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Washback on national examination: English language teacher and student's perception

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Abstract: Washback refers to influences of testing on teaching and learning for example from National Examination which is a test to evaluate and measure the student's competence nationally by the government after through process of teaching learning. This study attempts to investigate the perception EL teachers and students on washback of National Examination (NE). The participants of this study were ninth grade of junior high school in Jakarta, it will be taken four students from each class and English teachers. This study uses questionnaires and interviews to collect the data and the research method of this study used was a descriptive qualitative method. The result from this study show that the students' and teacher perception on ENE provide them negative and positive washback. Furthermore, the positive washback from ENE provide several aspects such as the teacher teach English subject more specific in certain skill and its effective to the students. However, the negative washback shown in several side likes the national Examination especially English subject just give the students feel anxiety because they need extra time to do the questions of national examination exercise and feel unfair for passed the standard test of school determine by national examination which conducted only three days.
Keyword: *Washback; high-stakes test; national examination*

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the important subjects in education of Indonesia it has been include in the curriculum as a subject and introduced in the secondary school, firstly English was introduced in primary school as a local content subject in 1994. After that, in 2003 English a subject becomes obligatory in level junior high, senior high and vocational high school. Furthermore, it becomes one of the subjects which to be tasted through the National Examination (NE) in Indonesia. It is one of the requirements to graduate school since it becomes a standard evaluation system. Endriyati & Anggreani (2019) state that the implementation of the National Examination is to evaluate the curriculum by government. According to Wahyu, et al. (2018) National Examination is a standard educational assessment of primary and secondary education in Indonesia which is administered by the National Standard of Education (BSNP- Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan). It means, National Examination as the final test of teaching programmed which intended to analyze the national education standard achievement, hence it becomes useful has been implemented as the Indonesian standard of education.

Regulation of education Minister (2005, p.1) presents that, the National Examination is a test to evaluate and measure the student's aptitude nationally by the government after through process of teaching learning. It means, the aim of regulation of minister education national examination is to evaluate and assess the student's competence after attend to teaching and learning process. Furthermore, according Nahdia and Trisanti (2018) there are several reasons the students assume this test is very important because the result of the test will be used as the requirement for the next steps of the study. Therefore, National Examination categorized Indonesian high-stakes test which has significantly outcome into positive and negative also give the impact public perception toward the school. Saukah and Cahyono (2015) mention that the implementation of the National Exam (NE)

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in Indonesia was considered high-stakes testing because the result of it was used as a basis to make decisions about the students' graduation at high schools. Krisnandani (2019) believes that the National Examination in Indonesia brings pride for school when the result of the student has a perfect score in their national examination. In short, it is produced many schools provide treatment for the national examination and influence both EFL teachers and students in the instructional process. Alhodiri (2016) mention that the teacher's role as facilitator and a guide on the side for increasing motivation of student, develop the skills or the strategies from a test, it is produced washback which the effect of examination on the attitudes, motivation, and general behaviors of learners, parents, and teachers and many other stake holders. It means, washback is an impact from the test on behaviors of learner, motivation, attitude can be generated positive and negative washback.

Nowadays, National Examination not only used for graduation requirement students but determined by their characters' evaluation and achievement score as their study results also administration in school-related to whether it will give impact to some aspects. Reflecting on the above discussion, this study was aimed to investigate the EL teachers' and students' perceptions of the washback of National Examination. The research question of this study will be mentioned as below.

1) How the teacher's perception of high-stakes examination mediates the washback.
2) What is the student's perception of National Examination washback.

Washback in assessment

National Examination implementation in country such as in Indonesia will cause some effects to the teachers and also the students. As Wall (1997) states that washback is restricted to "test effects on teacher and learner behavior in the classroom whereas impact refers to wider test effects such as their influence on teaching materials and educational systems". It means that washback is seen as a test effect in which it is only an effect on the teacher and student's behavior in the classroom, while the impact of a washback would be wider than the effect itself, namely influencing the teaching materials as well as the educational systems.

It means that washback is a set of terms used in both general and language education as well as in language testing referring to a relationship between teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the impact of a test may positive and negative. Washback can occur in the form of formative and summative tests and also the National Examination.

Students' perception of washback

Pan (2009) asserts that positive washback happens when a test is able to motivate the students to work harder to improve their learning. In this research, the positive washback in the national examination makes the students study hard then they usually do. The national examination triggers the learners to change their study habits. They do a lot of exercises every day to support their national examination preparation. They even join a tutoring program outside the school to help them prepare it better.

On the other hand, they pay their full attention to the teacher's teaching in class because they know that the materials are important for them later when they take the national examination. This is in line with Cheng, Watanabe, and Curtis's (2004) statement that positive washback means the positive attitude of both teachers and students towards examination that make them work willingly and collaboratively towards its objectives. It is seen from the fact that the national examination makes the students willingly study without being forced by anyone because they are aware of the importance of it for them. Therefore, considering the positive effect brought by the national examination, the students against the idea of the national examination moratorium because in their opinion the national examination is helpful to trigger them studying a lot and it can be used as the benchmark of their ability in mastering the materials that they have already got in school.

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Nevertheless, the national examination not only brings positive washback but also the negative one. Although the national examination is no longer used as the graduation determiner, the students still consider it as an important test. As a result, it brings anxiety to the students. This anxiety exists because while the national examination is not used by the students' graduation determiner, it is used to enter senior high school level. If they want to enter into a good academic qualified senior high school, of course, they have to get a high graduate average score in their national examination.

Teachers' perception of washback

English national examination presents both positive and negative washback viewed from the teachers' perceptions. The positive washback of the national examination for the teachers is that it motivates them to equip the students with the best learning materials that are useful for the students to be prepared to face the national examination. Because of the longing to make the students get a good score for their national examination, the teachers try their best for teaching the students by presenting the materials by using varied methods, techniques, and books to make the students able to understand the materials well and also having fun at class.

However, positive washback is always accompanied by negative ones. The teachers admitted that since the national examination only examines students' reading and writing skills, the teachers emphasize the materials of reading and writing skills, not listening and speaking. They admitted that at the beginning of the semester, they only teach listening and speaking skills. However, approaching the administration of the national examination, they focused only on reading and listening skills, which as a result, neglected the speaking and listening skills.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The participants of this study were the English teachers of Junior High School in Jakarta and 3rd students it will be taken four students from each class two females and two males. They were come from government and private schools. The setting of this study was divided into private school and government school especially in east Jakarta, the specification of school was three private school and three government school. Data were collected through questionnaire. This study used qualitative method, particularly descriptive qualitative method. It was appropriate to interpreted and analyze the washback National Examination (NE) based on perceptions of English teacher and students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Teacher's perception on English National *Examination*

Data for English teachers' perceptions on the English subject of NE were achieved particularly from teachers' questionnaires and interviews.

The following findings, from teachers' questionnaires, were extend in the form of open-ended questions. The finding showed that the ninth grade of Junior high school both of government and private school of English teachers and student's perceptions on the English National Examination were varieties. There are two categories of perception, positive and negative as can be observed in the following

Table 1. *Categories result of washback*

Categories'	**Perceptions**
Content lesson	Positive
Total time of learning	
Learning strategy	
Learning motivation	
Test anxiety	Negative
Attitude	
NE Implementation	

Table 1 show that categorized into seven based on washback of learning adopted from (Shih, 2007) perception which stated positive and negative on ENE. The participants both of teachers and students ask to respond some questions trough questionnaire designed on a

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Likert scale provided to them 5= Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3= Neutral, 2=Disagree and 1=Strongly disagree. Here is the result from questionnaire data which would breakdown from each category both of students and teacher perceptions of ENE.

Table 2. *Teacher's perceptions of ENE view from content lessons*

Content lesson	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
ENE teaching focused on some questions and skills that are likely appear in NE	25%	37,5%	12,5%	12,5%	12,5%
Teaching ENE help the teacher decide how students should study ESL / EFL.	12,5%	50%	12,5%	25%	0%

From table above show that, 37,5% most of the teachers who tough English subject for NE only focused on some questions and skill which often appear in it rather basic competence. It became narrowing curriculum to the materials that would be tested. As Alderson & Wall:1993 said that a test effected to the teaching and learning include curriculum. Nevertheless, 50% ENE teaching become the teachers tough easily to EFL or ESL it's become student know how they learn English specifically.

Table 3. *Learning strategy*

Learning strategy	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Teaching ENE helps the teacher teach specific purpose skills(reading,listening)	0%	50%	0%	37%	0%
Teaching ENE become teaching more communicative than focused on skills	0%	38%	25%	25%	13%

Table 3 shows the result that 50% teaching ENE more effective. In other case, the teacher tough applies GTM method, but teaching to prepare ENE trough variative questions, so the teacher could be able teach vocabulary, reading text and translate it. Besides that, 38% though ENE more interactive and communicative in language competence because almost ENE materials were reading text and writing.

Table 4. *Attitude*

Attitude	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
The teacher has responsibility for the success or failure of students on ENE	38%	25%	13%	0%	20%
Fear and anxiety on poor National Examination results in English subjects	13%	50%	12%	25%	0%

The result of attitude from washback ENE 38% show that responsibility of student's successful or failure were on teacher's hand, those one of negative washback effect of NE which become unfairness. Moreover, 50% the teacher agree that they fell anxiety and fear on result of ENE, it become teach harder and teaching to a test for resolve of anxiety and responsible on National Examination for student also school of principles. Align with Mukminin: 2013 the schools' principles worried on ENE, so the teachers did anything they could to pass the exam.

So, from all questionnaire result, generate of teacher's perception on ENE view from other aspects, there were positive and negative washback on their teaching learning process.

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Student's perception on English National Examination

Data from student's perceptions on the English subject of NE were achieved particularly from students' questionnaires design on Likert scale provide frequently to them 5=Always, 4= often, 3=sometimes, 2=seldom, 1=never. Here is the description of whole categories, from content learning of NE, the students always learn only questions of NE, this become boredom and confused on their learning process, it means NE has negative impact for their learning.

Therefore, preparing of NE needed time of arrangement, the students always ask special time to study hard then usually did because this exam related to their successful for their future. The student pays attentions on teachers' explanation about what would be exam in NE this one of positive washback from it. As according to Pan (2009) positive washback of test when it could motivate their learning process and improve their learning.

So, the perception of the students on ENE there were washback effect both positive and negative sides from each category

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The washback of ENE in Indonesia as high-takes test it become the teacher focus on testing preparation (Maya, 2020). Many factors influenced in teaching learning process especially English subject. Base on the result findings of teacher's and student's perception OF ENE there were positive and negative side.

Findings from teacher's perception who teaches grade nineth of Junior high school firstly, from negative influence 37,5% of the teachers tough English subject for NE only focused on some questions and skill which often appear in it rather basic competence**.** The teachers teach preparation of ENE, they said that only focused teaching to questions, it was become anxiety Nevertheless, 50% ENE teaching become the teachers tough easily to EFL or ESL it's become student know how they learn English specifically. 50% teaching ENE more effective. In other case, the teacher tough applies GTM method, but teaching to prepare ENE trough varieties questions, so the teacher could be able teach vocabulary, reading text and translate it. Besides that, 38% though ENE more interactive and communicative in language competence because almost ENE materials were reading text and writing. 38% show that responsibility of student's successful or failure were on teacher's hand, those one of negative washback effect of NE which become unfairness. Moreover, 50% the teacher agree that they felt anxiety and fear on result of ENE, it become teach harder and teaching to a test for resolve of anxiety and responsible on National Examination for student also school of principles.

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Based on result of this research, there some suggestions from the researcher about this research result were:

1. National Examination could be made one of the requirements of student's graduation; nevertheless, what happens now is that it plays too big portion. Therefore, government is expected to lessen the role of NE and increase the role of School Examination.
2. Many schools especially in remote areas, which is lack of educational facilities, the government must solve this problem by giving them real help and attention.
3. For teachers particularly who teach National Examination subjects, must always improve their competence so that they can transfer adequate knowledge and concise guidance to make the students pass the examination.

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4. Well preparation to the students before doing the National Examination. It is minimizing their worries and anxiety

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