

## An Investigation into the Effects of English Language Testing on Foreign Language Instruction at a Saudi Arabian University

Munagala Madhu Sudhan Rao

Associate Professor of English, Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation,  
Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India. [madhu.css@kluniversity.in](mailto:madhu.css@kluniversity.in). <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0383-4866>.

### Abstract

**Purpose of the study:** The study aims to explore whether EFL teachers are influenced by testing and its results in their teaching practices. It acknowledges that tests can have both positive and negative effects on students, and the teachers' attitudes toward washback can play a crucial role in mitigating any negative impact on teaching and learning.

**Methodology:** A background information questionnaire is generated for 57 EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. Besides, another questionnaire with sixteen statements is provided and the participants are asked to respond on the basis of 5-point Likert scale. The data is analysed with the support of pie and bar charts, SPSS, students' t-test, and ANOVA.

**Main Findings:** This study identifies different perspectives of teachers towards the impact of testing on teaching. The experienced faculties teach students and assess them with no washback. On the other hand, the moderately experienced and less experienced teachers get affected by washback. This study identifies that experienced teachers are not influenced by testing.

**Applications of this study:** If the universities create a platform for all EFL teachers, they can learn from one another. This study identifies that the third group, the experienced, are not influenced by testing. If their experience supports the first and the second groups, it will yield a larger benefit not only to students but also to the teaching fraternity. Novelty/Originality of this study: The experienced teachers focus more on teaching but not on testing, which is a positive sign. The moderately experienced teachers focus on both the things. The less experienced teachers are neutral to all statements. Based on the current study, the administrators can create a platform for all EFL teachers so that they can get benefitted from one another.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language, Teaching, Testing, Washback, Results

## INTRODUCTION

**Diversity of Students:** Acknowledging the diverse backgrounds of students, including those who have studied abroad, in international schools, or in different parts of KSA, is crucial. Understanding these backgrounds is essential for effective teaching.

**Importance of Assessment:** Recognizing the role of testing and assessment as integral components of the teaching and learning process is essential. You mention various assessment methods, such as assignments, quizzes, exams, presentations, debates, and extempores. This variety helps in gauging students' understanding and progress accurately.

**Language Medium:** Emphasizing the significance of the English language in undergraduate programs in KSA is important. English language teachers play a vital role in facilitating students' language skills, considering that the medium of instruction is English.

**Stress on Teacher Effort:** Highlighting the effort that teachers need to put into motivating and engaging students is crucial. It reflects an understanding of the challenges faced by educators, particularly in an EFL context.

**Variety of Teaching Strategies:** Mentioning a range of teaching strategies, such as lectures, small group discussions, projects, role plays, situational conversations, mind mapping, and individual presentations, indicates a holistic approach to pedagogy. Using a mix of these strategies caters to different learning styles and enhances overall learning outcomes.

**Interdependence of Teaching and Testing:** Stressing the interdependence of teaching and testing underscores the idea that these two components should work together seamlessly. Striking a balance between these elements is essential for effective education delivery. Overall, the statement reflects a thoughtful consideration of the challenges and strategies involved in teaching English language skills to undergraduate students in the specific context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It's evident that it recognizes the need for adaptability and creativity in teaching methods to address the diverse needs of students.

## Background of the Study

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been investing heavily on education. According to Hamdan, there is a growth in public universities from eleven to twenty-five between 2005 and 2012. Over the same period, private universities doubled from four to eight (Hamdan, 34). Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University is one among those new universities, established in 2010. It imparts education in different specializations like medical, engineering, science, business,

computer science, pharmacy, etc. The mode of instruction is English language. It is a challenge for both teachers and students as English is a foreign language to the students. The university is doing its best by starting a preparatory year for students, which concentrates mainly on English language courses like reading, writing, listening, speaking, etc. The idea is to develop English language skills of students so that they can cope with the remaining curriculum, which will be delivered in English. However, these preparatory year courses are not by the faculty existing in the respective colleges mentioned above. They are located at different places and at different locations with different colleges. Hence, the faculty who teaches English language has discussions and meetings among themselves in each college and implements the teaching and learning outcomes in their respective colleges. The teaching and learning strategies differ from one college to another as the students' needs vary.

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there are no studies in this area in the named university or even in the KSA. It is hence expected that this study serves as a base for future research that takes place in this area of knowledge in the KSA.

**1. Focus on Teacher Strategies:** Teachers often concentrate on their own teaching strategies and assessing students. Students in the classroom may have varied needs and motivations, with some prioritizing good results over learning.

**2. Stress on Teachers:** The emphasis on achieving outstanding results can stress teachers, potentially affecting their teaching methods.

**3. Research Objective:** Researchers aim to investigate how English language faculty in colleges balance teaching a testing. They seek to determine if testing influences teaching practices and if teachers prioritize language skill development.

**4. Teaching and Testing Strategies:** The researchers believe that effective teaching and testing strategies are crucial for student success.

**5. Washback Effect:** The impact of teaching on testing is referred to as "washback." Tests can have both positive and negative effects on students.

**6. Positive Washback:** Tests can encourage students to learn more, practice, and acquire knowledge.

**7. Negative Washback** Students who fail exams may drop out of courses or programs, representing a negative washback. Teachers may contribute to negative washback if their focus is solely on exam preparation.

**8. Influence on Teaching and Learning:** Various stakeholders, including colleges, universities, parents, teachers, administrators, and policymakers, often measure teaching effectiveness based on testing. High-stakes tests have a global influence on teaching and learning.

**9. High-Stakes Testing and Negative Washback:** The passage suggests that an overemphasis on high-stakes testing may lead to negative washback, potentially undermining the quality of teaching and learning.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Washback or Backwash

According to Gates (1995) washback is influence of testing on teaching and learning (4). Alderson and Wall (1993) posit that both classroom teaching and learning process are highly influenced by testing. „Washback“ or „backwash“ is a way how teaching and learning are powered by testing. There are number of definitions on „washback“ or „backwash“ to define its influence on language testing by researchers and linguists. The present study starts by focusing on the definitions on „washback“ or „backwash“. It further discusses a questionnaire generated by the researchers and finally ends with some pedagogical implications.

The word washback or backwash is rarely found in the dictionary. In contrast, it is well known and highly used by the language teachers and testers. According to Alderson and Wall (1993) washback force teachers and learners to do things they would not necessarily otherwise do because of the test. Shohamy et al. (1996) states that washback is a link between testing, teaching and learning. Alderson and Wall (1993), Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996), and Shohamy et al. (1996) and Alderson et al. (1996) opine, “there is a direct and linear relationship between the stakes of a test and the strength of washback: the higher the stakes and the stronger the washback”.

Hughes (1989) states, “the effect of testing and learning is backwash”. Spolsky (1994) opines that backwash deals with unforeseen side-effects of testing and not to the intended effects when the primary goal of the examination is the control of curricula. A review of related literature brings out certain more important and interesting facts about washback. Buck (1988), Alderson and Wall (1993), Messick (1996), Pearson (1988), Bailey (1996), and Cheng (2005) use the term „washback“. In contrast, Hughes (1989), Spolsky (1994), and Biggs (1995) refer it as

---

*Research paper*

© 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 8, Issue 4, 2019

„backwash“. Bachman and Palmer (1996), Wall (1997), McNamara (2000), and Andrews (2004) term it as „test impact“. Frederickson and Colling (1989) call it “systemic validity“. Messick (1989) calls it „consequential validity“. Marrow (1986) refers it as „washback validity“. Shohamy (1993) states that there is a lot of change in the way students are guided, when examinations approach Teachers pay more attention on revising the test syllabus instead of focusing on teaching the text. Handouts and question papers of earlier examinations substitute the text. The teachers’ thoughts get into the examination mode and take additional classes to revise the syllabus of the test besides the regular teaching hours. The teachers influence the students to master the syllabus of the examination. Examinations change students’ plans and attitudes. Eckstein and Noah (1993) opine that students will not study anything that cannot be questioned in the examination. They never read the questions that are doubtful to appear in the examination. Most of the students never care about the questions that are not tested.

### **Impact of Positive and Negative Washback**

Washback functions differently in different circumstances. Buck (1998) and Shohamy et al. (1996) opine that washback can function negatively or positively on the students. Bailey (1996) stated, “Washback can either be positive or negative to the extent that it either promotes or impedes the accomplishment of educational goals held by learners and/or program personnel” (269).

Students undoubtedly get influenced by tests. However, the effects or results of the influence like positive or negative have not been identified yet. Detailed research is significantly necessary to identify the amount of influence undergone by students. Alderson and Wall (1993) specify that the positive effect of testing is teachers testing students to make them learn more by making them pay more attention towards learning. The negative effect of testing is identifying a limited syllabus that will be tested in the examination and asking students to pay more attention on it to make them secure good results. Teachers who are afraid of students’ poor performance in the examinations will practice negative washback. They emphasize on textbooks as most of the question types in the final exam are derived from it. According to Alderson and Wall (1993), if teachers have common goals, activities, or common approaches to teaching and testing, they produce positive washback.

Pan (2009) states three effects of positive washback. Teachers set self-goals to complete the syllabi of the examinations more scrupulously within the stipulated time. Tests influence students to put their best efforts to succeed in examinations and in turn strengthen their knowledge. They can be used and planned as good supporting resources for teaching and learning and to boost positive teaching and learning practice.

According to Shohamy (1992), the negative washback effect occurs: when focus is on test to bring change; when stress is on adeptness and less on its direction; when tests are initiated as rigid trustworthy devices or deciding factors; when attending the examinations does not engage the test givers to develop; and when the results of the tests do not offer precise and thorough significant opinions and analysis that can be exercised to mend, it is ambitious to guess that tests will lead to a significant progress in the learning among students.

Anderson et al. (1990) state the practice of rote memorization in students as a negative washback effect. Alderson and Wall (1993) say that there is always a chance that the teaching and the tests do not go hand in glove. The most common cause or apprehension is that the learners pay attention on receptive skills as productive skills are not tested in the tests. There are hundred and one ways to prove that tests go against teaching as they do not carry the objectives of the textbook or learning as fully as they should, resulting in negative washback.

Pan (2009) defines a few negative washback effects. Teachers narrow the syllabus to prepare students for the test. They devote more time for coaching students for exams instead of teaching. Both teachers and students are victims of test anxiety, which misleads both. Students focus on acquiring marks and neglect learning. They do not learn the content that is not tested. Memorization leads to negative washback among students. This affects their learning and students do not get motivated.

### **Role of a Teacher**

Teachers play a pivotal role to reduce the impact of negative influence on teaching and learning, which is highlighted by various researchers. Bailey (2005) states that high stake national and international examinations can be partially influenced by us; however, we can tremendously influence our students to learn, teach them how to acquire language, and how to have positive washback. Teachers' attitude greatly determines the influence of washback on students. According to Spratt (2005), teachers' attitude undoubtedly rules the acuteness and the direction of the washback effect.

Spratt (2005) says, “The type and amount of washback on teaching methodology appears to vary from context to context and teacher to teacher. It varies from no reported washback to considerable washback. The variable in these differences appears to be not so much the exam itself as the teacher... nevertheless, the empirical studies reviewed (on washback effect) indicating strongly that an exam cannot of itself dictate what and how teachers teach, and learners learn. Degree and kinds of washback occur through the agency of various intervening bodies and are shaped by them. The teacher is an important and influential agent in this process” (17).

Teachers can reduce the effect of negative washback through the teaching and learning process, if they have a thorough awareness on testing. The established way of evaluation practice among teachers certainly guides to achieve a negative effect of testing on the teaching and learning methods. If teachers are permitted to engage in the method of high stakes testing besides teaching, their fear of students’ poor performance in the examinations can be lessened. For example, tests like IELTS, TOEFL, and GRE need specific training to teacher-trainers before teaching. If that specific training is provided to the teacher-trainers, it will strengthen the bond between the teacher-trainers and the testers. This is necessary as the testers and teacher-trainers are not the same in this situation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researchers are working with Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU). It is one of the emerging universities in KSA. It has various colleges situated on campus and in Al Kharj. It has also a few colleges in vicinity around 500 kilometres. The questionnaire was filled by 57 EFL teachers, out of which 12 were from the College of Business Administration, Kharj (CBAK), 9 were from the College of Preparatory Year Program College (PYP), 15 were from the Community College (CC), 6 were from the College of Business Administration, Howtah (CBAH) and 12 were from the College of Science and Humanities (CSH), and the remaining 3 were from the College of Science and Humanities, Sulayyel(CSHS). As testing impacts teaching and learning, the researchers want to study if the teachers of English language get influenced by testing while teaching. The data was collected from teachers belonging to these colleges by using a questionnaire. Besides, a background information questionnaire was also given to teachers. The questionnaire was based on a 5-point Likert scale (from strongly agree

*Research paper*

© 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 8, Issue 4, 2019

to strongly disagree). The statements for assessing teaching and testing were designed on the basis of a review of past literature. The researchers not only used graphical presentations, but also the method of hypotheses testing to find out the study outcomes. In order to check the differences between two different groups, the student t test was used, which helped to identify differences between the responses of two different groups of samples. The t value is calculated using the formula.

$t = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu}{\sigma/\sqrt{n}}$  where  $\bar{x}$  stands for the mean of the sample,  $\mu$  stands for the hypothesized value for population mean,  $s$  stands for

standard deviation of the sample, and  $n$  stands for sample size. Here, the null hypothesis stands for no difference between the mean values of both samples. By default, the alternate hypothesis stands for a significant difference between the two. Further, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is done using F ratio for hypothesis testing the group for which the difference amongst mean to be tested is more than two.

$$\frac{\sum_{i=1}^k n_i (\bar{x}_i - \bar{\bar{x}})^2}{k - 1} \quad \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k \sum_{j=1}^{n_i} (x_{ij} - \bar{x}_i)^2}{n_T - k}$$

$k$  = number of population;  $n_T$  = sum of the sample sizes from all population;  $n_i$  = sample size of population  $i$ ;  $\bar{x}_i$  = sample mean from population  $i$ ;  $\bar{\bar{x}}$  = grand mean.

The null hypothesis stands for no significant difference and alternate hypothesis stands for a significant difference. The hypotheses were tested against the table values at 5% level of significance or 10% level of significance. As the analysis was being done by SPSS software, the p values generated were considered. If the p value was less than 0.05, the alternate hypothesis was accepted at 5% level of significance. If the p-value was less than 0.10, the alternate hypothesis was accepted at 10% level of significance. Based on the explorations of the previous researchers on the impact of testing on teaching and learning, the researchers of the current study intend to study how far teachers get satisfied with their teaching strategies in EFL classrooms and focus on knowing if the teachers get influenced by washback. They further want to explore if there are any differences in teaching and testing strategies adopted by teachers from one college to another college. They also focus on exploring whether the position



of the teacher affects the teaching and learning process. They also aim to identify the impact of experience on teachers' teaching and learning processes.

## ANALYSIS

### Background Information Questionnaire

Though the participants were well educated and well experienced, they had to abide by the university norms. However, they certainly had liberty in using their own teaching strategies. The researchers want to identify if the colleges with which the participants work affected their teaching and testing strategies. In this regard, we intend to know the details like years of experience at PSAU, college of affiliation, and name (optional) through a questionnaire. Besides, it had two more questions. The participants were asked to write Yes/No to the below-mentioned questions.

Is the university/college responsible for the way you teach?

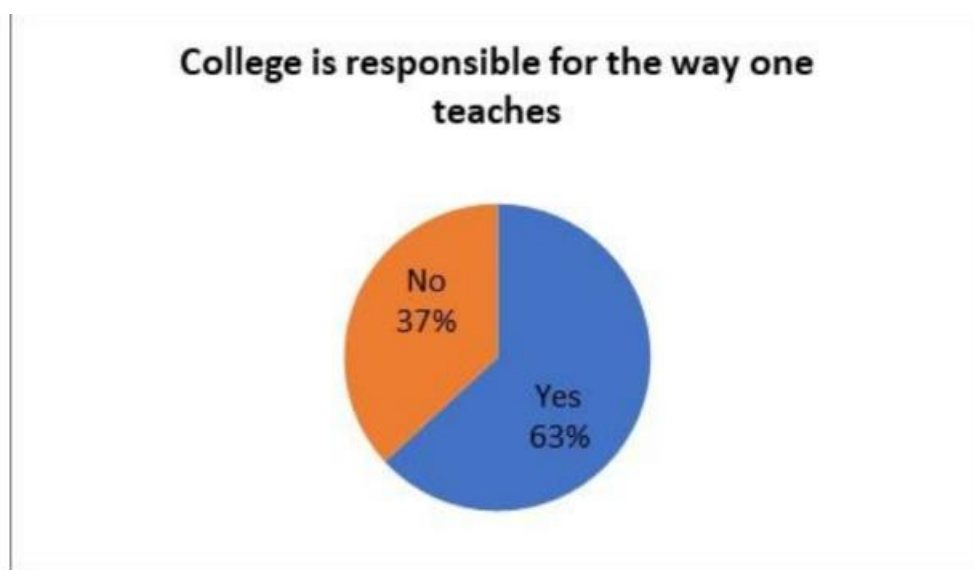


Figure 1. College is responsible for the way one teaches

63% of the EFL teachers felt that their respective college was responsible for the way they teach and 37% of the EFL teachers believed that college was not responsible for the way they teach.

1. Are you satisfied with the teaching and testing strategies adopted by your college?

74% of the teachers were satisfied by the teaching and testing strategies adopted by their respective colleges; however, 26% were not satisfied.



Figure 2. Satisfied with the teaching and testing strategies

The hypothesis testing was done through SPSS. Here, the null hypothesis was denoted by  $H_0$  while the alternate hypothesis was denoted by  $H_1$ . The hypothesis was taken to be significant if the p value was less than either 0.05 or 0.10. The first case was denoted significant at 5% significance level and the second case was denoted significant at 10% significance level.

### Hypothesis Testing

#### Hypothesis 1

Though all the colleges in the university have common teaching and learning strategies, we aim to know whether the respondents' teaching and learning process is motivated by the college. The participants were asked to respond to a Yes/No question (Is the university/college responsible for the way you teach?) in the Background Information Questionnaire for the present study.

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference between college of affiliation and college being responsible for the way one teaches.

$H_1$ : There is a significant difference between college of affiliation and college being responsible for the way one teaches.

(Significant at 5% - the p value is 0.026, which is less than 0.05)



Figure 3. College is responsible for the way one teaches

The mean score of all samples was 1.37. The college at Sulayyel had the score of 2 (2 means NO), while College of Business Administration at Howtah had the score of 1 (1 means YES). The other colleges whose score was more than the average were CBAK (1.42), CC (1.40), and CSH (1.50). The college whose score was less than the average was PYP (1.11).

The teachers in the College of Preparatory Year Program felt that college influenced their teaching. In contrast, the teachers in the CSHS felt that the college was not at all responsible for the way they teach. The p value of 0.026 ( $< 0.05$ ) also supported this hypothesis. Thus, there was a significant difference between one college and the other in using the teaching strategies. Hence, alternative hypothesis was accepted, and null hypothesis was rejected.

#### Hypothesis 2

The researchers want to know if the teachers were satisfied by the teaching and testing strategies adopted by their respective colleges in the university. The university had common teaching strategies like lecture, presentation, small group discussion, etc. and testing strategies like assignments, quizzes, individual presentations, mid exams, etc. The participants were asked to respond to a Yes/No question (Are you satisfied with the teaching and testing strategies adopted by your college?) in the Background Information Questionnaire to identify the teachers' level of satisfaction.

Ho: There is no significant difference between college of affiliation and satisfaction with the teaching and testing strategies.

*Research paper*

© 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 8, Issue 4, 2019

H1: There is a significant difference between college of affiliation and satisfaction with the teaching and testing strategies. (Significant at 5% - the p value was 0.17, which was more than 0.05)

Interestingly, the null hypothesis was accepted, and alternative hypothesis was rejected. It shows that most of the teachers in all colleges in the university were satisfied with the teaching and testing strategies recommended by the university.

### Hypothesis 3

In order to study further, the researchers focused to find whether teaching was influenced by either experience or college. In both cases, there was a possibility of either negative or positive washback. Though this hypothesis aimed to study the teaching and learning process, it supported to explore whether the testing strategies had any influence. In order to study this, the teaching experience available in the Background Information Questionnaire and a Yes/No question (Is the university/college responsible for the way you teach?) was taken into consideration.

H0: There is no significant difference between teaching experience and college being responsible for the way one teaches.

H1: There is a significant difference between teaching experience and college being responsible for the way one teaches. (Significant at 5% - the p value was 0.039, which was less than 0.05).

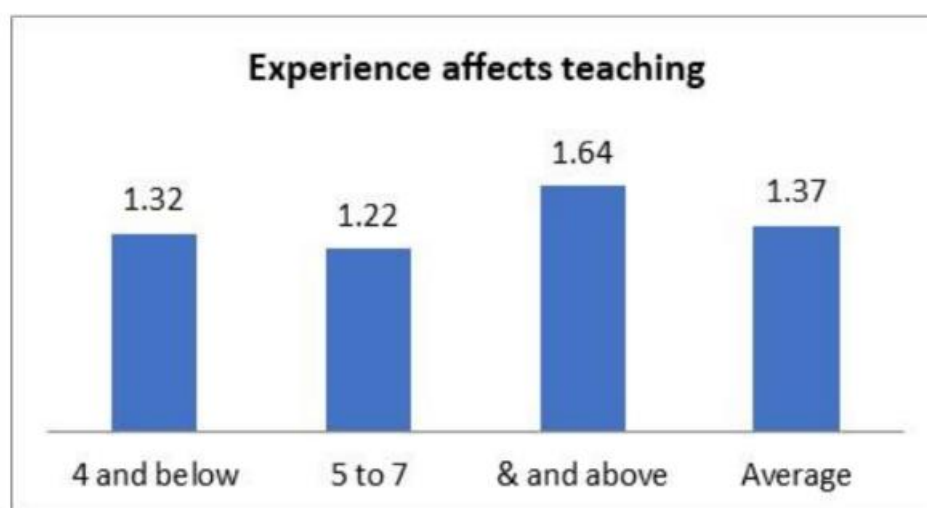


Figure 4. Experience affects teaching

The experience of teachers at PSAU was considered for the present study. All teachers were divided into three groups. The first group had an experience of 4 years and less than 4 years. The second group had teachers with 5 to 9 years of experience. The third group of respondents

had more than 9 years of experience. The mean score for Yes/No question was 1.37. The respondents with more than 9 years of experience were more inclined towards the opinion that the college is not responsible for the way one teaches (1.64). In contrast, the first and the second groups had average scores of 1.32 and 1.22 (closer to 1), respectively. The first group had the opinion that the college was responsible for the way one teaches. The second group indicated that they opined that the college and their experience were responsible for the way they teach. As the p value was 0.039, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

#### Hypothesis 4

The researchers also plan to study whether the level of satisfaction with the teaching and testing strategies differ on the basis of participants' experience. The experience of participants was recorded along with a Yes/No question (Are you satisfied with the teaching and testing strategies adopted by your college?) in the Background Information Questionnaire to identify the teachers' satisfaction.

Ho: There is no significant difference between teaching experience and satisfaction with the teaching and testing strategies.

H1: There is a significant difference between teaching experience and satisfaction with the teaching and testing strategies. (Significant at 5% - the p value was 0.717, which was more than 0.05). The p value was 0.717 for this hypothesis. It meant that the null hypothesis was accepted, and alternative hypothesis was rejected. Hence, the analysis indicates that the level of satisfaction does not differ with experience.

#### Analysis of the 5 Likert Items or Statements

Shohamy (1993), Alderson and Wall (1993), Pan (2009), and Spratt (2005) state that teachers narrow the syllabus as it reduces stress to students while preparing for the test. They also opine that teachers devote more time in preparing the students for exams instead of teaching. Based on their statements, the following five Likert items or statements were designed to measure the attitude and opinion of teachers of various colleges in PSAU on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 for strongly agree (SA), 2 for agree (A), 3 for neutral (N), 4 for disagree (DA) and 5 for strongly disagree (SDA):

1. Questions which are likely to appear in exam are well practiced in class.
2. I will not teach the content that is not tested in the exam.

3. I am not worried about my students' performance in the final exam.
4. As the exam's approaches, the teaching becomes exam-centric.
5. Amount of time devoted to teaching the concepts: less marks, less time: more marks, more time.

**Table 1:** Attitude and opinion of teachers towards teaching and testing

	Statement 1		Statement 2		Statement 3		Statement 4		Statement 5	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Strongly Agree	12	21.1	2	3.5	9	16	5	8.8	3	5.3
Agree	24	42.1	7	12	7	12	13	23	11	19
Neutral	7	12.3	9	16	11	19	15	26	32	56
Disagree	10	17.5	17	30	12	21	19	33	9	16
Strongly Disagree	4	7	22	39	18	32	5	8.8	2	3.5

As per the Likert scale, F means frequency. 24 teachers agree with statement one and 4 teachers strongly disagree with it. In contrast, 22 teachers strongly disagree with statement two and 2 teachers strongly agree with it. 18 teachers strongly disagree with statement three and 7 teachers agree with it. 15 teachers are neutral, and 5 teachers strongly agree and strongly disagree with statement four. At the same time, 19 teachers disagree with it. Interestingly, 32 teachers are neutral to respond to statement five. It means they either do not want to respond or they neither agree nor disagree.

### Histograms

The detailed analysis of these statements is provided in the following histograms.

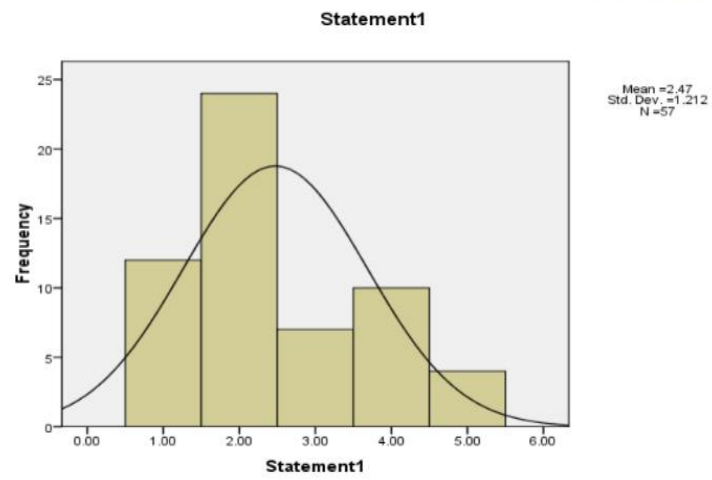
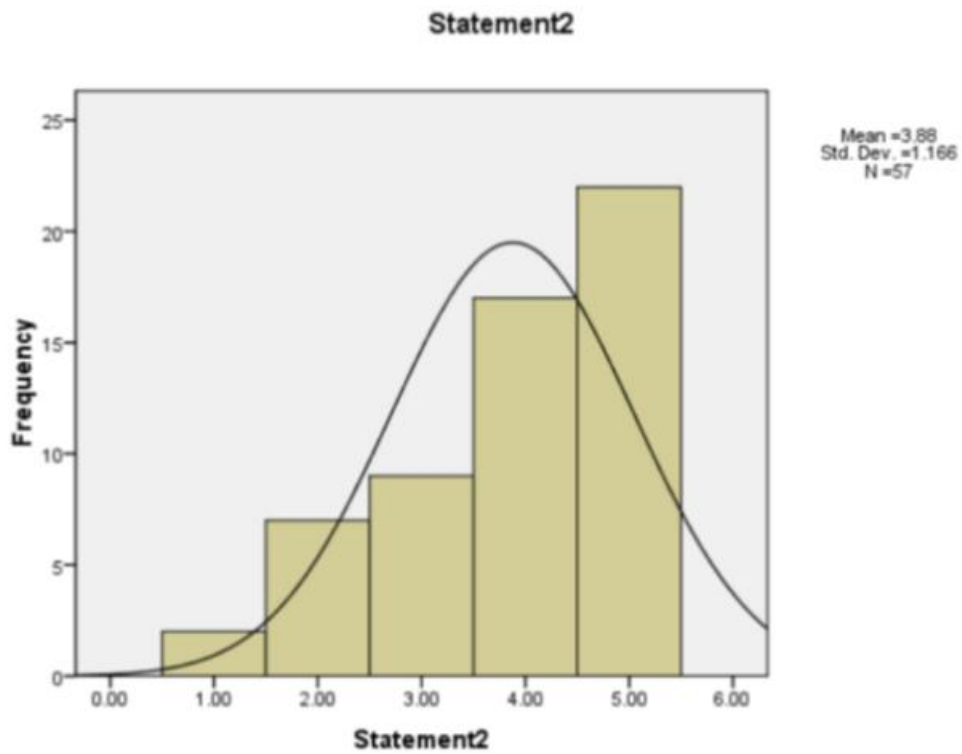


Figure 5. Questions which are likely to come in exam are well practiced in class



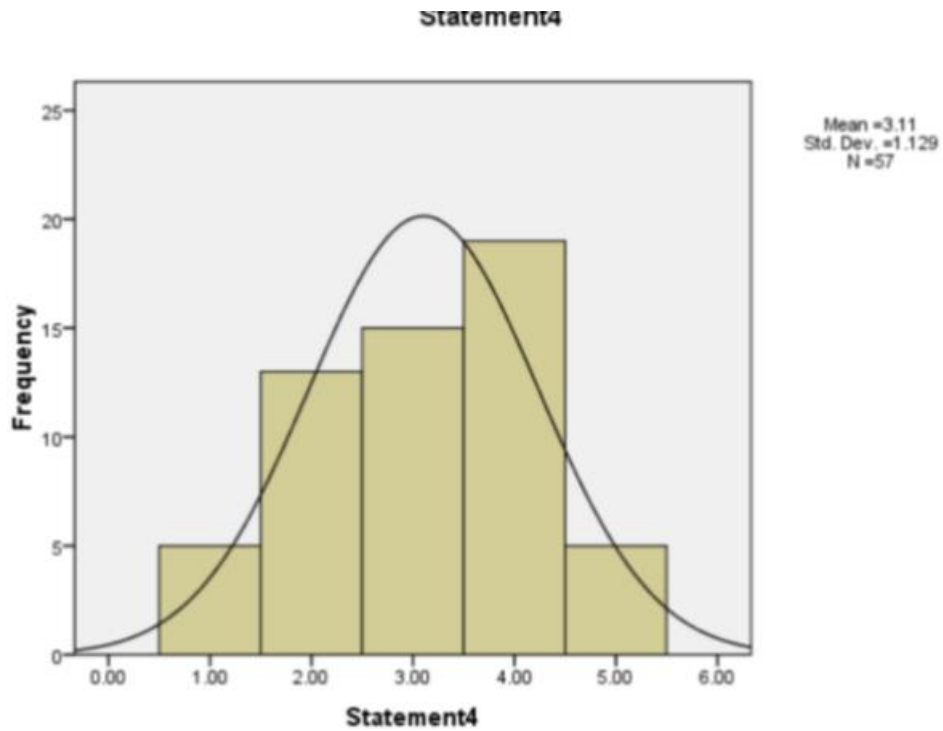


Figure 7. I am not worried about my students' performance in final exam

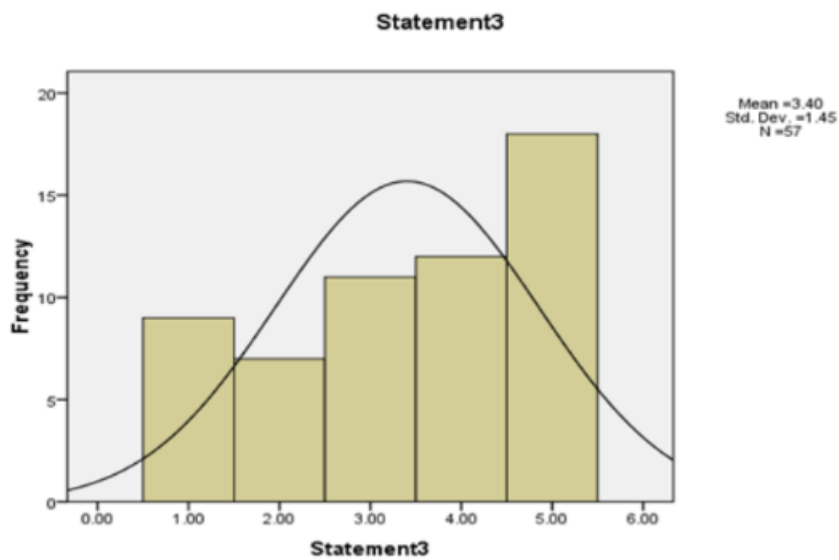


Figure 8. As the exams approaches, the teaching becomes exam-centric



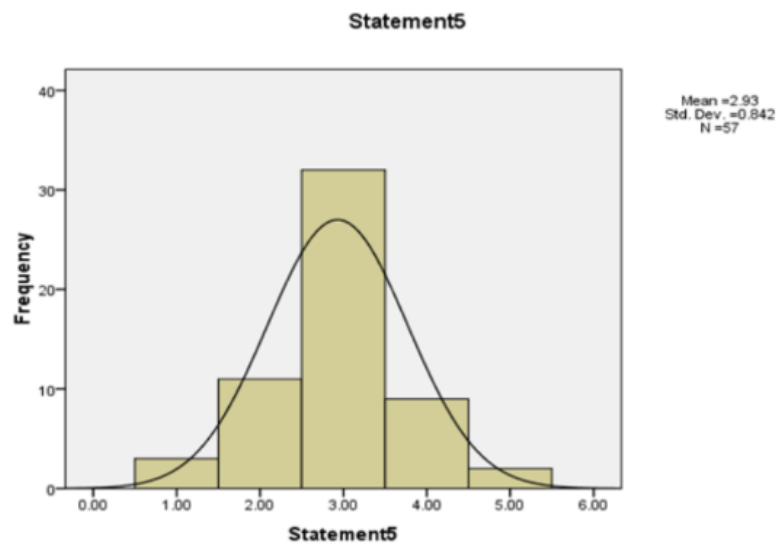


Figure 9: Amount of time devoted to teaching the concepts: less marks, less time: more marks, more time.

### Testing the Impact of Washback

Statement 1: Questions which are likely to come in exam are well practiced in class. (Strongly agree means teaching is influenced by testing, strongly disagree means teaching is not influenced by testing)

Hypothesis 5

H0: There is no significant difference between college of affiliation and statement 1

H1: There is a significant difference between college of affiliation and statement 1

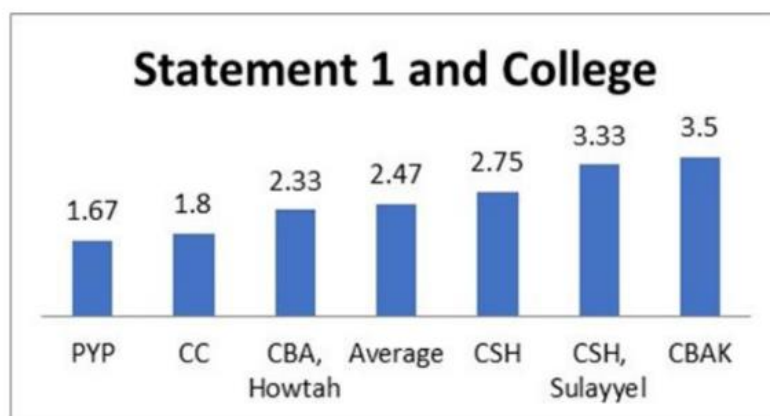


Figure 10. Influence of teaching on testing (Significant at 5% as the P value is 0.000)

*Research paper*

© 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 8, Issue 4, 2019

As per bar chart, teachers of PYP (Preparatory Year Program) college almost agree that teaching is influenced by testing. In contrast, teachers of CBAK (College of Business Administration, Kharj) disagree that teaching is influenced by testing. The average of this statement in the Likert scale is 2.47. Positive washback exists in CBAK when compared to the rest of the colleges. CSH (College of Science & Humanities) and CSHS (college of Science & Humanities, Suleyal) also opine that teaching is not influenced by testing.

Statement 2: I will not teach the content that is not tested in the exam (Strongly agree means testing influences teaching, strongly disagree means testing does not influence teaching). There is no significant difference. All the EFL (English as Foreign Language) teachers in all colleges agree that they will not teach the content that is not tested in the exam.

Statement 3: I am not worried about my students' performance in the final exam (Strongly agree means testing does not influence teaching, strongly disagree means testing influences teaching).

Hypothesis 6

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between college of affiliation and statement 3

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference between college of affiliation and statement 3

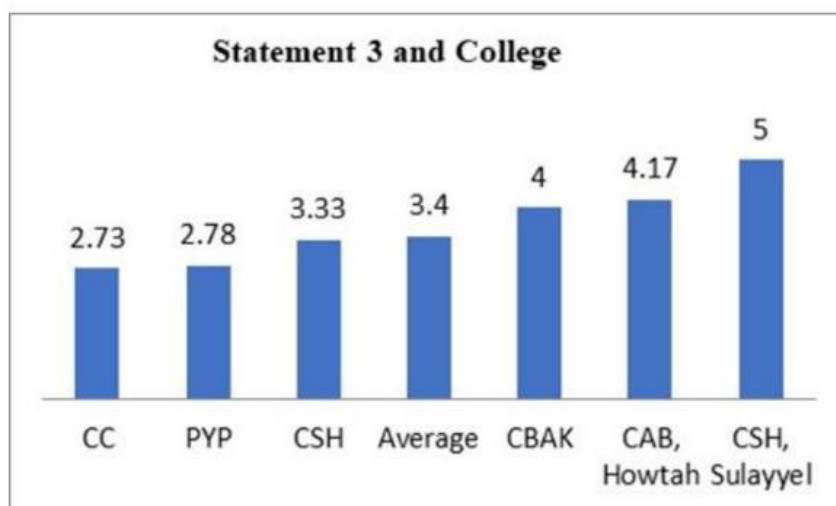


Figure 11: Influence of testing on teaching (Significant at 5% as the P value is 0.034)

The teachers of CSHS strongly disagree that testing influences their teaching. However, based on the responses of teachers of CC, it is concluded that testing influences teaching a little. The average of the statement is 3.4 and the responses of the teachers of CSH are neutral. The teachers of CBAK disagree that testing influences teaching and the teachers of CABH (College of Business Administration, Hotah) are a little above disagreement.

Research paper

© 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 8, Issue 4, 2019

Statement 4: As the exams approach, the teaching becomes exam centric (Strongly agree means teaching is influenced by testing, strongly disagree means testing does not influence teaching). There is no significant difference. The EFL teachers in all colleges agree that they their teaching becomes exam centric.

Statement 5: Amount of time devoted to teaching the concepts: less marks, less time: more marks, more time (Strongly agree means negative washback, strongly disagree means positive washback).

There is no significant difference. The EFL teachers in all colleges agree that they devote time on the basis of concepts tested in the exams. For further study, the EFL teachers in Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU) are divided into three groups on the basis of their experience, as mentioned earlier. We plan to study if teaching and testing strategies change with experience.

Statement 1: Questions which are likely to come in exam are well practiced in class. (Strongly agree means teaching is influenced by testing, strongly disagree means teaching is not influenced by testing)

Hypothesis 7

H0: There is no significant difference between experience at PSAU and statement 1

H1: There is a significant difference between experience at PSAU and statement 1



e 12. Influence of teaching on testing and role of experience (Significant at 5% as the P value is 0.021)

The average for this statement is 2.47. The third group, the most experienced in PSAU, disagrees with the statement. It means their attention is on teaching and giving knowledge to students. Interestingly, the second group agrees a lot with the statement and the first group, the

*Research paper*

© 2012 IJFANS. All Rights Reserved, UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 8, Issue 4, 2019

least experienced is neutral to the statement. Testing influences the teaching of the second group and can be either negative or positive washback.

Statement 2: I will not teach the content that is not tested in the exam (Strongly agree means teaching influences testing, strongly disagree means testing does not influence teaching).

There is no significant difference. All three groups agree that they would not teach the content that is not tested in the exam.

Statement 3: I am not worried about my students' performance in the final exam (Strongly agree means testing does not influence teaching, strongly disagree means testing influences teaching).

There is no significant difference. All three groups agree that they will not teach the content that is not tested in the exam.

Statement 4: As the exams approach, the teaching becomes exam-centric (Strongly agree means teaching is influenced by testing, strongly disagree means testing does not influence teaching).

Hypothesis 8

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between experience at PSAU and statement 4

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference between experience at PSAU and statement 4



Figure 13: Exam-centric teaching and role of experience (Significant at 10% as the P value is 0.061)

The most experienced incline to disagree that their teaching is exam-centric. It shows that the result of their teaching and learning process is not influenced. However, the second group agrees with it. The washback used by the second group can be either negative or positive. The least experienced group is almost neutral to this statement.

Statement 5: Amount of time devoted to teaching the concepts: less marks, less time: more marks, more time (Strongly agree means negative washback, strongly disagree means positive washback).

Hypothesis 9

H0: There is no significant difference between experience at PSAU and statement 5

H1: There is a significant difference between experience at PSAU and statement 5

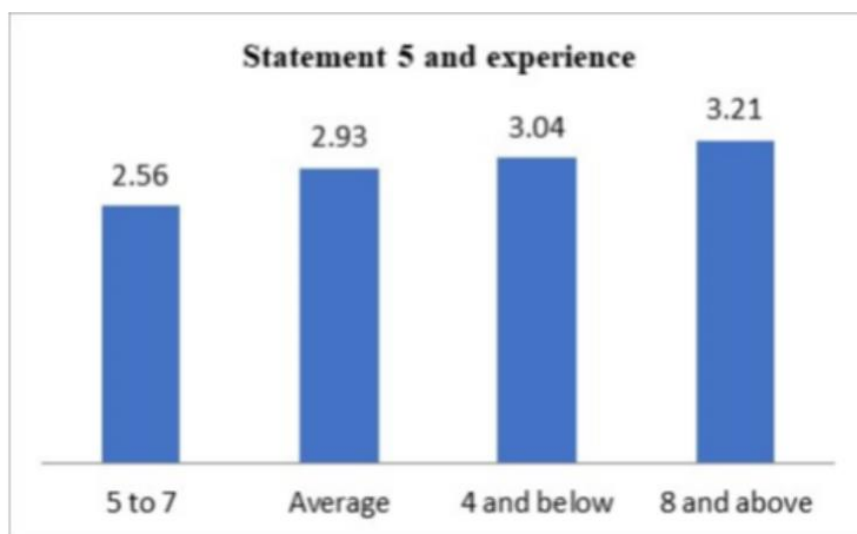


Figure 14. Time devoted to teach concepts and role of experience (Significant at 10% as the P value was 0.059)

The third group, the most experienced in PSAU, slightly disagreed that their teaching does not depend on the marks allotted to the topic. Hence, their focus was not on testing, but on the teaching and learning process. The second group slightly agreed that their teaching was based on the marks assigned to them. The first group was again neutral to this statement.

## CONCLUSION

Significantly adding to the body of knowledge on teaching and assessment methodologies is the study. The study mentioned above leads to the conclusion that instructors' views about teaching and testing at different colleges are situational and vary. It is also acknowledged that seasoned educators devote more of their time to instructing, but not during testing, which is encouraging. Teachers with a reasonable level of experience concentrate on both. The purpose of this study is to determine the kind of washback that PSAU experiences. The study reveals varying viewpoints among educators regarding the influence of assessments on instruction, indicating a limited degree of success for the researchers. The knowledgeable instructors don't use washback when they instructor evaluate students. Conversely, the teachers with moderate

to less experience receive. Based on this research, a few policies can be considered implicated. All EFL teachers can benefit from one another's knowledge if the university establishes a platform for them. According to this study, testing has no effect on the third group of seasoned educators. Their expertise will be more beneficial if it helps the first and second groups, as well as both to the teaching fraternity and students. It's also important to examine the reasons for the few instructors at one or two universities in the university is impacted by assessments. Long-term unfavourable washback will impact their instruction.

### LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER STUDY

This study focuses on only one university. There is a scope for future research on this area with a large sample and different regions in KSA. This study identifies a noticeable impact of washback. In this regard, the future researchers can identify if it is positive or negative at a fuller length. This study can also be extended with an aim to identify the impact of positive or negative washback.

### REFERENCES

- [1] Alderson, J. C. and Hamp-Lyons, L. (1996). TOEFL preparation courses: A Study of Washback. *Language Testing* 13(3): 280-97.
- [2] Alderson, J.C., and Wall, D. (1993). Does Washback Exist? *Applied Linguistics* 14(2): 115-129.
- [3] Anderson, J. O., Muir, W., Bateson, D. J., Blackmore, D., & Rogers, W. T. (1990). The impact of provincial examinations on education in British Columbia: General report. Victoria: British Columbia Ministry of Education.
- [4] Andrews, S. (2004). Washback and curriculum innovation. In L. Cheng. Y. Watanabe, & A. Curtis, (Eds.), *Washback in language testing: Research contexts and methods* (pp.37-50). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- [5] Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. Bailey, K.M. (1996). Working for washback: a review of the washback concept in language testing. *Language Testing* 13(3): 257-79.

- [6] Bailey, K.M. (2005). Looking back down the road: A recent history of language classroom research. *Review of Applied Linguistics in China*, 1, pp. 6-47.
- [7] Biggs, J. B. (1995). Assumptions underlying new approaches to educational assessment. *Curriculum Forum*, 4(2), 1–22.
- [8] Buck, G. (1988). Testing listening comprehension in Japanese university entrance examinations. *JALT Journal* 10, 15-42.
- [9] Cheng, L. (2005). *Changing language teaching through language testing: a washback study*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [10] Eckstein, M.A. and Noah, H.J. (1993). *Examinations: Comparative and International studies* (Eds.).
- [11] Frederickson and Colling (1989), A systems approach to educational testing. *Educational Researcher* 18 (9), 27-32.
- [12] Gates, S. (1995). Exploiting washback from standardized tests. In J. D. Brown & S. O. Yamashita (Eds.), *Language testing in Japan* (pp. 101-106). Tokyo: Japan Association for Language Teaching.
- [13] Hamdan, A. (2013). An exploration into " private" higher education in Saudi Arabia: Improving quality and accessibility? *The ACPET Journal for Private Higher Education*.2(2).
- [14] Hughes, A. (1989). *Testing for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [15] Marrow, K. (1986). The evaluation of tests of communicative performance. In Portal, M., editor, *Innovations in language testing*. Windsor: NFER/Nelson, 1-13.
- [16] McNamara, T. (2000). *Language Testing*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000
- [17] Messick, S. (1989). Validity. In Linn, R., (ed.), *Educational measurement*, New York: ACE/Macmillan, 447-74.
- [18] Messick.S (1996). Validity and washback in language testing. *LanguageTesting*13, 241.
- [19] Pan, Y. (2009). A review of washback and its pedagogical implications. *VNU Journal of Science, Foreign Languages*, 25: 257-263
- [20] Pearson, I. (1988). Tests as levers for change. In Chamberlain, D. and Baumgardner, R., editors, *ESP in the Classroom*: