

The Students' Perception of National Examination Washback: A Case Study at MTS Daarul 'Ulya Metro

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Abstract: Studies on washback of testing have been recently conducted. This demonstrates that there is a growing awareness that testing can have consequences beyond just the classroom. For one decade, Ministry of Education in Indonesia has administered National Examination (NE) as the standardized test for passing grade requirement. In spite of its good aim, NE has become one of controversial issues among educators, students and even parents. Some say yes while some others say no. This paper was mainly attempted to display some impacts, not all, of NE toward the test takers, the students. A qualitative research was employed where the data taken from observation and questionnaires to 20 students. The result of the study showed that most of the students felt unconfident with their score in National Examination due to the fact that their English competence was considered low. However, the difficulty of NE did not significantly affect their studying English language. In other words, the washback of NE on their study was negative.

Key words: Washback; national examination; students' perceptions

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INTRODUCTION

Testing is one of the common ways to assess. Assessment is perhaps one of most difficult and important parts of teachers' jobs (Shepard, 2000; Wiggins, 2011). Ideally, it should be seen as a means to help the teachers guide their students on their road to learning. No single procedure can meet the needs of all learners and situations, so according to (Black & Wiliam, 2006; S. Brown, 2005; James, 2008), the teachers need to remember to incorporate a variety of tools to help the students know how they are progressing and to gauge the effectiveness of our own methodology and materials.

Testing and teaching are inseparable. Testing and teaching, as highlighted by Sun (2013), are so closely related that it is virtually impossible to work in either area without being constantly concerned with the other. Testing must accompany all kinds of teaching, including English language teaching, and reflect how much English knowledge students have grasped in a certain phase of English study. Tests should be constructed primarily to reinforce learning, to motivate students, and to assess students' performance in language acquisition. Thus, it is necessary for instructors to design tests according to the features of the college English intensive

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