

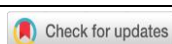
THE WASHBACK EFFECT OF THE ENGLISH NATIONAL EXAMINATION TOWARD ENGLISH TEACHERS, STUDENTS, STAKEHOLDERS AND PARENTS

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to measure the washback effect on students, English teachers, stakeholders, and parents of students from the implementation of the National Examination. This research study is a qualitative research design; Data collection techniques in this study were interviews and questionnaires. The results of this study are that the English National Examination have a negative effect rather than a positive effect. The method teachers have used in the teaching and learning process, focusing on preparation for the English National Examination, tends to emphasize reading skills and override other English skills. Then students facing the National Examination tend to be divided into several groups; some relax without studying, but some students feel worried and afraid of being unable to pass the National Examination. National Examination activities for schools certainly impact many things, especially facilities and infrastructure that must be prepared as well as possible by schools so that the National Examination can run well. For parents of students, National Examination activities also affect the pattern of education at home; parents must provide more understanding and advice to their children to study more seriously.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengukur washback effect pada siswa, guru bahasa Inggris, pemangku kepentingan, dan orang tua siswa dari pelaksanaan Ujian Nasional. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian dengan desain penelitian kualitatif, teknik pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini adalah wawancara dan kuesioner. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah Ujian Nasional Bahasa Inggris memiliki efek negatif daripada efek positif. Metode yang digunakan guru dalam proses belajar mengajar yang berfokus pada persiapan Ujian Nasional Bahasa Inggris cenderung menekankan pada kemampuan membaca dan mengesampingkan kemampuan Bahasa Inggris lainnya. Kemudian siswa yang menghadapi Ujian Nasional cenderung terbagi menjadi beberapa kelompok; ada yang bersantai tanpa belajar, namun ada juga siswa yang merasa khawatir dan takut tidak dapat lulus Ujian Nasional. Kegiatan Ujian Nasional bagi sekolah tentu berdampak pada banyak hal, terutama sarana dan prasarana yang harus dipersiapkan sebaik mungkin oleh sekolah agar Ujian Nasional dapat berjalan dengan baik. Bagi orang tua murid, kegiatan Ujian Nasional juga berdampak pada pola pendidikan di rumah, orang tua harus memberikan pengertian dan nasehat yang lebih kepada anaknya untuk belajar lebih serius.

Kata kunci: Pencucian, Ujian Nasional, Efek Washback, Washback Siswa

INTRODUCTION

The current National Examination in Indonesia is one of the graduation requirements and components to measure the students' success on the final level to continue their studies to the next education level, Indonesian government has used computers to implement the National Examination in Indonesia. Although until now, all Indonesian schools have not thoroughly carried out computer-based tests in implementing the National Examination. This certainly depends on the facilities owned by the school, especially the computers and good internet networks. This has become a serious obstacle, especially for schools in the villages and some regions without internet access. (Even, 2017)

Because of the importance of implementing the National Examination in schools, each component, both teachers, students, and the school, will prepare something so that the National Examination can be carried out successfully. This becomes a psychological and mental burden for each component of education involved in the school. Implementing the National Examination will also automatically influence the behavior carried out by students, teachers, and educational institutions in preparing it, both in the learning process and the facilities needed by the school for the Examination.

Based on the above-mentioned problems and phenomena, the researcher was interested in analyzing the washback effects in implementing the National Examination policy in Indonesia. Because washback is a complex phenomenon, the author is interested in examining the effects of the implementation of the National Examination on students, English teachers, stakeholders, and parents of students. The author is also interested in investigating whether the National Examination still positively or negatively influences each component. This is because the results of the National Examination are no longer the only component determining the students' graduation from their school. After all, at present, students' graduation is determined by each school. This is following the regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia number 4 in 2018, concerning the assessment of learning outcomes by education units and assessment of learning outcomes by the government, which states that graduation of students is determined by the education unit (school) or program concerned. The details of the formulation are as follows: Students are declared to have graduated from the education unit after: Completing the entire learning program; Obtain a minimum good behavior score; and passing the exam from the education unit. Then, the student's graduation as intended is determined by the respective education unit.

This was further reinforced by government regulations compiled by the National Education Standards Agency Which states that students' graduation from education units is determined by education units based on teacher council or tutor meetings. Achievement of graduate competencies in the National Examination is stated in the category of very good, good, sufficient, and poor. The assessment of graduate competencies' achievement is based on a range of grades from 0 to 100 with the following categories:

- a. Very Good, with criteria $85 < \text{Score} \leq 100$
- b. Good, with criteria $70 < \text{Score} \leq 85$
- c. Sufficient, with criteria $55 < \text{Score} \leq 70$
- d. Poor, with criteria $0 \leq \text{Score} \leq 55$

The regulation of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Indonesia also explained the criteria for the student's graduation in the National Examination, contained in Minister of Education Regulation number 45 of 2010 article 5, which reads:

- a. Students are declared to have passed the National Examination if the students have met

the graduation criteria set by the education unit.

- b. This score is obtained from a combination of School Examination scores and the average score of students' report cards for semesters 1, 2, 3, 4, and semester 5 for SMP/MTs and SMPLB, with a division of 60% (sixty percent) for grades. School Examinations, and 40% (forty percent) for the average value of student report cards. From these regulations, it can be concluded that students' graduation is not determined entirely by the results of the National Examination scores but also by the assessment given by the school.

This study illustrates how the National Examination influences how teachers teach their own students in the classroom, how students learn, how schools prepare for the success of the National Examination, and how the student's parents can prepare their children for the National Examination at school.

This research is relevant to the study conducted by ([Mardiani, 2011](#)), entitled “ The Washback Effect of English National Examination (ENE) on English Teachers’ Classroom Teaching and Students’ Learning.” She said that the results of the computer-based National Examination at that time were not the primary decision for student graduation, but the existence of the computer-based National examination impacted the teaching process in the classroom. As a result, the researcher only focused on examining the effects of the computer-based English National Examination on the English teachers' perceptions and the teaching process in the class.

Although this present study looks similar to Mardiani, but this research is different for several things that have not been researched before. Namely, the effect of the National Examination is examined not only on English teachers but also on students, stakeholders, and parents of students.

METHOD

This research study is a qualitative research design. ([Lichtman, 2010](#)) defines qualitative research as a way for a researcher to gather, organize, and interpret information obtained from humans by using their eyes and ears as filters. Whereas, according to ([Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen, 2010](#)), qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of human participants in a natural setting. It does not rely heavily on hypothesis testing, cause and effect, and statistical data. ([Lichtman, 2010](#)) points out that qualitative research aims to understand and interpret social interaction. Furthermore, qualitative research assists the researcher in investigating what washback phenomenon occurs and how it occurs. Thus, the researcher uses qualitative research in this study.

The researcher has chosen three techniques of data collection that are appropriate for qualitative research. The data collection techniques are observation, interview, and documentation. According to ([Sugiyono, 2009](#)), qualitative research is research based on post-positivism philosophy, used to examine the natural conditions of objects (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is a crucial instrument. Sampling data sources is done purposively and snowball, collecting techniques with triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive or qualitative, and qualitative research results emphasize more meaning than generalization. It follows ([Sugiyono, 2007](#)), who said that purposive and snowball sampling is often used in qualitative research. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique for data sources with specific considerations. Snowball sampling is a technique of taking samples of data sources, which initially are small in number, but gradually become large.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

English Teachers' Preparation in Facing the National Examination

MTs Tanjungsari-Rajadesa is one of the private schools in Ciamis Regency. It is a Madrasah Tsanawiyah at the same level as junior high school and under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. It is located in *Jalan Lapang* Tanjungsari No. 114, Rajadesa District, Ciamis Regency, West Java. Founded in 1989, MTs Tanjungsari-Rajadesa has accredited B. It consists of 23 teachers with 132 students.

In the last two years (2018-2019), the English National Examination scores at MTs Tanjungsari have always been in the lowest position, even though there are two teachers with English Education backgrounds (teacher A and teacher B). Most students in this school do not have handbooks or practice questions for the English National Examination, so the learning system is by taking notes on the writing board of the material to be taught. It makes students less trained to answer English National Examination questions.

Based on the interview regarding the response to seeing the current National Examination, Teacher A said that: "It still takes a lot of preparation because it can be seen from the time of learning and the tryout exams that have been carried out, the English students' scores of the MTs Tanjungsari-Rajadesa are still far below the average value to be achieved".

Meanwhile, teacher B said: "Personally, in my opinion, in facing National Examination, students tend to be more relaxed and indifferent, maybe because they already understand and know about the current National Examination graduation regulations which do not only rely on National Examination scores as a graduation benchmark, which are not as strict as they used to be lazy to study".

The data above showed that the teacher saw many challenges faced by students, teachers, and the school in facing National Examination, so of course, preparation and planning were needed so that the National Examination activities in schools could run well. This condition is in line with the statement by Sajidin, S., Saehu, A. and Kariadinata, R. (2017) that the students involved in the research conducted showed different perceptions of the final exam conducted. Some of them say that the final exam is complex, and others say it is easy. Nevertheless, most students think the final exam is essential for improving their English skills. However, some say it is unnecessary because it is futile and irrational that the length of student study during one semester is only determined by the pass or not within an hour and a half of the final exam.

Based on interviews with English teachers, it was said about the challenges faced in preparing for the current National Examination: "There are many challenges faced by students in implementing the National Examination including the low understanding of students in English lessons, and mastery of basic computer use, when the implementation of the National Examination is still low".

Meanwhile, teacher B said: "Because currently the National Examination uses computers, for teachers and schools this is an additional challenge that must be solved so that students are able to master computers, at least for basic programs, besides how to make students care more about the short National Examination will be implemented, because students seem to tend to be more indifferent and relaxed.

What was expressed by the teachers above indicated that it can be concluded that the challenges faced in the National Examination activities are very complex, especially in the mastery of IT/Computer by students, considering that the current National Examination is carried out using a computer system. In addition, teachers are also expected to be able to

mentally prepare students for the National Examination because mental has a crucial role in achieving achievement. Mental training is an exercise that involves all aspects of the psyche in dealing with various kinds of stress. 50% of the match results are determined by psychological factors, namely mental ([Herman, 2011](#)), where it can be seen that no matter how good, the physical aspect will be destroyed if the mental aspect is never trained ([Gunarsa, 2008](#)). Therefore, to achieve optimal appearance, a person must balance physical and mental abilities ([Gucciardi, Gordon, & Dimmock, 2008](#)). Moreover, the school must prepare the necessary infrastructure to run well for the National Examination activities.

Furthermore, the researcher also asked the teachers about the students' responses to the current implementation of the National Examination. When interviewed, teacher A said: "When I asked students about their opinion on the implementation of the National Examination, they answered variously, some were anxious and afraid of not passing the exam, some were really calm because every year all students always pass 100%, and when we researched, most of them many of them are still relaxed even though the implementation of the National Examination is near".

Teacher B said also: "Many of them tend to be afraid of facing the National Examination, because if they don't pass, of course they have to repeat the exam next year, it seems that many of them do not understand the government regulations regarding the current National Examination passing standard, even though we have often socialize it to students, maybe they are still carried away by the atmosphere of the National Examination in previous years which has always been a scary thing for students.

It denotes that the current National Examination differs from the previous. In addition to being computer-based, the graduation standard is not only determined from the results of the National Examination, but there is an accumulation of the previous student's scores. In addition, the school also plays a significant role in determining whether students are entitled to graduate or not.

When asked about the teacher's response to the implementation of the National Examination in the future, concerning the fourth question, teacher A said: "The role of the government in providing facilities and infrastructure for the implementation of the National Examination needs to be increased, seeing from the previous National exams that have always been constrained by funding problems, we hope that the government is able to overcome this in the future and can help schools administering the National Examination".

Teacher B said: "Currently the National Examination regulations are good and not burdensome for students, as we know that the current National Examination graduation is not entirely determined from the National Examination results, hopefully in the future the government will also be able to make good rules related to the exam which is certainly not burdensome for students and of course for schools as well as organizers of the National Examination".

Of the problems that occurred, English teachers at MTs Tanjungsari-Rajadesa made several preparations to implement the 2019/2020 National Examination. Based on the results of the interview with Teacher A, it is known that the unique learning program in preparation for the National Examination implementation is as follows: "The special program that we carried out in preparation for the National Examination was providing training on tricks on how to answer National Examination questions quickly, as well as providing an intensification of discussion of National Examination questions to students during the learning process".

Meanwhile, teacher B said: "It is true that there is an additional learning program for

class IX students ahead of the National Examination, namely material intensification, for strengthening the mastery of student learning materials”.

Implementing the National Examination preparation activities that English teachers will apply consists of three stages: “Preparation, Implementation, and Evaluation. The preparation stage includes several activity steps, namely first: Initial observation by doing the English National Examination Try Out (TO) so that it is known which questions are challenging to students through item analysis of questions. Second: Preparing suitable materials, methods, and tricks for solving the English National Examination questions. Third: selection of implementation and determination of intensification time outside of learning hours”.

The stage of implementing a unique program or additional material prepared by an English teacher is divided into two, namely intensification and mentoring. The intensification activities will be held for five meetings with the following details:

Tabel 1. Learning Activities

MEETINGS	ACTIVITIES
Meeting I	Introduction and purpose of activities. Provide material predicting and scanning
Meeting II	Provide examples of tricks on how to answer English questions by introducing the types of questions that will generally be asked in the National Examination
Meeting III	Guide to practice questions and continue the discussion
Meeting IV	Guide to practice questions and continue the discussion
Meeting V	Posttest

The third or evaluation stage is carried out after the intensification is complete. The program implementer carries out several activities such as evaluation of training activities. At this stage, the English Teacher evaluates the training activities that have been carried out. All problems or obstacles that arise during the intensification activities will be discussed. Then, the English teacher, as the implementer, collected data on whether there was progress in the ability to answer English questions through the post-test.

In implementing the National Examination, of course, many needs must be completed to make the activity a success, both physical and non-physical. Based on interviews: Teacher A said: “We usually hold the National Examination every year and of course it has become a routine school agenda, so schools already know what to do and of course have been prepared as much as possible from a long time ago so that the implementation of the National Examination can run successfully”.

Teacher B said: “School preparation has been maximized, by completing the necessary facilities and infrastructure, also by preparing additional learning programs for students so that students understand more about the National Examination material. Besides, the school fully supports the implementation of this intensification program”. The English teacher said: “Since the beginning of the learning year, we have proposed this program. The school is very supportive of this activity. The school tries to provide the facilities and infrastructure needed by students in the form of providing worksheets and preparing questions using a computer system according to National Examination standards”.

According to ([Sajidin, S., Saehu, A. and Kariadinata, R. \(2017\)](#)), Final exams have many positive impacts on students, one of which is forcing students to study more seriously to improve their English skills. Furthermore, make students do more religious activities such as

praying. Final exams influence students' study habits in a way that tends to differ from usual. They spend more time studying, both at and outside school, repeating previous learning materials, and consulting with their teachers. Some students even take an English course before facing the National Examination.

The researcher also asks the teachers if they have a special method or trick given to students facing the English National Examination. Based on interviews with teacher A, it is known that: "The special method used in the preparation of this year's National Examination is to train students to master the tricks of answering English questions easily even though they have not mastered English well. In addition, students are introduced to the types of questions that will generally be asked in the National Examination". Meanwhile, teacher B said: "Yes, we were given directions by the principal to carry out a student learning intensification program, in which students are trained more deeply about easy and simple methods to answer National Examination questions using the previous National Examination questions".

In the first training meeting, students were introduced to the predicting and scanning method tricks to answer the questions on the National Examination. Then continue trying to practice answering the 10 National Examination questions in the student worksheets. According to articles contained in the writings of ([Susanti A. 2015](https://www.educationokezone.com)) at [education.okezone.com](https://www.educationokezone.com) websites, it is said that one of the most straightforward learning methods is practice questions. By doing practice questions, you can find out which topics you have not mastered and can focus more on learning that you do not understand. The more questions you do, the greater your understanding of the material you are working on.

The second meeting started by asking students to do National Examination questions on student worksheets, which focused on how to answer questions from the various texts that were presented while still using the techniques that had been taught, namely predicting and scanning. Predicting and scanning techniques by searching for keyword questions makes it easier for students to guess the answers to National Examination questions.

The focus of intensification at the third and fourth meetings is on the material of the National Examination questions in the form of announcement texts and warning signs (notice) or prohibitions. At the end of the fourth meeting, the students were asked to answer ten practice questions with a combination of questions that had been studied directly. It was found that the students began to understand how to solve the tricks of the questions, even though they did not understand some English vocabulary in the reading text.

At the fifth meeting, a posttest was held to determine the increase in English language skills of grade IX students in answering and predicting accurately and quickly the questions on the English National Examination through predictive and scanning tricks that have been taught. This post-test activity is carried out in a computer laboratory.

The results of the posttest showed that about 60% of grade IX students had reached the expected average score of at least 60. Meanwhile, 40% of students were still below the expected score. Nevertheless, they have started to understand how to do the trick and answer the questions if they do not understand them.

This intensification activity was held for two weeks on February 1, 4, 8, and 12, 2020. For each class, the intensification was carried out for 60 minutes. The material given is taken from the worksheet for the exam preparation questions that the teacher has prepared. When we ask, do the teachers spend more time guiding students in facing the National Examination? Based on the interview, teacher A answered: "We take the time to guide students through the intensification program for 2 weeks, even the preparation of modules

and teaching materials has been prepared in advance, so that this program can run smoothly and successfully". Meanwhile, teacher B said: "Yes, of course, every year before the National Examination, our duties as teachers increase to guide students, so we also spend a lot of special time guiding them to be successful".

Based on interviews with teachers, it can be concluded that every year in facing the National Examination, many preparations are made by teachers, so the effect is that it takes up much time for teachers to give more lessons and deepen the material to students. To deal with the obstacles experienced by teachers, ([Purnamasari \(2013\)](#)) said in his research that teachers must be wise in determining which group should be mentored. For example, group A wants guidance in the afternoon, while other groups also want guidance at the same time, the teacher should be more selective in choosing which group to guide first and find the right time for the other group so that everything can run in a balanced way, and the teacher must also manage his time very precisely and look for ways how the teacher can complete other jobs well.

When the teacher asked whether the teacher was depressed in the face of the National Examination, teacher A answered: "Yes, I am a little depressed because I expect 80% of students to get above-average grades, but there is still time to train them. I hope I reach my target". Meanwhile, teacher B said: "Feelings of pressure and fear are of course always present not only by students but also by teachers, especially when you see that there are still students who tend to relax, and their tryout scores are still below standard. But if there is still time, we will continue to guide them as best we can".

Evaluation activities are carried out after intensification activities. This activity aims to see the intensification process, whether running smoothly or not, and any problems that occur during intensification. In addition, this evaluation activity is also used to measure the extent of the interest and response of the intensification participants about the tricks of answering English National Examination questions.

From the evaluation activity, it was found that the interest and response of the intensification participants were very positive. So, in general, this intensification activity was successful. This intensification program also received support from students' parents. When this program is socialized, students' parents do not have demands and pressure on teachers and schools.

Teacher A said: "Parents fully entrust their children to schools; they support all programs so that their children can pass the National Examination". Meanwhile, teacher B said: "So far there has been no pressure from any party on us, be it from the school or the parents of students, they are very supportive. So, we become more enthusiastic in guiding and succeeding students in the National Examination".

With the intensification program in preparing for the National Examination, it is hoped that it can foster confidence in students in facing English questions, arouse students' motivation to learn better, and obtain satisfactory grades according to what is learned during the learning process.

Questionnaire data shows that this National Examination does not provide a mental burden that is too big for the two teachers so that students can pass the National Examination. Teachers provide students with a significant portion of learning when they face the National Examination and enrich learning material outside of class hours. The teacher also provides additional material about computers for students because the National Examination is conducted on a computer basis. The teacher is worried that their students will be unable to answer the National Examination questions. The teacher agrees that the

National Examination is still relevant to implement in Indonesia. However, the teacher disagrees that the National Examination is a benchmark for students to understand the material that has been given.

Students' Preparations for the English National Examination

Based on the students' interviews about their views on English National Examination:

1. Student 1: I am afraid and not confident in facing the Mathematics and English National Examination.
2. Student 2: I feel very confused and worried if later I don't pass the National Examination, I am ashamed of my friends and family.
3. Student 3: In my opinion, in every National Examination implementation every year it always makes students feel anxious and depressed, afraid of not graduating.
4. Student 4: Even though I'm a little anxious and nervous about it, I still try to be calm and study hard to face the National Examination.
5. Student 5: I'm a bit worried, but I'm sure I can handle it, sir.
6. Student 6: Very restless and nervous, sir.
7. Student 7: I'm afraid, but hopefully it goes well and can pass the exam.
8. Student 8: I feel relaxed, sir, the important thing is that we study the National Examination materials given by the teacher.
9. Student 9: It's not too special, sir, it's just normal, because I saw that the older classmates seemed busier again.
10. Student 10: I'm scared, sir, what if I don't pass the exam later.

Based on the interviews with the ten students above, it can be concluded that 20% of students feel anxious and afraid when facing the National Examination, and the majority of them are afraid of not being able to answer the questions of the National Examination and not passing the National Examination. Meanwhile, 20% of students feel relaxed and confident that they can pass the National Examination.

According to Nevid (2005:163), anxiety is a bad situation that will occur caused by unnatural threats such as health, social relations, exams, careers, and environmental conditions that can affect it. Likewise, students will face the National Examination with various demands from many parties and the fear of being unable to pass the National Examination. Then it will make students experience anxiety because of the burden. In this case, students are afraid they will fail because they have never experienced answering computer-based English National Examination questions.

CONCLUSION

In carrying out the preparation for the English National Examination, which the English teacher will carry out at MTs Tanjungsari-Rajadesa, consists of three stages. The first is the preparatory stage, which includes initial observation by carrying out Tryout activities for the English National Examination to students so that the questions and material are known, which are challenging to work on, and which students have not mastered.

Then, in the second stage, the teacher prepares the subject matter, learning methods, and precise and fast tricks for solving English National Examination questions. In the final and third stages, the teacher and principal determine the implementation time for learning intensification activities outside of learning hours. By frequently working on National Examination practice questions, students will be better prepared to face the National Examination because they can measure their weaknesses when working on exam questions.

That way, students can improve themselves and try to improve their abilities so that during the implementation of the National Examination, they can do well and get satisfactory results.

Parents must be able to allocate the time for their children to prepare for the National Examination. Parents' habits while their children study includes watching television, playing with gadgets, or other bad activities. It must temporarily be changed with more attention from the child.

The role of the school principal in preparing for the National Examination can be seen from a well-organized work program, and this can be seen from the activities carried out before the implementation of the computer-Based National Examination. The principal provides the facilities needed to improve the quality of student learning. Provision of facilities and infrastructure in classrooms, computer labs, Student Worksheets, modules, and sample exam questions, coupled with the internet, can help students gain insight from outside. The principal also oversees the entire teaching and learning process.

The English National Exam seems to have more negative than positive effects. In addition, five main areas are directly affected by the English National Examination: the timing of activities, teaching materials, teaching methods, and students' feelings when they are about to face the National Examination. Overall, regarding the timing of activities leading up to the implementation of the National Examination, teaching methods, and materials often change and are adapted to the conditions of implementation ahead of the Examination, the implications of which can be detrimental to the psychological development of students.

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