

Impact of Public Examination on Teaching of English: A Washback Perspective

Uzma Adnan, Muhammad Asim Mahmood
Department of Applied Linguistics, GC University, Faisalabad.
uzmaagha01@gmail.com, masimrai@gmail.com,

Abstract

Washback speaks of influence of test on teaching and learning. This paper investigates the wash back effect of Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) exam on English language teaching and learning in Pakistan. The purpose of this study is to explore the causes of low level of English language proficiency at the completion of 12 years of academic education with English as a compulsory subject. To achieve this goal it examines the effect of HSSC exam on teaching methods and materials. Population of the study was all the teachers teaching English in colleges at HSSC level in Sargodha, Pakistan. A survey questionnaire consisting of ten questions was administered to the teachers of English. The questionnaire aimed at investigating the effect of HSSC on English teaching methodology and materials used by the teachers. Findings of the study affirmed that HSSC instead of supporting has negative washback effect on teaching methods and materials.

Keywords: washback, HSSC exam, teaching method, teaching materials

1. Introduction

Education aims at changing thinking and behaviour of an individual approvingly. In an academic setting, achievement of this goal is measured through the results of the tests conducted on students. This process of testing and assessing learning is called examination (Khatoon, 2009). Public exams have been conducted in many countries of the world. It is considered that public exam plays a significant role in determining classroom activities – teaching and learning. As exam has an impact on teaching as well as learning, it can motivate understanding and critical thinking or can impede deep learning (Rehmani, 2003).

2. Language Testing and Washback Effect

Test is a tool of any exam and possesses central position in the framework of an examination system. Focus, form, content and manipulation of a test can affect validity of exam and ultimately affects the quality of English language teaching and learning that aims at imparting language skills (Ozmen, 2011). Washback has become a well versed common academic phenomenon in all the institutions (Shawcross, 2007). Comprehensively washback can be defined as the influence of testing on teaching and learning (Gates, 1995). Washback is not something new it has always been present in the academic career of every student and teacher in the form of the question: Will this be included in the test? Naturally, teachers and students are inclined to adapt teaching and learning according to the requirement of test especially when the test results would have a bearing on their future (Buck, 1988). Washback has become an important aspect of present day education because test scores have played a decisive role in the achievement of educational and social pursuits (Cheng, 1997). Despite their beneficial or harmful washback, public exam and test have maintained their place because they hold a mirror to all the other activities going on under the umbrella term of teaching-learning process and other processes in education system. It is important to understand that washback is a neutral term that can be considered as positive or negative (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). On the basis of its scope Bachman and Palmer (1996) differentiated test impact from test washback. They considered test impact a ‘macro level’ a phenomenon having social and institutional implications while observed test washback at ‘micro level’ limited to teaching, learning, teachers and students. In the same way, Wall (1997) claimed that test impact is any kind of effect that an exam or test might have on individuals, policies and other educational practices, while test washback is the effect of test specifically on teaching and learning. Considering distinction between test impact and test washback it was inferred that it is neither easy to measure negative washback effect of exams nor to modify exams to exert a positive effect because washback not only influences teaching and learning but it is also influenced by many other factors (Shepard, 1997).

2.1 Examination System in Pakistan

In Pakistan, there are three levels of education primary, middle, secondary & higher secondary (Intermediate). Primary level comprises grade 1-5 and serves as building block in the castle of academic education. Middle level commences at grade 6 and ends at 8, secondary level of education consists of two grades 9 and 10. Higher secondary level, also known as Intermediate level, is the most important sub-sector and pivotal turning point in the life of a student that includes grades 11 and 12 (Jilani, 2009).

I chose to highlight the issues regarding washback effect of HSSC exam on English teaching because:

1. Higher Secondary School certificate (HSSC) exam in Pakistan is a high stakes exam and marks secured in English paper play a decisive role in the final result of the exam.
2. I have observed closely the hazardous effects of exams on English language teaching as I am teaching English at intermediate level for six years.

Rationale for studying exam washback effect on English language teaching is that English is the language of international level, has acquired the position of 'Lingua Franca' and serves to bridge higher education with better career opportunities. Acknowledging this stature of English, it has been made a compulsory subject in the curriculum of Primary to Intermediate level in Pakistan.

Due to the cardinal importance, as briefed above, English has ever been taught as a compulsory subject and as a final ritual students' English language competence has also been tested at the end of academic session at all levels (Jilani, 2009). As an English teacher, I feel quite exasperated about English language teaching situation in Pakistan. In our educational layout, none of the stakeholders realize the importance of testing in shaping teaching and learning into an innovative activity that is the need of the hour. I consider it a serious situation of negative washback of the exam and this paper will briefly discuss the reason why I think so. Firstly, I reviewed the studies which discussed washback effect of exam on English language teaching and then presented my own analysis of the situation. Through the platform of this study, I wanted to call attention to the ignored and important dimension of the education system that ever remained undone in Pakistan. The purpose of this paper was to communicate my concerns about the classroom situation prevalent in Pakistan as a result of this test washback. My concluding argument regarding this situation was that our current examination system has a negative washback effect on English language teaching, that is why, despite twelve-year course of study in English as a second language, students of high schools and colleges in Pakistan cannot exhibit basic English language proficiency.

3. Literature Review

High-stakes examination has effect on teaching and the way in which an exam affects teaching is called washback. Washback can be positive or negative according to the nature and implementation of examination. Exam washback is a commonplace concept in language testing as Alderson and Walls in 1993 declared tests as "powerful determiners" of all the activities which take place in a classroom. This study was based on the hypothesis that HSSC exam has a negative washback effect on teaching of English at Intermediate level in terms of teaching methods and materials. The following studies demonstrated and supported this present study regarding its hypothesis as well as methodology.

Alderson and Wall (1993) stated fifteen Washback Hypotheses on the basis of research literature on language testing and their conversation with teachers about teaching and testing. They speculated that a test would influence the rate, sequence, degree and depth of teaching and learning and teachers' choice of teaching content and methods. Role of exam washback in determining relationship between teaching and testing was studied. They recorded perceptions of the teachers and students through questionnaires and interviews and suggested a closer inspection of the actual classroom situation through observations to have an idea of actual performance of teachers and students. After identifying the existence of washback, further explanatory research was desirable and inevitable as well.

On the basis of evidence provided by Alderson and Wall (1993), Cheng (1997) investigated washback effect of revised Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination in English (HKCEE) to observe change in teaching of English in Hong Kong. At macro level unstructured interviews and overall observations were carried out and at micro level, detailed observations informed about the classrooms activities. Survey questionnaire was administered to explore the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the impact of this revised exam on teaching methodology and content. Results showed that revised examination would affect students' motivation, teaching strategies, and student-teacher relationship. This study did not examine the extent, direction and quality of exam washback effect.

Fujimoto (1999) hypothesized that the university exam negatively influenced teaching and learning of English language in Japan. He administered questionnaires for students and teachers and the results showed that most of the students were learning English for academic purposes and their attitude towards four language skills was different during different years of university education. 1st year students preferred listening and speaking because for them university exam was far away and in 3rd year reading exercises were favoured by 95% students, listening by 15% and speaking by 5%. This study is identical to the present study in terms of its objectives and methodology. Unlike Cheng (1997) this research was limited because it determined the presence of exam washback effect but did not highlight the quantity and quality of exam washback.

Mirza, Nosheen & Mahmood (1999) examined the impact of Secondary (SSC) and Higher Secondary (HSSC) exams on teaching methods. This multi dimensional study aimed to analyze the nature of assessment and its

impact on teaching methods by comparing SSC and HSSC exams with Ordinary Level (O' Level) exam. A team of 12 content and measurement experts, 81 paper setters, 237 examiners and 638 teachers from 134 schools of 8 districts reviewed 640 past papers consisting of more than 10000 items. They used questionnaire, observations and checklists for data collection. Previous studies (Alderson and Wall, 1993; Cheng, 1997) did not establish a strong connection between exam washback and teaching methods but this study supported the present study by indicating effect of public exam on teaching methods.

Rehmani (2000) supported the hypothesis that examination is determining factor in teaching and learning as Alderson and Wall (1993) described tests as 'powerful determiners'. He conducted an empirical qualitative study to investigate the way exams have pressurized teachers. It was found that internal assessment system of schools supported teaching and learning of all the skills but under the pressure of public exam teaching and learning were driven by exam format. Findings of this study have substantiated what the previous studies viewed (Shohamy, 1997; Mirza et al., 1999; Fujimoto, 1999; Shamsi, 2006; Al Jamal & Ghadi, 2008). Due to the same social context this study had much in common with the present study.

Andrews, Fullilove and Wong (2002) examined the impact of change in high-stakes exam on the performance of students. For this purpose they introduced modification in high-stakes public exam to study its effect on student learning. Effect of change in the 'Use of English' (UE) oral examination was studied in the context of Hong Kong Advanced Supplementary (HKAS). Results showed that the commencement of UE oral examination influenced students' performance in spoken English. It was concluded that change in examination geared changes in learning. Limitation of this study was that it focused change in learning but ignored teaching that can make learning beneficial or superficial.

Spratt (2005) reviewed empirical studies that scrutinized exam washback on English language teaching and learning to inform teachers about the role that they could play and the decisions they could take regarding washback effect. Alderson and Hamp Lyon (1996), Andrews et al. (2002) found difference in teaching in exam and non-exam classes and Read and Hayes (2003) concluded that revised exam influenced the selection of teaching methods whereas Cheng (1997) observed change in teaching materials. Alderson & Wall (1993: 127) and Shohamy (1996) reported no significant change in teaching methodology due to the impact of high stakes exams. Contrary to all this, Watanabe (2000) reported productive teaching of English language skills believing it helpful in passing the exam. It was concluded that washback effect on teaching methods and materials varied from context to context and teacher to teacher and suggested more research in different learning contexts to look into the contradictions in present study.

Manjarres (2005) studied the effect of State Examination for the Admission into Higher Education in Colombia on teaching and learning in 10th grade classroom. Trichotomy presented by Hughes (1993 in Bailey, 1996) was used to analyze the effect of public exam on participants, processes and products. Interview results showed that new syllabus was designed focusing the Foreign Language Test and teachers attached tremendous importance to State Examination and considered them obsessed with the exam. Limitation of the study was that it did not give any evidence about the way English was taught before the introduction of the State Examination. Findings showed that exam washback could have a positive effect by improving teaching quality.

Al-Jamal & Ghadi (2008) examined the nature and scope of English General Secondary Certificate Examination (GSCE) in Jordan to investigate the perceptions of English language teachers about the impact of GCSE on their teaching methods. A questionnaire was administered to measure the way in which GSCE affected English language teachers' selection of teaching method. Like other studies (Fujimoto, 1999; Mirza et al., 1999; Rehmani, 2000; Ahmad et al., 2012) teachers in Jordan also taught English as EFL/ESL using grammar-translation method. This study recommended that teachers' should be provided with professional development, evaluation policy should be reconsidered, and oral language skills should be included in GSCE.

Amengual (2010) highlighted washback effect of high-stakes English test (ET) on various aspects of teaching and investigated degree of improvement in teaching due to the reforms in high-stakes exam. A questionnaire was administered to explore teachers' perceptions about teaching materials, methodology and new reform in ET. Like Fujimoto's (1999) this study claimed that communicative competence suffered a great deal due to exclusion of speaking and listening skills from ET exam. This study asserted, like others (Dina, 2011; Ahmad et al., 2012; Manjarres, 2005) that teachers paid attention to those skills in their classrooms that would prepare the students for exam. It was limited to a self-reported data hence required detailed empirical research to examine the effect of change in exam on teaching methodology.

Dina (2011) explored the influence of First Certificate in English (FCE) exam on teachers' classroom practices. FCE designers disagreed to the beliefs of EFL practitioners about FCE washback effect on teaching. Teachers favoured this exam as a 'necessity' but half of them considered that it made the students dependent on teachers with respect to language learning and exam preparation. Teachers focused the topics and skills expected to be tested in the exam due to the accountably pressure for the results of the students. Findings strengthened the belief

that FCE exam provoked the use of exam oriented materials and intense preparation activities by rendering teaching restricted and selective. This study supported the hypothesis but did not draw any definite conclusion due to insufficient evidence provided by the teachers.

Ahmad, Dr. Ghani, Alam, & Sadiq (2012) studied the effect of “Higher Secondary School Certificate Examination” (HSSC) on English language teaching to examine the causes of extensive failure of students in English at HSSC level. They not only scrutinized the presence of exam washback effect but also examined the way in which exam washback affected teaching. It was found that teachers have been teaching to the test but not according to the needs of the students. Like Chen (2002) and Manjarres (2005) lack of time was pointed as a basic hurdle that affected teachers’ choice of teaching methods. Change in paper pattern was suggested to avoid considerable failure in HSSC exam. Like Cheng (1997) and Fujimoto (1999), findings reported that reading and writing skills were emphasized while listening and speaking skills were ignored because these were not tested in the exam. They concluded that at HSSC level due to time constraint and repetitious paper pattern English language teachers adopted exam oriented teaching methodology and material.

From this review of literature it was concluded that (1) test washback is a complex educational phenomenon, (2) its existence is widespread, (3) it has been discussed widely, (4) there is a variety of views about the entities influenced by it, (5) there are other factors influencing washback. It is evident that most of the washback research has been conducted on teachers and various aspects of teaching. Comparatively there has been dearth of empirical findings about positive washback and exam washback effect on students and learning.

4. Research Questions

This study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. How does HSSC exam affect teaching methods and materials of English language teachers at Intermediate level?
2. What is the nature and scope of washback effect caused by HSSC exam on English language teaching?

5. Hypothesis

HSSC exam has negative washback effect on teaching methods and materials of English language teachers at Intermediate level.

6. Methodology

Major purpose of the study was to investigate washback effect of HSSC exam on teaching at Intermediate level. The study was quantitative in nature because quantitative results were easy to interpret and teachers were willing to fill the questionnaire rather than answering interview questions. Population of the study included all the teachers teaching at Intermediate level in girls and boys Colleges of Sargodha and Faisalabad. Sample for the study was selected randomly from Punjab Colleges Sargodha and Faisalabad. Fifty teachers teaching at Intermediate level (grade 11 and 12) were selected randomly. Teachers included in the sample were experienced and were well aware of the objectives and needs of HSSC exam. Questionnaire consisted of fifteen items with two options i.e., ‘Yes, No’. Questionnaire was distributed among the participants of the study and the collected data was analyzed using SPSS 17.

7. Data Analysis

To answer the first research question regarding HSSC washback effect on teaching methods and materials frequencies of teachers’ responses were calculated.

Research Question #1

How does HSSC exam affect teaching methods and materials of English language teachers at Intermediate level?

To answer this question a questionnaire was administered among English language teachers at Intermediate level.

Their responses have been given in the following frequency tables:

Table1: HSSC washback effect on teaching materials

No	Item	Yes	NO
1	In the context of HSSC exam I focus those lessons which are important from exam point of view.	86%	14%
2	I suggest my students to use those guide books/key books which provide maximum practice of the questions expected to be tested in HSSC exam.	79%	21%
3	I suggest my students the use of previous papers and make them practice those questions which may be tested in HSSC exam.	93%	7%
4	As HSSC focuses grammatical competence therefore I focus those lessons/exercises which provide practice in grammatical items.	82%	18%
5	I select lessons and exercises according to the learning needs of my students.	20%	80%

Table (1) item no. 1 showed that 86% English language teachers have paid more attention to those lessons that were important for HSSC exam while 14% gave equal importance to all the lessons. Similarly 79% responses to the item no. 2 indicated that teachers have promoted the use of such supplementary materials i.e. guide books and key books which provided practice exercises for the questions likely to be asked in the exam whereas 21% negated this claim. Past papers and model papers are widely used teaching material in Pakistani schools/colleges. It was clearly indicated by the responses of item no. 3 because 93% teachers agreed to the use of this teaching resource to score good marks in HSSC, only 7% rejected the use of this supplementary material. Item no. 4 showed that 82% of English language teachers preferred the material that could provide practice to the students in grammar competence; only 18% did not prefer grammar items specifically. Item no. 5 expressed the priority of a majority of teachers by showing that only 20% teachers catered for learning needs of their students, 80% teachers mentioned that they preferred exam based needs of students to their learning needs. It showed that HSSC objectives were given more importance than curriculum objectives and learning needs of students.

Table 2: HSSC washback effect on teaching methods

No	Item	Yes	NO
6	I select those teaching methods which help my students to score good marks in HSSC.	84%	16%
7	HSSC exam restricts my teaching methods and I cannot teach in the way as I should do otherwise.	72%	28%
8	I do not adopt communicative approach to teaching because only reading and writing skills are tested on HSSC exam.	86%	14%
9	I select my teaching method according to the learning needs of the students.	12%	88%
10	HSSC has influenced the choice of my teaching method.	87%	13%

Table (2), item no.6 showed that 84% teachers favoured to use those teaching methods which could help their students to secure good scores in HSSC exam. 16% tried to get good scores by the method of their own choice. Generally public exams manipulate teaching methods of teachers and sometimes teachers cannot teach as they should, it was visible from the response of 72% teachers in item no.7, only 28% teachers thought that exam pressure did not hinder them in the selection of teaching method. There are four basic skills of English language; listening, speaking, reading, and writing but teachers prefer those skills in their classroom that are frequently tested in exam. This tendency was indicated by the response of 86% teachers in item no.8. Whereas 14% teachers reported that four language skills were taught equally in classrooms. Item no.9 revealed that 12% teachers adopted teaching methods according to the learning needs of the students; this possibility seemed a rarity because 88% teachers indicated that they preferred those teaching methods which could fulfill the needs of HSSC exam because success in HSSC exam was crucial to the students' future. That is why they made every effort by adopting every teaching method that went in line with the requirements of HSSC exam. Item no.10 indicated that 87% teachers clearly admitted the influence of HSSC exam on their teaching in many respects, 13% teachers claimed that they were using their teaching method independently and HSSC exam had no manipulating influence on their teaching.

Table 3: Nature and scope of HSSC washback effect

No	Item	Yes	NO
11	To pass through HSSC exam only traditional teaching methods are sufficient.	87%	13%
12	Innovation in HSSC exam pattern can cause positive changes in English language teaching.	78%	22%
13	In the absence of HSSC exam I will be able to teach four language skills equally.	86%	14%
14	Pressure of HSSC exam result causes anxiety among teachers.	72%	28%
15	HSSC directs teaching and learning to test by exerting pressure on teachers, students, administrators and parents and.	82%	18%

Table (3), item no.11 showed that 87% English language teachers have been using traditional teaching methods to help students score high marks on HSSC exam, 13% felt that these traditional teaching methods were not sufficient for developing English language proficiency. In item no.12 strong response of 78% teachers indicated that HSSC exam pattern should be modified so that it could cause positive changes in teaching, according to 22% teachers existing HSSC exam pattern did not need any innovation. In item no.13 valid evidence from 86% teachers showed that HSSC paper pattern has been a great hurdle in teaching and learning of four English language skills. 14% thought that HSSC exam did not hinder the achievement of four language skills, so they did not advocate any change in HSSC exam. Results of item no. 14 indicated that the pressure of HSSC result caused tension and anxiety among English language teachers because their performance was judged on the basis of these results whereas 28% teachers did not agree to this view of tension and anxiety emphatically. Responses to item no.15 highlighted many other elements influenced by HSSC exam directly or indirectly. 82% teachers agreed that HSSC exam directly exerted pressure on teachers and students and indirectly affected administration, principals and parents as well. 18% teachers considered that HSSC exam did not influence teaching and learning through other stakeholders related to teaching- learning process.

8. Discussion

Analysis of the questionnaire showed that most of the respondents of the questionnaire thought that HSSC exam has affected the selection of teaching materials. HSSC exam has been given so much importance because in Pakistan HSSC is considered a high-stakes exam whose results will affect students' future career and this sense of responsibility has created pressure on English language teachers to equip their students' with English language competence so as to ensure their success in HSSC exam. Most teachers reported that they have taught the lessons efficiently that are supposed to be tested in the exam because for them success in exam was the principal objective of teaching. Findings also revealed that teachers have suggested their students the use of such supplementary materials that can help them in exam preparation. Teachers teach differently in exam classes and near exam their main objective is to provide extensive practice according to the objectives of the exam. Teachers were of the view that near exam they approached syllabus selectively so that they could give more time to exercises and lessons that were important from exam point of view. According to Cheng (2001) and Hayes & Read (2004) teachers help their students by selecting particular material to aware them of test and question type expected to be asked in the test. Most teachers emphasized grammatical competence because most of the question items in HSSC exam have been based on testing grammar competence. In this way, following the objectives of the exam teachers have ignored English language skills whose command can render the students proficient in English language. Teachers considered HSSC exam so much influential that it has restricted their selection of lessons and exercises according to the objectives of HSSC exam but not according to the learning needs of the students. To teach according to HSSC exam pattern and students' learning needs at the same time is not an easy rather possible task because teaching according to students' learning needs require certain adaptations in material, content, syllabus and even exam pattern but HSSC exam pattern does allow teachers for any modification and if it is done then students' success in exam will be at stake. These results were similar to studies conducted by Mirza et al.(1999), Cheng (1997) and Rehmani (2000). HSSC exam was blamed for having negative washback effect on teaching methods. Teachers adopted such teaching methods that could help students in securing good score. Every teacher wants his students to show good result on HSSC exam because criterion to judge professional performance of a teacher has been attached to good scores of his students. Teachers reported restricted nature of HSSC exam because sometimes they have felt that some other method would be beneficial for the students according to their learning weaknesses and strengths but could not accomplish their plan. HSSC exam has hindered them through the pressure of time management, syllabus coverage and exam practice. HSSC appeared to have partial influence on English language skills. Generally students at Intermediate level do not have command on English language competence. During their 12 years of academic career they practice only

reading and writing skills while speaking and listening have never been talked about in the classrooms because these two skills are not tested on HSSC exam. So, teachers have been focusing reading and writing skills in classroom activities. Teachers perceived that they have been teaching the way appropriate to HSSC exam but not according to the learning needs of the students. Student is the pivotal point of the whole teaching-learning process and exam is a part of it but it can be seen that in Pakistan public exam has acquired pivotal importance and students' learning needs for which the whole stage is set have been ignored altogether. Findings of this study were in harmony with one hypothesis presented by Alderson and Wall (1993) that "A test will influence teaching." Teachers reported HSSC influence on their teaching in terms of time management, syllabus coverage, selection of teaching method and material. According to the teachers time duration has been the basic factor that affected their teaching and the choice of teaching method as well. These findings were not in line with Alderson and Wall (1993) and Cheng (1997) who revealed influence of public exam on teaching material but not on teaching method. It was reported that the use of traditional methods, that specifically focus grammar and translation skills, could not cope with communication skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Due to exam oriented approach communication skills have been ignored because these have not been tested in HSSC exam. Teachers proposed that by promoting innovations and modifications in HSSC exam pattern positive changes could be introduced in English language teaching. If HSSC exam can influence teaching methods and materials negatively, it can do the same other way round. Saif (2006) revealed a positive relationship between teaching and testing. Teachers believed in intended positive washback of HSSC exam if current exam pattern could be replaced by a new specimen. In the absence of recent HSSC objectives they could focus their attention on developing listening and speaking that have been ignored presently. Here findings of this study were in complete harmony with the study of Fujimoto (1999) and Manjarees (2005) that showed teachers' inability to promote communicative competence because listening and speaking skills were not tested by the public exams. HSSC exam appeared to have washback effect on teachers' attitudes and behaviours. In an educational system, different participants got influenced by tests particularly teachers and students' in different ways (Al-Jamal & Ghadi, 2008). Teachers felt tension and anxiety due to HSSC result because this result would be considered a criterion of their professional value. Generally speaking, teachers feel this stress not only at the declaration of exam result but face HSSC influence in solving the problems of their students and feel tension. "It is generally accepted that public examinations influence the attitudes, behaviour, and motivation of teachers, learners and parents," (Pearson, 1988, p.98). Similarly HSSC effect is not limited to teachers and learners only but other stakeholders in this process are also affected by HSSC exam. These stakeholders included teachers, students, school/college principals, administrative authorities and parents as well. Precisely HSSC exam has affect teachers in the selection of teaching method, material, content and students have been influenced by the exam because it exerts pressure on learning directly. HSSC exam has influenced principals of institutions in that they have ensured the fulfillment of HSSC objectives so as to show a good result for the exam. Administrators ensure successful implementation of HSSC objectives because in case of extensive failure administrators, principals and teachers are blamed. Being a high-stakes exam HSSC has been playing a decisive role in professional career building of students and parents expected school/college responsible for this success. Thus HSSC exam influences teachers through administrative accountability and parents' expectations and in turn teachers transfer this influence to students by directing teaching and learning to test.

Conclusion

Conclusively, results of the study indicated that HSSC exam influences English language teaching in the areas of material and methodology. It concluded that need for success in HSSC exam has prompted teachers to such teaching where principal objective is to get marks ignoring learning needs of the students. This study determined that HSSC exam is a powerful agent of change in teaching methodology and materials but necessarily it does not have as much power to change education system. HSSC exam has emerged as a leading factor that has motivated some sub-factors such as teachers, students and other stake holders and in turn all of them have given their share in restricting teaching to a question paper. It is essentially needed to use this power of HSSC exam to create positive washback effect on teaching. Research in different dimensions of teaching-testing relationship is needed to investigate pitfall of English language teaching that promotes superficial learning in Pakistan.

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