

Washback Impact on Teachers' Instruction Resulting from Students' Apathy

Asifa Abbas¹ Sahiba Sarwar Thaheem²

1. MS Scholar, @ ELDC Mehran University of Engineering and Technology Jamshoro, Pakistan

2. Assistant Professor, English Language Development Center, Mehran University

Abstract

The “Washback” as we call it in the applied linguistics (termed ‘backwash’ in education), is a well-documented phenomenon known to all institutional learning process. (Philip Shawcross, p 2, What do we mean by the ‘washback effect’ of testing?). The washback effect has tersely been referred to as ‘the influence of testing on teaching, and learning.’ (Gates 1995) This study ventured to examine the washback phenomenon from teachers’ perspective taking learners as the inducing factors of the washback effect. The Qualitative approach was espoused. The data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with the HSC English language teachers of the government colleges in Hyderabad with a ‘convenient sampling’. The participants numbering ten in total were equally taken from both the genders. The interview responses were thematically analyzed and coded to form a compact but summarized picture of the washback on teachers. The findings provided the breaking-through insights into the flip side of the washback from teachers’ vantage point. It established that the apathy/lack of interest by students brings an intense kind of washback on teachers’ teaching method, and content, and their overall morale. Assuming that students are directly receptive to the washback coming from tests; it sought to know as to ‘how they reflect the same back on their teachers’. The respondents named many a handicap placed by apathetic students on how and what they teach. The study corroborated the fact that the teachers are at least, as affected as the learners by the washback phenomenon.

Keywords: Washback, Impact, Higher Secondary Examination, Teachers’ Perception, Students’ apathy, Instruction, Language Testing

Introduction

Achieving the optimal quality in education has been the foremost priority globally. The discourse has focused on enhancing the rapport between instructor, and learner; designing innovations in techniques whereby a teacher carries out instruction delivery; and ameliorating the curriculum scheme to be delivered to students. If the above factors work in an adverse way, that is to say, teachers and students going at cross purposes, the instruction methods devoid of any innovative spirit to meet the needs of learners in the modern age, and shaky content unlikely to yield positive outcomes both in terms of students cracking their tests, and developing the four language skills, the consequences (washback effects as they are known as) then are disastrous for teachers, and learners alike.

Definitions of Washback:

Also known as “Measurement-driven instruction”, washback is a common term in the parlance of applied linguistics denoting the impact of test(s) on teaching and learning. The washback can be either positive or negative, and respectively can be on teachers or on learners. Similarly, it can be beneficial in that the positive washback may bring about an improvement in teaching, and learning, and the negative washback works exactly otherwise.

The definitions of washback are nearly as numerous as people touching upon it. The famous hypothetical models (15 in number) advanced by Alderson and Wall shed light on the subject. Alderson (1993-117) states in his “Does Washback exist” Washback as a term is neutral. It means ‘influence’. If test is poor, then the washback may be said to be negative. The positive washback is having good tests with good results.”

Shohamy (1993a, p. 4 quoted by Katherine M. Bailey in Washback in Language Testing) puts it as: “Washback effect refers to the impact that tests have on teaching, and learning.” Making a general differentiation between the terms washback and backwash, Andrews (1994a, p.67 as quoted by Katherine M. Bailey in Washback in Language Testing, p.16) notes: “In general education literature, the favoured term to describe this phenomenon is ‘backwash,’ while in language education there seems to be a preference for ‘washback’.”

Bachmann and Palmer (1996, p. 35) state that washback is a more complex phenomenon than simply the influence of a test on teaching, and learning.

Pearson (1988, p. 98) remarks, “It is widely held that public examinations affect the attitudes, motivations, and behaviors of teachers, learners, and parents.”

Various research studies reveal that a teacher’s expectation of his or her students can trigger an immense effect both on 1) How and What they teach, and 2) Students’ actual performance (Chen & Wesley, 2011). Undeniably therefore, securing the optimal academic achievement is a crucial factor of student-teacher rapport

(Hamre&Pianta, 2001). Moreover, it has been revealed by several studies that the higher the expectation(s) from a teacher, the greater the increase in students (IQ) scores (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

The relationship between a teacher and a student is of great import esp. owing to the numerous roles a teacher is supposed to play in terms of nurturing, discipline, teaching, and evaluating (Johnson, 2009). To secure the ends envisaged in the syllabus, teachers take to certain techniques, known as teaching strategies, which sometimes are comprehensive oriented towards achieving higher goals as visualized to cater for an ideal teaching. And sometimes, teachers influenced by a wide spectrum of factors fall back on shortcuts directing their instruction method and content towards serving only one goal of their students getting through exams/ tests successfully. These royal roads, as they are, are meant to hit the nail right on the head, viz., tests. The latter situation has a couple of reasons. A committed teacher otherwise focusing more on ideal learning of his/her students than on numbers in tests can also resort to the exam-oriented-strategies due to the lukewarm response he gets from his students. This behavior is induced in him by students unwilling and unconcerned with his broader strategy of making them excel in the four layered English skills.

Furthermore, giving in to students' whims and wishes to train them only from exam point of view does not necessarily entail taking the high road. The short-term strategies are not always a guarantee to prepare students to a T to crack the final exam. When even short-cuts fetch students poor grades, the fallout, that is to say, the washback effect, falls on teachers at least, as much as on students. Thus, a teacher is mer and more receptive to the washback induced by a multiplicity of factors.

Significance of the Study

Although a good deal of research studies conducted on examining the washback effect from the vantage point of learners clutter up the corpus of English language in the applied linguistics, hardly any substantial breakthrough has been made to canvass the nature, and intensity of washback on English language teachers. The learners are taken as the stakeholders of studies in most of the research projects, without taking any stock of the psychological, professional, and moral pressures exercised on teachers during the course of entire teaching session, and in the wake of students performing below the mark in tests. What is more, washback on teachers in relation to students as inducing agents has been ignored. This research enterprise is a bid to fill the gap to explore, and investigates to how, on what scale, and induced chiefly by what, the washback effect bears upon English language teachers of the HSC grade. The study will come in handy for both 1) the prospective researchers undertaking the studies on washback on teachers; and 2) practical utility to work up a sound teacher-student rapport.

Statement of the problem

The study intends to explore the symbiotic relationship between the impact of HSC English test on undergrad students and their subsequent attitude towards teachers' instruction method and content. Further it investigates the emotional and cognitive directions of washback on teachers' teaching method and content resulting from students' lack of interest.

Research Objectives

- To investigate the washback effect on teachers' instruction method and content resulting from students' lack of interest.
- To examine the symbiotic correlation between the HSC English test washback, and students' subsequent attitude towards teacher's instruction method, and content. Besides, in view of the students' given attitude, how a teacher delivers to them.
- To look into the emotional and cognitive dimensions of washback on teachers ensuing from students' apathy.

Research Questions

The following questions are going to be addressed in the present studies:

1. What is the washback effect on teachers' method and content of instruction due to students' apathy?
2. How does the washback of the HSC English language exam bear upon students' attitude towards method, and content of the instruction by teacher(s)?
3. How much successfully do the teachers deliver to learners irrespective of the consideration of "just pass the exam"?
4. What are the emotional and cognitive washback effects of students' lack of interest on teachers?

Literature Review

Background of the Washback

The term Washback is variously associated with effects on teachers, learners, parents, administrators, textbook

writers and instructors. (Shohamy 2001: cited in Monograph). According to Pearson, 1988; It is accepted that public examinations have great influence on the attitude, behavior, and motivation of teachers, learners and parents.

According to Bachman and Palmer (1996): High-Stakes exams have impact at two levels; micro level and macro level.

- At micro level (it affects individuals or teaching and learning context).
- At macro level it affects education system or society.

Theoretical models of the Washback

There is a variety of theoretical framework designs for Washback study; main three models are discussed here.

The first theoretical model proposed by Alderson and Walls in 1993. According to them test affects at two levels, namely Micro-level and Macro-level. In view of this proposition, they proposed 15 hypotheses for better understanding the concept of 'washback' as to how it occurs, and at what level. These hypotheses postulate that a test may bear upon teaching and learning, teachers and learners'. How teachers teach, and how learners' learn. The test influences degree, depth, frequency and intensity of teaching, and learning respectively. The greater the consequences, the more intense the Washback effect unto all teachers and learners. Those tests which produce no serious consequences will have no washback.

The second trichotomous model has been advanced by Hughes in 1983. He focuses on three elements in the model, namely 1) Participant, 2) Process and 3) Product. The participant takes students, classroom, teachers, administrators and publishers to be affected by the test. Under the process come material developers, syllabus designers, and methodology and teaching strategies. The product refers to outcomes/ end results, that is, what is being learnt and (skills, facts and quality learning). These three elements of Hughes model are interrelated; the ultimate goal is improvised learning with least Washback effects.

Intermediate English Examination (HSC)

Intermediate English examination plays a vital role of a gatekeeper for students to gain an access to tertiary education. The English Intermediate examination is comprised of two papers in total, that is to say, part I and part II. Each part carries a hundred marks. Part I has Textbook, Poetry and Drama. Part II has Textbook, Poetry and Novel. This exam is administered in Pakistan by Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education commonly known as 'BISE'.

Context of the study:

A plethora of studies on washback in general education context, and in the arena of applied linguistics/ language have appeared checking out the relationship between testing and teaching. Various dimensions of washback effect falling on teachers' method, and content of instruction have come under the scrutiny of scholars worldwide thereupon giving credence to the belief that washback does affect teachers as much as it does to learners. Washback effect on teachers has been studied from different angles; how a test directly bears upon a teacher's methodology, and content, and his or her perceptions about tests has been the subject-matter of these research studies. However, in the present study, the washback effect of the English language test on teachers through the medium of students has been contextualized. It has been treated as an established proposition that tests do affect students one way or the other, and positively or adversely. Establishing this baseline leads us up to study the washback problem in trio as to how the washback reflected in students' apathetic behavior impacts on teachers' method, and content of instruction.

Previous Research Studies

It is pertinent to note here that prior to Alderson and Wall's widely acclaimed work "Does washback exist? (1993), a spate of research studies on washback existed, but as criticized by the above two, the earlier research notably by Vernon (1956), Davis (1968), Kellaghan, Madaus, and Airasian (1982), Morrow (1986), Pearson (1988), Hughes (1989), and Khaniya (1990a and 1990b, p.115) was based on the empirical observation of the actual classroom activities. Instead, they drew on the data gathered through questionnaires, and interviews (Green, 2013, p.42). With these two personages, that is, Alderson and Wall, the subject of the washback became the talk of town in the circle of academia, and scholars in the applied linguistics.

As stated by Alderson and Wall (1993: 115), the notion that tests impact upon teaching is referred to as 'backwash' in general education circles. However, in British applied linguistics, it has taken up the nomenclature of what is now commonly known as "Washback". (It can be categorized as positive or negative depending on whether it promotes or impedes the attainment of educational goals (Bailey, 1996 as quoted by Dianne Wall, Trinity College London, Examining washback: What do we know and what is there left to explore, P.5)

Scholars have preferred defining the term in their own individualistic way. Buck (1988, p.17 cited in Bailey) maintains that both teachers, and students have a natural inclination for tailoring their classroom activities to

meet the demands of a test, particularly when the test carries great significance for the future of students, and pass rates are used as a measure of success for teachers.

In the opinion of Pearson, "It is generally acceptable that public examinations influence the attitudes, behaviors, and motivations of teachers, learners, and parents." (1988, p.98)

Irini Papakammenou asserts that the subject of washback has spotlighted the issues pertaining to teaching practices, yet many hitherto untouched issues need to be investigated. Further, Very little focus has been fixed on a teacher's thought process, and his perceptions about the washback phenomenon. (IriniPapakammenou, Examining Washback in Multi - exam Preparation Classes in Greece: A Focus on Teachers' Teaching practices, 2013, University of Cyprus, p.16)

Washback effect refers to the influences a test exerts on teaching, and learning (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Hughes, 1988; Khaniya, 1990; Kirkland, 1971; Pearson, 1988; Wesdorp, 1982). Measurement-driven instruction denotes the view that test should drive teaching and hence learning (Bracey, 1987; Frederiksen, 1984; Haladyna et al., 1991; Li, 1990; Popham, 1987; Smith, 1991).Popham (1987: 679) vehemently asserts that 'measurement-driven instruction is the most cost-effective way to improve the quality of public education'. (Liyong Cheng: How Does Washback Influence Teaching? Implications for Hong Kong, P. 39).

Liyong Cheng (How Does Washback Influence Teaching? Implications for Hong Kong, P.40) contends that the study of washback on teaching should be taken up thru the yardstick of two interrelated indicators. Firstly, the focus of investigation should be shifted on the nature of examination/ assessment in teaching. Secondly, and finally, the nature of the washback effect, and the conditions under which it operates should come under the evaluation.Cheng further holds that assessing the consequences of test(s) is not the sole job of testers. Rather, all of those involved in the entire education system should take this onus to evaluate the consequences. The context in which the washback consequences show up ought also to be appraised.

Hardly can any distinction be made between 'teaching the curriculum and teaching to the test' provided that the washback is positive in nature (Weigle & Jensen, 1997, p. 205). Contrary to it, a good examination will have a useful impact on teaching, while a bad one will have a damaging effect on it. (Heaton, 1990).

The following areas can have the occurrence of washback: Teaching Materials:choice of textbooks, use of pastpapers, teacher made materials. Teaching Methods: choice of method, teaching of test taking skills, and Attitude of teachers (Spratt, 2005 quoted by Dianne Wall, *ibid*, p. 28).

The most troublesome aspect of washback is locating the right direction, and the consistent factors responsible for positive, and negative washback. Furthermore, when securing the greater numbers turn out the only objective of a test,the instruction approach by a teacher is wishfully turned upside down. With a view to achieving optimum success in the test, say HSC English paper, a learner, and subsequently a teacher resort to short-cuts, thus ignoring a considerable portion of syllabus, creative learning activities, some productive part of the curriculum, and communication skills. Vernon (1956: 166) condemned such wishful leaps as "distorting the curriculum". He dismisses the unwarrantedly predicating the teaching/learning upon exams/tests.

The substantial strides were made by Dina Tsagariin her paper "Washback of a high-stakes English exam on teachers' perceptions and practices". She enters on her project to research the relationship between the intended influence of the FCE exam, teachers' perceptions toward the exam, and their classroom activities. The First Certificate in English/FCE(Cambridge ESOL) is commonly held language exam in Greece. She provides some interesting insights into teachers' dilemmas issuing forth from a multiple factors. She touches upon the washback exclusively from teachers' perspective.

She records that majority of the teachers she interviewed said that as the FCE exams drew near, their students fell into the state of extreme dependence on them. They perceive their teachers as "God or Goddess", "a moving dictionary", "a walking grammar", "the expert", "an authority", and "a know-all person". The students not only expected of their teachers to teach them the language, but help them get through exams successfully also. The teachers recounted to her as to how much they felt stressed on account of the students' total dependency on them, and accountability they owed to their parents, and to the employers. What was more; the exam was the only yardstick whereby their professional expertise was judged.

Dina notes that the teachers put a great emphasis on the point that their methodology was drastically hampered by the exam which forced them into doing things they would never otherwise do. They lamented: "We teach them rules, rules, and rules, and not the real learning of the language, and communication."

Moreover, if such exams were put an end to", they said, "They would employ a communicatively-oriented methodology, measure up to the needs of the students, and use more authentic material." It was revealed to Dina during the interview that majority of the teachers dwelt on the traditional methods for instruction in grammar, etc. because the nature of the exam did not allow them a space to go for any communicative, and creative methodology. (Dina Tsagari, Washback of a high-stakes English exam on teachers' perceptions and practices, p. 434-435)

The findings by Leila Mahmoudi throw light on nuances of the washback on the English Teaching. She studied the washback effect of Iranian National University entrance exam (INUEE) on Pre University English

Teaching and Learning as requirement of her Doctorate. The participants of the study were both teachers, and students of both the genders. The data was collected by means of teachers, and students' questionnaires, and teachers' interviews. The observation of the classroom activities was also carried out; besides, audio-video recordings of the class sessions were captured. A good majority of students viewed the test as the only reason for their learning of English. The teachers' responses were mixed. The ones that held negative opinion of the test characterized it as "evaluator of rote-memorization ability". It was further demonstrated by the studies that the teachers did not have an iota of the idea about the content, and objectives of the curriculum. Further, the process of teaching was adversely affected not only by the test itself, but also by other contextual factors. (LEILA MAHMOUDI, studied the washback effect of Iranian National University entrance exam (INUEE) on pre university English Teaching and Learning, p. 3 & 4)

Davis (1968a, p.125 in Davis, A. (Ed.). *Language testing symposium: A psycholinguistic approach*. London: Oxford University Press) has expressed the strong disapproval of the exam-oriented instruction. He sees exams as "Teaching devices" due to which teaching and learning become confined to past papers ultimately spoiling the spirit of the curriculum.

Sadiq et al (2012) conducted his research enterprise to investigate the Washback effect on English Language Teachers in Kohat Pakistan. The project was carried out in four domains of instruction, teaching activities, teaching method, time management and content. The questionnaire was consisted of 9 likert scale. The findings reveal that instruction is affected on a large scale by teaching methodology. Grammar translation method is applied for teaching English language content. Therefore rote learning takes place destroying students' cognitive learning ability.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study in which the data was collected by semi-structured interviews from teachers who were concerned with intermediate English teaching. The qualitative research is a strategy which is more related to constructive, interpretive and exploratory research. (Bryan and Bell: 2007). It is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences in which they live. (Alderson and Walls 1993, p.28). To produce the reliable results, qualitative approach is more effective. Wanatabe (2004) put a great emphasis on espousing the ethnographic or qualitative approach to washback. He adopted it to analyze the university entrance test system in Japan. Creswell and Clark (2009, p.9) while underpinning the significance of the qualitative approach to washback maintained: "Predicating your enterprise upon the quantitative date esp. in the multicultural and multilingual settings is rather flimsy in terms of results." It may be noted here that Alderson and Walls (1993) adopted a qualitative framework in Srilanka, and Cheng had the same approach in Thailand. It allows investigators to dig deeper in order to get the desired data for their research study, and capture a compact and comprehensive picture of the issue under study.

Research Instrument

This study used the semi-structured tool for the collection of data. (Cohen, Lawrence and Morrison: p.349: 2007) stated that "Interview is a flexible tool for data collection". Semi-structured interview is neither subjective nor objective it is the inter-subjective interview which enables the participants to express how they regard the situation from their point of view. The validity of the interview is that in interview participants are directed in the real situation in order to get the relevant data. Interview questions were adopted from the doctorate research of Hoque, Enamul: (2011) "Washback of the Public examination on Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language" (EFL) at the Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh and Stephen Moore (2012, Vol; 13) "Perception of IELTS in Cambodia: A case study of test Impacts in a small developing country. Interview questions were modified according to the present study context.

Population and Sampling

The population of this research study is HSC teachers who are concerned with the teaching content for the preparation of the examination. To limit the population size, I have selected convenient sampling which is the technique where participants are selected of one's own accessibility and proximity. The sampling size was of the 10 participants. The data extracted from six of the participants has been included in the study as the baseline for findings, whereas some of the remaining participants on account of their reluctance or unwillingness dwelt on hazy responses. Still fewer plainly avoided being included in the studies for some unspecified reasons. Three of them lacked interest in queries and were reluctant to give any response. The gender of teachers and location of the schools were taken in consideration. Three interviews were taken from male teachers and three from female teachers of government colleges. The participants were chosen as per sample type (convenient sampling) from different colleges of Hyderabad, Sindh.

Data Collection Procedure

The data was collected by semi-structured interviews from the teachers who were involved in HSC exam preparation. The participants were informed before the interview for their consent and confidentiality of the personal data. They were assured for any kind of data that they hesitated to provide. Semi-structured interviews were carried out from 10 teachers who taught English Intermediate grade (12th grade). Four teachers were teaching intermediate for 4 years. They were directly or indirectly affected by washback phenomenon for long time. The qualitative data were collected from semi-structured interviews which provided better and clearer description and explanation of the washback effect on teachers.

Data Analysis

Kathleen M. Piercy (2004) stresses the process of interpreting the semi-structured interviews. The data collected from the interviews was lengthy and layered which required the researcher to take out codes and themes from the collected data without being biased. The data was collected by keeping in view Mc Cracken (2004) 5-steps of long interview analysis. i.e: 1. Reading and reviewing interview script twice. 2. Develop and interpretive categories based on interview transcript. 3. Thorough examination of codes/themes to identify or develop pattern. 4. Make memos from the data. 5. Writing up the data. (Kathleen W. Piercy, 2004: p.4-6)

By keeping all these steps of data analysis I focused on essential themes behind the data collected from teachers' interviews (Corbin and Strauss 2008.p.160). Particularly, the data was analyzed by categorizing, interpreting and through supplementary data.

The interviews were recorded and pen down the relevant answers on the note book. The data was analyzed by using codes and themes. Collection of data went until it reached saturation point where participants 'almost provide enough information.

Findings

This section commits itself to the analysis of the teachers' responses in light of the three research questions, leading up towards discussion, as necessary for a contextualized meaning (Stauss & Corbin, 2008, A. *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks,

Calif: Sage Publications, Inc.). The concerned teachers' categorized interview responses are described by means of all-embracing findings from the qualitative data/semi-structured interviews. What responses have been elicited from the respondents against the four research questions are provided as follows. The first of the questions is:

1. What do you think how you are forced into neglecting some of the productive methods of instruction by the students' apathy?

T1 noted: "Yes, student's apathy is one of the most important factors when it comes to teaching, it depends on them how challenging, demanding, absorbing, they are. We can't force them to learn. This is a mutual process. I am forced by students' disinterest, and which itself is the result of exam fears into omitting much of what I think is very useful material, and which I can deliver by means of an innovative method.

T2 said: "I am forced to neglect some of the productive methods of instruction because students are not ready to adopt the productive methods."

T3 responded: "Students at this level believe that this English course is just to pass the exams; it is just the compulsory subject. They are more interested in the science subjects (biology, physics, chemistry, and mathematics). Such lack of interest discourages us from using any productive method of instruction."

T4 responded: "Impassiveness of a student directly hits a teacher's teaching strategy.. Thenceforth students or class, teacher has to choose the same traditional teaching plan. I go simply for a translation method; translating each and every line of a given text for them. End even so, they lack the required interest. Copy culture is very common here. So, students feel they will have all material provided to them at the time of English paper, thus lose that incentive to "learn". As a result, it badly affects my teaching way, as well as what I teach them. I consider it waste of my energy and time to prepare something productive or creative for them. Because they are not going to learn it the way they should.

T5 said: "Students feel discouraged due to the content of the syllabus taught to them. Because the syllabus is too rough and dry; it is not interesting as well as productive. Further, it is not up to date. It is too lengthy above all. As a result they lose their interest which in turn impacts adversely on me as a teacher."

T6 responded: "As the students at the intermediate level come from different backgrounds with their early education up to the matriculation from the government schools, they are considerably weak in the area of language. Let alone speaking, writing a few lines in correct English is a big deal for them. They lag behind in English to such an extent that we have to start with getting them to learn tenses. Sticking to the translation methods remains the only alternative. In it also, they are unable to do any better. I fall exhausted to say the least!"

The second question (given just below) provoked the following responses.

2. Why is your instruction centered on grammar other than communication skills? Comment

T1: "It depends on the atmosphere we are in, like if I am teaching at Beacon house or any other private institute my methods or way of instruction would be different and if I am teaching at a govt. school I have to use this GTM (Grammar Translation Method) as it is highly understandable by the students. While other methods like Direct Method, Audio lingual Method, Eclectic approach, and other methods are of no use there"

T2: "...because grammar being the part of paper ultimately catch teachers' attention, if other communication skills will get the same part in paper it will get the same focus too."

T3: "I do focus on grammar, reason being that this area is tested and assessed in the examination."

T4: "My instruction is centered on grammar because we are told to gauge our students' performance by the correct use of grammar."

T5: "We, the teachers, are not equipped with a proper teaching training about the aspects of communication skills. So we feel easy to stick to old patterns like grammar-based teaching. Communication skills are the need of the time, which are not given proper attention."

T6: "My teaching remains focused on grammar, and there is a good reason for that. You know, the content being taught to the inter-level students is having exercises mainly based on writing skills. Obviously, to write something demands of you to be well at home in grammar. What is more, the exam system is such that grammar driven questions are administered to students. If we go through the English paper of any BISE, far from communication skills, it tests none of the areas other than grammar and writing. My grammar-based instruction makes sense then, doesn't it?"

The third question was received with the following responses.

3. Name the main reasons due to which you think you are discouraged from giving your best, and applying the creative kind of material, and method in classroom activities?

T1: "Apathy or lack of interest by the students, the notion of being passed in the exams due to copy culture, their level of comprehension, their pace (some students are retarded and they really find it hard to compete with the normal students), etc."

T2: "The following reasons really drive me crazy; besides, suppressing my morale in teaching, and marring my impetus to give my best:

1. Lack of interest from students' side.
2. No such demands in the syllabus.
3. Not assessed in the final exams (the creativity).
4. Students used to cramming and have poor background learning.

T3: "These [factors] disappoint me a lot:

1. Students are habitual to old methods, so when I introduce new method(s), students are not ready to learn them.
2. In our institution, we are not allowed to go for any creative method other than the traditional one.
3. All students including their parents are interested in covering just the syllabus.
4. Classrooms are not equipped with technology required for applying innovative teaching strategies. "

T4: "Reasons are quite many, for example: Students' apathy, no support from the administration to lower some burden, and Consecutive, exhaustive class schedule."

T5: "No, I don't agree with it. I never feel discouraged. A teacher should not feel so, because he or she is a teacher after all; it is his/her job to speak to his/her students in a language they understand best. A teacher should be competitive and steadfast in his/her profession. A teacher never feels down when it comes to teaching. I draw myself to the level of my students. If this or that method is not going well with students, give it up. Try new one."

T6: "I feel discouraged because of lack of resources, and textbooks are too old. And there is no such a benefit or moral in the units which are included in the textbooks."

Discussion

Concerning the first research question posed to the respondents, there triggered a spate of interesting responses. The answers in response to 'how they felt about giving up creativity in their choice of instruction method as well as the content they teach' focused more on the causative factor already made explicit by the research studies, that is to say, the students' apathy, than on the manner. The teachers argued that since the students feel certain that by means of cheating, they are easily going to sail through the English paper, thus, they lose focus on it. The exam system is faulty, inducing the washback effect in one of various ways, as documented in Alderson and Walls' 15 hypotheses (1993), the qualitative findings in the British Columbia suggested that exams impact upon teachers and students both at micro and macro levels in various ways. Secondly, the nature of the HSC exam system is such that it tests them on traditional learning, viz., grammar, and writing only, making it more and more difficult, or rather impossible for them, the teachers, to get their students to develop communication skills, the reason again being that students tend to learn only things which they think will come in paper. Fourthly, the syllabus has

worn itself out; it offers nothing novel in terms of content and method.

The teachers put the blame for students' indifference towards their [teachers'] creative method/content approach on many a factor.

One of the teachers also maintained that caused by students' grim disinterest, they felt as if their labor on preparing creative, and innovative material for their students is going to end in smoke, thus the same reason has them deterred from giving their best. Stated by Vernon (ibid) has strongly disapproved of the syllabus curtailment, and regarded it as distorting the content. It can be construed from the foregoing discussion that the negative washback is broadly indicated, and the positive washback is partially indicated by the question number one.

The second question looking for a reason as to why their instruction was centered more on grammar than on the communication skills generated no less attention-grabbing responses. One respondent posited the view that that depended largely on the institution he/she was teaching in. The fact remains that teaching in govt. schools entails the employment of GTM (Grammar Translation Method) which is best picked by the students with poor backgrounds. Any method relating to the communications skills haunts such students like a genie, for never have they been exposed to it.

Another respondent held the view that grammar has outstripped the other areas, say, communication skills, because all importance has been placed on it by the exam system. The exam is comprised of the questions testing students on grammar on a large scale, and the remaining portion of the paper taken by writing-based questions, which is again grammatical in nature. If other areas of language learning are given equal, or at least, an appreciable weight, it will ultimately draw students and teachers to communication skills, and the like.

It also came to the fore during the interviews that lack of training to the teachers about the different aspects of communication skills also oriented their tilt more towards grammar. The teachers bemoaned their not being given a proper teaching training to equip them with the innovative ideas. Further, the administration also coerced them into sticking to the traditional methods of instruction. A respondent threw persuasively the argument that her dwelling on grammar in the face of the syntax driven tests makes good sense: 'they deliver what they are supposed to deliver by the system they are in'.

The fact stands revealed from the study that the majority of the teachers, if not all, in the government colleges in Sindh, adhere to exam-oriented pedagogy, bringing, so to say, higher results/numbers. Further, it has been observed from the study that teaching to the test brings a positive washback as far as the examination is concerned. However, this approach yields cipher in terms of learning of the students. The study by Nawaz and Natasha (2016) characterizes this seemingly positive washback as actually negative. They refer to it as a "negatively positive washback". In point of fact, as shown by the present project, it takes with one hand what it gives with the other; the supposedly approving numbers scored through "teaching to the test" strategy are outweighed by the grievously far-reaching consequences it has on students' learning, and in the long turn, on their career. It mars their learning potential; besides, making them more and more dependent on royal roads, and short cuts. What use is there in having good grades when they are empty from inside? The present study posits it that the positive washback, in reality, is not positive at all.

Davies' contention (2014) that 'examinations are actually teaching devices' proves itself the other way around in this case as shown by the present study. In government colleges in Sindh, exams are teaching devices. The washback is an asymmetric and multifaceted phenomenon induced by a multiplicity of interrelated factors unto a teacher, and a student in various ways. Revealed by the findings, the washback factor broadly induced by the test transmits from one recipient to the other, viz., from student to teacher, and vice versa.

The third question posed to the participants asks for the chief factors deterring them/teachers from adopting creative methods/content, and giving their best to the students. The respondents took time to list the reasons as per their experience, and quite interestingly, the factors enumerated by one respondent match those of another with slight variations. It is pertinent to mention here that the majority of the teachers included in the study have singled out "students' lack of interest" as the elemental constraint on them. They also stigmatized the entire system as grimly moribund which accommodated no innovation. Furthermore, they also laid the blame on the behavior of the administration as well as on the exam system. However, the cold behavior of the students towards the innovative method/material ran predominately through their responses. Quite intriguingly, a female respondent came harshly out in condemnation of the teachers falling into despondency when faced with apathetic students, noting that a teacher qualifies to be a teacher only when he/she keeps his/her composure in check. Bringing oneself to the level of students is what teaching is all about. The allusion from her response points to the fact that a teacher must stay unreceptive to the adverse effects of the washback. Even if washback is bound to fall unto him/her, he/she should throw it away.

The lack of resources required for executing a novel teaching delivery, and coping with the needs of the modern education system, coupled with the old and drudging scheme of syllabus runs as the important factor driving the respondents in demoralization.

Conclusion

The present research study strove to make an in-depth analysis of the fallout and the nature of washback on teachers induced by apathetic students. Qualitative in nature, it collected data from a small group of participants of ten members from both the genders by semi-structured interviews. Further, the convenient sampling was adopted. The participants were English language lecturers in government Colleges in Hyderabad. Their responses were minutely recorded, and with great precision transcribed, and coded, and finally thematically analyzed in view of the three research questions. The study brought to the light the findings that teacher is at least, as amenable to the (adverse) washback as the learners. The research sought to study washback in two-faceted dimension. It treated, and with a good deal of scientific investigation, tested “students” as the inducing factor of washback on teachers; it was assumed in the study that washback effect is always unequivocally looming over the heads of the students, but in turn, how the students bring the same to their teachers. Several other dimensions also came to the limelight during the interviews with the participants. Some institutional and technical flaws in the system were also spotlighted, and groaned about by the participants. The study established successfully the hitherto denied or partially recognized and wholly clouded aspect of the washback on teachers caused by students. Nevertheless, as stated by Alderson and Wall, *ibid* (1993), the washback is a complex phenomenon. It is hoped that the present research will open up the avenues for the prospective studies on washback from teachers’ perspective, coming in handy as the beacon of light for developing further insights.

References

1. Adnan, U. & Mahmood, A.M. (2014). Impact of Public Examination on Teaching of English: A Washback Perspective. *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol. 5.
2. Aftab, A., Qureshi, S. & William, I. (2014). Investigating the washback effect of the Pakistani Intermediate English Examination. *International Journal of English and Literature*. Vol.5 (7), pp. 149-154.
3. Ahmad, S., & Rao, C. (2012). Examination Washback Effect: Syllabus, Teaching Methodology and the Learners’ Communicative Competence. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3(15), 173 - 183.
4. Alderson, J.C., & Wall, D. (1993). Does washback exist? *Applied Linguistics*. 14 (2), 115-129.
5. Bachman, L.F., and Palmer, A. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
6. Bailey, K.M. (1999). *Washback in language testing*. TOEFL Monograph Series, MS-15, Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
7. BAILEY, K. Working for washback: a review of the washback concept in language
8. testing. *Language Testing*, 13 (3), 1996.p. 257-279.
9. Chen, L.-M. (2002). *Washback of a public exam on English teaching*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. The Ohio State University.
10. Davis, A. (Ed.1968a, p.125) *Language testing symposium: A psycholinguistic approach*. London: Oxford University Press.
11. Dianne Wall. (1996) *Examining washback: What do we know and what is there left to explore*, P.5)
12. Documents Volume 128. D. Chamberlain and R. J. Baumgardner. London, *Modern English*. Publications: 98-107.
13. Green, A. (2013). *Washback in Language Assessment*. IJES.
14. Hughes, A. (1994). *Backwash and TOEFL 2000*. Commissioned by Educational Testing Service (ETS). University of Reading.
15. Irini, Papakammenou. (2013) *Examining Washback in Multi - exam Preparation Classes in Greece: A Focus on Teachers’ Teaching practices*. University of Cyprus, p.16
16. Kenny, N. (1995). "The New FCE Reading Paper." *ELT NEWS* 74: 15 (local publication).
17. Mason, J. (1996). *Qualitative researching*. London: Sage Publications, Inc
18. Morrow, K. (1986). The evaluation of a test of communicative performance. In M. Portal (Ed.), *Innovations in language testing* (pp. 1-13). Windsor: NFER Nelson.
19. Pearson, I. (1998). Tests as levers for change. In D. Chamberlain & R.J. Baumgartner (Eds.), *ESP in the classroom: Practice and evaluation* (pp. 98-107). London: *Modern English*.
20. Pearson, I. (1988). *Tests as Levers for Change*. *ESP in the Classroom: Practice and Evaluation*. ELT
21. SHOHAMY, E. *The power of tests: a critical perspective on the uses of language tests*. London: Pearson, 2001.
22. Spratt, Mary. (2005). Washback and the classroom: The implications for teaching and learning of studies of washback from exams. *Language Teaching Research*, 9 (1), 5-29.
23. Tsagari, D (2012). Washback of a high-stakes English exam on teachers’ perceptions and practices. P.231-245 vol.9 University of Cyprus. *ISTAL*.
24. Vernon, P.E. (1956). (2nd Edn.). *The measurement of abilities*. London: University of London Press.

Appendix-A Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Teachers

Dear Participants,

As part of the continuing program to improve the testing system of Intermediate examination (HSC), a number of studies are taken in different contexts in order to determine the impact of the test on teachers' instruction ways. This study attempts to investigate the washback impact on teaching instruction in HSC English Language test resulting from students' apathy/lack of interest. The questionnaire is developed to collect data for my research paper. Your co-operation in completing this study by responding to the following questions would be highly appreciated.

Your responses to this questionnaire will strictly be kept confidential. I would also be grateful if you complete and sign the consent note below.

Yours Sincerely
 Asifa Abbas
 Mphil Scholar
 English Language Development Center
 Mehran University Jamshoro

Your consent to participate in HSC Washback effect research study:
 I understand that:

- The purpose of the study is to collect and analyze the information from those familiar with the HSC examination.
- My name will not appear in any project publication.
- The information I give and not my name, may be quoted;
- I am free to refuse to participate in the study and withdraw at any time;
- My completed questionnaire is only for research study. It will not be shown to anyone connected with this study.

Signature:

Date:

Please answer the following questions.

Full name:	Age:	Designation:
-------------------	-------------	---------------------

1. How is your Intermediate English language course likely to benefit the learners in future other than just to crack the exam?
2. Why or why don't you feel encouraged by the nature of the Hsc exams to introduce activities that may polish your students speaking and listening skills?
3. What do you think how you are forced into neglecting some of the productive methods of instruction by the students' apathy?
4. Why is your instruction centered on grammar other than communication skills? Comment
5. You focus more on the other communication skills than grammar? If agreed/or disagreed, Give Reasons.
6. Why is your classroom activities carried out from the point of view of HSC exams?
7. Is there any rational for carrying out different classroom activities other than HSC exams? Mention it.
8. How your students are developing four layered language skills: (i.e. reading writing speaking listening)?
9. Do you feel compelled to skip some of the innovative material? If yes, why?
10. How does the test influence your choice of the content, and method of instruction?
11. When students are disinterested in your creative method or content of instruction, what do you do then?
12. Why do you get your students to solve the past paper?
13. What concrete steps are you going to take in the classroom to develop language proficiency in your students?
14. What activities take place in your preparation class? List them.
15. When are your spirits/mood lowered in class?
16. Name the main reasons due to which you think you are discouraged from giving your best, and applying the creative kind of material, and method in classroom activities?