**NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE EFFECT OF BACKWASH**

**ON TOEIC TEST**

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**ABSTRACT :** Test is a systematic procedure for observing person and describing them with either a numerical scale or a category system. A test is given to know the students’ achievement on their learning. There is a test affects on teaching and learning which is called backwash. Backwash could be positive and negative. Negative washback involve the teacher, students and the school’s program. However, if the assessment of the tesr reflects the skill and content taught in the classrom, the positive washback will be occured.

**Key Words:** test, TOEIC, backwash

A test is one of assessment tools which provides in formation about students. It can be used to measure how well the studentss have achievement and mastered the material. Wiersman and Jurs (1990) state a test is a set of items and questions designed to be preesnted to one or more students under specified condition. While, test may be given in days, weeks an entire semester, entire school year or after finishing a school’s program.

TOEIC refers to one of Proficiency tests that is designed to measure people’s ability in a language which is previously used for business context but now for academic context also. State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya is one of colleges in Asia which adopted Toeic to measure students’ ability in English especially for every six semester student as graduates. Toeic is used to get students score about the ability of students in English proficiency which score can be used for them to apply for the job because of demanding of workforce market.

Getting high score from a test is important for students because high score is a demand or one of pre requisitions from workforce market. Therefore, it is important to do preparation for test. However, although high score is a goal of test, teachers not only provide materials of test examination but also communicative materials such as communicative activities (like pair work, group work, and presentations) and grammar exercises and quizzes because usually most of students learn English for academic purposes, i.e. to pass an examination. It was also clear that using English for communicative purposes was a motivating factor. In addition, the teaching process not only focus on teacher-centered but student- centered also. In other word, the teaching process must emphasize a rotation between left and right-brain activities also gives prime time to the basically different orientations and should lead to whole-brain performance (Scott, 1994).

Based on the reason above, this paper would like to find out more information about washback and negative and positive significance of backwash.

The purposes of this study are to find out what washback is and to find out what are negative and positive significance of washback.

The Benefits of this study are to give information about washback and to give information about negative and positive significance of washback. Therefore, teacher must really understand about the way how to make students get high score on TOEIC test but do not give materials only focus on teacher-center but students- center also.

**DISCUSSION**

**Washback**

Washback or backwash is generally known as the effect of testing on teaching and learning (Djuric. M .2008). This effect can be either positive or negative. While, Robb, T., & Ercanbrack, J. (1999) mention washback, a term popular in British applied linguistics and commonly referred to as backwash in the field of general education, may be understood as the influence that a test has on teaching and learning.In addition, Washback is defined as the impact of a test on teaching, and it can be powerful determiners, both positively and negatively, of what happens in classrooms (Wall & Alderson, 1993). Washback is also described in literature as overt and convert.

According to Prodomou (1995) overt washback is usually negative and seen in the explicit use of examination papers or examples from textbook that emphasize the skills used in exams. As a result, reading and writing are given more emphasis than speaking and listening. However, the implicit consequences of convert washback as more of an underlying, unconsious process stemming from asumptions about how students learn. Andrews (1994) sees washback as "a complex and ill-defined phenomenon" (p. 45). He adds another dimension to the definition in terms of the scope of people influenced by test results, when he acknowledges "widespread acceptance of the assertion that tests, especially public examinations, exert an influence on teachers, learners, *andparents,* with an associated impact on what happens in classrooms"

Moreover, Alderson and Wall (1993) who have conducted extensive research into the area, argue convincingly that washback is a far more complex issue than simply the effect of testing on teaching. They believe that there is not an automatic relationship between tests and their impact. Rather, specific areas such as teaching content and methodology, teacher competence, assessment methods and resources available need to be investigated as well as the extent of the impact and whether or not it is positiveor negative. Their findings also include the potential effect of washback on the whole education system. Futhermore, Alderson and Wall (1996) states washback is the influence that writers on language testing, syllabus design, and language teaching believe a test will have on the teaching that precedes it. Similarly, washback can be broadly defined as the effect of a test on teaching and often also on learning, and it has been variously associated with effects on teachers and learners (Green, 2007). Bachman and Palmer (1996) consider washback to be a subset of a test’s impact on society, educational systems and individuals.The term *backwash* is defined as the direct and indirect effects of examinations on teaching methods (Prodromou, 1995). Shohamy (1993) summarized four key definitions that are useful in understanding the washback concept. They are:

1. Washback effect refers to the impact that tests have on teaching and learning.

2. Measurement driven instruction refers to the notion that tests should drive learning.

3. Curriculum alignment focuses on the connection between testing and the teaching

syllabus.

4. Systemic validity implies the integration of tests into the educational system and the need to demonstrate that the introduction of a new test can improve learning.

Based on some definitions above, backwash is the effect of test on teaching and learning process such as syllabus design, students and teachers’ motivation and attitudes. And even parents. But it has positive and negative benefits. In other word, test influences the way how teachers teach and the way how students study.

**Negative significance of backwash**

Negative effect of backwash is the teacher-centered teaching style has put on lot pressure. Students are pressured the most when the slow students are ignorant to raising their TOEIC scores because of their bad attitudes towards learning the courses (Green, 2007). Besides, backwash makes students very nervous and was afraid that they wouldn’t pass the test. So students decide to buy a few TOEIC preparation books at the bookstores and studied many sample tests in the books (Ying, 2003). At this point, test could sometimes makes the students pressure and even discourage, if they can not get high score in test, especially, when students listen to conversations and talks on the CDs made students often frustrated due to the students’ lack of understanding and interest real TOEIC test. Furthermore, the students will face very anxious and stress out, especially when the test day comes..

According to Robb & Ercanbrack, (1999). Disadvantage of washback is that the students had little chance to  practice their writing and speaking and even their thinking or problem-solving skills in the classroom, when compared to their first year of studying TOEIC. It means that syllabus design of test makes students do not have much time to discuss with their friends. They also can not interact with their friends. They do not have much time to make fun with their presentation because they just focus on doing test. And then there is no adventure of students in doing TOEIC test especially about Reading section. They just choose the right answer without thinking although they can get high score. But it can not guarantee they are also are able to have productive ability such as writing and speaking skill well, because there is no speaking and writing aspect in TOEIC but only focus on just reading and listening skill. There is no guarantee if the students who can get high score in TOEIC, they are also able to have productive ability such as write and speak well. TOEIC score can’t guarantee that one can speak English or write in English better, because it doesn’t include any speaking or writing elements. (Chapman, 2003)

In addition, negative backwash effects influence the teachers’ choice of textbooks, teaching contents, teaching methods and their attitudes towards students. Meanwhile, they also influence the students’ learning objectives, learning contents, classroom performance and choice of extracurricular reading materials ( Ming Li, 2005)

In conclusion, negative backwash of test is test makes the changing of syllabus design such as the purpose of study, the selection of the materials and even the activities of students and teacher in processing of learning. Because of the materials tends to do test only, so the activities can not involve students in participating with group discussion, presentation, do not interact with other students that’s why it makes students feel boring and study with pressure because they must study only to get high score on test result. However, a high score in TOEIC could have used for applying for a good job. On the order hand, Prodromou (1995) offers a solution for transforming negative washback intopositive by shifting to a learner centred approach with an emphasis on the language process rather than preoccupation with the end-product.

**Positive significance of washback**

One of the most outstanding benefits of the TOEIC preparation courses for both the certificate and the diploma levels with the new teaching style (teacher-centered with grammar translation) was that students can have a chance to be exposed to a lot of questions emphasizing on grammar points as well as a wide range of vocabulary which students tend to experience in the reading part of the real TOEIC examination that they will take at the end of the academic year. Robb and Ercanbrack (1999) concluded the use of the grammar translation approach, explanations of grammatical points in the class can be made more easily and quickly, since there are not a lot of group activities requiring much discussion and interaction between the students themselves.

There are some positive significances of backwash that reflect to the students and teacher. Bachman (1990) states positive washback occurs when the assessment used reflects the skills and content taught in the classroom. The test can be positive effect of backwash if test can make students more pay attention to the lesson and more prepare about it (Wall and Alderson, 1993). Another positive significance of washback is probably because with the new teaching system the students will be more exposed to real TOEIC questions through different forms of TOEIC practices by using the techniques similar to those of the Grammar Translation, such as reading comprehension questions, fill-in-the-blanks, and synonyms & antonyms (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

Furthermore, Apichatrojanakul, (2011) mention another positive effect is that the teacher could teach the students the skills for taking the examination directly, without spending a lot of time on explaining certain grammatical structures and other unnecessary issues. In addition, Cheng and Watanabe (2004) suggest that positive washback is more likely to occur if teachers are familiar with a wide range of teaching methods.

In conclusion, with the use of the grammar translation approach, explanations of grammatical points in the class can be made more easily and quickly, since there are not a lot of group activities requiring much discussion and interaction between the students themselves. Teacher-centered in teaching TOEIC courses, students can understand more subtle grammar points, and they can have a chance to discuss things as well as to write and think creatively together. Students can learn from a lot of questions extracted from different TOEIC preparation books, which are similar to those questions in a real TOEIC examination. In addition, teacher-centered style of teaching in teaching TOEIC courses was more effective and faster. As an effect of the TOEIC test, students had to find a lot of TOEIC questions, apart from those in the study sheets, to get the students to be familiar with.

**CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded that there are both positive and negative effects of the TOEIC preparation courses on the TOEIC . In order to increase positive washback effects and at the same time reduce the negative washback effects of TOEIC on the learners, there should be practical measures used by the TOEIC teachers appropriately, such as creating a balance between the teaching-centered approach and the child-centered approach, including pair work and group activities in teaching plans, pointing out the benefits of getting a high TOEIC score, or giving positive reinforcement to the students. Besides, decreasing negative washback effects on the TOEIC For example, the teachers should be allowed to use communicative approach at certain points of a class by getting them to do some pair work or group work with some writing and speaking elements incorporating the required grammar points, so that the class will be more interesting, fun, and not too stressful to both the teacher and students. there should be a compromise or a balance between the communicative model and the teacher-centered style in teaching TOEIC preparation courses, in order to alleviate the tremendous pressure being put on both the teachers and the students (Wilhelm & Pei, 2008).

Negative washback does not necessarily have negative effects. As soon as negative washback is noted it can be addressed. Considering its complex nature it is difficult enough to identify it but responding to it professionally and timely is the responsibility of testers, teachers and institutions towards their clients – students and test takers. Teachers help testers improve their tests, testers help teachers improve their teaching and both need to accomplish a common mission i.e. help students and test takers reach the course objectives during a course and reach the required language level by valid tests. Changes as results of washback should be introduced to improve teaching and testing processes primarily for the sake of students and test takers.

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