



Doctor of Philosophy (**PhD**) Programme

**Interplays between English Teaching-Learning and Assessment
Practice in Secondary Schools**

A dissertation submitted to the University of Dhaka in partial fulfilment of the
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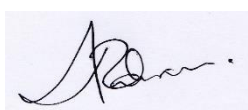
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Statement of Original Authorship

I declare that this dissertation and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that this work was done wholly in candidature for a research degree at the University of Dhaka and has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. It contains no materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.



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Declaration

It is to certify that I have supervised the research work and the dissertation that Kh. Atikur Rahman is submitting in the partial fulfillments of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in English Language Education.

To the best of my knowledge, it is his own work and it has not been submitted it anywhere for a degree or diploma.



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Abstract

Teaching English has always been a challenging area in Bangladesh (Rahman and Pandian, 2018). In order to improve the quality of English teaching and learning, several attempts have been made to reform the curriculum. But unfortunately, regardless of various attempts of curriculum reforms, several recent studies (Rahman et al., 2019; Sultana, 2019; Al Amin and Greenwood, 2018; Hoque, 2016; Hoque, 2011; Chowdhury, 2010; and Maniruzzaman & Hoque, 2010) confirm that there is very insignificant change in the teaching and learning process in the English classrooms. Among other factors, researchers (Rahman et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2018b; Khan, 2010) explored a direct connection between the failure of English teaching, learning and assessment system in Bangladesh. Few studies found the relationship between the failure of CLT and its methods of assessment in Bangladesh (Sultana, 2019; Ali, Hamid, & Hardy, 2018; Amin, 2017).

However, although it is a widely held notion that washback (i.e., positive or negative effects of a test on teaching and learning) exists, there is insufficient data or evidence to confirm “whether it really exists and, if it does, what the nature of its effect is” (Shohamy, 1993, p. 4), especially in the context of current study (Nuby, Rashid, & Hasan, 2019; Nur & Islam, 2018; Rahman et al., 2018b; Sultana, 2019; Karim, et al., 2017). Literature (e.g., Nuby, Rashid, & Hasan, 2019; Rahman et al., 2019, 2018; Sultana, 2019) indicates that there are three shortcomings in the field of language testing in Bangladesh (i.e., paucity of empirical studies, absence of washback study on the JSC English test, and absence of students’ perspectives in the washback studies). Responding to these shortcomings, the present doctoral study made an effort to investigate and approach washback of JSC English test from a context-specific and wider perspective.

It examined the correlations between the JSC English curriculum and JSC examination; the JSC textbook and other teaching-learning materials and JSC English test; teaching-learning methods and JSC English examination; classroom activities and test, etc. It, then, investigated if any washback of the JSC English test exists, and in what ways English teaching and learning practice are affected by the JSC English test.

This study focused firstly on JSC English teaching-learning practice in the classrooms. Secondly, it attempted to explore the existing assessment practice used in JSC English. Thirdly and most importantly, it examined the interplays between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice, how they influence (facilitate or hinder i.e., washback effect) each other. Thus, the overarching aim of this study is to investigate the effect of assessment (JSC English Test) on English teaching-learning at Class 8 at secondary schools of Bangladesh. Alongside, it seeks to examine the effect of any other teacher, students and context-dependent variables which may contribute to positive or negative interplays between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice.

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study, mixed method research approach was applied to collect relevant data. The researcher used in-depth interviews with teachers and students, classroom observations (COLT scheme) and analysis of JSC curriculum, textbook, commercially produced books or materials and other examination related documents to elicit qualitative data and conducted questionnaire surveys for students and teachers to obtain quantitative data, which provided ample insights into the current study.

As far as analysis of relevant data is concerned, a thorough analysis of the features of the JSC English test was made and reported. The data elicited from the classroom observation scheme was first compiled and tallied for an

individual lesson/class, and then coded according to the categories specified in the classroom observation scheme. Then, frequency counts for each category across all observed lessons were done. Moreover, during the analysis, mean ratings for each category across all observed lessons were also computed. When analyzing the data was done quantitatively, a short summary was written. On the other hand, the interviews involved the application of transcript-based analysis (for teacher interviews) and tape-based analysis (for FGIs) approach (Krueger & Casey, 2020), thematic analysis (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016), and constant comparative method (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Glasser and Strauss, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The relevant data were classified into categories. The analysis of the quantitative data derived from the questionnaire surveys for students and teachers involved frequency counts (and/or percentages by category), and descriptive statistics.

Eventually, the study has explored some noteworthy and interesting findings that were cross-referenced through a number of research instruments already mentioned. These findings of the study are: the majority of the teachers lacked proper understanding and awareness of the objectives of JSC English curriculum. They only knew the JSC English test format and taught accordingly. Both teachers and their students were reluctant to study the textbook, rather they depended highly on commercially produced test-oriented materials. The study reveals that this phenomenon happened because of misalignment between the JSC English textbook and the test.

Teachers skipped and ignored some of the lessons of the textbook that were not or less expected and thus, they narrowed the content of the textbook so that it can match and resemble the content of the JSC English examination, i.e., “*what is tested is taught.*” Test-items of the JSC English test were quite commonly repeated almost every year. Consequently, the learners took resort to memorizing those test-items got from the commercially produced guidebooks

or their teachers. The content and construct validity of the question-items of the JSC English Test were found questionable. Most of the teachers criticized this test for failing to redress the expected balance between its contents and the content of the national English curriculum (2012).

Both teachers and their students underwent internal and external pressure for better scores. The JSC English test greatly influenced the teachers' and students' teaching and learning practices, tailoring it to the test. They emphasized acquiring mastery over grammar, and reading and writing skills; limiting participation in communicative tasks and activities. Since listening and speaking skills are not tested in the JSC English test, teachers did not teach and/or assess these two skills. Even if these two skills were ever taught, the way they were taught hardly could benefit the students to develop their proficiency in these two skills.

The findings of the study also reveal that the JSC English test was not the sole reason behind these unwelcomed English teaching and learning practices in the classroom by the English teachers and their students. Teacher characteristics including teachers' educational background, their beliefs, and their past experience also play a significant role in this regard. On the other hand, context characteristics or factors include large student population, small class size, insufficient time allotted for instruction, large contents of syllabus, the grades teachers teach, their heavy workloads, students' low levels of proficiency in English, pressure from authority (school and education ministry), and parents of the students to improve the score, no reflection of the marks of speaking and listening tests in public (JSC) examinations, poor socio-economic conditions of teachers, absence of monitoring and supervision by concerned authorities like NCTB, education boards, etc. are also indirectly responsible for this. The findings of the study have several significant implications for policy makers, test creators, teachers, teacher trainers and other stakeholders.

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this work to **four persons**:

- my late mother **Ms. Jobaida Afsary**, who had always been an inspiration in all my achievements
- my mother-in-law (**Zinnatur Rizwana Lipi**) and my wife (**Nafisa A. Jenus**) who took all the responsibilities of discharging our day-to-day family affairs so that I could carry on my PhD work smoothly
- my daughter (**Atkia Labiba**) who had to spend her childhood days without me and at times was so disappointed seeing me busy all the time with my “**criminal PhD**” work!

To understand her disappointment, **in the screenshot** below, **read the middle paragraph (written by her** while I was brushing up Chapter 4 before submission)

papers, commercially produced test-oriented books (guide and notebooks, Test-papers, Model question books), which has been reported in the following chapter of this doctoral dissertation.

Stop this bad criminal PHD, because it makes my father mad **about work, SO can you pls call a police or GOVERNMENT who can stop this** PHD and WORK from BSMRMU? or it will kill my father.

Secondly, alongside the analysis of relevant, documents qualitative analyses of the data elicited from in-depth interviews with English teachers, focused group interviews with

Acknowledgments

Quite a few wonderful people helped to inspire and to develop this doctoral research project. I wish to express my appreciation to them.

I thank **Prof. Dr. Mariam Begum**, my supervisor, for her guidance in pursuing this research work on English language teaching and testing in the secondary schools of Bangladesh. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to her not only for her eternal patience and support and for tireless readings and revisions of my work but also for being an exceptional educator and advisor.

I am also grateful to the many wonderful teachers and students of the sample schools whose participation made this project possible. These dedicated language teachers and learners inspired this research and my own views of teaching. I hope that the professional and personal ties we have forged will continue to benefit both parties through the years.

Most importantly, I thank my wife (**Nafisa Anjum Jenus**) and my mother-in-law (**Jinnatur Rizwana Lipi**) for their unprecedented sacrifice, support and warmth during this PhD project.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Statement of Original Authorship | 2 |
| Declaration | 2 |
| Abstract | 3-6 |
| Dedication | 7 |
| Acknowledgments | 8 |
| Table of Contents | 9 |
| Chapter One: Introduction | 15 |
| 1.1 Introduction | 15 |
| 1.2 Background to the Research Problem | 17 |
| 1.3 Research Aims and Objectives | 25 |
| 1.4. Research Questions | 25 |
| 1.5 Significance of the Study | 27 |
| 1.6 Structure of the Thesis | 31 |
| 1.7 Conclusion | 34 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review | 35 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 35 |
| 2.2 High-Stakes Testing and Public Examinations | 36 |
| 2.3 Washback: Background and Origin | 38 |
| 2.4 Washback: Definition | 43 |
| 2.4.1 Defining ‘washback’ in general | 43 |
| 2.4.2 Defining ‘washback’ in terms of the present study | 48 |
| 2.5 Complexity of washback | 50 |
| 2.5.1 Areas of teaching and learning influenced by washback | 51 |
| 2.5.2 Characteristics of washback | 53 |
| 2.5.2.1 Washback intentionality | 54 |
| 2.5.2.2 Value of washback: Positive, Negative | 56 |
| 2.5.2.3 Washback specificity | 60 |
| 2.5.2.4 Washback intensity | 61 |
| 2.5.2.5 Differential washback | 62 |
| 2.5.2.6 Seasonality of washback | 63 |
| 2.6 Washback Factors | 64 |
| 2.6.1. Washback on Curriculum and Teaching materials (Curriculum Washback) | 65 |
| 2.6.2 Washback on Teaching Methodology (Methodological Washback) | 71 |
| 2.6.3 Washback on Students’ and Teachers’ Perception (Perception Washback) | 76 |
| 2.6.3.1 Students’ attitudes and perceptions | 76 |
| 2.6.3.2 Teachers’ attitudes and perceptions | 80 |
| 2.6.3.3 Other factors influencing washback | 85 |
| 2.6.3.3.1 Teachers’ teaching experience | 85 |
| 2.6.3.3.2 Teacher Education, Training and Awareness of Test | 86 |
| 2.6.3.3.3 Teachers’ Academic Qualification | 87 |
| 2.6.3.4 Contextual Factors | 89 |
| 2.7 Washback: Hypotheses and Models | 94 |
| 2.7.1 Washback hypotheses | 94 |
| 2.7.2 Washback Models | 97 |
| 2.7.2.1 Hughes’s Washback Model (1993) | 98 |
| 2.7.2.2 Bailey’s basic washback model (1996) | 101 |
| 2.7.2.3 Shih’s Washback Model (2007 and 2009) | 103 |
| 2.7.2.4 Pan’s Washback Model (2008) | 107 |
| 2.8 Conceptual framework for the current study | 108 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Chapter 3: Setting the Scene | 112 |
| 3.1 Educational Structure of Bangladesh | 112 |
| 3.2 JSC/JDC Level Education in Bangladesh | 117 |
| 3.3 English Education at Secondary School Level | 118 |
| 3.4 Description of the JSC English Examination | 122 |
| 3.5 Defining ‘the term’ mentioned in the title of the study | 127 |
| Chapter 4: Research Methods and Design | 129 |
| 4.1 Introduction | 129 |
| 4.2 Defining Research Design | 130 |
| 4.2.1 Research Philosophy and Paradigm | 131 |
| 4.2.1.1 Paradigm | 132 |
| 4.2.1.1.1 Ontology | 135 |
| 4.2.1.1.2 Epistemology | 136 |
| 4.2.1.2 Methodology | 138 |
| 4.2.1.3 Key Philosophical Paradigms | 139 |
| 4.2.1.3.1 Positivist Paradigm | 139 |
| 4.2.1.3.2 Interpretivist Paradigm | 141 |
| 4.2.1.4 Quantitative Research | 142 |
| 4.2.1.5 Qualitative Research | 143 |
| 4.2.1.6 Mixed Methods | 145 |
| 4.2.1.7 Triangulation | 149 |
| 4.2.2 Debate on Mixed Approach to Research Paradigm | 154 |
| 4.2.3 Methods Used in Washback Studies | 156 |
| 4.3 Research Methodology of this Study | 163 |
| 4.3.1 Research Type and Strategy | 164 |
| 4.3.2 Rationale for the Methodology | 170 |
| 4.3.3 Variables focused on in the study | 172 |
| 4.3.4 Population, Sample and Methods of the Study | 174 |
| 4.3.4.1 Population of the Study | 174 |
| 4.3.4.2 Sample of the Study | 174 |
| 4.3.4.2.1 Subjects (Participants) | 174 |
| 4.3.4.2.1.1 Demographics of the surveyed English teachers | 178 |
| 4.3.4.2.2 Survey Strategy | 182 |
| 4.3.4.2.2.1 Questionnaire | 182 |
| 4.3.4.2.2 Qualitative Strategy | 189 |
| 4.3.4.2.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews with Teachers | 190 |
| 4.3.4.2.2.2 Focused Group Interviews (FGIs) with Students | 193 |
| 4.3.4.2.2.3 Classroom observation | 196 |
| 4.3.5 Pilot Study and Implications for the Main Study | 200 |
| 4.3.5.1 Piloting Student and Teacher Questionnaires | 201 |
| 4.3.5.2 Interviews with teachers and Students | 203 |
| 4.3.5.3 Piloting Classroom Observation | 204 |
| 4.3.5.4 Changes made to classroom observation scheme after piloting | 206 |
| 4.3.5.5 Document Study | 207 |
| 4.3.5.6 Research Diary | 209 |
| 4.3.5.7 Artifacts | 209 |
| 4.3.5.8 Photographs | 210 |
| 4.4 Research Stages and Timeline | 211 |
| 4.5 Ethical Considerations | 215 |
| 4.6 Data Analysis | 217 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 4.6.1 Analysis of Quantitative (Survey) Data | 221 |
| 4.6.2 Analysis of Relevant Documents | 224 |
| 4.6.2.1 Analysis of JSC English Curriculum | 224 |
| 4.6.2.2 Analysis of the Textbooks | 224 |
| 4.6.3 Analysis of Interviews | 227 |
| 4.6.4 Focus group Interviews (FGIs) | 229 |
| 4.6.5 Analysis of Classroom Observation Data | 230 |
| 4.7 Triangulation of Data | 231 |
| 4.8 Summary of the Chapter | 233 |
| Chapter 5: Findings of the Study | 234 |
| 5.1 Findings from Document Analysis | 235 |
| 5.1.1 Findings from the Analysis of English Curriculum | 235 |
| 5.1.1.1 Mapping the Objectives and the Learning Outcomes (LOs) | 243 |
| 5.1.2 Findings from the Analysis of the Textbooks | 245 |
| 5.1.2.1 External Evaluation | 247 |
| 5.1.2.2 Internal Evaluation | 248 |
| 5.1.2.3 Compliance with the General Instructions given by the NCTB | 269 |
| 5.1.3 Analysis of JSC English Test | 273 |
| 5.1.3.1 Misalignment between the textbook and the exam | 277 |
| 5.1.4 Analysis of Commercially produced materials | 281 |
| 5.1.5 Findings from Teacher and Student Questionnaires | 283 |
| 5.1.5.1 The Questionnaire Surveys | 283 |
| 5.1.5.2 Descriptive Statistics Analysis | 285 |
| 5.1.5.3 English Syllabus and Curriculum | 285 |
| 5.1.5.3.1 Participants' Awareness of the JSC Curriculum Objectives | 286 |
| 5.1.5.3.2 Classroom Teaching and Learning of the Syllabus and Curriculum | 287 |
| 5.1.5.3.3 Alignment between the aims of the Curriculum and the Test | 288 |
| 5.1.5.4 Textbooks and other Teaching Materials | 288 |
| 5.1.5.4.1 Salient features of <i>English for Today</i> (for Class 8) | 289 |
| 5.1.5.4.2 Sharing the Objectives of the Lessons with Students | 289 |
| 5.1.5.4.3 Perceptions and Attitudes towards the Textbook | 290 |
| 5.1.5.4.4 Skipping and Narrowing the Contents of the textbook | 291 |
| 5.1.5.4.5 Use of Test- Related Materials | 292 |
| 5.1.5.5 Teaching Methods and Approaches | 293 |
| 5.1.5.5.1 Teachers' Language of Instruction | 294 |
| 5.1.5.5.2 Teachers' Encouragement and Motivation | 294 |
| 5.1.5.5.3 Teaching to the Test | 295 |
| 5.1.5.5.3 Indication and Reflection of the JSC Examination Results | 296 |
| 5.1.5.6 Classroom Tasks and Activities | 296 |
| 5.1.5.6.1 Classroom Tasks and Activities Preferences | 297 |
| 5.1.5.6.2 Practice of Model Tests and Preparation Tests | 298 |
| 5.1.5.6.3 Examination Pressure and Test-taking Strategies | 298 |
| 5.1.5.6.4 Choice of Skills, Tasks and Activities | 299 |
| 5.1.5.7 Beliefs, Attitudes and Perception as to the Test | 301 |
| 5.1.5.7.1 Perception of External Pressure and English Proficiency | 301 |
| 5.1.5.7.2 Tension and Anxiety resulting from JSC Examination | 302 |
| 5.1.5.7.3 Perceptions towards the JSC English test | 303 |
| 5.1.6 Findings from Classroom Observations | 304 |
| 5.1.6.1 Participant Organization | 305 |
| 5.1.6.2 Teaching Materials Used | 309 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 5.1.6.3 Classroom Content | 310 |
| 5.1.6.4 Content Control of Classroom Activities | 314 |
| 5.1.6.5 Student modality | 316 |
| 5.1.7 Findings from Interviews (Teachers and Students) | 319 |
| 5.1.7.1 English Curriculum and Syllabus | 320 |
| 5.1.7.2 Teaching-Learning Methods | 323 |
| 5.1.7.3 Teaching Materials and Aids Used | 329 |
| 5.1.7.4 Activities and Skills Practiced | 330 |
| 5.1.7.5 School based Assessment (Summative and Formative) | 333 |
| 5.1.7.6 Feedback Practice | 336 |
| 5.1.8 Present Assessment System (Formative and JSC English Test) | 341 |
| 5.1.8 Importance of JSC result in Bangladesh | 349 |
| 5.1.9 Private tuition or coaching classes | 354 |
| 5.1.10 Reasons behind failure in ensuring positive interplays | 357 |
| Chapter 6: Discussion | 358 |
| 6.1 The Syllabus and the Curriculum | 360 |
| 6.1.1 Awareness of the Objectives of the JSC English Curriculum | 360 |
| 6.1.2 Teaching and Learning of the JSC Syllabus and Curriculum | 362 |
| 6.1.3 Communicating the Lesson Objectives | 364 |
| 6.1.4 Skipping and Narrowing the Contents of <i>EfT</i> | 365 |
| 6.1.5 JSC English Curriculum and Test: Alignment of Goals | 367 |
| 6.2 Teaching Methods and Approaches | 381 |
| 6.3 Teachers' Language of Instruction | 385 |
| 6.4 Language Skills Practiced | 388 |
| 6.5 School based Assessment (Summative & Formative) | 389 |
| 6.6 Teaching to the Test | 392 |
| 6.7 Internal and external pressure for good grades | 394 |
| 6.8 Contextual Factors and Failure in ensuring positive interplays | 407 |
| 6.9 Achievement of Intended/Unintended Objectives | 409 |
| 6.10 Answer to the Research Questions | 413 |
| 6.10.1 Answer to the Main Research Question | 413 |
| 6.10.2 Answer to Guiding Question 1: | 421 |
| 6.10.3 Answer to Guiding Question 2: | 426 |
| Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations | 431 |
| 7.1 Introduction | 431 |
| 7.2 Summary of the Findings | 431 |
| 7.2.1 Findings on the JSC Syllabus and Curriculum | 432 |
| 7.2.2 Findings on Textbook and other teaching materials | 433 |
| 7.2.3 Findings on JSC English test | 435 |
| 7.2.4 Findings on Teaching Methods | 437 |
| 7.2.5 Findings on Classroom Activities and Tasks | 439 |
| 7.2.6 Findings on Summative and formative assessment | 441 |
| 7.2.7 Findings on Skills Practiced | 444 |
| 7.2.8 Findings on Teacher and Contextual Factors | 444 |
| 7.3 Recommendations | 446 |
| 7.4 Contribution and Implications of the Study | 450 |
| 7.5 Limitations of the Study | 453 |
| 7.6 Suggestions for Future Research | 455 |
| 7.7 Concluding Remarks | 459 |
| References | 461 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Appendices | 492 |
| Appendix 1A: Interview Questions for Teachers | 492 |
| Appendix 1B: Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) Schedule for Students | 492 |
| Appendix 1C: Teacher Questionnaire | 493 |
| Appendix 1D: Student Questionnaire | 495 |
| Appendix 1E: Modified- Part A of the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) | 497 |
| Appendix 2: Original COLT Scheme | 498 |
| Appendix 3A: Teacher Questionnaire (by Hoque, 2011) | 499 |
| Appendix 3B: Student Questionnaire (by Hoque, 2011) | 501 |
| Appendix 4: Preface of <i>English for Today</i> | 503 |
| Appendix 5: NCTB Sample English Question Papers for Class 8 | 504 |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|-----|
| Table 2.1: Factors mediating washback | 65 |
| Table 2.2: Hughes's trichotomy of backwash model | 98 |
| Table: 3.1: The educational structure of Bangladesh | 114 |
| Table 3.2: JSC English Test Items and Marks Distribution | 123 |
| Table 4.1: Four elements informing one another | 134 |
| Table 4.1: Ontology of research philosophies | 135 |
| Table 4.2: Main aspects of positivism and interpretivism | 140 |
| Table 4.3: Differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches | 143 |
| Table 4.4: Mapping of all paradigms, stances, and approaches | 145 |
| Table: 4.6: Research tools and sampling process at a glance | 176 |
| Table 4.7: Demographics of the surveyed English teachers | 179 |
| Table 4.8: Profile of the interviewed teachers | 180 |
| Table 4.9: Instruments of data collection | 182 |
| Table 4.10: Section-wise Items in the original Questionnaires (Hoque, 2011) | 186 |
| Table 4.11: Section-wise Items in the current Questionnaires | 186 |
| Table 4.12: Steps to interview design and construction | 192 |
| Table 4.13: Procedures of data collection | 213 |
| Table 4.14: Procedure of data analysis for the current study | 220 |
| Table 4.15: Phases and Stages of theme development | 228 |
| Table 5.1: Mapping the Learning Outcomes in the Curriculum and in EFT | 244 |
| Table 5.2: Distribution of lesson-wise tasks | 249 |
| Table 5.3: Compliance with the General Instructions given by NCTB | 271 |
| Table 5.4: Alignment between the English for Today and JSC English Test | 278 |
| Table 5.5: Section-wise Items in the Questionnaires | 283 |
| Table 5.6: Descriptive Statistics (Participants' Awareness of Curriculum Obj) | 286 |
| Table 5.7: Descriptive Statistics (Teaching the syllabus and Textbook) | 287 |
| Table 5.8: Descriptive Statistics (Lack of Alignment between Curriculum and Test) | 288 |
| Table 5.9: Descriptive Statistics (Sharing Lesson Objectives with Students) | 290 |
| Table 5.10: Descriptive Statistics (Participants' Attitude towards Textbook) | 291 |
| Table 5.11: Descriptive Statistics (Skipping and Narrowing the content) | 292 |
| Table 5.12: Descriptive Statistics (Use of Teaching Materials) | 293 |
| Table 5.13: Descriptive Statistics (teachers' medium of instructions) | 294 |
| Table 5.14: Descriptive Statistics (teachers' encouragement to speak English) | 294 |
| Table 5.15: Descriptive Statistics (Choice of topic and test taking strategies) | 294 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Table 5.16: Descriptive Statistics (Indication and Reflection of JSC Results) | 295 |
| Table 5.17: Descriptive Statistics (Tasks and Activities Preferences) | 297 |
| Table 5.18: Descriptive Statistics (Use of model/mock test and past papers) | 298 |
| Table 5.19: Descriptive Statistics (Exam Pressure and Hindrance of learning) | 299 |
| Table 5.20: Descriptive Statistics (JSC English Test's influence on choice of skills) | 300 |
| Table 5.21: Descriptive Statistics (Skills taught in the classroom) | 300 |
| Table 5.22: Descriptive Statistics (External Pressure on Participants) | 302 |
| Table 5.23: Descriptive Statistics (Participants' English Score Vs Proficiency) | 302 |
| Table 5.24: Descriptive Statistics (Participants' anxiety for JSC English test) | 302 |
| Table 5.25: Descriptive Statistics (Participants' Attitude towards JSC English test) | 303 |
| Table 5.26: Participant organization (%) | 306 |
| Table 5.27: Types of teaching-learning materials used in the classroom | 309 |
| Table 5.28: Lesson Contents (%) in total class time | 312 |
| Table 5.29: Teacher-wise Content Control (%) | 315 |
| Table 5.30: Teacher-wise Student Modality (%) | 317 |
| Table 5.31: Class-tests taken at different schools | 344 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure 2.1: Washback on curriculum and syllabus | 68 |
| Figure 2.2: Stakeholders involved in the testing process | 93 |
| Figure 2.3: Saville's stakeholders of macro-level washback | 94 |
| Figure 2.6: Shih's Washback model | 104 |
| Figure 2.7: Shih's Washback model | 106 |
| Figure 2.9: The conceptual framework for the current study | 110 |
| Figure 4.1: Relations between paradigms and methods | 133 |
| Figure 4.2: Impact of ontology on the selection of research methods | 136 |
| Figure 4.3: Four types of triangulation | 153 |
| Figure 4.4: Research "onion" model | 163 |
| Figure 4.5: Research methodology adopted in this study | 164 |
| Figure 4.6: Variables focused in the current doctoral study | 173 |
| Figure 4.7: Process of data triangulation in the current study | 232 |
| Figure 5.1: Percentage of tasks on different skills in EfT | 252 |
| Figure 5.2: Participant organization (%) | 308 |
| Figure 5.3: Graphical Presentation of Average (%) Time Spent | 313 |
| Figure 5.4: Graphical Presentation of Content control (%) | 316 |
| Figure 5.5: Student Modality (%) | 318 |

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In the prevailing education system of Bangladesh, students learn English as a mandatory subject/course from the “earliest grade possible” (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008, p.16) which starts at Grade/class 1 and continue till Grade/class 12, and afterward at the university level (Ali & Hamid, 2020; Sultana, 2018; Rahman & Rahman, 2013; Yasmin, 2005, 2007), where the medium of instruction is usually English. Yet regrettably the majority of them have poor level of proficiency in English (Rahman & Rahman, 2013). Following Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) in the English teaching and learning process was thought to be one of the most significant reasons for this poor level of proficiency. Therefore, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach was introduced in the national curriculum in 1996 to enhance students’ communicative competence (Nuby, Rashid, & Hasan, 2019; Nur & Islam, 2018; Rahman et al., 2018b; Sultana, 2018; Roy, 2016; Rahman, 2015; Rahman & Rahman, 2012; NCTB, 2012; Yasmin, 2009).

The current English curriculum (2012) including the recent past English curriculum (2003) developed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) follows the communicative approach to curriculum design and development. Accordingly, the core textbook (*English for Today for Class 8*) was produced by the NCTB. The NCTB recommended that English teaching-learning and assessment practice should also follow the communicative approach (NCTB, 2012), with the expectation that it would 'revitalize' students’

poor level of English language proficiency by “improving the standard of teaching and learning English at different levels of formal education” (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008, p.16; Rahman & Rahman, 2012; Roshid, 2009). Yet regrettably again, improvement in the students’ level of English language proficiency is still “far from satisfactory” (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008, p.16; Rahman et al., 2019; Amin, 2017; Roshid, 2009).

Among other factors, researchers (Rahman et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2018b; Khan, 2010) explored a direct connection between the failure of English teaching, learning and assessment system in Bangladesh. Few studies found the relationship between the failure of CLT and its methods of assessment in Bangladesh (Sultana, 2019; Ali, Hamid, & Hardy, 2018; Amin, 2017). This failure resulting from the lack of a harmony between syllabus, teachers’ and students’ beliefs and attitudes, the teaching-learning method, and examination is believed to be one of the reasons behind the lack of improvement in the students’ level of English language proficiency (Rahman et al., 2019; Amin, 2017; Rahman & Rahman, 2012; Quader, 2001).

Thus, although it is a widely held notion that washback exists, there is insufficient data or evidence to confirm or reject these perceptions, especially in the context of current study (Nuby, Rashid, & Hasan, 2019; Nur & Islam, 2018; Rahman et al., 2018b; Sultana, 2019; Karim, et al., 2017). "While the connection between testing and learning is commonly made, it is not known whether it really exists and, if it does, what the nature of its effect is" (Shohamy, 1993, p. 4).

1.2 Background to the Research Problem

Effective assessment or testing functions as a significant force to ensure effective and outcome-based teaching and learning in the classroom and beyond (Rahman & Rahman, 2012; Rahman, 2013, Stiggins, 1991). It facilitates teachers to augment students' learning and their achievement in the examination and in their practical life (Phelps, 2019; Day et al., 2018). At the same time, assessment has the power to dominate the curriculum, and teaching and learning practice (Torrance, 2012, 2011, 2007; Rahman, 2013). The educational experience of students and their relationship with teachers is also dictated by the mode of assessment. Assessment and testing drive the established curriculum (Brew, Riley & Walta, 2009), teachers' teaching methods and approaches, and learners' learning approaches (Torrance, 2011; Biggs, 1995). Either they positively emphasize such behaviors and attitudes which encourage students to work diligently, or exert pressures on them that lead them to unwanted academic behaviors and attitudes (Tzagari, 2007).

Several empirical studies show evidence that when the mode of assessment is limiting, it narrows students' learning experiences. Such assessment practice creates washback (usually negative) on teaching-learning practice in the classrooms, negatively affects teachers and students' attitudes and behaviors towards teaching and learning, what teachers teach, and how they teach, what learners learn, how they learn, and the education system and the society as a whole (Messick, 1996; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996; Alderson & Wall, 1993). Shepard (2000) recommend that there should be alignment between assessment or test practices, and current pedagogical theories and curriculum theories.

The correlations and interplays between (a) teaching and learning; and (b) assessment and testing practices has commonly been investigated in several research studies conducted in language teaching and testing (e.g., Luong-Phan & Effeney, 2015; Gebril & Brown, 2014; Cheng, Andrews, & Yu, 2011). The last two decades of empirical research into washback in the field of language teaching and testing starting with Alderson and Wall's (1993) seminal work with a titular question, "*Does washback exist?*", has led to an escalating body of empirical washback studies. With the increase of high-stakes and large-scale testing worldwide (Green, 2006; Cheng, 2008; Tsagari, 2009;) and therefore the rising cognizance of the massive power testing has (Ali et al., 2018; Sultana, 2018; Hoque, 2011; Shohamy, 2007), the concept of washback has been increasingly reconceptualized. During this process, the initial concept of washback, an aspect of validity (Morrow, 1986; Messick, 1996), has revolved to the complex relationships between teaching and learning, and testing and assessment (Sultana, 2018; Hoque, 2011; Green, 2007a, 2007b; Cheng, 2002; Bailey, 1996).

Thus, this progression and diversification in the process has led to the concept that washback is now broadly conceptualized as the effects of a particular test has on "micro-levels of language teaching and learning inside the classroom" and "macro-levels of education and society" (Cheng, Sun & Ma, 2015, p438).

While prior washback research studies were mainly on teaching in the ESL or EFL classrooms – the changes in teachers' aspects of teaching resulting from the changes in testing (Bailey, 1996), for example: teachers' perception, attitude and behavior (see Turner, 2006; Cheng, 1997, 1999, 2010; Wang, 2010), methods and approaches of teaching (e.g. Spratt, 2005; Watanabe, 2004a,

Andrews *et al.*, 2002; Cheng, 1997), content of teaching (e.g. Munoz & Alvarez, 2010; Wall 2005; Qi, 2004, 2005; Read & Hayes, 2003; Cheng 1997, 2005; Watanabe 1996b, 2003; Bailey 1996; Hughes, 1993; Alderson and Wall 1993), teaching materials such as textbooks and past exam or test papers (Saville & Hawkey, 2004; Read & Hayes, 2003; Andrews *et al.*, 2002; Cheng, 1997), allocation of class time (Read & Hayes, 2003; Shohamy et al. 1996; Alderson and Hamp-Lyons 1996, Lam, 1994), recently research on the effects of testing on language learners' learning (e.g. Shih, 2007; Senel & Tutunis, 2013; Cheng et al. 2015), has caught attention also. For example, studies of washback on learners (e.g. Shih, 2007; Pan, 2014; Weili, 2010; Hawkey, 2006), students' test preparation approaches (Mickan & Motteram 2009; Green 2007; Read & Hayes, 2003; Elder & O'Loughlin 2003; Brown 1998), learners' focus on test-related materials, activities and tasks (e.g. Mickan & Motteram 2008; Green 2007) their perspectives (Mahmud, 2018; Green 2006a; Green, 2007), their beliefs, their context, educational experience (Zhan & Wan 2016; Zhan & Andrews 2014; Xie & Andrews 2012; Gosa, 2004) and their achievement of score/grades (Humphreys et al. 2012; O'Loughlin & Arkoudis 2009; Green 2007; Elder & O'Loughlin 2003), and the learners' mediating factors in washback research (e.g. Gosa, 2004; Allen, 2006; Stoneman, 2006; Green 2006a, 2007; Shih, 2007; Tsagari 2007; Tsai & Tsou 2009; Mickan & Motteram 2009; Cheng & Deluca, 2011; Cheng et al. 2010; Smyth & Banks 2012; Xie & Andrews 2012; Xie 2013; Zhan & Andrews 2014; Pan, 2014; Zhan & Wan 2016) have been investigated to elucidate how testing influences and shapes learners' learning.

Although commencing with the phenomenal work of Alderson and Wall (1993), a considerable body of empirical studies on washback has been carried out throughout the world (as it has been seen above and detailed in the 2nd chapter of this dissertation), a very limited and insignificant number of washback studies (e.g., Ali & Hamid, 2020; Jamila & Kabir, 2020; Sultana, 2019; Maniruzzaman, 2012; Khan, 2010) were conducted in the context of the secondary schools of Bangladesh. Hence, there is a paucity of empirical studies on this particular area which can lead to a comprehensive understanding of the interplays between English teaching-learning and assessment (testing) practice at schools in Bangladesh, and how they influence (facilitate or hinder) each other, in particular, to what extent assessment affects English classroom teaching-learning.

“It is evident that the washback effect of assessment impacts several aspects of teaching and learning of English in Bangladesh. However, there is still a paucity of empirical studies given those handful of studies mentioned above. Thus, further empirical studies are needed to find out the impact of washback of testing on the different classroom practices carried out by the teachers and the learners” (Rahman et al., 2019, p. 9).

Furthermore, it is stated in several studies that as a phenomenon, washback is complex and multidimensional (El-ebyary, 2009; Choi, 2008; Alderson and Wall, 1993). Therefore, although a large number of the previous studies demonstrates ample evidence that test has considerable influence (washback) on English language teaching and learning, the form and intensity in which this takes place differ considerably across context because of the complex nature of the washback (Gennaro, 2017). Bailey (1999) comments, “In considering the

varied research about washback and language teachers, we can see that teachers' classroom behavior can either support or override the intended positive washback effect of new or revised tests. There have also been differences observed between novice and experienced teachers with respect to washback. We have seen that in many contexts teachers change the content of their teaching but not their methods as a result of examination changes" (p. 24).

On the other hand, some of the previous research studies indicated that test did not create washback effect (Watanabe, 1996b; Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996), whereas other studies found various ways and extent of washback on curricular planning, teaching materials, classroom instruction and arrangement of class time (Hughes, 1988; Herman & Golan, 1991). Therefore, it has been recommended by influential washback researchers to undertake more empirical studies to investigate washback both quantitatively and qualitatively (Cheng, 2005; Chen, 2002).

Hence, generalizing the findings of washback studies from one context to another unfalteringly is not a wise and professional deed, since multiple complex aspects, which contribute to studying washback in either context, do not possibly overlap to a large extent, and even person-specific characteristics unique to each teacher also contribute to this. Therefore, we should not consider it a direct or an automatic effect of any test or examination (Spratt, 2005; Bailey 1999).

The previous studies as outlined in the 2nd chapter (Literature Review) explore that a number of different variables which go beyond the exam *per se* may also lead to determine the intensity, amount, length, and kind of washback effect.

These variables include learners' characteristics (attitude, behaviors, and actions), teachers' characteristics (beliefs and practice), and the context in which teaching and learning occur (Spratt, 2005). These studies suggest that each test or exam, (especially high-stake ones) stipulates a tailor-made study to detect its washback effect. "[W]e need to investigate washback for every context in which test use is hypothesized to impact upon the process and content of teaching and learning" (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007: p. 229).

But the very limited and insignificant number of washback studies (e.g., Ali & Hamid, 2020; Jamila & Kabir, 2020; Sultana, 2019; Maniruzzaman, 2012; Khan, 2010) that were conducted in the context of the secondary schools of Bangladesh, focused only on the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) English test. None of these washback studies focused on the English language test in the JSC (Junior Secondary Certificate) examination, which is the first high-stakes public examination at secondary level of education in Bangladesh. Hence, since there is no empirical study which can definitely conclude that washback exists in the context of English teaching, learning, and assessment practice at the JSC level, it is important to investigate "whether it really exists and, if it does, what the nature of its effect is."

Moreover, although the washback research conducted in Bangladesh and elsewhere has advanced our understanding of different aspects of washback, most of them were either from teachers' perspectives or students' perspectives. Thus, inadequate attention had been paid to the fact that study of washback is a holistic process where actions and voices from both teachers and students need to be observed and listened to equally. Bailey pens, "although language learners are the key participants whose lives are most directly influenced by language

testing washback, there is relatively little research that documents their point of view or their washback-related behavior...” (1999, p.14). Other researchers also mentioned the significance of on boarding manifold stakeholders while embarking on a research study on washback (Cheng, Andrews, & Yu, 2011).

But none of the studies (except the study of Sultana, 2019) conducted in Bangladesh included students as participants for the study. Acknowledging that we have very little knowledge about learners’ perceptions of tests and how new tests influence students’ knowledge and their performance, Wall (2000) confirmed that more empirical studies are required in this area.

This tendency on the part of the washback researchers to overlook perceptions of students may partially explicate why, out of the fifteen hypotheses set by Alderson and Wall (1993), each hypothesis about teaching has been paired and matched with a corresponding item from learning.

Similarly, Hamp-Lyons (1997) stressed that high-stakes tests bring different meanings and connotations to different stakeholders. She suggested to conduct more empirical washback research studies on students’ attitudes and perspectives so that the professional responsibility of test writers can be enhanced in language education and testing. Green (2007), in the similar vein, believe that student perspectives in the washback studies even now remain “under-investigated in the literature” (p. 314). He stated that “variability at the individual level is central to an understanding of the complex process of washback and that the nature and extent of washback to learners does not bear a transparent relationship to washback to the teacher” (p. 314).

Hence, in the present doctoral study students have been included as respondents so that their voice can be provided as a representative opinion while making conclusions on the research results. And thus, this current doctoral study attempted to go round and deep to examine the washback of the JSC English test on English teaching and learning more holistically and systematically.

To sum up, the above discussion indicates that there are three shortcomings in the field of language testing in Bangladesh (i.e., paucity of empirical studies, absence of washback study on the JSC English test, and absence of students' perspectives in the washback studies). Responding to these shortcomings, the present doctoral study has made an effort to investigate and approach washback from a context-specific and wider perspective. It can be considered the only formal, comprehensive, and methodologically sound research study conducted on the influence (washback) of assessment (the public examination) on English teaching and learning in the context of the JSC level at secondary level schools in particular and one of the very few in general in Bangladesh.

It has examined the correlations between the JSC English curriculum and JSC examination; the JSC textbook and other teaching-learning materials and JSC English test; teaching-learning methods and JSC English examination; classroom activities and tests, etc. It, has then, investigated if any washback of the JSC English test exists, and in what ways English teaching and learning practice are affected by the JSC English test.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

This study focuses firstly on JSC English teaching-learning practice in the classrooms. Secondly, it attempts to explore the existing assessment practice used in JSC English. Thirdly and most importantly, it examines the interplays between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice, how they influence (facilitate or hinder i.e., washback effect) each other, because “any given test needs tailor-made research to examine its washback” (Shih, 2007: p. 137).

Thus, the overarching aim of this study is to investigate the effect of assessment (JSC English Test) on English teaching-learning at Class 8 at secondary schools of Bangladesh. Alongside, it seeks to examine the effect of any other teacher, students and context-dependent variables which may contribute to positive or negative interplays between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice.

1.4. Research Questions

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study, the following research questions (one main question and two guiding questions) had been framed.

Main Research Question (1): How is JSC English teaching-learning influenced (i.e. washback effect) by assessment practice in the secondary schools of Bangladesh?

Sub-Questions

- a) How does assessment practice facilitate English teaching and learning practice?
- b) Does assessment practice have any washback/backwash effect on English teaching and learning practice? If so, how does it create washback effect?

c) What challenges do teachers and students face in ensuring effective interplays between English teaching-learning and assessment practice?

Guiding Question 1: What is the common classroom (teaching-learning) practice of English teachers at secondary schools?

Sub-Questions

- a) What is their understanding of the present English curriculum?
- b) What do they teach in the classrooms?
- c) How do they teach in the classrooms?

Guiding Question 2: What is the common assessment practice of English teachers at secondary schools?

Sub-Questions

- a) What do they assess in the classrooms?
- b) How do they assess in the classrooms?
- c) What is their understanding of the present assessment system?
- d) To what extent is the summative and formative assessment system reflected in their classroom assessment?

Such guiding questions were not specific questions to be answered, but rather, they were those that suggested themselves at the commencement of the study as being the most productive guides to generate data relevant to the central area of interest.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This current doctoral study has made a number of original contributions in the field of English language teaching and assessment research. This has also several significant implications for policy makers, test creators, teachers and other stakeholders.

The current doctoral study gives answers to a unique context and scenario which was not thoroughly examined and explored before. This research was carried out in a unique context (JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice) as opposed to a few washback studies on SSC and HSC English test conducted in Bangladesh. A thorough study of literature indicates that this study is the first and only comprehensive and methodologically sound study to investigate and explore the interplays between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice, more specifically the influence of JSC English test on English teaching-learning.

Hence, it can be considered as one of the very few formal and comprehensive research studies conducted on the influence (washback) of assessment (the public examination) on English teaching and learning in the context of the JSC level in particular and secondary level schools of Bangladesh in general.

While studying relevant documents, the researcher of this study thoroughly analyzed and explained the positive aspects as well as shortcomings of the JSC English Curriculum, JSC English textbook, and JSC English test. A comprehensive study of literature indicates that this is the first time ever in Bangladesh that any study or work has done this. This original contribution

bears significant implications for policymakers, curriculum developers, textbook writers, question-setters, examiners, and teachers.

Another important contribution of this study is that it included students as an important stakeholder and they could equally convey their opinion through both student questionnaire and student in-depth interviews in broad based mixed-method study, whereas none of the previous studies conducted in Bangladesh on washback (except the study of Sultana, 2019) included students as participants for the study.

Thus, in comparison to other similar studies on washback, this current study offers a more comprehensive viewpoint on understanding washback of the JSC English test as a complex phenomenon: what it does, how it gets operated, and why it exists.

Methodology applied in this current research and the results and findings of the study have important implications for future research on language assessment and washback both in JSC and other language testing contexts.

Besides, English teaching-learning and assessment practice are self-regulated processes operating in the educational and social contexts. These contexts can help gain significant information in terms of interplays between English teaching-learning and assessment practice. Keeping this in mind, this research highlights the contextual (educational and social) factors that can contribute to the washback of JSC English test.

This study has also lent some significant insights into language assessment theory and practice both in Bangladesh and elsewhere. From the practical

viewpoint, it was able to create cognizance of the significance of JSC English test as manifested in the study. The study explores that the test is not doing what it should do. Moreover, as the study has made an extensive analysis of the design, format and content of the test. The findings in terms of the design, format, and content of the test also provide significant insights for designers of curriculum, assessment and testing and other stakeholders involved in the Bangladeshi educational system and elsewhere.

The JSC English Curriculum (2012) was designed and developed communicatively with the intention that a more communicative approach to English teaching and learning would be encouraged, and practice and assessment of all the four skills of language would be there, but it did not happen, since this test could not create such effect. Bachman (2000) comments that the contents of a language test have to be consisted of activities and tasks that can measure learners' language proficiency if it would like to be considered communicative language testing. But this JSC English test lacked these properties, and hence, was considered very limited and can be termed as "construct under-representative" (Onaiba, 2013, p. 244). Andrews et al. (2000) claimed that such an inappropriate test must yield negative washback on language learning and teaching. The design of the JSC English test should, hence, be revised. International Language Testing Association (ILTA, 2018) recommended that working for the improvement of the quality of a language test should be continuous. But it is not the case here in Bangladesh.

One means of improving the test to an expected level is by including all the stakeholders, e.g., policy makers, test creators, teachers, and students (Tan & Turner, 2015) in the test development process. It, however, does not say that

students should also be in the question-setters panel, but a need analysis of the stakeholders should be conducted to find out what should be included and what not in the test battery.

The study has also put forward some suggestions on how the JSC English test can be improved. For example, massive revamping of the content, format, and test-items of the JSC English test is required. It should include test-items covering all four language skills (namely listening, speaking, reading and writing skills) equally; avoid repetition of reading texts and other test-items including writing topics etc. Moreover, this study suggested the means to ensure positive alignment between the JSC English teaching, learning and assessment practice.

Most importantly, this study explored how (i.e., the ways and means) high-stakes public examination negatively influenced teaching and learning practice in the classroom, particularly in the secondary schools of Bangladesh and more generally elsewhere, which helps the concerned authorities to work effectively for future reforms.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This doctoral dissertation contains seven chapters. These are as follows:

Chapter One is the introductory chapter that presents an introduction to the research context of the current doctoral study by offering a short description of the underlying problems which paved the way for this study. This chapter encompasses different issues such as background to the research problem, aims and objectives of the study, research questions to be answered, significance of the research study. It also includes a brief outline of the thesis and draws a conclusion to the chapter.

Chapter Two deals with the review of previous literature pertaining to the focus of the current study. It encompasses literature study on public examinations, English language assessment, and high-stakes testing. Since the overarching aim of this study is to investigate the effect of assessment (JSC English Test) on English teaching-learning at Grade/Class 8 at secondary schools of Bangladesh, a comprehensive review on washback literature was presented in this chapter.

The review discusses the background and origin of washback, definition of washback and other similar terms (backwash, impact, etc.), complexity of washback, aspects of teaching and learning affected by washback, characteristics of washback (washback intentionality, value of washback: positive, negative, washback specificity, washback intensity, differential washback, seasonality and persistence (length) of washback), washback factors, washback on syllabuses and curriculums, washback on teaching methodology, washback on teacher factors (teachers' perceptions and attitudes, teaching

experience, teachers' education, teacher training, and awareness of assessment change), washback on language learning (students' perceptions and attitudes), washback on test-takers, washback on materials, washback on lesson contents, washback on learning outcomes, washback on examination-related factors, washback on macro/context factors (school and classroom), washback stakeholders, washback hypotheses, mechanisms, and models.

This review facilitates me to construct the theoretical framework for the current research study keeping aims and objectives, research questions of the study in mind. In the last section of this chapter, I finally propose an appropriate conceptual framework for the current doctoral study.

Chapter Three: In order to understand the context of the current doctoral study, this chapter presents an ethnographic portrayal of the context and educational structure (including the schooling system) of Bangladesh in general, and JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice (including the JSC English Test) at the secondary schools in particular.

Chapter Four deals with the research methodology and design used in the current study. It also describes different philosophical stances adopted in research and provides justifications for adopting the suitable philosophical stance for the study. It describes the methodological approaches, strategies and processes applied including rationale for applying the selected methodology in the current study. It also encompasses variables focused in the study, sampling process, development of research tools/instruments (classroom observation scheme, student and teacher questionnaires, interview schedules for students and teachers) and piloting of these instruments used in the study. Next, the

procedures and process of data collection have been elucidated. Finally, the methods and procedures of data analysis have been explained.

Chapter Five presents the relevant findings resulted from the analysis of data collected from mixed sources (i.e., teacher and student questionnaires, semi-structured teacher interviews, focused group interviews with students, and classroom observations, complemented by document study). These findings have been presented thematically keeping aims and objectives, research questions of the study in mind.

Chapter Six discusses the findings of the study keeping aims and objectives, research questions of the study in mind, and comparing and linking them to the relevant reviewed literature. Similar to the previous chapter, in this chapter the discussion of findings has been presented thematically. Answers to the specific research questions in the light of relevant reviewed literature have also been presented in this chapter.

Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter of this dissertation, which starts with a succinct recapitulation of the discussed findings of the study. Then, it outlines some result-driven recommendations for the stakeholders of the JSC English in particular, and English language teaching and assessment in general. After that, it mentions the original contributions made by the study to English language teaching and assessment research as well as the implications for policymakers, test creators, teachers, and other stakeholders. Limitations of the study have also been mentioned here. Moreover, it indicates a few areas where more study is required, i.e., the suggestions for future research. Finally, the chapter ends with concluding remarks.

1.7 Conclusion

Since in the globalized world, Bangladesh cannot cope with modern challenges if our next generations lack proficiency in the English language, she must ensure an effective English teaching and learning environment where students can learn, practice, develop, and eventually improve their proficiency in English to an expected level. Creating such learning environment is possible only when positive interplays between English teaching-learning and assessment practice take place. As mentioned above, previous studies indicate that comprehensive and empirical studies are required to explore the interplays and interrelations. The current study marched to that path of exploration. This chapter of the dissertation has started with the context in which the study has been placed. Then it has discussed the background to the research problem. Besides, it has outlined the research aims and objectives including the research questions. Finally, the significance of the current study has been mentioned accompanied by the outline of the dissertation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on high-stakes testing and public examinations, test washback, test impact, aspects, and factors mediating washback, washback hypotheses, and models. It also explores the theoretical underpinnings and academic debates in terms of the effects of high-stakes testing or public exams on English teaching and learning as a second or foreign language. Finally, it draws an appropriate conceptual framework for the current doctoral research study.

Starting with a brief introductory section, the second section of this chapter explores the concept of high-stakes testing and public examinations. The third section explores the background and origin of washback, specifically test washback in language teaching and learning. The fourth section reviews different key terms used to describe this complex phenomenon and explains what washback denotes in the current study.

The fifth section explores the characteristics and complexity of washback by discussing the certain aspects of English teaching and learning which are influenced by washback. The sixth section discusses the washback stakeholders, and factors beyond the test itself which may interact with the effects of testing on English teaching and learning. The seventh section analyses washback hypotheses, different washback models, and mechanisms with a view to understanding how washback occurs and interrelations among the mediating factors. The last section proposes an appropriate conceptual framework for the current study.

2.2 High-Stakes Testing and Public Examinations

In most of the countries of the world including Bangladesh, high stakes tests or public examinations play a central role in assessing students individually (Kellaghan & Madaus, 2003). To attain a certain form of standardization, these tests/ examinations are applied by governments throughout the world to ascertain if the students of the respective countries are prepared to be promoted to the next level or grade of education (Borghouts, Slingerland & Haerens, 2016; Lau & Tam, 2017; Goldenstein & Leckie, 2016).

Collins Dictionary (2020) defines, public examination as “an examination, such as a GCSE exam, that is set by a central examining board.” High stakes testing takes place in the public examination system of Bangladesh and worldwide. It is defined as “the use of standardized student achievement tests as a primary mechanism to evaluate the performance of students, their teachers, and their schools” (Natriello, 2009).

In spite of having several advantages, public examinations or high-stakes tests are criticized severely for encouraging test-oriented teaching and learning since the results of such examinations or tests assess the standard and quality of the educational institutions (Islam, 2016; Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2014). Studies show that when the final examinations of the institutions are arranged and managed by external bodies, and whose reputation, performance, standard, and quality are measured by the results of the final examinations, exam-oriented instructional practices are carried out by the teachers of those institutions (Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2014; Aftab, Qureshi & William, 2014; Adegoke, 2010).

On the other hand, although it is argued that public examinations or high stakes tests motivate learners extrinsically, it fades their motivation to engage in any effort, and thereby, they do not learn. Rather, “preparation for high stakes tests often emphasizes rote memorization and cramming of students and drill and practice teaching methods” (Madaus, 1991, p.7).

The findings of several studies (e.g., Sultana, 2019; Chowdhury, 2010; Maniruzzaman & Hoque, 2010; Tsagari, 2009; Lam, 1994) conducted in the context of public examinations or high stakes testing reveal that every section of the textbook or syllabus is not taught in the classroom. Teachers skip and ignore some of the lessons of the textbook or syllabus that are not or less expected and set to be set in the public examination (Rind, & Mari, 2019). They narrow the content of the textbook so that it can match and resemble the content of the public examination.

The same findings were also revealed by several other studies in other contexts at home and abroad (Sultana, 2018; Choi, 2008; Abu-Alhija, 2007; Hoque, 2016; Cheng, 2005; Stecher, 2002) where it was noticed that high-stakes tests were instrumental in limiting the curriculum to those items only which were likely to be set in the test. Above all, public examinations or high stakes tests lead teachers’ teaching and learners’ learning behavior in the classrooms (Peterson, 2007). Pearson comments that “public examinations influence the attitudes, behaviours, and motivation of teachers, learners, and parents, and because examinations often come at the end of a course, this influence is seen working in a backward direction, hence the term, washback” (1988, p. 7).

2.3 Washback: Background and Origin

Washback is a relatively new yet complex phenomenon found in the area of applied linguistics and general education. Before the 1990s, the word, 'washback' could not be traced in the dictionaries. The study of literature indicates that no research study on washback, before 1982, can be found either in the area of applied linguistics and general education. However, although washback or backwash is a term that is quite common now in the field of applied linguistics and general education, it is still found hardly in the dictionaries (Hoque, 2011; Cheng & Curtis, 2004).

Kellaghan et al. (1982) are the very first researchers who used the term, "The effects of standardized testing" in their research work. Following the study of Kellaghan et al. (1982), a few researchers showed interest in studying washback of tests to investigate the influence of tests on classroom teaching-learning practice. Hence, till 1990, very few empirical studies were conducted to examine the washback of tests either in the field of language education or in general education. The other studies carried out in this area were by Wesdorp (1982) and Hughes (1988).

The study by Kellaghan, et al., (1982), however, was in the area of general education, not particularly in the field of language education or language testing. Kellaghan et al. (1982) studied how the introduction of standardized tests affected teaching and learning in Irish schools. In his published paper titled, "*The Real Test Bias*," Frederiksen (1984) suggested that since test information was significant to hold the accountability of schools, tests could have potential influences on what was taught in the schools. In 1986, Alderson pointed out 'washback' as a separate and evolving concept in the area of language testing and assessment. Davies (1985) enquired whether tests should

essentially follow the prescribed curriculum. Davies (1985) wrote, "an innovative and creative test can efficiently result in syllabus alteration or even in a new syllabus" (p.18). Perhaps tests, he suggested, should influence and lead the curriculum.

Even though, around two decades ago Alderson (1986) first recognized that language test as a tool could potentially be used to produce positive effects on teaching-learning of a language, it took nearly another ten years to become a recognized research topic. The reason behind this was that researchers during that period were more interested to investigate individuals' language abilities and skills, rather than the effects of tests (McNamara, 2000).

Moreover, Wigglesworth and Elder (1996, cited in Hoque, 2011) during the same time pointed out that "the concept of tests influencing teaching and learning is under-researched probably because the huge number of variables involved have made it very difficult for researchers to identify a causal relationship between the test and what went on in the classroom."

A significant number of research studies on language assessment and testing was conducted since the late 1980s (Rahimi, Esfandiari, & Amini, 2016; Alderson & Wall, 1993; Bailey, 1996; Wall, 1997), but washback on learners as a topic was discussed occasionally in 1990s (Hoque, 2011).

Cheng (2008) observed that significant discussions about the effect of language testing in the field of language education began in the early 1990s. Cheng (2014) further noted that in the 1990s, research in washback discovered the presence of it, whereas, in the 2000s, research in washback explored practical evidence of the correlations between language teaching and language testing.

On the other hand, Tsagari (2007) classified the development and expansion of research studies in washback in three steps: i) the pre-1993 phase; ii) the 1993 phase; and iii) the post-1993 phase. The first phase, i.e. the pre-1993 phase, can be termed as a myth phase, when only a few studies were conducted based on direct test-results or self-reported data. These works denied the presence of the effect or influence of tests on language teaching and learning. The 1993 phase, the second phase, was the time when washback research got its true face marked by the phenomenal works on washback conducted by Alderson and Wall's (1993) and Wall and Alderson's (1993). These two researchers were the pioneers who questioned the features of the effect of a test/exam on language teaching and learning. Thus, the serious academic discussion about washback started in the field of language education. The post-1993 phase is the third phase, which was termed as the reality phase by Tsagari (2007). This phase encompasses several empirical research studies on washback and different working models.

Thus, since the eve of the twenty-first-century, research on washback got momentum. "The Sri Lankan Impact Study" was the first ever empirical research study conducted on washback by Alderson and Wall (1993). This phenomenal study is considered the landmark study in the field of washback research. They carried out a two-year long investigation in Sri Lanka to explore the influence of the then revised O-Level English test on teachers' instructional methodology. The objective of the revised test was to strengthen the innovations in English textbooks and English teacher training, that were intended to encourage communicative language learning and teaching with its stress on real-world reading, writing and speaking skills, and to discourage grammar-focused and teacher-oriented lessons. The English lesson observations in fourteen schools explored that English language learning tasks,

activities, and classroom test developments were influenced by the revised tests or textbooks. Alderson and Wall (1993), However, explored that no fundamental difference was there in the instructional practice of the English teachers over the studied two years. The classrooms remained teacher-dominated and the students had little opportunity to practice English in the real-life situation. The study indicated that the desired positive and washback of the revised test were very limited.

Before this seminal work, studies on the effects of tests were speculative, not empirical. Alderson and Wall (1993) were the first scholars who commented that the washback of tests was not so straightforward as previous literature showed. They indicated the problematic and complex nature of washback as a concept and stressed the prerequisite of designing research studies on this carefully. In their much-cited article, “*Does Washback Exist?*”, they argued the prevailing concepts of washback and identified 15 hypotheses that might facilitate the washback of test, and hence, should be considered in washback investigations in any context (1993, p. 120-121).

Once this seminal work by these researchers was published in 1993, several researchers showed their interests in this topic and started empirical research studies so as to gain the evidence of existence of washback in the language classrooms and to date, a great number of washback studies had been conducted in Bangladesh (e.g. Ali & Hamid, 2020; Jamila & Kabir, 2020; Sultana, 2019; Maniruzzaman, 2012; Hoque, 2011; Khan, 2010) and elsewhere (e.g. Dong, 2020; Khan, Aziz & Stapa, 2019; Rind & Mari, 2019; Abdulhamid, 2018; Umashankar, 2017; Onaiba, 2013; Muñoz & Álvarez, 2010; Turner, 2009, 2008, 2005, 2001; Tavares & Hamp-Lyons, 2008; Wang, 2008; Tan, 2008; Davison, 2008; Urmston & Fang, 2008; Wall & Horák, 2007; Shih, 2007;

Green, 2007, 2006; Qi, 2007, 2005, 2004; Cheng & Qi, 2006; Saif, 2006; Burrow, 2004; Hayes & Read, 2004; Cheng, 2004, 2001, 1998, 1997; Watanabe, 2004b, 1996a; Wall, 1999, 1996; Shohamy et.,1996; Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Shohamy, 1993; Wall & Alderson, 1993, etc.).

These studies explored various issues related to washback phenomena such as: definition and scope of washback, complexity of washback including aspects of teaching and learning affected by washback, characteristics of washback, washback intentionality, value of washback (positive or negative), washback specificity, washback intensity, differential washback, seasonality and persistence (length) of washback, washback factors, washback on syllabuses and curriculums, alignment of curriculums with public examinations, (curriculum alignment by frontloading and by backloading), teaching to the test, washback on teaching methodology, washback on teacher factors (teachers' perceptions and attitudes, teaching experience, teachers' education, teacher training, and awareness of assessment change), washback on language learning, washback on test takers (students' perceptions, and attitudes), washback on materials, washback on lesson contents, washback on learning outcomes, washback on examination-related factors, washback on macro/context factors (school and classroom) and washback stakeholders, etc. The following parts of this section will focus on these issues as explored by the studies conducted since 1993 till 2020.

2.4 Washback: Definition

2.4.1 Defining ‘washback’ in general

Not only for passing a grade, but also for everyday life and for professional life, it is important to know the language efficiency and ability of an individual. To assess individuals’ language efficiency and ability, language tests were used by educational institutes and even governments or employers. These language tests, however, can also wield power that goes beyond testing individuals’ language efficiency and ability only.

[T]he decisions that may be made about the [language] test takers on the basis of their test scores may directly affect them in a number of ways. Acceptance or non-acceptance into an instructional program, advancement or non-advancement from one course to another, or in a career, employment or non-employment, are all decisions that can have serious consequences for test takers” (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 32; also see Shohamy, 2001; 1993).

Hence, in the fields of applied linguistics and language education, language testing is a matter of much talk, interest, controversy, and even debate. Within these fields and among language practitioners, a concept is developed and flourished that tests, specifically, standardized or high-stakes tests or public examinations could shape the ways and the kinds of teaching and learning which take place in the language classrooms (Shohamy, 1993). This phenomenon is termed as *washback*, although “[D]efinitions of washback are nearly as numerous as the people who wrote about it” (Bailey, 1999: p.3).

The term, *washback*, is often addressed in the sub-field (language testing) of applied linguistics (Hughes, 2003; Alderson & Wall, 1993). Language testing usually has a “research goal” (Latimer, 2009, p.28) which attempts, “to arrive at a model of language ability that can provide a basis for describing and assessing this ability for a given individual or group of individuals at a given stage of development, using a given norm or standard of target language use as a point of reference” (Bachman, et al., 1998, p.2). Unlike Second Language Acquisition (SLA), that deals with the interlanguage process as well as the development of languages over the years and in time, language testing concentrates only on the results of acquisition of language (Bachman, et al., 1998, p.2).

In general term, any educational phenomenon which explicates “the influence of test on teaching and learning” is called “*washback*” (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Bailey, 1996; Messick, 1996) or “*backwash*” (Biggs, 1995, Spolsky, 1995; Hughes, 1989). However, earlier in applied linguistics in order to label this idea of test-influence, a number of other terms were used for example, “measurement-driven instruction” (Shohamy, 1992; Popham, 1987), “systematic validity” (Messick, 1989; Frederiksen & Collins, 1989), “curriculum alignment” (Madaus, 1988; Shepard, 1990; Resnick & Resnick, 1992; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996), “washback validity” (Morrow, 1986), “consequential validity” (Messick, 1996, 1989) and “backwash” (Biggs, 1995; Spolsky, 1995; Hughes, 1989), and “test impact” (Andrews, 2004; Wall, 1997; Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Hsu (2010) observed that although different researchers used different terms, all of these terms lead to the same concept catering to its different features. However, among these various terms, two of them (“washback” and “backwash”) have been more commonly used since the beginning.

Although Bailey (1999) observed that “There are differing points of view about what the construct may encompass” (p. 9), Alderson and Wall (1993) argued that these two (washback and backwash) terms can be applied interchangeably, as these denote the same phenomenon and bear the same connotation. However, in spite of their carrying the same connotation, “washback” as a term is more rampant in the literature of language testing and teaching, whereas “backwash” is mostly used in the research in the field of general education. Observing the use of these two terms, Andrews (1994a. p. 67 in Bailey, 1996, p.16) wrote: “In general education literature, the favoured term to describe this phenomenon is 'backwash,' while in language education there seems to be a preference for 'washback'.”

Some of the researchers count only intended and foreseen effects of a test as washback. They believe that the main objective of a test is to control the curricula (Spolsky, 1994). However, most of the researchers agree that any influence or effect, be it negative or positive, unintended or intended, which a test has on language teaching-learning, is “*washback*” (Hung, 2012; Bachman & Palmer, 2010, 1996; Cheng, 2005; Hughes, 2003, 2002; Cheng et al., 2004; Alderson & Wall, 1993). This concept, in general, refers to any effect/impact related to tests, irrespective of its nature. In line with this, Cheng (2005, p. 112) refers washback to “an intended or unintended (accidental) direction and function of curriculum change on aspects of teaching and learning by means of a change of public examinations”.

However, different researchers define washback or backwash in their own ways. Hughes (2003: 1) concisely writes: “the effect of testing on teaching and learning is known as *backwash*”. Biggs (1995) refers *backwash* to “the fact that

testing controls not only the curriculum but also teaching methods and students' learning strategies" (cited in Pan, 2009), while to Spolsky (1994) backwash is the "accidental side-effects of examinations" (p. 55). On the contrary, to Cheng (1997) washback is the "intended and directed function" of a test or exam change (p. 36). Washback is actually the intrinsic quality and value of a test where its (washback) consequences are to be delineated by its stakeholders and its contextual uses (Cheng, 2014).

Pearson (1988, p.98) gave one of the initial definitions of this by remarking that "It is widely held that public examinations affect the attitudes, motivations, and behaviors of teachers, learners, and parents, and because examinations often come at the end of a course, this influence is seen working in a backward direction, hence the term, washback". Hughes (1989), on the other hand, offered the simplest yet one of the most overriding definitions: "the effect of testing on teaching and learning is known as backwash" (p. 1). Similarly, Bailey (1996:259) referred to washback as "the influence of testing on teaching and learning."

Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman (1996) commented that washback was the consequence of the influential power of external language tests, that affects the lives of the test takers. Thus, washback is "the connections between testing and learning" (Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996, p.6). Later Messick (1996: 241) comments: "washback ... refers to the extent to which the introduction and use of a new test influences language teachers and learners to do things they would not otherwise do, that promote or inhibit language learning," which is similar to what Alderson and Wall (1993, p. 1) argued, washback forces "teachers and learners to do things they would not necessarily

otherwise do because of the test.” Messick (1996: 243) added an important further dimension: “evidence of teaching and learning effects should be interpreted as washback ... only if that evidence can be linked to the introduction and use of the test.”

Thus, the base of washback lies in that (language) tests always have effects and influences on (language) teaching-learning. “The washback effect clearly has to do with the effect of external testing on the teaching and learning processes in language classrooms” (Brown, 2000, p. 5). Hence, it is an inherent result of any test especially the high-stakes ones, intended or unintended, positive or negative if the future life of the learners or test-takers is affected by its outcomes (Beikmahdavi, 2016; Cheng, 2005).

On the contrary, some of the researchers remarked that high-stakes tests have extensive, wider, and broader effects in education, and life of the test-takers than only in the classroom. In order to mean the wider and broader effects of test, the term, “test impact” was used by Bachman and Palmer (1996:12), which indicated the effects and influences tests usually have on teachers and students as individuals or on the educational system in context and eventually on the society as a whole. McNamara (2000 cited in Pan, 2009; p. 258) claimed that “Tests can also have effects beyond the classroom. The wider effect of tests on the community as a whole, including the school, is referred to as test impact.” Andrews (2004) applied the same term “test impact” which encompasses “the effects of tests on teaching and learning, the educational system, and the various stakeholders in the education process” (p. 9).

However, other researchers (such as Andrews et al., 2002) made no such difference, and remarked that both narrow and wider/broader effects and influences can be encompassed under one term, *washback*. In the current doctoral study, the same approach was considered i.e., both narrow and wider/broader effects and influences of JSC English test were counted under one term, *washback*.

2.4.2 Defining ‘washback’ in terms of the present study

The title of this dissertation starts with the word “*interplays*”. The Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary (2020) defines the word “*interplays*” as “the effect that two or more things have on each other”. In terms of this doctoral study, these two things are: (a) JSC English teaching and learning practice; and (b) assessment practice (the JSC English test). The above discussion indicates that in a high-stake test (JSC), it is the assessment that affects teaching and learning, not vice-versa. Thus, the word “*interplays*” essentially refers to the effects of the JSC English test on JSC English teaching and learning practice.

“The washback effect clearly has to do with the effect of external testing on the teaching and learning processes in language classrooms” (Brown, 2000, p. 5). In the context of the current study, the external test is the JSC English test. In line with Cheng (2005, p. 112), who refers washback to “an intended or unintended (accidental) direction and function of curriculum change on aspects of teaching and learning by means of a change of public examinations” and Messick, (1996) who believed that the effects were only washback when these could be linked to the studied test, for this current study, any impact, influence

or effect linked with the studied test, be it negative or positive, unintended or intended, which this targeted test has, has been deemed “washback”.

Besides, with regard to the aspects of washback, Lam (1994; p. 84–85) explored different forms of washback. The current study deals with three of these main forms. They include:

- **Attitude/perception washback.** This refers to the effect of the introduced exam on teachers’ attitudes and perception of the exam vis-à-vis instruction.
- **Methodology washback.** This implies how the new exam influences the way teachers plan and implement their classroom instruction, teaching and testing.
- **Curriculum/textbook washback.** This indicates the effect of the exam on the content of teaching as far as the current curriculum/textbook of English is concerned, i.e. teachers’ choice and selection of teaching material resources.

At the same time, in the current doctoral study, it has been used in line with what Hughes (2002) suggested, i.e., it embraces not only the effects or impact of the studied test on English language teaching and learning at grade 8 (JSC) at the secondary schools of Bangladesh, but also the entire educational system as well as the society altogether. This is what is suggested also by Bachman and Palmer (1996), that washback of a language test should be examined in terms of the contextual factors of societal values and goals, the education system where the test is used and the likely results of its use, since washback of a test is more than just the effect of the test on language teaching and learning.

In the current doctoral research, the term “washback” was retained in general while “impact” was applied in “a non-technical sense, i.e., as an alternative

when referring to anything associated with the effect, consequence, or influence of testing” as it was done in a doctoral study on washback conducted by Mahmud (2018) for example. A further focus of the current study, as suggested by Wall (2012), was to understand and explore the reasons behind the failure to ensure positive interplays between English language teaching-learning and assessment practice at grade 8 (JSC) at the secondary schools of Bangladesh, so that this study can recommend, and thereby, facilitate good English language teaching-learning and assessment practice at schools and the redesigning of the studied test to improve it to an effective standard.

2.5 Complexity of washback

Several studies (Spratt, 2005; Cheng, 2005, 2000; Chen, 2002; Alderson & Wall, 1993) conducted in the field of language education and testing bear the testimony that washback is not a simple and monolithic phenomenon, rather it is a complex, elusive, and multi-dimensional concept. Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996, P. 280) in their study on washback of TOEFL concluded that “simple forms of washback hypotheses are too naive: influences on what happens in class are much more complex than unexamined beliefs about washback allow.”

Spratt (2005, p. 21) argued that, “rather than ... being a direct, automatic and blanket effect of exams, washback is more complex and elusive. It seems to be a phenomenon that does not exist automatically in its own right but is rather one that can be brought into existence through the agency of teachers, students or others involved in the test-taking process” (p. 21).

It is, hence, considered an intricate phenomenon which affects different aspects of language teaching and learning and thus, can be discussed with regard to diverse features and is intervened by various factors.

2.5.1 Areas of teaching and learning influenced by washback

As a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon, the washback of a test has the potential to affect different aspects of language teaching and learning. In his Sri Lankan study, Wall (2005), for example, found that testing affected the contents of teaching, not the teaching methods and approaches of teachers, whereas, in his study in Israel, Ferman (2004) found that newly introduced EFL Oral Matriculation Test by the ministry of education had intense washback on EFL teaching-learning activities in the classrooms of Israeli schools where both teachers and students were found to concentrate developing speaking skills.

High-stakes test can affect teachers' aspects of teaching resulting from the changes in testing (Bailey, 1996), for example, teachers' perception, attitude and behavior (e.g. Turner, 2006; Cheng, 1997, 1999, 2010; Wang, 2010), methods and approaches of teaching (e.g. Spratt, 2005; Watanabe, 2004a, Andrews *et al.*, 2002; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman, 1996; Cheng, 1997), content of teaching (e.g. Munoz & Alvarez, 2010; Wall 2005; Qi, 2004, 2005; Read & Hayes, 2003; Cheng 1997, 2005; Watanabe 1996, 2003; Bailey 1996; Hughes 1993; Alderson & Wall 1993), teaching materials such as textbooks and past exam/test papers (Saville & Hawkey 2004; Read & Hayes, 2003; Andrews *et al.*, 2002; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996; Cheng, 1997), allocation of class time (Read & Hayes, 2003; Shohamy, Donitsa-

Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996; Alderson & Hamp-Lyons 1996, Lam 1994) and “the status of the language and the uses of the test” (Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman, 1996, p.280).

Recent research studies also show the effects of testing on language learners’ learning (e.g., Shih, 2007; Senel & Tutunis, 2013; Cheng et al. 2015; Green, 2007; Ferman, 2003; Andrews *et al.*, 2002;). For example, studies of washback on learners (e.g. Shih, 2007; Pan, 2014; Weili, 2010; Hawkey, 2006), students’ test preparation approaches (Mickan & Motteram 2009; Green 2007; Read & Hayes, 2003; Elder & O’Loughlin 2003; Brown 1998), learners’ focus on test-related materials, activities and tasks (e.g. Mickan & Motteram, 2008; Green, 2007) their perspectives (Mahmud, 2018; Green 2006a; Green, 2007), their beliefs, their context, educational experience (Zhan & Wan, 2016; Zhan & Andrews, 2014; Xie & Andrews, 2012; Gosa, 2004) and their achievement of score/grades (Humphreys et al. 2012; O’Loughlin & Arkoudis 2009; Green 2007; Elder & O’Loughlin 2003), and the learners’ mediating factors in washback research (e.g. Gosa, 2004; Allen, 2016; Stoneman 2006; Green 2006, 2007; Shih, 2007; Tsagari 2007; Tsai & Tsou 2009; Mickan & Motteram 2009; Cheng & Deluca, 2011; Cheng et al. 2010; Smyth & Banks 2012; Xie & Andrews 2012; Xie 2013; Zhan & Andrews 2014; Pan, 2014; Zhan & Wan, 2016) have been investigated to elucidate how testing influences and shapes learners’ learning.

Jiang and Sharpling’s (2011) study is another noteworthy example of how test affects various aspects of language teaching and learning. They studied eight graduate Chinese students boarding on higher education in the UK where they got an English-speaking environment. Through interviews with these Chinese

students, the researchers tried to explore their reflective opinions about the interrelation between their strategies of learning a language and changes in assessment in different contexts. The researchers explored that changes made in the approach of assessment to formative assessment from summative and in the change of environment of language learning affected learners' strategies of learning a language. Their strategies of learning a language were linked to the form of assessment. They changed their strategies of learning a language to match the formative assessment approach when they discovered that their instructor assessed them mostly through formative assessment approach in their English preparatory course (through pair works, group works, participation in the classroom, assignment in lieu of summative test).

The study found that instead of focusing on learning discrete vocabulary and grammar items, the learners concentrated more on learning how to effectively write assignments, when they found that their instructors assess them on writing assignments. The study, however, also explored that not only the changes in the form and approach of assessment, but also an English language learning environment has affected the learners' strategies of learning the language. The factors which intervened in the washback process are discussed in detail in Section 2.6 of this chapter.

2.5.2 Characteristics of washback

Researchers (e.g., Watanabe, 2003) explored different characteristics of washback such as intentionality of washback, value of washback (positive or, negative), specificity of washback, intensity of washback, differential washback, persistence (length) and seasonality of washback.

2.5.2.1 Washback intentionality

Several research studies (Zhang & Elder 2009; Wall & Horák 2008; Qi 2005; Watanabe 2003; Andrews et al. 2002, McNamara 1996; Messick 1989) explored that a test may have intended or unintended effect on teaching and learning practice. These studies demonstrate that a test can exert intended washback when it can bring about expected changes in the teaching and learning practice, whereas a test exerts unintended washback when it fails to bring about expected changes in the teaching and learning practice.

For example, the above-mentioned study by Jiang and Sharpling (2011) shows that changes made in the approach of assessment to formative assessment from summative affected learners' strategies of learning a language. They changed their learning when they discovered that their instructor assessed them mostly through formative assessment approach in their English preparatory course (through pair works, group works, participation in the classroom, assignment in lieu of summative test). Instead of focusing on learning discrete vocabulary and grammar items, the learners concentrated more on learning how to effectively write assignments, when they found that their instructors assess them on writing assignment. Thus, this change in learning strategies appears to be in line with the intention of the instructor.

Reviewing the Chinese College English test – Spoken English Test (CET-SET) (meant for assessing Chinese university and college students' speaking skill) with regard to its validity, reliability, authenticity, fairness, interactivity, washback and impact, Zhang and Elder (2009) found that “The washback effect of the CET-SET on teaching, learning, and self-evaluation is intended to be

positive in that it is designed to help English learners to practice the various language functions emphasized in the test syllabus when preparing for the test and to improve their oral communicative ability through the performance of authentic tasks resembling those which occur in everyday communication contexts” (p.308). In their review, they contended that the CET-SET could create positive washback on English teachers and learners with regard to their perceptions, and behaviors of learning.

Sultana (2018) and Hoque (2016) conducted washback studies on the English language test of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination, “the most high-stakes examination in Bangladesh” (Sultana, 2018, p.ii). Applying the multi-method approach, both of them, contrary to the findings of Zhang and Elder (2009), found evidence of superficial and unintended learning outcomes such as: the respondents felt pressure from their parents, relatives and school authorities to score high grade. The students practiced mock tests. They received short-listed suggestions on reading texts, vocabulary items, grammatical tasks, dialogues, paragraphs, and emails writing and memorized them for the SSC English test. Moreover, their teachers familiarize them to the test format and greatly engaged them in the test-oriented tasks etc.

These findings conform with the findings of Andrews et al. (2002) who “studied the effects of the introduction of the Use of English (UE) oral examination, taken in students’ final year of schooling (Secondary 7), where a pass is a pre-requisite for admission to university in Hong Kong”. They concluded, “... the nature of the washback on student performance has not necessarily been of the sort anticipated or intended by those responsible for the introduction of the UE oral” (p. 220). The findings of these studies indicate that washback of tests is not necessarily intended. They have the potential to create unintended washback on the teaching and learning process.

2.5.2.2 Value of washback: Positive, Negative

It is argued that a test (new or revised) can bring about beneficial or detrimental changes in the teaching curriculum, teaching approaches and methods, and learners' approaches to learning behavior (Green 2007; Wall 2005; Biggs 1995). The value of washback indicates the 'positivity' or 'negativity' of the effects which a test has on teaching and learning and stakeholders engaged in these activities (Umashankar, 2017).

A long ago, Wiseman (1961) commented that tests might have not only *debits* but also *credits* (p.159-61; cited in Wall, 2005: p.34). Thenceforth, researchers believe that washback is not a unidirectional phenomenon, rather it is a bi-directional phenomenon (see Cheng & Curtis, 2004; Bailey, 1999; Alderson & Wall, 1993), depending on positive or negative effects this washback has on teaching and learning (Hughes, 1989). The positive or negative effects, that a test may have, are linked to washback direction (Green 2007a; Hughes 2003; Brown & Hudson 2002; Alderson & Wall 1993). Green (2007a) claims, "... washback is often evaluated as positive or negative according to how far it encourages or discourages forms of teaching or learning judged to be appropriate" (p. 6).

Thus, studies conducted by several researchers provide ample evidence that test-influence may take two different directions. Among them, some of the researchers claim that a test can positively affect or influence both teachers and students (James, 2000; Wolf, 1997; Biggs, 1995; Heyneman & Ransom, 1990). Heyneman and Ransom (1990), for instance, contend that as a powerful and low-cost instrument, tests can positively influence content quality i.e., what

language teachers teach as well as what students learn in the classroom at school.

On the contrary, other researchers argue that any testing is more prone to exert negative effects (see Zeider, 1998; Shohamy, 1997; Madaus, 1988). Madaus (1988), for instance, argues, “The tests can become the ferocious master of the educational process, not the compliant servant they should be. Measurement-driven instruction invariably leads to cramming, narrows the curriculum; concentrates attention on those skills most amenable to testing; constrains the creativity and spontaneity of teachers and students; and finally, demeans the professional judgment of teachers” (p. 85).

Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, (1996) comments that it is commonly found that tests are usually used by policymakers to promote political agendas, gatekeeping, and to control the education systems. Choi (2008), for instance, commented that ESL testing had a great impact on English teaching and learning practice across all three levels of education in Korea: in the elementary level, where learners are less interested and motivated in language learning English language; in the secondary level, where learners are obliged to learn test-taking strategies in order to prepare for the examinations; and in the higher education level, where gaining good grades in English is considered a precondition for graduation and post-graduate employment (p. 55).

Abu-Alhija (2007) and Alderson and Wall (1993) contend that tests will exert negative effects when they bring anxiety and pressure among teachers; and when students' grades inflate without a simultaneous growth in learning, thus produces “*test score pollution*” (Haladyna et al., 1991, p4; Azizeh & Mansoor,

2010; Choi, 2008; Ferman, 2004; Andrews et al., 2002). Another detrimental effect is that tests may encourage traditional methods of instructional practice by teachers. A further detrimental effect is that tests may have is promoting rote learning and memorization (Black & Wiliam, 2006).

Another most deteriorating effect that tests may have is the promotion of negative washback has close relation with “teaching to the test” as opposed to “teaching to the curriculum”. Teachers skip and ignore some of the lessons of the textbook that are not or less likely to be set in the high-stakes test (Rind, & Mari, 2019; Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2011; Hoque, 2011; Qi, 2004). Fullilove (1992, p. 139) termed such exams as “little more than cloners of past exam papers”. Teachers narrow the content of the textbook so that it can match and resemble the content of the examination. These findings were also revealed by several other studies in other contexts at home (Bangladesh) and abroad (Sultana, 2018; Hoque, 2016; Choi, 2008; Abu-Alhija, 2007; Cheng, 2005; Stecher, 2002) where it was noticed that high-stakes tests were instrumental in limiting the curriculum to those items only which were likely to be set in the test.

On the contrary, promotion of positive washback has close relation with “teaching to the curriculum as opposed to teaching to the test” (Hoque, 2011, p. 297). For a test to promote beneficial washback, it should be purposive, well-known to teachers and students, as well as reflecting the course objectives upon which the test content is supposedly based (Pearson, 1988; Shohamy, 2001; Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010) (see also Bailey, 1996; Hughes, 2003; Cheng and Curtis, 2004). In this vein, Messick (1996) states: “for optimal positive washback there should be little if any difference between activities involved in

learning the language and activities involved in preparing for the test” (p. 241-242).

It is, however, noteworthy that evaluation of washback direction (unlike intentionality) depends largely on the stakeholders. Green (2007) contends, “there are no agreed standards for evaluating washback” (p.3). He further clarifies that test washback is comprehended through the “interactions between the test, teachers and learners”. Alderson (1992) and Watanabe (2003) similarly claim that this positive or negative washback direction is dependent on for whom the evaluation of washback is. Watanabe (2003) elucidates, “[O]ne type of outcome may be evaluated as being positive by teachers, whereas the same outcome may be judged to be negative by school principals. Thus, it is important to identify the evaluator when it comes to passing value judgement” (p.21). Cheng and Curtis (2003) contend likewise that, the evaluation of positive or negative washback direction is context-sensitive. They commented, “Whether the effect of testing is deemed to be positive or negative should also depend on who it is that actually conducts the investigation within a particular education context, as well as where, the school or university contexts, when, the time and duration of using such assessment practices, why, the rationale, and how, the different approaches used by different participants within the context” (p. 8).

Thus, these arguments indicated that the evaluation washback direction is dependent on the stakeholders and other contextual characteristics and factors.

2.5.2.3 Washback specificity

“The effects of a test may be general or specific. General washback is the overall effect of a test that makes teachers and students engage in activities which they would not otherwise engage in” (Umashankar, 2017, p.31; Sukyadi, & Mardiani, 2011; Watanabe 2003). Most of the washback studies (eg. Sultana, 2018; Choi, 2008; Abu-Alhija, 2007; Hoque, 2016; Cheng, 2005; Stecher, 2002) conducted in diverse contexts explore that general washback of tests, where test dictates curriculum, teachers skip and ignore some of the lessons of the textbook that are not or less likely to be set in the examination (Rind, & Mari, 2019; Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2011; Qi, 2004). Fullilove (1992, p. 139) termed such exams as “little more than cloners of past exam papers”. Teachers narrow the content of the textbook so that it can match and resemble the content of the examination. They put emphasis and teach only those sections of the lessons or lessons which they deem important for the examination (Rind, & Mari, 2019).

On the other hand, “Specific washback refers to a type of washback that relates to only specific aspect of a test or one specific test type” (Sukyadi, & Mardiani, 2011, p.97; Umashankar, 2017; Watanabe 2003). Watanabe (2003), for instance, explicates, there is “[a] belief that if a listening component is included in the test, the students and teachers will emphasize this aspect in their learning or teaching” (ibid, p.20). Stecher et al. (2003) explored washback specificity in teaching and learning practice in writing skill development when they carried out surveys to examine the washback of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) test on teachers teaching approaches and methods applied in teaching writing.

2.5.2.4 Washback intensity

Washback can vary in intensity, which is often associated with the importance given to the results by the teachers, students and other stakeholders (Green 2007a), or in other words, it is a function of the stakes of a test (Cheng 1998, 2005). High- stakes tests are associated with more intense washback as teachers and learners may adjust their behaviour more when test results matter most to them. Green (2013) argues behaviour to meet the demands of a test (p.40).

One of the major washback dimensions is its strength, termed as washback intensity. Several researchers in their washback studies (e.g. Sukyadi, & Mardiani, 2011, Cheng, 2005) found that washback can be strong or weak. Washback intensity indicates how strong or weak the washback of a test is, which is evinced by learners' extent of conformity to the demands of the test (Cheng, 2005). For convenience, coherence and ease of understanding in the current study, the term "intensity" is used, as it has been used in both washback models of Green (2007a) and Watanabe (2004a). It is usually linked with the stakes of a test. The higher the value is placed on the test, the higher the stakes and intensity of the test is felt. "The higher the stakes of the test, the stronger the washback effect" (Green, 2007a), since they transmit more ramifications for its stakeholders. Several studies (see Sultana, 2018; Al-Amin, 2018; Hoque, 2011) explored strong washback intensity of tests.

In their study conducted in Israel, Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, (1996), however, explored differences in intensity of washback between the Arabic as a Foreign Language Test (ASLT), and the English Foreign Language

Oral Test (EFL-OT). These researchers examined the washback of ASLT, and EFL-OT on Israeli teachers through document analysis, interviews and questionnaires. Their study explored that ASLT had insignificant effects and influence on teaching content, on the contrary, EFL-OT had significant effects and influence on both teaching content and method. When asked about the reasons of such difference, the teachers informed that “the Arabic test is not a high-stakes test and the results are not used for any decision-making or placement purposes”, and that “the EFL test, on the other hand, is a high-stakes test in the sense that the individual test results affect graduation from high school and entrance to tertiary institutions” (p. 315).

It is a very common phenomenon (see Kwon, Lee & Shin, 2017; Ho, 2006; OECD, 2003; OECD, 2004) that results of high-stake public examinations generally influence an individual’s career or life chances (e.g., educational and/or employment opportunities). Such examinations are considered an ‘educational gatekeeper’ (Froese-German, 2001, p111) or a ‘gatekeeper’ (Kwon, Lee & Shin, 2017, p60) of a learner’s success in life, with regard to entering a reputed educational institute or having a bright career. In such cases, washback of a test is found to be particularly strong (Ho, 2016; Vallette, 1994).

2.5.2.5 Differential washback

Differential washback is a phenomenon where teachers, students and others do not experience the same degree of effect from the same test, i.e., different effects are experienced by different teachers and students (Green, 2007). The extent of the effects of a test differs among the stakeholders. Some washback studies (Burrows, 2004; Ferman, 2004; Andrews et al., 2002) found that newly

introduced tests exert different washback effects on different teachers and students operating in the same context.

Tsagari (2007) commented that “the studies that found evidence of washback on teaching also found large differences in the way teachers teach towards the same exam, with some adopting more overt ‘teaching to the test’ while others follow more creative and independent approaches” (p. 36).

2.5.2.6 Seasonality of washback

The high-stakes test imposes more demands and pressure on teachers, particularly when the examination came closer which is termed as the *seasonality* of washback in the language testing literature (Tsagari & Cheng, 2017; Cheng, 2005; Baily, 1999). Several washback studies observed this time-issue (the *seasonality*) (Gennaro, 2017; Onaiba, 2013; Cheng, 2005; Bailey 1999; Watanabe 1996a; Shohamy et al. 1996; Alderson & Wall 1993). Watanabe (1996) also detects seasonality as a likely effect in washback research studies, telling that if two different teachers are interviewed at two different times during an academic year, they might answer very differently or show opposing behaviors based on the integral contextual differences which take place during an academic term. One of the studies reported that teachers informed that their teaching increased with the approaching of testing periods (Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996). On the other hand, another one (Shohamy, 1993) explored that the effects of test (washback) greatly differ over time. Spratt (2005) comments, that “[W]e have seen that exam materials can be heavily used in classrooms particularly as the exam approaches” (p. 17).

Finding that with approaching of the examination date, teachers' instructional behavior in the classroom got significantly intensified, Shohamy (1996), Watanabe (1996) and Wall and Alderson (1993) suggested that while conducting studies on washback timing should be seriously considered, which has been done while conducting this current doctoral study. Bailey also suggested the same by mentioning that the seasonality issue can be an “*appropriate concept in washback investigation*” (1999, p. 40).

In terms of the characteristics of washback, the current doctoral study investigates whether the JSC English test has effects on teaching and learning with regard to washback *intentionality*, whether the effects of the test are termed as negative or positive by the teacher and students i.e. *value* of washback, whether the JSC English test influence all the respondents or some of them to the same extent i.e. *differential* washback, as well as to what extent teachers' instructional practices and learners' learning strategies are influenced by the JSC English test (i.e. washback *intensity*). On the other hand, since the current study is not a longitudinal research study, the *seasonality* of washback, is not within the scope of the study, although in Chapter 5 (Findings of the Study) we will see some traces of *seasonality* of washback.

2.6 Washback Factors

Spratt (2005) in his review paper found several factors explored by empirical studies which affect kinds and degrees of washback. He classified these factors into the school, resources, teacher factors, and the test/exam itself. Wall (2005) and Watanabe (1996b) classified washback factors into micro-context (student and teacher factors), assessment/test-related factors (contents and methods), and macro-context (factors existing in the entire educational system) to

elucidate how these multiple factors are facilitating the production of washback.

| Micro-context | | Macro-context |
|--|--|---|
| Teacher and student factors | Assessment related factors | |
| <p>Teacher related factors: Teachers' perceptions and attitude to aspects of teaching, learning and testing Teaching experience Teachers' education, training and awareness of assessment change</p> <p>Student related factors: Students perceptions and attitudes to aspects of teaching, their own learning activities and testing</p> <p>School and classroom and head teacher factors: School atmosphere and cultural factors Classroom setting Class size The grade teachers teach School principal</p> | <p>Design and administration of assessment: its proximity its stakes the status of the language it tests its purpose the formats it employs the weighting of individual papers when the exam was introduced how familiar the exam is to teachers</p> | <p>Educational administration: How supportive in passing message about the changes to teachers and students and in implementing the change how much the administrators put pressure on teachers to achieve results</p> <p>Geographical factors: Available facilities like transport and electricity , whether schools located in war affected areas</p> <p>Political factors: How much the new change depends on politically motivated decisions</p> <p>Resources: the availability of textbooks and exam support materials</p> |

Table 2.1: Factors mediating washback

2.6.1. Washback on Curriculum and Teaching materials (Curriculum Washback)

Effective assessment or testing functions as a significant force to ensure effective and outcome-based teaching and learning in the classroom and beyond (Rahman & Rahman, 2012; Stiggins, 1991). It facilitates teachers to augment students' learning and their achievement in the examination by

following the curriculum (Phelps, 2019; Day et al., 2018). At the same time, assessment has the power to dominate curriculum, and teaching and learning practice (Torrance, 2012, 2007). High-stakes test is stigmatized as dominator and distorter of the whole curriculum. Negative washback of a test promotes has close relation with “teaching to the test opposed to teaching to the curriculum, while promotion of positive washback has close relation with *“teaching to the curriculum as opposed to teaching to the test”* (Hoque, 2011, p. 297).

In her study, Chen (2002) found that teachers preferred to ‘teach to the test’ when they lacked sufficient idea and knowledge of the curriculum goals. Such thing happens when the contents of the curriculum are not reflected in the contents of the test and the score achieved in the test is given more emphasis than achieving the curricular goals. Hence, teachers as well as students give more priority to the test than the curriculum and its goals. Eventually, the test negatively impacts the curriculum.

Hence, test washback has a very close relationship with the relevant curriculum. Contents of assessment and test can also have a direct effect upon curricula of teaching and learning. There is no denial of the fact that the curriculum itself cannot guarantee that teaching-learning in the classroom occurs as per the curriculum (Hoque, 2011).

Several studies (Sultana, 2018; Choi, 2008; Abu-Alhija, 2007; Hoque, 2011; Cheng, 2005; Stecher, 2002) explored that there was an extremely negative washback effect of the high-stakes tests on the teachers’ selection and teaching of contents from the curriculum and syllabus. The findings of these studies

revealed that every section of the curriculum and syllabus was not taught in the classroom. Teachers skipped and ignored some of the lessons of the textbook that were not or less expected and set to be set in the test (Rind, & Mari, 2019; Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2011; Qi, 2004). Fullilove (1992, p. 139) termed such exams as “little more than cloners of past exam papers”. Teachers narrowed the content of the textbook so that it could match and resemble the content of the test. Lam (1994) remarks that “... about 50% of the teachers appear to be ‘textbook slaves’ in teaching the sections of the test related to listening, reading, and language systems, and practical skills for work and study (p. 83)”.

Wall (2012) commented that washback on teaching materials and curriculum becomes prominent when both students and teachers “pay more attention to certain parts of the teaching syllabus at the expense of other parts because they believe these will be emphasised on the test” (79). Reviewing previous washback studies, he remarks that teachers design and develop their teaching content and materials around tests, a phenomenon termed as “*Curriculum Alignment*” (Choi, 2008; Abu-Alhija, 2007; Cheng, 2005; Stecher, 2002; Wall & Alderson, 1993; Madaus, 1988). Wall and Alderson (1993) noted that “the new exam has had a demonstrable effect on the content of language lessons” (p. 126-27). This ignoring, narrowing and skipping of the contents of the syllabus and textbook indicates how negatively test affects English teachers’ teaching practice. Hoque (2016, p354) opined that “positive washback takes place when tests induce teachers to cover their subjects more thoroughly, making them complete their syllabi within the prescribed time limits”. Studies conducted by Sultana (2018), Chowdhury (2010), Maniruzzaman and Hoque (2010), Tsagari (2009), Lam (1994) also produced similar findings. The study of Watanabe

(2000, p44) who in his study found the teachers “using a variety of self-made materials” ignoring the curriculum to suit the targeted test. The following figure by Saville and Hawkey (2004) picturesquely demonstrates washback on syllabus and curriculum.

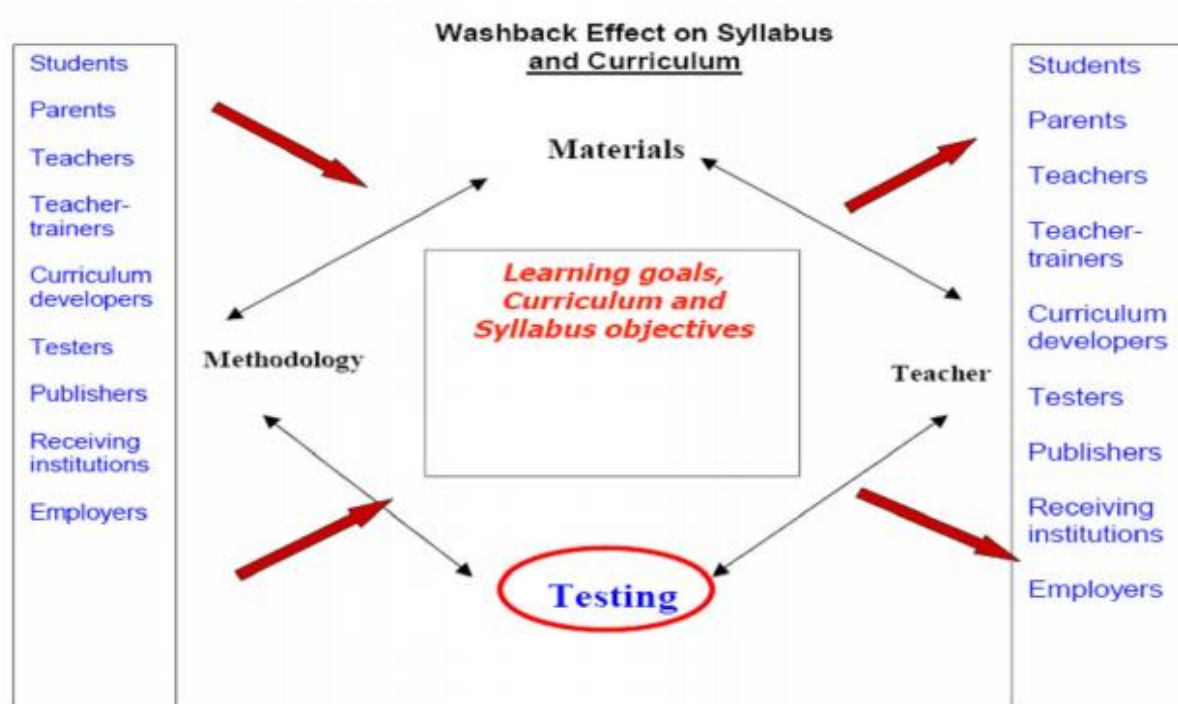


Figure 2.1: Washback on curriculum and syllabus

The high-stakes tests not only dictate English teaching and learning, but also take the form of curriculum itself, hidden curriculum (Minarechová, 2012; Booher-Jennings, 2008) for parts of the academic year since in several studies (e.g. Rahman et al., 2019; Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018; Hoque, 2016; Sarwer & Hoque, 2016; Jilani, 2011) both the teachers and students were frequently found to depend highly on commercially produced notes and guidebooks. For example, the findings of a study conducted by Cheng (1997, p.50) explored that the candidates for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and

their teachers relied greatly on the workbooks explicitly produced for preparing the candidates for the said examination.

While commenting on published materials, Andrews (1995) reported that the observed teachers used an “estimated two-thirds” of class-time on test-related materials. These findings also have similarities with the study of Han et al. (2004) in China. Their study also found that for their preparation of the College English Test (CET), the candidates are seriously reliant on test related materials produced commercially. Read and Hayes (2003), in their study on IELTS conducted in New Zealand, observed that test preparation materials were used in ninety percent of cases. The studies by Cheng (2005) and Alderson and Hamp-Lyons, (1996) explored similar findings. Cheng (2005) testified that the newly revised test had a great effect on teaching and learning materials. Cheng (1997) attributes it to “the highly adaptable and commercial nature of Hong Kong society” (p. 37), and observed that: “textbook publishers in Hong Kong not only provide teaching materials but also detailed teaching and learning activities with suggested methods” (Cheng, 2005: p. 130).

By applying teacher interviews and classroom observations, Orafi and Borg (2009) investigated how secondary English teachers in Lybia executed the EFL communicative curriculum, and observed that English teachers struggled to execute their instructional practice as suggested by the curriculum and concluded that the reason behind this failure was “the gap between the orientation of the curriculum and that of the examination system”. Studies conducted in Hong Kong by Lam (1994) and Andrews (1995) on textbook and content washback of UEE found that the test (UEE) had a washback effect on teaching and learning materials. Lam (1994) remarked that "positive washback

is evidenced by teachers creating more authentic materials from the mass media, [and] producing meaningful learning activities” (p. 95). Likewise, Watanabe (2000), similar to Tsagari (2009), observed that English teachers "tried to innovate during exam preparation classes ... using a variety of self-made material" (p. 44).

Some studies (e.g. Onaiba, 2013; Hoque, 2011) revealed that teachers were compelled to do so because their students were not interested and show resistance to exercise the activities that were not likely to appear in the test. Alderson and Wall (1993) explain that “for teachers, the fear of poor results, and the associated guilt, shame, or embarrassment, might lead to the desire for their pupil to achieve high scores in whatever way seems possible. They point out this might lead to ‘teaching to the test’, with an undesirable narrowing of the curriculum” (p.118). In his study Onaiba (2013) noted that it was “a result of students’ resistance to teachers’ attempts to implement certain activities” (p. 254). Such reasons, however, created “a tension between pedagogical and ethical decisions” (Spratt, 2005: p24) to cater to the expectations of not only students but also their parents as well as the school authority. Most of the teachers in the study of Phelps (2015) believed that this test had taken the form of “rigid, unbalanced and narrowed curriculum” (p.8 cited in Ritt, 2016). Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996, p. 28) summarize certain common concerns resulting from negative washback on the curriculum:

1. Narrowing of the curriculum (Madaus, 1988; Cooley, 1991)
2. Lost instructional time (Smith et al., 1989)
3. Reduced emphasis on skills that require complex thinking or problem-solving (Fredericksen, 1984; Darling-Hammond and Wise, 1985)
4. Test score ‘pollution’, or increases in test scores without an accompanying rise in ability in the construct being tested (Haladyna, Nolan and Haas, 1991)

The findings of the study of Read and Hayes (2003), however, elaborately show that depending on the observed courses, differences in washback on the curriculum could be noticed.

2.6.2 Washback on Teaching Methodology

One of the aspects of this current study is it views the effects of a test from the perspective of teachers’ use of curriculum and their instructional practice in the classrooms. Issues related to their instructional practice in the classrooms form “methodology washback” in this present doctoral study. The findings of several studies indicated that the format and demands of the test greatly influenced the interviewed teachers’ instructional practices in their classroom with their students, tailoring it to the test. The influence, however, was more prominently observed in terms of choice and selection of teaching contents, classroom tasks and activities, and skills practiced, rather than teaching methods and approaches applied in the classroom.

The findings received from several studies (Umashankar, 2017; Onaiba, 2013; Rahman et al, 2019; Hoque, 2011) indicated that in the test-oriented classrooms, English teachers taught their students whatever they liked to teach and English teachers’ preference and choice of chapters and topics got priority

in the classroom teaching and learning. English teachers hardly involved them to practice learning and speaking English, instead they were taught the strategies to answer to the English questions to ensure high scores and good grades. Bailey (1999) comments,

“In considering the varied research about washback and language teachers, we can see that teachers’ classroom behavior can either support or override the intended positive washback effect of new or revised tests. There have also been differences observed between novice and experienced teachers with respect to washback. We have seen that in many contexts teachers change the content of their teaching but not their methods as a result of examination changes (p.24)”.

These findings also conform to the findings of several other studies such as Qi (2004), and Wall and Alderson (1993) including the one conducted by Cheng (2005). These studies explored similar findings in terms of teachers’ teaching approaches and methods. In a similar tone with Bailey (1999), Cheng (2005) in her study commented, “the way the teachers carried out their teaching remained more or less the same, whether the testing syllabus was the old one or the new one” (p. 246). The Sri Lankan washback study by Wall and Alderson (1993) explored that tests had “virtually no impact on the way that teachers teach English” (p. 127).

In their washback studies, Amengual-Pizarro (2009) and Stecher et al. (2004), however, found that the teaching methods and approaches of all the studied teachers were influenced by the test. These studies explored that teachers changed their teaching methods and approaches to suit the requirements of the

test. Amengual-Pizarro (2009, p. 594) concluded that, "Contrary to previous studies that found no straightforward connection between the test and teachers' methodology [...], the results of this study also appear to indicate that the ET affects the methodology teachers employ in actual class teaching adapting it to the purpose of the test".

Several studies (Sultana, 2018; Choi, 2008; Abu-Alhija, 2007; Hoque, 2016; Cheng, 2005; Stecher, 2002; Rind, & Mari, 2019; Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2011; Qi, 2004) explored that teachers skipped and ignored some of the lessons of the textbook that were not or less expected and set to be set in the test. Fullilove (1992, p. 139) termed such exams as "little more than cloners of past exam papers". Teachers narrowed the content of the textbook so that it could match and resemble the content of the test. This ignoring, narrowing and skipping of the contents of the syllabus and textbook indicates how negatively test affects English teachers' teaching practice. Teachers greatly engaged themselves in the test-oriented tasks and activities and disregarded the tasks and activities which were not likely to be tested and required to pass the English test (Rind, & Mari, 2019; Hoque, 2011). They spent more time was used on practicing topics such as grammar, reading, writing and vocabulary related tasks since these were tested mostly in the test, i.e. "*what is tested is taught*" (Onaiba, 2013, p.254). Gorsuch (2000) examined teachers' classroom practices in the wake of curriculum reform in EFL at the Japanese schools. The study explored that though the curriculum reform emphasized the equal application of all the four skills of language, the schools stressed assessing students' stock of vocabulary, their mastery over usage of grammatical forms and structures of English

language. Similar findings were also explored by other washback studies (e.g. Orafi & Borg, 2009; Orafi, 2008; Agrawal, 2004).

Studies (e.g., Cheng, 2005; 1997; Caine, 2005) also found that teachers depended highly on commercially produced model/mock test book, test papers, suggestion books, notes and guidebooks which contained test-related materials, which Caine (2005, p. 11) termed as a “hidden syllabus”. For example, the findings of a study conducted by Cheng (1997, p.50) explored that the candidates for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and their teachers relied greatly on the workbooks explicitly produced for preparing the candidates for the said examination. Cheng (1997) attributes it to “the highly adaptable and commercial nature of Hong Kong society” (p. 37), and observed that: “textbook publishers in Hong Kong not only provide teaching materials but also detailed teaching and learning activities with suggested methods” (Cheng, 2005: p. 130).

These findings substantiate the four hypotheses put forwarded by Alderson and Wall’s (1993: 120): *A test will influence **what** teachers teach, and **how** teachers teach; and A test will influence **what** learners learn, and **how** learners learn.* Teachers of the study by Walker (2014) claimed that because of the higher stakes of the test, they were “*forced to dilute their creativity to teach to the test*” (p.2).

The study of Bailey (1996), on the other hand, revealed that teachers did not use authentic materials in their English classroom. The use of authentic materials is considered vital for promoting positive washback. Bailey (1996) commented that “... *a test will yield positive washback to the learner and to the*

programme to the extent that it utilizes authentic tasks and authentic texts (p.276)”.

The findings received from several studies (Sultana, 2019; Rahman et al, 2019; Umashankar, 2017; Onaiba, 2013; Hoque, 2011) indicated that all the classrooms which prepared students for high-stakes test were teacher-centered and test-oriented. It is compatible with the findings of the study conducted by Andrews (1995) who also found that teachers consumed too much time of the entire class hour and spent it on test-related materials, which he believed “*a limiting of focus for teachers and students rather than a broadening of horizons*” (p.80). Cheng (2004) warns that test-oriented teaching causes loss of teaching-learning time.

The findings of the study conducted by Hoque (2011) showed that nine out of the ten Bangladeshi secondary school teachers, whose classes were observed, used the majority of the time of their class-time. It specifies that the teacher, not the students, was the focal point of the lessons and the lessons were teacher-dominated. The same study explored that content selection and control of the lesson and activities in the classroom were heavily lied with the class-teacher. These teachers were found mostly engaged with themselves and the text. They usually started the conversation in the classroom, explained and led the text, activities and exercises throughout the lesson time, where their students were only inquired if they could understand what they were instructing and explaining.

Another striking finding of the studies (Podder, 2016; Hossain, Nessa & Kafi, 2015; Rahman, 2014; Hoque, 2011) conducted in Bangladesh indicate that the

teachers did not use English to clarify the text in the classroom. It was specified that mostly Bangla along with English was used as the languages of instructions in the classroom. Hossain, Nessa and Kafi (2015) observed, “most of the English teachers do not practice speaking side by side with writing and they conduct the classes in Bangla which is a hindrance to the implementation of language curriculum” (p. 15). Nor did the English teachers encourage learners to ask any question. These findings of these studies testify that “*A test will influence how teachers teach*” a hypothesis by Alderson and Wall’s (1993: p. 120).

2.6.3 Washback on Students’ and Teachers’ Perception towards Test (Perception Washback)

Odo (2012) writes, “researchers are becoming progressively more aware of the negative social impact large-scale high-stakes tests can have on the lives of learners –particularly those who are most vulnerable – when the results of these tests are used to make decisions that unfairly limit the life choices of these learners” (p. 2). Therefore, it is argued that stakeholders especially, teachers’ and students’ perceptions, attitudes and feelings are influenced by the nature and effects of a test (washback).

2.6.3.1 Students’ attitudes and perceptions

Only a very insignificant number of washback studies (Jamila & Kabir, 2020; Ali & Hamid, 2020; Sultana, 2019; Khan, 2010; Maniruzzaman, 2012) have been conducted in the context of the secondary schools of Bangladesh. More

importantly, none of these studies included students as participants for the study, whereas throughout the world, the need for more washback studies from students' perspectives is enjoying increased awareness (Wu, 2014). Acknowledging that "we know very little about students' perceptions of tests (as opposed to their teachers' impressions of their perceptions) and even less about how new tests influence what students know and can do" (p. 506), Wall (2000) confirmed that more empirical studies are required in this area. The tendency to ignore student perceptions may partially explain why, out of the 15 hypotheses put forth by Alderson and Wall (1993), each hypothesis concerning teaching is paired with a counterpart regarding learning (Wu, 2014).

Similarly, Hamp-Lyons (1997) stressed that high-stakes tests cause "different meanings to different stakeholders". She suggested conducting more empirical washback research studies on students' attitudes and perspectives so that the professional responsibility of test writers can be enhanced in language education and testing. Green (2007a), in a similar vein, believes that student perspectives in the washback studies even now remain "under-investigated in the literature" (p. 314). He stated that "variability at the individual level is central to an understanding of the complex process of washback and that the nature and extent of washback to learners does not bear a transparent relationship to washback to the teacher" (p. 314).

Students' attitudes towards and perception of tests may prove to be important in causing the effects of testing. A number of washback studies indicated that students' attitudes towards and perception of learning, teaching, and testing play important role in creating washback (Xie 2015; Tsagari, 2009, 2007; Green 2005; Read & Hayes, 2003; Cheng 1998, Shohamy et al. 1996). This is

why, researchers like Tsagari (2007) commented that while embarking on washback study, students' views and opinions should be taken into consideration, which has been done in the current study.

Tsagari (2007) carried out a washback study entitled "Investigating the Washback Effect of a High-Stakes EFL Exam in the Greek context: Participants' Perceptions, Material Design and Classroom Applications". The final part of this washback study highlighted the effects of the test on the students. The findings of the study indicated that the feelings, perceptions and attitudes of students, and their motivation towards language learning were influenced by the test.

Xie (2015) studied the two changes brought to the College English Test (CET) in China. Using a questionnaire survey, he examined a Chinese university students' attitudes towards and perceptions of the two changes in CET and their effects on their time management, their test preparation approaches and their test performance. The findings of the study display that students possessed positive attitudes towards the CET associated with more engagement in learning activities as well as test preparation. The researcher remarked that students' positive attitudes towards the tests have the potential to create positive washback.

In their study conducted on two different tests in Israel, Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman, (1996) explored that students possessed a negative attitude towards the Arabic as a Foreign Language Test (ASLT), since they believed this test had no practical importance, whereas they considered the English Foreign Language Oral Test (EFL-OT) an important one. The reason

behind their negative attitudes is that the results of ASLT had no use in “decision-making or placement purposes”, whereas the results of EFL-OT had been used as an indication of students’ “graduation from high school and entrance to tertiary institutions” (p. 315). Hence, EFL-OT motivates learners to develop their English-speaking skills, whereas ASLT fails in this regard.

Studies conducted on washback of testing also found that students’ attitudes towards and perceptions of testing might be mixed. In Athens, Tsagari (2009) carried out another washback study where 54 English teachers and 98 students of two language schools. The findings of the study indicated that both teachers and their students believed the newly introduced examination influences English teaching and learning significantly. The findings from the student questionnaires showed that the majority of them found the examination very important as well as useful. It had positive effects on teaching and learning, on materials, and “the perceived attitude of the teacher”. The study indicated a mixed result on the effects of tests on students’ attitudes. 44% of them thought the test had positive or strongly positive effects, and 36% reported negative or strongly negative effects. Similar to the study conducted by Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman (1996), this study also reported that most of the learners (70%), however, unfortunately, reported that the test caused them anxiety. On the other hand, a massive-scale longitudinal study of four years conducted in Hong Kong by Cheng’s (2005) that the English subject of HKCEE had washback on students’ learning but it was superficial. And their perceptions and attitudes towards high-stakes public examinations continued to be largely unchanged.

2.6.3.2 Teachers' attitudes and perceptions

Reviewing various empirical washback studies on external examinations, Spratt (2005: p. 5) comments, “how crucial a role the teacher plays in determining types and intensity of washback, and how much teachers can therefore become agents for promoting positive washback”. This role, however, is dependent on some teacher related factors, such as their perceptions, attitudes, feelings, beliefs, expectations, experience, and educational qualifications, etc. Similarly, Cheng (2008, p. 352) remarks, “teacher factors, including personal beliefs, past education, and academic background, seemed to be more important in determining the teaching methodology a teacher employs”. In the same way, classroom observations of Watanabe’s (1996) washback study advocate, “teacher factors, such as educational background, personal beliefs and teaching experience may outweigh the possible effect of the entrance examinations [a high-stakes public examination]” (p. 318).

The perceptions, attitudes and feelings of teachers in relation to the expectations of students, in turn, might influence how teachers conduct their instructional practice (Hughes, 1993 cited in Bailey, 1999). Besides, previous studies pointed out that tests, more specifically newly-introduced or revised tests, affect teachers’ feelings, perceptions and attitudes towards their behaviour and classroom practice in a way that they “increase teachers' stress and lower their morale” (Abu-Alhija, 2007: p. 57), or else, inspire them to work tougher and embrace innovative techniques and methods “more in line with communicative and, to some extent, humanistic teaching” (Prodromou, 1995; p. 15). The willingness of teachers to innovate and their personalities are also explored as intervening factors of washback (Alderson & Hamp Lyons, 1996). A number of washback studies indicated that teachers’ attitudes towards and

perceptions of the following aspects in terms of teaching, learning and testing play important mediating roles in washback of a test:

- awareness and understanding of the test (Spratt, 2005);
- stakes of the test, its usefulness, status and position of the language, and skills tested by the test (Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996);
- perceptions of teachers of the perceptions of their students (Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996);
- perceptions of teachers of the extent to which the test flouts their existing instructional practices (Alderson & Hamp-Lyons 1996).
- philosophy of teaching (Lam, 1994);
- appropriate methods of teaching (Watanabe, 1996b);
- the interrelations between the test and the textbook (Wall 2005; Wall & Alderson 1993);

How the teachers design and develop their teaching materials and their classroom lessons is also influenced by their perceptions of and attitudes towards the tests (Alderson & Hamp-Lyons 1996). In contrast to the belief of the authorities that tests can be used as an effective means to encourage teachers to teach, tests are often considered an intrusion by teachers (Shohamy, 1993). Hence, the effect of tests is regarded as negative for teaching and learning (Alderson, 2004; Andrew et al., 2002). Turner (2001), however, explored that if teachers are invited in the processes of designing the test, they possess more positive attitudes towards the test.

Cheng (2005), in her Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination washback study, reported that English teachers were concerned about how students, particularly the introvert ones, would face and pass the recently

revised test. One of them informed that she felt embarrassed if she failed to familiarize students with the revised test content and formats. Similar findings were noted by Tsagari (2009) in her Greece study, while investigating test effect on respondents' perceptions and teaching material design. During the interviews with teachers it was informed that they felt anxious, embarrassed and stressed while they were trying to complete all of the materials prescribed in the syllabus. In her another study conducted in the same context, Tsagari (2009) mentioned, "Evidence of more intensive washback was recorded in the diaries as the date of the exam drew closer. This reached a peak in the weeks prior to its administration and was accompanied by intense physical reactions such as upset stomach, headache, and sickness" (p. 7).

In their study conducted in Israel, Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman, (1996) explored that teachers possessed negative attitude towards the Arabic as a foreign Language Test (ASLT), since they believed this test had no practical importance, whereas they considered the English Foreign Language Oral Test (EFL-OT) an important one. The teachers informed that ASLT's "results are not used for any decision-making or placement purposes", whereas EFL-OT "results affect graduation from high school and entrance to tertiary institutions" (p.315). Hence, EFL-OT motivates learners to develop their English-speaking skills. This test, however, had the potential to "create an atmosphere of high anxiety and fear of test results among teachers and students" (Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman, 1996: p. 309-10) (also see Ferman, 2004; Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Wall & Alderson, 1993).

Shohamy (2007) highlighted that the effects of tests on its stakeholders need to be investigated in terms of its uses, fairness, misuses, discrimination and

biases. Cheng et al. (2010), in their washback study in Hong Kong, examined students and their parents' perceptions towards the newly introduced high-stakes examination. On one hand, the research study studied students' perceptions of the effects of the newly introduced high-stakes examination in terms of their English language learning, and on the other hand, their parents' perceptions and beliefs of their role in this regard. It was explored that there was a direct connection between the perceptions of students towards test-related learning activities and those of their English levels.

Cheng (1998) had similar findings from her study conducted earlier in 1998. Besides, the study (Cheng et al., 2010) explored that perceptions of parents towards the newly introduced high-stakes examination was that their role was to support the children to make good grades in the examination. The study finally remarks that perceptions of parents towards the newly introduced high-stakes examination are directly and substantially linked with the perceptions of their children about the examination (Cheng et al., 2010: 221), which "in turn would likely directly or indirectly affect the teacher in class" (Onaiba, 2013).

Hence, teachers are influenced greatly by the desires of other stakeholders. They are predominantly pressured by the school authority, their students and parents to customize their teaching methodologies (Onaiba, 2013; Wall, 2000). Subsequently, this may lead teachers towards what Spratt (2005; p. 24) terms "a tension between pedagogical and ethical decisions": "either to practice what they would like to teach stemming from their own philosophy of what real learning is, or to be enslaved by teaching to the test to enable their students to pass exams, especially when those exams are of low quality—poorly constructed—in terms of the constructs they measure" (Onaiba, 2013; p. 59).

Consequently, teachers' professional knowledge and standing gets reduced by the demands of tests and indirectly they are pressurized enormously to work hard to upgrade exam test scores of their students, that ultimately develop feelings of anxiety, embarrassment, guilt, shame, and anger (Onaiba, 2013; Hoque, 2011; Gipps, 2011; Smith, 1991; Madaus, 1988).

However, Gregory and Burg (2006) accentuate that while high-stakes examinations produce negative effects, they can have certain positive consequences on instruction: "[T]he extent to which a teacher provides explicit structure during lessons such as providing frequent previews and reviews, and reduces the density of instruction and content input have both been identified as potentially reducing the debilitating effects of test anxiety on student achievement" (p. 44). Likewise, the findings of the study of Wall (2005) indicated that teachers had mixed, yet mostly positive attitudes towards the examination. The findings of the study of Amengual-Pizarro (2009) also agree with these findings. They found that most of the teachers appeared to possess positive perceptions of the test. She concluded, the test "was thought to be useful and necessary" and "reliable" (p. 592) (also see Watanabe, 2000; p. 44).

To sum up, high-stakes examinations exercise considerable washback effects on the perceptions, attitudes and feelings of teachers and students. However, the extent of these effects on effective teaching and learning is not clear. Hence, perceptions of stakeholders (especially teachers and students) towards the test, their test anxiety and its resulting effects on language teaching and learning are "worth investigating in relation to washback" (Onaiba, 2013). This current doctoral study attempted to explore teachers' and learners' feelings, attitudes towards and perceptions of the JSC English test, and the extent of these feelings and perceptions influencing English language teaching and learning.

2.6.3.3 Other factors influencing washback

2.6.3.3.1 Teachers' teaching experience

Several studies examining the interrelations between testing, and teaching and learning report that teachers' teaching experience also may potentially mediate the washback of testing on language teaching and learning (Umashankar, 2017; Onaiba 2013; Hoque, 2011; Wang, 2010; Pan, 2009; Watanabe, 2000; Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Lam, 1994). Some of these research studies also reported that teachers' experience is one of the main factors, that can help washback researchers explain the reasons behind washback's varying influence teachers, i.e., influencing some teachers but not others (Cheng, 2005; Watanabe, 1996b; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996; Lam, 1994). Onaiba (2013) concedes that "teachers with more years of teaching would have the ability to alter and modify their teaching methods and techniques in response to the demands of the exam introduced" (p. 74).

Fish (1988, cited in Pan, 2009; p. 260), who studied the responses of teachers to standardized high-stakes testing, found that novice and young teachers experienced more anxiety and pressure for accountability than the experienced teachers. A finding from a study by Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman, (1996) indicated that veteran teachers were much more thoughtful and perceptive to standardized high-stakes examinations and hence, were more likely to abide by the requirements of the test and apply them as guidance for their instructional practices. In the same way, Lam (1994) found differences between experienced and novice teachers with regard to negative and positive washback. He commented, "The more experienced UE teachers are likely less [negatively] affected by syllabus innovation because they are more set in their

ways and more confident of themselves as a result of more years of experience and the fact that they are more realistic in assessing what is functional in their working situations” (p. 95).

Cheng (2005) remarked that experienced teachers may fail to change their approaches to teaching which is required by the change in testing system, since with the passage of time two of their important characteristics (i.e. their ability and skill to change) fades.

2.6.3.3.2 Teacher Education, Training and Awareness of Test

Several washback studies also indicate that besides teachers’ teaching experience, the methodological training they received (Umashankar, 2017; Hoque, 2011; Andrews, 2003; Wang, 2010), their training on approaching and dealing with specific tests and test related materials and textbooks (Wang, 2010; Wall & Alderson 1993; Onaiba, 2013), their preparedness to accept the pedagogical or curricular changes (Falvey, 1996, Cheng, 1997 and 2005), and their awareness of the change in assessment and testing (Hoque, 2011; Wall, 2005; Chapman & Snyder, 2000; Wall & Alderson, 1993) are also important factors influencing washback of tests.

Wall (2005, p. 283) commented that tests can hardly influence teachers “... if they [teachers] do not have the skills that will enable them to experiment with, evaluate and make appropriate adjustments to new methods”. Cheng (2005) agreed with Wall’s (2005) opinion and remarked that teachers may not modify and alter their teaching approaches, when they lack the ability and skills to do that. Wall (2005, p. 20) also commented that teachers in such case would use

and rely more on test-related materials while teaching in the classroom taking them from “past exam papers, official exam support material, or commercial examination preparations books”.

Wall and Alderson (1993) found no evidence of washback on methodology. They commented that it happened because teachers lack training on approaching and dealing with specific tests and test related textbooks and materials. They concluded that: “the exam can have no impact on methodology unless the teachers understand correctly what it is the exam is testing” (p. 217). This finding and remark is remarkably similar to the findings of the studies conducted by Chapman and Snyder (2000), and Wall (2005).

Wall (2005), for example, commented that: “examinations cannot influence teachers to change their practices if they are not committed to the new ideas and if they do not have the skills that will enable them to experiment with, evaluate and make appropriate adjustments to new methods” (p. 283). These findings lead the current researcher to believe that the extent of washback of test is attributable partially how teachers perceive, understand the goals of the test and their awareness of the said test.

2.6.3.3.3 Teachers’ Academic Qualification

Teachers’ educational background and academic qualifications is another considerable teacher-related factor that can be partially attributable to why and how washback takes place or not. Onaiba (2013) comments that future teachers should have a major in the subject they want to teach and attend quality pre-

service education along with in-service training, to enhance their theoretical and practical knowledge and understanding of their intended subject areas (p. 75).

Watanabe (1996b), for instance, remarks that teachers' educational backgrounds and academic qualifications shape the instructional practice they apply because of the introduction or revision of exams. Richards (1990) comments, "In second language teaching, teacher education programs typically include a knowledgebase drawn from linguistics and language learning theory, and a practical component based on language teaching methodology and opportunity for practice teaching. In principle, knowledge and information from such disciplines as linguistics and second language acquisitions provide the theoretical basis for the practical components of teacher education programs" (p. 3). Hence, it can be said that teachers who had a major in English language teaching or applied linguistics at the postgraduate or undergraduate level might teach in a different way than those received their academic degree in other subjects (Onaiba, 2013).

It is noteworthy to recapitulate that teacher respondents of the current study have four different educational and academic backgrounds, i.e., holding four different qualifications: BSS, BA, BSc, and BCom/BBA. One may, at this point of the current study, argue that these differences in educational backgrounds and academic qualifications among the respondent-teachers can potentially have effects on their individual reactions to the JSC English test.

2.6.3.4 Contextual Factors

Watanabe (2004b) highlights the importance of context factors in mediating the process of washback. He divided these factors into two categories: “micro-context factors (e.g. the school or classroom setting in which test preparation is being carried out); and macro-context factors (the society in which a test is used)” (p. 22). With regard to macro-context or societal factors (e.g. parents, media), studies explored that pressure on teachers from external sources can elucidate the reasons behind the effects of high-stakes tests on instructional differences, particularly when professional success of teachers is measured by students’ results (Cheng et al., 2010; Gregory & Burg, 2006; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996), or “when awards or sanctions are attached to the test scores rewarding teachers of high achievers while teachers of low achieving students are punished” (Abu-Alhija, 2007; p. 56). Therefore, “the influence of students’ expectations [and their parents] on teachers’ instruction is potentially powerful” (Gorsuch, 2000; p. 685).

The environment and cultural factors of schools (e.g. learning traditions) and “the amount of time and number of students allocated to exam classes” (Read & Hayes, 2003; Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996 cited in Spratt, 2005, p. 23) were also explored and identified as mediating factors in generating test effects on teaching and learning in washback studies (see Wall, 2005; Watanabe, 2000). In relation to classrooms (the micro-level factors)—Wall (2012) mentions that “some of the early references to washback in the language testing field assumed a direct cause and effect relationship between a test and the effects it would have in the classroom” (p. 84).

Class size is one of the factors that that may interrelate with the examination to govern its effect on classroom teaching and learning (Watanabe, 1996b). “It is assumed that the bigger the class, the more likely teachers would practice exam-related activities to save time and effort” (Onaiba, 2013). Class size is considered an important for classroom teaching and learning in the EFL classroom following CLT methodologies (Rahman, Pandian & Kaur, 2018; Hussein, 2018; Huang, 2016; Anani et al, 2016; Ju, 2013; Ansarey 2012, Chang & Goswami, 2011; Orafi & Borg, 2009; Waters & Vilches, 2008; Kokkelenberg, Dillon & Christy 2008; Agrawal, 2004; Gahin & Myhill 2001, Musthafa 2001; Gorsuch, 2000).

Onaiba (2013) studied the washback of a revised EFL high-stakes public exam on the classroom teaching practices of the Libyan public schools’ teachers. Data generated from document analysis, teacher questionnaires, and interviews with teachers as well as inspectors for the study also explored class size as “the most influential—the bigger the class, the fewer communicative activities are performed by teachers; and hence, a minimum amount of such activities are practiced by learners” (p. 79).

Another important factor to be considered in a washback study is the grade that English teachers teach. Several washback studies (Umashankar, 2017, Obaiba, 2013; Latimer, 2009; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman, 1996) found that if the grades teachers teach which face high-stakes public examinations or tests, is more likely to experience washback effects. In the similar way, Alderson and Wall (1993) explored that teachers teaching in the higher grade are more likely to stick to test-oriented instructions and practices to suit the test requirements.

Several washback studies identify the assessment and test itself as one of the influential factors in influencing the degree and direction of washback. Different factors associated with the assessment which affect the entire teaching and learning process are: test “proximity, its stakes, the status of the language it tests, its purpose, the formats it employs” (Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman, 1996, cited in Spratt, 2005, p. 23), “the status of the test (the level of the stakes)” (Alderson & Wall, 1993, cited in Tsagari, 2007), “the weighting of the individual papers” (Lam 1994, cited in Spratt, 2005, p. 23), “when the test was introduced and how familiar it is to teachers” (Andrews et al. 2002, cited in Spratt, 2005, p. 23). All of these test-related factors play a significant role in intermediating the kinds, degree, and direction of washback (Umashankar, 2017; Tsagari, 2007; Spratt 2005; Wall, 2012; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman, 1996).

Spratt (2005) also listed educational administration, geographical factors and political factors as macro-context factors. “The educational administration – how well messages about the new changes are passed onto teachers and students and how supportive the educational administration is in implementing the change; Geographical factors – whether facilities like transport and electricity are available, whether schools are located in war affected areas; Political factors – how much the change depends on politically motivated decisions” (Umashankar, 2017, p. 47).

Several empirical studies on washback found that resources can be one of the intervening factors that affect washback. “Factors mentioned are whether or not customized materials and exam support materials, such as exam specifications, are available to teachers (Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and

Ferman, 1996; Watanabe, 2000) and the types of textbooks available” (Hamp Lyons, 1998; Cheng, 1997, cited in Spratt, 2005, p. 23)

To sum up, according to the washback literature, researchers should not treat washback “as a simple cause-effect systematic reaction to exams” (Onaiba, 2013, p. 79), rather it listed several factors that may or may not intervene the effects of test on language teaching and learning, and thus, either promote or inhibit washback. Spratt (2005) in her concluding remarks mentions that the reply to the question of washback direction where these mediating factors lead to ‘would likely be: it depends’ (p. 23). She also argues: “There is also an interaction between the factors and between the factors and the teaching and learning contexts, which is not yet described. The variety of the factors, their varying strength and the complexity of the interactions between them indicate strongly that washback does not always occur and that when it does it may do so in a variety of forms and intensities in different contexts” (p. 23).

2.6.3.5 Washback Stakeholders

Washback is an outcome of an interrelation between all direct and indirect stakeholders. This interrelation encompasses a continuous multi-directional interactions and interplays. Basing on a model projected by Rea-Dickins (1997), who pointed out at least five categories of stakeholders: teachers, learners, parents, official and government bodies, and the marketplace, Taylor (2000: p. 2) provides a more comprehensive model and a conceptualization for delineating test impact, i.e. the larger social effects of a test.

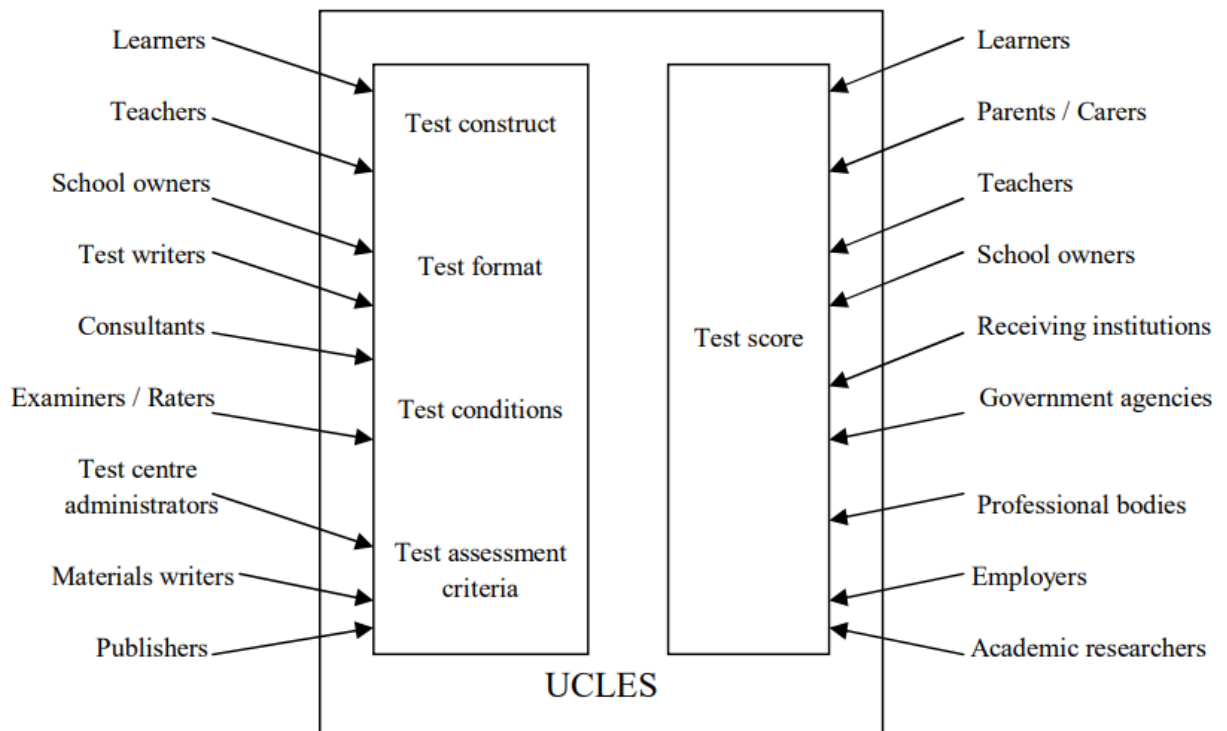


Figure 2.2: Stakeholders involved in the testing process

The model above offers a valuable illustration and presentation of the fact (i.e., test impact). It explains picturesquely that a language test may exert an impact on the different stakeholders engaged at different stages of the testing process:

“Some of the stakeholders listed above (e.g., examiners, and materials writers) are likely to have more interest in the ‘front end’ of a test, i.e. the test assessment criteria or test format. Others may see their stake as being primarily concerned with the test score. Some stakeholders, such as learners and teachers, will naturally have an interest in all aspects of the test” (Taylor 2000: p. 2).

In their study of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), Saville and Hawkey’s (2004) also indicated the wide variety of stakeholders involved in the macro-level. Their list of stakeholders engaged in a testing process is very identical to the categories of stakeholders proposed by Rea-Dicken (1997). The teachers, test-takers (students), parents, the public, test

users, test administrators, teacher educators and trainers, funding bodies and sponsors, government bodies, different national and international exam authorities, curriculum committees and working parties' members.

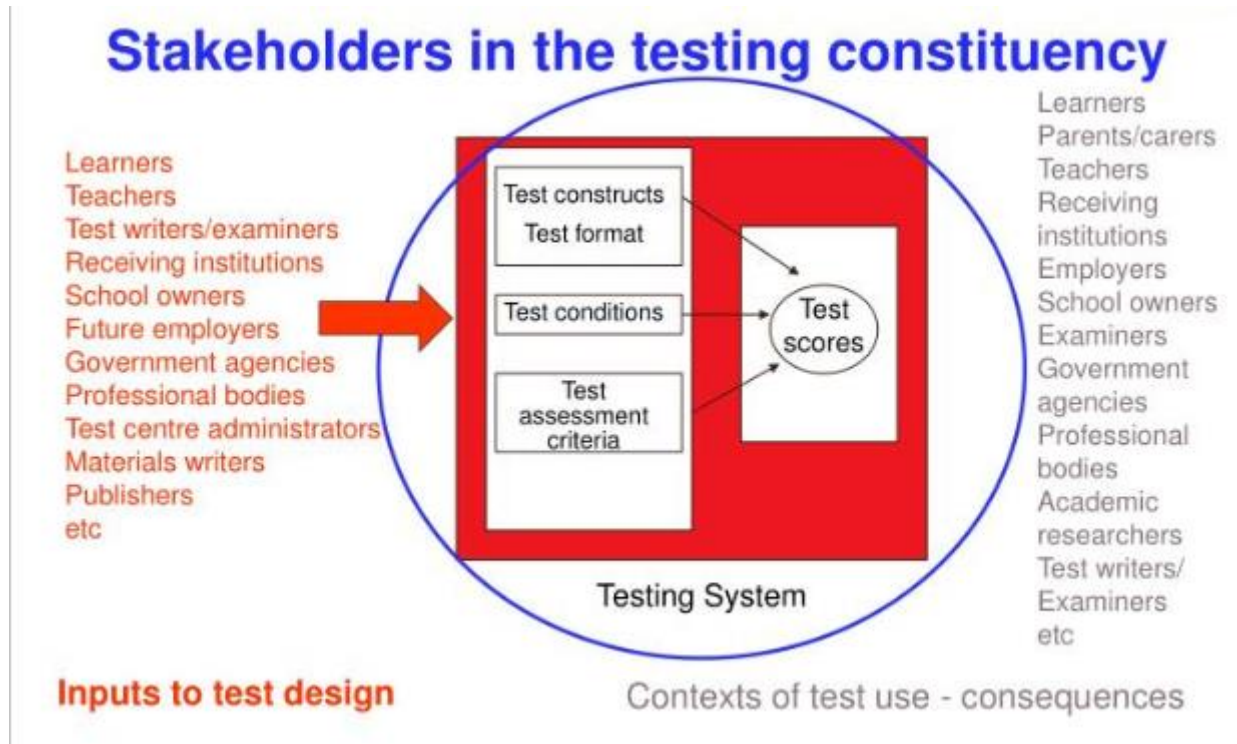


Figure 2.3: Saville’s stakeholders of macro-level washback

2.7 Washback: Hypotheses and Models

2.7.1 Washback hypotheses

“The Sri Lankan Impact Study” was the first-ever empirical research study conducted on washback by Alderson and Wall (1993), who focused on micro aspects of language teaching and learning that might be affected by change in assessment and testing. This phenomenal study is considered the landmark study in the field of washback research. The researchers carried out a two-year long investigation in Sri Lanka to explore the influence of the then revised O-Level English test on teachers’ instructional methodology. The objective of the

revised test was to strengthen the innovations in English textbooks and English teacher training, that were intended to encourage communicative language learning and teaching with its stress on real-world reading, writing and speaking skills, and to discourage grammar focused and teacher-oriented lessons. The English lesson observations in fourteen schools explored that English language learning tasks, activities, and classroom test development were influenced by the revised tests or textbooks. Alderson and Wall (1993), however, explored that no fundamental difference was there in the instructional practice of the English teachers over the studied two years. The classrooms remained teacher-dominated and the students had little opportunity to practice English in the real-life situation. The study indicated that the desired positive and washback of the revised test were very limited.

Before this seminal work, studies on the effects of tests were speculative, not empirical. Alderson and Wall (1993) were the first scholars who commented that the washback of tests was not so straightforward as previous literature showed. They indicated the problematic and complex nature of washback as a concept and stressed the prerequisite of designing research studies on this carefully. In their much-cited article, "*Does Washback Exist?*", they argued the prevailing concepts of washback and identified 15 hypotheses (given below) that might possibly facilitate the washback of test, and hence, should be considered in washback investigations in any context (1993, p. 120-121).

The 15 hypotheses are:

- 1-A test will influence teaching.
- 2-A test will influence learning.
- 3-A test will influence **what** teachers teach.
- 4-A test will influence **how** teachers teach.
- 5-A test will influence **what** learners learn.
- 6-A test will influence **how** learners learn.
- 7-A test will influence the **rate** and **sequence** of teaching.
- 8-A test will influence the **rate** and **sequence** of learning.
- 9-A test will influence the **degree** and **depth** of teaching.
- 10-A test will influence the **degree** and **depth** of learning.
- 11-A test will influence attitudes to the content, method, etc. of teaching and learning.
- 12-Tests that have important consequences will have washback.
- 13-Tests that do not have important consequences will have no washback.
- 14-Tests will have washback on **all** learners and teachers.
- 15-Tests will have washback effects for **some** learners and **some** teachers, but **not** for others (Alderson and Wall, 1993: 120-121, bold in original).

These hypotheses are marked as a predecessor to the latter and recent theoretical washback models. Alderson and Wall (1993) suggested washback researchers to choose from these hypotheses and to mention which of these hypotheses are used in their washback study. Researchers were also advised to take into consideration of “at least two areas: that of motivation and performance, and that of innovation and change in educational settings” (p. 127), so that they can have a better understanding of the existence and direction of washback phenomenon.

These hypotheses, however, are neither explicit and specific about what creates test washback, nor do they elucidate any applied mechanisms and steps which may operationalize washback. These focus only on probable aspects and

characteristics of washback. They do not deal with relationships among them (Bailey 1996; Hughes 1993).

Once this seminal work by these researchers was published in 1993, several researchers showed their interest in this topic and started empirical research studies so as to gain evidence of the existence of washback in the language classrooms and, to date, a great number of washback studies had been conducted. With the evolution and advancement in washback research studies, various researchers proposed different models to explain the washback mechanism.

2.7.2 Washback Models

Attempts had been made by washback researchers to describe and explain the influences of test on language teaching and learning through models. These attempts led to development of a number of washback models which tries to demonstrate the mechanism of washback. These washback models have a common feature, i.e., they focus on how washback looks like, who are affected and what are the factors which contribute to this complex phenomenon. This section of the doctoral dissertation discusses some of the prominent and influential washback models which have been consulted to develop an appropriate conceptual framework for the current study.

2.7.2.1 Hughes's Washback Model (1993)

Hughes proposed a model of washback in 1993. Though his paper/model got never published, an illustration based on Hughes's work produced by Bailey (1996) gave Hughes's model extensive recognition.

Hughes's (1993) washback model, which is sometimes referred to be the 'trichotomy' model, is considered to be the pioneer model of washback in the field of applied linguistics, language education and testing. Hughes argues: "In order to clarify our thinking on backwash, it is helpful, I believe, to distinguish between participants, process and product in teaching and learning, recognizing that all three may be affected by the nature of a test" (1993; cited in Bailey, 1999; p. 2).

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Participants | Students, classroom teachers, administrators, and material developers and publishers whose perceptions and attitudes towards their work may be affected by a test |
| Processes | Any actions taken by the participants which may contribute to the process of learning |
| Products | What is learned (facts, skills, etc.) and the quality of the learning |

Table 2.2: Hughes's trichotomy of backwash model

These *participants*, according to Hughes, are learners, classroom instructors or teachers and education administrators, curriculum and materials designers, developers and publishers, "all of whose perceptions and attitudes towards their work may be affected by a test" (1993; cited in Bailey, 1999; p. 2). The

constituent *Process* denotes “any actions taken by the participants which may contribute to the process of learning” (p.2), including designing and developing syllabus, new materials, changing teaching methodology, changing or improving learning and/or test-taking strategies, etc. Finally, the *product* is concerned with “what is learned (facts, skills, etc.) and the quality of learning” (p.2), i.e., what is achieved. Hughes’ (1993) explanation of the mechanism of washback is as follows:

“The nature of a test may first affect the perceptions and attitudes of the participants towards their teaching and learning tasks. These perceptions and attitudes in turn may affect what the participants do in carrying out their work (process), including practising the kind of items that are to be found in the test, which will affect the learning outcomes, the product of the work” (p. 2).

However, these three constituents can be correlated with the washback hypotheses of Alderson and Wall (1993). Figure (2.4) below demonstrates how these three constituents correlate with the washback hypotheses of Alderson and Wall (1993).

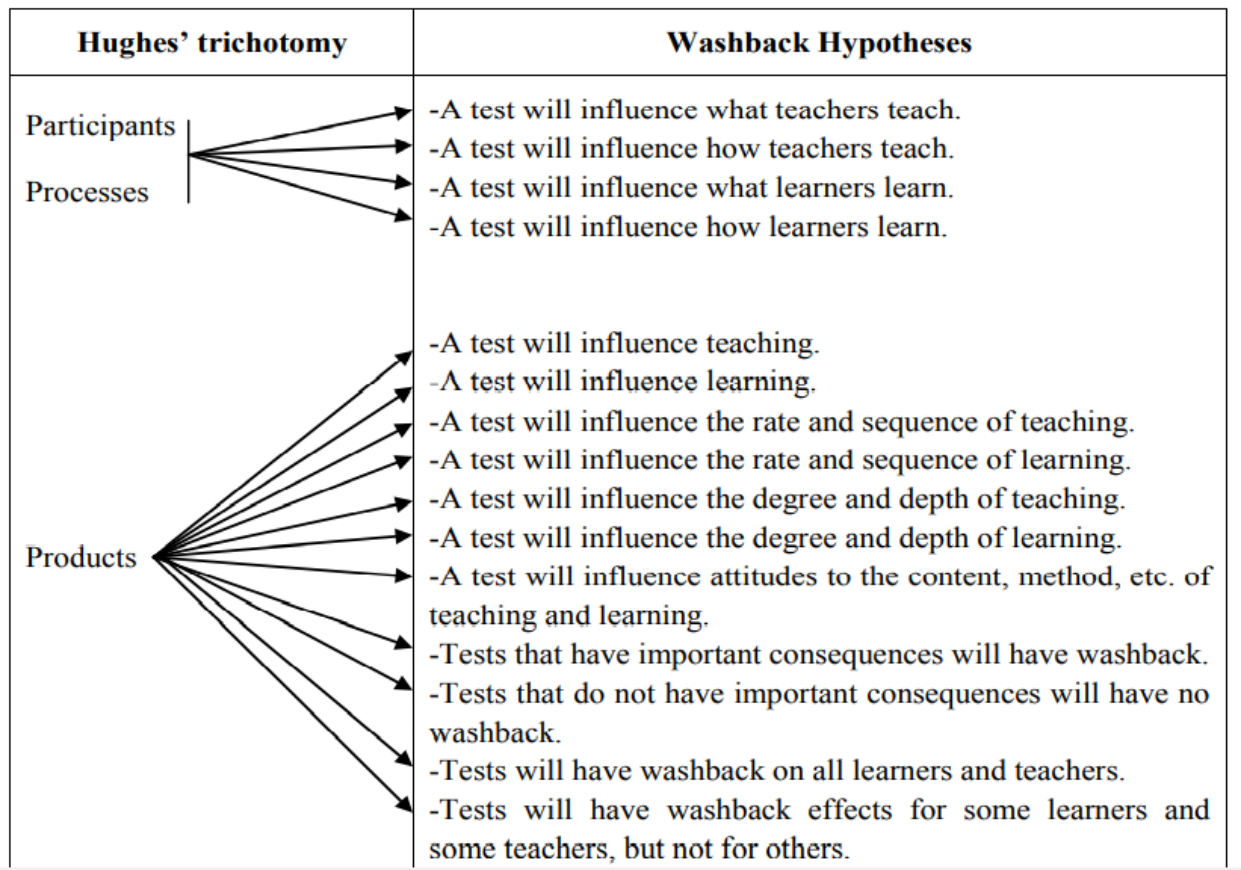


Figure 2.4: Correlation between Hughes's trichotomy and washback hypotheses of Alderson and Wall

In order to promote positive washback, Hughes (1993) also suggested five conditions which should be met. These are as follows:

- i. Success on the test must be important to the learners.
- ii. Teachers must want their learners to succeed.
- iii. Participants must be familiar with the test and understand the implications of its nature and content.
- iv. Participants must have the expertise which is demanded by the test (including teaching methods, syllabus design, and materials writing expertise).
- v. The necessary resources for successful test preparation must be available.

(Hughes, 1993; p. 2-3)

This model, being the pioneer model of washback, attempts to elucidate how test functions to bring desired outcomes, although, it struggles to clarify the term '*processes*' sufficiently. As a first washback model, it got wide recognition in the field of language testing.

2.7.2.2 Bailey's basic washback model (1996)

Bailey (1996) not only introduced Hughes' washback mechanism, but also criticized it, claiming that "not all the participants' processes lead directly to learning" (p. 262). She argued that the washback hypotheses of Alderson and Wall (1993) and Hughes's trichotomy of the backwash model can be merged to investigate the complex mechanisms of washback. Synthesizing the washback hypotheses of Alderson and Wall with Hughes' (1993) distinction between participants, processes and products, she advocated and developed a basic model of washback to explain the washback mechanism. (see figure 2.5 below). One of the significant and remarkable features of his model is that this model demonstrates that "there can be a reciprocal effect as a result of testing: it is not only the test that may affect the products of learning through participants and processes, but that participants and processes may also provide feedback that affects the test" (Umashankar, 2017; p. 53). This model emphasizes the significance of interaction between the different components.

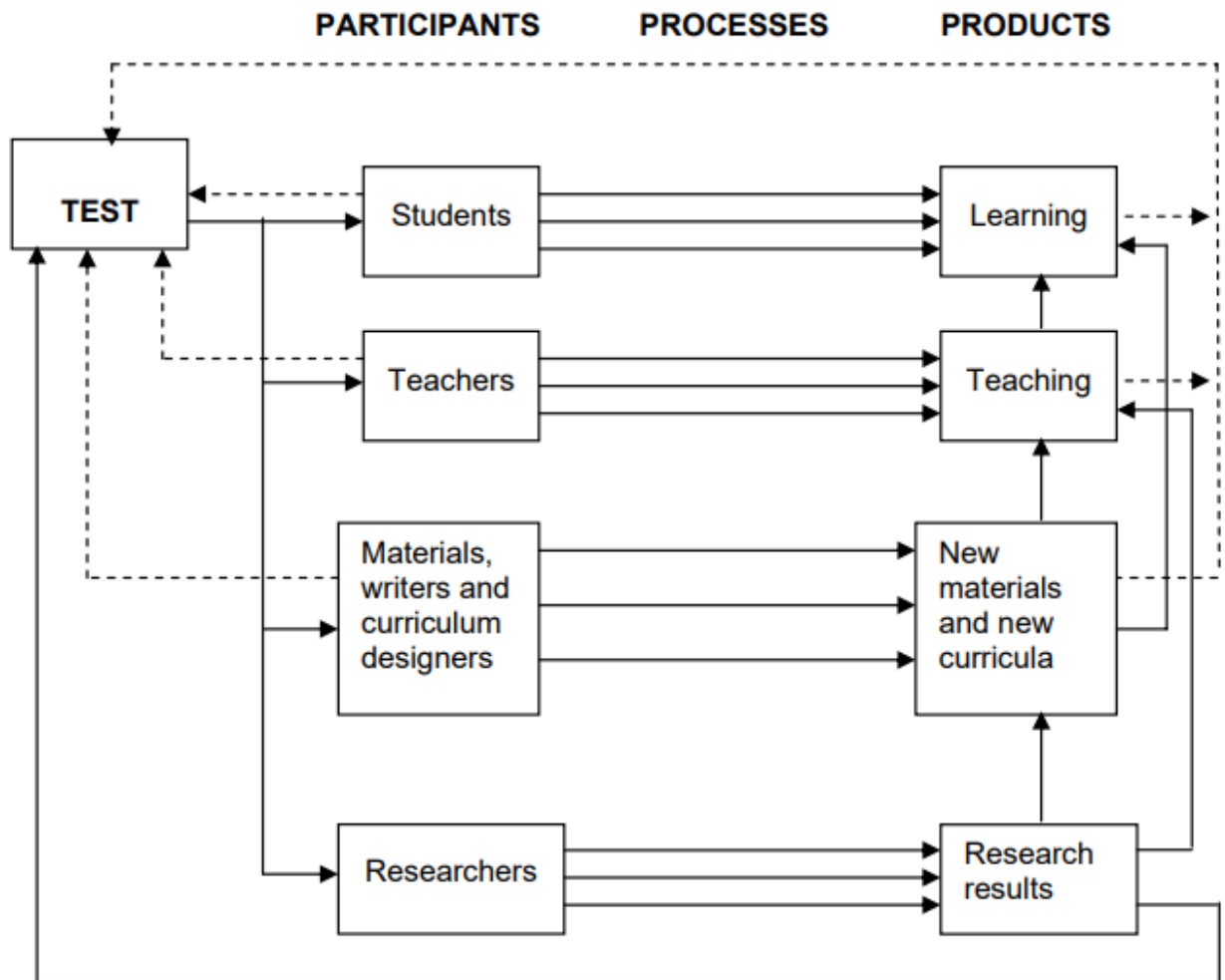


Figure 2.5: Bailey's basic model of washback

The solid arrow lines display direct influence, a test has on participants, processes, and products, while the possible influences from the participants on the test are manifested through the dotted lines.

Partially influenced by the difference between “washback to teaching” and “washback to learning”, Bailey proposed this dichotomic model of washback: “washback to the learner” and “washback to the program”. She related Alderson and Wall's hypotheses 2, 5, and 6 above to her washback to the learners, and hypotheses 1, 3,4,7,9 and 11 to her washback to the program. She has elaborated that due to high-stakes testing, learners may involve themselves in a variety of

learning activities. In this sense, Bailey's model places more stress on the importance of washback to the learners (Wu, 2014).

Bailey, however, does not elucidate the *process* herself. Her model shows and clarifies the participants and products, but information of process is not given. A seeming inadequacy in this model is: it shows that a test influences the participants directly, without saying the role of participants' beliefs. i.e. this model has not elucidated why the participants do what they do. "She did not specify what kinds of processes the participants (e.g., the teachers) might participate in. She only stated that there is room here for future research" (Tsagari, 2009, p. 12).

2.7.2.3 Shih's Washback Model (2007 and 2009)

Shih (2007) proposes two prominent models of washback that draw washback researchers' attention worldwide. His first model (Figure 2.6), based on the washback of the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) on English teaching and learning in Taiwan, contains a comprehensive list of extrinsic, intrinsic, and test factors to illustrate the complexity of the washback mechanism, whereas the preceding washback theories by Alderson and Wall (1993) Bailey (1996), and Hughes (1993) appear to be too simplistic and basic in this regard.

Before this study, relatively a small number of empirical studies of washback on the processes of students' learning had been conducted. Watanabe (2004b) states, "relatively well explored is the area of washback to the program, while less emphasis has been given to learners" (p. 22). Shih's investigation, hence,

contributed significantly in this field. The following model (Figure 2.6) illustrates how different factors play roles in the washback mechanism:

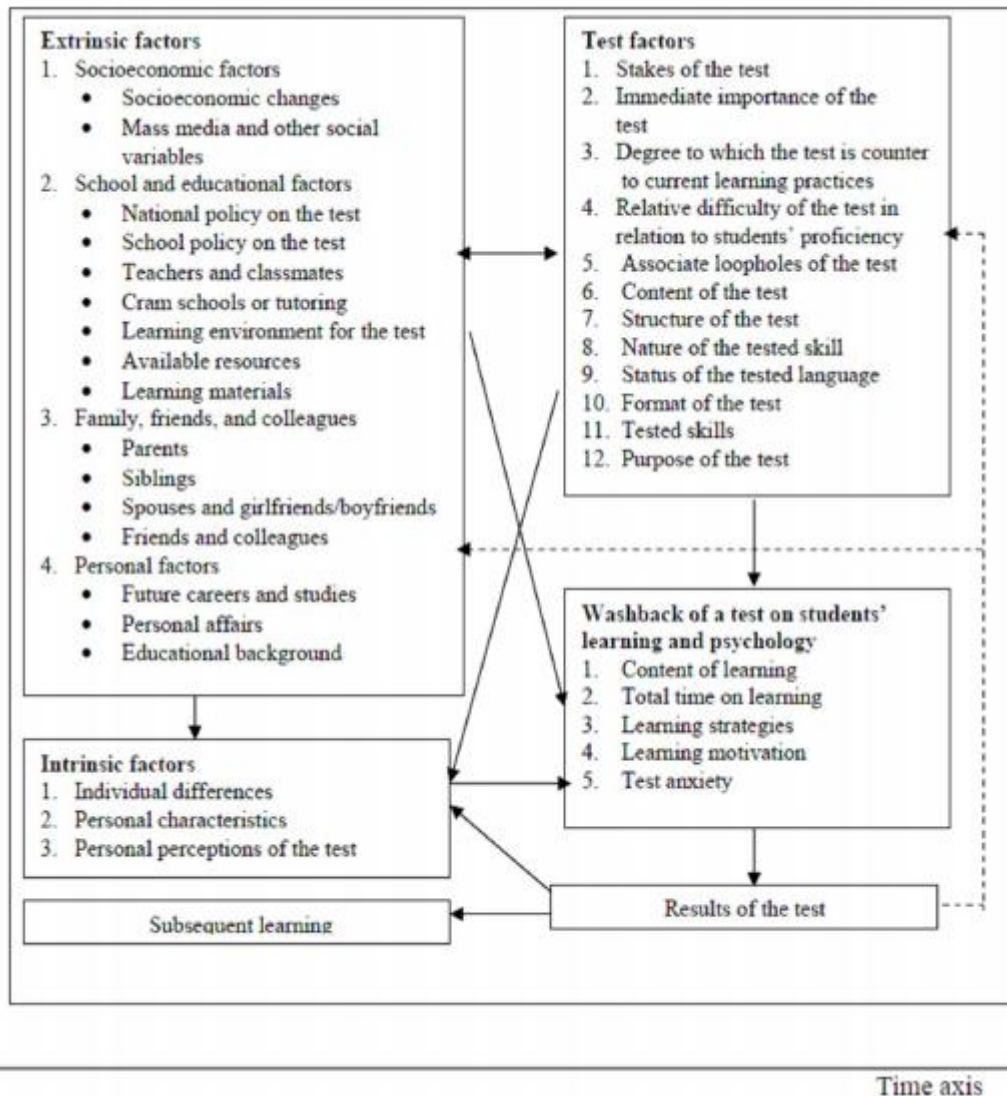


Figure 2.6: Shih's Washback model

In the above model, solid line arrows show the impact which is established empirically and dotted line arrows, on the other hand, indicate the potential effects.

This model clarifies not only the direct effects of extrinsic, intrinsic, and test factors on test washback, but also the indirect effects on it. For instance,

extrinsic factors can affect washback through intrinsic or test factors. On the other hand, test factors can affect washback through extrinsic factors. One interesting aspect of the model is, it has attached a time axis, which refers to time as a variable, which was discussed also by Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman, (1996) who advocates that washback has the potential to evolve over time. It covers sufficient factors and illustrates how these factors interact with each other to produce washback.

One of the concerns, however, in this model is that some items termed as test factors have similarities (e.g., the content, test structure, test skills) and yet another distinctive facet, which Shih terms "the nature of the tested skills" having some influences on test performance. A more comprehensive account of how these items affect students in their learning process should also be given. For instance, he mentioned that the content of test affected students in their learning process but he did not clarify in what way it influenced. Secondly, an instance regarding test impact that can be mentioned is that she pointed out most of the students did not prepare themselves for speaking test items since they did not know how to prepare themselves for them. He, however, did not evidently disclose the reasons behind it. Moreover, an account of "how other factors in Shih's model such as the social-economic status of the examinees or status of the test in question might influence students' learning requires greater clarity as well" (Pan, 2008; p. 10).

Later in 2009, Shih proposed yet another model of washback which was built on Bailey (1996). This second model, like the first one, was developed empirically, basing on Shih's investigation of the implementation of the GEPT in Taiwan. He employed participant-interviews and classroom observations to

collect data for the study. The study illustrates that contextual factors, teacher factors and test factors affect the direction and degree of washback. This model, however, only focuses on test washback on student learning.

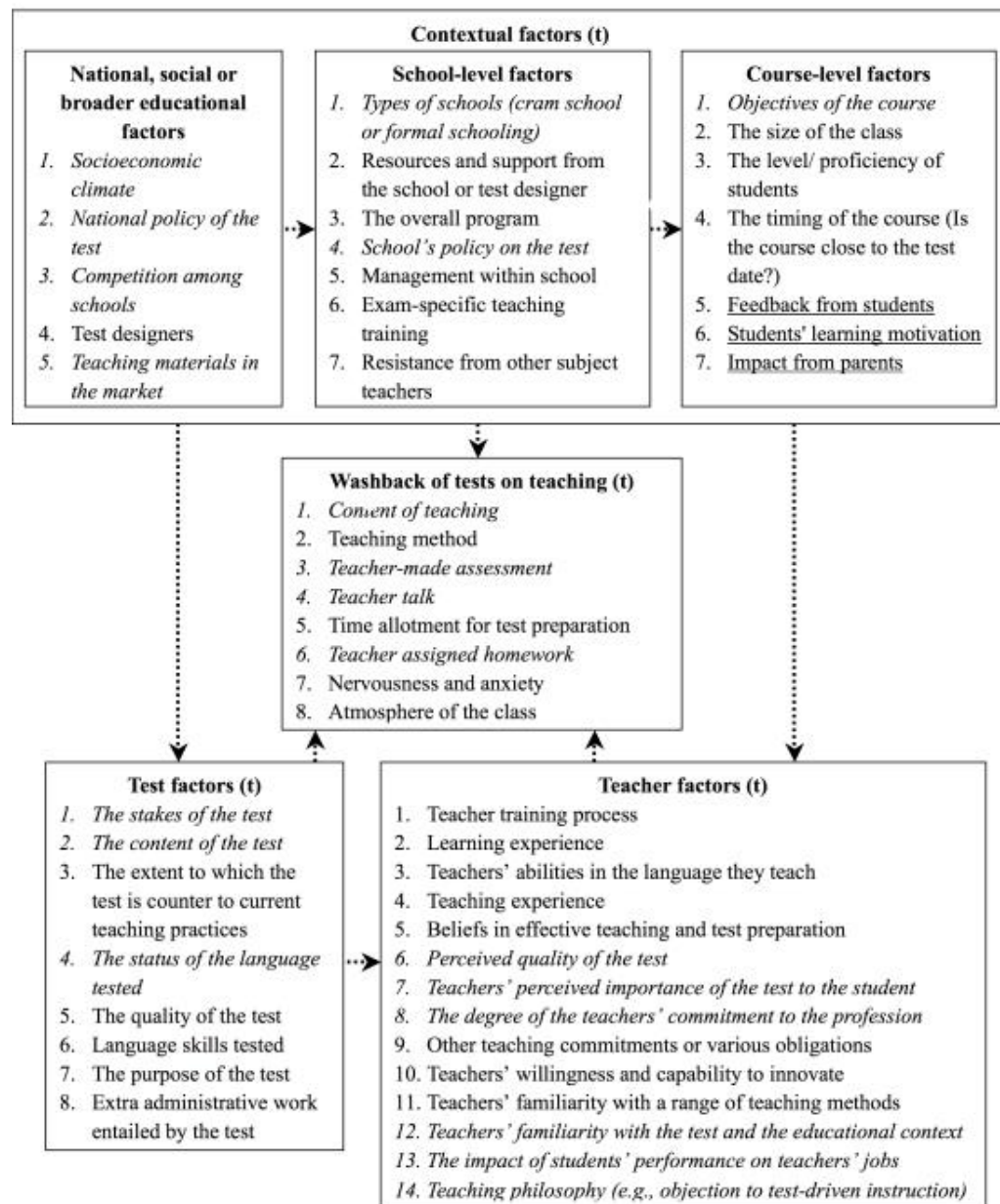


Figure 2.7: Shih's Washback model

The dotted lines in the above model (Figure 2.7) indicate the influences of one type of factor on other types. The symbol (t) refers to 'time' as a variable, which

was also discussed by Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman (1996) who advocates that washback has the potential to evolve over time. Factors shown in italics generated either from this study or were explored by empirical studies conducted by other researchers (Shih, 2009), and have been validated again in the current doctoral study. Underlined factors, however, had not been substantiated by any data from any empirical study, but they are believed to be essential to understanding the mechanism of washback (Shih, 2009). The rest of the factors have been reported in other washback studies. Listing all factors in the model does not guarantee that the given figure covers all possible variables/factors which may be instrumental to understanding the mechanism of washback (Shih, 2009). Hence, further empirical research studies are needed to expand our understanding of the washback mechanism.

2.7.2.4 Pan's Washback Model (2008)

Pan's micro and macro washback model (2008), presented below in Figure 2.8, has been built on different washback studies, prominent models of washback and leading washback theories, for instances, Alderson and Wall's (1993) 15 washback hypotheses, Bailey's (1996) basic washback model, Hughes' (1993) trichotomy of backwash model. This model integrates ideas from Hughes (1993, as cited in Bailey, 1999) trichotomy of test effects with regard to "participants", "process", and "product". Like other researchers, she also believes that tests can influence students, teachers, educational administrators, and materials developers with regard to their perceptions and attitudes, their activities, and learning outcomes.

However, Pan's model differs from these three models/hypotheses in the way that "they tend to highlight what washback looks like and who is affected, but do little to address the factors that contribute to the phenomenon. In other words, *process* is less understood than *participants* and *products*. Besides, the products in these three models/hypotheses refer mainly to teaching and learning washback, not to the aspects of washback that might impact society" (Pan, 2008; p. 11). Her model, on the other hand, includes both micro aspects and macro aspects associated with test washback and impact. Her micro level encompasses teaching effect, learning effect, teaching material effect and score-gain effect, while macro level comprises innovation and social dimension features.

A notable shortcoming of this model, however, is that list of variable or factors enumerated in it is not as comprehensive as it is in Shih's washback model (2007, 2009). Secondly, Pan in her model did not specify the items of innovation and social dimension features shown in macro level. Thirdly, these washback items or aspects have not been explored by any empirical study conducted by her.

2.8 Conceptual framework for the current study

Analyzing Alderson and Wall's washback hypotheses (1993, p. 120-121), Bailey's (1996) basic washback model, Hughes' (1993) trichotomy (participants, processes and product) of backwash model, Pan's (2008) and Shih's (2007, 2009) washback models, a conceptual framework for the current doctoral study is developed and presented in the figure (2.9) below.

This framework integrates ideas from Hughes (1993, as cited in Bailey, 1999) trichotomy of test effects with regard to "participants", "process", and "product". Tests can influence students, teachers, educational administrators, and materials developers with regard to their perceptions and attitudes, their activities, and learning outcomes. Alderson and Wall (1993) suggest 15 washback hypotheses, which illustrate the effects of test, "from the most basic to the more specific" (Pan, 2008; p. 11), on teaching and learning. For instance, "A test will influence teaching/learning" (p. 120) and "Tests will have washback effects for some learners and some teachers, but not for others" (p. 121). Bailey (1996) merged Alderson and Wall's (1993) fifteen washback hypotheses into Hughes' (1993) trichotomy of backwash model, and developed the "basic model of washback". Bailey differentiates between "washback to the learner" (what and how learners learn and the rate/sequence and degree/depth of learning) and "washback to the program" (what and how teachers teach and the rate/sequence and degree/depth of teaching) to exemplify the mechanism through which washback operates in actual contexts of teaching and learning (Pan, 2008).

This framework presented in the figure (2.8) below aims at striving to include and represent both micro level (teaching, learning, teaching material and score-gain effects) and macro level (social consequences). Different aspects and features of both the levels are considered as *products* (again following Hughes's term).

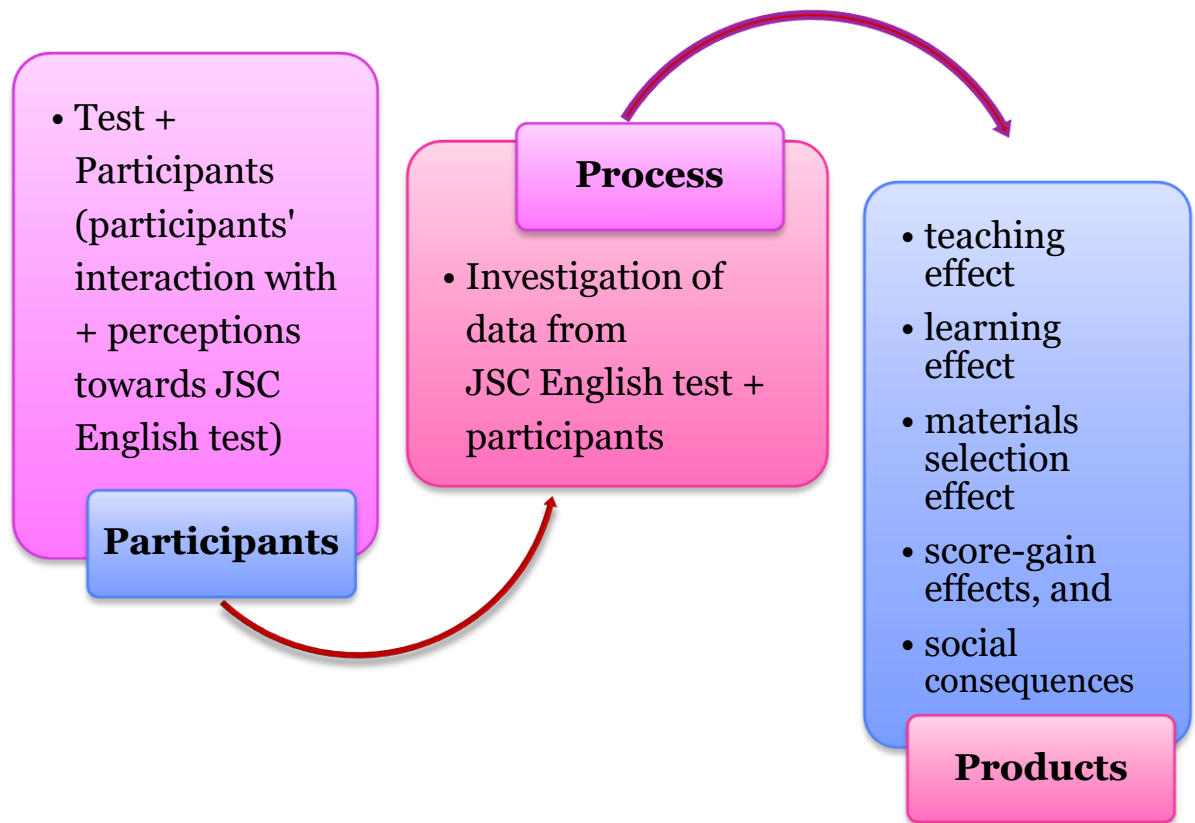


Figure 2.9: The conceptual framework for the current study

"Tests + Participants", shown in the first step of the given figure, represents *participants'* (following Hughes's term) perceptions toward and interactions with tests. On the other hand, "*process*", shown in the first step of the given figure, leads to the investigation of data collected from the first step, "Tests + Participants" projected to explicate *products*. In other words, in order to understand and draw a picture of the way (how) these products (teaching, learning, teaching material and score-gain effects; and social consequences) generate, an examination of how the participants themselves respond toward the JSC English test need to be carried out.

Moreover, Watanabe's framework has been adopted (cited in Cheng & Watanabe, 2004) for exploring the different dimensions of the washback i.e. intentionality of washback, value of washback (positive or, negative), specificity of washback, intensity of washback, differential washback, persistence (length) and seasonality of washback, (which have been discussed above in detail in 2.5.2: characteristics of washback). Besides, three core forms of washback pointed out by Lam (1994; p. 84-85) have been dealt with in the current doctoral study. These are: attitudinal or perception washback, methodological washback, curriculum/textbook washback.

Chapter 3: Setting the Scene

Discussion (based on the available relevant literature) in the previous two chapters (Chapter 1: Introduction and Chapter 2: Literature Review) leads to the conclusion that there is a paucity of empirical research and publication on English teaching-learning and assessment practice at the JSC level, especially washback research on the JSC English test in Bangladesh. Hence, to understand the context of the current doctoral study, it is deemed essential to illustrate the context and educational structure including the schooling system of Bangladesh in general, and English teaching-learning and assessment practice (including the JSC English Test) at the JSC level in particular.

Therefore, in this chapter, an ethnographic portrayal of the schooling system of Bangladesh, as well as the history and existing English teaching-learning and assessment practice at secondary schools is provided.

3.1 Educational Structure of Bangladesh

The education system of Bangladesh is a three-tiered system: Primary education, secondary education and tertiary education. Primary education starts at Class/Grade 1 and culminates at Class 5 with the students' appearing at Primary Education Certificate (PEC) examination, which is the first high-stakes examination in the main stream education system of Bangladesh. On the other hand, secondary education has three stages: junior secondary, secondary and higher secondary. Junior secondary starts at Class 6 and culminates at Class 8 with the students' appearing at Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) examination, which is the second high-stakes examination. English subject of

this JSC level is the focus of the current doctoral study. Once students pass the JSC examination, they can study in classes 9 and 10 and appear at the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination. After this, they study for another two years in classes 11 and 12 and appear at the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination, while at the tertiary level, students study for the undergraduate and post-graduate degrees in diverse disciplines.

There is a provision for students to choose to receive their medium of instruction either in English or Bangla language at any level of schooling. Private schools are usually found to choose the English language as the medium of instruction while schools sponsored by the government use Bangla language as medium of instruction.

In primary education, there are two streams: general stream and religious stream, while in secondary education, there are three streams: general stream, technical-vocational stream, and religious stream. There is no middle school system in Bangladesh.

The general education track is the mainstream education track of Bangladesh where the majority of the students are enrolled. Primary education (5-year cycle) includes Class 1 to Class 5, while secondary education (7- year cycle) has three sub-stages: 3 years of junior secondary (Class 6 to Class 8), 2 years of secondary (Class 9 to Class 10), and 2 years of higher secondary education (Class 11 to Class 12). In the main stream general education system, students at secondary and higher secondary levels have the options to choose one of the three groups: science, business, or humanities education. When the students pass the higher secondary level, they can opt for the next phase of education,

which is tertiary education. This tertiary education level (Bachelor to Doctoral degree) ranges from 3 to 11 years.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Bachelor (Pass course) | : 3 years |
| Bachelor (Honors course) | : 4 years |
| Master's | : 1/2 years |
| MPhil | : 2 years |
| Doctorate/PhD | : 3-4 years |

The table below presents the educational structure of Bangladesh.

| THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BANGLADESH | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------|-----------------|---------------|---|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| Age | Grade | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 26+ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25+ | XX | | | | | | Ph. D(Engr) | Ph.D(Medical) | | | | | | | |
| 24+ | XIX | | | | Ph. D | PostMBBS Dipl | | | | Ph. D (Education) | | | | | |
| 23+ | XVIII | | | M.Phil | M.Phil(Medical) | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22+ | XVII | | MA/MSc/MCom/MSS/MBA | | LLM | M B B S BDS | MSc(Engr) | MSc.(Agr) | | MBA | M.Ed & M A(Edn) | MFA | MA(LSc) | | |
| 21+ | XVI | Bachelor (Hons) | Masters (Prel) | | LLB(Hons) | | BSc.Eng BSc.Agr BSc.Text BSc.Leath | BSc.Eng | BSc (Tech.Edn) | BBA | B.Ed Dip.Ed & BP ED | Dip.(LSc) | Kami | | |
| 20+ | XV | | Bachelor (Pass) | | | | | Diploma (Engineering) | | BFA | | | | | |
| 19+ | XIV | | | | | | | | | | | | | Diploma in Nursing | |
| 18+ | XIII | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17+ | XII | Secondary | Examination | | | | HSC | | | HSC Voc, C in Ag | C in Edu. | Pre-Degree BFA | Diploma in Comm | Alim | |
| 16+ | XI | | HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| e15+ | X | | Examination | | | | SSC | TRADE Certificate/ SSC Vocational | | ARTISAN COURSE e.g. CERAMICS | | | | Dakhil | |
| 14+ | IX | | SECONDARY EDUCATION | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13+ | VIII | JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12+ | VII | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11+ | VI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10+ | V | PRIMARY EDUCATION | | | | | | | | | | Ebtedayee | | | |
| 9+ | IV | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8+ | III | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7+ | II | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6+ | I | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5+ | PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4+ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3+ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table: 3.1: The educational structure of Bangladesh

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), established as a Ministry in 1992, bears the total responsibility of managing primary education. While MoPME is engaged in formulating policies, the responsibility of

implementing these policies lies with the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) which is headed by a Director General. The DPE is a directorate under the MoPME.

On the other hand, while Ministry of Education (MoE) is engaged in formulating policies for secondary and higher secondary education levels, the responsibility of implementing these policies lies with the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE). The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) is responsible for the development of curriculums and the publications of standard textbooks for all the classes/grades at all these levels (primary and junior secondary, secondary and higher secondary).

There are eight division-based Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) under MoE. These are: Dhaka Education Board (for Dhaka Division and Mymensingh Division), Cumilla Education Board (Cumilla Division), Rajshahi Education Board (Rajshahi Division), Barisal Education Board (Barisal Division), Chittagong Education Board (Chittagong Division), Dinajpur Education Board (Rangpur Division), Jashore Education Board (Khulna Division), Sylhet Education Board (Sylhet Division). These education boards are responsible for conducting the high-stakes public examinations, such as Primary Education Certificate (PEC) for 5th graders, Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC)/ Junior *Dakhil* Certificate (JDC) for 8th graders, Secondary School Certificate (SSC) for 10th graders, and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) for 12th graders.

MoE also supervises technical and vocational education (TVET), and religious education, which is taught at Madrasas (Islamic schools). Technical and

vocational schools use Bangla as the medium of instruction, while Madrasas use Arabic language and Bangla language as the medium of instruction. There are two types of Madrasas: the "*Quomi*" Madrasas (which are owned and run privately following the *Deobandi* Islamic education system), and the "*Alia*" Madrasas (which are also mostly privately owned but subsidized by the government). There is a Madrasa Education Board (under MoE) which covers islamic/religious education in government-registered "*Alia*" Madrasas in the secondary level. Junior *Dakhil* Certificate (JDC) is equivalent to JSC, *Dakhil* is equivalent to SSC, *Alim* is equivalent to HSC, *Fazil* is equivalent to bachelor degree and *Kamil* is equivalent to Master's degree.

Besides, there are English medium schools also, which are fully private schools where English language is used as the medium of instruction and courses are taught in English targeting the Ordinary level (O Level) and the Advanced Level (A Level) examinations. These schools follow the General Certificate of Education (GCE) syllabus where students are prepared for taking their O Level (equivalent to SSC) and A Level (equivalent to HSC) examinations. The GCE is an UK based education system, which is one of the internationally acknowledged qualifications. These examinations are conducted under the supervision of the British Council, Bangladesh Office. At present, there are two boards (Edexcel and University of Cambridge International Examinations) which are operating O Level and A Level examinations in Bangladesh.

However, the main stream education system of Bangladesh is highly centralized, which follows top-down instructions and policy. Almost all the mainstream schools have similar educational resources and facilities. The academic year at all the main stream schools in Bangladesh starts in January

and ends in early December. These schools run on a term basis. There are two terms. The first term starts in January and ends in May or early June and with a few days' break the second term starts and ends in early December.

Students have to attend schools six days (from Saturday to Thursday) a week. They study approximately seven subjects/sessions classes a day. The first class/session of the day is usually a forty minutes session and the rest are thirty-five minutes each. Normally, there are two term final or terminal examinations in an academic year. These can be termed as summative assessment/ examinations. Besides these, as a part of formative assessment, a number of class tests, tutorial examinations, or preparation tests are held at schools. These, however, vary from school to school.

3.2 JSC/JDC Level Education in Bangladesh

Before the introduction of the JSC and JDC examination, students would study in class 8 and appear at the final examination administered and held at their respective schools. The JSC and JDC public high-stakes examinations, however, were introduced in 2010. Hence, the history and origin of JSC and JDC examination is not very old. The first ever JSC and JDC examinations were held on 4th of November, 2010, where “15,05,391 students, with girls outnumbering boys, registered for the exams and 14,03,891 students turned up on the first day, said the education ministry control room. In terms of the number of participants, the junior level exam is considered the second largest public exam” (The Daily Star, 2010).

The JSC level education in Bangladesh starts on the 1st of January every year with the distribution of free textbooks by the NCTB among the students, who successfully pass the final examination of Class 7 administered and held at their

respective schools. Students appear at the JSC/JDC examination at the end of Class 8. This examination is usually held in the month of November each year. This is the first high-stakes examination at the secondary level of education in Bangladesh followed by another high-stakes examination, the SSC examination. This JSC examination is carried out by the above mentioned eight general education boards across the country. The content of the JSC examination is the same countrywide. The examination, however, is administered regionally.

3.3 English Education at Secondary School Level

English is taught as a foreign language in Bangladesh (NCTB, 2012; Rahman et al, 2018). Similar to the primary level education, at the secondary level also students learn English as a mandatory subject/course and continue till Grade/class 12 (Rahman et al, 2018; Rahman & Rahman, 2012; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). The National English Curriculum (2012) regards English as a tool for achieving the “Digital Bangladesh 2021” goal of the government of Bangladesh, since English is viewed as the language of globalization, science, and technology “to help prepare the country’s younger generation for the competitive globalized world of the 21st century...” (p. 73).

Substituting for long-standing Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach was first introduced in the national English curriculum of Bangladesh in 1996 (Nuby, Rashid, & Hasan, 2019; Nur & Islam, 2018; Rahman et al., 2018b; Sultana, 2018; Karim, et al., 2017; Roy, 2016; Rahman, 2015; Rahman & Rahman, 2012; NCTB, 2012; Rahman et al., 2009; Yasmin, 2009; Roshid, 2009).

“Bangladesh has been in the process of a change in the teaching and learning of English since the 1990s. This change in pedagogy and approach, replacing the traditional grammar-translation method, was necessary to help learners communicate in English meaningfully and spontaneously. Considering this learning need, the country adopted Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) from primary to higher secondary levels. A communicative curriculum for secondary level was introduced in 1996” (NCTB English Curriculum, 2012; p. 73).

The current version of NCTB developed national English curriculum set five general objectives. These are:

1. To help students develop competence in all four language skills, i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing.
2. To help students use the competence for effective communication in real life situations.
3. To help students acquire appropriate language and communicative competence for the next level of education.
4. To support them gain accuracy.
5. To facilitate learners to be skilled human resources by using English language appropriately.

(NCTB English Curriculum, 2012; p. 36)

NCTB English Curriculum recommended that English teaching-learning and assessment practice should also follow communicative approach (NCTB, 2012), with the expectation that it would 'revitalize' students' poor level of English language proficiency by “improving the standard of teaching and learning English at different levels of formal education” (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008, p.16; Rahman & Rahman, 2012; Roshid, 2009). Several empirical studies, however, regrettably explore that these objectives have not yet been materialised. Consequently, improvement in the students' level of English language

proficiency is still “far from satisfactory” (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008, p.16; Rahman et al., 2019; Amin, 2017; Rahman & Rahman, 2012).

Rahman et al. (2018) explore that the principles of CLT and teachers’ instructional practice are not aligned. Likewise, Das et al. (2014) expose that English teachers lack a clear understanding of the principles of CLT and the CLT curriculum. Hence, they possess a mixed perception about the implementation of the CLT curriculum. Chen (2002) claims that teachers prefer to ‘teach to the test’ when they lack sufficient ideas and knowledge of curriculum goals.

Other researchers (Rahman et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2018b; Khan, 2010) explore a direct connection between the failure of English teaching, learning and assessment systems in Bangladesh. Few studies found the relationship between the failure of CLT and its methods of assessment in Bangladesh (Sultana, 2019; Ali, Hamid, & Hardy, 2018; Amin, 2017). This failure resulting from the lack of a harmony between syllabus, teachers’ beliefs and attitudes, the teaching-learning method, and examination (Ansarey, 2012; Quader, 2001) is believed to be one of the remarkable reasons behind the lack of improvement in the students’ level of English language proficiency (Rahman et al., 2019; Amin, 2017; Rahman & Rahman, 2012).

High-stakes testing has considerable washback effects on English teaching and learning in Bangladesh (Sultana, 2018). The washback of English examinations is observed in the test preparation of the students, where both teachers and students focused on attaining higher grades (Khan, 2010). This phenomenon motivates the learners to memorise the contents of the course (Rahman et al.,

2018a, b) and encourages the likely danger of receiving shadow education by the learners (Hamid et al., 2009).

Besides, in the high-stakes public examinations in Bangladesh, the two essential language skills, namely speaking and listening, are not tested in the examination, neither students nor teachers are willing to practice these skills in the class (Nuby, Rashid, & Hasan, 2019; Sultana, 2019, 2018; Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018; Rahman & Pandian, 2018a, 2018b). This outdated attitude to testing impedes the implementation of the curriculum. It also signifies that the method of assessment is ill-aligned with the national curriculum and language policy (Rahman et al., 2019; Nuby, Rashid, & Hasan, 2019). Shepard (2000) recommends that there should be alignment between assessment or test practices, and current pedagogical theories and curriculum theories. Stomp (2008) concedes with their recommendation and in his study, he proves that test usually affects teaching and learning negatively if the gap between pedagogy and testing is not duly addressed.

Since the gap between pedagogy and testing is not duly addressed, several empirical studies (Nuby, Rashid, & Hasan, 2019; Sultana, 2019; Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018; Rahman et al., 2018b) explore that teachers still follow teacher-oriented lecture method. English classrooms are teacher-centered and test-oriented, where teachers consume too much time of the entire class hour and spend it on test-related materials. Content selection and control of the lesson and activities in the classroom heavily lie with the class-teacher. They explain and lead the text, activities and exercises throughout the lesson time. Hence, “CLT-based English education in Bangladesh has remained only a theory, [since] it has not been put into practice” (Sultana, 2019; p. 15), as

commented by Ahmed (2006): “the government made the right decision [by] introducing the approach. But unfortunately, [the] government did not ensure suitable academic and socio-economic environment for the proper implementation of the approach” (p. 8).

3.4 Description of the JSC English Examination

The JSC English test is a high-stakes public examination. It is a very common phenomenon (see Kwon, Lee & Shin, 2017; Ho, 2006; OECD, 2003; OECD, 2004) that results of high-stakes public examinations generally influence an individual’s career or life chances (e.g. educational and/or employment opportunities). Such examination is considered a ‘educational gatekeeper’ (Froese-German, 2001, p111) or ‘gatekeeper’ (Kwon, Lee & Shin, 2017, p60) of a learner’s success in life, with regard to his entering a reputed educational institute or having a bright career. The JSC English test is not an exception in this regard. The 3rd and 5th national English curricular objectives also speak the same. The objectives of English teaching, learning and assessment, as stated by the NCTB, are to “help them [learners] attain proper communicative and language competence for their subsequent education level” and “facilitate them to be skilled and trained human capital by applying English language properly” (NCTB English Curriculum, 2012; p 36)

The JSC English test is more orientated to discrete-point testing rather than integrative testing. In order to understand the overall aspects of the JSC English test, the following table (3.2) containing the test items and marks distribution for each item can work as a reference.

| Subject: English | | Total Marks-100 | | Time: 3.00 Hours | |
|--|--|------------------------|-------|---|--|
| Part-A: Seen Comprehension: Marks- 20 (Skimming and Scanning) | | | | | |
| Q. No | Test Items | No. of tasks | Marks | Skills and elements tested | |
| 1 | Choosing right answer (MCQ) | 7 | 7 | - Reading Comprehension | |
| 2 | Short Answer Question | 4 | 8 | - Reading Comprehension | |
| 3 | Filling the gaps with appropriate words | 5 | 5 | - Vocabulary | |
| Part-B: Unseen Comprehension: Marks- 25 (Skimming and Scanning) | | | | | |
| 4 | Information transfer (1 text) | 5 | 5 | - Reading comprehension | |
| 5 | True/false, if false, providing right answer. | 5 | 5 | - Reading comprehension | |
| 6 | Filling the gaps in a given discourse (with clues). | 5 | 5 | - Vocabulary | |
| 7 | Filling the gaps in a given discourse (without clues). | 5 | 5 | - Vocabulary | |
| 8 | Matching the phrases to make sentences | 5 | 5 | - Contextual knowledge - Language Form/Grammar | |
| Part-C: Grammar: Marks- 25 | | | | | |
| 9 | Changing of the form Speech | 5 | 5 | -Grammar | |
| 10 | Using capital letters and punctuation | 10 | 5 | | |
| 11 | Using Articles where necessary | 10 | 5 | | |
| 12 | Changing Sentences as directed | 5 | 5 | | |
| 13 | Using Suffix and Prefix | 10 | 5 | | |
| Part-D: Guided Writing: Marks-30 | | | | | |
| 14 | Writing a Dialogue | 1 | 10 | -Writing | |
| 15 | Writing a paragraph answering a set of questions | 1 | 10 | | |
| 16 | Writing an Email | 1 | 10 | | |

Table 3.2: JSC English Test Items and Marks Distribution

Since no items to test speaking and listening skills are there in the test format as the table (3.2) shows, it can be claimed that listening and speaking skills are not tested at all in this high-stakes public examination. This JSC English test consists of four parts. Each part of the test includes different kinds of activities and tasks.

Part A (20 marks) and Part B (25 marks) test JSC examinees' reading skill and stock of vocabulary. All the texts needed for the question-items 1, 2 and 3 in Part A is taken from the textbook, and hence, this part is tagged as *Seen Part*. The question-items 1 and 2 in this part (Part A) are based on a reading text which is directly taken from the textbook to test students' reading ability. These two question-items are noticeable evidence of an invalid test, because the examinees have already read this text several times before they actually face it in the examination hall. These two items would be valid if the text is re-written or paraphrased and then set in the question paper.

Question-item number 3 (in Part A) test examinees' stock of vocabulary where they have to read a similar text (that is also available in the textbook but not in the same language forms and words, i.e. re-written or paraphrased) with five missing words. They have to read it and fill in the gaps with appropriate words to make it a meaningful one.

None of the texts/sentences of the next five question items (4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) in Part B, however, is taken from the textbook. Hence, this part is tagged as the *Unseen Part*. The question-item 4 and 5 again test examinees' reading skill, but as it has been said the reading text based on which these two questions are set is unfamiliar to the examinees.

The next two question items (4 and 5) in Part B are also based on a reading text to again test students' reading ability, but this time the text is not taken from the textbook. In question-item 4, they have to complete an incomplete table with appropriate information from the given reading passage/text. In question-item 5, there are five statements given. They have to determine whether these five sentences are true or false. Besides, they have to provide correct answers if any or all of these statements are incorrect or false.

In question-item number 6, they have to read an incomplete text and fill-in the gaps using the clues/words given in the boxes along with the text, while in question-item number 7, they have to do the same but this time without having any given clues/words. The last question of this part is question-item number 8 where they have to match the part of sentences from column A with those in column B to make five complete sentences.

Part C (25 marks) exclusively test JSC examinees' grammar skills. Hence, this part is tagged as the *Grammar Part*. In question-item number 9, they have to read a text and fill in the gaps with the root words in the brackets adding suitable suffixes, prefixes, or both. In question-item 10, they have to fill in the gaps in the given text with appropriate articles (a, an, or the) or put a cross (x) where no article is used. In question-item 11, they have to change the five given sentences as directed in the brackets. In question-item 12, they have to rewrite a text/passage changing the form of speech and in question-item 13, use capital letters and punctuation marks as needed in another given text/passage.

Part D (30 marks) exclusively test JSC examinees' writing skills. Hence, this part is tagged as the *Writing Part*. In the very first item of this part (question-

item number 14), they are given a situation and they have to write a dialogue based on a given situation. For instance, *“Suppose, you are Rabid and you are in a restaurant with your sister. Make a dialogue between you and the waiter before ordering your meal”* (Source: THE NCTB sample question for JSC English test, see Appendix-5). This question-item is another noticeable evidence of an invalid test, because, involving learners in a dialogue is meant for assessing their speaking skill, not writing skill. Since speaking skill is not tested at all in this high-stakes public examination, such an invalid test item is included to test learners’ speaking skill in the disguise of writing item. Question-item number 15 test their email writing skill. They are given a situation and they have to write an email based on the given situation.

An example from THE NCTB sample question for JSC English Test can be cited here (see Appendix-5).

“A social organization in your locality is hiring some volunteers for a fund-raising event. Write an email to the coordinator of that organization to be a volunteer for the event. The email can be sent to abcd123@charity.org.bd. In your email, you should write a subject line, use proper salutation/greetings, give a brief introduction of you, express your interest for the role of a volunteer, mention why you are interested to work as a volunteer and write a closing remark, your name, and contact address.”

The last item (question-item number 16) of this part and of the JSC English test is writing a paragraph. The JSC Candidates are given a situation and they have to write a paragraph based on the given situation. An example from THE NCTB sample question for JSC English Test can be cited here.

“Write a paragraph in 150 words on the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear families. Your writing should address the following questions: What is a nuclear family? What are the advantages of a nuclear family? What are the disadvantages of a nuclear family? What kind of family do you prefer and why?”

However, the review of the test-items of this JSC English examination demonstrates that this test can be termed as “construct under-representation” and “construct irrelevant” (Spurgeon, 2017, p. 275). For ensuring test validity, a test should avoid two major flaws (Spurgeon, 2017; Messick, 1996). The first one is “construct under-representation, where, for instance, neither speaking nor listening skills are tested in a communicative competence-based test” and the other one is “being construct irrelevant, where, for instance, teachers pay unduly marked attention to grammar points in a communicative-based test” (Onaiba, 2013, p. 43). This JSC English test could not avoid any of these two flaws.

3.5 Defining ‘term’ mentioned in the title of the study

The title of this dissertation starts with the word “*interplays*”. The Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary (2021) defines the word “*interplays*” as “the effect that two or more things have on each other”. In terms of this doctoral study, these two things are: (a) JSC English teaching and learning practice; and (b) assessment practice (the JSC English test). The above discussion indicates that in high-stake tests (JSC), it is the assessment that affects teaching and learning, not vice-versa. Thus, the word “*interplays*” essentially refers to the effects of the JSC English test on JSC English teaching and learning practice.

“The washback effect clearly has to do with the effect of external testing on the teaching and learning processes in language classrooms” (Brown, 2000, p. 5). In the context of the current study, the external test is the JSC English test. In line with Cheng (2005, p. 112), who refers washback to “an intended or unintended (accidental) direction and function of curriculum change on aspects of teaching and learning by means of a change of public examinations” and Messick, (1996) who believed that the effects were only washback when these could be linked to the studied test, for this current study, any impact, influence or effect linked with the studied test, be it negative or positive, unintended or intended, which this targeted test has, has been deemed “washback”.

Chapter 4: Research Methods and Design

4.1 Introduction

In common term, 'research' involves the quest for knowledge. Research can also be called a systematic exploration of specific information for a particular subject. Actually, research is an art which looks for scientific inquiry. It is a term that is used liberally for the work of scientists or researchers in the process of intellectual exploration of human beings and the exploration of new discoveries. It is defined as "an activity that involves finding out, in a more or less systematic way, things you did not know" (Walliman, 2011, p.7), while Brown (2006) defines research methodology as a philosophical framework. Within this framework a researcher conducts his/her research. It is a foundation on which the researcher bases his research. It denotes the techniques and systematic procedures that a researcher adopts to conduct a research study.

This doctoral research study, which is exploratory in nature, is carried out to investigate the influence and effect of the Junior School Certificate (JSC) English test on English teaching-learning and assessment practice at Grade 8 in secondary schools in Bangladesh. This current study is driven by three key research questions relating to (a) common classroom (teaching) practice of English teachers teaching at grade 8 at secondary schools of Bangladesh, (b) common assessment practice of English teachers teaching at grade 8 at secondary schools of Bangladesh, and (c) effect of assessment practice (washback) on JSC English teaching and learning practice. To address these issues, the researcher believed that a methodically apposite research design is essential.

This particular chapter of the current doctoral study outlines the research methodology of this doctoral dissertation. It reveals the research design and strategy adopted in the current study. It contains strategies, research instruments, data collection process and methods of data analysis. It also explains the stages of the research and the processes it involves. This research design navigates the methodological processes for this study. At the outset, it presents the research design, which contains the main philosophical paradigms such as ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Eventually, it determines the suitable philosophical standing for the current research study. Second, it discourses the methodological processes, encircling the approaches as well as strategy applied for this study, entailing the research methods used in data collection and data analysis process. Besides, this particular chapter includes validity and reliability issues which are required to be considered in a research study. Moreover, it discusses about researcher's access to the research site and inclusion of research respondents or participants during data collection stages.

4.2 Defining Research Design

For accomplishing a successful research study, an unambiguous research design is mandatory since it overlays the path for conducting the current study. Crotty (2003) suggests that in developing a research study a researcher needs to address four questions. These four questions are: a) What *methods* does a researcher propose to apply? b) What *methodology* directs his selection and application of the methods? c) What *theoretical perspective* is there for the methodology? And finally, d) What *epistemology* apprises the theoretical perspective?

A well-organized research design shows the researcher how the study is to be conducted, what to do, where to go and how to reach there, and thus ensures “that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible” (De Vaus, 2001: 9). Yin (2003) opines, “colloquially a research design is an action plan for getting from *here* to *there*, where ‘here’ may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered and ‘there’ is some set of (conclusions) answers” (p. 19). It helps plan, devise, structure, finally execute the research study to optimize the validity of the research findings.

4.2.1 Research Philosophy and Paradigm

“The research philosophy you adopt contains important assumptions about the way in which you view the world. These assumptions will underpin your research strategy and the methods you choose as part of that strategy” (Saunders et al., 2009: 108).

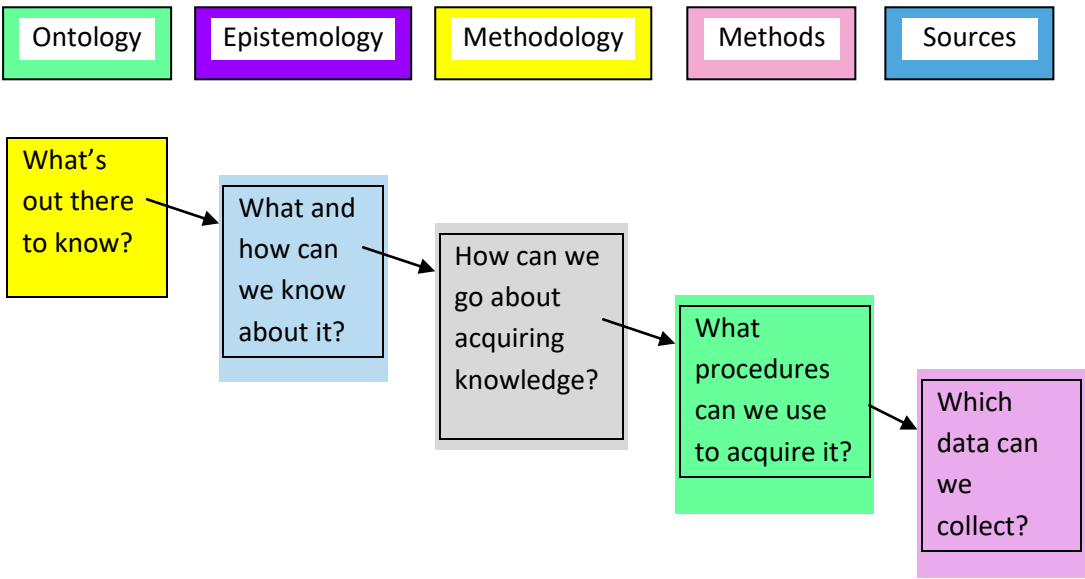
Research philosophy refers to “the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge” (Saunders et al., 2009: 108). While considering research methodology, a researcher has to resort to either qualitative or quantitative strategy, or both at the same time. Not only this, he has to aboard a philosophical bearing, ontological and epistemological perspectives (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). These perspectives play an essential part in supporting not only the philosophical stance but also the selected methodology and, hence, choosing data collection methods (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). So, the choice of a research paradigm in a study is not deemed elective, rather vital, and “questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigms” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 105).

4.2.1.1 Paradigm

Paradigm is defined as “a basic set of beliefs that guide actions” (Guba, 1990; p. 17). The origin of the word, ‘paradigm’ has its root in the Greek word ‘*paradeigma*’ which denotes *pattern*. This term was first used by Thomas Kuhn (1962). Kuhn (1962) defines the term as: “an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems attached with corresponding methodological approaches and tools” (Kuhn, 1962 cited in Flick, 2009: p. 69). By the time, the 2nd edition of his book was out in the market in 1970, the idea of a paradigm was already popular. Neuman (2011), Babbie (2012), Collis and Hussey (2009), Creswell (2007), Mouton (1996), as well as Mouton and Marais (1990) had used the term; and it had started influencing philosophy and methodology of social sciences. Generally, the term refers to “a whole system of thinking” (Neuman, 2011, p. 94). Now, a paradigm denotes the recognized traditions in research in a specific area (Mouton,1996). This is “a theoretical framework” (Collis & Hussey, 2009: p. 55). More specifically, it includes the recognized theories, approaches, traditions, frame of reference, models, methodologies and body of research. So, this can be viewed as a framework or a model for observing and understanding a certain phenomenon (Babbie, 2012; Rubin & Babbie, 2010; Creswell, 2007).

Different authors and researchers assign diverse meanings to the term paradigms, such as “worldview” (Creswell, 2009); “epistemologies and ontologies” (Crotty, 2003) and “research methodologies” (Neuman, 2000). Irrespective of different terms for paradigm, all of these authors and researchers agree that all research studies are conducted within a specific research paradigm, “a set of assumptions about how the issue of concern to the research should be studied” (Henn *et al.*, 2006; p. 10).

A research paradigm contains 3 principles. These are ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Ontology indicates the question: *What is reality?* Epistemology refers to the question: how a researcher or anyone knows anything/something, while methodology refers to how a researcher can find this out. The following diagram adapted from Hay (2002: p. 64) and Crotty (2003) explains the above terms and the relations between them.



Adapted from Hay, 2002, p. 64

Figure 4.1: Relations between paradigms and methods

The four elements: (epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, methods) facilitate one another. There are several options in each of the category but the table below displays the main examples:

| Epistemology | Theoretical Perspective | Methodology | Methods |
|---|--|--|--|
| Objectivism Constructionism Subjectivism <i>(and their variants)</i> | Positivism Post-positivism Interpretivism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic interactionism • Phenomenology • Hermeneutics Pragmatism Participatory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical inquiry • Feminism • Postmodernism <i>(etc.)</i> | Experimental research Survey research Ethnography Phenomenological research Grounded theory Heuristic inquiry Action research Discourse analysis Feminist standpoint research Case Study <i>(etc.)</i> | Sampling Measurement & scaling Questionnaire Observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant • Non-participant Interview Focus group Life history Narrative Visual Ethnographic methods Statistical analysis Data reduction Theme identification Comparative analysis Cognitive mapping Interpretative methods Document analysis Content analysis Conversation analysis <i>(etc.)</i> |

Table 4.1: Four elements informing one another

4.2.1.1.1 Ontology

Any research has its starting point and that is ontology, after which logically comes epistemological and methodological stances. Ontology is defined as “the study of being, that is, the nature of existence” (Gray, 2004: p. 16; Crotty: 2003: p. 10). It relates to “what kind of world we are investigating, with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such”. So, at a fundamental level, ontology is how we imagine the social world to be.

Blaikie (2000) denotes ontology as “claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other. In short, ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality (p. 8).” The following table (4.1) explains the ontology of 4 main research philosophies:

| Research philosophy | Ontology: the researcher’s view of the nature of reality or being |
|----------------------------|---|
| Pragmatism | External, multiple, view chosen to best enable answering of research question |
| Positivism | External, objective and independent of social actors |
| Realism | Is objective. Exists independently of human thoughts and beliefs or knowledge of their existence (realist), but is interpreted through social conditioning (critical realist) |
| Interpretivism | Socially constructed, subjective, may change, multiple |

Table 4.1: Ontology of research philosophies

Ontology of Research Philosophies

A researcher needs to identify ontology at the very beginning of his research process because it governs the selection of his/her research design. The following figure demonstrates the impact of ontology on the selection of research methods through epistemology, research approach, strategy, data collection and analysis methods.

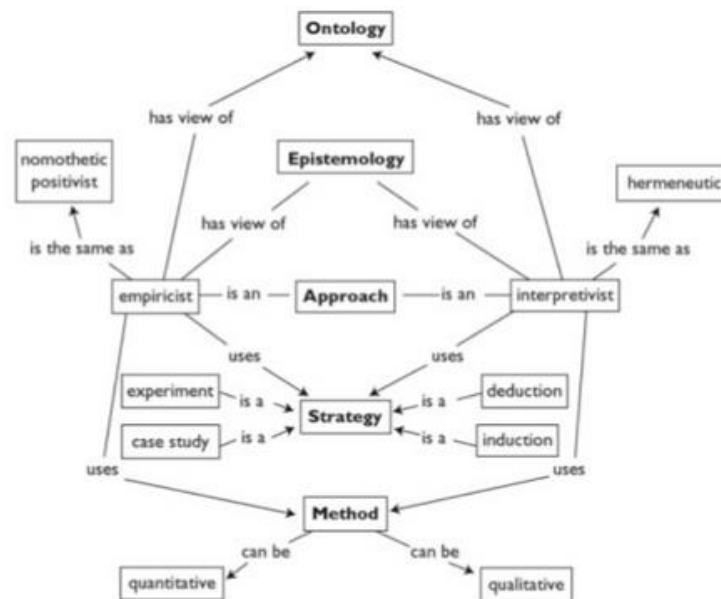


Figure 4.2: Impact of ontology on the selection of research methods

4.2.1.1.2 Epistemology

Epistemology focuses on the theory of knowledge, particularly associated with its methods and validation. The Greek words *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (reason) together formed the term, *Epistemology*. It studies the nature and scope of knowledge. It concentrates on the process of knowledge-accumulation and focuses on developing new theories and models, which are preferable to

other opposing theories and models. It throws certain questions to be answered. These are:

What is knowledge?

How does someone acquire knowledge?

What do we know?

What are the essential and satisfactory conditions of knowledge?

What is the structure of knowledge?

What are the limits of knowledge?

How can we understand what is true and what is not?

How can we differentiate between the truth and false ideas?

“Whilst ontology refers to the consideration of what is, epistemology emphasizes comprehending the nature and scope of knowledge, its views and basics about the status of knowledge (Schwandt, 2003 cited in Obaiba, 2013; p. 89)”. It is “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (Crotty, 2003: p. 3). Blaikie (2000, p. 8) defines epistemology as “the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be”. In short, he claims “about how what is assumed to exist can be known” (p. 8). Epistemology is also “concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate (Maynard, 1994: p. 10 in Crotty, 2003: p. 8)”.

Thus, ontology relates to the fact, what is true whereas epistemology relates to the means and ways of finding out those truths. Crotty (2003) advocates that there are 3 epistemological stances:

- Objectivism where there is knowledge, whether or not people are aware of. Objectivism is unconditional and downright. In this circumstance, researchers are trying to explore causes, results, and elucidations. They are trying to envisage contexts and test hypotheses and theories.
- Subjectivism is described as an opinion that understanding behavior of humans comprises entirely in reconstructing or recreating the individual's own understanding or realization of those involved in their success. Knowing others is knowing their interpretation of what they are doing and understanding this sense is knowing them in their own terms.
- Constructivism claims that in specific social contexts social phenomena evolve. The ideas or behaviors may appear to be apparent and expected in a specific context, but they are in fact artifacts of that context. People are involved in creating their perceived social reality, and as social interactions arise, this perception is always changing.

Therefore, as any research study opts to acquire knowledge and understanding of an event or a phenomenon, in the research design of the study a researcher must address the relevant epistemological issues.

4.2.1.2 Methodology

Methodology is defined as “choices we make about cases to study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis etc. in planning and executing a research study” (Silverman, 2005; p. 99). It is “the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of the methods to the desired outcomes (Crotty, 2003; p. 3)”

while methods are “the techniques or procedures used to gather and collect data related to some research question or hypothesis (Crotty, 2003; p. 3).” Henn *et al.* (2006) defines it as “the range of techniques that are available to us to collect evidence about the social world” (p. 6). Methodology encompasses overall strategy for a research ensemble, interpolating, as Seale (1998) writes, “the political, theoretical and philosophical implications of making particular choices of method when doing a research project” (p. 3).

4.2.1.3 Key Philosophical Paradigms

Henn *et al.* claimed that “there are two broadly divergent views of knowledge [...] which we can group as: positivist paradigm [...] and interpretive paradigm” (2006; p. 10). This segment of the dissertation elucidates these two research paradigms, positioning the suitable paradigm for this current research study, that facilitated to find the most suitable methodological design. Reasons for choosing a particular or both the paradigms will be explained afterward.

4.2.1.3.1 Positivist Paradigm

Babbie (2012) mentioned that the origin of the term *positivism* could be traced to August Comte who believed that human behaviors as a phenomenon should be scientifically studied. It is a “paradigm (under objectivism epistemology), which is a methodological philosophy in quantitative research where we will apply the methods of natural sciences to discover the study of social science (Crotty, 2003, p. 8-9)”. In this respect, “understanding of phenomena in reality must be measured and supported by evidence (Hammersley, 2013, p. 22-23)”. The advocates of positivist claim that “truth is out there and it is the job of the researcher to use objective research methods to uncover that truth (Muijs,

2004: p. 4)”. The researcher conducting a study is considered to be an outsider to the study meaning that the discover (the knower) and the discovered (the known) phenomenon or object are separate entities, hence, the information and data that are collected is impartial and unbiased.

This current study also belongs to this same stance, especially where questionnaires with teachers and students are administered. Since the study must be unbiased, the "researcher needs to be as detached from the research as possible (Muijs, 2004: p. 4)”.

| Paradigm | Positivism | Interpretivism |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Ontology (reality) | Singular, external, objective, realist and pre-determined | multiple, specific, internal, relativist and changeable |
| Epistemology (knowledge) | based on a phenomena that are directly observable, i.e. objective: the investigator and the investigated are separable | based on meanings and interpretations that are not directly observable, i.e. subjective: the knower and the known are inseparable |
| Methodology | Quantitative methods of data collection are chiefly employed | Qualitative methods of data collection are often used |
| Approach | Deductive (Theory verification) theory-then-data approach (numerical & statistical data). Research is often conformity in nature | Inductive (Theory generation) data-then-theory approach (verbal & analytic data). Research is often exploratory in nature |
| Axiology | Inquiry is value-free, and researchers are unbiased | Inquiry is value-bound, and researchers are biased |

Table 4.2: Main aspects of positivism and interpretivism

4.2.1.3.2 Interpretivist Paradigm

Interpretivist paradigm is “an approach that aims to understand people (Babbie & Mouton, 2008: p28)”. Neuman (2011; p11) and De Vos et al. (2011; p8) mentioned that the origin of the term “interpretivism” could be traced to Max Weber and Wilhelm Dilthey. The main proposition of this paradigm is that the methods and approaches applied to understand knowledge of human and social sciences is not the same as it is with knowledge in physical sciences.

The advocates of this paradigm believe that it is quite natural with human beings that they interpret the world they see and encounter. They give meaning to the seen and justify as well as rationalize the deeds and phenomenon and basing on their own interpretation they act. (Babbie & Mouton, 2008; Hammersley, 2013). They consider social reality nuanced and subjective, because social reality is created not only by the perceptions of the respondents, but also by the goals and the values of the researcher.

Hence, the advocates of interpretivist paradigm apply a relativist ontology where a phenomenon can have more than one interpretation instead of having a single truth weighed by a measurement process. The researchers applying interpretivist paradigm opt for obtaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon rather than simply generalizing on the basis of the population (Creswell, 2007). Hammersley (2013) suggested the researchers to resort to interpretivist paradigm for understanding “the diverse ways of seeing and experiencing the world through different contexts and cultures” (p. 22-23).

Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007) write, it “allows researcher to investigate and prompt things that we cannot observe, researchers can probe an

interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives" (p. 81). This paradigm is "characterized by its concern for the individual" and "efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within" (Cohen & Manion, 1994; p. 36).

4.2.1.4 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research refers to the investigation of a phenomenon with the help of mathematical, statistical and/or computational tools and techniques (Given, 2008). It is concerned with numerical/quantitative data.

Quantitative data is the pool of data which is collected and stored in numerical form, for example: frequency, percentage, statistics etc. Quantitative research is carried out with this storage of quantitative data. This data can be ranked, ordered, categorized or measured in measurement units. This data can be applied to create charts, tables or graphs of raw data. This type of quantitative data can be presented and explained with statistical analysis and can be viewed objectively, rationally and scientifically (Denscombe, 2010 and Carr, 1994).

Quantitative research aims for objectivity having no bias. The researchers who employ quantitative data, view the reality as objective and exist without any relation with data and statistically produces unbiased result (Corrine, 2011).

| Orientation | Quantitative | Qualitative |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Assumption about the world | A single reality, i.e., can be measured by an instrument. | Multiple realities |
| Research purpose | Establish relationships between measured variables | Understanding a social situation from participants' perspectives |
| Research methods and processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - procedures are established before study begins; - a hypothesis is formulated before research can begin; - deductive in nature. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - flexible, changing strategies; - design emerges as data are collected; - a hypothesis is not needed to begin research; - inductive in nature. |
| Researcher's role | The researcher is ideally an objective observer who neither participates in nor influences what is being studied. | The researcher participates and becomes immersed in the research/social setting. |
| Generalisability | Universal context-free generalizations | Detailed context-based generalizations |

Table 4.3: Differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches

4.2.1.5 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research refers to empirical research or study where the required data is not collected in numerical forms (Punch, 2005), rather non-numerical data (Babbie, 2014) is gathered through observation, interviews, document study etc. This kind of research denotes the meanings, definitions, connotations, concepts, characteristics, symbols, metaphors, and descriptions of things. Their counts or measures are not aimed at. This type of research investigates and explores the reasons and the process of a particular phenomenon instead of counting the number of times certain things happen in this phenomenon (Berg & Lune, 2012). A naturalistic and interpretive approach to investigate a particular phenomenon is applied in this type of research.

“Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 2).

In qualitative research, context is very important. So, the researcher actively immerses himself there in the natural settings. In such research, nothing is pre-determined and pre-defined. Hence, the researcher cannot take anything for granted. He believes there is no specific or single reality. Reality is subjective and interpretative. To capture this subjective and interpretative reality, a researcher uses different research instruments such as: interviews, open-ended questionnaires, participant observation, diary, documents, ethnography etc.

Qualitative research approaches contain research methods and concepts from multiple recognized academic fields. Qualitative researchers apply a range of research methods to form profound understandings of how people see the social realities around and accordingly, how they act and react within their social world. This range of research methods include, for instance, documents, diary accounts, participant observation, open-ended questionnaires, and ethnography. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) write, “The researcher has several methods for collecting empirical materials, ranging from the interview to direct observation, to the analysis of artifacts, documents, and cultural records, to the use of visual materials or personal experience” (p. 14).

Since in qualitative research, interpretations of the phenomenon are constructed, multiple techniques and methods are employed to understand the data. These are “thematic analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2006), “grounded theory”,

“content analysis” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) or “discourse analysis” (McLeod, 2019).

| | | Level | Contrasting stances | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Theoretical stance | | Ontology Beliefs about the nature of being or reality | There is one objective reality | There are multiple realities | |
| | | Epistemology Belief about the nature and scope of knowledge (how we come to know the world) | You uncover the reality – there is one true explanation | Meaning is culturally defined | |
| Approach | | Methodology Based on paradigmatically different ontological and epistemological assumptions | Quantitative Positivist, Objectivist, Empiricist, Nomothetic | Qualitative Hermeneutic Interpretivist | |
| | | Design | Overarching strategy for collecting data, such as: Experimental Case study Quasi-experimental Action research Random Controlled Trials Ethnography | | |
| | | Emphases | deductive reasoning | inductive reasoning | |
| | Data (numerical or non-numerical) | Methods | Techniques for collecting data, such as: Survey/questionnaire; Interview/Focus group; Document analysis; Observation | | |
| | | Instruments | Specific data collection tools, such as: a specific questionnaire or interview schedule | | |
| Analysis | | How the data are processed in order to make sense of them (to answer your research questions) | | | |

Table 4.4: Mapping of all paradigms, stances, and approaches

However, to reap the benefits of both paradigms (positivism and interpretivism), this current doctoral study involves an eclectic approach (eclecticism) by applying suitable methods, since many researchers like Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) advocated that “it is indeed possible to have two paradigms, or two worldviews, mixed throughout a single research project” (p. 11).

4.2.1.6 Mixed Methods

The term “mixed method” denotes an embryonic research methodology which advocates the methodical incorporation, or mingling of quantitative data and qualitative data within a single research study or investigation. Mixed-method

study is an emergent side of methodological choice which is opted by researchers from different disciplines. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) denotes mixed-method research has:

... gone through a relatively rapid growth spurt...it has acquired a formal methodology that did not exist before and is subscribed to by an emerging community of practitioners and methodologists across the disciplines. In the process of developing a distinct identity, as compared with other major research communities of researchers in the social and human sciences, mixed method has been adopted as the de facto third alternative, or "third methodological movement" (p. 803-804).

Creswell *et al.* (2003) defines mixed-method research as "the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially" (p. 212). Johnson *et al.* (2007) writes, "Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e. g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (p. 123).

While giving a more comprehensive definition of mixed-method research, Creswell and Clark (2011) writes: "Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that

the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (p. 123). The main justification behind adopting such methodology is that this mixing of data allows comprehensive, reciprocal and synergistic interpretation of data which is not possible when qualitative or quantitative data is used separately for data collection and analysis.

Mixed-method research has its origin in social sciences in the 1960s. Campbell and Fiske (1959 cited in Migiro & Magangi, 2011 and Pelto, 2017) are duly attributed to be the pioneers to illustrate clearly how mixed method research can be used for validation purposes. It, however, has gained quick popularity in the research studies conducted in social sciences in the last one decade and has lately extended into the educational sciences, and others (Johnson et al., 2007). The last decade has witnessed its process to be developed, flourished and sophisticated to address a range of research questions in research studies (Creswell & Clark, 2011). These processes contain progressing rigor, contributing substitute multiple methods designs, stipulating a shorthand representation system for illustrating the designs to accelerate communication among multiple fields, picturing the procedures through diagrams, observing research questions which can specifically reap the benefits resulting from mixing, and developing reasons for applying various kinds of mixed methods research studies.

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) argue that the philosophical underpinning of mixed-method research approach is pragmatism. Literature survey demonstrates a plethora of evidence which confirm that the mixed-method research approach has gained popularity in the research studies done in

different fields (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Turner, 2005, 2008, 2009; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Creswell and Clark (2007) advising researchers to conduct research following this approach, write “the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (p. 18).

Greene (2007) commented, “The primary purpose of a study conducted with a mixed methods way of thinking is to better understand the complexity of the social phenomena being studied” (p.20). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) write: while mixed-method research approach is “inclusive, pluralistic and complementary...[it] take[s] an eclectic approach to method selection and the thinking about and conduct of research (p.15).” Hence, the fundamental features of an aptly-developed mixed methods research study in educational research can be summarized in the following way:

- To collect and analyze not only closed-ended quantitative data, but also open-ended qualitative data.
- To use rigid procedures in the collection and analysis of data suitable to the characteristics of each method. For example, selecting a suitable sample size for the purpose of qualitative and quantitative analysis.
- To integrate the data while data is collected, analyzed, or the results are discussed.
- To use procedures which employ quantitative and qualitative parts either simultaneously or successively having the same or different samples.
- To set the procedures within philosophical and/or theoretical frameworks of research, for example, within a constructionist theory that pursues understanding several viewpoints on a single question.

Patton (2015) theorized “methodological mixes” quoting that qualitative and quantitative methods could be circulated across three stages: design, measurement and analysis. Creswell and Clark (2011) define the 4 main types of mixed-method research design:

- a. **Triangulation design-** advocates collection of quantitative and qualitative data concurrently to comprehend the research problem;
- b. **Exploratory design-** applies qualitative data and analysis in an investigative function so that a quantitative instrument can be developed.
- c. **Embedded design-** refers to applying qualitative data in a correlational or experimental study;
- d. **Explanatory design-** combines qualitative results with qualitative data.

4.2.1.7 Triangulation

The term ‘triangulation’ has its origin in the area of navigation where the angles from two known points are used to determine a location. It is the application and combination of more than one approach to addressing a research problem (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). It aims at gaining confidence in the findings by confirming a proposal applying two or more measures. It gives a comprehensive and balanced representation of the situation or context (Altrichter et al., 2008; p. 147).

Pelto (2017) writes, in the 1950s the researchers started to use ‘triangulation’ as a means to evaluate the reliability and validity of data collection methods in the behavioural and social sciences (p. 242). He mentions that it was Campbell and Fiske (1959) who wrote one of the first papers to promote “methodological

triangulation” (Campbell & Fiske, 1959, p. 101) as a substitute tactic to “the single operationalism now dominant in psychology (p. 101).”

Webb, Campbell, Schwartz and Sechrest (1966, cited in Johnson *et al.*, 2007) expanded the concepts of Campbell and Fiske (1959) and defined multiple operationalism. They defined it as representative of the employment of more than one measure that “are hypothesized to share in the theoretically relevant components but have different patterns of irrelevant components” (p. 3). Webb *et al.* (1966) writes:

“Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation [italics added] of measurement processes. If a proposition can survive the onslaught of a series of imperfect measures, with all their irrelevant error, confidence should be placed in it. Of course, this confidence is increased by minimizing error in each instrument and by a reasonable belief in the different and divergent effects of the sources of error”. (p. 3)

Hence, Webb *et Al.* (1966) are duly attributed to be the first who coined the term ‘*triangulation*’ (Johnson *et al.*, 2007). It was first used in qualitative research in the 1950s as a way to overcome probable biases resulting from the application of one methodology only in the same study. This technique is applied not only to confirm the findings, but also to ensure data completeness.

Triangulation, in research, is used to confirm the credibility and validity of findings of a research study (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018; Stavros & Westberg, 2009; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The term, *credibility* has to do with

the trustworthiness and how convincing the results and findings of a research study are (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018; Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010). On the other hand, *validity* is a term which “determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are (Joppe, 2000, p.1 cited in Golafshani, 2003)”. Leung (2015) writes, “Validity in qualitative research means *appropriateness* of the tools, processes, and data. Whether the research question is valid for the desired outcome, the choice of methodology is appropriate for answering the research question, the design is valid for the methodology, the sampling and data analysis is appropriate, and finally the results and conclusions are valid for the sample and context” (p.325).

Denzin (1978) opined that “triangulation, or the use of multiple methods, is a plan of action that will raise sociologists above the personalistic biases that stem from single methodologies” (p. 294). Denzin (2009, 1978) drew an outline which shows how researchers can apply methodological, investigative, theoretical and data triangulation in naturalistic inquiry (p. 294). Denzin (2009, 1978) advocates that multiple forms of triangulation can be applied in a single study. These are:

- 1) Data triangulation is a triangulation of (1) time, (2) space, and (3) person. It involves applying various sources of data so that the validity of a study can be increased. It involves collecting data at different times, from different people, in different contexts. Since this is very easy to apply in any study, it is perhaps the most popular type of triangulation. By triangulating various sources of data, a researcher may “go to as many

concrete situations as possible in forming the observational base” (Denzin, 1978; p. 101).

- 2) Methodological triangulation includes the application of multiple methods (quantitative and/or qualitative) to investigate a research study. Having the same conclusions resulting from each method helps establish the validity of the study. Such triangulation is again subdivided into two kinds:
 1. Within-the-method triangulation and
 2. Between-the-method triangulation.Bryman (2001) terms Within-the-method triangulation as the employment of different varieties and instruments of the same method to examine a research study". For example, a researcher can ask both open and closed questions in the same questionnaire. Between-the-method triangulation, the most common form of triangulation, on the other hand, comprises what Bryman calls the employment of "contrasting research methods". For instance, a researcher may choose to mingle a structured interview with an observation tool. Between-the-method triangulation has been recommended by Denzin (1978) advocating that by utilizing multiple methods, "the bias inherent in any particular data source, investigators, and particularly method will be canceled out when used in conjunction with other data sources, investigators, and methods" (p. 14); and (b) "the result will be a convergence upon the truth about some social phenomenon" (p. 14). Although methodological triangulation is the most widely-used type and quite popular, it is usually expensive since it demands more resources and it is time consuming.

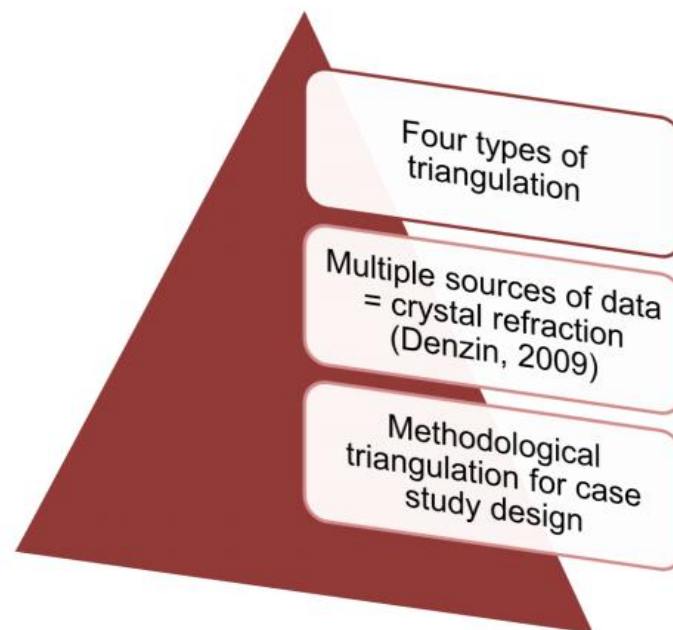


Figure 4.3: Four types of triangulation

- 3) Investigator triangulation involves multiple investigators in an attempt “to obtain as many diverse views and opinions as possible “on the behavior in question” (Denzin, 1978; p. 102). Although as an effective means it helps establish the validity of the study, it may not always be possible to gather multiple observers since it is time-consuming and may go against individual schedules.
- 4) Theory triangulation requires the researcher to compare participants’ own accounts with “alternative theoretical schemes” (Denzin, 1978; p. 102) to use multiple perspectives/disciplines to interpret a single set of data. Theory triangulation can also be time-demanding and may not be practicable and possible in all circumstances.

4.2.2 Debate on Mixed Approach to Research Paradigm

Literature survey reveals that there was considerable debate on using two opposing paradigms (i.e. positivism and interpretivism) in one single study. The two opposing theses concerning this debate are compatibility thesis (i.e. accommodation between two paradigms) and incompatibility thesis.

The core component of the incompatibility thesis is that quantitative and qualitative methodologies echo fundamental epistemological paradigms that are essentially and reciprocally “exclusive and antagonistic” (Smith, 1983; Smith & Heshusius, 1986). In particular, the proponents of this thesis advocate that quantitative and qualitative methods are discordant on an epistemological level; hence, the two types of approaches are incompatible. While commenting on the incompatibility of the positivist and interpretivist paradigms, Smith (1983) contends: “One approach takes a subject-object position on the relationship to subject matter; the other takes a subject-subject position. One separates facts and values, while the other sees them inextricably mixed. One searches for laws, and the other seeks understanding. These positions do not seem to be compatible” (p. 12).

Other proponents of this thesis (like Guba and Lincoln, 1994), who discard the incorporation of two contrasting paradigms, together with their allied methods, in the same research work, accentuates the difference between positivist and interpretivist paradigms and oppose that the two impede each other. Such opposing notions towards the incompatibility thesis, however, failed to hold water and opted for the compatibility thesis in a short period of time. Regarding the compatibility thesis, to which this present study sticks, Denzin and Lincoln

(2002) posited, "within the past decade, the borders and boundary lines separating these paradigms and perspectives have begun to blur" (p. 246).

Likewise, Lincoln and Guba (2003) comment that: "various paradigms are beginning to 'interbreed' such that two theories previously thought to be in irreconcilable conflict may now appear, under a different theoretical rubric [eclecticism in this case], to be informing one another's arguments" (p. 254). Furthermore, Howe (1988) and Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) observe that the compatibility of two paradigms, in a single research work, where researchers adopt both qualitative and quantitative methods. It insinuates that both quantitatively databased questionnaires can be administered and qualitatively data-based interviews and observations employed in the single research work for purpose of triangulation; this is exactly what is employed in the present study.

Miles and Huberman (1994) endorse that: "we have to face the fact that numbers and words are both needed if we are to understand the world" (p. 40). Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) encourage researchers to use "whatever philosophical and/or methodological approach that will work for the particular research problem under study" (p. 5), since a single paradigm in all cases may not be sufficient.

In compliance with the aspects of the research questions placed, at first closed-ended quantitative data was collected through student questionnaires and teacher questionnaires, complemented by the collection of qualitative data through semi structured classroom observation schedule, student and teacher interviews, and document study, such as reviewing textbook (*English for*

Today) and analyzing examination papers. The rationale behind choosing such design was that one single method alone may not be sufficient and may fail to serve the purpose (Cohen *et al.*, 2011), as “each method has its own strengths and weakness” and “one’s weaknesses are often the other’s strengths” (Henn *et al.*, 2006; p. 128).

Another feature that characterized the overall design of this current research is triangulation, "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Denzin, 1978; p. 291). Two types of triangulation had been applied. These were: (a) data triangulation: resorting to more than one source of data (from teachers, students and documents) to answer the research questions; and (b) methodological, i.e., between methods triangulation (Denzin, 2009): using more than one tool to collect data (teacher and student questionnaires, interviews with teachers and students, and document analysis).

4.2.3 Methods Used in Washback Studies

The wheels of research are never stagnant, rather they are always on the go, and its design progresses over time. The research methods used in different studies differ from study to study. Literature survey shows that the methodologies employed in washback studies evolved during the last couple of years. In this field of research, we can see a shift from employing mono-method/a single method (questionnaire survey methods) to the employment of multiple methods or mixed methods (e.g., in-depth interviews, survey methods, accompanied by classroom observations etc.).

Some washback studies used only questionnaires (e.g. Amengual-Pizarro, 2009; Choi, 2008; Stecher *et al.*, 2004; Cheng, 1998; Lam, 1994; Andrews, 1995), others applied only interviews (see Qi, 2004), some utilized survey questionnaires and interviews in tandem, besides documentary analysis (e.g. El-Ebyary, 2009 ; Ferman, 2004; Shohamy *et al.*, 1996), others deployed interviews and observations (e.g. Saif, 2006; Wall and Alderson, 1993), while others (similar to the present study) made a combination of survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observations (e.g. Munoz-Alvarez, 2010; Wall, 2005; Burrows, 2004; Watanabe, 1996b, 2000; Cheng, 1997, 1999; Shohamy, 1993).

Literature survey shows that between 1980 and 1990, petite empirical studies (e.g. Kellagan, et al, 1982; Wesdorp, 1982, Hughes, 1989; Khaniya, 1990; Li, 1990, Smith, 1991) had been conducted to examine the washback effect of examinations. Research strategy during this time was mostly dominated by survey methods (usually interviews or written questionnaires), but observations were ignored. Nonetheless, though the survey data delivered considerable information on the impact of testing on teaching, and learning, these data alone would barely offer a deep and rich interpretation of what was really happening in the classroom.

The review of literature (see Chapter 2) demonstrates that in the washback studies, a variety of methods has been employed to amass data to offer substantial indication for spotting washback effects of testing on teaching and learning aspects. The recent washback studies (e.g, Turner 2009, 2008; Tavares & Hamp-Lyons, 2008; Davison, 2008; Urmston & Fang, 2008; Qi, 2005, 2004; Cheng, 2004; Watanabe, 2004a, 1996b; Cheng, 2001; Wall, 1999;

Andrews and Fullilove, 1994; Shohamy, 1993; Shohamy,1992; Herman & Golan, 1991) show the use of various research instruments such as the use of survey questionnaires, classroom observations, interviews, diaries and testing measures etc. These methodologies are not always used identically, rather following the nature of inquiry, the context, and the researcher these are in some cases used separately while in other cases in tandem. The washback being a complex phenomenon (Tzagari, 2009; Wall and Alderson, 1993; Wall, 2005) led the researchers to employ different research designs and various sources of data in their research process. For example, reviewing 101 papers on Washback studies, Tzagari (2009, p. 59) advised:

“It is preferable if more than one method be used to increase validity of research. For comprehensive picture, it is desirable to conduct studies which look at washback of a specific test from different perspectives (including at least teachers and students) to investigate the influence it exerts on classroom teaching-learning in depth.”

The study conducted by Alderson and Wall (1993) is considered to be a pioneer in the area of the washback research. It is commonly recognized that the most phenomenal contribution in the field of washback study, which paved the way to the spread of the application of mixed methods, is the washback study conducted by Alderson and Wall (1993) in Sri Lanka. Most important of all, it has inspired a significant number of observational and evidence-based studies on washback (effect) of tests (Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Shohamy et al., 1996; Watanabe, 1996a, 1996b, 2004b; Cheng, 1997, 1998; Burrow, 2004; Read & Hayes, 2004; Qi, 2004; Turner, 2002, 2008, 2009; Munoz & Alvarez, 2010).

Wall and Alderson (1993) accentuate the significance of mixed methods to answer to the questions such as "why the teachers do what they do, what they understand about the [...] examination and what they believe to be effective means of teaching and learning" (p. 62). To confront these questions, they mention that "observations on their own cannot give a full account of what is happening in classrooms". Hence, they concluded that "it was important for us to complement the classroom observations with teacher interviews, questionnaires to teachers and teacher advisors, and analyses of materials (especially tests) teachers had prepared for classes" (p. 63). Likewise, Cheng (2001) indicates that "survey data alone are useful but insufficient for understanding washback ... we need to ask teachers and watch them teaching"(p. 20).

We can classify the methods employed in washback research studies such as indirect methods (which include questionnaires, tests and dairies) and direct methods (such as observations, interviews, and documents) (Alderson and Wall, 1993). Some of these washback studies have applied only indirect methods (e.g. Andrews, 1995; Lam, 1994; Cheng 1998; Stecher *et al.*, 2004; Choi, 2008; Amengual-Pizarro, 2009), which are disputed as these studies used data gained from self-reported anecdotes, but other washback studies (such as the current study), however, used both indirect and direct methods in tandem (e.g. Munoz and Alvarez, 2010; El-Ebyary, 2009; Saif, 2006; Burrows, 2004; Ferman,2004; Watanabe, 2000, 1996b; Cheng, 1997, 1999; Wall & Alderson, 1993). The results produced by the direct method disclose realities about washback phenomena which might not be exposed applying indirect methods only.

Since mixed method research method offers multiple benefits, its popularity is increasing with researchers conducting washback research. Apart from Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996) and Watanabe (1996b), the most of the washback studies have involved this method. Impact Study conducted by Alderson and Wall (1993) in Sri Lanka and the washback study by Turner (2002, 2006, 2008, 2009) has proved mixed method research method as an effective blend of survey research and qualitative procedures. Turner (2005, 2008) evidently mentions that the research design and procedures of data analysis used in her study had been facilitated by the features of mixed method research approach. Cheng's (1997, 1998) longitudinal study is profoundly dependent on qualitative procedures (i.e. interviews, observations, and document analysis, but integrating a corresponding quantitative part (e.g., survey questionnaires).

Green (2007) also advocates mixed method research approach, with its prominence on all-inclusive, comprehensive descriptions, analyses of teaching and learning behaviors and the different circumstances where such behaviors are fostered, is well-matched for seizing the intricacy of the societal instances being investigated.

Cheng (1997, 1999, 2000), from a methodological viewpoint, convincingly contends that the complex phenomenon of washback studies demands the integration of both qualitative and quantitative methods. This view is strongly braced by Watanabe (1996b) and Chen (2002) who also profoundly thinks that qualitative and quantitative methods can be successfully applied together in washback studies. The principles and perspective of the mixed-method research approach in the washback studies convinced this current research study to

resort to this method that most agreed. Listing 29 empirical washback studies, Tsagari (2007) found several qualitative and quantitative research instruments that comprise observation, questionnaire, interviews, and analysis of documents. Not only these, some investigators also apply case studies, test scores, and test analysis. The rationale behind choosing this method largely by washback researchers (Alderson & Hamp-Lyon, 1996; Watanabe, 1996b, 2004b; Turner, 2002; Cheng, 2003) is that it can generate deep and rich data (Watanabe, 2004b; Cheng, 2003).

Moreover, as noted by Turner (2009), the multiple-method research design has the tendency to “help respond to certain types of questions, especially those having to do with classroom contexts” (p. 108). The research questions in washback studies are best addressed with multiple-method research designs rather than with singular dependence on either the quantitative or the qualitative approach. Turner (2005, 2008, 2009) confirmed the significance of employing mixing methods of data collection (a multiple-method design), and demonstrated an ideal instance of how effective and efficient washback study could be designed by mingling qualitative and quantitative methods. Considering all these, the present researcher deems it fit to use this approach for the present research purpose.

The current study was a convergence of the two paradigms (positivist and interpretivist paradigms). This study is neither totally positivist nor entirely interpretivist. The justification for adopting this strategy was that while one paradigm (positive) helps the researcher to generalize data, the other (interpretivist paradigms) facilitates him to amass deep and rich data (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Since washback is identified in the literature (Onaiba, 2013; Hoque, 2011) as a complex and multidimensional (Alderson and Wall, 1993) as a research design mixed-method orientation has been used as a key element in planning the current study. The overall methodological process that has been exploited in the study navigates through certain steps of the research “onion” model by Saunders *et al.* (2009) (see Figure 4.4): research philosophy; approach; strategy; choices; time horizons; data collection and data analysis.

As per the current research work, the outer most layer displays the adopted research philosophy: positivism and interpretivism; then the second circle denotes the research approach which results from this selected philosophy (deductive and inductive), forming the research design. On the other hand, the third circle of the onion demonstrates the methodological choice (i.e. mixed methods and triangulation) while the fourth circle shows the strategy of the research, espousing interviews and observations accompanied by survey strategy (questionnaires). Both third and fourth circles form the overall methodology of the current study. The fifth circle displays the time horizon, adopting cross-sectional research. The inner most circle of the onion refers to data collection and data analysis techniques. The arrows depicted in the shown figure leads to the directions of the methodological steps of the current research work.

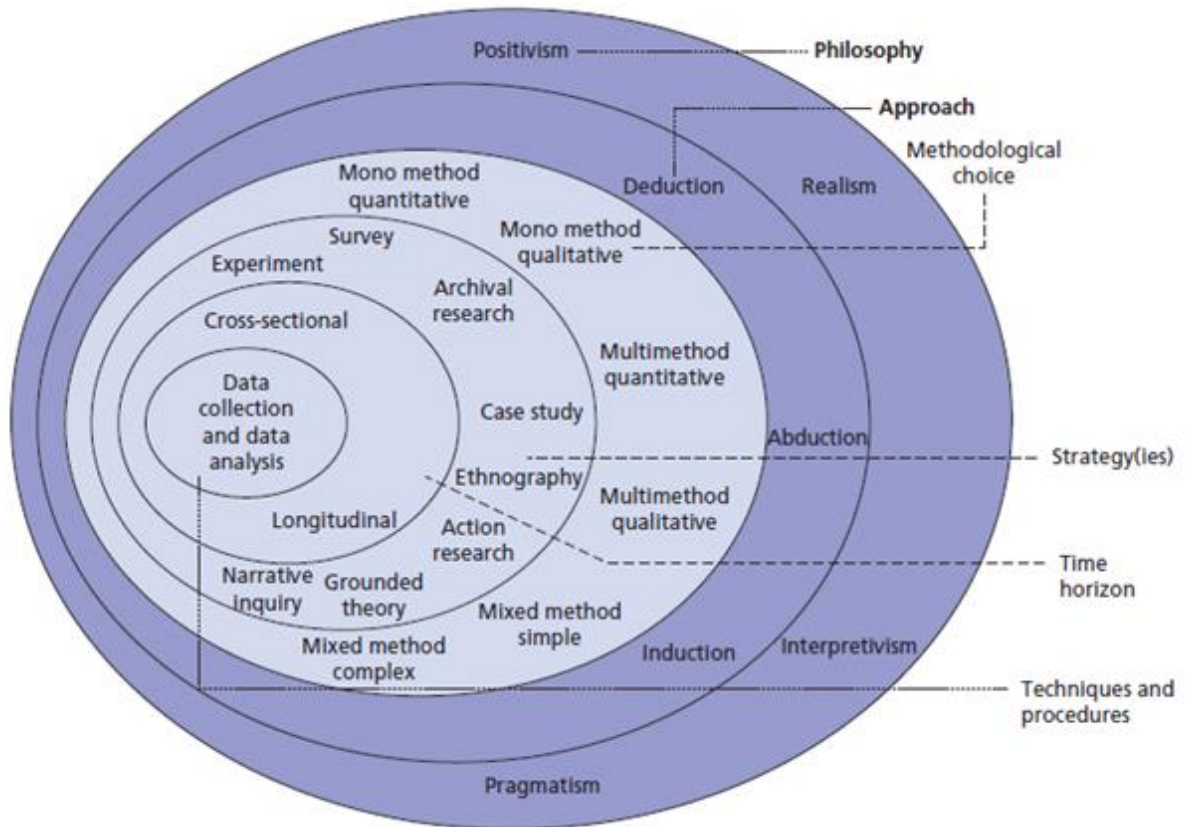


Figure 4.4: Research "onion" model

4.3 Research Methodology of this Study

Research methodology is defined as the research strategy which comprises the type of research, choice of methods and approaches of research (Henn *et al.*, 2006). A well-delineated and comprehensive research strategy is a must for gaining effective results at the end of any research study. This part of the chapter presents the type of research that embodies the present research study, and introduces the choice of methods and approaches of research the present researcher opted for, and the research sample selected. It depicts the research phases as well. The following figure (4.5) depicts a picturesque diagram of the research methodology adopted in the current study.

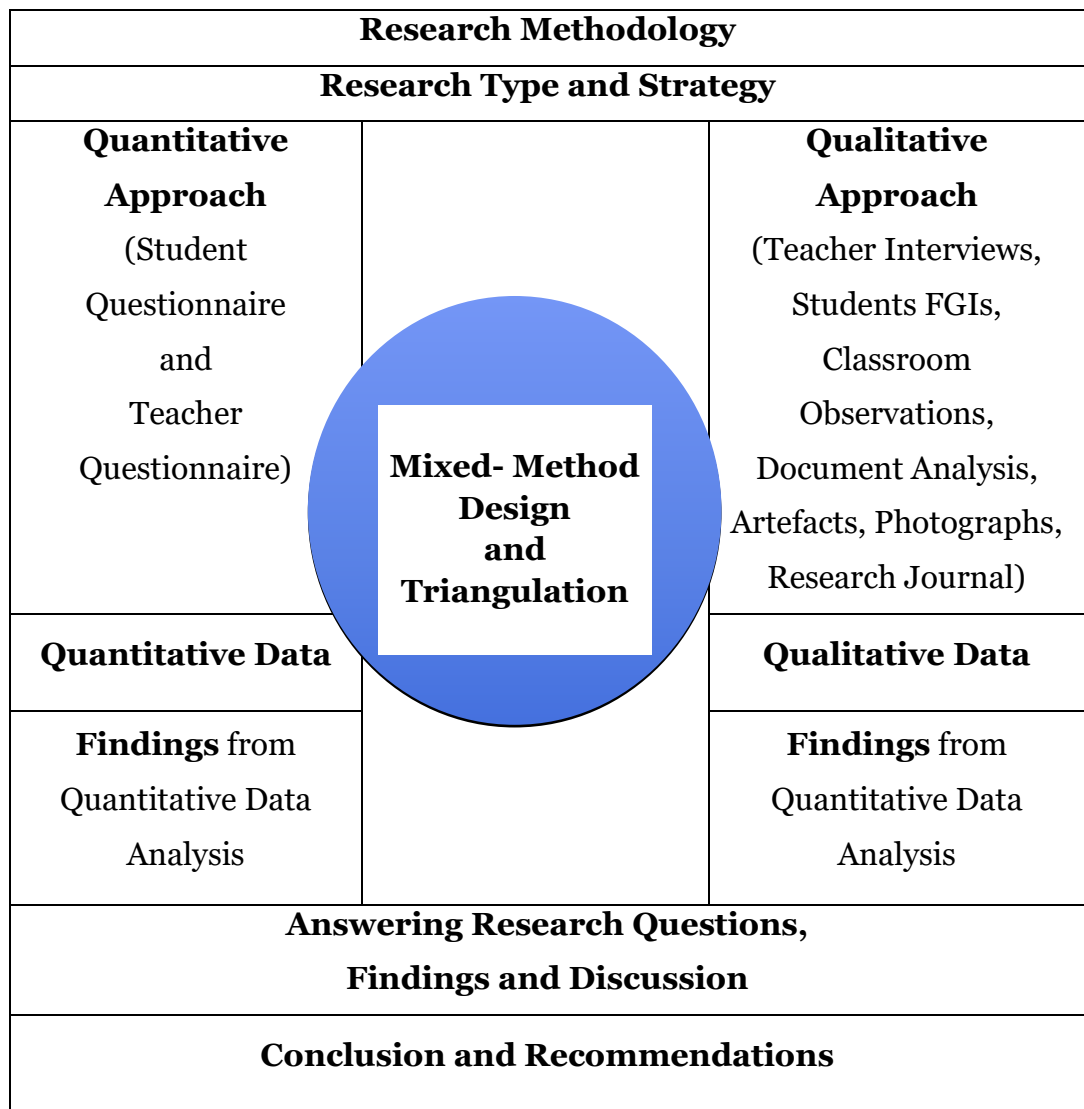


Figure 4.5: Research methodology adopted in this study

4.3.1 Research Type and Strategy

As mentioned earlier, there are two strategies of investigation as identified by Creswell (2009). These are: (a) qualitative strategies which comprise case studies, ethnography, phenomenological research, grounded theory and narrative research; (b) quantitative strategies which use experimental research or surveys. On the other hand, there are two major research paradigms such as (a) positivism which includes purely quantitative methods (Tashakkori &

Teddlie, 1998) and (b) interpretivism which includes qualitative methods of data collection (Morris, 2006; Cohen *et al.* 2011). To avail the benefits of these apparently two extremes, since last decade especially researchers have been adopting a mixed approach to research which includes both quantitative and qualitative methods (Johnson et al., 2007).

For several rational reasons, the current study has also adopted a multi-method research approach. This mixed-method study has been adopted basing on 3 aspects: the type of problem the study needs to address, the objective of the research study, and the nature of the data of the study.

This mixed-method study integrates surveys (i.e. teacher and student questionnaires), interviews with teachers, focused group interviews (FGIs) with students, and classroom observations, complemented by document analysis. This section of this chapter will discuss all these research instruments.

The rationale for adopting this research strategy for the current study is that the survey questionnaires will yield sufficient data (produced quantitatively) which help gather generalizable data, that will consequently create the ground for pooling data via qualitative means: teacher and student interviews, and semi structured classroom observations, supplemented by documentary analysis. Because mixed-method approach “involves gathering both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study, allowing the researcher to identify significant trends in the quantitative data, the possible causes of which can be pursued in interviews with a smaller number of participants” (Dewaele, 2018, p. 282).

The main basis for mingling qualitative and quantitative methods was to satisfactorily answer the research questions, striving to avoid complications like

the questions of the reliability and generalizability of qualitative data, and representativeness and validity of quantitative data (Silverman, 2005; Hammersley, 1992). Such blending was worth arraying in the present study since it can produce required results:

- Corroboration: hoping/ getting similar results from both qualitative and quantitative methods.
- Elaboration: analysis of qualitative data illustrates how findings from quantitative data apply in specific cases.
- Complementarity: results of quantitative and qualitative data may/may not vary, yet they collectively produce insights. (Brannen, 2005: p. 176)

Taking these facts into account and realizing that assimilation of qualitative and quantitative methods in the same research is instrumental in deriving rigid data, the concurrent use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, quantitative data following qualitative data, or qualitative following quantitative data are likely mixtures (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). That is why, Alderson and Wall (1993) emphasize that the best method to investigate washback is through a blend of teacher and/or student questionnaires, interviews and direct observation of classroom practice.

The current study adopted both, consecutively (quantitative approach followed by qualitative). This design was implemented because only one single method may not be sufficient (Cohen *et al.*, 2011), as “each method has its own strengths and weakness” and “one’s weaknesses are often the other’s strengths” (Henn *et al.*, 2006:128) and “because going back and forth between qualitative

interpretations and quantitative analysis is explicitly seen as yielding important insights concerning the phenomena [washback in this case] under study” (Rocco *et al.*, 2003: p. 596-97).

To explain the issue further, the context-sensitivity and the complexity of the research problem of the current study is one of the main reasons for adopting a mixed-methods research approach. Context sensitivity (Patton, 2015) means an occurrence needs be understood in every possible complexity it may have and within a specific context and environment. As it has been pointed out above, the purpose of this study is to investigate how English teaching-learning and assessment practice influence each other, teachers’ understanding of the present English curriculum and assessment system, what and how they teach and assess in the classrooms, reflection of summative and formative assessment in the classroom assessment and most importantly and specifically how assessment practice facilitates/hinders (washback) English teaching and learning practice.

Nonetheless, findings from literature in washback studies reveal that washback study demonstrates substantial complexity (see Chapter 2: Literature Review). Besides, this complexity is more visible in the context of Bangladesh since the system of education and social context here is very much centralized and examination-oriented (Amin & Greenwood, 2018). So, the researcher needed to consider both pedagogical and the personal and/or social complications that had an impact on the perceptions, attitudes, and practices of teachers and students. Since mixed-method approach gives importance on overall and thick descriptions and analysis of stake-holders' behaviors and their contexts, this method is the most apposite for detailing the complexity of the context under

study (Greene, 2007). Furthermore, mixed method research approach “helps respond to certain types of questions, especially those having to do with classroom contexts” (Turner, 2009; p. 108). Thus, it appears that mixed method approach is suitable for the current study.

Secondly, mixed method research approach gives stress on “tailoring methods to research questions” (Wang, 2010; p. 83). For a successful research project, it is obligatory that research approaches are mixed in such a way that it can provide the best offerings to address the research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Therefore, it can be safely deduced that mixed method research approach refrains from itself from dictating the option of the methods of data collection. Rather, it advocates that research should be conducted according to the research objective and question as well as the context in which the study operates. One of the notable characteristics of this approach is that researchers can mix aspects of the qualitative and quantitative paradigms at all or many methodological steps in the design (Creswell, 1994; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Thus, it appears that mixed method research approach is suitable for the current study.

Thirdly, mixed method research approach can generate better findings than single method research (Creswell, 2009; Greene, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). They opine that mixed method research approach can diminish some of the shortcomings related to mono-method. Exploiting both qualitative and quantitative data within the same study, mixed method research approach can integrate the positive aspects of both the methods. Considering these points, to study the Bangladeshi context and to understand the washback experience (e.g., how English teaching-

learning and assessment practice influence each other, how they teach and assess in the classrooms, and most importantly how assessment practice facilitates/hinders (washback) English teaching and learning practice), both qualitative and quantitative data need to be collected and analyzed.

Fourthly, mixed method research approach offers some distinctive features (as opposed to mono-method) that boost the quality of end-results and present a more all-inclusive picture of examined phenomenon (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Greene (2007) identified some of these features. These are: (a) triangulation (which works to determine how various methods can verify, validate or support one another.); (b) complementarity (which works to elaborate, enhance, and clarify the results from one method with the other); (c) initiation (that explores disagreements which guide to re-frame the research questions; (d) development (which utilizes the results of one method to enlighten the other); and (e) expansion (which helps expand the range and breadth of inquiry by employing diverse methods for diverse portions). These characteristics facilitate to amplify the validity of the findings (Greene, 2007). Thus, by adopting mixed method research approach the validity of the current study is also ensured.

However, the application of the qualitative approach supersedes the employment of the quantitative approach because close-ended direct questionnaires bar respondents to demonstrate actual perspectives, perceptions, and attitudes while replying to a query whereas qualitative data derived through observations, interviews, and document analysis help overcome this (Baker, 1992).

Another important feature used in the design of this current study is triangulation, "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon"(Denzin, 1978: 291). Out of at least four approaches of triangulation (Denzin, 1978). Two were used. These are: (a) data triangulation, employing more than one source of data (from teachers, students and documents) to address the research questions; and (b) methodological triangulation, i.e. between methods triangulation (Denzin, 2009), resorting to more than one tool (questionnaires, classroom observations, teacher interviews, student interviews (FGI), and document study) to gather required data. Thus, the present study adopted a mixed-methods research approach as a key component in formulating the researcher.

4.3.2 Rationale for the Methodology

As far as the selection of methods is concerned, it is crucial that the first step taken should include an assessment of all available and relevant documents associated with the JSC English curriculum, and textbook. This is essential that I should have a comprehensive understanding of the objectives of the test and the content of the national English textbook (i.e. *English for Today*). Only then I can examine and explore the effect of English test on English teaching, learning and assessment practices.

Three complementary methods (i.e., interviews, observations and questionnaires) were employed in my research design. As my research objective was to examine English teachers' and their students' perceptions of teaching, learning and testing and how they were shown to operate in the course of teachers' instructional practices in the classroom, semi-structured interviews

and classroom observation are assumed to be best suited for this research purpose. The assumption is that observation is useful for obtaining descriptions of behavior and events, whereas interviewing is mainly useful for eliciting the perspectives of teachers (Maxwell, 1996).

Meanwhile, teacher and student questionnaires were employed to further explore teachers' various perspectives and how they were interrelated with other sets of data. Based on Maxwell (1992), although the interviews could give the researcher the required scope and depth, they could not ensure the representativeness of the data. In addition, questionnaires also seemed adequate to quantify data and to provide descriptions and comparisons of teacher and student beliefs (Barcelos, 2003). Thus, to facilitate the generalizability of insights derived from qualitative data, to expand the generalizability of the findings (Reichardt & Cook, 1979) and to better describe teacher beliefs by quantifying them, the data were supplemented with the questionnaire.

Worthy of note is that when devising my study, considerations of validity (the relevance of the data) and reliability (the consistency of data analysis) also permeated every level of the research from how questions were asked and how data were gathered and analyzed; to how and to whom research results were reported. Drawing on the review of the research methodologies employed in washback research, both method triangulation and data triangulation were carried out. Method triangulation was achieved by combining aspects of quantitative and qualitative methods in the stages of data collection and data analysis. It has been believed that the combination of these research methodologies would allow me to examine the perceptions and behaviors of

English teachers and their students from many different angles. Data triangulation was achieved by having different sets of data cross-checked.

In addition, other standards such as “persistent observation”, “thick description of the content”, and “explicit emphasis on research question(s)” had also been taken into account in my study. In Chapter 3, a thick description has already been provided on the context of the study and in Chapter 5, a comprehensive account of the results has been offered. Overall, by positioning myself within the mixed-method research design, I was able to identify specific patterns of teacher and student beliefs and behavior, and describe them in relevant descriptive terms, and above all, I was able to place them in some relations to the wider social context. It shows that a match existed between what I needed and what the mixed-method research design offered.

4.3.3 Variables focused on in the study

The current doctoral study emphasizes on three variables namely the presage, context and process. The teachers’ characteristics: their experiences, and their professional training, and learners’ characteristics are included in Presage variables (Stern, 1983). Context variables include the structures and aspects of the settings and surroundings where the learners and teachers’ function –the school, the community and its environment. The process variables consider the interactions between learners and teachers. The context variables in this study are examined through interviews with research participants, and the presage variables i.e. the characteristics of the student and the characteristics of the

teacher were examined through student questionnaires and teacher questionnaires.

On other hand, the process variables are examined through classroom observations, review of lesson and lecture plans of teacher, and teachers' interviews after the observation of their classroom practice. The presage and the context variables stimulate test washback on classroom teaching and learning activities (process variables) (Cheng, 2005) (see Figure 4.6). Consequently, the current doctoral study concentrates on 3 variables only (the presage, the context, and the process variables)

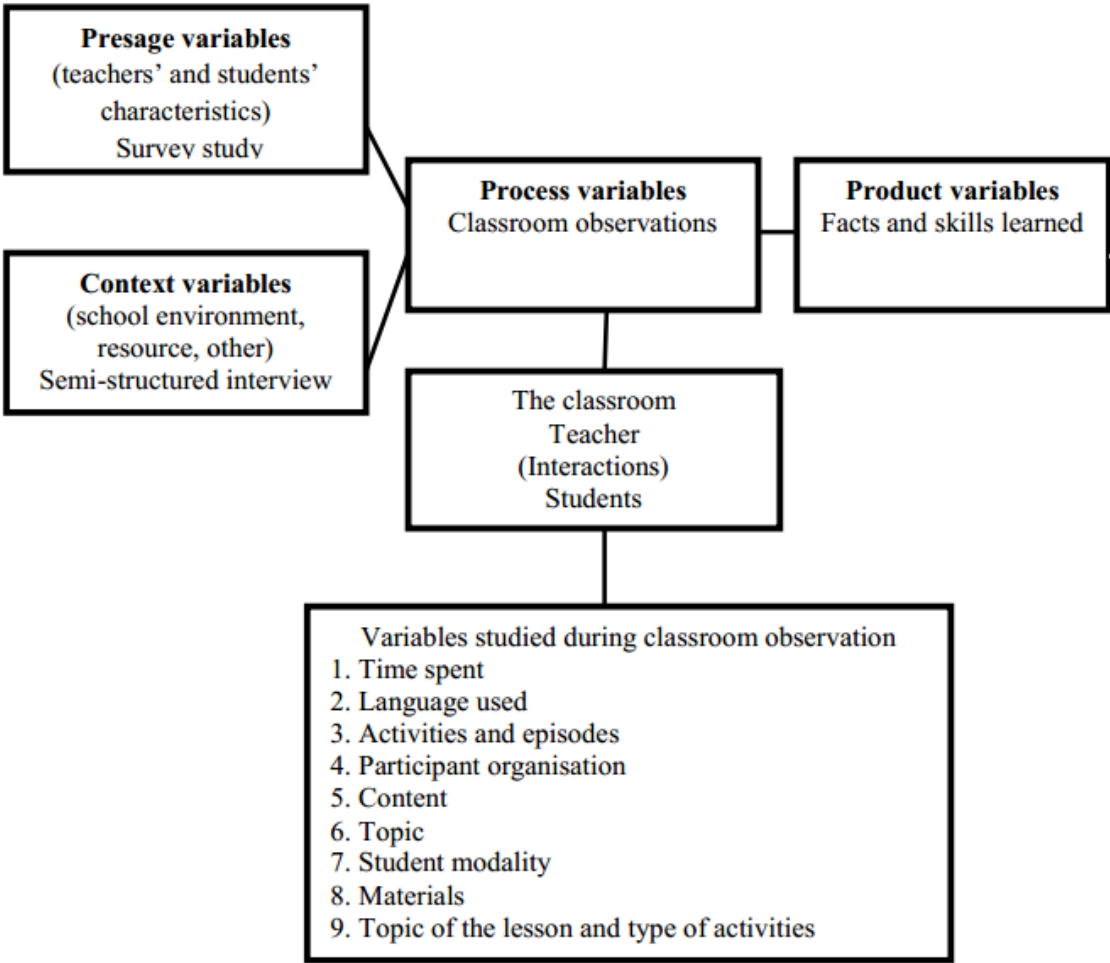


Figure 4.6: Variables focused in the current doctoral study

4.3.4 Population, Sample and Methods of the Study

4.3.4.1 Population of the Study

In the point of view of statistics "population", the term, has to some extent a different implication from the one given to it in everyday language. It does not necessarily denote only people or to animate creatures - the population of Bangladesh, for example or the cat population of Dhaka. In statistics, a population of things, or incidents, or observations, or actions, including examples of the amount of lids in water, visiting the psychologists, or operations done in the hospitals can be mentioned. Thus, a population is a total of individuals, objects, incidents and so on.

It is a set of analogous things or incidents, which has certain interest for certain experiments or questions. A population is a cluster of prevailing things or items or events (for example, the cluster of all stars that can be found within the galaxy) or it can be a hypothetical group of things or items or events perceived as a generalization from our practical experience. The population of this current study is all secondary schools of Bangladesh, their students of Class 8 and their respective English teachers.

4.3.4.2 Sample of the Study

4.3.4.2.1 Subjects (Participants)

Research studies conducted on washback of language tests in the last two decades, explore that most of the studies applied two groups of respondents mostly in washback studies. They are teachers, and students (e.g., Turner,

2009, 2008, 2005, 2002, 2001; Alderson & Wall, 1993; Shohamy, 1996, 1993). Accordingly, my study also included these two groups of respondents. They are teachers and students of sixteen different schools.

Since, it is hardly possible to work with the entire population (Robson, 2002) which includes all English teachers and students of Class 8 in a study, I selected sixteen schools situated in four different districts (Dhaka, Manikgonj, Laxmipur, Sylhet) of Bangladesh. My experience as an English teacher and researcher gave me an insider's knowledge of the context of the research sites. This knowledge and understanding guided me in my initial sample selection. A convenient sampling technique was used for selecting schools for this study. The selection of schools was made on the basis of accessibility and convenience as well as considering their familiarity with me (the current researcher), their distance, locations and time, so that I could get easy access to these schools and the participants. Moreover, I had the opportunity of visiting these schools as an EFL researcher for two years. It helped me know the schools' locations beforehand, and to have easy access. Consequently, it had a positive effect on gaining a high return of teacher and student questionnaires, and influenced teachers' and students' willingness to participate in the interviews accommodatingly. The following table (4.6) at a glance captures the research tools and sampling process of the current study.

| Research Tools & Sampling Process | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Research Sites | Research Tools | Respondents | Total Number | Sampling Procedure |
| 16 Schools from four different districts (Dhaka, Manikgonj, Laxmipur, Sylhet) | Teacher Questionnaire | Teachers | 32 | Convenient Sampling (for school selection) And Purposive Sampling (for participant selection) |
| | Student Questionnaire | Students | 500 | |
| | Interview schedule for English Teacher | Teachers | 16 | |
| | FGIs with Students | Students | 16x9=144 from 16 FGIs | |
| | Semi-structured classroom observation schedule | Teachers and Students | 16 (1 class of each English teacher) | |
| | Documents Analysis | - | - | Activate Window Go to Settings to act |

Table: 4.6: Research tools and sampling process at a glance

On the contrary, teachers and students were selected following the purposive sampling technique. This technique was applied for choosing individuals or groups deliberately not only based on our research questions, but also based on information available about these individuals or groups (Maxwell, 1996 & Patton, 2015). The participating teachers and students were selected considering their potential for generating data which could reveal teachers' and students' perceptions in general.

The selected teachers were presently teaching English at Class/grade 8 in the secondary schools in Bangladesh. Therefore, they could deliver the required information corresponding to the research questions. Few of them were examiners of English of the JSC and SSC public examination. Furthermore, the students were also learning English at Class/grade 8 (the JSC level). They were

learning English for 8 years as a mandatory subject. While selecting the student-participants, the researcher also followed Patton's (2002) "maximum variation sampling" technique, i.e., in each of the focused groups there was a combination of students (the front-benchers, the mediocre students and the back-benchers), so that voices of all categories of students could be heard and elicited data could represent all categories of students.

For the current research study, 32 questionnaires were handed over to 32 English teachers in 16 sampled schools. All of them completed the questionnaires in the school premises while I was in the school also and I requested all of them to complete the questionnaires in full. Hence, if any confusion or difficulty arose, they contacted me on the spot and I clarified these. I found this very advantageous for my study, because as a result of this, I received all 32 questionnaires fully completed, with a 100% return rate.

Since in the context of the current study (conducted in Bangladesh) where the entire education system is highly centralized, all the schools have almost same educational resources and facilities, and almost all English teachers teaching in these schools share almost same social, economic and cultural backgrounds and experiences. The selected sample, hence, specifies that this sample had positive impact on the representativeness of the population and data derived from the study can positively be generalized to the broader population (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010; Cohen *et al.*, 2011 and Fink, 2003).

4.3.4.2.1.1 Demographics of the surveyed English teachers

English teachers teaching in the Bangladeshi schools are graduates from different colleges or universities. All these teachers held a BA/BSc/BSS degree and three of them had MSS degree. Along with their bachelors and/or master's degree, most of them had B.Ed degree. The following table (4.7) displays the demographics of the surveyed English teachers. The majority (69%) of them were male, whereas 31% of them were females. The demographic table displays that teachers' experience of teaching English ranged from three years to twenty-six years. These Grade 8 teachers also taught the students of other classes/grades. Of the 32 teachers, seven teachers were teaching the students of grade 6, eight were teaching the students of grade 7, twelve teachers were teaching the students of grade 9, and five teachers were teaching the students of grade 10. Moreover, 72% of these teachers were found to have more than 50 students in their English classes. 24% of them had less than 50 but more than 35 students (35-49) in their English class, while only 4% of them had less than 35 students in their class. Teacher's qualification and practical experience of teaching had been considered an independent variable in the study while analyzing the collected data.

| Teacher | Gender (M/F) | Age | Experience (Years) | Qualification | Training | Area of School |
|---------|--------------|-----|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| T1 | Male | 35 | 7 | BSS, MSS, BEd | SBA, ELT | Urban |
| T2 | Female | 31 | 4 | BA, MA | ELT, EIA | Rural |
| T3 | Male | 41 | 13 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Urban |
| T4 | Female | 43 | 10 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Urban |
| T5 | Male | 37 | 8 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, CEC | Rural |
| T6 | Female | 47 | 19 | BSS, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Urban |
| T7 | Male | 52 | 26 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Rural |
| T8 | Male | 46 | 20 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Urban |
| T9 | Male | 50 | 25 | BSc, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Urban |
| T10 | Male | 27 | 3 | BA, MA | ELT, EIA | Urban |
| T11 | Male | 46 | 20 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Rural |
| T12 | Female | 38 | 14 | BSS, MSS | ELTIP, SBA | Rural |
| T13 | Male | 48 | 24 | BCom, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Rural |
| T14 | Male | 50 | 26 | BSc, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Rural |
| T15 | Male | 45 | 19 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Urban |
| T16 | Male | 37 | 12 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Rural |
| T17 | Female | 36 | 8 | BSS, BEd | SBA, ELT | Urban |
| T18 | Female | 34 | 7 | BBA, MBA | ELT, SBA, EIA | Urban |
| T19 | Male | 39 | 10 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Urban |
| T20 | Male | 45 | 13 | BCom, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Urban |
| T21 | Male | 36 | 8 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, EIA, CEC | Rural |
| T22 | Female | 44 | 16 | BCom, BEd | ELTIP, EIA, SBA | Urban |
| T23 | Male | 50 | 24 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Urban |
| T24 | Male | 46 | 19 | BCom, BEd | ELTIP, EIA, SBA | Urban |
| T25 | Female | 49 | 22 | BSc, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Rural |
| T26 | Male | 30 | 4 | BA, MA | ELT | Urban |
| T27 | Male | 45 | 18 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Rural |
| T28 | Female | 38 | 11 | BSS, MSS, BEd | ELTIP, EIA, SBA | Urban |
| T29 | Female | 48 | 22 | BSc, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Rural |
| T30 | Male | 50 | 25 | BA, MA | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Rural |
| T31 | Male | 45 | 18 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, CEC | Urban |
| T32 | Male | 38 | 13 | BSc, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Rural |

(BA: Bachelor of Arts, BSc: Bachelor of Science, BSS: Bachelor of Social Science, BEd: Bachelor of Education, MSS: Master of Social Science, ELTIP: English Language Teaching Improvement Project; CEC: Communicative English Course; SBA: School Based Assessment; EIA: English in Action)

Table 4.7: Demographics of the surveyed English teachers

As in-depth interviews and teachers' classroom observations are two of the major parts of the study, where researchers usually choose not only a small

sample, but also “the persons to be included within the group must be distinguished from those who are outside (Yin, 2003: p. 24)”, purposive sampling had been employed to choose sixteen English teachers from the questionnaire participants for interviews and teachers’ classroom observations (for the purpose of data triangulation). The justification behind adopting purposive sampling was that it facilitated the present researcher to choose “individuals who can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation so as to maximize what we can learn (Dörnyei, 2007: p. 126)”. The following table (4.8) reflects the interviewed teachers’ characteristics in terms of their gender, educational qualification, practical experience of teaching and classes they teach besides teaching class 8.

| Teacher | Gender (M/F) | Age | Experience (Years) | Qualification | Training | Area of School |
|---------|--------------|-----|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| T1 | Male | 35 | 7 | BSS, MSS, BEd | SBA, ELT | Urban |
| T2 | Female | 31 | 4 | BA, MA | ELT, EIA | Rural |
| T3 | Male | 41 | 13 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Urban |
| T4 | Female | 43 | 10 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Urban |
| T5 | Male | 37 | 8 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, CEC | Rural |
| T6 | Female | 47 | 19 | BSS, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Urban |
| T7 | Male | 52 | 26 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Rural |
| T8 | Male | 46 | 20 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Urban |
| T9 | Male | 50 | 25 | BSc, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Urban |
| T10 | Male | 27 | 3 | BA, MA | ELT, EIA | Urban |
| T11 | Male | 46 | 20 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Rural |
| T12 | Female | 38 | 14 | BSS, MSS | ELTIP, SBA | Rural |
| T13 | Male | 48 | 24 | BCom, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Rural |
| T14 | Male | 50 | 26 | BSc, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Rural |
| T15 | Male | 45 | 19 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA, CEC | Urban |
| T16 | Male | 37 | 12 | BA, BEd | ELTIP, SBA | Rural |

Table 4.8: Profile of the interviewed teachers

The discussion of this section of the current doctoral study now concentrates on the selection of research methods applied for collecting relevant data. To reiterate, the researcher has chosen mixed-method (both quantitative and qualitative) research strategy. Quantitative or survey strategy included teacher

and student questionnaires, while the qualitative strategy used teacher interviews, FGIs with students and document analysis.

| Data collection instruments | Mode of recording the data | Purpose | Sources for theme development for instruments of data collection |
|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Focused Group Interviews with student-participants | audio recorded | To explore what they learn and how they learn English in the classroom To explore how they are assessed in the classroom To explore their perceptions towards JSC English test | exploratory study group discussions review of literature research questions |
| semi structured interviews with teacher-participants | audio recorded | To explore what they teach and how they teach English in the classroom To explore how they assess students in the classroom To explore their perceptions towards JSC English test | |
| questionnaires to teachers | written response | To explore their perceptions towards JSC English Curriculum, textbook and test To explore their English teaching and assessment practice in the classroom | Tools trialing |
| questionnaires to students | written response | To explore their perceptions towards JSC English textbook To explore what they learn and how they learn English in the classroom To explore their perceptions towards JSC English test | |
| classroom observations | recorded on observation schedule | To explore their English teaching and assessment practice in the classroom | |

Table 4.9: Instruments of data collection

4.3.4.2.2 Survey Strategy

A questionnaire survey is a frequently used research instrument which is applied to collect numerical or quantitative data for a particular study. A survey research strategy is used for collecting data related to attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors of respondents in terms of issues which are under study (Creswell, 2009). Langdrige (2004, p. 67) comments that questionnaires are “useful if you want to know something about the opinions, beliefs or attitudes of large numbers or groups of people”. Use of questionnaires in washback research is a popular instrument of data collection (e.g. Pan, 2014; Akpinar & Cakildere, 2013; Xie & Andrews, 2012; Ren, 2011; Green, 2006, 2007). In this study too, a questionnaire survey design had been was applied as an instrument of data collection for the research, because such type of research design is considered practical for doctoral research studies (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Wiersma and Jurs, 2009; Nardi, 2006). This type of design is also suitable for “comparing the different values on key variables possessed by groups of cases; rather than possessed by any particular case” (Aldridge & Levine, 2001: p. 31).

4.3.4.2.2.1 Questionnaire

The use of questionnaires in washback study/research is very popular and prominent as one of the major instruments of data collection. For example, teacher questionnaires used by Xie and Andrews (2012) in their study while Cheng (1998) in her study used student questionnaire. On the other hand, Tsagari (2009) used questionnaire with other instruments (e.g. student diaries, interviews with teachers and document analysis). Questionnaires were used as one of the main instruments in the current doctoral study too.

Since scientific research in social sciences “is trying to find answers to questions in a systematic manner, it is no wonder that the questionnaire has become one of the most popular research instruments in the social sciences” (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010; p. 1). Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010; p.3) outline ‘questionnaire’ as “the self-completed, written questionnaire that respondents fill in by themselves” (p. 3). Questionnaires are used “as research instruments for measurement purposes to collect valid and reliable data” (p. 3).

Questionnaires are designed, developed and employed by researchers to explore and infer about human being’s perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors; and generalize from a sample to a population (Creswell, 2009; Bryman, 2008 and Punch, 2005). Standardized and objective comparisons can be systematically done with the data collected by questionnaires (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005).

Surveys is an efficient and economical means of collecting a large volume of data from numerous students (Creswell, 2008, p. 87). Besides being economical, it can collect data maintaining confidentiality and involve respondents "to reveal information about feelings, to express values, to weigh up alternatives etc., in a way that calls for a judgment about things rather than the mere reporting of facts" (Denscombe, 2010: p. 157). Questionnaire is best used in order to address the issues such as: “a) the prevalence of attitudes, beliefs, and behavior; b) changes in them over time; c) differences between groups of people in their attitudes, beliefs and behavior; d) causal propositions about these attitudes, beliefs, and behavior” (Weisberg, Krosnick & Bowen, 1996; p. 15).

Employing a questionnaire has another advantage and that it has high reliability than any other instruments of data collection. Researchers in washback studies applied questionnaire surveys for several purposes: to gather information about participants' characteristics; to uncover the opinions and attitudes of the participants about washback; and to explore their views and perspectives on language teaching and learning (Turner, 2009, 2008, 2005; Qi, 2005; Cheng, 2004; Watanabe, 1996b). Cheng (2004) opines that questionnaire surveys can capture a general image of how students and teachers react. The strength of surveys, Watanabe (1996a) believes, is that these can explore and explicate the reasons behind language teachers' behavioral attributes in their classrooms. Complementing with interview-instrument, questionnaire surveys can facilitate researchers to determine how far the results of interviews can be attributed to a wider group of people (Qi, 2005).

Questionnaire, however, has certain disadvantages if it is applied in isolation to collect data for a study, because "questionnaire surveys usually provide a rather "thin" description of the target phenomena" (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010; p. 115) and may fail to give deeper understandings into teachers' actual instructional practice (Borg, 2006; Dörnyei, 2003).

Another major disadvantage of applying questionnaires, particularly self-administered, is, they "offer little opportunity for the researcher to check the truthfulness of the answers" (Denscombe, 2003: p. 160). Yet, since questionnaire surveys can be used with a large sample and can elicit relevant data, two separate questionnaires one for teacher and the other for student were used in the current study. Both the constructs and items for these questionnaires, however, were adapted from relevant recognized

questionnaires which were developed and used by Hoque (2011) in his doctoral study on washback of HSC English (grade 11-12). Both of the original questionnaires (by Hoque, 2011) were designed and developed keeping the number of sections and items the same. Each of the two questionnaires had the same six sections with the same 45 items (one is meant for teachers and the other is for students).

The adaptation of these questionnaires was possible and justifiable, because there are similarities between the study by Hoque (2011) and the current study. Both of these studies are doctoral studies, conducted in the same country (Bangladesh), i.e., the contexts of both the studies are similar. The grades of the students in these two studies, however, differ. Hoque (2011) in studied HSC English teaching-learning and washback of HSC English test (grade 11-12), whereas the current study studied JSC English teaching-learning and washback of JSC English test (grade 8). The original questionnaires (by Hoque, 2011) and the questionnaires for the current study are available at appendix-3A and appendix-3B respectively for reference. The advantage of adapting the student questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire is that these ready-made instruments had already been tested for validity and reliability.

Therefore, these took less time for constructing suitable questionnaires. However, not all 45 items from the original questionnaires (by Hoque, 2011) were adopted for the current study. Considering the age and level of the student-respondents of the current doctoral study, the researcher found the original questionnaires too lengthy. Therefore, ten of the less important and not significantly relevant items included in the original questionnaires were left out. Thus, 35 items out of the original 45 items were adapted for the current

study. The reliability assessment was conducted by determining Cronbach alpha for questionnaires which show acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha=0.725$).

| SL | Sections | Items |
|----|---|----------|
| 1 | Curriculum and Syllabus (1-7) | 7 items |
| 2 | Textbook and other Aids and Materials (8-17) | 10 items |
| 3 | Teaching Approaches and Methods (18-26) | 9 items |
| 4 | Classroom Tasks and Activities (27-32) | 6 items |
| 5 | EFL Skills and elements (33-37) | 5 items |
| 6 | Attitudes and Perception towards the JSC English test (38-45) | 8 items |

Table 4.10: Section-wise Items in the original Questionnaires (Hoque, 2011)

| SL | Sections | Items |
|----|---|---------|
| 1 | Curriculum and Syllabus (1-4) | 4 items |
| 2 | Textbook and other Aids and Materials (5-13) | 9 items |
| 3 | Teaching Approaches and Methods (14-20) | 7 items |
| 4 | Classroom Tasks and Activities (21-28) | 8 items |
| 5 | Attitudes and Perception towards the JSC English test (29-35) | 7 items |

Table 4.11: Section-wise Items in the current Questionnaires

All the items/statements used in both the questionnaires seeking the probable response of the respondents employed a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932). The statements, on the scale, were labeled as Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, and Strongly Agree=5. Kent (2015) characterized neutral answers (mid-point) as a “valid indicator of the absence of attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or knowledge” or “inaccurate reflections of existing cognitive states” (p.57).

Likert-type scale is generally employed to measure attitudes, perceptions, agreement, or disagreement, preferences etc., by requesting respondents to reply by choosing a response option in a given range to a particular statement or question (Sullivan & Artino, 2013; Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The greater number of information can be elicited if more options to a particular statement or question are offered to the participants. Cummins and Gullone (2000) noted that “increasing the scale further increases its sensitivity” and hence, it is preferable that a researcher uses a 5-point Likert scale or more. Revilla, Saris, and Krosnick (2014) carried out a study to investigate if a 5-point Likert scale or more (7–11) would be better in terms of agree-disagree (AD) rating scales and claimed, “despite what information theory states, there is no gain in information when an AD scale with more than five categories is used. There is, instead, a loss of quality” (p. 90). Hence, the present researcher of this study considered a five-point Likert scale suitable for the questionnaires in this current study.

In the current study, the same areas of JSC English teaching-learning and JSC English testing were used in the construction of both the questionnaires. Moreover, an equal number of statements (35 each) were there in each of the domains in both the questionnaires. The questionnaires permitted anonymity, that is, the respondents were apprised that all the data and information would be kept strictly confidential, in order to inspire their forthrightness (Robson, 2002). Since a purposive sample of students and teachers, who were respondents in the questionnaires, were also recruited to respond to the questions poised in the interview schedules, the questionnaires were not completely anonymous. Rather these questionnaires had codes which were

linked to names and schools of teachers and students. This allowed the current researcher to contact the students and teachers afterward for interviews.

Validation Procedures: To confirm the validity of the student questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire, two things were done: a) careful qualitative input so that content validity could be ensured; and piloting so that construct validity could be ensured. The questionnaire items/statements were mainly focused on theoretical considerations derived from relevant reviewed literature.

The items/statements and themes of teacher and student questionnaires were grounded on the subjects and topics which were applied in several washback studies conducted in various contexts (e.g., Wang, 2010; Hsu, 2009; Tan, 2008; AlJamal. and Ghadi, 2008; Hayes, 2003; Saif, 1999; Alderson and Wall, 1993, 1996). Thus, the validity, reliability, practicality and authenticity of the current questionnaire were maintained sufficiently from the beginning. In addition, the current researcher carried out a pilot survey/study with the students and teachers. It was the method that was used to measure the validity, reliability, practicality and authenticity of the research instruments. The questionnaire was administrated on three English teachers and twelve JSC students (four front-benchers, four mediocre and four back-benchers). These fifteen respondents, however, were not included in the main study as samples. Both the student and teacher questionnaires were found valid in terms of the construct, content, and criterion. These questionnaires had the questions in the form of statements which straightway matched with the investigation done in the study. It is significantly vital that a questionnaire should be practical and easy to administer. Practicality encompasses the convenience and cost of the said test. The student and teacher questionnaire of the current study found to

be highly practical, since it was comparatively cheap to administer (economic). It consumed around 25 minutes to respond to all the statements. Moreover, the analysis of the findings and results could be statistically described.

4.3.4.2.2 Qualitative Strategy

The 2nd strategy that was adopted for the current study is a qualitative study. Yin (2009) suggests that when a researcher deals with ‘how and ‘why’ questions in his study, he should prefer such studies. He also says, “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (2009: p. 18). It “aims to understand the case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context” (Punch, 2005; p.144).

It offers flexibility in studying complex issues (Denscombe, 2003). It “benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (Yin, 2009; p. 18). Qualitative research such as “the case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (Creswell, 2009, p. 227).

Qualitative research can be of various types: explanatory, exploratory and descriptive. when a researcher deals with ‘how and ‘why’ questions in his study, the explanatory study works best, but when a researcher deals with ‘how’ questions in his study, the exploratory study works best. On the contrary, descriptive study is applied when a researcher deals with only ‘what’ question in

his study, and wants to “portray a detailed narrative description of the actions, however, “there are large areas of overlap” (Yin, 2009: p. 9), since the borders between these strategies are not impenetrable and fixed. Hence, in the current study, the researcher mingles exploratory type with descriptive one, since this study investigated the ‘what, how and why’ questions involved in JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice.

Besides questionnaires with students and teachers, the current study formed the case through sixteen interviews with English teachers, sixteen focused group interviews with students. This was complemented by sixteen classroom observations and documentary analysis.

4.3.4.2.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews with Teachers

An interview is a “conversation with a purpose” (Berg, 2009: p. 101). It is “a purposeful interaction between two or more people focused on one person trying to get information from the other person” (Gay & Airasian, 2003: p. 209). In this current study, interviews were conducted with students and teachers. As already mentioned above, sixteen English teachers were selected for interviews. The researcher conducted semi-structured and face to face interviews with sixteen English teachers, one teacher from each of the sixteen schools. Semi-structured interviews were used in the current study, because they are “exploratory” in nature (Magaldi & Berler, 2020; p. 161) and offer “flexibility for conducting an in-depth interview” (Creswell, 2008). DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019, p. 3) highlights the main characteristics of semi-structured interviews in the following way.

Key characteristics of semistructured interviews

- ✓ Loose, flexible structure
- ✓ Iterative
- ✓ Groups or individual participants
- ✓ Scheduled in advance
- ✓ Gathers information from key informants who can inform the topic
- ✓ Insight into participant perspectives
- ✓ Deep exploration of participant thoughts and experiences
- ✓ Often the sole data source for a qualitative study

Semi-structured interviews assist a researcher to understand his respondents' opinions or experiences (Seidman, 2013). "Interviewing (i.e., the careful asking of relevant questions) is an important way for" the current researcher "to check the accuracy of the impressions he has gained through observations" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p. 455). Moreover, they allow the current researcher to probe into the beliefs, behaviors and practices observed in the classroom during classroom observation and beyond during the current research.

Guiding questions for the interviews conducted in this current study were formed following the research questions. The steps to designing and constructing semi-structured interviews followed by the researcher matched with the following steps (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019, p. 3) given in the table (4.11) below.

| Step | Task |
|------|---|
| 1 | Determining the purpose and scope of the study |
| 2 | Identifying participants |
| 3 | Considering ethical issues |
| 4 | Planning logistical aspects |
| 5 | Developing the interview guide |
| 6 | Establishing trust and rapport |
| 7 | Conducting the interview |
| 8 | Memoing and reflection |
| 9 | Analysing the data |
| 10 | Demonstrating the trustworthiness of the research |
| 11 | Presenting findings in a paper or report |

Table 4.12: Steps to interview design and construction

During the interviews, the current researcher had interview questions related to JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice, yet to allow the respondents' freedom and ease of expression, as well as to avoid "leading" the respondents with focused and pre-prepared questions, the researcher involved the respondents in a cooperative dialogue, rather than taking the form of simply asking questions and answering accordingly.

This format of conducting interviews allows the current researcher "to explore new avenues of opinions in ways that a questionnaire does not"; to "probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions" (Berg, 2009: p. 107). It "encourage[s] interviewees to be more open to express tentative or exploratory opinions, ideas, and speculation that would not come out on a questionnaire" (Brown, 2001:78) and "leads to more possibilities in terms of exploring the issues involved" (Brown, 2001: p. 78). Methodologically, the semi-structured interviews employed in the current research study as suggested by Denscombe (2003: p. 166):

•1) “Follow-up a questionnaire. Where the questionnaire might have thrown up some interesting lines of enquiry, researchers can use interviews to pursue these in great detail and depth. The interview data complements the questionnaire data.”

•2) “Triangulation with other methods. Rather than interviews being regarded as competing with other methods, they can be combined in order to corroborate facts using a different approach.”

The 1st purpose is associated directly with the reasons for which the researcher interviewed English teachers. On the other hand, the second purpose is related to student interviews. However, both of these interviews facilitated to triangulation as supplementing data (Denscombe, 2003). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. After transcribing these interviews were translated in English.

4.3.4.2.2.2 Focused Group Interviews (FGI) with Students

A focus group is “a group comprised of individuals with certain characteristics who focus discussions on a given issue or topic” (Anderson, 1998, p. 241). A focus group, Denscombe (2007, p. 115) comments, “consists of a small group of people, usually between six and nine in number, who are brought together by a trained moderator (the researcher) to explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a topic”. The aim of conducting focused group interviews (FGIs) is to understand and probe into the respondents’ beliefs, ideas, opinions, behaviors or practices and experiences by running multiple focused groups having a similar kind of respondents (Krueger & Casey, 2020).

The researcher can detect and categorize patterns and trends in respondents' perceptions and opinions from the data elicited from multiple focus groups. FGIs can provide an in-depth and comprehensive exploration of topics and issues by unfurling a deeper stage of discourse (Kitzinger & Farquhar, 1999). As a powerful instrument, FGIs can expose the voices of those who are ignored often in decisions making process (Wilkinson 1998, Smithson, 2000), for example, students.

With reference to the research questions of the current study, both teacher interviews and questionnaires, and the review of the washback literature (e.g. Wall and Alderson, 1993; Qi, 2004; Burrows, 2004) principally and methodologically form the basis for the questions designed and developed for focused group interviews with students. These FGIs assisted the researcher to validate and support findings and results elicited from teacher interviews and questionnaires. They primarily helped in answering the second and third research questions where students talked about their teachers' classroom behaviors, and their instructional and assessment practices. "The interview questions were open-ended aiming to probe deeply into participants' ideas and perceptions (Cohen *et al*, 2000: p. 275)".

As an instrument, focus groups were selected by the researcher mainly for two reasons. Firstly, they are less threatening. Hence, respondents feel motivated to be more free, open and comfortable while expressing their views and opinions (Krueger & Casey, 2020). As the student-participants of the current study were under the age of fifteen, they might feel afraid to express themselves if they were invited in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. On the contrary, in FGI they would feel at home with their friends. Through this instrument, I

wanted to get a holistic representation of students' opinions and views on their and their teachers' classroom behaviors, and teachers' instructional and assessment practices and most importantly the washback of the JSC English examination.

I conducted 16 FGIs (five FGIs from each of the schools) with a total of 144 students. The size of focus groups should range from 4 to 12 participants (Krueger & Casey, 2020). Krueger and Casey (2020) suggested conducting at least three focus groups to gather sufficient data on the issue under scrutiny. Conducting sixteen FGIs offered me a richer set of data.

Thus, the researcher could identify key perceptions of the participants after comparing data across groups (Krueger & Casey, 2020; Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). I recruited students from the 16 teachers' classrooms I interviewed. The FGI guided questions focused on understanding how students realized the washback effect on their learning, test preparation, and English language proficiency and their teachers' instructional and assessment practices. The questions were designed based on the research focus of the study, elements of the adapted framework, and Krueger and Casey's (2020) guidelines for designing focus group questions.

Both teacher interviews and student FGIs were validated using different options: two doctoral candidates were requested to give opinions about the structure and strategy of the interview. Besides, both teacher interviews and student FGIs were piloted.

4.3.4.2.2.3 Classroom observation

Most of the major studies on washback conducted over the last 20 years used classroom observation as one of the crucial instruments in their studies (Cheng, 1997; Pan, 2009; Sun, 2016; Tsagari, 2007; Wall, 1999). The researchers, who worked on washback, emphasized the necessity of triangulation of data, collected through qualitative and quantitative methods from different sources of data (Watanabe, 2004b; Wall & Alderson, 1993). It was recommended specifically that data on respondents' perceptions and beliefs should be buttressed by observation of their behaviors and practice in the classroom. Because observation "offers an investigator the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 456).

Patton (1990: p 25) advises, "to understand fully the complexities of many situations ... observation of the phenomenon of interest may be the best research method". Classroom observation is essential "to see whether what teachers [...] say they do is reflected in their behavior" (Alderson and Wall, 1993; p. 127). Classroom observation is a dependable data source because it allows the researcher to experience how washback takes place in classroom instruction because a classroom is a place "where the real activity of education occurs" (Chapman & Snyder, 2000, p. 458).

Ren (2011) commented that the direct observation of the classroom permits the researcher to experience the ways in which washback functions more correctly than depending on the information shared by the participants. Thus, observation is considered one of the key data collection tools in qualitative research, where the researcher inspects the subject in the field setting (Creswell

& Poth, 2018). The main goal of observation is to report the in-depth details of what is happening by going into the setting, observing, and describing what one notices (Patton, 2015).

This doctoral study employed an adaptation of the well-established Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) scheme (Green 2007; Spada & Fröhlich, 1995) as a classroom observation instrument along with field notes made by the observer.

I conducted classroom observations for two reasons. First, since my research was centered on how alignment relationships created washback on classroom instruction and the nature of the washback, I needed to observe real classroom situations. Second, data collected from classroom observation validated the teachers' claims in interviews as what teachers said might vary what happened in the classroom (Wall & Alderson, 1993; Watanabe, 2004b).

Moreover, classroom observation allowed me to see how the alignment expectations at the policy level were achieved at the classroom level. In this study, class observations were used to collect the empirical evidence of how the relationships between curriculum, textbook, testing, and teaching were reflected in actual classroom instruction.

I also used a field note "to facilitate critical reflection" Maharaj (2016). Field notes are defined by Bogdan and Biklen (1982) as "the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data" (p. 107). So, my field note approach was based on Bogdan and Biklen (2015)'s ideas, with the guiding principles based on the need of the study. The guiding principles were: a) how curriculum objectives are

aligned with 1) the textbook objectives and 2) classroom instructional objectives; b) how the examination tasks are aligned with 1) the textbook activities and 2) classroom activities; c) how classroom activities are supporting students' 1) English language learning and 2) test preparation for the examination; d) what influences the examination has on classroom teaching and learning.

Procedure: For the current doctoral study, non-participant observation was opted, where the researcher was a “complete observer, one who merely stands back and 'eavesdrops' on the classroom proceedings” (Taylor and Bogdan 1984; p. 15). It was done so by considering the researcher's part in the classroom observation as an outsider, so that he could not disturb the respondents during the classroom observation time, and as indicated in the pilot study. The classroom observation instrument (COLT) was a structured scheme. Structured observation was conducted because through this means data could be recorded quickly, easily and more systematically than with unstructured or no scheme. The researcher sought prior permission from English teachers to observe their lessons. He also made follow-up contact with the observed teachers during or after the collection of data. The purpose of follow-up contact was to get them to explain and clarify unclear points. English lessons/classes of sixteen English teachers of grade 8 from sixteen different secondary schools were observed.

Instrument/Scheme Used: Rossman and Rallis (1998: p. 117 cited in Angrosino, 2008: p. 162) advising to use already published or well-established scheme for classroom observation, says “Observations in natural settings can be rendered as descriptions either through open ended narrative or through the use of published checklists or field guides”. Thus, with a view to making participants' classroom behaviour and practice more measurable, this research

study adopted and employed a published or well-established scheme namely the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Scheme (COLT) (Spada and Frohlich, 1995) for classroom observation (see Appendix-2), because this scheme “describes classroom instruction in terms of the types of activities that take place” (Froehlich *et al.*, 1985: p. 29). Moreover, it was widely employed in several previous washback studies (e.g. Hoque, 2011; Barnes, 2010; Hsu, 2009; Green, 2007a; Wall & Horak, 2006; Cheng, 2005, 1997; Burrows, 2004; Hayes & Read, 2004; Read & Hayes, 2003).

The COLT was preferred for this current study since the COLT focuses on students’ and teachers’ behavior, interaction and practice in the classroom (Allen, Frohlich, & Spada, 1984). It has two parts. Part-A describes classroom events at the level of activity and Part-B captures verbal exchanges/interaction between teachers and learners or among learners themselves as per their happening within each activity (Spada & Frohlich, 1995). For this current study, Part A of the COLT was deemed specifically appropriate since it contains a suitable framework where observed teachers’ classroom and instructional practices with regard to the JSC English test could be noted. Therefore, only slightly modified Part-A (see Appendix-1E) was employed. Since the language used in the classroom was not within the scope of this current study, Part-B was not used. The observation scheme covers some categories: participant organization, time, activity type, material used and content etc.

Moreover, during the lessons, other significant activities (e.g., giving students information about the JSC exam, discussing JSC test-taking strategies or JSC test-related activities) were observed which was not particularly covered by this

scheme and noted and recorded through a self-made checklist by the researcher.

Since the participants of the observation showed an air of disagreement to be video or even audio recorded, all the lessons observed were noted in writing. In all the observed lessons, the observation instrument encompassed the observation scheme (COLT) with note-taking sheets, pencils and a smart-phone which worked as a watch. The observation scheme was duly filled in during each observation. The other narrative or raw data were also noted in writing.

4.3.5 Pilot Study and Implications for the Main Study

“You never test the depth of a river with both feet” – African proverb

Although a fruitful pilot study may not guarantee the accomplishment of a study or a research project, it assists the researcher to assess his approach and adopt the required techniques for the study. It gives him a signal of whether his project/study will function appropriately. A researcher can ascertain the likelihood of his research design if he runs a pilot study before he starts his main study. A pilot study is a small-scale preliminary “rehearsal” through which the researcher can trial the methods and techniques he devises to apply for his research project/study. He can use the findings to guide and direct the methodology of his large-scale study. Pilot studies need to be run for both quantitative and qualitative studies.

Since “all research designs need to be piloted or pre-tested” Gorard (2001: p. 102), the research methods that had been employed in this current study and discussed above underwent tests and trials. This part of the doctoral dissertation discusses the piloting process, evaluating the feasibility of these

used methods for the study, as well as the implications of the pilot study. The piloting was carried out in March, 2018. The methods of data collection employed in the pilot study were the same as those employed in the main study.

4.3.5.1 Piloting Student and Teacher Questionnaires

Piloting research instruments is crucial for the reliability and success of the main study (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, before moving into the main doctoral research study, ‘trialing’ was carried out by the current researcher to validate both student and teacher questionnaires, besides the qualitative input.

The pilot study started with the original version of Hoque’s (2011) student and teacher questionnaires. The piloting of both the student questionnaire (SQ) and teacher and questionnaire (TQ) aimed at checking the construct validity of these questionnaires and removing challenges in administering these. The objective was cross-checking with a view to seeing whether respondents understood each statement in the questionnaires as I intended, and whether the statement was understood in the same way by each student and teacher (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2010).

This allowed me to revise, refine or eliminate some of the statements/questions from the original questionnaires (teacher questionnaire and student questionnaire) due to various factors e.g. the nature of the research questions, need, relevance, expense, time and accessibility (Cohen *et al.* 2011; Cohen and Manion, 1994), in addition to gaining useful feedback on the readability of the questionnaires. Moreover, gaining information in terms of the time required to respond to the questions/statements was of specific interest. It was the method that was used to measure the validity, reliability, practicality and authenticity of

the research instruments. Thus, besides finishing the questionnaire, respondents were requested to provide feedback on coherence, clarity, and readability, and the time required to complete.

Teacher questionnaires were given to three teachers, and student questionnaires to twelve students (four front-benchers, four mediocre and four back-benchers). These fifteen respondents, however, were not included in the main study as samples. All of the respondents answered these questionnaires in full. Both the student and teacher questionnaires were found valid in terms of the construct, content, and criterion. These questionnaires had the questions in the form of statements which straightway matched with the investigation done in the study. It is significantly vital that a questionnaire should be practical and easy to administer. Practicality encompasses the convenience and cost of the said test. The student and teacher questionnaire of the current study found to be highly practical, since it was comparatively cheap to administer (economic). It consumed around 30 minutes to respond to all the statements/questions. Moreover, the analysis of the findings and results could be statistically described. Some of the respondents (some teachers and students), however, uttered ambiguity and doubts about some statements and terms. Accordingly, these unclear items, statements and terms were reviewed to avoid any misinterpretations by the respondents (targeted students and teachers in the main doctoral study). Some clarifying changes were brought to the wording of a few of the statements/questions.

Besides, though I intended that to complete the questionnaires, the respondents would not take more than twenty-five minutes; most respondents took a bit longer: thirty minutes or more. Consequently, the most important

modification that was made in both the questionnaires was reducing the number of questions/statements. Both of the original questionnaires had 45 questions and these original versions of both the questionnaires were for the pilot study keeping these questionnaires unabridged. Considering the age of the student-respondents, time required for completing the questionnaire, the subsidiary questions, not explicitly related to the research questions or purpose of the study, were removed. The main purpose was to increase the response rate, as well as to minimize the risk of receiving incomplete questionnaires in the main study. 45 questions were reduced to 35 questions in both the student questionnaire and teacher questionnaire for the main study. Thus, a revised version of the teacher questionnaire and student questionnaire were prepared for use in the main study (see Appendix:-1-C and 1-D).

4.3.5.2 Interviews with teachers and Students

Of the three English teachers who were respondents in the teacher questionnaire, one willingly participated in the pilot interview. On the other hand, of the twelve students who were respondents in the student questionnaire, six willingly participated in the pilot FGI. Bangla was chosen as a medium of conversation in both the interviews following the preference of the interviewees. Both of these interviews were semi-structured and face-to-face. Each of these interviews took around 20 minutes. These were audio recorded. Prior permission from teachers and students was sought to record the interviews. Written field notes were also taken.

Each of the interviewees was requested to provide the researcher with feedback on any confusion or problems he/she faced when responding to the interview questions, in order to assess whether all the questions were understood properly as intended, or not. It helped the researcher understand whether the wordings of the questions were appropriate as well as gaining information for removing a few of the questions or adding further questions that did not pop up in the researcher's mind when he was formulating the interview schedule. The interviewees did not mention any problems in responding to any of the interview questions. However, one question from teacher interviews and two from student FGIs were appeared to be ancillary and not relevant. So, in order to keep the respondents engaged for the least possible time in the main study, these questions were removed. Additionally, minor revisions were made in the wordings of the interview questions. Thus, one of the significant implications of these pilot interviews was that data to be derived from interviews with students and teachers in the main study would be rich and relevant enough to answer the research questions of the current doctoral study. Furthermore, the piloting facilitated the researcher to ascertain variables, categories and their inter-relations (Gray, 2004). Additionally, it helped the researcher to logically reordering questions that would assist and ease the data transcription process in the data analysis stage.

4.3.5.3 Piloting Classroom Observation

Similar to the interviews and questionnaires, the classroom observation scheme/ instrument also underwent validation procedures through piloting. The key aim of piloting this research instrument applied for classroom

observation was to assist the researcher to trail the instrument to visualize the type of data to be collected with this instrument, to assess its effectiveness for collecting relevant and required data for the main doctoral study. Firstly, an initial investigation was made to understand current JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice, as well as the effect of the JSC English test on this practice. Relevant document studies, review of literature on washback models and the findings derived from the piloting of questionnaires and interviews helped the researcher understand the checklist required to be included while he would be designing and developing the instruments for the classroom observation. Based on these findings, the researcher opted to adapt Part A of the COLT observation scheme for this current study. The adapted scheme/instrument for classroom observation was trialed with a teacher in his real classroom lesson. Required modification brought out in layout and content before the instrument was applied for observation in the main doctoral study (see appendix: 1-E). Observation during this pilot phase was done by two observers. Sitting at the very back of the observed teacher's classroom, I along with one of my colleagues employed the classroom observation scheme/instrument to capture each event separately as the teaching-learning in the classroom progressed.

The trialing of observation scheme was made “with the objective of finding out the need for any required changes (e.g. addition or deletion of categories which might not be relevant to the purpose of the study) and also exploring any potential difficulties in administering the instrument in the main study. The piloting assisted the researcher to tune the observation instrument appropriately for the main doctoral study.

4.3.5.4 Changes made to classroom observation scheme after piloting

In order to cater to the demand of the research questions and purpose, the requisite for adapting and modifying the classroom observation scheme/instrument became visible while the piloting was done. Required modifications were done in the observation scheme, since some of the categories were found not relevant in the context of the current study.

The Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) scheme had no columns to record the language used by the participants (neither students nor teachers). Throughout the lesson in the pilot classroom observation, the participants were often found to switch between Bangla and English (although Bangla was the dominant language of conversation), the researcher added a new column to note this switch of languages in the edited version of the COLT scheme which was used for the main study.

Besides, in the COLT scheme 'Group' under participant organization refers to "Groups/ pairs of students all work on the same task", which indicates that there is no provision of recording Pair and Group works individually. To avoid this shortcoming, the edited version of the COLT scheme replaced 'Group' with 'Pair/Group'. Furthermore, in the content category, the term 'language' was replaced with 'focus of instruction' so that confusion with the term 'language' written in the 2nd column could be avoided.

4.3.5.5 Document Study

Documents are studied for collecting data in a mixed-methods study (Creswell, 2005). Though “documents can be treated as a source of data in their own right” (Denscombe, 2003: p. 212), these were studied and used in this current study as an additional instrument so that these could facilitate in producing answers to the research questions. Since they “do not speak for themselves but require careful analysis and interpretation” (Cohen *et al.*, 2011: p. 253), two samples of the JSC English test provided by the NCTB were critically analyzed item by item. More specifically, the samples of the JSC English test were studied in relation to their contents to explore to what extent its objectives correlate with the test content of and textbook content for the students of grade 8 (JSC students). Therefore, it was important to analyze *English for Today*, the textbook with regard to its objectives and content, since *English for Today* produced by NCTB for teaching the students of grade 8 (JSC students) in the classrooms are considered an important source of evidence in research study in the field of education (Cohen *et al.* 2011).

Content analysis was preferred in this case for investigating *English for Today*, the textbooks since this tool is used for collecting and analyzing required data from written documents. Besides, it was hardly possible to meet the authors of the textbook because of lack of contact address, contact information as well as time limitations.

It was emphasized that content analysis of other relevant materials used besides the textbook could be an important source of written and documentary data (Hoque, 2011). The researcher of the current study applied content

analysis to retrieve data from a number of documents: two samples of the JSC English test provided by the NCTB, question-papers of the previous years' JSC English test, the JSC English Curriculum (2012), *English for Today* (the textbook), commercially produced test-oriented 'Test-papers', Model Question Book, guide or note-books or any other teaching-learning materials English teachers use in their instructional practice to derive information and data relevant to the research questions of the current study.

The researcher conducted document analysis (Bowen, 2009) of the English *National Curriculum* (2012), the textbook *English for Today*, and a set of question papers from the 2018 English JSC Examination. It was hoped to understand the extent of alignment among these chosen policy documents. One of the most cited scholars in alignment studies, Webb (1997a) identified document analysis as one of the major approaches for determining the range of agreement among documents at the policy level. According to Bowen (2009), "the rationale for document analysis lies in its role in methodological and data triangulation...and its usefulness as a standalone method for specialised forms of qualitative research" (p. 29).

In this study, there were two specific purposes for document analysis. One was to find out the extent to which the objectives of the national English curriculum were aligned with the objectives of the associated textbook. The second objective was to explore the extent to which the textbook activities were aligned with the examination tasks of the JSC English examination. Investigating these two objectives helped me explore the answers to the research questions of the current study.

4.3.5.6 Research Diary

Krishnan and Lee (2002, cited in Yi, 2008) define research diaries “as first-person observations of experiences that are recorded over a period of time” (p. 1). Research journals or diaries are maintained by researchers “to record and reflect their own behaviors, attitudes, feelings, and thought processes to provide a multilayered facet to their academic studies. Diary or journal writing often evokes introspection, and precautionary measures should be considered” (Given, 2008). The current researcher maintained a regular research diary where he recorded the facts and incidents which appeared to him to be valuable for his doctoral research. To cite an example, during informal chats with the research participants, sometimes the researcher found some valuable relevant information. At times, it helped him to record his personal reflections, comments, and interpretations on different phenomena. During interviews with teachers and students, the diary helped to record participants’ feelings as additional information. These personal reflections, comments, and interpretations on different phenomena were found beneficial which doing the analysis of data.

4.3.5.7 Artifacts

Documents (artifacts) prepared by the teachers, for example, lesson plans and actual question papers, tests, were collected and analyzed in the research studies of Moallem (1993), Reiser and Mory (1991) and Higgins, and Rice (1991) on teachers’ perceptions, behaviors, instructional planning, thinking, and concepts of testing. Glesne (2016) specified that artifacts are useful supplementary data source which can assist researchers to reflect on further aspects in interviews conducted and observations done, and that can enhance precision to the analysis of data which eventually contribute to the

trustworthiness of the results and findings. Keeping these advantages in mind, during data collection the researcher collected and studied different artifacts, which includes teachers' instructional plans, teaching aids and materials, different notebooks and guidebooks, model question books, writing samples of learners, examination scripts, several handouts and sheets given by the teachers to the students attending the coaching centres, digital teaching aids such as power-point slides etc.

4.3.5.8 Photographs

Visual methodologies (such as photographs, images, and videos) are considered a noble and innovative approach to qualitative research, which has its root in the ethnographic methods utilized in sociology and anthropology. In qualitative research, there is growing recent interest in the utilization of this method (Barbour, 2014). By conveying additional dimension, visual methods like photographs can help increasing value to the prevailing approaches (Balmer, Griffiths, & Dunn, 2015), by seizing rich multivariate data (Mah, 2015), and by arousing helpful understandings into the day-to-day worlds of research participants (Barbour, 2014). Researchers applying qualitative dimension in their research utilize these images to generate knowledge (Thomas, 2009), that is getting recognition as valuable in qualitative research (Balmer et al., 2015).

Besides collecting artifacts, the researcher captured a large number of photographs so that he can record flashes of conversation, facial expressions of the research participants classroom settings, physical facilities and surroundings of the school. The researcher also took snaps of different charts

and wallpapers hanged up on the wall of the classrooms and teacher's rooms. Moreover, the researcher has collected various photos from his research participants. For example, two of them shared their photos of attending training sessions delivered by *English in Action* (a mega project to enhance the quality of English teaching and learning at primary and secondary schools).

4.4 Research Stages and Timeline

The relevant data required for the current study was collected following a well-planned schedule and procedure. The data was collected between July 2017 and October 2018. As mentioned earlier, multiple researcher instruments and tools (e.g. teacher questionnaire, student questionnaire, classroom observation scheme, in-depth interviews, and analysis of relevant authentic documents) and multiple number of sources (e.g. English teachers, students, JSC English curriculum and syllabus, JSC English textbook, *English for Today*, past years question papers, commercially produced test-oriented guide and notebooks, Test-papers, Model question books) were used to elicit required data for the study.

In the current study, the analysis of relevant documents, the pilot study, the interviews, the classroom observation, and questionnaire survey were interrelated and interdependent. The sites where the research was conducted included both rural and urban areas. Table 4.13 below demonstrates a specific timeline of when each data collection period occurred. This table also lists the different data sources (both qualitative and quantitative), which were attained throughout the process of data collection.

| Phases of Data Collection | Activities/Procedures | Timetable |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Phase-1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site mapping and selection of sample • Baseline data • Review of relevant authentic documents (JSC English curriculum and syllabus, JSC English textbook, <i>English for Today</i>, past years question papers, commercially produced test-oriented guide and notebooks, Test-papers, Model question books) • Literature review • Pilot study • Planning for administering questionnaire survey | July 2017- March 2018 |
| Phase -2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting sites of survey • Asking permission from authority • Administering questionnaire survey • Planning classroom observation • Adopting, modifying and finalizing classroom observation scheme (COLT, Part- A and Self-prepared checklist) | April 2018– June 2018 |
| Phase- 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting classroom observations • Planning for teacher interviews and focused group interviews (FGIs) with students • Drafting interview questions | July 2018- August 2018 |
| Phase -4 | <p>In-depth interviews and FGIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGIs with students • Interviews with English teachers | September 2018- October 2018 |

Table 4.13: Procedures of data collection

The current research study adopted one of the most commonly used mixed methods designs, which Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) termed “the

exploratory sequential design” where “data collection from a prior phase informs a subsequent phase of a research study” (Guest & Fleming, 2015; p. 589). In this type of sequential design quantitative data is used to select respondents for follow-up qualitative investigation (Guest & Fleming, 2015).

Phase -1 was the preliminary stage of collecting data for the current study which encompassed the critical review and detailed analysis of relevant documents on JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice. The washback of the JSC English test at the macro level (e.g., current educational and social context) was studied. The objective of this data collection stage was to gain a holistic and understanding of washback on English teaching-learning and assessment practice at schools, and objectives of JSC English curriculum and syllabus, JSC English textbooks, contents of lessons, features of the JSC English question paper etc.

The researcher during this stage also collected baseline data from various sources to compare with the data to be collected later. At this stage, the researcher conducted a pilot study, and it was in March 2018. The objective of the pilot study was testing and refining the proposed research instruments (Marshall and Rossman, 2010). The main research instruments were trialed in this stage: student and teacher questionnaires, classroom observations, teacher and student interviews. Thus, this stage dealt with all the research questions of this current study.

Phase- II: The second phase administered the questionnaire survey. The survey was conducted in different secondary schools through student and teacher questionnaires. Sixteen schools in rural and urban areas were visited,

and data was collected from the teachers and students of these schools. The collection of survey data went on between April 2018 and June 2018. Typed questionnaires were distributed to the participants, and they were requested to respond spontaneously. All the students were supplied with questionnaires and they had to complete these in the classrooms. They were not given time a limit to complete these, so that they could do their job comfortably without haste. No interference from teachers or the researcher was made during this survey data collection. These completed questionnaires were then immediately collected. Hence, the reliability of the findings and results was guaranteed.

Of the 878 student questionnaires distributed, 836 were returned. Hence, the return rate was 95.2% which is considered a “high response rate in educational research” studies (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). After data cleaning, the student questionnaires having 10% or more absent responses as well as those having “irregular or the same responses throughout” were eliminated. Eventually, 500 valid student questionnaires could be received for the current study. On the other hand, 32 questionnaires were handed to 32 English teachers in 16 sampled schools. All of them completed the questionnaires in the school premises while I was in the school also and requested all of them to complete these in full. Hence, if there was any confusion or difficulty arisen, they contacted me on the spot and I clarified these. I found this very advantageous for my study, because as a result of this, I received all 32 questionnaires fully completed, with a 100% return rate. During this phase, the researcher planned the classroom observation too. He also finalized the classroom observation scheme and checklists. Once the data collection was over, the researcher processed the scripts for analysis.

Phase- III: During this third phase, the researcher conducted classroom observations in the sixteen selected schools. These classroom observations were conducted to disclose what occurred inside the ‘blackbox’ (Long, 1980). These observations went on between July 2018 and August 2018. These months were chosen in order to observe the ‘washback intensity’ (Cheng, 1997, 2005). On the cumulative intensity of preparation for test, Tsagari (2011) advocated that intensive test preparation generally occurs as the examination gets closer. However, during this stage, administering of in-depth interviews with students and teachers was also planned by the researcher and he framed the most relevant questions for the interview schedules.

Phase-IV: The final stage of collecting data for this study contained in-depth interviews with English teachers and focused group interviews with their students. This phase of collecting data opted to check the striking and recurrent patterns and themes that derived from the data collected in the previous phases and to notice whether ‘teaching to the targeted test’ expediated right before the JSC test. All sources of data during this phase were cross-checked to eventually develop a theory which can explain the results. These teacher interviews and FGIs with students went on between September 2018 and October 2018.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

As researches in education generally include people as subjects and educational institutions as sites or places to carry out research, it is always mandatory for a researcher to consider ethical issues carefully and to respect and protect participants involved (Cohen *et al*, 2011) and sites or places. Research ethics

strongly recommend defending research participants from physical, psychological, and emotional harm (Silverman, 2010; Cohen *et al.*, 2011).

Ethical issues related to conducting research, collecting data, and reporting the findings and results had been taken into utmost and careful consideration by the current researcher. Before starting the research on-site, informed consent must be gained from concerned individuals or authorities (Cohen, *et al.*, 2011). Hence, prior permission was taken from the headmasters of the sampled schools to access the English teachers and their students in their schools.

Respondents' interest and their willingness to share their professional beliefs, perceptions (related to English teaching-learning and assessment at school level) and their instructional practice with the current researcher form the basis of selecting respondents for the current study. All the respondents were duly informed about the purpose of the current study, their right to decline to provide information at any time, as emphasized by De Vaus (2001). They were also given assurance that their identity and their respective schools' identity would be kept hidden by using pseudonyms.

Since the researcher was studying the respondents' beliefs, perceptions, behavior and professional practice, confidentiality was considered supreme (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). In order to encourage frankness, they were also assured of anonymity and confidentiality of data (Robson, 2002). They were informed that their identity would neither be disclosed to anyone, nor be shared even with their colleagues and other participants.

The respondents' 'anonymity' was maintained by hiding their identities in the questionnaires and in written reports Coffelt, (2017). Furthermore, all

questionnaires (students' and teachers') were given codes linking teachers' and students' names to allow the present researcher to carry out interviews with them later at their institutions (Brannen, 2005). Thus, the respondents' names, identities, opinions and comments were maneuvered with utmost care and importance throughout the study.

Care was also given not to hamper their professional and personal life. As the respondents were all professionals with their busy lives, and their involvement as participants in the research study demands thorough engagement, caution was taken not to create or impose any unnecessary stress on their lives. Hence, all interaction sessions with them were scheduled in advance and arranged at their convenient times. Moreover, prior permission was sought to record the interviews.

4.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis includes several “closely related operations that are performed with the purpose of summarizing the collected data and organizing these in such a manner that they will yield an answer to the research questions or suggest hypothesis or questions if no such questions or hypothesis had initiated the study” (Mohan & Elangovan, 2011). This process involves revealing themes, patterns, and categories.

For the current study, data elicited from multiple researcher instruments and tools (e.g. teacher questionnaire, student questionnaire, classroom observation scheme, in-depth interviews, and analysis of relevant authentic documents) and multiple number of sources (e.g. English teachers, students, JSC English

curriculum and syllabus, JSC English textbook, *English for Today*, past years question papers, commercially produced test-oriented books such as guide and notebooks, Test-papers, Model question books) were analyzed for the study. This analysis of relevant documents, the pilot study, the interviews, the classroom observation, and questionnaire survey were interrelated and interdependent.

This analysis of pertinent data started with extensive and meticulous examination and investigation of relevant documents such as JSC English curriculum and syllabus, JSC English textbook, *English for Today*, past years question papers, commercially produced test-oriented books (guide and notebooks, Test-papers, Model question books), which has been reported in the latter part of this doctoral dissertation.

Secondly, alongside the analysis of relevant documents, qualitative analyses of the data elicited from in-depth interviews with English teachers, focused group interviews with students, and the classroom observations were conducted following a 'content analysis method' which is the most effective and most commonly applied methods for analyzing qualitative data (Marying, 2014, 2015; Kuckartz, 2014; Guest et al., 2012; Schreier, 2012), because this was suggested as the best method for minimizing qualitative data, as well as for coding and for analyzing the open-ended questions (Cohen et al., 2011).

Following Miles and Huberman (1994), three tasks were conducted simultaneously to the data derived from in-depth interviews. These were (a) data reduction, (b) data display and (c) drawing conclusion and verification. Moreover, the application of the constant comparative method (Bogdan &

Biklen, 1998; Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Strauss, 1987; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) by the researcher allowed the data to be classified into categories. More specifically, inductive logic was used by the researcher to find and categorize emergent patterns, perspectives, and themes derived from the abundance of narrative data.

On the other hand, the quantitative analysis of the data elicited from student and teacher questionnaires was conducted following an appropriate statistical process. Statistics facilitated the current researcher in preparing, analyzing, as well as interpreting the findings of the data derived from the two questionnaires. To analyze the responses of the respondents, the statistical procedures that were used in this study included percentages and/or frequency counts by category as well as the descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation, variance). The researcher had tabulated and converted the responses of the respondents for every statement into percentages. Then the percentages had been tabulated to permit a clear understanding and interpretation of the data so that readers can have a glance at the responses distributed across both groups of respondents. As the responses in the study were essentially binary, the two types of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' were merged into one type of *agreement*. On the other hand, 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' were merged into one type of *disagreement* so that the results and its associated discussion could be conveniently done.

| Document Analysis | Lesson Observation | Questionnaires | Data Integration |
|---|---|--|--|
| JSC Syllabus and Curriculum, textbook, JSC English exam papers, commercially produced books • Goals • Contents • Skills • Methodology | Classroom Observation • Coding • Frequency counts • Percentages | Closed items (Likert Scale) • Percentages • Frequency counts • Descriptive Stats (M,SD) | Quantitative and Qualitative data: • Questionnaire, • Interviews, • FGIs and • Observation |
| Interviews & FGIs • Organizing data • Categorization • Developing theory | Interview-Questions (Open-ended ques) for Teachers and Students • Transcript-based analysis approach • Tape-based analysis approach • Constant comparative analysis • Content and Thematic analysis | | • Data (persons) Triangulation • Methodological Triangulation |

Table 4.14: Procedure of data analysis for the current study

At the final stage of analysis, the qualitative data (elicited from observations, interviews and FGIs) were compared with the quantitative data (through the questionnaires) were synthesized, triangulated and integrated. The triangulated and compared results have been presented both in writing and visually (tables, charts, graphs, figures etc.) in the next chapter of this dissertation. The following table (4.14) captures the procedure of data analysis done in this current study.

4.6.1 Analysis of Quantitative (Survey) Data

As opposed to the four research instruments (relevant documents, in-depth interviews with English teachers, focused group interviews with students, and the classroom observations) used in this study for collecting qualitative data, two questionnaires (one for teachers and other for the students) were used for collecting quantitative data. Questionnaire surveys were administered to the responding students and teachers in this doctoral study to survey their beliefs in the JSC examination in English, and their views of its impact on English education, their understandings of language teaching and learning, and about what these respondents considered fruitful means of English teaching.

Thirty-two (32) teachers and five hundred (500) students participated in the survey questionnaire. Both of these respondents answered the questions on the JSC English syllabus and curriculum, teaching materials and aids, teaching-learning methods, activities and tasks done in the classrooms and, language skills practiced, and respondents' attitudes, perception and beliefs towards the JSC English test.

The researcher applied descriptive statistical procedures to analyze teachers' and students' responses, since the research questions of this study did not demand factor analysis or correlations. The researcher calculated the mean of teachers' and students' responses and the standard deviations to demonstrate the trends of the perceptions of teachers' and students' and the extent of variation from the trends. The results are tabulated in tables, with the number of student and teacher responses for each measure on the Likert scale

expressed as a percentage of the total number of respondents for the particular item.

The statements seeking the probable response of the respondents employed a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932). The statements, on the scale, were labeled as Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, and Strongly Agree=5. An expert statistician had been consulted in categorizing the analytical levels of approximating values of mean scores and standard deviation (SD) of every statement of the questionnaire.

The current researcher applied multiple ways to analyze the survey data. The researcher used percentages, frequency counts, descriptive statistics, tables, graphs, charts, and figures to clarify and describe the analysis. Tables, graphs, charts, and figures were used because these are very convenient means to channel numerical data to the readers who are to comprehend information while they are reading. The tables, graphs, charts, and figures can present and explain large amount of data or numbers easily than text, and are suggested to be applied if a researcher is required to present and convey more than three or four numbers. Furthermore, Microsoft Excel was used to calculate descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation).

While dealing with survey data which focused on various issues and themes (as mentioned above), the current researcher relied firstly on frequency counts so that the frequencies as well as percentages of the responses of both the students and teachers by category can be known and the mean and standard deviation (SD) of each of the statements/questions of the questionnaires was also examined.

The quantitative data elicited from the questionnaires was typed and stored. They were coded. And in the end, these data were analyzed. The researcher calculated frequency distributions for each of the statements/questions of the questionnaires, so that results could be presented in percentage terms as recommended by Brown (2001). In such case where the data yielded the decimal numbers, these had been rounded off considering the convenience of reporting. Then the percentages had been tabulated to permit a clear understanding and interpretation of the data so that readers could have a glance at the responses distributed across both the groups of respondents. As the responses in the study were essentially binary, the two types of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' were merged into one type *agreement*. On the other hand, 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' were merged into one type *disagreement* so that the presentation of results and its associated discussion could be conveniently done.

Likert-scale answers allowed quantitative data to be analyzed in descriptive statistics form mainly to generate answers to the research questions. Hence, central tendency statistics i.e., mean and standard deviation (SD) were applied to present a broad and comparative picture of the perceptions of both the teachers and students on the JSC English curriculum and syllabus, methods and approaches of teaching and learning at grade 8, textbook and other materials, beliefs about influence of JSC English test on learning-teaching, etc. Moreover, comparing frequencies and means, and examining the correlations facilitated to make interpretation from prior "descriptive-data-based analyses". The mean was reported in this data and whether the data was ordinal or interval was also considered.

4.6.2 Analysis of Relevant Documents

4.6.2.1 Analysis of JSC English Curriculum

The function of curriculum analysis is to unfold a curriculum into its constituent parts (e.g., knowledge, teaching, learning, resources); assesses how the parts suits together, for example with regard to its focus, goals and coherence; examines its fundamental beliefs and assumptions; and explores reasonings behind the choices and assumptions made by the curriculum.

Qualitative content analysis (Elo et al., 2014) was applied in the current study to analyze and examine the JSC English curriculum. Content analysis (Krippendorff, 2018) denotes a technique of research which is applied to make valid and replicable inferences from a text to the contexts of its use. Besides being a counting process, content analysis compares the findings to its context. Downe-Wambolt, (1992) defines content analysis as a research technique which offers an objective and systematic way to make valid inferences from a text (written, visual, verbal data to quantify and describe specific phenomena. This research approach, in conjunction with a curriculum analysis checklist, applied in data analysis and presentation of findings assisted me to present not only description but also interpretation of phenomena (Holloway & Galvin, 2017).

4.6.2.2 Analysis of the Textbooks

In order to cover the complete JSC (Grade 8) English syllabus, NCTB (National Curriculum and Textbook Board) developed two textbooks: one of them is *English for Today* and the other one is *English Grammar and Composition*. The intended users are the students of grade/class 8 (English) at secondary

schools. Of the two textbooks, *English for Today* (for class 8) is designed and developed to be used as core teaching materials, the ‘mother textbook’ whereas *English Grammar and Composition* is a complementary book designed solely for JSC English test purpose, where there are chapters on grammatical items (like parts of speech, narration, change of voice, punctuation etc.). National Curriculum and Textbook Board developed *English for Today* (for class 8) in 2013, followed by the revised English Curriculum (2012), whereas *English Grammar and Composition* only recently in the year 2017 solely to “create opportunities to practice grammar in context and use language accurately” (as it is mentioned in the Preface of this very book). The findings resulting from the analysis and evaluation of the core textbook, *English for Today* (for class 8) are presented.

Similar to curriculum analysis, in order to analyze and examine the JSC English textbooks, content analysis (Elo et al., 2014) was used. Apart from content analysis, a textbook can also be analyzed and evaluated at two levels: ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ (McGrath, 2002, p. 14). Macro level evaluation is called ‘external evaluation’ by McDonough & Shaw (2003, p. 61) whereas the same thing is called ‘impressionistic method’ by McGrath (2002, p. 25). McGrath (2002) says, impressionistic analysis focuses on gaining a general imprint of the material (p. 25). At this level, the task of a researcher is to investigate whether the claims made by the publisher, the editor(s) and the author(s) of the book are justified or not. At the second level, micro level evaluation is carried out. McGrath (2002, p. 25) has termed this evaluation as ‘in-depth evaluation’ while McDonough and Shaw (2003, p. 66) has termed this evaluation as ‘internal evaluation’. The important thing which is done at this stage is to “analyze the

extent to which the...factors in the external evaluation stage match up with the internal consistency and organization of the materials as stated by the author/publisher...” (McDonough & Shaw, 2003, pp. 66-67). Evaluation at this level, says McGrath (2002), explores the validity of claims made by the publishers and authors. It investigates, for instance, the types of language description, fundamental assumptions regarding values or learning on which the examined “materials are based or, in a broader sense, whether the materials seem likely to live up to the claims that are being made for them” (p. 27-28).

In order to evaluate the textbook (*English for Today*) the researcher applied the McDonough & Shaw’s (2003) model. While evaluating the book, both the external and the internal criteria of evaluation are applied to the textbook to scrutinize the consistencies or inconsistencies between the external claims made by the writers and publishers for the book keeping in mind the objectives of the English curriculum (2012) and the overall internal settings of the book. For studying the textbook externally, the preface to *English for Today*, and its table of contents were scrutinized to explore the claims that have been made for the book. The 2nd step- the internal evaluation stage- scrutinizes its internal organization. For doing this, at first, the bookmap is charted to reach a preliminary decision to be taken on how the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) have been presented in it. Then, the comprehensive study explores the consistency and uniformity between the external claims and the internal organization of the textbook materials.

4.6.3 Analysis of Interviews

A transcript-based analysis approach (Krueger & Casey, 2020) was applied by the researcher to analyze the interview data. Each of the interviews was transcribed word by word. In spite of its being a time-consuming procedure, it was conducted because it helps overcome the probability of missing any important data (Seidman, 2013). All the interviews were carried out in Bangla, because teachers preferred to converse in Bangla. The interviews were transcribed first in Bangla and then were translated into English. In order to confirm the reliability of the data, these translations were verified by one of my colleagues who teaches English at a university in Bangladesh.

Both deductive and inductive thematic analysis (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016) was applied to analyze the interview data. It allowed the current researcher to get the answers to the research questions (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The researcher employed 4 stages/steps of theme development proposed by Vaismoradi, et al. (2016). These stages were *initialization*, *construction*, *rectification*, and *finalization* (see Table 4.15).

At the initial stage, the transcripts were read and reread, so that a comprehensive understanding of the interview data and the key issues could be gained before coding these data. Following the suggestions of Gillham (2005), “the transcripts were edited by avoiding repetitions and putting substantive statements in chronological order to make grammatical sense, which facilitated further levels of analysis and provided a relatively tidy and accessible form for interpretation”. For each of the transcripts, individual coding was done and reflective notes were kept.

| Phases | Stages |
|-----------------------|---|
| Initialization | Reading transcriptions and highlighting meaning units; Coding and looking for abstractions in participants' accounts; Writing reflective notes. |
| Construction | Classifying; Comparing; Labelling; Translating & transliterating; Defining & describing. |
| Rectification | Immersion and distancing; Relating themes to established knowledge; Stabilizing. |
| Finalization | Developing the story line |

Table 4.15: Phases and Stages of theme development

This stage assisted the researcher to realize the breadth and depth of the data. In the construction stage (which comprises 5 steps: classification, comparison, labelling, translation and transliteration, and definition and description) organizing of codes, comparing these in relation to their similarities and dissimilarities and clustering these together in order to tag a label to each cluster of codes with reference to the research questions were conducted. The rectification stage which comprises three steps: immersing and distancing, linking themes to recognized knowledge, and stabilizing, was the process of verification, where the validity and the reliability of the developed themes were ensured. In the finalization stage, the themes were defined and linked to reply to the set research questions; i.e. the findings and results were analyzed.

4.6.4 Focus group Interviews (FGIs)

To analyze the FGI data, a researcher uses “a tape-based analysis, wherein the researcher listens to the tape of the focus group and then creates an abridged transcript. This transcript was usually much shorter than is the full transcript in a transcript-based analysis. Notwithstanding, this type of analysis is helpful because the researcher can focus on the research question and only transcribe the portions that assist in better understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009, p4; Krueger & Casey, 2020). This transcript was an abridged form of the conversation where unnecessary talks were eliminated which made the process of analysis less time-consuming. Only those portions that allowed insight into the purpose of the research study were transcribed and translated. Thus, concentration was on the research questions. At first, the audios of each of the FGIs were listened to recognize the “scope of the research” and important portions to transcribe were decided.

Then, to analyze these transcriptions, constant comparison analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992; Strauss, 1987) was applied as an approach to the FGIs data analysis because interpreting FGIs data refers to content analysis (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014). FGIs were considered units of analysis (Smithson, 2000) to recognize the emerging themes in each group. Constant comparison analysis offered the current researcher to make a comparison among those emerging themes across all the groups. This approach adopted by the researcher opened an opportunity to reach data saturation, specifically because this current study had multiple focus group interviews (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). Constant comparison was important since it allowed to create refined and meaningful themes across the

focus group interviews (Charmaz, 2000). For coding and categorizing of focus groups data, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) was applied. Once I had themes from all sixteen FGI groups, I identified common themes the students expressed regarding their perceptions of the washback of the JSC examination on their learning, test preparation, and English proficiency. It is to be noted that I reached data saturation in the case of FGIs because from the seventh FGI onward, I started getting repeated information from the students.

4.6.5 Analysis of Classroom Observation Data

The data elicited from the classroom observation scheme was first compiled and tallied for individual lessons/classes. The data was coded according to the categories specified in the classroom observation scheme. Then, frequency counts for each category across all observed lessons were done. The current researcher relied on frequency counts so that the frequencies as well as percentages of the specific activities, events or behaviors could be counted. The analysis applied the calculation of the duration of each instructional pattern and classroom activity in an average percentage of the class hour/time. Since the duration of all the classes/lessons were not the same, all the tasks, activities, events or behaviors were stated as the percentage of the total lesson/class time. Afterward, the percentages of the time spent on each category in the classroom observation scheme were compared in order to ascertain the frequency of occurrence of various classroom activities and interaction patterns. Moreover, during the analysis, mean ratings for each category across all observed lessons were also computed. When analyzing the data was done quantitatively, a short summary was written.

4.7 Triangulation of Data

In the current study, in order to ensure triangulation of data, the researcher chose a mixed method research design, where a combination of positivism and interpretivism, as well as a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches were utilized. From the quantitative method, the researcher chose a survey strategy (student and teacher questionnaires), and for the qualitative method the researcher chose document analysis, classroom observation, teacher interviews and focus group interviews with students.

Data elicited from these multiple sources and respondents were triangulated to explore the interplays between English teaching-learning and assessment practice at grade 8 in the secondary schools of Bangladesh and the washback of JSC English test on the entire process of teaching and learning. Thus, in the current study both data triangulation (data from two types of respondents-teachers and students) and methodological triangulation (data elicited through both qualitative and quantitative method) were ensured. This multi-level triangulation warrants clearly that the results and findings of the current research study are not consequences of one single method (Flick, 2018; and Green & Chian, 2018), rather this triangulation is used in the current study to confirm the validity and credibility of findings and results of this research study (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018; Stavros & Westberg, 2009; Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2011). It provides a convergence of “evidence that breeds credibility” (Eisner, 1991, p. 110) of the current research study.

This multi-level triangulation protects the current researcher from the allegation that this research study is the outcome of one single method, that

might encompass the present researcher's biases (Patton, 2015). "By examining information collected through different methods, the researcher can corroborate findings across data sets and thus reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study" (Bowen, 2009, p. 28). Thus, triangulation ensured in this current research study adds richness and depth to the collected data (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Accordingly, this doctoral study employed multiple methods of data collection to arrive at the research findings (see Chapter 5). By triangulating the collected data, the present researcher could extrapolate its messy and embedded meanings, that, as Denzin (2012) presumed, permitted him to see the data through clearly to observe all viewpoints of the collected data. Therefore, "the importance of triangulation cannot be underestimated to ensure reliability and validity of the data and results" (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018, p. 21). The process of data triangulation in the current study has been depicted below:

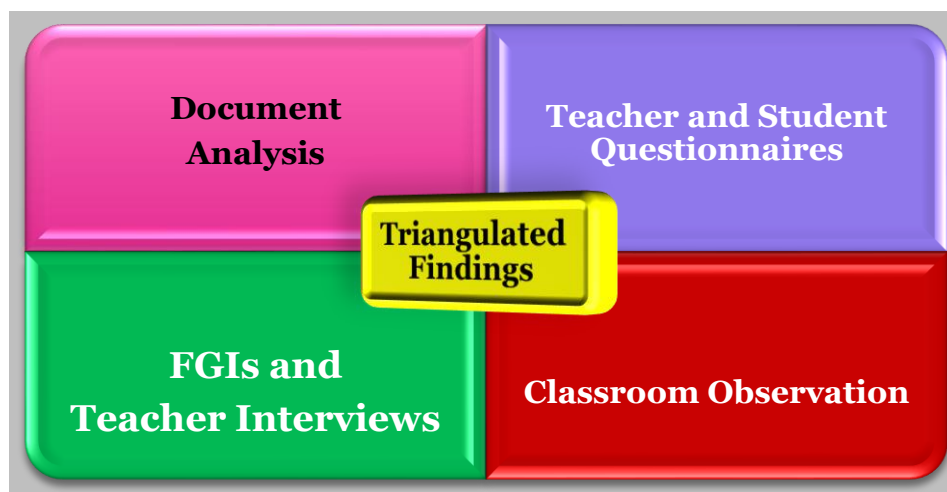


Figure 4.7: Process of data triangulation in the current study

4.8 Summary of the Chapter

To reiterate, this chapter has presented and explicated several aspects of the research methodology and design adopted in the study to address the research questions. At the outset, an introduction on the use of a mixed-method research design was given. As an appropriate research method which suits the purpose of this research study, the researcher chose a mixed method research design, where a combination of positivism and interpretivism, as well as a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches were utilized. From the quantitative method, the researcher chose a survey strategy (student and teacher questionnaires), and for the qualitative method the researcher chose document analysis, classroom observation, teacher interviews and focus group interviews with students. Then, some background information about the respondents (i.e. teachers and students) and research sites was given. After that, a description of the research instruments, and rationale for applying them was given. Next, the procedures and process of data collection were elucidated. Finally, the methods and procedures of data analysis were explained.

Chapter 5: Findings of the Study

What follows the methodology chapter which has explained the design and the procedures of the present study is the findings and results chapter in which the findings are presented and discussed.

In the previous chapter i.e., in Chapter 4, I discussed in detail the methods that were used for gathering data for the current doctoral study. Now in this chapter I am presenting the relevant findings derived from the analysis of data collected from mixed sources. Teacher and student questionnaires, semi-structured teacher interviews, focused group interviews with students and classroom observation scheme, complemented by document study, were applied to gather research data so that the following research questions can be appropriately addressed. Findings and results presented in this very chapter are based on the themes and categories emerged from the above-mentioned sources.

Main Question:

How is JSC English teaching-learning influenced (i.e. washback effect) by assessment practice in the secondary schools of Bangladesh?

Guiding Question 1:

What is the common classroom (teaching-learning) practice of English teachers at secondary schools?

Guiding Question 2:

What is the common assessment practice of English teachers at secondary schools?

5.1 Findings from Document Analysis

The analysis of the three vital documents namely the English Curriculum for Grade 8 and JSC examinees, JSC English Textbook namely *English For Today* and past question papers of JSC examinations is one of the key means to understand how English teaching-learning and assessment practice influence each other at Grade 8 in the secondary schools of Bangladesh.

5.1.1 Findings from the Analysis of English Curriculum

A curriculum is a central part of any subject including English. It focuses on a particular class/grade, and sets objectives, goals and benchmarks for the learners. A curriculum also provides them an idea, a guideline to the contents, skills, and attitudes; what they will learn and develop, and how they will proceed when the particular subject/class is over (Su, 2012).

The function of curriculum analysis is to unfold a curriculum into its constituent parts (e.g., knowledge, teaching, learning, resources); assess how the parts suits together, for example with regard to its focus, goals and coherence; examine its fundamental beliefs and assumptions; and explore reasoning behind the choices and assumptions made by the curriculum.

In order to analyze and examine the JSC English curriculum, content analysis (Elo et al., 2014) was applied. Content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004) refers to “*a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use*” (p. 18). Besides being a counting process, content analysis compares the findings to its

context: *“Content analysis is a research method that provides a systematic and objective means to make valid inferences from verbal, visual, or written data in order to describe and quantify specific phenomena”* (Downe-Wambolt, 1992; p. 314). This research approach, in conjunction with a curriculum analysis checklist, applied in data analysis and presentation of findings assisted me to present not only description but also interpretation of phenomena (Holloway & Galvin, 2017).

This section presents the findings of the analysis of JSC English curriculum. The current JSC English curriculum was developed by National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) in 2012. This curriculum was influenced by research in the domain of second language teaching and learning, cognitive psychology, as well as curriculum development, education and assessment.

The goal of this curriculum is to create an efficient and effective English language learning environment which nurtures learners’ development and their skill-based achievement. This curriculum considers English language learning as a process that involves learners in meaningful and effective communication (NCTB, 2012). The curriculum outlines the principles of language teaching and learning, the choice of content and material, assessment and evaluation of students’ learning. It embraces constructivism which focuses on the learner rather than on the teacher (NCTB, 2012; Brooks & Brooks, 1999). Moreover, constructivist theory advocates learning as a process of interactions with peers, which is considered an effective means of gaining skills (Laura & Catherine, 2003). A constructivist approach to learning considers learners as active learners who can create knowledge (Mcloughlin, 1999; Baker, Jensen, and Kolbe, 2005). Learners are involved in the

meaningful learning process where they are found to be responsible for the learning outcome.

This JSC English curriculum (NCTB, 2012), like the immediate past one, has accepted Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach that underscores learning all the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an integrated way. The CLT approach advocates “learning by doing” and recommends that teachers must not teach grammar items explicitly; instead, the functional and structural features should be offered within contexts in a graded and organized way (NCTB, 2012; p35).

This JSC English curriculum recommends that grammar items and vocabulary should be presented within real life contexts in a graded and systematic way. It has also strongly suggested audio and visual teaching materials should be made available to students. This JSC English curriculum offers teachers and learners with a “constructivist approach to assessment as an integral part of the teaching-learning process with guidelines and on expectations for formative and summative assessments that would reflect performance in the target language competencies described in the curriculum” (NCTB, 2012, p. 35).

In order to achieve the overall objectives of learning English language it is a must that English teachers themselves should be capable of all four English language skills. Because, their own capability in all 4 English language skills is directly associated with the realization of curriculum objectives. So, NCTB curriculum recommends giving training to teachers in their English language skills development and in English language teaching methodology.

This curriculum presents unambiguous and all-inclusive guidelines for writers of English textbooks, teachers, students, and other stakeholders. It stresses on organized language teaching-learning, use of correct pronunciation, intonation and stress of words and sentences, besides using audio and visual teaching materials in English classrooms. “In addition, this curriculum deems the importance of developing the young learners as competent human resources for a digital Bangladesh and global world. It has thus set the objectives and the terminal learning outcomes and has suggested content, teaching learning activities in a way to equip the learners of this level with basic language skills in English to function in an international context with confidence” (NCTB, 2012, p. 35).

This curriculum has set certain general objectives and learning outcomes.

Curriculum Objectives: It sets the following five general objectives:

1. To help students develop their English competence in all four English language skills, i.e. reading, writing, speaking, and listening,
2. To help them use English language competence for effective interpersonal communication in real life everyday contexts,
3. To help them attain proper communicative and language competence for their subsequent education level,
4. To help them can gain accuracy and
5. To facilitate them to be skilled and trained human capital by applying English language properly (English Curriculum, 2012; p. 36)

Terminal Learning Outcomes: This curriculum sets nine terminal learning outcomes. Students will be able to:

1. follow instructions, commands, requests, announcements and act accordingly.
2. recognise and use English sounds, stress and intonation appropriately.
3. understand and enjoy stories, poems and other texts.
4. interact through short talks and simple dialogues, conversations and discussions.
5. read aloud texts with proper pronunciation, stress and intonation.
6. understand written instructions and texts through silent reading.
7. use dictionary and understand the table of content of a book.
8. write answers to questions, short compositions(paragraphs, essays, letters) and simple CVs.
9. use proper punctuation marks.

Activate Windows

The current JSC English curriculum was developed in the year of 2012, following the National Education Policy (NEP, 2010) by Ministry of Education (2010). The NEP (2010) and the JSC English Curriculum (2012) underscore the importance of learning language for real everyday life situations so that learners can perform both locally and globally. The NEP specifies that students should attain language skills to such a standard that they can strive in the global scenes. The JSC English curriculum also underlines the significance of English language learning to communicate internationally for different various purposes such as education, employment, business, medical services and have access to the outer world.

The present JSC English curriculum (2012) was developed ensuing the CLT approach. It accentuates developing students' all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and hopes that students can effectively be able to use English language in real everyday life situations

catering to both the local and international context. Student-focused language teaching-learning is advocated and teachers are advised to perform as facilitators of language learning. They are encouraged to use several teaching-learning aids, real life objects multimedia, audio-video materials, and ICT in their classroom teaching. The curriculum emphasizes group and pair work activities and such sitting arrangements which help perform these activities fruitfully. Rote learning is discouraged.

The JSC English curriculum and syllabus offers adequate opportunities for learners to use English for various practical and everyday purposes in interesting and engaging situations. The focus on the CLT approach, however, does not rule out the importance of grammar. Rather than using grammar as rules to be discretely memorized, the JSC English curriculum and syllabus has encouraged integration of grammatical items into the activities in each lesson which allows English grammar to adopt a more functional role in English language learning. Therefore, learners have the opportunities to develop English language skills by involving themselves in language activities, and not just by memorizing the grammatical rules of English language.

The current JSC English curriculum cannot be parted from the textbooks (developed and prescribed by NCTB) since it represents the JSC English curriculum. The textbook called *English for Today* incorporated the contents of the JSC English syllabus and curriculum. This textbook is regarded as the mother or core textbook for the JSC candidates.

Following the principles of CLT, the JSC syllabus incorporates topics of both local and international context, most of which appear to be interesting and

suitable for the students both linguistically and culturally. It is projected that if the curriculum and syllabus is used appropriately, it can enable English language learning through several engaging and skill-based practice activities.

It advocates that the learning process is more important than the content (Savry & Duffy, 1995). It also puts up alternative assessment that "turns day-to-day assessment into a teaching and learning process that enhances (instead of merely monitoring) student learning" (Stiggins, 2007, p. 23).

The analysis of the syllabus and curriculum finds that the JSC English curriculum is communicative thematically, but there is a very relevant question whether the set objectives of the curriculum are attainable, because teachers do not like to take any risk of teaching the items which are not tested, they consider it simply waste of time, they skip items and narrow down the syllabus and curriculum contents towards the preparation of the examination, the findings which have been reported by the respondents during this study that are discussed in detail in the later part of this very chapter. The present study found that both the teachers and the students were very selective in choosing study contents for the preparation of examination. That is, teachers design the classroom activities as per the test contents. This practice is an evidence of washback effect on the syllabus and curriculum.

From the point of views of pedagogy (economy in the management of a students' learning process), pragmatism (economy of time and money) and explicitness (clear and understandable to both the teachers and the students), the existing English curriculum appears to be a good one.

In order to achieve the goals and objective of the English Curriculum (2012), 9 explicit learning outcomes are stated. Similarly, every unit of *English For Today* (the textbook) begins with a number of learning outcomes. After analyzing the English Curriculum and *English For Today*, alignment between the learning outcomes specified in the curriculum and the outcomes identified in *English For Today* is found in the most part. The analysis, however, found certain inconsistencies between the curriculum and textbook, that may lead to confusion and frustration in English teaching and learning in the classroom.

The analysis reveals certain shortcomings also. For example, there is a repetition of learning outcomes in the curriculum. 2nd and 5th learning outcomes are quite similar which is quite unexpected.

- “*recognise and use English sounds, stress and intonation appropriately.*” (2nd learning outcome)
- “*read aloud texts with proper pronunciation, stress and intonation.*” (5th learning outcome)

Furthermore, 9th learning outcome was not found in any of the 9 units of the textbook. Moreover, the analysis discovered that throughout the textbook learning outcomes were unevenly distributed. I observed an overlapping of most of the learning outcomes with each other in the English curriculum. Some of the learning outcomes were repeatedly addressed in several units of the textbook, whereas one of them was found in one unit only (for example, 7th learning outcome of the curriculum). Thus, because of the overlapping and confusion in certain areas, it is somewhat challenging to map the English curriculum and *English For Today* (the textbook).

On the other hand, looking at how the learning outcomes of SSC (class 9-10) English curriculum are mentioned, I found that these were “tagged with specified skills to be taught, but the activities in *English For Today* were written in an integrated manner—this is one of the basic tenets of any CLT-based textbook. For instance, learning outcome 15 (“read maps, charts, graphs”) was associated with reading and speaking skills in the curriculum, and it corresponded with the stated outcomes in Units 2, 4, and 13 of the textbook.” (Sultana, 2019, p.111). But this is not the case with JSC English curriculum, although, all the activities in *English For Today* attempted to teach four language skills. Most surprisingly, despite inclusion of several listening activities, no CD was attached with *English For Today* (the textbook) which could help learners practice listening activities in the classroom and at home.

5.1.1.1 Mapping the Objectives, Learning Outcomes (LOs) in the Curriculum and in *English For Today* 243

The five objectives of this curriculum as already stated are: to help learners develop their English competence in all 4 English language skills, i.e. reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Obj 1), so that learners can gain accuracy (Obj 4), acquire proper communicative and language competence for their subsequent education level (Obj 3) and for effective interpersonal communication in real life everyday contexts (Obj 2) and eventually demonstrate themselves as skilled and trained human capital by applying English language properly (Obj 5) (English Curriculum, 2012; p. 36)

| | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO5 | LO6 | LO7 | LO8 | LO9 |
|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| U1 | Yes | | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| U2 | Yes | Yes | | | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| U3 | Yes | Yes | | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| U4 | Yes | | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | | |
| U5 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| U6 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | | Yes | |
| U7 | Yes | Yes | | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |
| U8 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | | Yes | |
| U9 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | | | Yes | |

U1-9= Units from *English For Today* (the textbook); LO1-

LO9= Learning outcomes mentioned in the curriculum

Table 5.1: Mapping the Learning Outcomes in the Curriculum and in EFT

Out of the nine learning outcomes mentioned in the curriculum, five of them were found directly as LOs in *English For Today*, while one of the learning outcomes of the English Curriculum (LO5) was not addressed at all in *English For Today* (as it can be seen in the last column of the above table: 5.1).

The above table shows that alignment between the English curriculum and *English For Today* was found for the most part, since learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 (except 9) were addressed in the textbook. Learning outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8 were the almost fully addressed LOs in *English For Today*. In some cases, the curriculum learning outcomes were not directly identified as the learning outcomes in the units of the textbooks, but the activities encompassed the learning outcomes. For example, all the units of *English For Today* included activities like follow instructions, commands, requests, announcements, act accordingly (LO1), understand reading texts (LO3) and interact through short talks and simple dialogues, conversations and discussions (LO4), but these learning outcomes were not one of the directly identified outcomes mentioned in the units of *English For Today*.

5.1.2 Findings from the Analysis of the Textbooks

In order to cover the complete JSC (Grade 8) English syllabus, NCTB developed and produced two textbooks: one of them is *English for Today* and the other one is *English Grammar and Composition*. The intended users are the students of grade/class 8 (English) at secondary schools. Of the two textbook, *English for Today* (for class 8) is designed and developed to be used as core teaching materials, the ‘mother textbook’ whereas *English Grammar and Composition* is a complementary book designed solely for JSC English test purpose, where there are chapters on grammatical items (such as: parts of speech, narration, change of voice, punctuation etc.). NCTB developed, produced and distributed *English for Today* (for class 8) among students and teachers in 2013, followed by the revised English Curriculum (2012), whereas *English Grammar and Composition* was produced and distributed only recently in the year 2017 solely to “create opportunities to practice grammar in context and use language accurately” (as it is mentioned in the Preface of this very book). The findings resulting from the analysis and evaluation of the core textbook, *English for Today* (for class 8) are presented.

A textbook can be analyzed and evaluated at two levels: ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ (McGrath, 2002, p. 14). Macro level evaluation is called ‘external evaluation’ by McDonough and Shaw (2003, p. 61) whereas the same thing is called ‘impressionistic method’ by McGrath (2002, p. 25). McGrath (2002) says “impressionistic analysis is concerned about obtaining a general impression of the material” (p. 25). At this level, the task of a researcher is to investigate whether the claims made by the publisher, the editor(s) and the author(s) of the book are justified or not.

At the second level, micro level evaluation is carried out. McGrath (2002, p. 25) Micro has termed this evaluation as 'in-depth evaluation' whereas McDonough and Shaw (2003, p.66) has termed this evaluation as 'internal evaluation'. "[T]he essential issue at this stage is for us to analyze the extent to which the...factors in the external evaluation stage match up with the internal consistency and organization of the materials as stated by the author/publisher..." (McDonough & Shaw, 2003, pp. 66-67). Evaluation at this level, says McGrath (2002), dives "beneath the publisher's and author's claims to look at, for example, the kind of language description, underlying assumptions about learning or values on which the materials are based or, in a broader sense, whether the materials seem likely to live up to the claims that are being made for them" (p. 27-28).

In order to evaluate the textbook, *English for Today* the researcher applied the McDonough and Shaw's (2003) model. While evaluating the book, both the external and the internal criteria of evaluation were applied to the textbook to scrutinize the consistencies or inconsistencies between the external claims made by the writers and publishers for the book keeping in mind the objectives of the English curriculum (2012) and the overall internal settings of the book.

For studying the textbook externally, the preface to *English for Today*, and its table of contents were scrutinized to explore the claims that have been made for the book. The 2nd step, internal evaluation stage, scrutinizes its internal organization. For doing this, at first, the bookmap is charted to reach to a preliminary decision to be taken on how the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) have been presented in it. Then, the comprehensive

study explores the consistency and uniformity found between the external claims and the internal organisation of the textbook materials. Eventually, the findings derived from both the external and the internal evaluation, a complete impression and opinion is formed on the materials of the textbook.

5.1.2.1 External Evaluation

In order to carry out external evaluation of the book, an ‘impressionistic’ overview of the preamble to *English For Today*, the textbook is done and it has been found that moving away from traditional teacher-centered approach, it nurtures the learner-centered approach to language teaching advocated in the English curriculum.

In the preface to the book, the publisher states that “contents of the book will reflect real life situations as the ultimate purpose of language learning is to communicate.” Rather than considering English a content-based subject, English has been termed “as one of the most powerful tools for pursuing ... inter-cultural and inter-personal communication, and job markets at home and abroad.” It is further stated, “The *English for Today* textbook has been developed to help students attain competency in all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The contents and illustrations of the book have been developed in order to suit the learners’ age and cognitive level.” These statement means that the textbook has followed the communicative approach to language teaching-learning and has been designed on the core principle of language learning by actually practicing it, and that the practice has to be done in an interactive mode through activities which involve all four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking).

The themes of the contents of *English for Today* are based on different topics presented in 9 separate units like ‘A glimpse of our culture’ (Unit 1), ‘Food and nutrition’ (Unit 2), ‘Health and hygiene’ (Unit 3), ‘Check your reference’ (Unit 4), ‘Making a difference’ (Unit 5), ‘Going on a foreign trip’ (Unit 6), ‘Different People, different occupations’ (Unit 7), ‘News! News! News!’ (Unit 8), ‘Things that have changed our life’ (Unit 9). These units again include 58 separate lessons under different headings. Each of these lessons includes materials, activities and tasks on different language skills.

Thus, the findings of the external analysis and evaluation show that the methodological approaches that have been adopted in designing *English for Today* follow the goal of JSC English curriculum (2012). NCTB made following claims for *English for Today*: (a) the target of this book is to help students of Class 8 develop English communicative competence, (b) the book has been developed to help students attain competency in all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing., (c) students are presented with authentic/real life language, (d) students are provided with real life situations for communicative tasks and activities, (e) contents are graded as per learners’ age and cognitive level.

5.1.2.2 Internal Evaluation

At this stage, the researcher examines the internal organization of *English for Today*, the textbook. The purpose of the internal evaluation is to examine and expose the consistency between the external claims that the authors and the publisher made, and the internal organization of *English for Today*, the textbook.

| 9 Units | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Total | % |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|----------|
| Number of Lessons (Unit-wise) | 5 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 58 | |
| Number of Reading tasks | 6 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 12 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 62 | 35% |
| Number of Writing tasks | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 5 | 32* | 18% |
| Number of Speaking tasks | 7 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 11 | 18 | 71 | 40% |
| Number of Listening tasks | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 12 | 7% |
| Number of total tasks (Lesson-wise) | 16 | 10 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 27 | 15 | 29 | 32 | | |

Table 5.2: Distribution of lesson-wise tasks

Lessons and Tasks Distribution: A thorough look at each of the lessons in the book exposes certain points to consider.

- ✓ There is a very uneven distribution of unit-wise lessons, having the lowest number of lessons in Unit 7 (only 4) with the highest in Unit 6 (9 lessons).
- ✓ Similarly, a very uneven distribution of lesson-wise tasks and activities is also observed, Unit 2 having the lowest number of tasks and activities (only 10) whereas Unit 9 having the highest (32).
- ✓ Most importantly, skill-wise extremely uneven distribution of tasks and activities is also very disappointing and unexpected from a textbook, having the lowest number of listening tasks and activities (only 7%) in the entire book, although in its preface it is clearly articulated that, “The *English for Today* textbook has been developed to help students attain

competency in all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.” (See Appendix-4 to view the ‘Preface’.)

- ✓ It is to be noted that although the above table presents 32 (18%) writing tasks, these include only the separate writing tasks, the actual number and percentage of writing tasks will be no less than the number and percentage of reading tasks, because alongside reading tasks, most of the reading texts are integrated with writing activities as well.

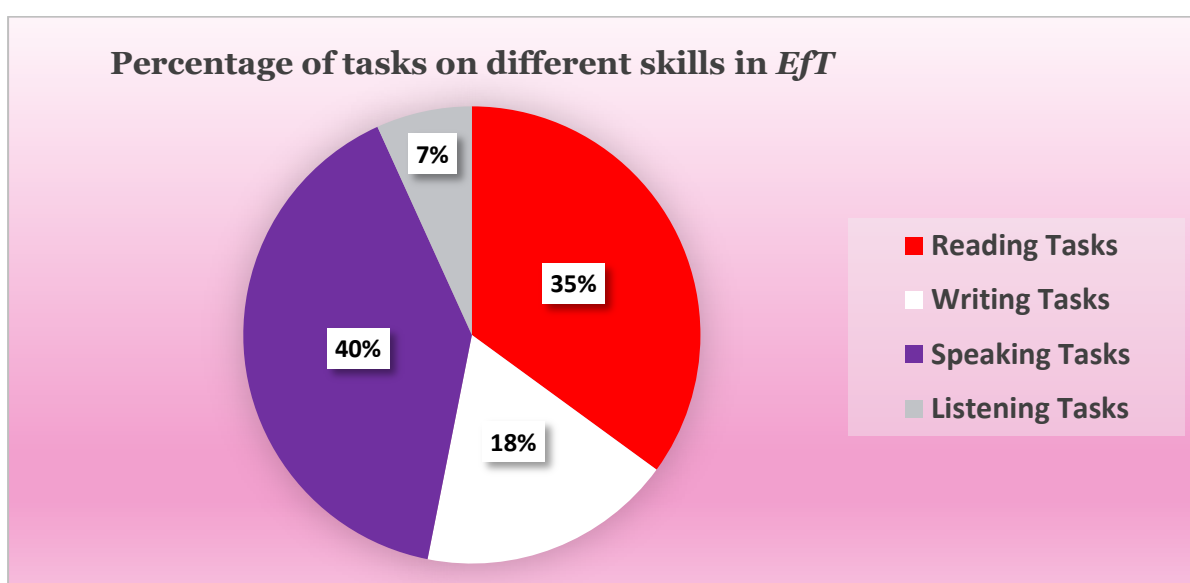


Figure 5.1: Percentage of tasks on different skills in Eft

Language Skills

Burley-Allen (1995) found that the time pattern of our day-to-day communication follows like 40% listening, 35% speaking, 16% reading, and only 9% writing. He also mentioned that people spend 70% their waking hours in verbal communication. Similar phenomena were found by the study carried out by Mendelsohn (1994 cited in Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011) who discovered that 40-50% time of our total everyday communication is spent on listening; 25-30% on speaking, 11-16% on reading, and about 9% on writing.

These studies implicate that a person needs command over all four language skills to operate successfully in the real world. This textbook made an attempt to design and present all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) through an integrated approach, despite skill-wise uneven distribution of tasks and activities in it. Also, one of the important language components i.e. vocabulary is used contextually although activities on the other important language components i.e. grammar in context is almost missing except in two places/activities, where basic grammatical items such as using right form of verbs and using modals, etc. are presented in meaningful contexts.

Of the four language skills, reading has received the second highest priority in this book. As the above table (5.2) show, all the lessons of all the units in the textbook have reading texts and tasks based on those texts. Students have to read these texts and write down the answer to the given questions. The question types are MCQs, True/False, answering short questions, matching, fill in the blanks etc. An excerpt taken from page 67 of the textbook is given below for understanding the point better.

C Read more about the Tha Kha river and Mita's experience.

The Tha Kha floating market is more traditional with a few tourists visiting than other floating markets. Originally, the Tha Kha floating market used to sit only six or seven days a month depending on the phase of the moon. Nowadays, the trade takes place on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays too. The main buyers here are the Tha Kha natives. People seem to know each other very well. Everyone was seen smiling and calling each other by name. The locals did not notice Mita and others much. They were all busy buying and selling.

D True or false? If false give the correct information.

- 1 Tha Kha floating market is a tourist place.
- 2 It sits only six or seven days a month.
- 3 The buyers and sellers are the local people living near Tha Kha river.
- 4 They all knew each other.

E Read the text further and write the answers to the following questions.

- 1 Why is Tha Kha floating market 'traditional'?
- 2 How many days a week does the market sit?

Certain tasks and activities prove that the textbook has resort to integrated approach which communicative curriculum advocates. Reading texts are integrated with speaking and writing activities. For example, tasks # A, B, C and D of lesson 9 in unit 6 (page 61-62). See below:

Lesson 1: At the airport

Key words: lounge immigration

A Look at the picture and talk about it.



- 1 What do you see?
- 2 Can you guess where it could be?
- 3 Who are the people in the picture?
- 4 What could be their relationship?

B Now read the text and find out if your guesses are correct.

Zara lives with her parents in London. They have come to Bangladesh to visit Zara's aunt and uncle. She is very close to her cousin Mita. Both the families have visited many interesting places together in Bangladesh. It was great fun. Then they decided that they would visit some places outside Bangladesh too. They decided to go to Thailand. But Mita's parents were too busy with their work, so they could not go. However, Mita was going with them.

Mita, Zara and her parents are at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

through the immigration. He gives one to Mita and says, "You have to give some information about yourself in the form. The immigration officer will check your passport and stamp it. And then you are ready to travel." Mita, Zara and her parents start filling in the forms.

C Read the text again and answer the following questions.

- 1 Why is Mita excited?
- 2 Why aren't Mita's parents going with her?
- 3 What does an immigration officer do at the airport?

D Write a short composition about your experience of travelling to another place. It could be going to your grandparents'/aunt's/sister's/brother's house.

Write about your preparation before travelling, your experience on the way, e.g. launch terminal, railway/bus station, airport, etc.

Lesson 2: Filling in a form

Key words : expire renew visa valid

A Read the card and discuss in pairs.

| গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (বহিঃস্থান কার্ড/ Departure Card) | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|-------|-------|------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> পুরুষ Male | <input type="checkbox"/> মহিলা Female | ১. জন্ম তারিখ Date of Birth <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Day</td> <td style="border: none;">Month</td> <td style="border: none;">Year</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> </tr> </table> | Day | Month | Year | _ | _ | _ |
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| ৫. পাসপোর্ট নম্বর Passport Number | | ৬. পাসপোর্ট মেয়াদ Date of Expiry <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Day</td> <td style="border: none;">Month</td> <td style="border: none;">Year</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> </tr> </table> | Day | Month | Year | _ | _ | _ |
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| ৭. উদ্দেশ্য Purpose of Visit | | ৮. বিদায় তারিখ Date of Departure <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Day</td> <td style="border: none;">Month</td> <td style="border: none;">Year</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> </tr> </table> | Day | Month | Year | _ | _ | _ |
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| ৯. জাতীয়তা Nationality বাংলাদেশ (বা অন্য) Bangladesh (or other) | | | | | | | | |
| ১০. উদ্দেশ্য Purpose of Visit | | | | | | | | |
| ১১. মেয়াদ Date of Expiry <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Day</td> <td style="border: none;">Month</td> <td style="border: none;">Year</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> <td style="border: none;"> _ </td> </tr> </table> | | Day | Month | Year | _ | _ | _ | ১২. উদ্দেশ্য Purpose of Visit |
| Day | Month | Year | | | | | | |
| _ | _ | _ | | | | | | |
| স্বাক্ষর Signature | | | | | | | | |
| সীল Seal | | | | | | | | |

Tasks F, G and H of lesson 9 in unit 6 (page 77) can also be cited here.

Going on a foreign trip

77

F Read the text and answer the following questions.

They passed an hour and a half at the market and enjoyed the business. Then all of them were hungry. They rowed near the boat of an elderly woman, who was selling food. She welcomed them with a smile and showed them the foods. They bought the traditional and very popular food called 'Pad Thai', a kind of noodles with shrimps, tomato and some vegetables, with freshly roasted crushed peanut. The food was served in a bowl made from banana leaf. After Pad Thai, they ate 'Kanom Krok'. It is a coconut pancake which is very sweet. The Tha Kha people are simple and easy going. They are very friendly and polite. They do not understand English or any other language. Yet they have a way to communicate with Mita and others.

Mita was delighted to see a traditional Thai floating market. She took a lot of pictures with the elderly sellers.

Questions

- 1 Who were hungry?
- 2 How did the elderly woman know that Mita and others want to buy food?
- 3 What does the phrase 'easy going' mean?

G Discuss in groups the following question and write the answer.

Do we have anything like a Tha Kha market in our country? If we have, where can you find it? If we don't have, discuss why we need it.

H Describe a nearby bazar/market in your locality by answering the following questions:

- a. What is the market called? (give its name if there is any) How far is it from your home?
- b. When does the market sit?
- c. What can you buy at the market?

The textbook offers learners ample opportunities to develop and hone their writing skill through variety of writing tasks and activities. Besides writing activities integrated in the reading texts, there are discrete writing activities. These comprise writing paragraphs, writing letters, writing short compositions, writing short passage, writing story, etc. But the textbook does not provide the students with enough support in showing them the way of writing; despite having numerous writing activities and tasks. Because, they are hardly shown with writing samples. Moreover, although the

communicative curriculum strongly advocates process-focused approaches to writing, the writing activities given in the book follow product-centered approaches.

“One of the earliest approaches in writing is the product approach, which according to Nunan (1999) focuses on the final product which should be coherent, without mistakes and students will learn, copy and transform the models provided by the schoolbooks or by the teachers. Even Tangpermpoon (2008) states that students will begin from the first stage of drafting, to writing and then concluding with the correction. What is noted in this kind of approach is the development of student's knowledge, especially in terms of grammatical structures” (Likaj, 2015; p.103). On the other hand, process-based approach is applied to *“develop the capability of writing in a communicative way, focusing on the student as a creator, as a writer and as a transmitter of the message to the reader. Process approach emphasizes the idea of writing as problem-solving, with a focus on thinking and process”* (Dudley - Evans & St Johns, 2000 cited in Likaj, 2015; p.104).

Rather than developing learners' writing skill, such textbook strategy will compel teachers to put more focus on the product i.e., end result of an essay or paragraph, and will encourage teachers to engage learners in controlled exercises in the English classroom in order to achieve the result.

In this textbook, speaking has been given the highest priority probably because the publisher of the book believes that “the ultimate purpose of language learning is to communicate” (NCTB, 2012). There are several lessons which have numerous speaking activities related to the topics of the lesson. Students are instructed to talk about the topics either in pairs or in groups.

They are asked to discuss in groups on topics like folk song on TV channel, ethnic people of the country, table of contents of the book, how to use a dictionary, etc., whereas they are asked to discuss in pair on topics like Bangladeshi foods, conversation between a patient and a doctor, immigration office and a traveler, a country you have travelled, etc. In some lessons, they are instructed to role-play the given situations. But in some places, there remains ambiguity as to how the talk/discussion will be carried out. For example, on page 19 in lesson 1 of unit 2, there is a speaking activity on a given picture where there are two boys, one is healthy and the other is unhealthy. The activity reads: “*Look at and talk about the picture. Ask and answer the following questions.*” The instruction here is not clear, because it does not say whether it will be a pair work or a group work; with the fellow classmates or with the teacher. There are several such activities in every lesson of each unit of the textbook with very few exceptions such as on page 62, 63 in Unit 6.

Unlike in writing, in the speaking activities students are scaffolded with the forms of language (in sample dialogues) that may be useful in learning functional speaking skill, but the forms of language used in these dialogues have not taken the form of real-life conversation. The following excerpts taken from page 13-14 and page 117 of the textbook are given below for better understanding this point.

A Read the dialogue.

Ms Rehana : Let's talk about some essential foods that we need to eat regularly.
For our good health we must choose the right food in our daily diet.

Student 1 : We eat rice, 'ruti', fish and meat every day. What else should we
have, teacher?

Ms Rehana : Well, we must also eat vegetables and fruits. They contain a
lot of vitamins and minerals. They keep our body free from
diseases. They are also good for our skin and overall health.

Student 2 : Should we have anything else?

Ms Rehana : Sure. We need to drink milk every day. Milk is highly rich in
calcium. It's good for our healthy growth. It makes our bones and
teeth strong as well. We must drink pure water at regular intervals
too. It's essential for our body. We can't live without drinking water.

D Read the dialogue between the English teacher Mr Ramis and Sohan. Then do the following exercise:

- Sohan : Teacher, in the last class we read about modern aircraft. There were Boeing 787s, Airbus 350s, Concorde and so on. But which one is the best? Which one can we buy for our Biman Bangladesh Airlines?
- Mr Ramis : A difficult question. There are certain things to consider. If you think of speed, Concorde flies the fastest. To many, it looks the most beautiful. But it's no more in operation.
- Sohan : Between the other two aircraft?
- Mr Ramis : Well, if you remember, Boeing 787 travels 950 km/h. So you see, it's not as fast as Concorde. But it's faster than Airbus 350.
- Sohan : Yes teacher. I remember Airbus 350 travels 945 km/h. It's 5 km shorter than Boeing 787.
- Mr Ramis : Nice calculation! But there are other factors too. Say, passenger capacity, production cost and many more. Airbus 380 now is the largest and can carry more passengers than any other aircraft. Authorities have to consider so many...
- Sohan : Yes teacher. I understand.
-

The careful examination of the textbook explores that least focus is given on listening skill development of the learners. With only 12 activities (7%) out of 177 activities in the entire book, listening is the most neglected language skill in the book. To be more precise, there is no opportunity for learners to practice listening following this textbook. They cannot engage themselves in these 12 activities even, because no CDs or tapes are supplied with the book for listening practice. Even no transcript of the text for the activities is attached at the end of the textbook. Even if transcripts were provided, in place

of CDs or tapes, class teachers could have read the texts aloud and the learners would have listened to and answered the listening questions. An excerpt taken from page 12 of the textbook is given below for understanding the point more clearly.

Lesson 2: Kinds of food

Key words : Carbohydrate Protein Vitamins Minerals

A Listen to the teacher/CD and answer the following questions.

U2, L2 A
Listening text: 1

Questions

- 1 How many kinds of food do we need?
- 2 What are they?

Now choose the best answer.

- 1 Foods are divided into classes according to their
 - a colours and tastes.
 - b shapes and sizes.
 - c substances they contain.
 - d water they contain.

Visual Materials

Visual materials such as illustrations and photographs used widely in the textbook and these are integrated into the text for pedagogical purposes only, not for aesthetic or cosmetic purpose. These pictures are integrated into the text for the purpose of assisting the learners understand the lesson better. Most of the illustrations are set in the introductory activity to assess the

contextual familiarity of the learners regarding the lesson that is going to be discussed.

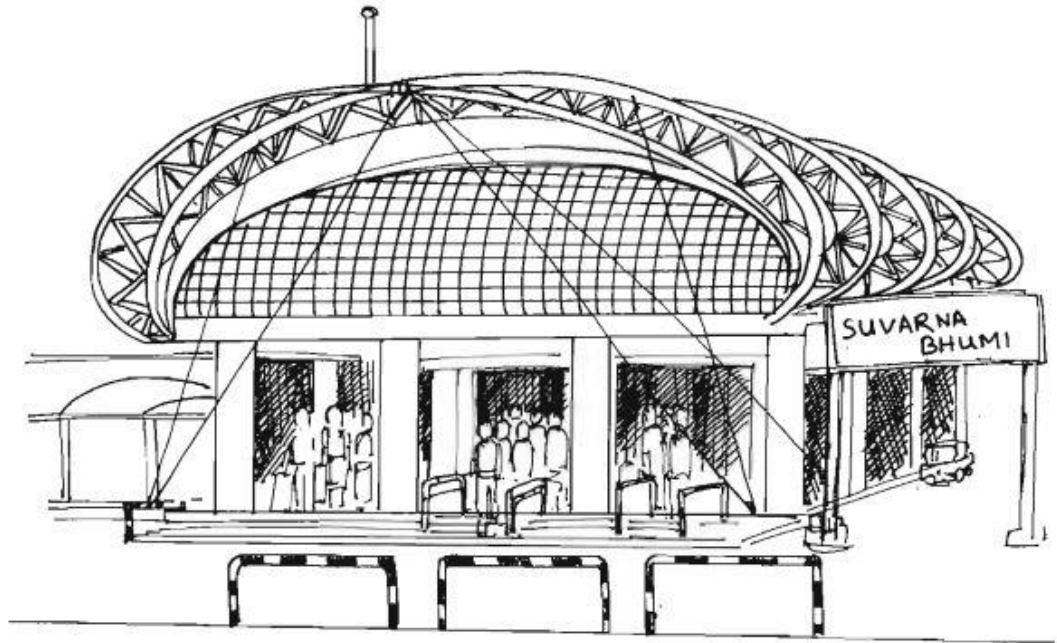
Inclusion of Tests

In order to monitor learning progress of the students, this textbook includes use of different exercises such as reading comprehension (MCQs, true/false, short answers, matching, fill in the blanks etc. based on the reading texts), vocabulary, writing paragraphs, letters, CV, short compositions, completing stories etc. so that teachers can test and assess the learners throughout each of the lessons. Each of this variety of exercises emphasizes on a particular skill that the learners need to develop. Moreover, the use of tests in the book assists both the learners and their teachers to know whether they are in the right track in relation to attaining the intended learning outcomes.

Authenticity and Students' age and interests

One of the claims made by the authority of the book was that authentic activities, tasks and language have been used in the book. But careful analysis and evaluation of the book reveals that these are all created and incorporated for pedagogical purposes. On the other hand, there are 86 visual images (termed as 'pictures') in the textbook. But only eight (9.30%) of these visuals seem to be authentic. The rest of them (90.7%) are all drawn artificially. Most unfortunately, some of these pictures are drawn so poorly that without explanation from teachers or going through the entire lesson, it is hardly possible to understand what is the picture about. But surprisingly, the very first tasks of the lessons start with such pictures stating "Look at the picture and talk about it." One of such pictures is shown below.

A Look at the picture and talk about it.



- 1 What do you see?
- 2 What could be this place?

Can the above picture be understood or guessed? Really, what could be the place? Is it a museum, or theatre or metro-station? No doubt, instead of encouraging the learners, such substandard pictures will demotivate them to the lesson. In place of such amateurly drawn picture, a real photograph of *Subornabhumi* Airport (Bangkok) can be set here, which is found in quality textbooks around the world.

Listening skill, which has already been stated, is the least focused language skill in the book. There is question of authenticity and suitability of even those few listening tasks (12 in total) that are inserted in the book. Specifically, the

listening tasks listed below cannot be considered authentic and suitable for the 8th grader students living in Bangladesh.

Listening Task B in Lesson 7 of Unit 3 on Page 66

Listening Task B in Lesson 4 of Unit 6 on Page 68-69

Listening Task C in Lesson 3 of Unit 7 on Page 84

Listening Task A in Lesson 4 of Unit 8 on Page 97

Listening Task E in Lesson 2 of Unit 9 on Page 109

Listening Task D in Lesson 5 of Unit 9 on Page 120

An example (from Unit 9, Lesson 5, Task D, page 120) of such type of listening task is where learners are instructed to listen to an audio on Hypersonic Technology Vehicle, a future aircraft and answer the questions following it.

C Imagine you are a TV reporter. You have come to interview the chief engineer of the HTV-2 Launch Project. What questions will you ask him/her? Design a short dialogue between yourself and the engineer, and write it. Finally act it out in pairs with proper sounds, stress and intonation.

D Listen to the teacher/CD carefully and complete the following sentences with appropriate words.

| |
|--|
| U9, L5 D Listening text: 11 |
|--|

- 1 Thursday's flight will test another ----- of the aircraft.
- 2 The plane is made of ----- composite materials.
- 3 The plane will fly at ----- speed.
- 4 In the flight, the body ----- of the plane could reach 2,000 degree Celsius.
- 5 ----- will melt at 2000 degree Celsius.

- C** Imagine you are travelling to a foreign country. Copy the form in A and fill in with your own information. If you have a passport, use information from it. If you do not have a passport, make your imaginary passport with visa number and expiry date, passport number, date of travel, etc.
- D** Work in pairs. If you have a passport, tell your partner when you got it and which country/countries you have already visited. If you do not have a passport, would you like to have one? Why?

Lesson 3 : Going through immigration

Key words : departure booth counter scan machine readable

A Look at the pictures and discuss in pairs.

1



2



One of the other claims made by the authority of the book was that texts, activities, and tasks used in the book are in line with learners' age.

At least for three reasons, the above three activities (from Unit 6, Lesson 1, and 2) shown in the image do not appear to be authentic and suitable for the learners. Firstly, in Bangladesh, officially learners start schooling (Grade 1) at the age of six and accordingly they are in Grade 8 in their 14 years or so. As per Bangladesh Passport and Immigration Authority, people under 15 are considered minor and so, they cannot get a passport of their own accord. Secondly, in a country where the poverty rate is so high (20.8%) and only 6.6

million (0.037%) people out of 180 million population hold passport, and the rural population in Bangladesh was reported 63.37 % in 2018, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, engaging learners in a conversation on the passport and immigration is nothing but a mockery. Thirdly, in a communicative curriculum, the contents of the task itself bear no importance, contents are there only a means of communication/conversation.

Moreover, in Unit 5 (Checking your reference) it has been found that there are several reading, writing and speaking activities on using the table of contents of a book and using a dictionary. Considering the age (14 years or so) of the learners of grade 8, engaging them in activities and tasks (especially in speaking skill development) based on using the table of contents of a book and using a dictionary may not be a wise choice, because such activities will not be interesting ones. Another example (from Unit 9, Lesson 5, page 120) of such type of speaking task is where learners are instructed to act a role play dialogue between a TV reporter and a chief engineer of Falcon Hypersonic Technology Vehicle-2, a future aircraft.

120

Things that have changed our life

C Imagine you are a TV reporter. You have come to interview the chief engineer of the HTV-2 Launch Project. What questions will you ask him/her? Design a short dialogue between yourself and the engineer, and write it. Finally act it out in pairs with proper sounds, stress and intonation.

Retaining interest and motivation in the language class is given utmost priority in communicative curriculum. “Content associated with immediate

personal life themes ... is perceived to be more intrinsically interesting than that associated with more remote and abstract topics” (Poupore, 2015). Engaging them in activities and tasks which are not interesting will run the risk of leading them to low task motivation (Brown, 1987: p. 115 in Daskalovska, Koleva, & Ivanovska, 2012) and failure in the language classroom.

Internal Design, Formatting and Lay-out of the book

One of the weak aspects of the textbook is the poor internal design, formatting and lay-out of the book. It is an established truth that fostering learners’ motivation in the language classroom is utmost important for successful learning. Attractive design and formatting of text inside the book can trigger learners’ interest and can help retain motivation of the learners of the tender age, the opposite of which may be instrumental in losing their interest in the tasks and making them demotivated.

This textbook appears to fail in this regard. Enough space is not given between two tasks. Usually in any nicely formatted book, new lesson should start on a new page. But in this book new lesson starts just after where the previous lesson ends, even no space is left to indicate that a new lesson has started. Most of the pages are crammed with too much text and tasks, sometimes including pictures as well. As an example, page 63 can be viewed.

B Now, read the text about Mita, and fill in the departure card in section A on her behalf.

Mita's full name is Mita Sultana Ahmed. She was born on 6 May 1998. She got her passport on June 09, 2010. It's a five-year passport. It will expire on 8 June 2015. After that she has to renew her passport. Her passport number is AB 9842251. She is going to Thailand by Bangladesh Biman, flight number BG 88 on 14 July 2012.

Mita got her visa from the Royal Thai Embassy in Dhaka. Her visa number is T 9115138. The visa was issued in Dhaka on 29 June 2012. The visa is valid for three months. It will expire on September 27, 2012. It is a tourist visa. If you are travelling on a tourist visa, you are not allowed to study or work there.

C Imagine you are travelling to a foreign country. Copy the form in A and fill in with your own information. If you have a passport, use information from it. If you do not have a passport, make your imaginary passport with visa number and expiry date, passport number, date of travel, etc.

D Work in pairs. If you have a passport, tell your partner when you got it and which country/countries you have already visited. If you do not have a passport, would you like to have one? Why?

Lesson 3 : Going through immigration

Key words : departure booth counter scan machine readable

A Look at the pictures and discuss in pairs.

1



2



Vocabulary List and Index

One of the shortcomings of this textbook is no vocabulary list and index has been found anywhere in it. It has not even included a vocabulary section of the words in any lesson. Failure to include a vocabulary list and an index of terms at the end of the book creates challenges for the learners to find out the meaning of the words easily. The inclusion of an index on the last page would help the learners find out the page number of the words they are looking for.

Representation of Minority/Ethnic Groups and Women

After appraising the textbook, it can be stated that the book does not bear any sign of undesirable depictions of ethnic/minority groups or women. Bangladesh is a multi-cultural country with 45 small ethnic living in different parts of the country (Uddin, 2015; Ahmed, 2014; UNESCO, 2013). As per the direction of the English Curriculum (2012) the textbook upholds the cultural diversity in the country. At the very first unit of the book, learners are introduced positively to the ethnic people of Bangladesh living in Chittagong hill-tracts, Sylhet, Mymensing and Rajshahi.

Women are also glorified in the book. It presents and praises the efforts of women by integrating stories of an “*extraordinary woman named Shamima Akhter Maya*” in Unit 5 (Making a difference) of the book. This unit of the book shows how Shamima has “come out as a winner, defying all odds of life (English for Today, p. 45)” and helping other women of her village to be successful. In fact, the stories of Shamima and the life-style of ethnic groups enlighten the learners about the things related to minority/ethnic groups and women.

Cultural Issues

After careful browsing of the pages of the book, it is evident that there is no sign of cultural biases or cultural specificity. It has not included a single incident or task that shows any insult and discrimination to a particular culture, religion, caste, creed etc. which means that it is a culturally appropriate book is for the learners to use.

Teacher's Manual/Guide and Workbook

The national English Language Curriculum (2012, p. 71) developed by National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) clearly states that there will be a *Teacher's Guide* for the teachers which will explain the ways and methods of teaching the textbook and it is the responsibility of NCTB. The general instructions given to the textbook writers in the national English Language Curriculum (2012) indicate that there will be a *Teacher's Guide* for teachers teaching the textbook. But surprising till now since the year (2013) of publishing the first edition of the book, no *Teacher's Guide* is yet developed and delivered to teachers. Without this, it is obviously difficult for the teachers to teach appropriately, since they do not have anything to guide them in teaching and using the content of this textbook. They have to just rely on the textbook itself to come up with appropriate teaching methods.

Besides, 15th general instruction (for the writers of the textbook) mentioned in the National English Language Curriculum (2012, p. 71) states that “Workbooks with appropriate exercises should be produced along with textbooks in order to give students further opportunities for language practice”. But no such workbooks have yet been produced and delivered to the students which limits their further opportunities for language practice.

5.1.2.3 Compliance with the General Instructions given by the NCTB

In the national English Curriculum (2012, p. 71) developed by the NCTB, the textbook writers were instructed to follow twenty-two general instructions (given in the table below) while writing the textbook. In the light of the thorough evaluation of the textbook and on the basis of the above discussion, I

am showing here how satisfactorily the writers and the book have followed the instructions. Each of the twenty-two instructions has been marked under three criteria namely Fully Satisfactory (FS), Mostly Satisfactory (MS) and Not Satisfactory (NS). In the light of the thorough evaluation of the textbook and on the basis of the critical discussion, it can be safely said that only three instructions (13.6%) have been followed fully and eight instructions (36.3%) have been followed mostly, whereas 32% (seven) instructions have not been followed satisfactorily at all. Instructions number 15 (workbook to be with the textbook), 16, 17, and 20 (Teacher’s Guide) are not applicable (N/A) to the writers of the textbook.

| SL # | General Instructions for Writers of Textbooks Classes 6-8 | FS | MS | NS |
|-------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 1 | Textbooks should reflect social and moral values and the spirits of our Liberation War. Materials should be sensitive to issues on gender, cultures, color, race, religion, ethnic groups etc. | 2 | | |
| 2 | Topics and themes should be interesting, realistic, and suitable for learners’ age and cognitive level. Topics may include community, day-to-day activities, environment, health and hygiene, society, culture, history, heritage, ICT, human rights (such as women and children rights) etc. | | 1 | |
| 3 | Topics/activities should be chosen to achieve the main objectives and terminal learning outcomes of the curriculum. | | 1 | |
| 4 | Topics should properly address all educational domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor). | | 1 | |
| 5 | The textbooks should contain authentic texts as needed, and language appropriate to different contexts and cultures. | | | 0 |
| 6 | Instructions should be brief and written in simple English. | 2 | | |
| 7 | The textbooks should include a variety of activities to provide adequate exercises on four language skills. | | | 0 |
| 8 | The textbooks should provide opportunities for learners to | | 1 | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|-----|---|---|
| | learn and practice social interactions through dialogues. | | | |
| 9 | Some language games, puzzles, mini dialogues may be used as exercises for developing language skills through fun and entertainment. | | | 0 |
| 10 | Grammar items should be provided in context in a systematic and graded way. | | 1 | |
| 11 | At each level new vocabulary should be introduced. Vocabulary introduced in previous classes should be revised. | | 1 | |
| 12 | Stress and intonation marks should be shown in the examples and sampled contexts. | | | 0 |
| 13 | The textbook should be attractive and colorful. Illustrations (charts, maps, photos, drawings, diagrams etc.) should be relevant to the contexts/topics. | | 1 | |
| 14 | Indications should be given in the textbooks as to how many periods should be needed for each lesson. | | | 0 |
| 15 | Workbooks with appropriate exercises should be produced along with textbooks in order to give students further opportunities for language practice. | N/A | | |
| 16 | The sound symbol chart should be provided in the <i>Teacher's Guide</i> . | N/A | | |
| 17 | A section on sample classroom instructions (such as for greetings, starting a lesson, common Wh/Yes-No question, monitoring students' activities, checking answers, simple social English) should be provided in the <i>Teacher's Guide</i> . | N/A | | |
| 18 | The textbooks will create opportunities for sound and pronunciation practice as they are graded in the curriculum. | | | 0 |
| 19 | Sounds should be presented with minimal pairs, pictures, flash cards, etc. supported by audio / video CD materials. | | | 0 |
| 20 | Phonetic symbols are not to be used in the textbooks for learners but should be explained in the Teacher's Guide. | N/A | | |
| 21 | Writers have to acknowledge the sources of their collected or adapted materials. | | 1 | |
| 22 | Grammar items should be presented within contexts. | 2 | | |
| * FS= Fully Satisfactory, MS= Mostly Satisfactory, NS= Never Satisfactory | | | | |

Table 5.3: Compliance with the General Instructions given by NCTB

Thus, this research exposes that despite the claims made externally are consistent with the aim of the English curriculum, these claims are not aligned with the internal organization of the book. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between the textbook and the aim of the English curriculum. Although the English curriculum expected that the book would present all four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) following the communicative approach, in reality this expectation is not translated truly in the book. The four English language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) are not likewise offered in the book. The textbook, following the age-old traditional Grammar Translation Method (GTM), has given more focus on reading and writing skills and to some extent on speaking, but listening is grossly ignored.

Although it is recommended in the English curriculum that texts and tasks should be developed and designed focusing on real-life activities, the textbook has been written artificially keeping pedagogical purposes in mind. The topics, themes and materials are developed artificially and they are neither authentic nor suitable for the learners of Grade 8. It offers the students with insufficient materials for listening skills that are required in real-life communication.

It could be very suitable for teaching reading skills and occasionally for teaching writing since it contains several tasks on writing. Even then, reading texts and writing tasks have to be authentic and suitable for the learners of grade 8. Especially, writing tasks have to be guided which can help students scaffolded somehow. Tasks and activities on speaking and listening do not appear to be authentic; artificial, unsuitable and inappropriate language forms and tasks have been used. The pictures used in the book are created too. These are actually poorly drawn images of different objects, places and people. The

internal design and formatting of the book is also poor. The quality of paper and print of the textbook is not satisfactory either.

Therefore, this textbook in its present condition is largely misaligned with the current English curriculum and eventually cannot reach the goals set by the curriculum. It demands immediate revision with suitable and authentic speaking and listening materials along with *Workbooks* for students and a *Teacher's Guide* for teachers.

5.1.3 Analysis of JSC English Test

The JSC English test is a high-stakes public examination. It tests students' reading and writing skills only. As it has already been presented and seen in the before-mentioned table (Table 3.2) in Chapter 3 (which contains the test items and marks distribution for each item of the test), that there is no item in the test format of this test which can assess students' speaking and listening skills. Hence, it can be claimed that listening and speaking skills are not tested at all in this high-stake public examination. The JSC English test consists of four parts. Each part of the JSC English test includes different kinds of activities and tasks.

Part A (20 marks) and Part B (25 marks) test JSC examinees' reading skill and stock of vocabulary. All the texts needed for the question-items 1, 2 and 3 in Part A is taken from the textbook, and hence, this part is tagged as *Seen Part*. The question-items 1 and 2 in this part (Part A) are based on a reading text which is directly taken from the textbook to test students' reading ability.

These two question-items are noticeable evidence of an invalid test, because the examinees have already read this text several times before they actually face it in the examination hall. These two items would be valid if the text is re-written or paraphrased and then set in the question paper.

Question-item number 3 (in Part A) test examinees' stock of vocabulary where they have to read a similar text (that is also available in the textbook but not in the same language forms and words, i.e. re-written or paraphrased) with five missing words. They have to read it and fill in the gaps with appropriate words to make it a meaningful one.

None of the texts/sentences of the next five question items (4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) in Part B, however, is taken from the textbook. Hence, this part is tagged as the *Unseen Part*. The question-item 4 and 5 again test examinees' reading skill, but as it has been said the reading text based on which these two questions are set is unfamiliar to the examinees.

The next two question items (4 and 5) in Part B are also based on a reading text to again test students' reading ability, but this time the text is not taken from the textbook. In question-item 4, they have to complete an incomplete table with appropriate information from the given reading passage/text. In question-item 5, there are five statements given. They have to determine whether these five sentences are true or false. Besides, they have to provide correct answers if any or all of these statements are incorrect or false.

In question-item number 6, they have to read an incomplete text and fill-in the gaps using the clues/words given in the boxes along with the text, while in question-item number 7, they have to do the same but this time without

having any given clues/words. The last question of this part is question-item number 8 where they have to match the part of sentences from column A with those in column B to make five complete sentences.

Part C (25 marks) exclusively test JSC examinees' grammar skills. Hence, this part is tagged as the *Grammar Part*. In question-item number 9, they have to read a text and fill in the gaps with the root words in the brackets adding suitable suffix, prefix or both. In question-item 10, they have to fill in the gaps in the given text with appropriate articles (a, an or the) or put a cross (x) where no article is used. In question-item 11, they have to change the five given sentences as directed in the brackets. In question-item 12, they have to rewrite a text/passage changing the form of speech and in question-item 13, use capital letters and punctuation marks as needed in another given text/passage.

Part D (30 marks) exclusively test JSC examinees' writing skills. Hence, this part is tagged as the *Writing Part*. In the very first item of this part (question-item number 14), they are given a situation and they have to write a dialogue based on a given situation. For instance, "*Suppose, you are Rabid and you are in a restaurant with your sister. Make a dialogue between you and the waiter before ordering your meal*" (Source: THE NCTB sample question for JSC English test, see Appendix-5). This question-item is another noticeable evidence of invalid test, because, involving learners in a dialogue is meant for assessing their speaking skill, not writing skill. Since speaking skill is not tested at all in this high-stakes public examination, such invalid test item is included to test learners' speaking skill in the disguise of writing item. The

question-item number 15 test their email writing skill. They are given a situation and they have to write an email based on the given situation.

An example from the NCBT sample question for the JSC English Test can be cited here (see Appendix-5).

“A social organization in your locality is hiring some volunteers for a fund-raising event. Write an email to the coordinator of that organization to be a volunteer for the event. The email can be sent to abcd123@charity.org.bd. In your email, you should write a subject line, use proper salutation/greetings, give a brief introduction of you, express your interest in the role of a volunteer, mention why you are interested to work as a volunteer and write a closing remark, your name, and contact address.”

The last item (question-item number 16) of this part and of the JSC English test is writing a paragraph. The JSC Candidates are given a situation and they have to write a paragraph based on the given situation. An example from the NCTB sample question for JSC English Test can be cited here.

“Write a paragraph in 150 words on the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear families. Your writing should address the following questions: What is a nuclear family? What are the advantages of a nuclear family? What are the disadvantages of a nuclear family? What kind of family do you prefer and why?”

However, the review of the test-items of this JSC English examination demonstrates that this test can be termed as “construct under-representation” and “construct irrelevant” (Spurgeon, 2017, p. 275). For ensuring test validity, a test should avoid two major flaws (Spurgeon, 2017; Messick, 1996). The first one is “construct under-representation, where, for

instance, neither speaking nor listening skills are tested in a communicative competence-based test” and the other one is “being construct irrelevant, where, for instance, teachers pay unduly marked attention to grammar points in a communicative-based test” (Onaiba, 2013, p. 43). This JSC English test could not avoid any of these two flaws.

5.1.3.1 Misalignment between the textbook and the examination

The *EfT* textbook made an attempt to include activities and tasks with a view to teaching four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in line with English Curriculum. But, the JSC English test only test learners’ reading and writing skills. Therefore, there is no point in finding the alignment of speaking and listening skills in any element, since this is misaligned with the tasks and activities given in the textbook. The JSC English test, as it is found in the before-mentioned table (Table 3.2) in Chapter 3, includes 16 question-items: four of them (Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5 and Q8) are set to test the reading skills of the examinees. On the other hand, three of them (Q3, Q6, and Q7) are there to assess their stock of vocabulary, and five of them (Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12 and Q13) are set to test the grammatical skills of the examinees. At the end part of the test, three of them (Q14, Q15, and Q16) are set to assess the writing skills of the examinees (see Appendix-5 for sample questions produced by NCTB).

The following table (5.4) shows the alignment between the textbook activities and JSC English test items.

| | MCQs | Short Answer Questions | Gap Filling | Info Transfer | True/False | Cloze Test with Clues | Cloze Test without Clues | Matching | Change of Speech | Punctuation | Articles | Changing Sentences | Suffix and Prefix | Dialogue | Email | Paragraph |
|----|------|------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------|------------------|-------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------|----------|-------|-----------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 | Q9 | Q10 | Q11 | Q12 | Q13 | Q14 | Q15 | Q16 |
| U1 | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| U2 | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| U3 | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| U4 | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| U5 | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| U6 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| U7 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| U8 | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| U9 | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |

(U1-9= Units from the textbooks; Q1-Q16= Question items from the exam questions; (✓) = Question items included as activities)

Table 5.4: Alignment between the English for Today and JSC English Test

The above table (5.4) outlines that tasks such as short answer questions, matching, dialogue-practice and paragraph writing (Q2, Q8, Q14, and Q16) are found in almost all the 9 units of the book. Gap filling activities (Q3) have been included in almost half of the units of the book. On the other hand, the textbook has not created sufficient practice opportunities for question-items e.g., information transfer, cloze test with clues, and cloze test without clues

(Q4, Q6, and Q7), while no direct practice tasks and activities related to changing speech (Q9), using capital letter and punctuation (Q10), use of articles (Q11), changing sentences (Q12), use of suffix and prefix (Q13) and writing email (Q15) has been found in the book. However, these question-items have their place in the supplementary book named *English Grammar and Composition* which was only recently developed and delivered to the students from 2017 solely to “create opportunities to practice grammar in context and use language accurately” (as it is mentioned in the Preface of *EfT*).

Bachman (2000) emphasizes that to prove itself as a test for communicative language testing, the items of a test have to include tasks that measure learners’ language skills. He complements that the objectives of the test should respond to the objectives of the curriculum. On the other hand, Andrews (2004) warns that if a test fails to reciprocate the objectives of the curriculum, it produces negative washback on the language teaching-learning process.

As it has been already discussed, one of the reading passages is taken directly from the textbook which is an indication that while designing the items of the test the core principles of CLT based on which the curriculum is developed are not followed. Setting text directly from the textbook in the test encourages memorization, which is strongly discouraged both by the JSC English curriculum, and the textbook.

For a test designer, the initial thing in designing a test should be to consider thoroughly about language use in the target language use (TLU) domain. The objective of this is to generate test tasks that match TLU tasks so that

examinees' performance on the test largely replicates target language use (Bachman, & Palmer, 2010). But in this case (JSC English test), a number of the items hardly resemble tasks in TLU domain, i.e. the items of the JSC English test does not contain any items which may resemble everyday situations of examinees' life. Out of the insignificant number of tasks, tasks on writing skill assessment (Q14, 14, and 16) are the ones that embody realistic tasks in the test. Apart from these, other tasks (both in multiple type format and those in constructed response formats) also loosely relate to learners' everyday life situations. Thus, this test fails to assess learners' performance to use the target language in real-life situations.

Externally, the activities given in the textbook appear to be aligned with the test activities. However, adequate practice opportunities for writing email (Q15) and paragraph writing (Q16) have neither been found in *English for Today*, the 'mother textbook' nor in *English Grammar and Composition*, the complementary book. Consequently, teachers and learners are compelled to resort to commercially produced books for practice.

The validity and reliability of the JSC English test with regard to the objectives of the English syllabus and to the coverage of the English curriculum are considered doubtful. The current curriculum adopted the communicative language teaching approach to teaching and learning English with the expectation that the current textbook along with the complementary one would play an instrumental role in fostering the communicative competence of students. The English curriculum lauded that a sufficient number of communicative exercises had been inserted, and learners would get ample opportunities for practice of the four language skills and their English skill will boost up. But disappointingly, learners on their own could not practice all four language skills because, no supplementary workbook came with the textbook.

Thus, in the light of the discussion, it can be claimed that the textbook for English mostly aligns with the objectives of the curriculum, but there are signs of misalignment with the test format. Hence, despite the syllabus and curriculum being communicative in nature; and the textbook has been produced with a communicative approach of language teaching and learning, the examinees are not assessed and tested communicatively; that is to say, communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) of the students is not assessed and tested in the JSC English examination. Such a phenomenon happens because of a lack of coordination among the NCTB, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), and the education boards who have their autonomous role. NCTB is responsible for designing and producing the curriculum, and the textbook, DSHE is responsible for supervising classroom practices of the teachers, and the eight education boards have been shouldered the responsibilities of developing question papers and administering the examinations in the country, although all of these organizations function under one bigger organization, i.e., the Ministry of Education (Sultana, 2019, p. 117).

5.1.4 Analysis of Commercially produced materials

The document study reveals that there are a number of commercially produced materials available in the market for the JSC English test candidates. These are: 1) note-books or guide books, 2) JSC English Grammar and Composition book, 3) JSC Model Questions book, 4) JSC English Test Papers, 5) JSC English Suggestions book.

The analysis of these books explores that note-book or guide book includes the Bangla equivalent translation of the reading texts of *English for Today* (the textbook), list of vocabulary with their Bangla equivalent meanings,

solutions/answers to all the tasks and activities included in *English for Today* etc., while JSC English Grammar and Composition book includes chapter-wise discussion and practice items of different grammatical forms and structures (e.g. parts of speech, types of sentences, transformation of sentences, the right form of verbs, appropriate preposition, use of articles, changing speech (direct/indirect speech), vocabulary exercises (cloze test with and without clues), chapters on writing skill (paragraph, composition, essay, letter, email writing etc.).

The JSC English Model Question book, on the other hand, contains 50 or more 100 model questions resembling the actual JSC English test question paper. These model questions are mock questions meant for the JSC candidates so that they can familiarize themselves with the test format and test contents and prepare themselves as the test demands.

It was explored that publishers of the commercially produced exam materials collected English question papers mostly from famous schools of the country just after the test examination (i.e. the mock examination held at all schools of the country which resembles the JSC examination and passing this mock examination is mandatory to get the permission to sit for the JSC examination) was over and also the question papers of several past years' JSC English test, and published them in a book commonly named "*Test Papers*".

The JSC English Suggestions book contains a list of probable reading texts, grammatical tasks and activities, vocabulary parts (cloze test with and without clues), and also the list of probable topics of paragraph, composition, essay, letter, email and dialogue writing etc. along with sample answers for each of these items.

5.1.5 Findings from Teacher and Student Questionnaires

5.1.5.1 The Questionnaire Surveys

Questionnaire surveys were administered to the responding students and teachers in this doctoral study to survey their beliefs in the JSC examination in English, and their views of its impact on English education, their understandings of language teaching and learning, and about what these respondents considered as fruitful means of English teaching. Thirty-two (32) teachers and five hundred (500) students participated in the survey questionnaire. Both of these respondents answered the questions on the JSC English syllabus and curriculum, teaching materials and aids, teaching-learning methods, activities and tasks done in the classrooms and, language skills practiced, and respondents' attitudes, perception and beliefs towards the JSC English test. The results and findings of statistical analyses of the questionnaire data have been presented here. In such cases where the data yielded the decimal numbers, these had been rounded off considering the convenience of reporting. Two questionnaires: teacher questionnaire and student questionnaire had been employed in this doctoral research study. This survey questionnaire had five sections on five domains. Every section had several questions. Each survey questionnaire had thirty-five (35) questions spreading over five sectioned shown in the table below.

| SL | Sections | Items |
|-----------|---|--------------|
| 1 | Curriculum and Syllabus (1-4) | 4 items |
| 2 | Textbook and other Aids and Materials (5-13) | 9 items |
| 3 | Teaching Approaches and Methods (14-20) | 7 items |
| 4 | Classroom Tasks and Activities (21-28) | 8 items |
| 5 | Attitudes and Perception towards the JSC English test (29-35) | 7 items |

Table 5.5: Section-wise Items in the Questionnaires

The results and findings of this doctoral study are presented based on the above five major themes. All of these themes are related to the research questions set in this doctoral study.

In order to do quantitative analysis for this doctoral study descriptive statistics (e.g., frequency counts, means, standard deviations, variance etc.) was administered. The researcher had tabulated and converted the responses of the respondents for every statement into percentages. Then the percentages had been tabulated to permit a clear understanding and interpretation of the data so that readers can have a glance at the responses distributed across both the groups of respondents. As the responses in the study were essentially binary, the two types of 'strongly agree' and 'agree' were merged into one type of *agreement*. On the other hand, 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' were merged into one type of *disagreement* so that the results and its associated discussion could be conveniently done.

The statements seeking the probable response of the respondents employed a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932). The statements, on the scale, were labeled as Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, and Strongly Agree=5. An expert statistician had been consulted in categorizing the analytical levels of approximating values of mean scores and standard deviations, variance etc. of every statement of each of the questionnaires.

5.1.5.2 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

As the statements in both the questionnaire survey (teacher questionnaire and student questionnaire) were ordered by themes, the findings elicited from the statements have also been presented thematically here. The same areas of English testing and teaching were used in the construction of both the questionnaires. Moreover, an equal number of statements were there in each of the domains in both the questionnaires. Consequently, presentation and discussion of the findings and results from both the questionnaire surveys (teacher questionnaire and student questionnaire) have been done concurrently using data from statistical analyses.

5.1.5.3 English Syllabus and Curriculum

The responses of the respondents for every statement in the syllabus and curriculum part of the questionnaire were analyzed and presented in this section. The researcher made an attempt to validate the findings by cross referencing. The interpretation of the results and findings had explored the washback of the JSC English examination on English teaching and learning.

In the questionnaire, this section had 4 statements/questions which talked about a number of issues: (a) cognizance of the syllabus and curriculum objectives (S1), (b) use of contents of the syllabus and curriculum in the class (S2, S3), and (c) aims of curriculum and language skills' practice and test (S4).

5.1.5.3.1 Participants' Awareness of the JSC Curriculum Objectives

Statement 1 (S1) inquired whether teachers and learners were “aware of the objectives of JSC curriculum and syllabus”. The findings exposed that 81% of the students (M=2.63, SD=1.03) and 69% of the teachers (M=3.06, SD=1.06) answered (disagree and strongly disagree) that they were not aware of the objectives, which means that only one-fifth of the sampled students and one-third of the sampled teachers are very familiar with the objectives of the JSC English curriculum.

For the first Statement (S1), students' mean was 2.63 while teachers' mean was 3.06. The teachers' mean (M=3.06) was greater than the students' mean (M=2.63). It was found that the teachers' score is higher than the students' score. The difference was $(3.06 - 2.63 =) 0.43$. The difference, although, is not too high, it can be interpreted as it is obvious and more likely that teachers' score will be higher in this regard, since teachers' professional responsibility demands their better acquaintance with syllabus and curriculum. Hence, their score for obvious reasons will be higher than students.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S1 | 2.63 | 1.03 |
| Teacher S1 | 3.06 | 1.06 |

Table 5.6: Descriptive Statistics (Participants' Awareness of Curriculum Objectives)

5.1.5.3.2 Classroom Teaching and Learning of the Syllabus and Curriculum

S2 enquired whether the teachers taught every section of *English for Today*, the textbook in the classroom. In reply to S2, almost half of the sampled teachers (56%, M=2.49, SD=1.07) and more than two-third of the learners (71%, M=2.40, SD=1.08) mentioned that teachers did not teach every section of the textbook or syllabus in the classroom. S8 (a cross-referencing statement) wanted to know whether teachers skipped and ignored some of the lessons of the textbook that were not or less expected to be set in the JSC examination. The results from this statement (S8) correlate with the findings of S2. More than two-thirds of the sampled teachers and three-fourth of the students confessed that they ignore skipped some of the sections of the syllabus, because they believed that tasks from these lessons are less likely to be tested in the JSC examination.

S3 wanted to know whether the participants “felt pressure to cover the syllabus before the examination”. In reply, more than two-thirds of the sampled students (69%, M=3.71, SD=1.02) and almost three-fourth of the sampled teachers (73%, M=3.74, SD=1.09) stated that they felt pressure to complete the syllabus.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S2 | 2.49 | 1.07 |
| Teacher S2 | 2.40 | 1.08 |
| Student S3 | 3.71 | 1.02 |
| Teacher S3 | 3.74 | 1.09 |

Table 5.7: Descriptive Statistics (Teaching the syllabus and Textbook)

5.1.5.3.3 Alignment between the aims of the JSC English

Curriculum and the JSC English Test

S4 asked whether the JSC English test aligned with the goals of the JSC English curriculum, i.e., achieving communicative competence. In this regard, 60% of the teachers (M=2.76, SD=1.01) and more than two-thirds of the sampled students (69%, M=2.43, SD=1.08) believed that the JSC English test did not align with the objectives of the JSC English curriculum.

This particular statement positively triangulated with the analysis and evaluation of the JSC English test, in-depth interviews with the English teachers, focused group interviews with the students and the classroom observation.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S4 | 2.76 | 1.01 |
| Teacher S4 | 2.43 | 1.08 |

Table 5.8: Descriptive Statistics (Lack of Alignment between Curriculum and Test)

5.1.5.4 Textbooks and other Teaching Materials

S5-S13 of the questionnaires reveal the attitudes and perception of the participants towards different teaching-learning materials including textbooks, and their use in the classroom. The assumptions related to the washback effect of the JSC English test can be received from their replies.

5.1.5.4.1 Salient features of *English for Today* (for Class 8)

Section B of the questionnaires had 9 statements. Both of the respondents had to give their opinion on the same 9 statements. As the statements of the questionnaires were presented theme-wise, the presentation of findings from these statements are also presented thematically. In this section, 5 salient themes based on different teaching-learning materials including textbooks are presented: (a) teachers' sharing of the objectives of the lessons with the learners in the classroom (S5), (b) exercises given in the textbook (S6), (c) reducing of the contents of the textbook and syllabus by both group of the participants (S7, S8 and S12), (c) their opinion on the suitability of the textbook for developing students' communicative competence, (S9 and S11), (d) their reliance on the test-related materials (S10 and S13).

5.1.5.4.2 Sharing the Objectives of the Lessons with Students

S6 in the survey questionnaires inquired if the teachers communicated the objectives of the lessons to their students, because previous studies related to setting and communicating lesson/learning objectives to the learners show positive outcomes (Glaser & Brunstein, 2007; Mooney, Ryan, Uhing, Reid, & Epstein, 2005). In reply to the statement (S5), nearly all the students (82%, $M= 2.04$, $SD=1.09$) informed that their teacher did not share the objectives of the lessons with them. The majority of the teachers, 71% ($M=2.17$, $SD=1.03$), also agreed with the statement. These findings correlate with S1 where the majority of the teachers and learners informed that they were not “aware of the objectives of JSC curriculum and syllabus.”

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S5 | 2.04 | 1.09 |
| Teacher S5 | 2.17 | 1.03 |

Table 5.9: Descriptive Statistics (Sharing Lesson Objectives with Students)

5.1.5.4.3 Perceptions and Attitudes towards the Textbook

S6, S7, S9 and S11 focused on perceptions and attitudes of the respondents towards the textbook (*English for Today*). In reply to S6, nearly three-fourth of the sampled students (72%, M=4.02, SD =1.03) and more than two-thirds of the sampled teachers (69%, M=3.93, SD =1.01) opined that the textbook included adequate exercises for practice and that the English curriculum (2012) claimed.

In response to S9, three-fourth of the sampled students (74%, M=3.81, SD =1.02) and 63% of the teachers (M=3.41, SD =1.02) believed that the JSC English textbook was suitable and appropriate for practicing so as to develop learners' communicative competence in English. In reply to S11, again nearly three-fourth of the sampled students (72%, M=3.81, SD =1.09) and seven in ten teachers (70%, M=3.69, SD =1.01) opined that the contents of the *English for Today* were stimulating and interesting. These results lead to affirm the claims made by the publisher of the book (i.e. the NCTB) that it was designed and developed following the principles of the communicative English curriculum inserting interesting materials.

On the other hand, in reply to S7, two-third of the students (66%, M= 3.59, SD =1.01) admitted that they did not go through the lessons of textbook attentively and seriously while three-fourth of the teachers (75%, M= 3.62, SD =1.09) believed their students were unwilling to study the textbook. These opinions of the respondents can be corroborated through the cross-referencing by S8 and S10. The replies from both the statements (S8 and S10) reinforced the views of sampled students and teachers on this point (S7).

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S6 | 4.02 | 1.03 |
| Teacher S6 | 3.93 | 1.01 |
| Student S7 | 3.69 | 1.01 |
| Teacher S7 | 3.62 | 1.09 |
| Student S9 | 3.81 | 1.02 |
| Teacher S9 | 3.41 | 1.02 |
| Student S11 | 3.81 | 1.09 |
| Teacher S11 | 3.69 | 1.51 |

Table 5.10: Descriptive Statistics (Participants' Attitude towards Textbook)

5.1.5.4.4 Skipping and Narrowing the Contents of the textbook

S8 and S12 focused on the respondents' choice of the contents of the textbook, and their apprehension about the JSC English test. Three-fourth of the sampled students (75%, M=3.87, SD=1.00) found their teachers skipping certain parts of the textbook and thus narrowing the syllabus because these skipped contents had less possibility to be tested in the JSC English test.

Nearly the same percentage of teachers (70%, $M=3.67$, $SD=1.09$) confirmed their students' claim. On a similar note (S12), the same percentage of students (74%, $M= 3.81$, $SD =1.01$) voiced their concern that they would have performed poorly in the JSC English test if they had to go through the entire textbook. 63% of the teachers ($M= 3.49$, $SD =1.06$) had a similar opinion on this point.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S8 | 3.87 | 1.00 |
| Teacher S8 | 3.67 | 1.09 |
| Student S12 | 3.81 | 1.01 |
| Teacher S12 | 3.49 | 1.06 |

Table 5.11: Descriptive Statistics (Skipping and Narrowing the content)

These opinions of the respondents can be validated and corroborated through the cross-referencing by S2 and S8. The replies from both the statements (S2 and S8) reinforced the views of sampled students and teachers demonstrating that the teachers encouraged the learners to practice those tasks and activities that were more likely to be tested and skipped those which were less likely or unlikely to be tested in the JSC English examination.

5.1.5.4.5 Use of Test- Related Materials

S10 and S13 focused on the use of test- related and/or authentic materials used in the classroom. Almost all the students (83%, $M=3.73$, $SD=1.08$) and a large majority of the teachers (65%, $M=3.58$, $SD =1.03$) admitted that they

depended on the test-related materials (such as guidebooks, test papers, past questions, and model questions, suggestion book, etc.) to prepare for the preparation of the JSC English examination (S10), which Caine (2005, p. 11) termed as a “hidden syllabus”.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S10 | 3.73 | 1.08 |
| Teacher S10 | 3.58 | 1.03 |

Table 5.12: Descriptive Statistics (Use of Teaching Materials)

On the other hand, in reply to S13, both the groups of respondents (84% students and 81% teachers) have the same opinion that authentic materials (e.g. newspaper articles, radio and television, news bulletin, texts of real-life incidents, etc.) and modern equipment/technology besides textbook for the students’ practice of English language had not been used in the classroom.

5.1.5.5 Teaching Methods and Approaches

This part (C) of the survey questionnaires comprised 7 statements (S14-S20). These items of the questionnaires were on teachers’ use of teaching methods in the classroom. The different features of teachers’ teaching methods used in the classroom are: (a) language of instructions in the classroom (S14, S17, and S18), (b) teachers’ encouragement to the students (Q15), (c) teachers’ teaching to the JSC test (Q17, and Q19), and (d) reflection of students’ language ability through test score (S20).

5.1.5.5.1 Teachers' Language of Instruction

S14, and S16 inquired about the teachers' medium of instruction in the classroom. In reply to S14, 59% teachers (M=3.13, SD=1.08) and 68% students (M=3.21, SD=1.02) informed that the teachers did not use English to clarify the text in the classroom. S16, a cross-referencing statement, showed that 78% of the teachers (M=3.67, SD=1.01) and 82% of the students (M=3.63, SD=1.03) specified that Bangla along with English was used as the languages of instructions in the classroom.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S14 | 3.21 | 1.02 |
| Teacher S14 | 3.13 | 1.08 |
| Student S16 | 3.63 | 1.03 |
| Teacher S16 | 3.67 | 1.01 |

Table 5.13: Descriptive Statistics (teachers' medium of instructions)

5.1.5.5.2 Teachers' Encouragement and Motivation

S15 questioned whether teachers encouraged the students to speak English in the class. Nearly two-thirds of the students (64%, M=2.66, SD =1.05) informed that their English teacher had not encouraged them to ask any question while about one in six teachers (58%, M=2.83, SD =1.02) agreed with their students' comment.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S15 | 2.66 | 1.05 |
| Teacher S15 | 2.83 | 1.02 |

Table 5.14: Descriptive Statistics (teachers' encouragement to speak English)

5.1.5.5.3 Teaching to the Test

S17 questioned whether English teachers taught their students whatever they liked to teach. In response, 83% of the students (M= 2.46, SD=1.09) and 72% of the teachers (M= 2.37, SD=1.08) informed that English teachers' preference and choice of chapters and topics got priority in the classroom teaching and learning.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S17 | 2.46 | 1.09 |
| Teacher S17 | 2.37 | 1.08 |

Table 5.15: Descriptive Statistics (Choice of topic and test taking strategies)

In retort to S19, two-thirds of the sampled students (66% M= 2.54, SD=1.04) informed that their English teachers hardly involved them to practice on learning and speaking English, instead they were taught the strategies to answer to the English questions to ensure high score and good grade. In line with their students' retort, half of the English teachers (50% M= 2.67,

SD=1.07) confirmed that their students were taught how to prepare themselves for the final/JSC examination.

5.1.5.5.3 Indication and Reflection of the JSC Examination Results

Statement#20 inquired whether the test result/scores of the JSC English examination were believed to be a proper meter of a JSC student's English language ability. In response to this, two-thirds of the students (65%, M=2.72, SD=1.05) confirmed that they did not consider the scores of JSC English examination as an appropriate indicator of their English language proficiency, while eight in ten English teachers (81%, M=2.19, SD=1.04) spoke in the same tone following their students that the scores of JSC English examination failed to reflect their students' English language ability.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S20 | 2.72 | 1.05 |
| Teacher S8 | 2.19 | 1.04 |

Table 5.16: Descriptive Statistics (Indication and Reflection of JSC Results)

S4, the cross-referencing question, inquired whether the JSC English test could gauge JSC student's English language proficiency. Responding to this statement, seven in ten students (69%, M=2.43, SD=1.08) and six in ten teachers (60%, M=2.76, SD=1.01) informed that this English test was not an appropriate test which could reflect real English teaching and learning or English language proficiency.

5.1.5.6 Classroom Tasks and Activities

This part (D) of the survey questionnaires comprised 8 statements (S21-S28). These items of the questionnaires were on the classroom tasks and activities that were done in the classroom, and their relation with the washback effect of the JSC English Test. The main issues presented and discussed here are: (a) preferred tasks and activities (S21 and S23), (b) practicing model test (S22), and (c) examination pressure and teaching learning strategies (Q24 and Q25) and (d) language skills practiced in the classroom.

5.1.5.6.1 Classroom Tasks and Activities Preferences

Statement 21 and 23 inquired about the teachers and students' preferred tasks and activities in the classroom. The findings showed that 76% of the students ($M=2.87$, $SD=1.04$) and 59% of the teachers ($M=2.94$, $SD=1.09$) greatly engaged themselves in the test-oriented tasks and activities and disregarded the tasks and activities which were not likely to be tested and required to pass the English test (statement 21).

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S21 | 2.87 | 1.04 |
| Teacher S21 | 2.94 | 1.09 |
| Student S23 | 2.97 | 1.01 |
| Teacher S23 | 3.58 | 1.07 |

Table 5.17: Descriptive Statistics (Tasks and Activities Preferences)

In reply to the statement 23, three fourth of the students (73%, $M=2.97$, $SD=1.01$) informed that more time was used on practicing grammar, reading, writing and vocabulary related tasks since these were tested mostly in the JSC test. Two-thirds of the sampled teachers (64%, $M=3.58$, $SD=1.07$) agreed with their students' response to the same statement.

5.1.5.6.2 Practice of Model Tests and Preparation Tests

Statement# 22 probed whether students were offered model/mock tests and made to practice and solve the items of the previous years' examination questions papers so that they could prepare themselves as the test demanded. In reply to this, almost the same percentage of English teachers (91%, M= 3.06, SD=1.09) and students (87%, M=2.88, SD=1.06) admitted that English teachers offered model/mock tests and made to practice and solve the items of the previous years' examination questions papers so that they could familiarize themselves with the test format and test contents and prepare themselves as the test demanded.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S22 | 2.88 | 1.06 |
| Teacher S22 | 3.06 | 1.09 |

Table 5.18: Descriptive Statistics (Use of model/mock test and past papers)

5.1.5.6.3 Examination Pressure and Test-taking Strategies

Statement# 24 probed whether the JSC examination hampered English teaching and learning. While responding to this, two-thirds of the students (67%, M=2.87, SD=1.05) confirmed that they could hardly concentrate on learning English due to examination pressure. Similarly, English teachers (74%, M=2.97, SD=1.01) believed that the JSC test impeded their students' English learning.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S24 | 2.87 | 1.05 |
| Teacher S24 | 2.97 | 1.01 |
| Student S25 | 2.91 | 1.02 |
| Teacher S25 | 3.23 | 1.09 |

Table 5.19: Descriptive Statistics (Exam Pressure and Hindrance of learning)

Statement# 25 queried whether the English teachers offered guidelines for the JSC English test and demonstrated their students the JSC English test taking strategies. 83% of students (M=2.91, SD= 1.02) informed that their English teachers offered guidelines for the JSC English test and demonstrated their students the JSC English test-taking strategies. Likewise, 79% of teachers (M=3.23, SD=1.09) agreed with their students' confession.

5.1.5.6.4 Choice of Skills, Tasks and Activities

A couple of statements (S26- S28) were set for the teachers and students to inquire about which language skills were taught and practiced in the classroom. S26 asked whether the JSC examination influenced teachers' decisions on which language skills were more important to be taught in the class. Seven in ten teachers (71%, M= 2.97, SD=1.01) informed that the JSC examination influenced their choice of skills to be taught and practiced in the classroom. More than two-thirds of the students (69%, M= 3.05, SD= 1.05) replied that the class tasks and activities they were engaged in were designed

by their teacher and they practiced the language activities and skills following his design and decision.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S26 | 3.05 | 1.05 |
| Teacher S26 | 2.97 | 1.01 |
| Student S27 | 2.82 | 1.09 |
| Teacher S27 | 2.54 | 1.04 |

Table 5.20: Descriptive Statistics (JSC Test's influence on choice of skills)

On the other hand, Statement# 27 probed whether listening skill was taught and practiced in the classroom. In reply, 84% of students (M= 2.82, SD=1.49) confirmed that they did not practice listening skill in the classroom. Teachers (76%, M=2.54, SD=1.34) agreed that listening skill were not taught and practiced in the classroom. S28 queried if speaking skill was taught and practiced in the classroom. In reply, 67% of students (M=2.49, SD=1.42) confirmed that they did not practice speaking skill in the classroom. Teachers (61%, M=2.68, SD=1.09) agreed that speaking skill were not taught and practiced in the classroom.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S28 | 2.49 | 1.04 |
| Teacher S28 | 2.68 | 1.09 |

Table 5.21: Descriptive Statistics (Skills taught in the classroom)

5.1.5.7 Beliefs, Attitudes and Perception as to the Test

Teachers' and students' attitudes and beliefs about a language test are generally reciprocated to their attitudes and beliefs in teaching and learning of that language. S29 to S35 were set to explore teachers' and students' attitudes and beliefs towards the JSC English test. The key features explored in this section of the questionnaire survey were: (a) pressure on teachers and students from the external and internal source for good results in the JSC examination (Q29, Q33, and Q35), (b) tension and anxiety for the JSC examination (Q31), and (c) perception to English test and its effect on students' future life (Q30, Q32, and Q34).

5.1.5.7.1 Perception of External Pressure and English Proficiency

S29 enquired whether the respondents had undergone internal and external pressure for better scores. More than two-thirds of the students (69%, $M=3.21$, $SD= 1.09$) regretted that they felt pressure from their parents, relatives and school authorities to score high grades. Similarly, external pressures (e.g. authority, guardians) to achieve a high passing rate and good grades in the JSC examination posed a challenge for the majority of the teachers (66%, $M=3.13$, $SD=1.06$).

S33 explored that students (83%, $M= 3.57$, $SD=1.05$) had a firm belief that if they were not pressurized to cut a good figure in the JSC test, it would be easy for them to learn English. In a similar tone, teachers (87%, $M=3.69$, $SD=1.07$) agreed that their students could learn English better from them if they felt no pressure from school authorities and guardians.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S29 | 3.21 | 1.09 |
| Teacher S29 | 3.13 | 1.06 |
| Student S33 | 3.57 | 1.05 |
| Teacher S33 | 3.69 | 1.07 |

Table 5.22: Descriptive Statistics (External Pressure on Participants)

In response to S30, the respondents surprisingly confirmed that the students could cut high scores without improving English language proficiency. Three-fourth of the students (74%, M=3.91, SD=1.08), and almost all teachers (87%, M=3.89, SD=1.03) informed that they believed their students could make good score even if they could not achieve the expected level of English language proficiency.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S30 | 3.91 | 1.08 |
| Teacher S30 | 3.89 | 1.03 |

Table 5.23: Descriptive Statistics (Participants' English Score Vs Proficiency)

5.1.5.7.2 Tension and Anxiety resulting from JSC Examination

S31 revealed that almost all the students (82%, M=3.84, SD=1.05) felt tension and anxiety for the JSC English test. Their teachers (74%, M=3.92, SD= 1.02) also had the same feeling for them and their reply reinforced the students' response.

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S31 | 3.84 | 1.05 |
| Teacher S31 | 3.92 | 1.02 |

Table 5.24: Descriptive Statistics (Participants' anxiety for English test)

5.1.5.7.3 Perception towards the JSC English test

The respondents' perception towards the JSC English test is not very positive. S32 inquired whether the existing JSC English test facilitated the students develop and advance their English language proficiency. Responding to the query, 67% of students (M=2.28, SD=1.06) regretted that the current JSC English test did not benefit them to develop their English proficiency. Correspondingly, almost 76% of teachers (M=2.31, SD=1.01) confirmed their students' claim.

It is very common phenomenon that test results generally influence an individual's careers or life chances (e.g. educational and/or employment opportunities). So, the respondents were asked whether it was the same for them also. S34 probed if the result and scores of the JSC English test had any significant impact on students' future career. In reply to this, almost all the students (79%, M=4.08, SD=1.04) and teachers (87%, M=4.10, SD=1.11) confirmed that test results had a significant impact on students' future career (e.g. educational and/or employment opportunities).

| Questionnaire Statement (S) # | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Student S32 | 2.28 | 1.06 |
| Teacher S32 | 2.31 | 1.01 |
| Student S34 | 4.08 | 1.04 |
| Teacher S34 | 4.10 | 1.11 |
| Student S35 | 3.97 | 1.03 |
| Teacher S35 | 4.05 | 1.16 |

Table 5.25: Descriptive Statistics (Participants' Attitude towards the test)

S35 inquired whether it was frustrating or embarrassing for the respondents if students failed or performed poorly. In response to this query, almost all of the students (89%, $M=3.97$, $SD=1.03$) informed that it was embarrassing and frustrating for them if their performance was poor in the examination. A similar percentage of teachers (87%, $M= 4.05$, $SD=1.16$) confirmed that if their students performed poorly or failed in the examination, they felt embarrassed.

5.1.6 Findings from Classroom Observations

It has already been mentioned in chapter 4 (Research Methodology) that one of the major instruments of data collection for the study was classroom observation. 16 English classes of 16 English teachers from the 16 sampled schools were observed using an adaptation of the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) (Green 2007a; Spada & Fröhlich, 1995), and field notes made by the observer in order to explore what English teachers and the learners really do in the classrooms and how they function and interact. Following the ethical principles of the study, the names of the sixteen teachers were kept anonymous and they were labeled as T1 to T16. The duration of each of the classes was 35 to 40 minutes.

This section of the doctoral dissertation presents the findings derived from the analysis of classroom observation data using the COLT. This instrument aims at exploring the instructional process, practices, teaching aids and materials used in a language classroom.

This section of the current chapter presents information from the COLT (part-A) focusing on classroom interaction, the participants' (teachers and

students) control of the content of the English lessons, probable preponderance of teacher led activities, most frequent skills used by the learners and teaching materials exploited.

The observation data received from the instruments was noted. The amount of time (minutes) used up was documented against each heading on the observation schedule (e.g. materials used, participant organization, content of the classroom activities and its control and student modality) during learners' involvement in activities and tasks. The types of language used for interaction in the classroom and the teaching aids and materials applied during the classes were also noted. All the numbers were added to see the total number of minutes for a certain task or activity. This total helps compute the percentage of English class time for each aspect under the different headings within each lesson and across all lessons in the current research.

5.1.6.1 Participant Organization

Following the COLT observation scheme, the observations regarding 'Participant Organization' had been on three main categories: Whole Class Work, Group Work, and Individual Work. The observation showed whether the English teacher was engaged with the whole class or not, whether the learners were working in groups or they were involved in individual work and how it was ordered. Whole Class Work is again categorized into four sub- divisions (i.e. teacher to individual student/class, student/class to teacher, student to student/class, choral), whereas Group Work and Individual Work are categorized into two further sub- divisions (i.e. same

task, different task) (see Appendix-2 for COLT scheme). The findings are tallied in the following table (5.26). This COLT category observed whether the classroom activities done in the classroom concentrated on the teacher or on the students involved as individuals or in groups or as a whole class.

The facts and particulars of the participation organization found in this study are presented in Table 5.26. The patterns of the participant organization in this research were (a) individual work (student-student), (b) group work (students are working on a certain task in groups), (c) pair work (sharing one another, e.g. on dialogue, problem solving, etc.) and (d) teacher to students (such before the lesson activities, directing, lecturing, narrating, explaining, describing, checking answers etc.)

| Participation Organization | Teacher to students (class) | Individual work | Group work | Pair work |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| T1 | 61 | 14 | 8 | 17 |
| T2 | 61 | 24 | 2 | 13 |
| T3 | 63 | 20 | 3 | 14 |
| T4 | 61 | 24 | 6 | 9 |
| T5 | 59 | 21 | 4 | 16 |
| T6 | 67 | 18 | 3 | 12 |
| T7 | 58 | 23 | 7 | 12 |
| T8 | 59 | 7 | 2 | 32 |
| T9 | 63 | 29 | 2 | 6 |
| T10 | 45 | 11 | 15 | 29 |
| T11 | 57 | 26 | 3 | 14 |
| T12 | 57 | 19 | 6 | 18 |
| T13 | 61 | 10 | 5 | 24 |
| T14 | 57 | 26 | 7 | 10 |
| T15 | 62 | 18 | 9 | 11 |
| T16 | 63 | 16 | 6 | 15 |
| Mean | 59.63 | 19.12 | 5.5 | 15.75 |

Table 5.26: Participant organization (%)

Findings from the classroom observation showed that teachers consumed the majority of the time of the class-time. It specifies that the teacher, not the students, was the focal point of the lessons and the lessons were teacher-dominated. In the above table, it is seen that nearly 60% of the total lesson time was consumed by the teachers, while just above 19% and nearly 16% of the time were spent in individual work and pair work respectively. Only 5.5% of time was spent in group work.

As far as individual teacher's practice is concerned, it was noticed that T6 consumed the highest amount of class time for her classroom teaching and it was 67% of the total class time, while T10 used consumed the lowest amount of class time for his classroom teaching and it was 45% of the total class time. He (T10) and T8 engaged their students in a number of pair work activities using a good amount of time (29% and 32% respectively) for pair work.

As far as participant organization is concerned, it was noticed that all of the observed teachers except T10 used maximum lesson time demonstrating that the observed lessons were teacher-centered, not student-oriented. Such classroom practice does not go with the principles of the CLT approach to classroom teaching, although it was noteworthy that T10's lesson was comparatively student-centered. He was also observed to use a considerable amount of English, the target language in the classroom, and engaged his learners in a number of classroom tasks and activities.

The existing JSC English curriculum follows the CLT approach, and the design of the English textbook advocates engaging students in practicing all four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. English lessons at

schools are projected to be communicative where learners participate actively in the lesson tasks and activities through individual works, pair works and group works. But the findings of the classroom observations indicate that teachers were unable to realize expected objectives which have been forwarded by the JSC English syllabus and curriculum. In the figure below (Figure 5.84) it is seen that teachers used on an average 60% of lesson time while just over 19% of the total class time was spent on individual student tasks and activities. On the other hand, nearly 15.75% of lesson time was used for pair work,s whereas only 5.5% of lesson time was utilized for groups.

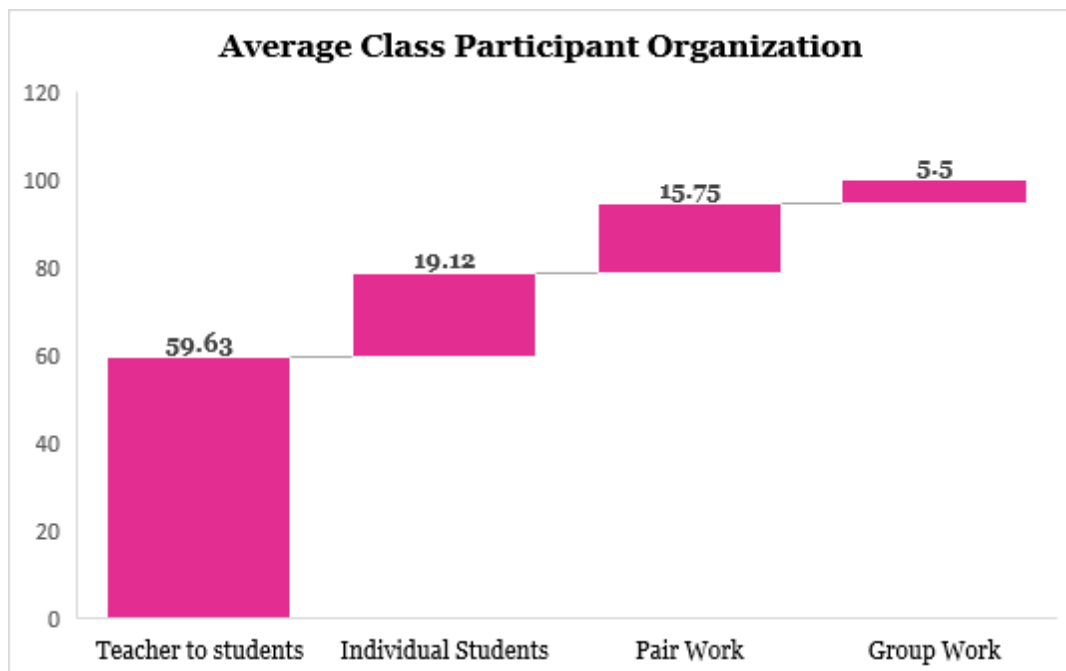


Figure 5.2: Participant organization (%)

5.1.6.2 Teaching Materials Used

The findings and results regarding the different teaching-learning materials used by teachers and students in the classroom have been presented here. The important features about using different teaching-learning materials during the class-hour were noted. The observation recorded besides NCTB recommended textbook (*English for Today*), what other materials including authentic materials were used in the classroom. Care had been taken to note if any adaptations were done to the materials used in the classroom. Table 5.27 below displays the types of teaching-learning materials used in the classroom.

| Teachers | <i>English for Today</i> | Guide Books/ Model Tests/ Test Papers | Authentic Materials | Audio-Visuals |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------|
| T1 | Yes | | | |
| T2 | | Yes | | |
| T3 | | Yes | | |
| T4 | | Yes | | |
| T5 | Yes | | | |
| T6 | | Yes | | |
| T7 | | Yes | | |
| T8 | Yes | | | |
| T9 | | Yes | | |
| T10 | Yes | | Yes | Yes |
| T11 | | Yes | | |
| T12 | Yes | | | |
| T13 | Yes | | | |
| T14 | | Yes | | |
| T15 | | Yes | | |
| T16 | | Yes | | |

Table 5.27: Types of teaching-learning materials used in the classroom

The findings of lesson observation data from all the English lessons observed show that around two-thirds of the teachers (62.5%) depended solely on the commercially produced teaching materials (e.g. model test books, guide

books, or test papers, etc.). Only 37.5% of the teachers used the NCTB produced textbook (English for Today). There is no remarkable variance in the teaching materials used by the teachers except T10 who incorporated authentic visual materials alongside the NCTB produced textbook (*English for Today*). It is important to note that all these commercially produced teaching materials (e.g. model test books, guide books, or test papers, etc.) are solely test-oriented, which indicates the negative washback effect of JSC English test on teaching and learning in general and on the use of teaching-learning materials in particular by teachers and students in the classroom.

5.1.6.3 Classroom Content

This category in the COLT presents the subject matter of the tasks and activities performed in the classroom, which means what is read, written, spoken and listened to. It comprises aspects such as: focus of instruction, the topics covered or taught and management of the classroom. Here it has been expected by the JSC English syllabus and curriculum that English teachers should move away from the traditional GTM, which engrossed more on form of language (grammar), to a more functional approach of language and instruction.

The reason for observing the types of activities during class-hour was to see what types of teaching and learning were conducted through different tasks and activities. By examining the content of these tasks and activities done in the classrooms, the subject matter of these tasks and activities - what the learners and their teachers were reading, speaking, or writing about, or

listening to etc. was explored. These tasks and activities were grouped into student activities and teacher activities. Findings and results received from these were shown as a percentage (%) of lesson time. An analysis of the 16 English lessons/classes of 16 different English teachers (Table 5.28) reported (a) what kinds of tasks and activities were done in the classrooms and how all the lessons were divided according to time given to them, and (b) who was leading and how.

The Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) explores the content of the tasks and activities carried out in the classroom, showing the focus of the lesson – on form or meaning, or a blend. The two key types are (a) language issues and (b) issues resulting from classroom management (procedure). Happenings in the classrooms can again be categorized as narrow (the content of the lesson corresponding to the immediate classroom and the students' immediate environment, and the discussion concentrating on Narrow subjects was confined to a short discussion about students' feelings about test result and their significant relationships, etc.) or incorporates broader issues, the discussion of issues and topics which were beyond the direct concern of the lesson or class room (Broad). The participant organization analysis showed the prevalence of teacher-centered activities. That is echoed in the lesson content in the subcategory called *Procedure*. It consumed just above twelve percent (12.34%) of the lesson time.

Activities and tasks concentrating on both grammar and vocabulary were the most common classroom content. The teaching and learning of vocabulary were mostly significant. The teacher and learners were found to spend their time studying new words, and phrases. The broad items included the

discussion of topics outside the immediate concern of the class room, or test etc. The current doctoral study explored that 61.05% of the total lesson time was spent in the broad topics. Among all teachers, T7 spent two-third (65.69%) of the class time which was the largest amount of time for Broad items, while T10 spent 52.09% of the lesson time, the lowest for the broad items.

The biggest area of content was the *Broad* sub-category, (where JSC English test-related discussions of issues, areas and topics were done) and teachers spent a substantial amount of their lesson time speaking about the JSC English test. Three fourth ($12.34+61.05=73.39\%$) of the total lesson time was spent in the *procedure* and *broad* categories. Only 22.51% of the lesson time was used on items related to English teaching and learning (discourse, function, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, sociolinguistics etc.). The most noteworthy focus was on writing and reading, tailed by vocabulary, and grammar or both and the blend of vocabulary and discourse. The table below (5.28) displays the particulars of classroom contents, activities and tasks:

| Content | T1 | T2 | T3 | T4 | T5 | T6 | T7 | T8 | T9 | T10 | T11 | T12 | T13 | T14 | T15 | T16 | Mn |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Procedural Directives | 13.14 | 17.04 | 8.89 | 12.37 | 12.29 | 16.24 | 9.87 | 19.12 | 14.04 | 7.89 | 11.12 | 9.79 | 14.76 | 16.70 | 15.24 | 11.19 | 12.34 |
| Vocabulary | 4.23 | 5.23 | 4.14 | 4.41 | 10.18 | 3.44 | 4.98 | 3.21 | 5.23 | 5.11 | 8.89 | 3.24 | 4.57 | 2.60 | 4.23 | 9.16 | 5.18 |
| Pronunciation | 1.09 | 2 | 1.10 | 1.10 | 0 | 0.27 | 2.15 | 0 | 1.5 | 1.13 | 0.57 | 1.40 | 0.25 | 1.15 | 1.09 | 0 | 0.92 |
| Grammar | 4.11 | 4.11 | 3.52 | 4.32 | 1.76 | 4.24 | 3.34 | 4.23 | 4.13 | 3.45 | 2.84 | 3.22 | 3.73 | 3.95 | 5.13 | 1.78 | 3.62 |
| Spelling | 1.27 | 1.02 | 1.26 | 0.35 | 2.34 | 0.98 | 1.14 | 0.34 | 1.02 | 1.33 | 1.78 | 1.76 | 0.59 | 0 | 1.27 | 2.33 | 1.17 |
| Function | 1.12 | 1.23 | 1.31 | 1.68 | 0.93 | 2.11 | 1.93 | 1.73 | 1.21 | 1.28 | 1.23 | 1.31 | 1.13 | 1.45 | 1.14 | 0.94 | 1.35 |
| Discourse | 2.08 | 2.16 | 4.18 | 1.96 | 1.23 | 1.12 | 4.21 | 0 | 2.18 | 4.21 | 2.43 | 4.18 | 0.31 | 0.28 | 2.04 | 1.22 | 2.11 |
| Sociolinguistic | 0.05 | 0 | 2.50 | 0.61 | 0.08 | 0 | 0.31 | 0 | 0 | 9.01 | 0.61 | 2.00 | 0.12 | 0 | 0.05 | 0.09 | 0.96 |
| Vocab and Discourse | 1.63 | 1.92 | 1.10 | 2.75 | 2.01 | 1.74 | 0.71 | 4.37 | 1.90 | 1.10 | 2.21 | 1.10 | 4.58 | 1.75 | 1.53 | 1.90 | 2.02 |
| Vocabular and Grammar | 0.53 | 2.45 | 10.85 | 3.56 | 11.59 | 5.01 | 2.55 | 1.84 | 3.45 | 9.34 | 2.13 | 5.55 | 2.84 | 3.25 | 0.53 | 9.20 | 4.67 |
| Narrow | 5.73 | 3.72 | 5.12 | 4.17 | 3.12 | 3.56 | 3.12 | 3.10 | 4.81 | 4.06 | 4.10 | 5.40 | 3.63 | 3.50 | 5.71 | 2.81 | 4.10 |
| Broad | 65.02 | 60.94 | 56.03 | 62.72 | 54.47 | 61.29 | 65.69 | 62.06 | 60.53 | 52.09 | 64.52 | 61.05 | 63.49 | 65.37 | 62.04 | 59.46 | 61.05 |
| Content total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table 5.28: Lesson Contents (%) in total class time

Little learning occurs in a language classroom which is mainly teacher-centered. During the classroom observation, almost all the teachers were found to take controlling role in the classroom for the test preparation tasks and activities. They were found to use the majority of the lesson time for procedural and broad purposes. The figure given below (Figure 5.3) exhibits the findings and results of the activities and contents conducted in the classroom:

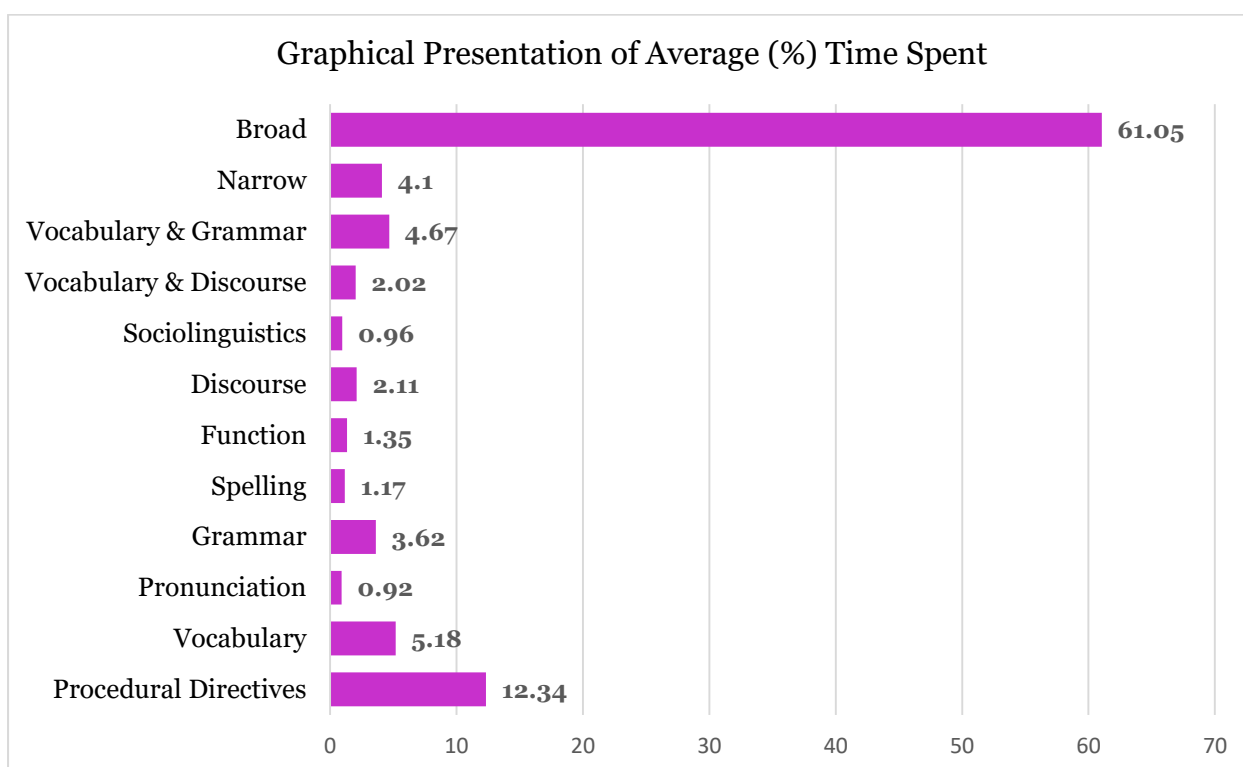


Figure 5.3: Graphical Presentation of Average (%) Time Spent

The largest share of the lesson time of each of the teachers was consumed by broad topics which was mostly related to the JSC English test. Grammar and vocabulary were more protuberant in writing activities. The focal point of all sixteen lessons of 16 teachers was meaning with stress on broad topics. Very insignificant focus was there on narrow topics. In this case, T16 had the lowest

(only 2.81%). English language teaching and learning received less importance in all sixteen lessons observed. T3 had spent a significant part of his lesson concentrating on particulars of language, especially vocabulary and grammar (20.41%). Not only in the case of this teacher but also for all other observed teachers, the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation consumed more time in contrast with the other activities and tasks. The present researcher, however, found T10 as the most active teacher compared to the other 15 teachers. 14.43% of his lesson time was spent on aspects such as discourse, function, and sociolinguistics which are more important for an effective language class.

5.1.6.4 Content Control of Classroom Activities

Students' active participation in the classroom interaction and activities plays a vital role in the development of their language skills. To what extent they are actively participating in the classroom interaction and activities can be ascertained through looking at the control of the lesson and activities in the classroom. With the help of the COLT, content selection and control of the lesson and activities in the classroom were explored in this study. The student/s, the teacher, and used text, or their combination were the variables here. The table below (Table 5.29) displays the extent and percentage of teacher's content selection and control of the lesson and activities in the classroom. It was explored that content selection and control of the lesson and activities in the classroom heavily lied with the class-teacher (73.75%). The learners were found to share only 26.25% control in this regard with the teacher.

| Teachers | Teacher/Text | Teacher/Text/ Student |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| T1 | 78 | 22 |
| T2 | 79 | 21 |
| T3 | 61 | 39 |
| T4 | 74 | 26 |
| T5 | 69 | 31 |
| T6 | 78 | 22 |
| T7 | 75 | 25 |
| T8 | 84 | 16 |
| T9 | 76 | 24 |
| T10 | 48 | 52 |
| T11 | 73 | 27 |
| T12 | 58 | 42 |
| T13 | 81 | 19 |
| T14 | 83 | 17 |
| T15 | 78 | 22 |
| T16 | 80 | 20 |
| Mean | 73.75 | 26.25 |

Table 5.29: Teacher-wise Content Control (%)

The above table and the graph below show that the teacher, the students and the used text shared the content selection and control of the lesson and activities in the classroom and statistically they were between 48% and 84%. On the other hand, the student control ranged from 16% to 52% in different classes. In the case of content selection and control of the lesson and activities in the classroom, T8 was found to consume the highest amount of time (84%). On the contrary, T10 was found to use the lowest amount of time selecting the content and controlling the lesson and activities in the classroom and it was 48%. Except for T3, T10 and T12, all other teachers were found to consume around or more than three-fourth of the total class time. These teachers were found mostly engaged with themselves and the text. They usually started the conversation in the classroom, explained and led the text, activities and exercises throughout the lesson time, where their students were only inquired if they could understand what they were instructing and explaining.

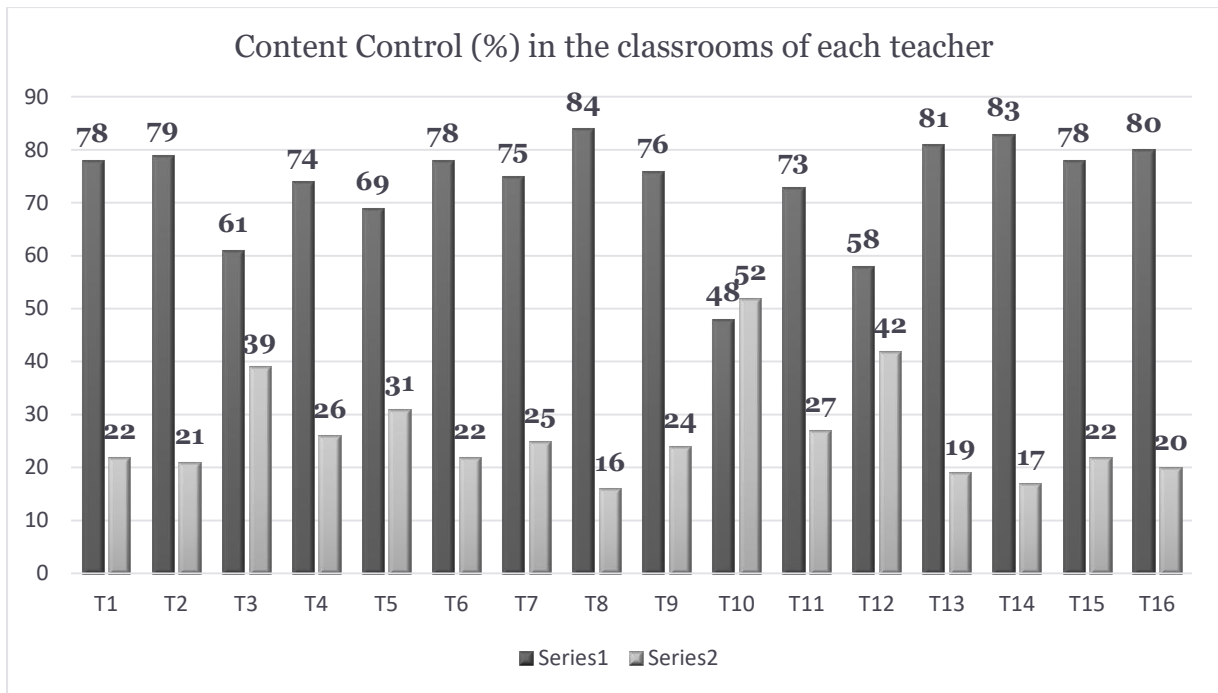


Figure 5.4: Graphical Presentation of Content control (%)

5.1.6.5 Student modality

The Table (5.31) below presents classroom observation data with regard to ‘student modality.’ Finding the language skills, the students are engaged in while they are doing the classroom tasks and activities is noted in the category called ‘Student Modality’. It displays the percentage of time spent by learners with a focus on the four English language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening during class time.

| Teacher | Listening | Speaking | Reading | Writing |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| T1 | 4 | 17 | 51 | 28 |
| T2 | 9 | 19 | 17 | 55 |
| T3 | 9 | 12 | 47 | 32 |
| T4 | 7 | 19 | 18 | 57 |
| T5 | 13 | 16 | 38 | 33 |
| T6 | 12 | 9 | 57 | 22 |
| T7 | 12 | 8 | 21 | 59 |
| T8 | 9 | 11 | 51 | 29 |
| T9 | 11 | 12 | 10 | 67 |
| T10 | 17 | 41 | 11 | 31 |
| T11 | 12 | 23 | 19 | 46 |
| T12 | 11 | 10 | 59 | 20 |
| T13 | 13 | 7 | 56 | 24 |
| T14 | 9 | 12 | 42 | 37 |
| T15 | 8 | 14 | 17 | 61 |
| T16 | 11 | 13 | 41 | 35 |
| Mean | 10.44 | 15.12 | 34.69 | 39.75 |

Table 5.30: Teacher-wise Student Modality (%)

The findings of lesson observation data from all the English lessons observed show that the main focus of the lesson of T1, T6, T8, T12, T13 was reading activities, for T2, T4, T7, T9, T11, T15 the main focus of the lesson was writing activities, whereas the main focus of the lesson of T3, T5, T14, T16 was vocabulary and grammar. Only one of them (T10) focused on speaking activities and none of them focused on any listening activity in the class.

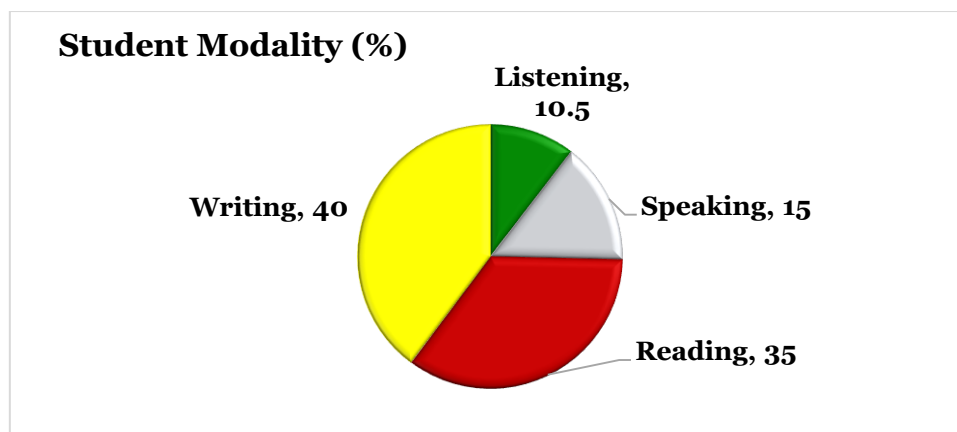


Figure 5.5: Student Modality (%)

However, it is notable that the identical type of activity conducted by 2 different school teachers yielded two different scenarios. T9 and T11 conducted the same lesson in their class hour and fully focused on writing, but they consumed 67% and 46% of the class time respectively. It demonstrates how different teachers conducted the same activity differently. Hence, time spent on language activities largely depends on a teacher's use of activities and tasks in his/her classroom, and the kind of activities and tasks selected. This also shows that the amount of reading, writing, speaking or listening that takes place in the classroom also depends on the teachers' choice of activity and how the teachers conduct the activity in the classroom.

Although, the percentage of time spent on different skills differed from school to school, the findings of lesson observation data from all the English lessons observed expose that the main focus of teachers and students was on grammar, vocabulary, reading (35%) and writing (40%) ignoring other two skills like listening (10%), speaking (15%), which clearly indicates the negative washback effect of JSC English test since this test only tests grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing skills of students; and accordingly, teachers and students only practice these items.

5.1.7 Findings from Interviews (Teachers and Students)

This section of the doctoral dissertation presents the findings of the interviews with English teachers and Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) with the students. With a view to exploring the teachers' and students' perspective about English learning, teaching and assessment practice in their schools and their opinion about the JSC English test, sixteen English teachers (one from each of the sixteen school), whose class/lesson had been observed, were interviewed and sixteen student FGIs (one from each of the sixteen schools) had been administered. Each FGI had nine students. In the FGIs they were asked about their views of learning English and their English teachers' teaching practice and their use of assessment techniques in English classrooms.

The focused group discussion with each group of students started with asking a question whether they like to learn English. Except for two students, all others of the twelve groups informed that they like to learn English. While the two students mentioned that English appeared to be a difficult subject and a hard nut to crack, others mentioned a wide range of reasons for their liking or learning English (which actually echo the goals and objectives of the present CLT based English curriculum). These are:

- English is an international language and people all over the world can understand this language.
- English is necessary for communicating with foreigners at home or when they will go abroad.
- If they learn English, they will be able to communicate with persons who visit their school from other parts of the world. The visitors will be happy to know that the students of their school can speak English.

- For getting good jobs, they will need English.
- They need English for higher studies.
- There is pleasure in learning English.
- To some of them, English appears to be ‘an interesting subject’.
- Some of them feel proud to learn this language, because if they can speak English, everybody will respect them.
- Some of them want to be doctors in the future. They think that they will need English to study medicine.
- Some of them think that learning English will help them use mobile-phones, send SMS.
- Others think that English is important for using internet.
- Some of them like to learn English because it is necessary for watching cartoon on the television while others more candidly mentioned that they need to pass the examination.

However, the findings from these two (students and teachers) sources have been ordered under five major themes and accordingly presented below.

5.1.7.1 English Curriculum and Syllabus

Of the sixteen English-teachers, five teachers did not read or see the English curriculum at all, while the other five teachers lack a clear idea about it, although what they shared about it and its objectives are in line with what has been written in the curriculum. The following quotes furnish their opinions.

At present, a communicative curriculum is on the vogue. From different trainings I got the idea, but I don't know whether a curriculum is available in my school or not. I didn't get enough opportunity to study the goals and

objectives of the curriculum but I know the communicative system expects that students will be able to speak English and also be able to write correct English (T4).

I do not have a clear idea about the present 'English Curriculum'. But I know the question patterns and the way questions are set in the present CLT based syllabus. This communicative curriculum expects that our students will be able to develop reading, writing and speaking (T6).

I did not see everything [what are there in the curriculum]. But I think it is attractive and useful for students. The guidance is for communicative English teaching. It is up to date. It will develop students' fluency and will make their higher studies easier (T9).

I am actually a teacher of Science and Mathematics. Since we have a shortage of English teacher and I am considered good in English, I teach English in our school. I, however, do not have a clear idea about the present NCTB English curriculum. But I know it follows the Communicative approach. But if you ask my opinion, I think that Grammar-Translation method (GTM) is appropriate for teaching/learning English, but one thing is good with this approach, it emphasizes making students speak in English (T13).

I didn't study the curriculum in detail. Maybe there is a curriculum in our school but I didn't get it (T14).

The rest (six) of the English teachers, however, have a clear and comprehensive idea about the curriculum and its objectives and support it, although they also prefer the inclusion of grammatical tasks more. According to them,

In the present context, the English curriculum formulated by the NCTB is very good, lively, updated and consistent with the needs of the present age. Besides teaching and testing of reading and writing skills, here speaking skill is also given importance. But in the past curriculum, emphasis was given on memorization. The teachers and the students are happy with the curriculum nowadays. The students don't need to memorize, so it is helpful for the weak students also. Here importance is given on conversation and communication. In this curriculum, there is clear directions on how to assess the students, what will be the nature of teacher-student and student-student conversation, how to teach, how to organize group work etc. (T10).

The NCTB formulated 'English Curriculum' emphasizes four skills of English language. The curriculum will be more effective if it includes more grammatical items, because to be good in writing proficiency in grammar is required. There are some instructions in the English curriculum for the teacher on teaching English. But most of the instructions are not in detail. It will be more effective if the instruction provided in detail (T3).

English Curriculum formulated by the NCTB gives emphasis on Communicative language teaching. In this curriculum, the grammar-translation method is not included. As a result, the students cannot express themselves. They can speak in Bangla, but cannot translate it in English while speaking. We, the teachers try to teach according to the CLT approach but the students cannot participate effectively (T7).

The present English curriculum is giving importance to communicative language teaching. The traditional method (he means GTM) was there for teaching in the past but following the present curriculum, the teachers are teaching following the communicative approach where they have to use

different teaching materials. Here, students are encouraged to discuss with teachers in the classroom which is developing their speaking skill. The development of four language skills is the goal of the present curriculum. In the past, there was the opportunity to develop their writing and reading skill only but in the present curriculum, there is the opportunity of developing all four skills (T12).

English curriculum is for communicative language teaching. If it is followed successfully students will be benefited. Educated persons of our country do not get good job or wages or fall in problem as they cannot communicate in English. To solve this problem if the present curriculum is followed, these people will be able to contribute to the national economy (T15).

I think that the goal and objective of the English Language Curriculum is learning English not only for passing the examinations but also for using English in real life situations (T16).

5.1.7.2 Teaching-Learning Methods

During interviews with teachers and students, it was exposed that all teachers except T10 prefer to remain stick to the teacher-centric approach of English language teaching since this offers them “command” over their students’ language learning activities. Furthermore, some of them believe that this teacher-centric classroom helps them to complete their lessons smoothly, easily and in time in their class-hour.

Interviewed students and teachers stressed that teachers tried to teach all the lessons of *English for Today*, the textbook, but when the term final

examination or the JSC examinations got nearer, they had to limit their teaching contents or lessons to those areas only which were likely to appear in the final examination. Most of the interviewed English teachers informed that during this year of high-stake public examination (JSC), it was hardly possible to cover all the lessons of the textbook in the stipulated time. They identified some of the lessons of the textbook as unimportant for the JSC English examination. They believed that these lessons did not have reading passages or other tasks and activities which resemble any test-item of the JSC English test.

Let me share a day's experience with you. That day I told my students to do an activity given in the English for Today book; some of them cried out, "no, sir! No, sir! We don't want to do this activity; it is not set in final (JSC) exam. Please sir, give us those activities which are likely to appear in the final (JSC) exam". Accordingly, I gave them tasks which were likely to appear in the final (JSC) exam (T10).

One of the interviewed English teachers commented that usually weaker students avoid some of the lessons of the textbook and focused only on those lessons which were likely to appear in the JSC English test, but the front benchers tried to go through all the lessons of the textbook ignoring their possibility of being or not being included in the JSC English test.

During interviews with students, it was revealed that teachers mostly concentrated on test-oriented activities and ignored tasks and activities which not directly related to passing the JSC examination. And almost all of them prefer to use Bangla mostly in the classroom.

Because of the exam demands, students' expectations, I myself and many teachers I know prefer to ignore the sections that less frequently used in the final exam, such as some items of writing, listening and speaking tasks, telling students these are not important. Meanwhile, we focus on other aspects such as grammar, vocabulary and reading texts (T2)

All the interviewed teachers talked about spending more time spent on assessments and tests. They opined that although they realized much time is spent on tests and test-focused activities in the classrooms, they claimed that it was difficult for them to reduce the time they spent on these. One of the teachers commented:

Students are literally spending almost half of the year learning JSC test-taking strategies. At schools in the classrooms, they are being taught the test-taking strategies through tutorials and then practicing mock tests. Day in and day out JSC English test is in the vanguard of learning, spearheading all English language teaching and learning activities at school. The pressure is paramount since the result of public examination is the benchmark of sanction or reward. Hence, it is not possible to concentrate on tasks and activities that are less like to appear in the JSC English test by minimizing time teaching things or contents that are more likely to come in the JSC English test. Still, I'm trying my level best to engage students in meaningful English language learning activities in my classroom (T10).

Data received from both teachers' interviews and their class observations show that lecture method is the most popular instructional method in the JSC English classroom. Teachers applied mostly this method in their teaching-learning practice. Besides this method, they applied some other methods such

question-answer method, demonstration method, participatory method etc. They engaged their students in pair work and group work activities. FGIs with students also revealed that their class teachers engaged them in these types of tasks and activities. The interviewed teachers clarified the reasons for their applying such methods.

My teaching method is different from others. I generally focus on teaching grammar and language rules directly using Bangla mostly than English. I do this for the final JSC examination and few other reasons: my students' low proficiency in English, insufficient class time, large classes etc. For instance, I give my students new vocabulary and their meanings using the blackboard and I encourage them to get these by heart. I also explain grammatical rules to them and then explain the reading text (T12).

I apply the question-answer technique in my teaching. I mean after finishing the lesson, I ask my student some questions. Those who listen to my lecture attentively, can reply correctly and if they fail to do so, then I can easily realize that my students have failed to receive anything from me (T5).

Both the teachers and learners considered question papers of previous years' JSC English tests important for the preparation of the upcoming JSC English test. Most of the interviewed teachers and students were of the opinion that practicing these question papers of previous years' JSC English tests helped students got familiarized with the format and contents of the said test. Document analysis revealed that publishers of the commercially produced exam materials collected all the English question papers mostly from famous schools of the country just after the test examination (mock examination held at all schools of the country that resembles the JSC examination) was over and

also the question papers of several past years' JSC English test, and published them in a book commonly named "*Test Papers*".

In response to the question, how do you ensure that your students perform well in the JSC examination? most of them replied that in a similar tone as shared by the following teacher.

I train my students on how to answer the JSC examination questions by giving them practice on some model question papers and past years' JSC exam question papers. I generally develop and write my own exam questions papers identical to the JSC final exams. I run them to students as monthly or weekly (T13).

The majority of the interviewed teachers and students were of the opinion that their students were passive learners and the learners think that their class teacher was responsible for doing anything in the classroom and accordingly they had hardly anything to do. Most teachers found their students shy and unwilling to speak out. On the other hand, some students informed that they were not encouraged and stimulated by their teachers to enquire questions and they felt shy and insecure about making mistakes.

On the other hand, the findings of the current study also indicate that the teachers did not use English to clarify the text in the classroom. It was specified that mostly Bangla along with English was used as the language of instructions in the classroom. Nor did the English teachers encourage learners to ask any question. This finding of the current study again testifies that "*A test will influence how teachers teach*", a hypothesis mentioned by Alderson and Wall (1993: 120). This striking finding of the current study comply with

the findings of other similar studies (Podder, 2016; Hossain, Nessa & Kafi, 2015; Rahman, 2014; Hoque, 2011) conducted in Bangladesh.

The study looked into the reasons behind English teachers overriding tendency of using Bangla as the language of instructions in the classroom. Most of the teachers and students were found to defend and support the use of Bangla in their English classroom, since they believe that it made English teaching and learning easier in the classroom. This finding conforms with the findings of two empirical studies (Salim, 2014 and Mirza et al., 2012) conducted in Bangladesh.

For a variety of reasons, the respondents of the current study prefer to use Bangla in their English classrooms. English teachers informed that they use Bangla for explaining the difficult and complex grammatical rules to the students, for clarifying difficult pedagogical issues, for making students understand the unknown and abstract phrases and vocabulary, for checking students' comprehension of the contents they teach, for maintaining discipline in the classrooms, and for boosting their students' confidence. Moreover, insufficient class time and large class size were also mentioned as reasons for compelling teachers to use Bangla in the classroom. On the other hand, students informed that they use Bangla to ask and answer questions in the classroom, to build confidence in the classroom and to take part in pair and group works. One of the teachers says:

I generally focus on teaching grammar and language rules directly using Bangla mostly than English. I do this for the final JSC examination and for few other reasons: my students' low proficiency in English, insufficient class time,

large classes etc. I also explain grammatical rules to them and then explain the reading text (T12).

On the contrary, the study of previous literature, indicates that English teachers of secondary schools of Bangladesh themselves seriously lack proficiency in English speaking (Rahman et al., 2018b; Nur, 2018). The interviewed teachers, however, claimed that though they did not support their own practice of carrying out test-oriented tasks and activities in their classroom with their students, they were impelled to use Bangla mostly as a medium of instruction in the classroom during English lessons, which was also observed during classroom observation. These teachers informed that they used Bangla for a number of reasons. One of the reasons was the low-level of English of their students. The other reasons were time constraints in the classroom, test-pressure and their urge to ensure their students pass the JSC examination.

5.1.7.3 Teaching Materials and Aids Used

The findings and results regarding the different teaching-learning materials used by teachers and students in the classroom have been presented here. The findings from the interviews with English teachers revealed that they used the NCTB produced textbook (*English for Today*) in the classroom frequently, but mostly depended on the commercially produced teaching materials (e.g. model test books, guide books, or test papers, etc.) which Caine (2005, p. 11) termed as a “hidden syllabus” alongside. Some of them mentioned that they also used poster, real object, sometimes some models in the classroom.

I prepare some teaching aids with the help of students. Sometimes I show posters and pictures prepared by myself (T7).

Besides the textbook (English for Today), I also use charts. picture of textbook etc. Sometimes, I show real objects from the outside environment (T14).

I use posters, real objects, sometimes some models (T16).

But during the classroom observation, no such teaching materials and aids were noticed to be used by any of the teachers and that there were no remarkable variances in the teaching materials used by the teachers except T10 who incorporated authentic visual materials alongside the NCTB produced textbook (*English for Today*). It is important to note that all these commercially produced teaching materials (e.g., model test books, guide books, or test papers, etc.) are solely test-oriented, which indicates the negative washback effect of JSC English test on teaching and learning in general and on the use of teaching-learning materials in particular by teachers and students in the classroom.

5.1.7.4 Activities and Skills Practiced

With a major focus on developing learners' ability to use language appropriately in context, the English language curriculum aims at focusing on all four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing as learner-centered activities within communicative contexts (NCTB, 2012). The class observation data show that teachers attempted to assess different skills in their classrooms.

Data from teachers' interviews explored that as far as assessment of listening skill is concerned, usually teachers read the text of the book loudly and instructed their students to listen to them attentively. At times they translated the text in English into Bangla so that their students could easily understand the contents of the text. When the reading of the text was over, they asked questions to their students from the text.

On the other hand, for assessing students' reading skill teachers instructed them to read the text of the book individually and then they were engaged in question-answer sessions or asked to fill the blanks from the English textbook or guide books.

Moreover, for assessing students' speaking skill, teachers instructed the students to work in pairs or in groups to practice some dialogues from the English textbook or guide books.

Some of the teachers informed that they requested a pair of students to come to the front of the class and engaged them in role play activities where students tried to speak in a given situation or they read out loudly the dialogue available from their English textbook.

Teachers informed that for writing exercises, they engaged their students in answering true or false statements, writing the correct answers to the given questions, and filling in the gaps. Students were also involved in writing paragraphs, letters and essays.

Data from most of the FGIs with students indicate that their teachers assessed their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Our teacher assesses all four English language skills. But most of the time he assesses reading and writing (FGI4).

In order to be able to use any language efficiently for usual communication, students are needed to be taught all four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. But, during the FGIs, students informed that they found themselves confident in reading and writing skills. The majority of them informed that oral and aural (speaking and listening) language was the toughest skills to learn and they felt afraid of using these skills. According to them:

Writing appears to be easier. Speaking is difficult but not so much. I can speak English a little bit but not correctly. On the other hand, listening is sometimes difficult to understand (FGI7).

Mostly listening is difficult, but I think reading is the easiest. We can read English, but listening we don't understand easily and always. For us, easy thing is reading because, we can read back the word again and again if we don't understand. But speaking is not easy for us. We need to think for the appropriate word and it doesn't come to mind automatically as it happens when we speak in Bangla (FGI9).

As it has been discussed earlier, most of the English classes were conducted not following the CLT approach and consequently learners were facing challenges in developing their language skills especially listening and speaking. Mostly they were developing reading and writing skills and fewer speaking skills because of inadequate opportunity and a deficiency of oral practice.

FGIs with the students, however, exposed that students had no idea about the appropriate and effective assessment method of listening skill. When the researcher asked them about the practice and assessment of listening skill in the classroom, they informed him that their teacher read out an excerpt from the textbook and told them to attentively listen to him. When his reading was over, their teacher asked them some questions based on the excerpt.

5.1.7.5 School based Assessment (Summative and Formative)

Through document analysis, FGIs with students and teacher interviews, it was found that all the schools follow two types of in-the-school assessments. These were summative assessment and formative assessment. Two terminal examinations took the form of summative assessment and 80% marks were allocated for this type of assessment, while 20% marks were allocated for formative assessment (which was in the form of class tests), although according to the curriculum, this 20% marks should be allocated to Speaking test (10% marks) and Listening test (10% marks).

But interview with teachers and FGIs with students reveal that 20% marks were not allocated to Speaking test and Listening test. Rather, two things happened instead. Most teachers considered these as class-tests which is a smaller version or partial form of terminal test/JSC English test. That is, instead of testing speaking and listening skills, they tested their students reading, writing, vocabulary or grammar skills similar to the JSC English test. One of the teachers informed,

“... I usually write and design my own exams similar to the final exams. I administer these tests to students as weekly, monthly or periodically tests.” (T13)

In some worst cases, it was reported by some of the students that these 20 marks were given without giving any test.

Although teachers and some students informed that all the four language skills (e.g. listening, speaking, reading and writing) were being practiced and assessed in the classrooms, classroom observation data show that listening and speaking skills were not practiced and assessed in the real term. Speaking skill practice was done only in the form that teachers asked questions to students and they replied to these questions. Moreover, students were found to give one-word answers to the questions. In the same way, listening skill practice was done only in the form that teachers asked questions and students replied or teachers engaged students in reading a passage aloud and other students listened to it. No planned and real-time speaking or listening practiced is found in any classroom.

Besides class tests, as a part of continuous assessment, students informed that they were assessed during the class-hour on a daily basis. They were involved in responding orally to questions individually or in chorus. Sometimes teachers wrote down questions on the blackboards and asked students to answer orally or in writing. At times teachers assessed them by engaging them in pair or group-works. Most of the time teachers assessed them in the middle of the class. Some teachers assessed previous day's lesson at the beginning of the class. All teachers gave home-works at the end of almost every lesson.

Teachers generally preferred to ask questions to the whole class, that is, to all students in general and waited for the students to show their willingness to answer by raising their hands. Teachers also tend to ask questions directly to individual students.

Students' FGIs and classroom observation data reveal that teachers tend to ask questions to good students than the weak ones. And with regard to position, teachers preferred to ask questions to the front benchers. They hardly reached to the back benchers. Teachers asked mostly such type of questions that demanded memorization. There were only very few questions asked by the teachers which involved students to reply based on their own thinking or real-life experience.

The questions asked by the teachers in the classroom were mostly from the knowledge sub-domain of the cognitive domain. Almost all the questions asked by the teachers were closed questions. Only very few questions gave clues to students to understand and answer previous questions or to motivate them towards learning. Only a very few numbers of questions which covered other sub-domain/higher domain of the cognitive domain such as application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation were asked. Thus, the used questions were related to measuring lower order of learning.

The practiced classroom assessment (only through oral questioning and class tests) was competitive, straightforward and content-related rather than goal-oriented and its feedback was evaluative rather than descriptive. As a result, the nature of classroom assessment indicates mostly to 'assessment of learning' than 'assessment for learning'.

5.1.7.6 Feedback Practice

Feedback has powerful impact on students' learning and their achievement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). A more recent study (Akter, 2010) proves that giving feedback to learners on their performance is an important aspect of effective language teaching. Feedback can either be positive or negative and may serve learners not only to know how well they have performed but also to motivate them and build a conducive classroom culture and environment.

All groups of students informed that their teachers gave them feedback on their works, but these are usually verbal ones, although sometimes written feedbacks were also given.

Teachers believe that if students are given feedback, it will help them understand mistakes and they can overcome their mistakes.

We should give feedbacks on their works. Because though these feedbacks they can know about their attainment in learning and they get correction of their mistakes from the teacher. It helps them in learning. (T6)

Not only that it helps inspire students to do better and increase their confidence, especially when they get complements in the form of feedback from teachers. Some of the teachers opine:

Students need to be given feedback, because through feedback they can realize their mistakes and make correction. Therefore, they get motivation to do well if they get feedback after their work (T3).

Students must be given feedback. They will be able to learn better if teacher gives feedback Students must be given feedback. They will be able to learn

better if teacher gives feedback by showing their mistakes by involving them in the process (T9).

One teacher pointed out a unique aspect of providing feedback, the social-interpersonal aspect of feedback. He commented that through the practice of giving feedback, a close and good relationship developed between teachers and students.

Of course, feedback is important for students. I think if feedback is given then both students and teacher get benefited. If feedback is given, children become very happy and learn the lesson very nicely the next day. Even if a student can partially answer any question, I thank him/her. As a result, in the next class, I find the student learns the lesson fully and nicely. Students get inspiration and a good relationship is built up between the teacher and students (T10).

Realizing the importance of giving feedback on students' work, teachers extensively practice the culture of providing feedback to students. They seek for peer-feedback; give feedback to individual students and to whole class. Peer feedback is given in the form when a student gives incorrect answer to any question, teacher asks another student to answer the question. If he answers correctly, the teacher asks the whole class to tell which answer is right. On the other hand, if in this process none can answer correctly, then the teacher himself provides the correct answer. One teacher describes his process of providing feedback to his students in the following way:

In the case of giving feedback in the classroom, if anybody makes mistakes, then I ask the same question to some other students. I ask them to say why the answer is correct or why the answer is not correct. The student, who can give

the correct answer, is told to describe the answer to the whole class and the students who don't know the answer, listen to him and learn the answer. Sometimes, I tell them to discuss among themselves about the correct answer. If they cannot understand yet, I clarify it to them. In the case of group work, I make groups with mixed types of students and utilize the advanced students to give feedback to the weaker ones. In the case of terminal exams, I point out their mistakes in their answer-scripts and while showing those scripts I discuss what and where their mistakes were, why they got less marks, what can be done to get more marks in future etc. (T7).

While giving verbal feedback some of the teachers sometimes involve students in clapping when someone performs well. For verbal feedback, most of them use some terms like, “thank you, thanks a lot, excellent, very good, you are right etc.” After finishing the examination and publishing the result they give some feedback to the students for their future improvement. One of the teachers say:

After taking class-tests, I discuss with my students about their mistakes, they also ask questions to me and I clarify. I try to give feedback in a positive manner. I involve my students in giving feedback. When I assess answer scripts of terminal exams, I point out the mistakes which my students do and after that I show those scripts to them. Then I ask if they need any clarification, if they require so, I discuss with them (T2).

Teachers also informed that they give feedback on their students' writing, reading, speaking and pronunciation.

I make correction in their writing. I make correction in their pronunciation during speaking. If they make mistakes in reading, I ask them to read the sentence again correctly (T1).

All sixteen groups of students also confirm that they are given feedback on their performance by their teachers. Some of them opine:

Yes, when we cannot answer correctly, our teacher corrects us. If we make wrong pronunciation or spelling, teacher corrects us. Again, when we make mistakes in writing, teacher corrects them (T8).

Teacher gives us feedback in the English class. He thanks us if we give right answer. If we make mistake in answer then teacher makes correction. If anyone can't perform well in the examination, teacher inspires him to perform better in future (T13).

When any student fails to understand the lesson, teacher helps him understand that and for the whole class also (T15).

Classroom observation data also show teachers are providing feedbacks to their students. During the class observations, it was found that teachers gave feedback to the whole class sometimes and to the individual students the other times.

For examples: To individual students:

Example 1:

Students were not responding to the teacher. Then the teacher told here is an easy English word which is not yet uttered by you. The teacher wrote “Rahman is a meritorious student” on the blackboard. Then he asked the whole class.

T: Is there any adjective in the sentence?

Ss: Yes

T: Which one is adjective?

S: meritorious (a girl replied)

T: Yes, you know the answer. This answer has come from you. Thank you.

(Feedback)

Example 2:

T: Bright is an adjective; can you tell another adjective?

S: dark (a male student replied)

T: Thank you thank you thank you (teacher uttered those words with great excitement) (Feedback)

To whole class:

Example 1:

A teacher wrote “Labiba is a sweet girl” on the blackboard and asked the whole class,

T: Which one is adjective?

Ss: Sweet.

T: you can answer only when I write on the board and without this you can't answer for a single time. (Feedback)

Example 2: A teacher wrote on the blackboard “Rony is an intelligent boy”

T: which one is adjective? (to whole class)

Ss: intelligent

T: virtue or fault?

Ss: virtue

T: so, you can answer if I write

Ss: they smile

T: you will be able to answer, you must be able (an example of feedback).

5.1.8 Present Assessment System (Formative and JSC English Test)

Among the sixteen teachers only five teachers have sufficient idea about the present assessment system. Rest of them only follows the school syllabus, the sample question papers provided by the NCTB and question formats of national education boards or the previous years' JSC English test questions, which can hardly give them comprehensive idea about the present assessment system.

Four of the teachers consider the present assessment process appropriate for evaluating the learning outcomes and achieving the objectives of the English curriculum. According to them,

I think through the current assessment system it is possible to evaluate students learning on English language if the system is followed properly (T9).

Yes, I think present assessment system is appropriate for evaluating students' learning outcome of English language. For example, School based formative assessment (10 marks for speaking and 10 marks for listening) is capable of assessing speaking skill (T5).

This is appropriate in the sense that in the terminal examination students are assessed in reading and writing; and in the school based formative assessment system, listening and speaking can be tested. I mean the combination of formative assessment and terminal examination is appropriate for evaluating the students' learning outcome (T12).

One teacher has a mixed feeling about the current assessment system. According to him, "This assessment system is more appropriate than the previous

systems, because now English class is more fruitful than the earlier one [he meant GTM based assessment system]. Students feel free to communicate with us which wouldn't happen earlier. They have the scope for having fun also. However, if there is a mandatory monthly exam, then it would be better for students” (T15).

Eleven of them, on the contrary, are of the opinion that the present assessment process is not appropriate for evaluating the learning outcomes and achieving the objectives of the English curriculum.

Here are some of their opinions regarding the present assessment system.

I think that present assessment system isn't appropriate for evaluating students' learning outcome of English language. In the current system students learn only for passing examination, not for communicative language learning. It does not assess all skills. It gives emphasis on writing. There is a mismatch between current classroom practice of communicative language learning and assessment system (T2).

This is not fully appropriate because we are saying about a student through marks which cannot describe his or her actual achievement in different skills. And at the end of the year we are taking a written test where we can assess only reading and writing skills. Rests of the two skills are not assessed (T7).

No, the present assessment system is not appropriate for evaluating students' learning outcome of English language. I think something more is needed. For example, some marks can be allocated to test the speaking skill. As there is no such allocation of marks, they do not practice or take any preparation for developing their speaking skill (T11).

There is a gap between teaching and assessment system. In the exam we are

testing only reading and writing but not listening and speaking. To recover this situation formative assessment (10 marks for speaking and 10 marks for listening) has been introduced but it is not followed accordingly as it is not included in JSC and SSC exam (T14).

The present assessment system isn't so appropriate for evaluating students' learning outcome of the English language. If the mark of School based formative assessment (10 marks for speaking and 10 marks for listening) is added with the marks of the JSC examination, it would be better. Moreover, listening and speaking test should be taken in the classroom as a part of school based formative assessment (T1).

Students and teachers of all the 16 schools informed that they follow two types of assessments. These are summative assessment and formative assessment. Two terminal examinations take the form of summative assessment and 80% marks are allocated for this type of assessment. Analysis of some of the English question papers and information received from the teachers during the interviews indicate that the question pattern and format of these summative examinations exactly follow the question pattern and format of the JSC English test. On the other hand, 20% marks are allocated for formative assessment and these marks are supposed to be given on the term-round performance of the students in *listening and speaking*, although teachers informed that students were not given this 20% marks based on the term-round performance of the students in *listening and speaking*. Rather, two things happened instead as it has already been mentioned above. Most teachers considered these as class-tests which is a smaller version or partial form of terminal test/JSC English test. That is, instead of testing speaking and

listening skills, they tested their students reading, writing, vocabulary or grammar skills similar to the JSC English test. In some worst cases, it was reported by some of the students that these 20 marks were given without giving any test.

All the student groups informed that they had to sit for two terminal examinations. Besides these, they had to sit for class-tests. But there were variations in the number of class-tests that they had to sit for each term. Eight groups informed that they had to appear at the class-tests weekly while remaining four groups sat for monthly tests and other four groups informed that they had three class-test per term. It is, however, interesting to note that ‘weekly tests’ do not have literal meaning here. The number of these tests has great variety. The table below shows it more legibly.

| Teacher | Class-tests Per term |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| T1 | 3 |
| T2 | 3 |
| T3 | 4 |
| T4 | 2 |
| T5 | 2 |
| T6 | 4 |
| T7 | 3 |
| T8 | 3 |
| T9 | 3 |
| T10 | 4 |
| T11 | 3 |
| T12 | 3 |
| T13 | 4 |
| T14 | 4 |
| T15 | 3 |
| T16 | 4 |

Table 5.31: Class-tests taken at different schools

We can see from the above table that six out of sixteen teachers arranged 4 class-tests per term, while eight teachers arranged 3 class-tests and the students of the rest of the two teachers sat for 2 class-tests a term.

Besides the above tests, as a part of continuous assessment, students informed that they were assessed during the class-hour on a daily basis. They were involved in responding orally to questions individually or in chorus. Sometimes teachers wrote down questions on the blackboards and asked students to answer orally or in writing. At times teachers assessed them by engaging them in pair or group-works. Most of the time teachers assessed them in the middle of the class. Some teachers assessed previous day's lesson at the beginning of the lesson. All teachers gave home-works at the end of almost every lesson.

In our English class, teacher asks us questions on the lesson. Teacher normally asks/writes questions on the blackboard during the class. We answer. Teacher assigns us home-work and in the next day he checks our learning on that. Sometimes teacher involves us in writing. After completing a chapter teacher takes test. We participate in one test weekly/monthly. But it is not fixed (FGI1).

Teacher gives us home work as an individual task, asks question to individuals, and takes class test per week to check whatever we have learnt throughout the week. After teaching something teacher tests us how much we have learned. We sit for class-tests weekly, sometimes twice in a month (FGI4).

Teacher asks questions to us and we try to give answers to those questions. Sometimes we ask questions to one another in pairs and in groups. Sometimes teacher asks question to individual student. After finishing reading the teacher usually asks questions but sometimes, he asks questions at the beginning of the

class to check our prior knowledge. While the lesson is going on, he also asks questions. Teacher asks questions everyday to assess us but class tests are taken weekly after finishing 3 or 4 lessons (FGI5).

We are assessed through individual task, question-answer session, reading test, writing test on board, quiz test etc.... After finishing a lesson, the teacher asks questions, generally she asks question at the middle and at the end of the class. Teacher asks questions every day, sometimes after one or two days. Some examinations are taken like class test on Thursday, model test for preparations before terminal exams and the terminal examinations (FGI9).

During interviews all sixteen English teachers informed that they assess students in the classrooms. All teachers believed and informed that assessing students in the classrooms had positive impact on their learning of English.

In response to the question on the objectives and purposes of assessing students in the classroom, teachers mentioned wide yet similar reasons. These include:

- observing the actual performance of the students,
- evaluating students' progress
- giving feedbacks on students' learning,
- helping students overcome their difficulties in different areas of language,
- removing their weakness in English, and hesitation about speaking in English,
- increasing their motivation and participation in the class,
- developing speaking skill of the students,
- increasing students' practice in the classroom,

- fulfillment of lesson objectives,
- helping students lessen the gap of knowledge between the advanced and weak students and
- above all, altering or modifying teacher's own teaching techniques to suit learners' needs.

Here are some of the quotes from teachers' mouth.

Yes. It's useful, because, if it is not done in the class, we cannot evaluate students' progress, whether they all understand the lesson or not (T1).

Yes. It's useful. Because, if after teaching a particular lesson, I ask them questions in the classroom, they try to answer these. They feel motivated. As a result, they learn effectively (T3).

I let my students talk in pairs in the classroom and I can assess their speaking and listening skill (T4).

Yes, I think students should be assessed in classroom. Through assessment I can understand to what extent students have received the lesson delivered by me. If I assess them in the classroom, their shyness removes. They become encouraged and inspired. Their interest for learning increases. If students are assessed, they get involved into a competition of doing better (T6).

Students should be assessed in the classroom because the students have to answer instantly, they can't take help from the book. So, the actual performance of the students we can observe (T8).

Yes, students should be assessed in the classroom to know the actual development of the students (T13).

In reply to the question, (how and when do you assess students in the class?) teachers informed that they assess their students while or after presenting a lesson. They informed that they assess them in different ways in different times. Among others, the most common means they shared and were observed (during classroom observation) is asking different questions to individual students or to whole class. Besides this, they involve students in pair, group or individual activities. They involve them in reading to assess their pronunciation and reading skill. Students are also engaged in written tasks.

I asked them different questions for assessing. After completing a chapter, I take a class test. I also involve students in group work. Sometimes I assess them through some activities. I give them clues for solving problems and then encourage them to use the clues (T10).

I involve my students in group work. In a group I mix both meritorious and weak students as a result the weak students can learn from the meritorious students. I found that after group work if I ask a question to a meritorious student, they can answer also the weak students can answer the question but the meritorious students can answer better. Other than these I also involve my students in some reading and writing tasks also. I involve them in reading for assessing their pronunciation and English reading skill. Through writing I involve them to write short answers to questions. I also ask them short verbal questions (T12).

After teaching a lesson, I ask questions in different ways. To test their prior knowledge I ask some questions, which they can answer from their own experience. While involving students in group work or in pair work, I instruct

my students to ask questions to each other. Sometimes, after doing group work, a leader of each group presents what they have discussed. Quiz game is also played. Thus, I try to assess them (T15).

Students should be assessed. They learn through mistakes. I give them some instant activities, ask questions, and try to go to the weak students more. If they unable to reply, I try to make understand them again and again. I give them written task, ask questions (T16).

5.1.8.1 Importance of JSC result in Bangladesh

Triangulated findings (from teacher and student questionnaires, interviews with teachers and students as well as from document analysis) presented above further reveal that the JSC examination is a high-stake public examination which has tremendous personal, socio-cultural and economic impact on the lives of both teachers and students; and even on their parents. For example, one of the interviewed teachers commented,

My students are usually worried about how to pass the JSC examination ... Consequently, I became worried. I also felt a lot of pressure on me. Therefore, I usually engage my students on drills of past JSC examination papers to familiarize them with the JSC examination format. For example, once I am done with a chapter, I come up with some previous years' JSC examination questions. This was very useful and effective because I observed my students could perform well in the exam, and the school authority and parents and guardians were pleased with my students' result (T4).

Similarly, the majority of the students regretted that they felt pressure from their parents, relatives and school authorities to score high grades. Likewise, external pressures (e.g., authority, guardians) to achieve high passing rate and good grades in the JSC examination also posed challenges for the majority of the teachers.

The current doctoral study reveals that almost all the students suffered from so much tension and anxiety for the JSC English test that they could not even forget to give a last-minute glance at the study materials (see the image below from *the Daily Star*, the premier English newspaper of the country as an evidence).

You're Allowed To Be Stressed - Last Minute Preparation



The JSC examination is not only important from the point of view of parents and school authority, but also has immense national significance. The result of this examination is considered so seriously that the day when the result is published, it becomes the news headline for all the national dailies. TV channels broadcast the news on the same day every year.

 <https://www.daily-sun.com> › post

4,769 institutions achieve 100 percent pass rate in JSC, JDC ...

Dec 24, 2018 · All examinees from 4769 educational institutions across Bangladesh cleared the Junior School Certificate (JSC) and ...

<https://www.daily-sun.com> › post

JSC, JDC exams: 100pc pass rate at 3,400 while 0pc at 33 schools ...

Dec 31, 2019 · A total of 3400 schools under all the education boards in the country achieved 10...

 m.theindependentbd.com › details

Pass rate in JSC exams increases | theindependentbd.com

Jan 1, 2016 · The passing rate of Junior School Certificate (JSC) under ... 158 achieved 100 per cent pass rate while two witnessed a ...

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JSC, JDC, PEC results handed over to PM

 **Tribune Desk**

 Published at 11:59 am December 24th, 2018



This examination has so much impact on its stakeholders that candidates' poor performance affects and embarrasses all. Almost all of the students along with their teachers informed that it was embarrassing and frustrating for them if their performance was poor in the examination. For some of the students, this embarrassment and frustration bring so much disgrace that some of them commit suicide every year once the result is published and they find their name in the failing list and become the news headlines in the national dailies and TV channels.

 <https://www.daily-sun.com> › post

JSC examinee 'kills self' in Chandpur | 2019-11-22 - Daily Sun

Nov 22, 2019 · A Junior School Certificate (JSC) examinee allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling of her house ...

 <https://en.somoynews.tv> › news › Gi...

Girl 'commits suicide' after failing in JSC examination

Dec 31, 2019 · Girl 'commits suicide' after failing in JSC examination ... of Barishal Sher-e Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMC), said ...

 <https://greenwatchbd.com> › 2-jsc-ex...

2 JSC examinees 'commit suicide for failure' - Greenwatch Dhaka

Dec 31, 2017 · Dhaka - Two Junior School Certificate (JSC) examinees, who ... Next: 5 killed as bus drives into auto-rickshaw in Sirajganj ...



5.1.9 Private tuition or coaching classes

The findings of the study indicate that almost all the students attended private tuition or coaching classes. These classes were held either at their own home where they were taught personally by a teacher who is usually not their school teacher or at their English teacher's home or coaching center. These classes were either one-to-one, or in small or even in large groups. Students informed that they usually attended private tuition or coaching classes between 8.00am and 8.00pm, either before the start of their school hour in the morning or

after their school hour in the late afternoon to night. One of the female students said:

I go to private coaching classes regularly. I attend coaching classes for English, mathematics, and general science. I go to mathematics and science teachers' home for coaching classes early in the morning. From 8.00am to 9.00am I attend mathematics class and after that from 9.00am to 10.00 I study science. And in the late afternoon at 6.00pm to 7.00pm, I attend English coaching class at English teacher's coaching center (FGI9).

Students believed that private tuition or coaching classes were beneficial for them because these classes offered short-curriculum, JSC exam-focused materials, tasks, activities and mock or practice tests which helped them understand the subject better, helped them get familiarized with test format and practice for the final examination well. In these classes they could get individual feedback from their teachers which they did not usually get in the school classrooms.

Some of them believed that they were more serious in studying and practicing the tasks and activities when they attended private tuition or coaching classes. Some of them opined that their teachers could teach them better in the private tuition or coaching classes than in the school classrooms, because there were less students in these classes compared to school classrooms and hence, their teachers could pay attention to every student. Some of them believed that if they attended private tuition or coaching classes offered by their school teacher, they could get A+ or gain good marks in the school examination and the JSC examination.

Some other students during the interviews with them, however, exposed one of the grimmest practices of their teachers. Some school teachers, they informed, compelled them to attend their private tuition or coaching classes, even if some of the students were not interested or could not afford to pay for these classes. They had to attend these teachers' private tuition or coaching classes otherwise they would not get good marks in the term final examinations, and in some extreme cases their teachers give them a failing grade.

Document analysis reveals that according to the Education Household Survey conducted in 2014 and released in 2015 by BBS (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics), over twenty nine percent of total educational expenses went to private tuition, which was the largest share among the expenses spent for the purpose of education. The same survey also showed that parents of students from urban schools spent higher (33%) than those of the rural schools (26%).

A study by Education Watch (cited in Nath, 2011) revealed that 50% students of secondary schools attended private tuition or coaching classes in 2000, 55% in 2005 and 68% in 2008. This figure reached the highest for the students of class 10 and it was 80%.

5.1.10 Reasons behind failure in ensuring positive interplays

The study (through teacher interview, FGIs with students and document analysis), however, also discovers the reasons behind teachers' failure in ensuring positive interplay between English teaching-learning and assessment practice. Although there are certain associated factors that hinder positive interplay between English teaching-learning and assessment practice, it is the faulty and ill-developed JSC test *per se* that works as the main interferer. Besides this, teacher characteristics (including teachers' educational background, their beliefs, and their past experience), student characteristics and context characteristics or factors such as: large student population, inadequate in the classrooms, insufficient time allotted for instruction, large contents of the syllabus, the grades teachers teach, their heavy workloads, students' low levels of proficiency in English, pressure from authority (school and education ministry), and parents of the students to improve score, no reflection of the marks of speaking and listening tests in public (JSC) examinations, poor socio-economic conditions of teachers, absence of monitoring and supervision by concerned authorities such as the NCTB, education boards etc. are also indirectly responsible for this.

Chapter 6: Discussion

What follows the findings chapter which has presented the findings and results of the present study is the discussion chapter. In the previous chapter i.e., in chapter 5, I have presented the findings that resulted from the analysis of data collected from mixed sources i.e., teacher and student questionnaires, semi-structured teacher interviews, focused group interviews with students and classroom observations, complemented by document study and that are relevant to the research questions. In that chapter, I have presented the phenomena related to the ways the sixteen case-study respondents teach and learn English in the classroom and also the task characteristics of the JSC English test and the resultant effect of these things on each other.

This chapter discusses the findings and results of the current study. Here I have discussed the phenomena related to the ways the respondents (teachers and students) of the sixteen schools teach and learn English in the classroom, and also the task characteristics of JSC English test and the resultant effect of these things on each other.

I throw light on several noteworthy issues from the findings of the study and connect them to the relevant literature. Discussion of the findings and results presented in this very chapter are based on the themes and categories that emerged from the research questions of the current study.

The discussion here has been guided by Alderson and Wall's washback hypotheses (1993, p. 120-121), Bailey's (1996) basic washback model, Hughes' (1993) trichotomy (participants, processes and product) of backwash model,

Pan's (2008) and Shih's (2007, 2009) washback models (see Chapter Two). Among the fifteen hypotheses, Hypothesis 13 (*Tests that do not have important consequences will have no washback*) have not been dealt with here since this hypothesis is beyond the scope of this current doctoral study.

Moreover, Watanabe's framework has been utilized (cited in Cheng & Watanabe, 2004) for exploring the different dimensions of the washback i.e., intentionality of washback, value of washback (positive or, negative), specificity of washback, intensity of washback, differential washback, persistence (length) and seasonality of washback, (which have been discussed above in detail in 2.5.2: characteristics of washback). Besides, three core forms of washback pointed out by Lam (1994; p. 84-85) have been dealt with in the current doctoral study. These are: attitudinal or perception washback, methodological washback, curriculum/textbook washback.

The high-stakes testing (e.g. the JSC examination and others) during the on-going educational reforms throughout the globe, has, at one hand, been used as a mechanism to observe progress of learners and as a medium advancing performance of learners, boosting school effectiveness; and increasing accountability of administrators of schools, teachers and also students (Lewis, 2000; Horn, 2003; Ho, 2006), on the other hand.

Polesel, et al., (2014) reported a study where over 8000 educators from all territories and states of Australia partook. The findings of this comprehensive study specify that high-stakes testing is in the forefront in minimizing time spent on other curriculum areas and in modifying teaching-learning practice and content of the curriculum to reflect the tests.

6.1 The Syllabus and the Curriculum

Effective assessment or testing functions as a significant force to ensure effective and outcome-based teaching and learning in the classroom and beyond (Rahman & Rahman, 2013; Rahman, 2013, Stiggins, 1991). It facilitates teachers to augment students' learning and their achievement in the examination by following the curriculum (Phelps, 2019; Day et al., 2018). At the same time, assessment has the power to dominate curriculum, and teaching and learning practice (Torrance, 2012, 2007; Rahman, 2013). High-stakes tests are often stigmatized to distort and dominate the entire teaching curriculum. Negative washback of a test promotes has close relation with teaching to the test as opposed to teaching to the curriculum, while promotion of positive washback has close relation with *“teaching to the curriculum as opposed to teaching to the test”* (Hoque, 2011, p. 297).

6.1.1 Awareness of the Objectives of the JSC English Curriculum

The analysis of the syllabus and curriculum indicates that the JSC English curriculum (2012) was designed and developed communicatively. However, the findings received from questionnaires and interviews with the respondents exposed that only a few of the interviewed teachers possessed proper understanding and awareness of the objectives of JSC English curriculum.

The majority of the interviewed teachers lacked proper understanding and awareness of the objectives of the JSC English curriculum, while the rest of them had no idea about the curriculum. They only knew the JSC English test format and taught accordingly. This finding was buttressed by the findings of

the observation of teachers' classroom practice. In her study, Chen (2002) found that teachers preferred to 'teach to the test' when they lacked sufficient idea and knowledge of curriculum goals. Such a thing happens when the contents of the curriculum are not reflected in the contents of the test and the score achieved in the test is given more emphasis than achieving the curricular goals. Hence, teachers as well as students give more priority to the test than the curriculum and its goals. Eventually, the test negatively impacts the curriculum.

Hence, test washback has a very close relationship with the relevant curriculum. Contents of assessment and test can also have a direct effect upon curricula of teaching and learning. There is no denial of the fact that curriculum itself cannot guarantee that teaching-learning in the classroom occurs as per the curriculum (Hoque, 2011). Curriculum can only suggest a set of principles and guidelines that should be followed and implemented accordingly if expected outcomes are desired. A number of previous washback studies claimed that the lack of proper understanding and awareness of the objectives of curriculum is the consequence of negative washback of the examination. These findings of this doctoral study confirm findings of other similar studies (e.g., Hoque, 2011; Maniruzzaman & Hoque, 2010; Wang, 2006).

One of the reasons of such unawareness and negligence towards the curriculum, as reported by the interviewed teachers, is the mismatch between curricular objectives and test objectives. The study by Orafi and Borg (2009) explored similar findings. By applying teacher interviews and classroom observations, they investigated how secondary English teachers in Lybia

executed the EFL communicative curriculum, and observed that English teachers struggled to execute their instructional practice as suggested by the curriculum and concluded that the reason behind this failure was “the gap between the orientation of the curriculum and that of the examination system”. The objectives of any language test should be in line with curricular objectives (Bachman, 2000). When the objectives of any language test do not reciprocate the curricular objectives, it creates negative washback on language teaching and learning (Andrews, 2004).

6.1.2 Teaching and Learning of the JSC Syllabus and Curriculum

The current study explores the perceptions and attitudes of the respondents towards the textbook (*English for Today*). The majority of the respondents opined that the textbook included adequate exercises for practice and that was what the English curriculum (2012) also claimed and they believed that the JSC English textbook was suitable and appropriate for practicing language skills, so as to develop learners’ communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) in English. They found the contents of the *English for Today* stimulating and interesting. These results lead to affirm the claims made by the publisher of the book (NCTB) that it was designed and developed following the principles of communicative English curriculum inserting interesting materials, but students admitted that they did not go through the lessons of the textbook attentively and seriously. The majority of the teachers also found their students reluctant to study the textbook, rather they depended highly on commercially produced model or mock test books, test papers, suggestion books, notes and guidebooks which contained test-related materials. Teachers themselves were also found to rely on such teaching materials, which Caine

(2005, p. 11) termed as a “hidden syllabus”. These findings substantiate the four hypotheses put forwarded by Alderson and Wall’s (1993: p. 120):” A test will influence what teachers teach, and how teachers teach; and A test will influence what learners learn, and how learners learn”.

The study also reveals that teachers were not found to use authentic materials in their English classroom. The use of authentic materials is considered vital for promoting positive washback. Bailey (1996) commented that “... a test will yield positive washback to the learner and to the programme to the extent that it utilizes authentic tasks and authentic texts (p. 276)”.

The study reveals that this phenomenon happened because of misalignment between the JSC English textbook and the test. These findings correspond with the studies conducted by Rahman et al. (2019), Al Amin and Greenwood (2018), Hoque (2016), and Jilani (2011). The findings also have similarities with the study of Han et al. (2004) in China. Their study also found that for their preparation of the College English Test (CET), the candidates are seriously reliant on test related materials produced commercially. Lam (1994, p.83) remarks, “... about 50% of the teachers appear to be ‘textbook slaves’ [here he means test-oriented materials] in teaching the sections of the test related to listening, reading, and language systems, and practical skills for work and study.”

These findings also conform with the findings of the study conducted by Cheng (1997, p. 50) who found that the candidates for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination and their teachers relied greatly on the workbooks explicitly produced for preparing the students for the said examination.

6.1.3 Communicating the Lesson Objectives

Lesson or learning objectives define a route for the learners to obtain new KSA (knowledge, skills, and attitudes). Appropriate learning or lesson objectives are compatible with the goals and objectives of the curriculum. When lesson and learning objectives are well-defined and articulated, they can encourage “a focused mindset” for learners engaging themselves in the content (Mitchell & Manzo, 2018, p. 456) and a clear reason to emphasize students’ learning efforts. But the current study indicates that teachers did not share the objectives of the lessons of the textbook with the students, probably because the observed classes were teacher-centered and content and test oriented rather than being goal or outcome focused.

Previous studies related to setting and communicating lesson/learning objectives to the learners show positive outcomes (Glaser & Brunstein, 2007; Mooney et al, 2005). In the study of Glaser and Brunstein (2007), 4th graders who were given instruction on writing strategies, as well as self-regulation strategies (for example, setting goals, self-assessment, strategy monitoring), were more capable to apply their knowledge and understanding when they were planning, developing and reviewing a story, and when they prepared the final draft of the stories, these were found more complete having higher quality than those of the controlled students and the students who were given only strategic instruction. By providing opportunities to students to personalize the objectives of learning indicated by the instructor can boost their motivation for learning (Brophy, 2004; Page-Voth & Graham, 1999). Learners feel a sense of control on their learning if they can find how their

learning is applicable to them and thus, this practice assist them to form self-regulation (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000).

The study indicates that the respondents did not care about the objectives of the lessons set by the curriculum, rather they were interested in and emphasized communicating the examination instructions to the students. So, the evidence of negative washback clicked at the very first minute of starting the lesson. Wang (2008) in his study demonstrates that teacher factors have a significant influence on teaching practices in the language classroom. Teacher beliefs and classroom behavior are usually consistent with their previous experience and approaches to teaching.

This study also proves that teachers as practitioners are likely to react to test following their own beliefs, instead of reacting to test constructors' beliefs and intentions, which increases the probability of unintended washback from the examination (Onaiba, 2013) as well as bears the evidence of attitudinal or perception washback (Lam, 1994).

6.1.4 Skipping and Narrowing the Contents of the textbook

The study finds that there was an extremely negative washback effect of the JSC English examination on the observed teachers' selection and teaching of contents from *English for Today*, the textbooks. The findings of this study reveal that every section of the textbook was not taught in the classroom. Teachers skipped and ignored some of the lessons of the textbook that were not or less expected and set to be set in the JSC examination (similar to the studies by Rind, & Mari, 2019; Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2011; and Qi, 2004). Fullilove (1992, p. 139) termed such exams as "little more than cloners of past

exam papers”. Teachers narrowed the content of the textbook so that it could match and resemble the content of the JSC English examination. The same findings were also revealed by several other studies in other contexts at home and abroad (Sultana, 2018; Hoque, 2016; Choi, 2008; Abu-Alhija, 2007; Cheng, 2005; Stecher, 2002) where it was noticed that high-stakes tests were instrumental in limiting the curriculum to those items only which were likely to be set in the test.

Ignoring some of the essential lessons and contents (which would help learners to practice their communication skills and develop their language efficiency), most of the participant-teachers were found to prepare lesson summaries following the format of the JSC English examination papers/questions to mirror the content of the said examination. This ignoring, narrowing and skipping of the contents of the textbook indicates how negatively test affects English teachers’ teaching practice. Hoque (2016, p. 354) opined that “positive washback takes place when tests induce teachers to cover their subjects more thoroughly, making them complete their syllabi within the prescribed time limits.”

This finding of the present study confirms the findings of other studies (e.g., Sultana, 2019; Chowdhury, 2010; Maniruzzaman & Hoque, 2010; Tsagari, 2009; Lam, 1994) and the study of Watanabe (2000, p. 44) who in his study found the teachers “*using a variety of self-made materials*” to suit the content of the target examination.

Thus, in the current study along with other similar studies, it was found that the JSC English examination has negative washback effects on the contents of

the textbook and curriculum, since most teachers put emphasis and taught only those sections of the lessons or lessons which they deem important for the JSC English examination. Interviews with the teacher revealed that they were compelled to do so because their students were not interested and show resistance to exercise the activities that were not likely to appear in the JSC English examination (see Section 5.1.6.2 teacher interview with T10). This finding conforms with the findings of Onaiba (2013), who also noted that it was “*a result of students’ resistance to teachers’ attempts to implement certain activities*” (p. 254). This finding also bears the evidence of curriculum or textbook washback (Lam, 1994).

6.1.5 JSC English Curriculum and Test: Alignment of Goals

The finding of the questionnaire item on alignment between the goals of JSC English curriculum, i.e., achieving communicative competence and JSC English test reveals that the majority of the respondents believed that the JSC English test did not align with the objectives of the JSC English curriculum.

This particular finding triangulates positively with the analysis and evaluation of the JSC English test, in-depth interviews with the English teachers, focused group interviews with the students and the classroom observation. The respondents also confirmed that they did not consider the scores of JSC English examination as an appropriate indicator of their English language proficiency, rather they felt that the scores of JSC English examination failed to reflect students’ English language ability. This finding of the current doctoral study conforms to the finding of the study by

Shohamy et al. (1996) and Gennaro (2017). The respondents surprisingly also confirmed that the students could cut high scores without improving English language proficiency.

This is another negative effect of the JSC English test which produces “*test score pollution*” (Haladyna et al., 1991, p4; Azizeh & Mansoor, 2010). The JSC English test is more orientated to discrete-point testing instead of its being integrative testing. Consequently, learners cannot gain real-life language skills. Rather they learn and master the discrete points of skills and knowledge. Pointing to this type of test, Onaiba wrote, the scores and grades they receive hardly represent “the quality of language performance on relevant tasks of the exam. Consequently, students’ scores can be considered invalid measurements in mirroring students’ real levels in using language communicatively as recommended by the existing curriculum. In effect, students may gain high marks in the exam but their real levels of language lag behind, and they are unable to express themselves in real-life situations, or even produce any type of writing (2013, p. 265).”

It is a very common phenomenon (see Kwon, Lee & Shin, 2017; Ho, 2006; OECD, 2003; OECD, 2004) that results of high-stake public examinations generally influence an individual’s career or life chances (e.g., educational and/or employment opportunities). Such examinations are considered an ‘educational gatekeeper’ (Froese-German, 2001, p111) or ‘gatekeeper’ (Kwon, Lee & Shin, 2017, p60) of a learner’s success in life, with regard to entering a reputed educational institute or having a bright career. The 3rd and 5th national English curricular objectives also speak the same.

Objective # 3: “To help them attain proper communicative and language competence for their subsequent education level” (NCTB, 2012; p 36)

Objective # 5: “To facilitate them to be skilled and trained human capital by applying English language properly” (NCTB, 2012; p 36)

As learners’ academic success in the examination has a significant role to ensure their future educational and career opportunities, they are found to attend cram school (Ho, 2016), private tuition or coaching classes after their regular school hours. The JSC English test is not an exception in this regard. The respondents believed the result and scores of the JSC English test had any significant impact on students’ future life and career (e.g., educational and/or employment opportunities), but they regretted that the current JSC English test did not benefit learners to develop their English proficiency. All the respondents opined that the current JSC English test is not an ideal instrument to measure the students’ performance of using the English language in real-life situation, rather they termed it as ‘inappropriate’. Andrews et al. (2000) claimed that an inappropriate test must yield negative washback on language learning and teaching. Bachman (2000) comments that the contents of a language test have to consist of activities and tasks that can measure learners’ language proficiency if it would like to be considered communicative language testing.

But this JSC English test lacks these properties, and hence, was considered very limited and can be termed as “construct under-representation” and “construct irrelevant” (Spurgeon, 2017, p. 275). For ensuring test validity, a test should avoid two major flaws (Spurgeon, 2017; Messick, 1996). The first one is “construct under-representation, where, for instance, neither speaking

nor listening skills are tested in a communicative competence-based test” and the other one is “being construct irrelevant, where, for instance, teachers pay unduly marked attention to grammar points in a communicative-based test”. (Onaiba, 2013, p43). This JSC English test could not avoid any of these two flaws. This finding of the current study co-relates with the findings of similar other studies (e.g. Onaiba, 2013).

In the present study teachers’ attitudes to the JSC English test, however, appeared to be pretty different from other similar studies. Amengual-Pizarro (2009), Wall (2005) and Watanabe (2000), for example, emphasized that the participant teachers had mixed yet positive attitudes and reactions to the introduced test. In the current study, however, although teachers also had mixed reactions and attitudes, yet they were mostly negative. The findings of the current doctoral study explore that the respondents’ perceptions towards the test are greatly incompatible with the intended or positive washback of the test. Andrews and Fullilove (1994) opined that teachers’ perception and attitudes mostly contributes to the creation of negative influence on teaching-learning. Hence, teachers’ perception and attitudes, and their beliefs and involvement have been mentioned in the studies on washback of testing (Turner, 2008, 2009; Cheng, 2004; Watanabe, 2004b; Rea-Dickens, 1997).

Similar to the findings of the doctoral study conducted in Lybia by Onaiba (2013), this study found that the content and construct validity of the question-items of the JSC English test is questionable. Most of the teachers criticized this test for failing to redress the expected balance between its contents and the content of the national English curriculum (2012). These

findings, thus, bear the evidence of attitudinal or perception washback (Lam, 1994).

As a test battery, this test does not satisfy the requirement of content validity of a test which denotes that it will be pertinent to and representative of the construct it is supposed to measure (Rusticus, 2014) and construct validity which shows that scores or marks gained on a test can accurately envisage the theoretical characteristic it claims it does (Ginty, 2013)

Tasks included in Part A (20 marks) and Part B (25 marks) of the JSC English examination to test JSC examinees' reading skill and stock of vocabulary are all directly from the textbook. The inclusion of texts that are already read by the test takers is strongly discouraged by the ELT professional and researchers (see Hughes, 2003). Such inclusion will make the test suffer seriously from lack of test validity and test-items based on such texts will hardly have any communicative value.

Part A (20 marks) and Part B (25 marks) of the JSC English Test assesses JSC examinees' reading skill and stock of vocabulary. All the texts needed for the question-items 1, 2 and 3 in Part A is taken from the textbook, and hence, this part is tagged as *Seen Part*. The question-items 1 and 2 in Part A are based on a reading text which is directly taken from the textbook to test students' reading ability. Question-item number 3 (in Part A) test examinees' stock of vocabulary where they have to read a similar text (that is also available in the textbook but not in the same language forms and words) with five missing words. They have to read it and fill in the gaps with appropriate words to make it a meaningful one.

The next two question items (4 and 5) in Part B are also based on a reading text to again test students' reading ability, but this time the text is not taken from the textbook. In Question-item 4, they have to complete an incomplete table with appropriate information from the given reading passage/text whereas in Question-item 5, there are five statements given. They have to determine whether these five sentences are true or false.

In question-item number 6, they have to read an incomplete text and fill-in the gaps using the clues/words given in the boxes along with the text, whereas in question-item number 7, they have to same but this time without having any given clues/words. The last question of this part is question-item number 8 where they have to match the part of sentences from columns A and B to make five complete sentences.

The objective test items, such as multiple-choice questions (MCQ), true or false, filling in the blanks, matching etc. can hardly assess learners' reading ability therefore, these items cannot assess the actual performance of the learners (Heaton, 1990). Researchers like Weir (1990) and Heaton (1990) questioned the validity of test-items like multiple-choice questions (MCQ) and true or false as measures of learners' reading ability. They commented that examinees can answer these test-items correctly by guessing even without comprehending the text.

Furthermore, Hughes (2003) commented that adopting unfair means by the examinees in the examination hall is likely to be easier while they will be responding and answering to these test-items. Besides, Weir (1990) mentioned that answering MCQs is not a realistic task, since in our real life

we are never provided with four/five options from which we can choose the right one to prove that we have understood what has been said.

ELT professionals and researchers (Alderson et al., 1995 and Weir, 1990), however, considered information transfer tasks as test-items realistic since they bear a resemblance to real-life situations, and hence, are popularly used in language tests which wish to contain authentic test-items. This test-item is specifically appropriate for assessing candidates' understanding of narrative sequence, classification or process. This is also suitable for assessing test takers' understanding of different types of texts (Weir, 1990).

Test-item like answering short questions is also very popular, useful and is commonly used in assessing candidates' understanding of reading texts, because unlike MCQs and true/false, in this sort of test-items, guessing and predicting is hardly possible (Weir, 1995; Hughes, 2003). Consequently, if a test taker can write the right answer, the examiner can be rest assured that the test taker has answered it from his/her own understanding of the text. Moreover, "activities such as inference, recognition of a sequence, comparison and establishing the main idea of a text, require the relating of sentences in a text with other items which may be some distance away in the text. This can be done effectively through short-answer questions where the answer has to be sought rather than being one of those provided. A well-designed summary task is also a very efficient way of testing reading comprehension. Writing summaries may closely replicate many real-life activities" (Alderson et al., 1995 cited in Ali and Sultana, 2016, p69).

The last test-item of this part (B) is item number 8 where test takers have to match the part of sentences from columns A and B to make five complete sentences. Matching as a test-item has a demerit, because when all sentences except the last one have been matched correctly, the last pair is, by default, correct (Ali & Sultana, 2016; Alderson et al. (1995). This type of test-item hardly has any communicative worth, because it does not involve any language production (Ali & Sultana, 2016).

Moreover, in the JSC English test, it is seen that a great emphasis is given on assessing test takers' grammatical skill. Part C exclusively tests JSC examinees' grammar skills. One fourth of the total marks (25 out of 100) has been allocated for grammatical items, and a number of test items, e.g., change of speech, punctuations, use of articles, changing sentences, and suffix and prefix. In test-item number 9, they have to read a text and fill in the gaps with the root words in the brackets adding suitable suffix, prefix or both. In test-item 10, they have to fill in the gaps in the given text with appropriate articles (a, an or the) or put a cross (x) where no article is used. In test-item 11, they have to change the five given sentences as directed in the brackets. In test-item 12, they have to rewrite a text/passage changing the form of speech and in test-item 13, use capital letters and punctuation marks as needed in another given text/passage.

Although testing test taker's grammatical ability adds to his/her communicative skills, it is hardly considered an end in itself (Hughes, 2003). Excessively emphasis on the assessing of language elements may generate a detrimental effect that impedes the achievement of teaching-learning objectives where these are in nature communicative (Hughes, 2003).

The vocabulary test in this JSC English Test comprises only one test technique, and this is the cloze test. In question-item number 6, they have to read an incomplete text and fill-in the gaps using the clues/words given in the boxes along with the text, while in question-item number 7, they have to do the same but this time without having any given clues/words. Instead of using only one test technique which has been done in this JSC English test, diverse types of items can be included to test candidates' stock of vocabulary, for example, word formation test items, items involving synonyms and antonyms, matching items, completion items, rearrangement items, definitions etc. (Heaton, 1990).

Thus, it is safe to say that using only one item leaving so many probable items inevitably brings this JSC English test's content validity into question. Additionally, such test-item has little to do with assessing candidates' stock of vocabulary, since the words required to fill in the gaps are directly derived from *English for Today*, the textbook.

Part D (30 marks) exclusively test JSC examinees' writing skills. But here again, the weaknesses implicit in the test-items again inevitably bring this JSC English test's validity into question. In the very first item of Part D (question-item number 14), test takers are given a situation and they have to write a dialogue based on the given situation. For instance, "*Suppose you are Rabid and you are in a restaurant with your sister. Make a dialogue between you and the waiter before ordering your meal*" (Source: NCBT sample question for JSC English Test, see Appendix-5). This question-item is another noticeable evidence of an invalid test, because, involving learners in a dialogue is meant for assessing their speaking skill, not writing skill. Since

speaking skill is not tested at all in this high-stake public examination, such an invalid test item is included to test learners' speaking skill in the disguise of writing item. "As far as achievement tests are concerned, it is preferable, according to Hughes (2003) to rely principally on direct testing. Moreover, as we have seen, tests of communicative language ability should be as direct as possible, and the tasks candidates have to perform should involve realistic discourse processing" (Ali & Sultana, 2016, p. 69).

Hughes (2003 cited in Ali & Sultana, 2016, p.69) advised the teachers to let their students write what he considered "the most direct way" to gauge their ability to write. The writing part of the JSC English test makes an attempt to measure test takers' writing ability 'directly' by asking them to write dialogue, paragraph, and email. But the respondents of the present study informed that the writing items of the JSC English test are highly repetitive and therefore quite predictable.

Accordingly, they either make or get a list of likely writing topics when the terminal/final examination approaches. They get prepared answers (paragraphs, dialogues and emails) on those likely writing topics mostly from commercially produced guide books and sometimes from their teachers and at times from the internet. Then they learn them by heart and thus prepare themselves for approaching the writing items. The students who prepare these answers on their own are very small in number.

Besides, the analysis of the JSC English test papers of the last 7 years also confirmed respondents' claim about the repetition of the writing topics. The analysis showed that a topic of paragraph writing was found to be set nine

times in different education boards. Similarly, a topic of dialogue writing was found to be set seven times in different education boards, an application writing topic had been repeated nine times and the very last test-item i.e., email writing topic was found to be set five times in different education boards.

The above findings deduced a relation between the repetition of the topics and the learners' taking resort to memorizing those writing items got from the commercially produced guidebooks, their teachers or from the internet. The above findings also indicate that the school syllabus of the school and teachers' classroom teaching was influenced by such repetition of writing topics, because during FDI with students, the majority of them informed that they had a limited number of writing topics in their school syllabus.

The above findings are compatible with other studies conducted in the same context and other foreign contexts (e.g., Sarwer and Haque, 2016; Ali and Sultana, 2016; Kennedy and Lui, 2013; Rehmani, 2013; Khattak, 2012; Khan, 2010 and Siddiqui, 2007) where it was observed that teaching and learning strategies were impacted by the tests.

Thus, the washback effect of JSC English test made the learners dependent on commercially produced guidebooks. Since they know it well that they can cut a good figure by preparing only a limited number of dialogues, paragraphs, and emails, they informed that they prepared a short but probable list of writing topics to memorize. And those who are efficient and capable of memorizing things, can easily get good scores on the test (Ali and Sultana (2016), which

never goes with principles of communicative language learning and most importantly, they cannot perform in the real-life situation.

This finding is compatible with the findings of Sarwer and Haque (2016), Ali and Sultana (2016), and Khan (2010) who reported this trend of making a short but probable list of writing topics and memorizing those. The above findings also correspond with the findings of the studies conducted by Rahman et al. (2019), Al Amin and Greenwood (2018), Hoque (2016), and Jilani (2011). They also found that the candidates depended highly on commercially produced notes and guidebooks.

This repetition of the writing topics and resultant dependency on commercially produced notes and guidebooks led to developing anxieties and apprehensions among the candidates. Since they do not practice anything besides the short-listed suggestion, a sort of tension and concern always loom large in them that whether they would really find these short-listed writing topics in their final examination question paper or not. This finding is also compatible with those of Sundayana et al. (2018) and Kennedy (2013) who also reported the candidates of Indonesia, Thailand and Pakistan also felt similar tensions and apprehensions owing to public examinations.

Moreover, such repetition of the writing topics and students' resultant dependency on short-listed suggestion and commercially produced notes and guidebooks negatively impacted their learning strategies. Since they were confident that they could get these short-listed writing topics in their final examination, they did not bother to practice writing and became unwilling to write anything on their own. For instance, a few of the most often repeated

paragraph writing topics are traffic jam, a winter morning and a rainy day. Due to their repetition, these paragraphs are found in any guidebooks commercially produced targeting JSC examinations. And therefore, they get these paragraphs by heart from the notebooks or guidebooks to ensure that they can cut a good figure instead of writing on their own. The above findings are compatible with other studies conducted in the same (Bangladeshi) context and other foreign contexts (e.g. Sultana, 2018; Sarwer and Haque, 2016; Ali and Sultana, 2016; Hossain, 2009; Rahman et al., 2006) where it was observed that SSC English test is still yielding to memorization and the students are highly dependent on rote memorization.

Similarly, the studies conducted in Pakistan by Khan (2011) found that Pakistani students at the Matriculation Level memorized the paragraphs, stories and essays from the books and regurgitate them in the final examination. The studies conducted by Suen and Yu (2006) in China revealed that the main effect of tests made Chinese students reliant on rote memorization.

Khan (1999, cited in Ali & Sultana, 2016) criticized this unhealthy tendency of memorizing writing items and argued that learners cannot develop writing skills through memorization. She commented that “encouragement of memorization as a strategy to cope with writing is –unfair, misleading and demotivating, as it can never help students to learn the art of composing” (p.221).

Similarly, the study conducted by Bhandari (2017) concluded that the Nepalese English examination was instrumental in encouraging rote learning

by the learners. Khan (1999) contended that the objective of testing writing is not to assess students' ability to memorize before the examination and reproduce in the examination hall. The National Curriculum (2012, p. 81) mentions that "a writing test in the secondary level should assess –students' ability to write correct English of appropriate level for expressing ideas, thoughts, feelings, emotions", but, the above discussion clearly proves that the JSC candidates got short-listed writing topics by heart for their final examination. Consequently, the JSC examination fails to test candidate' writing skill, instead it assesses their capability to memorize and regurgitate. This proves that there is a discrepancy between the curriculum and the test. Hence, the absence of construct validity is found in the JSC English examination (Akter, 2019).

One important point to notice is that there is a mentionable difference between the present doctoral study and aforesaid washback studies, and that difference lies with the aims and purpose of the test. In many of the research (e.g. Shohamy, 2007, 2001, Qi, 2007, 2005, 2004) the implementations of high-stakes tests had a very genuine purpose. These implementations of high-stakes tests were being done to bring about specific and intended changes in the teaching and learning system in context. But, the implementation of JSC English test had no such intention to use it as a means of bringing about educational change.

The study found no mentioning of JSC testing policy by interviewed teachers to bring about specific and intended changes in English language teaching and learning or in any JSC English test related documents. During the interviews, even the English teachers who had been teaching English at grade eight well

before the introduction of the current JSC English test format shared no such intention of bringing about change in English language teaching and learning by the authority.

6.2 Teaching Methods and Approaches

This current study views the effects of test from the perspective of teachers' use of curriculum and their instructional practice in the classrooms. Issues related to their instructional practice in the classrooms form “methodology washback” in this present doctoral study.

The study explores that although both the CLT approach and the National English Curriculum (2012) strongly advocated that the English classroom must be learner-centered, but in practice, the opposite was noticed. To “look closely at classroom events [by using direct research methods for data collection] in particular, in order to see whether what teachers and learners say they do is reflected in their behavior” (Alderson & Wall, 1993, p. 127), as “teachers may hold beliefs that are not compatible with the practices” (Muñoz & Álvarez, 2010, p. 46) (also see Cheng, 2005; Wall, 2005; Watanabe, 2004b; Cheng, 2001), this current study used classroom observations which explored that all the classrooms were teacher-centered and test-oriented. It is compatible with the findings of the study conducted by Andrews (1995) who also found that teachers consumed too much time of the entire class hour and spent it on test-related materials, which he believed “a limiting of focus for teachers and students rather than a broadening of horizons” (p. 80).

The findings of the current doctoral study indicate that the format and demands of the JSC English test greatly influenced the interviewed teachers' instructional practices in their classroom with their students, tailoring it to the test. The influence, however, was more prominently observed in terms of choice and selection of teaching contents, classroom tasks and activities, and skills practiced, rather than teaching methods and approaches applied in the classroom. Bailey (1999) comments,

“In considering the varied research about washback and language teachers, we can see that teachers' classroom behavior can either support or override the intended positive washback effect of new or revised tests. There have also been differences observed between novice and experienced teachers with respect to washback. We have seen that in many contexts teachers change the content of their teaching but not their methods as a result of examination changes (p.24)”.

These findings of the current study conform to the findings of several other studies (Qi, 2004 and Wall & Alderson, 1993) including the one conducted by Cheng (2005) who in a similar tone with Bailey (1999) commented, *“the way the teachers carried out their teaching remained more or less the same, whether the testing syllabus was the old one or the new one”* (246). The Sri Lankan washback study by Wall and Alderson (1993) explored that test has had “virtually no impact on the way that teachers teach English” (p. 127).

The findings of the current study to some extent, however, disagree with few other studies (e.g. Gennaro, 2017; Amengual-Pizarro, 2009; Stecher et al. 2004; Burrows, 2004). In their washback studies, Amengual-Pizarro (2009)

and Stecher et al. (2004), however, found that the teaching methods and approaches of all the studied teachers were influenced by the test. These studies explored that teachers changed their teaching methods and approaches to suit the requirements of the test. Amengual-Pizarro (2009) concluded that, “contrary to previous studies that found no straightforward connection between the test and teachers’ methodology [...], the results of this study also appear to indicate that the ET affects the methodology teachers employ in actual class teaching adapting it to the purpose of the test” (p. 594).

Findings from the classroom observation showed that all of the observed teachers except T10 consumed the majority of the time of the class-time. It specifies that the teacher, not the students, was the focal point of the lessons and the lessons were teacher-dominated. Content selection and control of the lesson and activities in the classroom lied heavily with the class-teacher. Almost all teachers were found to consume around or more than three fourth of the total class time. These teachers were found mostly engaged with themselves and the text. They usually started the conversation in the classroom, explained and led the text, activities and exercises throughout the lesson time, where their students were only inquired if they could understand what they were instructing and explaining.

The findings of lesson observation data from all the English lessons observed show that the main focus of all the lessons except one (T10) were reading, writing activities or vocabulary and grammar. Only one of them (T10) focused on speaking activities and none of them focused on any listening activity in the class. T10 appeared to be the “individual teacher” whom Spratt (2005, p. 12) indicated in his paper. He (2005, p. 12) argued, “There has been a perception

that washback affects teaching content but not teaching methods. This perception is not fully supported It seems to be true in some circumstances but not others, suggesting that whether the exam affects methods or not may also depend on factors other than the exam itself, such as the individual teacher”.

Cimbricz (2002) in his washback study conceded that testing itself is not the only influencing factor to form teachers’ understandings and interpretations of the centrally administered testing. Teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and experience also has a significant role to play. Shohamy *et al.* (1996) explored that in contrast to novice language teachers, experienced teachers were more responsive and sensitive to high-stakes testing and more likely “to teach to the test” (p.280). The differences in classroom teaching practice between T10 and the other fifteen teachers confirm the comments of the above-mentioned researchers. T10 is new to teaching (experience), has an undergraduate degree in English and a post-graduate degree in ELT (knowledge).

However, case of ignoring speaking and listening activities and putting emphasis on reading, writing activities or vocabulary and grammar because of the demand of the JSC English test was also shared by the respondents during interviews. Most of the teachers commented that the JSC English test did not encourage learners to apply integrated language skills which proves that this kind of activity is avoided in the JSC English test. This finding is compatible with the findings of Onaiba (2013), who studied the implementation of newly introduced EFL public examination namely Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) for school leavers in Lybia.

Thus, the above discussion indicates the presence of perception or attitudinal as well as methodological washback are evident in this study. These particular findings are compatible with the findings of the study conducted by Cheng et al. (2010). This current study testifies a number of hypotheses set by Alderson and Wall's (1993: 120). Such as:

“A test will influence teaching,

*A test will influence **what** teachers teach,*

*A test will influence **how** teachers teach,*

*A test will influence **degree** and **depth** of teaching, and*

A test will influence attitudes to the content, methods, etc. of teaching”

6.3 Teachers' Language of Instruction

The findings of the current study indicate that the teachers did not use English to clarify the text in the classroom. It was specified that mostly Bangla along with English was used as the language of instructions in the classroom. Nor did the English teachers encourage learners to ask any question. This finding of the current study again testifies that “*A test will influence **how** teachers teach*” a hypothesis by Alderson and Wall's (1993: 120).

This striking finding of the current study complies with the findings of other similar studies (Podder, 2016; Hossain, Nessa & Kafi, 2015; Rahman, 2014; Hoque, 2011) conducted in Bangladesh, which demonstrated that the teachers mostly used Bangla along with English as the medium of instructions in the English classrooms. Hossain, Nessa and Kafi (2015) observed, “most of the English teachers do not practice speaking side by side with writing and they

conduct the classes in Bangla which is a hindrance to the implementation of language curriculum” (p. 15).

Bangladesh is predominantly a monolingual country (Rahman et al, 2019; Hasan & Akhand, 2014; Rasheed, 2012) where Bangla is “spoken as the first language by 98 percent of the population” (Islam, 2013) for day-to-day communication. Consequently, the students here get barely any exposure to English language outside the English classroom (Salim, 2014; Mirza et al., 2012). Moreover, “the classrooms up to the 8th grade cannot offer exposure to much English because of the lack of qualified and competent teachers” (Salim, 2014). Park (2006, cited in Salim, 2014) finds that “more than half of the primary teachers hold SSC (Secondary School Certificate) or HSC (Higher Secondary School Certificate) as their qualifications and “many secondary school teachers teach subjects, like English, which they did not study in their graduate courses”. “22.5 percent of teachers with commerce, science, social science and Madrasah background are teaching [English] language” (Park, 2006). Consequently, teachers teaching English in the classroom fail to use English for a considerable period of time in the classroom, that eventually makes “the English class a translation class without much use of English itself” (Salim, 2014, p. 103).

The study looked into the reasons behind English teachers overriding tendency of using Bangla as the languages of instructions in the classroom. Most of the teachers and students were found to defend and support the use of Bangla in their English classrooms, since they believe that it made English teaching and learning easier in the classroom. This finding conforms with the findings of two empirical studies conducted in Bangladesh. Salim (2014)

explored that “90% teachers and 93% students are found to appreciate the use of Bangla in English language class as having facilitating contribution to teaching and learning pedagogy” (p. 112), while the findings of the study conducted by Mirza et al. (2012) explored that 93.33% respondents acknowledge the contributory role that they believe Bangla plays in English teaching and learning in the classroom.

For a variety of reasons, the respondents of the current study prefer to use Bangla in their English classrooms. English teachers informed that they used Bangla for explaining the difficult and complex grammatical rules to the students, for clarifying difficult pedagogical issues, for making students understand the unknown and abstract phrases and vocabulary, checking students’ comprehension of the contents they taught, for maintaining discipline in the classrooms, and boosting their students’ confidence. On the other hand, students informed that they use Bangla to ask and answer questions in the classroom, to build confidence in the classroom and to take part in pair and group works. These findings support the findings of the studies by Salim (2014) and Jingxia (2010) who explored that L1 is frequently used both by students and teachers for grammatical explanation, for clarifying unknown vocabulary and for building confidence in the students.

On the contrary, the study of previous literature indicates that English teachers of secondary schools of Bangladesh themselves seriously lack proficiency in English speaking (Rahman et al., 2018b; Nur, 2018). The interviewed teachers, however, claimed that though they did not support their own practice of carrying out test-oriented tasks and activities in their

classroom with their students, they were impelled to use Bangla mostly as a medium of instruction in the classroom during English lessons, which was also observed during classroom observation of this current study.

Teachers informed that they used Bangla for a number of reasons. One of the reasons was the low-level of English of their students. The other reasons were time constraints in the classroom, test-pressure and their urge to ensure their students pass the JSC examination. Such reasons, however, created “a tension between pedagogical and ethical decisions” (Spratt, 2005: p. 24) to cater to the expectations of not only students but also their parents as well as the school authority.

6.4 Language Skills Practiced

Since listening and speaking skills are not tested in the JSC English test, teachers did not teach these two skills. Even if these two skills were ever taught, the way they were taught hardly could benefit the students to develop their proficiency in these two skills. For example, in the case of assessing listening skill, usually teachers read the text of the book loudly and instructed their students to listen to them attentively. At times they translated the text in English into Bangla so that their students could easily understand the contents of the text. When the reading of the text was over, they asked questions to their students from the text. On the other hand, for assessing students' speaking skill, teachers instructed the students to work in pairs or in groups in to practice some dialogues from the English textbook or guide books.

Teacher and students were found to spend almost the entire class time practicing grammar, reading, writing and vocabulary-related tasks since these were tested mostly in the JSC English test. The findings of lesson observation data from all the English lessons observed show that the main focus of almost all the lessons were reading activities, writing activities, and activities related to vocabulary and grammar. Only one of the teachers focused on speaking activities and none of the sixteen teachers focused on any listening activity in the class.

These findings of the present study confirm the findings of other similar studies conducted in Bangladesh (e.g., Rahman et al. (2019); Sultana, 2019; Al Amin and Greenwood (2018); Hoque (2016); Hoque, 2011; Jilani (2011); Chowdhury, 2010; and Maniruzzaman & Hoque, 2010).

6.5 School based Assessment (Summative & Formative)

Through document analysis, FGIs with students and teacher interviews, it was found that all the schools follow two types of in-the-school assessments. These are summative assessment and formative assessment. Two terminal examinations take the form of summative assessment and 80% marks are allocated for this type of assessment. These terminal examinations are usually the replica of the JSC English test. On the other hand, 20% marks are allocated for formative assessment (which is in the form of class tests), although according to the curriculum, this 20% marks should be allocated to speaking test (10% marks) and listening test (10% marks).

But interview with teachers and FGIs with students reveals that 20% marks were not allocated to speaking skill test and listening skill test. Rather, two things happened instead. Most teachers considered these as class-tests which is a smaller version or partial form of terminal test. Similar findings are also reported in the study of Onaiba (2013), who found that the on-going class-tests, quizzes, monthly tests were designed following and resembling the English test format of Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). That is, instead of testing speaking and listening, they tested their students reading, writing, vocabulary or grammar skills similar to JSC English test. In some worst cases, it was reported by students that these 20 marks were given without giving any test (data from FGIs with students). These findings match with the findings of a study (Rahman, 2014) conducted in the same context where the researcher investigated the implementation of school-based assessment (SBA) at grade 8 in the classrooms of Bangladeshi secondary schools.

Although teachers and some students informed that all the four language skills (e.g., listening, speaking, reading and writing) are being practiced and assessed in the classrooms, classroom observation data show that listening and speaking skills are not practiced and assessed in the real term. Speaking skill practice is done only in the form that teachers ask questions to students and they reply to these. Moreover, students were found to give one-word answers to the questions. In the same way, listening skill practice is done only in the form that teachers ask questions and students reply or teachers engage students in reading a passage aloud and other students listen to it. No planned and real-time speaking or listening practiced is found in any classroom.

Besides class tests, as a part of continuous assessment, students informed that they were assessed during the class-hour on a daily basis. They were involved in responding orally to questions individually or in chorus. Sometimes teachers wrote down questions on the blackboards and asked students to answer orally or in writing. At times teachers assessed them by engaging them in pair/group-works. Most of the time teachers assessed them in the middle of the class. Some teachers assessed the previous day's lesson at the beginning of the following day. All teachers gave home-works at the end of almost every lesson.

Teachers generally preferred to ask questions to the whole class, that is, to all students in general and waited for the students to show their willingness to answer by raising their hands. Teachers also tend to ask questions directly to individual students. Students' FGIs and classroom observation data reveal that teachers tend to ask questions to good students than the weak ones. And with regard to position, teachers preferred to ask questions to the front benchers. They hardly reached to the back benchers. Teachers asked mostly such type of questions that demanded memorization. There were only very few questions asked by the teachers which involved students to reply based on their own thinking or real-life experience.

The questions asked by the teachers in the classroom were mostly from the knowledge sub-domain of the cognitive domain. Almost all the questions asked by the teachers were closed questions. Only very few questions gave clues to students to understand and answer previous questions or to motivate them towards learning. Only a very few numbers of questions which covered other sub-domain/higher domain of the cognitive domain such as application,

analysis, synthesis and evaluation were asked. Thus, the used questions were related to measuring lower order of learning.

The practiced classroom assessment (only through oral questioning and class tests) was competitive, straightforward and content-related rather than goal-oriented and its feedback was evaluative rather than descriptive. As a result, the nature of classroom assessment indicates mostly to ‘assessment of learning’ than ‘assessment for learning’.

6.6 Teaching to the Test

The findings of the current study also indicate that English teachers taught their students whatever they liked to teach and English teachers’ preference and choice of chapters and topics got priority in the classroom teaching and learning. English teachers hardly involved them to practice learning and speaking English, instead students were taught the strategies to answer the English questions to ensure high scores and good grades. Most of the interviewed teachers believed that this test had taken the form of a “rigid, unbalanced and narrowed curriculum” (Phelps, 2015, p.8 cited in Ritt, 2016). They claimed that they had been “*forced to dilute their creativity to teach to the test*” (Walker, 2014, pg.2).

Teachers greatly engaged themselves in the test-oriented tasks and activities and disregarded the tasks and activities which were not likely to be tested and required to pass the English test, similar to the findings of the study conducted by Rind and Mari (2019). The participants also informed that more time was used on practicing grammar, reading, writing and vocabulary

related tasks since these were tested mostly in the JSC English test, i.e., “*what is tested is taught*” (Onaiba, 2013, p.254). Thus, it is explored that the JSC English test was driving English language teaching and learning in the classroom. This happening was construed as negative by ELT practitioners and researchers. For example, Cheng (2004) warns that test-oriented teaching causes loss of teaching-learning time.

Moreover, since it is a high-stakes public examination and has an immense impact on life and career, as has already been said above, it draws great attention from its stakeholders. Hence, utmost importance and emphasis was given on the examination preparation. The findings of the present study indicate that English teachers offered guidelines for the JSC English test and demonstrated their students the JSC English test taking strategies. They offered model/mock tests and made to practice and solve the items of the previous years’ examination questions papers so that they could familiarize themselves with the test format and test contents and prepare themselves as the test demanded. These findings of the current study again testify that “*A test will influence **what** and **how** teachers teach*” the two hypotheses by Alderson and Wall’s (1993: p. 120).

These findings of the present doctoral study are compatible with numerous other studies conducted on washback of testing (e.g. Sultana, 2019; Umashankar, 2017; Onaiba, 2013 etc.). Similar to the findings of Onaiba (2013), this study also found that the on-going class-tests, quizzes, monthly or terminal tests were also designed following and resembling the JSC English test format, the mini versions of the JSC English test. These tests

reflected the JSC English test to a large extent in format and design, types and length of test-items, time allotted for each item, etc.

Such negative instructional practices are perceived as an act of cheating, although it is normally defensible and accepted (Onaiba, 2013; Amrein-Beardsley et al., 2010). However, the findings of the current doctoral study indicate that the washback effect of the JSC English test is more intensive, prominent and discernable in terms of teachers' content selection and testing practice than their choice and application of teaching approaches and methods.

6.7 Internal and external pressure for good grades

The respondents had undergone internal and external pressure for better scores. In a country where results of tests are used to impose punishments (such as reductions in funding, negative publicity, penalties and sanctions) or give rewards (like positive publicity, public celebration, praising and awards), the qualitative impact of such high stakes testing on learners, teachers and teaching and learning environment as a whole cannot be denied (Ritt, 2016) and hence, feeling internal and external pressure for better scores is not unusual.

When results of tests are the key adjudicators of further education or career opportunities in a stratified society (e.g., Bangladesh), tests become high-stakes and superior academic performance becomes the target of both schools and parents (Lewis, 2000; Horn, 2003; Ho, 2006).

Students regretted that they felt pressure from their parents, relatives and school authorities to score high grades. Similarly, external pressures (e.g. school authority, education ministry and guardians) to achieve high passing rates and good grades in the JSC examination posed a challenge for the majority of the teachers. These findings match with the findings of a study conducted by Phelps (2015) who found that teachers and school administrators were facing paramount pressure which was negatively influencing the teaching and learning environment of the school. Berliner (2011) goes onto say that in recent years the pressure from external sources is so intense that schools and students are being found cheating and doing extreme test preparation so that they can gain good grades, and achieve and maintain expected standards.

Findings from PISA studies done in PISA2000 and in PISA2003 revealed that although high-stakes testing had no noteworthy role in academic achievement and performance of students, it can negatively influence the dynamics of schools and their classrooms, students learning experiences, their cognition, their motivation and even their life after school (OECD, 2003; OECD, 2004).

The study reveals that if students performed poorly or failed in the examination, they felt embarrassed and frustrated. Delgado (2014) argued that the challenge with such high-stakes testing is that low-profile students were experiencing life stressors and these were not even considered in the course of such tests and during their scores and gradings. Besides these, a large volume of research studies conducted both at home (e.g. Hoque, 2011; Amin, 2017; Mamun & Griffiths, 2020; Mamun et al., 2020; Arafat & Mamun, 2019) and abroad (e.g. Mulverson et al., 2005; Triplett & Barksdale, 2005;

Popham, 1999) also found that high-stakes testing (e.g. JSC examination and the like) caused young learners to feel stressed, worried, anxious, overwhelmed and embarrassed.

One notable finding that this study reveals is that there is a correlation between learners' perceptions of the JSC English test and its perceived stakes. The study shows that the higher the value students placed on the test, the higher the stakes of the test they felt. These students are more aware and concerned with the test-items and format of the JSC English test. Secondly, although these students were not found to consider this JSC English test as an appropriate yardstick to measure their actual performance in English language, they were found to respond more that they suffered from stress and anxiety because of the JSC English test. These findings correlate with the findings of the study conducted by Xie (2015) and by Xie and Andrews (2013).

In the present doctoral study, learners were found to be exposed to different stakes objectively as far as the consequences of their scores at the JSC English test are concerned. Nevertheless, these learners' perceptions of the JSC English test as important or valid or stressful did not vary to the same degree.

For some of the students, however, this embarrassment and frustration resulting from the perceived stress of the JSC English Test brings so much disgrace that some of them commit suicide every year once the result is published. The finding of this current doctoral study is compatible with the report (Siu-Fai, 2016) presented by a committee of prevention of suicide in Hong Kong that reported that in Hong Kong, the peak suicide months for the

students are May, June and July when they sit for high-stakes public examinations and when results of these examinations are published.

A number of other studies conducted very recently (Mamun & Griffiths, 2020; Mamun et al., 2020; Arafat & Mamun, 2019) have explored that the students who face insurmountable academic stress and pressure are at the risk of adolescent mental distress, even self-killing (suicide). This is what happens with the students who committed suicide when they found their names on the failing list.

That is why, observing a similar phenomenon in the United States of America, Gorman (2015 cited in Ritt, 2016, p10) goes on to say, “Currently, high-stakes testing is implemented in all public schools’ curriculum and teachers are no longer focusing on supporting student’s emotional needs, but rather solely focusing on high-stakes testing and the score that the student will ultimately receive.”

The current doctoral study, however, also found that this test not only exert pressure on learners, but also teachers, though interviewed teacher informed that they could deal with the pressure, since their students’ academic achievement (success or failure) represented their own performance as subject teachers. They too had suffered from tension and anxiety for the JSC English test. They felt embarrassed and frustrated, if their students performed poorly or failed in the examination. Moreover, this test also imposed further demands and more pressure on some of the interviewed teachers, particularly when the JSC examination came closer which is termed as the *seasonality* of washback in the literature (Tzagari & Cheng,

2017; Cheng, 2005; Cheng & Watanabe, 2004b; Bailey, 1999). This seasonality was also observed in other washback studies. Finding that with approaching of the examination date, teachers' instructional behavior in the classroom got significantly intensified, Shohamy (1996), Watanabe (1996b) and Wall and Alderson (1993) suggested that while conducting a study on washback timing should be seriously considered, as it was done with this current doctoral study. Bailey (1999) also suggested the same by mentioning that the seasonality issue can be an "*appropriate concept in washback investigation*" (p. 40).

Similar to the finding of Green (2007), this study also reveals that alongside the actual stakes of the JSC English Test, there are the perceived stakes of this JSC test. Though we can ascertain without difficulty the stakes of the JSC English Test for its candidates by looking at the JSC English scores they have gained, the stakes of this test in their teachers' perspective and opinion may not be plainly and visibly articulated which indicates to attitudinal or perception washback of a test (Lam, 1994). This particular finding of the study is compatible with the findings of the washback study conducted by Cheng et al. (2014), who noted that the perceived stakes of a test depend on the social context, and the value given to the test ascertain its stakes (Xie, 2015). The perceived stakes and value of the JSC English Test differed from teacher to teacher. The stake of the JSC English Test was found higher for those teachers who considered the score gained by their students in the JSC English Test as the determinant of their professional performance and excellence than those who did not see things through the same lens.

Similar to Tsagari (2011), the current doctoral study also noted one of the subtle aspects of washback and that is teachers' accountability to their pupils. It was found that the interviewed teachers suffered from anxiety and stress because of their accountability to their school and the parents of their students, because success in the JSC English test, as already discussed above, determines these teachers' performance. This study indicates that the perceived stakes and value given to the JSC English Test by the interviewed teachers influenced the methods and approaches they applied in the classroom to prepare their students for the test. Although an often cited finding in the washback studies (e.g., Solorzano, 2008) is the feelings of the extra pressure resulting from the test, this extra pressure or stress generally occurs when the test is high-stakes. Although a common finding of this study is that every interviewed teacher commonly perceived the stakes of the JSC English Test, the degree and intensity of the perceived stakes vary from teacher to teacher. These findings of the current study testify that "*Tests will have washback, not on some teachers only, but on all teachers*" the *fourteenth* hypothesis by Alderson and Wall's (1993: p. 120).

Thus, the findings of the present study indicate that the JSC English examination hampered English teaching and learning. The students could hardly concentrate on learning English due to examination pressure. Students had a firm belief that if they were not pressurized to cut a good figure in JSC test, it would be easy for them to learn English, while teachers agreed that they could teach English better if they felt no pressure from school authority and guardians. This is why, Wren and Benson (2004)

comment that anxiety and stress resulting from test can make young learners perform miserably when they are being tested.

However, since the JSC English examination has a significant influence on English teaching and learning, and has a substantial impact on candidates' further education, the discussion indicates that "*tests that have important consequences will have washback*". But the 13th hypothesis: "*tests that do not have important consequences will have no washback*" was not proven, because the current study only deals with the JSC English test, which is a high-stakes test. So, that 13th hypothesis was beyond the scope of this doctoral study.

Furthermore, the findings of this study do not indicate that "tests will have washback effects for [...] some teachers, but not for others"; rather the findings show that all the participant-teachers of the study were influenced by JSC English test, though washback intensity (the degree of exam effect) was not same for all of them. It differed from teacher to teacher depending on the context and other mediating factors. Besides, the findings of this study indicate that Hughes' (1993) trichotomy (participant, process, and product) played its role inextricably and made washback of JSC English test observable.

Thus, the findings of the current doctoral study indicate that: the JSC English test dictates the national English curriculum (2012) and pervades English teachers' and learners' approaches to English teaching and learning; that the JSC English test contributes to the classroom culture of correction of mistakes; that the JSC English test promotes a well-built grammatical bent to

classroom instruction; that the JSC English test cultivates extensive and frequent use of model/mock the JSC English test in the classroom activities.

How the JSC English test dictates the national English curriculum (2012) can be concluded through the presence of two strong indicators: (a) commercially produced test-oriented model or mock test book, test papers, suggestion books, notes and guidebooks are the sole texts used in the classroom along with a very limited use of the NCTB produced national textbook (*English for Today*); (b) teachers themselves confirm that since JSC examination is a high-stakes public exam, examination preparation is the core focus of this year.

Although the national English curriculum (2012) recommended that the JSC English test should be a broad-based English language examination, the need for grammatical accuracy has been found to be ingrained throughout the test. Thus, because of the demand of the JSC English test, both the respondents are overtly conscious about the importance of acquiring strong and solid grammatical knowledge and having mastery over this and spend considerable time and energy to grammatical forms and instructions. Hence, grammatical knowledge, structures and forms work as subject content in the English classrooms. Learners not only listen to and comprehend explanations of grammatical structures and forms, but also try to internalize these to use them in the JSC English test.

The correction of tasks and activities and exercises on vocabulary, grammatical forms and structures conducted throughout the year can be attested to the influence of the JSC English test on English teaching and learning at grade 8. This existence of a culture of correction can be attributed

to the JSC English test. Both the teachers and learners informed that these feedbacks in the form of corrections assist learners to avoid making mistakes in the JSC English test. The source and content of classroom exercises, practicing mock tests, frequent review and correction of these exercises and tests indicate that this is the common classroom culture and it contributes to the classroom dynamic.

Reinforcement (Ho, 2016) is considered the effective means of strengthening the probability that expected behavior will happen. Consequently, the majority of the participants believed that constant drills and homeworks, alongside recurrent practice tests, can be instrumental in facilitating the learners “*to grind the iron bar into a needle*” (Pong & Chow, 2002, p. 3). Both the respondents claimed that correcting exercises over and again assisted learners to prepare them well for the JSC English test and helped increase the chance of cutting good figures eventually in the examination. Therefore, both the respondents pressurize themselves to practice as many exercises as possible on the learners’ part during this year of high-stakes public examination.

Another noteworthy finding of the current doctoral study is that the majority of the schools visited were found to arrange supplementary classes for their students before or after the regular school hour. Taking extra classes was so common that most of the interviewed students believed that if they did not attend these classes, it would be disadvantageous for them. They considered this “*imperative for successful learning achievement*” (Hamid, Sussex & Khan, 2009, p. 281). This belief is compatible with the belief of the Hong Kong students shown in a study conducted by Pong and Chow (2002).

Hence, this crucial year of high-stakes public exam is believed to be the high time for the pupils to attend private ‘cram’ schools (coaching centers) and take additional classes. “As the name suggests, rather than assisting students to pursue deep learning, a cram school aims to impart as much information to students as possible in the shortest period of time. The goal is to enable students to “parrot”, or to unthinkingly repeat, information that is deemed necessary to get through specific examinations” (Ho, 2016, p. 77). These schools are so widespread throughout the country that they have already appeared to be a *de facto* parallel educational system (Toaha, 2015). A large majority of the interviewed students informed that they spend a substantial amount of their time and money in order to join these schools before or after their regular school hours.

This unhealthy culture of attending after school lessons is not a good sign for students’ academic and mental growth, because they are always engaged with ostensibly interminable study which leaves hardly any time for them to involve in socio-cultural and recreational activities (Hamid, Sussex & Khan, 2009; Toaha, 2015).

Another major finding that indicates the influence (washback) of the JSC English test on English teaching and learning at grade 8 is the sheer frequency of using JSC English full or partial model/mock test in the language classroom. Giving model tests and reviewing them forms a *de facto* course at all the schools observed. Class time is dedicated for the JSC candidates to sit for the mock test. Teachers take the scripts and scrutinize these after class hour in the teachers’ room or at their home. And they return these scripts to the learners and review them carefully with them during class hour on any

next day. These model tests not only review and practice reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary, but also contain instructions on test-taking strategies. In fact, especially when the JSC final examination comes closer, JSC English full or partial model/mock tests remove all other classroom activities and become the prime responsibility for teachers and learners alike. Thus, the JSC English test not only dictates English teaching and learning at grade 8 at all the schools observed, but also takes the form of curriculum itself, hidden curriculum (Minarechová, 2012; Booher-Jennings, 2008) for parts of the academic year. These findings of the current study again testify that “*A test will influence what and how teachers teach*” the two hypotheses by Alderson and Wall’s (1993: p. 120). These findings are also compatible with those of Latimer (2009) who found the same scenario while he was conducting a washback study of Preliminary Test of English (PET) for 7th Form English classes at an Argentine bilingual school.

Based on the analysis and findings of the current study the strong existence and influence of the JSC English test on the national English curriculum (2012) and English teaching and learning at grade 8 cannot be denied. Washback effects on teachers and learners are being produced and reigned by the JSC English test. The findings indicate that the content of the course and rationale behind classroom teaching of English language are structured on the JSC English test.

The current study indicates that because of the nature and demand of the JSC English test, English teaching and learning at grade 8 at the observed schools aimed at developing linguistic competencies and attaining mastery over grammatical forms and structures. Theoretically speaking, developing

linguistic competencies and attaining mastery over grammatical forms and structures should neither be the center of English language teaching and learning, nor work against developing learners' sociolinguistic or pragmatic competence. Given what is found in the previous chapter of this doctoral dissertation, it appears that the JSC English test is creating negative washback effect at grade 8 at the observed schools, because what is happening in the name of English language teaching and learning at grade 8 at the observed schools is actually exam preparation targeting the JSC English test, which utterly goes against a more productive and effective approach to English language teaching and learning.

Besides, having their students pass the JSC English test seems to be the actual goals and aims of these schools and their teachers, which is actually not the larger and more significant goal that these English teachers are chasing. English language teaching and learning at grade 8 at schools should instead focus on developing students' communicative competence so that they can study further, communicate with the world and get success in future workplaces. But, since the JSC English test preparation culture has shaped the curriculum as test-centered, has produced grammar intensive instruction, has developed a culture of frequent review and correction of exam-focused exercises, it can be concluded that the JSC English test is against the greater goal of creating students as competent users of English language who will be able to use English pragmatically in their life.

Thus, the classroom discourse influenced and shaped by the JSC English test goes against the two essential aspects of "communicative competence and communicative teaching, namely *student output* and *interaction* (Latimer,

2009; p182)”. Besides, because of the nature and demand of the JSC English test, teachers were found not to apply task-based instruction (TBI) or content-based instruction (CBI) which are two realistic, effective and holistic approaches of communicative language teaching and learning (Latimer, 2009; p. 182). ELT researchers and practitioners recommend that English language teaching and learning in nature should be communicative, provide ample opportunities for both way interactions and communication between teachers and learners, and among learners (Hoque, 2011). English language classes where learners are not provided with communicative focus, have an absence of oral interactions and communications among teachers and learners, become teacher-centered and teacher-dominated. Such classes which limit the type, scope and length of learners’ verbal responses fail to represent and offer an effective environment for language learning. Such a classroom environment is not compatible with the objectives of the national English curriculum (2012) for students of the secondary schools of Bangladesh.

The current study indicates that in the context of secondary schools of Bangladesh, what English teachers teach, how they teach and overall, how they behave in the English language classrooms are dictated by the volume of contents these teachers have to cover with their students during this year of high-stakes public examination, the JSC English test format and the time constraint to do these. The study explored both the teachers and learners had to go through the contents of the textbook (reading texts), and other task types and activities hastily. More often, teacher-centered and teacher-dominated discourse and restricted and very limited participation of learners in the classroom took the form and norm of classroom dynamic.

Based on these findings, it is safe to say that English language teaching and learning at grade 8 in the secondary schools of Bangladesh is negatively influenced and dictated by the JSC English test format, consequently limiting participation in communicative tasks and activities in the classroom. Such classroom culture and environment limit learners' "overall communicative and SLA development" (Latimer, 2009; p. 184).

These findings of the current doctoral study are also in line with the findings of some of the influential studies (Onaiba, 2013; Spratt, 2005; Cheng, 2005; Shohamy *et Al.*, 2006; Wall & Alderson, 1993) which showed that there could be washback from examination on attitudes, perceptions and feelings of the teachers which in turn influenced what these teachers taught in the classroom and how they did this practice.

6.8 Contextual Factors and Failure in ensuring positive interplays

The significance of contextual factors is commonly discussed in the literature (e.g., Tsagari & Cheng, 2017; Gennaro, 2017; Allen, 2016, Shih, 2009; Dickins & Scott, 2007; Hamp-Lyons, 1997). Literature demonstrated that washback occurs within the complex educational system and social context. Cheng et al. (2014) found three different contexts namely social, regional and cultural contexts which could play major roles in influencing the entire process of English teaching-learning and assessment practice. This current doctoral study too could not avoid looking into and discussing the influence of contextual factors on the washback effects.

The findings of the current doctoral study, similar to the findings of other washback studies too (e.g., Ali & Hamid, 2020; Umashankar, 2017; Onaiba, 2013) reveal that the JSC English test was not the sole reason behind these unwelcomed English teaching and learning practice in the classroom by the English teachers and their students. The findings of the current study (through teacher interview, FGIs with students and document analysis) reveal several other factors behind teachers' failure in ensuring positive interplay between English teaching-learning and assessment practice.

Teacher characteristics including teachers' educational background, their beliefs, and their past experience also play a significant role in this regard. This finding of the current doctoral study is compatible with those of the studies by Gennaro (2017), Cheng, Sun, and Ma, (2015), Au (2007) and Cheng et al. (2014). On the other hand, context characteristics or factors include large student population, space constraints in the classrooms, insufficient time allotted for instruction, large contents of syllabus, the grades teachers teach, their heavy workloads, students' low levels of proficiency in English, pressure from authority (school and education ministry), and parents of the students to improve scores, no reflection of the marks of speaking and listening tests in public (JSC) examinations, poor socio-economic conditions of teachers, absence of monitoring and supervision by concerned authorities like NCTB, education boards etc. are also indirectly responsible for this.

These findings of the study buttress the comment that “washback is not easy to predict or control, and the shape it assumes is influenced not only by tests but by the interaction of numerous factors” (Wall, 2012, p. 83). The complex and dynamic interplays between the micro-level contextual factors related to

English teaching and learning and beyond the classroom micro-level factors lead to barring the researchers to assign influence to any single factor alone, e.g., the test (Cheng, Sun, & Ma, 2015).

Yet, since washback in language testing has been studied and found in a large plethora of literature in different contexts around the world (as has been discussed in the literature review section of this doctoral dissertation) as well as in the current study, the strong existence and influence of washback of testing across culture and context cannot be ruled out. Therefore, the findings of the current doctoral study expose that it is the faulty and ill-developed JSC test *per se* that works as the main hindrance, which directly influence the entire process of English teaching and learning practice in the classroom by the English teachers and their students, providing sufficient evidence to safely conclude that “*tests that have important consequences will have washback*” (the 12th hypothesis by Alderson and Wall, 1993, p. 120).

6.9 Achievement of Intended/Unintended Objectives

The goal of the national English curriculum (as discussed in the findings chapter of this doctoral dissertation) is to create an efficient and effective English language learning environment which nurtures learners’ development and their skill-based achievement. This curriculum considers English language learning as a process that involves learners in meaningful and effective communication (NCTB, 2012). The curriculum outlines the principles of language teaching and learning, the choice of content and material, assessment and evaluation of students’ learning.

This curriculum presents unambiguous and all-inclusive guidelines for writers of English textbooks, test setters, teachers, students, and other stakeholders. “It has set the objectives and the terminal learning outcomes... to equip the learners of this level with basic language skills in English to function in an international context with confidence” (NCTB, 2012, p. 35). This curriculum (2012) was developed ensuing the CLT approach. It accentuates developing students’ all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and hopes that students can effectively be able to use the English language in real everyday life situations catering to both the local and international context (NCTB, 2012; p. 36).

One of the purposes of the current doctoral study was to reveal how assessment practice facilitates English teaching and learning practice i.e., whether it helped in achieving the objectives of English teaching and learning. This, with reference to the current doctoral study, was termed by Hughes (1993) as the *product*, (that is to say, outcome).

The findings of the study (through document analysis and teacher interviews) explore that despite having criticism regarding the validity of the JSC English test, this test was found successful in realizing some intentions while missed the other bigger and larger intentions. In comparison to the grammar-translation method based old English examination (which was held as final examination in the respective schools), this test succeeded in involving the candidates to practice a range of reading and vocabulary activities, besides writing tasks and assessing them through a variety of test-items. Thus, this test was able to change English teaching and learning practice and bring about intended or positive washback.

On the contrary, this test could not cater to the intended or desired outcomes in a number of ways. For example, it did not comprehensively include equally all the key components and the contents of the national English curriculum. Besides, it did not offer learners with an appropriate scale to measure their English language skills and their achievement. More importantly, though the curriculum desired that a more communicative approach to English teaching and learning would be encouraged, and practice and assessment of all the four skills of language would be there, it did not happen, since this test could not create such effect.

Now the question is, as raised by Wall (2012), “*why the test has not produced the desired washback*” (p87). The findings of the current doctoral study reveal the answers to this question also. There are several reasons for this. For example, there is a gap between the test-content, on the one hand, and the curriculum-content and the goals and purpose of the test, on the other hand. This test did not include all or even the majority of the constituents of the existing curriculum and syllabus. It emphasized on the isolated points of the teaching-contents, e.g., reading texts, vocabulary testing, discrete writing, and grammar points using isolated test-items. It ignored communicative aspects of English language by not assessing speaking, and listening, for example. Besides, the findings of the study (through questionnaires and interviews with the respondents) explore incongruity between the test scores and grades of the candidates and their actual level of language ability, thus, explored deficiency in its validity as a test, another answer to the questions raised by Wall above. Such failure, therefore, barred the test from reaching a significant aim “to provide students with a gauge of their language learning achievement as far as

the material of the prescribed syllabus is concerned” (Onaiba, 2013, p. 262). Realizing these deficiencies will help test-designers and question-setters to restructure and improvise the test.

To sum up, this current doctoral study confirms findings of plethora of similar studies conducted in Bangladesh (Rahman et al., 2019; Sarwer & Haque, 2019; Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018; Sultana, 2018; Ali & Sultana, 2016; Hoque, 2016, 2011; Jilani, 2011; Chowdhury, 2010; Maniruzzaman & Hoque, 2010 etc.) and other countries of the world (e.g. Umashankar, 2017; Polesel, et al., 2014; Onaiba, 2013; Kennedy, 2013; Rehmani, 2013; Khattak, 2012; Khan, 2010; Tsagari, 2009; Siddiqui, 2007; Wang, 2006; Han et al., 2004; Watanabe, 2000; Cheng, 1997 etc.) on the power of high-stakes tests (like the JSC English test) in twisting English teaching-learning practices, limiting the curriculum and narrowing students’ learning experiences. It was found that it was the JSC English test that influenced English teaching-learning practices, **not vice-versa**.

6.10 Answer to the Research Questions

This study made an attempt to explore the interplays between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice, and how they influence (facilitate or hinder i.e., washback effect) each other. As already mentioned above, the purposes of this study were (a) to examine the effect of assessment (i.e. the JSC English Test) on English teaching-learning at secondary schools, and (b) to examine the effect of any other teacher, students and context-dependent variables.

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study, the following research questions (one main/leading question and two guiding questions) had been framed. In this section of this chapter, the answers to the research questions of the current doctoral study have been presented.

6.10.1 Answer to the Main Research Question

How is JSC English teaching-learning influenced (i.e. washback effect) by assessment practice in the secondary schools of Bangladesh?

- a) How does assessment practice facilitate English teaching and learning practice?
- b) Does assessment practice have any backwash effect on English teaching and learning practice? If it is so, how does it affect?
- c) What challenges do teachers and students face in ensuring effective interplays between English teaching-learning and assessment practice?

The current doctoral study explores that only a few of the sampled teachers possessed proper understanding and awareness of the objectives of the JSC

English curriculum. The majority of them lacked proper understanding and awareness, whereas the rest of them had no idea about the curriculum at all. They only knew the JSC English test format and taught accordingly. In her study, Chen (2002) found that teachers preferred to 'teach to the test' when they lacked sufficient idea and knowledge of curriculum goals. One of the reasons of such unawareness and negligence towards curriculum is the mismatch between curricular objectives and test objectives. The objectives of any language test should be in line with curricular objectives (Bachman, 2000). When the objectives of any language test do not reciprocate the curricular objectives, it creates negative washback on language teaching and learning (Andrews, 2004).

Although the majority of the respondents opined that the textbook included adequate exercises for practice and they believed that the JSC English textbook was suitable and appropriate for practicing language skills, so as to develop learners' communicative competence in English, both the teachers and their students were found reluctant to use the textbook as their teaching-learning material. Rather they depended highly on commercially produced model/mock test book, test papers, suggestion books, notes and guidebooks which contained test-related materials. The study reveals that this phenomenon happened because of misalignment between the JSC English textbook and the test.

The current study indicates that teachers did not care about the objectives of the lessons of the textbook while teaching in the classroom and hence, did not share these with the students, probably because the classes were teacher-centered and test oriented rather than goal or outcome oriented. They skipped

and ignored some of the lessons of the textbook that were not or less expected and set to be set in the JSC examination (similar to the findings of the studies conducted by Rind, & Mari, 2019; Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2011; Qi, 2004). Fullilove (1992, p. 139) termed such exams as “little more than cloners of past exam papers.” Teachers narrowed the content of the textbook so that it can match and resemble the content of the JSC English examination. This ignoring, narrowing and skipping of the contents of the textbook indicates how negatively test affects English teachers’ teaching practice. Hoque (2016, p. 354) opined that “positive washback takes place when tests induce teachers to cover their subjects more thoroughly, making them complete their syllabi within the prescribed time limits.”

Moreover, since the classes were teacher-centered and test oriented, the study found that teachers consumed too much time of the entire class hour and spent it on test-related materials, which Andrews (1995) believed “*a limiting of focus for teachers and students rather than a broadening of horizons*” (p. 80).

The findings of the current doctoral study indicate that the format and demands of the JSC English test greatly influenced the interviewed teachers’ instructional practices in their classroom with their students, tailoring it to the test. The influence, however, was more prominently observed in terms of choice and selection of teaching contents, classroom tasks and activities, and skills practiced, rather than teaching methods and approaches applied in the classroom. Teachers greatly engaged themselves in the test-oriented tasks and activities and disregarded the tasks and activities which were not likely to be tested and required to pass the English test. The participants also informed

that more time was used on practicing grammar, reading, writing and vocabulary related tasks since these were tested mostly in the JSC test, i.e., “*what is tested is taught*” (Onaiba, 2013, p. 254). The study found that teachers and learners ignored speaking and listening skills. English teachers offered guidelines for the JSC English test and demonstrated their students the JSC English test taking strategies. They offered model or mock tests and made to practice and solve the items of the previous years’ examination questions papers so that they could familiarize themselves with the test format and test contents and prepare themselves as the test demanded.

This study also found that the on-going class-tests, quizzes, monthly or terminal tests were also designed following and resembling the JSC English test format, the mini versions of the JSC English test. These tests reflected the JSC English test to a large extent in format and design, types and length of test-items, time allotted for each item etc.

The current study indicates that in the context of secondary schools of Bangladesh, what English teachers teach, how they teach and overall, how they behave in the English language classrooms are dictated by the volume of contents these teachers had to cover with their students during this year of high-stake public examination, the JSC English test format and the time constraint to do these. The study reveals that both the teachers and learners had to go through contents of the textbook (reading texts), and other tasks types and activities hastily. More often, teacher-centered and teacher-dominated discourse and restricted and very limited participation of learners in the classroom took the form and norm of classroom dynamic.

This crucial year of a high-stakes public examination (i.e., JSC examination) is believed to be the high time for the pupils to attend private ‘cram’ schools (coaching centers) and take additional classes. A large majority of the interviewed students informed that they spent a substantial amount of their time and money in order to join these schools before or after their school hours. They considered this “imperative for successful learning achievement” (Hamid, Sussex & Khan, 2009, p. 281).

Another major finding that indicates the influence (washback) of the JSC English test on English teaching and learning at grade 8 is the sheer frequency of using JSC English full or partial model or mock test in the language classroom. Giving model tests and reviewing them forms a *de facto* course at all the schools observed. Class time is dedicated for the JSC candidates to sit for the mock test. These model tests not only reviewed and practiced reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary, but also contained instructions on test-taking strategies. In fact, especially when the JSC final examination came closer, the JSC English full or partial model or mock tests removed all other classroom activities and became the prime responsibility for teachers and learners alike. Thus, the JSC English test not only dictated English teaching and learning at grade 8 at all the schools observed, but also took the form of curriculum itself, hidden curriculum (Minarechová, 2012; Booher-Jennings, 2008) for at least parts of the academic year.

Moreover, the JSC English test compelled the respondents to undergone internal and external pressure for better scores. When the results of tests are the key adjudicator of further education or career opportunities in a stratified society (e.g., Bangladesh), tests (such as the JSC) become are high stakes and

superior academic performance becomes the target of both schools and parents (Lewis, 2000; Horn, 2003; Ho, 2006).

The study reveals that if students performed poorly or failed in the examination, they felt embarrassed and frustrated. Delgado (2014) argued that the challenge with such high-stakes testing is that low-profile students were experiencing life stressors and these were not even considered in the course of such tests and during their scores and gradings. For some of the students, however, this embarrassment and frustration resulting from the perceived stress of the JSC English test brings so much disgrace that some of them commit suicide every year once the result is published. A number of other studies conducted very recently (Mamun & Griffiths, 2020; Mamun et al., 2020; Arafat & Mamun, 2019) have explored that the students who face insurmountable academic stress and pressure are at the risk of adolescent mental distress, even self-killing (suicide).

Teachers had also suffered from tension and anxiety for the JSC English test. They felt embarrassed and frustrated, if their students performed poorly or failed in the examination, since their students' academic achievement (success or failure) represented their own performance as subject teachers.

Based on the analysis and findings of the current study the strong existence and influence of the JSC English test on the national English curriculum (2012) and English teaching and learning at grade 8 cannot be denied. The findings indicate that the content of the course and rationale behind classroom teaching of English language are structured on the JSC English test. Thus, the classroom discourse influenced and shaped by the JSC English test

goes against the two essential aspects of “communicative competence and communicative teaching, namely student output and interaction.” (Latimer, 2009; p. 182).

The findings of the current doctoral study, however, also reveal that the JSC English test was not the sole reason behind the unwelcomed English teaching and learning practice in the classroom by the English teachers and their students. The findings of the current study (through teacher interview, FGIs with students and document analysis) reveal several other factors behind teachers’ failure in ensuring positive interplay between English teaching-learning and assessment practice. Although it is the faulty and ill-developed JSC test *per se* that works as the main interferer, there are certain associated factors that hinder the positive interplay between English teaching-learning and assessment practice, enforcing positive washback in particular.

Teacher characteristics including teachers’ educational background, their beliefs, and their past experience play a significant role in this regard. This finding of the current doctoral study is compatible with those of the studies by Gennaro (2017), Cheng, Sun, and Ma, (2015), Au (2007) and Cheng et al. (2014). On the other hand, context characteristics or factors include large student population, space constraints in the classrooms, insufficient time allotted for instruction/class, large contents of syllabus, the grades teachers teach, their heavy workloads, students’ low levels of proficiency in English, pressure from authority (school and education ministry), and parents of the students to improve scores, no reflection of the marks of speaking and listening tests in public (JSC) examinations, poor socio-economic conditions

of teachers, absence of monitoring and supervision by concerned authorities like NCTB, education boards etc. are also indirectly responsible for this.

These findings of the study buttress the comment that “washback is not easy to predict or control, and the shape it assumes is influenced not only by tests but by the interaction of numerous factors” (Wall, 2012, p. 83). The complex and dynamic interplays between the micro-level contextual factors related to English teaching and learning and beyond the classroom micro-level factors lead to barring the researchers to assign influence to any single factor alone, e.g., the test (Cheng, Sun, & Ma, 2015).

Yet, since washback in language testing has been studied and found in a large plethora of literature in different contexts around the world (as has been discussed in the literature review section of this doctoral dissertation), the strong existence and influence of washback of testing across culture and context cannot be ruled out.

Therefore, the findings of the current doctoral study expose that it is the faulty and ill-developed JSC test *per se* that works as the main hindrance, which directly influence the entire process of English teaching and learning practice in the classroom by the English teachers and their students, providing sufficient evidence to safely conclude that “tests that have important consequences will have washback” (the 12th hypothesis of Alderson and Wall, 1993, p.120).

6.10.2 Answer to Guiding Question 1:

What is the common classroom (teaching-learning) practice of English teachers at secondary schools?

- a) What is their understanding of the present English curriculum?
- b) What do they teach in the classrooms?
- c) How do they teach in the classrooms?

The current doctoral study explores that only a few of the sampled teachers possessed proper understanding and awareness of the objectives of JSC English curriculum. The majority of them lacked proper understanding and awareness, whereas the rest of them had no idea about the curriculum. They only knew the JSC English test format and taught accordingly. In her study, Chen (2002) found that teachers preferred to ‘teach to the test’ when they lacked sufficient idea and knowledge of curriculum goals. Promotion of positive washback has close relation with “*teaching to the curriculum as opposed to teaching to the test*” (Hoque, 2011, p. 297). One of the reasons of such unawareness and negligence towards curriculum is the mismatch between curricular objectives and test objectives. The objectives of any language test should be in line with curricular objectives (Bachman, 2000). When the objectives of any language test do not reciprocate the curricular objectives, it creates negative washback on language teaching and learning (Andrews, 2004).

The majority of the respondents opined that the textbook included adequate exercises for practice and that was what the English curriculum (2012) also claimed and they believed that the JSC English textbook was suitable and

appropriate for practicing so as to develop learners' communicative competence in English. They found the contents of the *English for Today* stimulating and interesting, but students admitted that they did not go through the lessons of textbook attentively and seriously. However, the majority of the teachers also found their students reluctant to study the textbook, rather they depended highly on commercially produced model or mock test book, test papers, suggestion books, notes and guidebooks which contained test-related materials. Teachers themselves were also found to rely on such teaching materials. These findings substantiate the four hypotheses put forwarded by Alderson and Wall's (1993: 120): *A test will influence **what** teachers teach, and **how** teachers teach; and A test will influence **what** learners learn, and **how** learners learn.*

The study also reveals that teachers were not found to use authentic materials in their English classroom. The use of authentic materials is considered vital for promoting positive washback. Bailey (1996) commented that "... a test will yield positive washback to the learner and to the programme to the extent that it utilizes authentic tasks and authentic texts" (p. 276). The study reveals that this phenomenon happened because of misalignment between the JSC English textbook and the test.

The study explores that although both the CLT approach and the National English Curriculum (2012) strongly advocated that the English classroom must be learner-centered, but in practice, the opposite was noticed. The findings received from all sources indicated that all the classrooms, except one (T10) were teacher-centered and test-oriented. It is compatible with the findings of the study conducted by Andrews (1995) who also found that

teachers consumed too much time of the entire class hour and spent it on test-related materials, which he believed “a limiting of focus for teachers and students rather than a broadening of horizons” (p. 80).

The current study indicates that while teaching teachers did not share the objectives of the lessons of the textbook with the students, probably because the observed classes were teacher-centered, content and test oriented rather than goal or outcome oriented. When lesson and learning objectives are well-defined and articulated, they “provide a focused mindset for students engaging in the content” (Mitchell & Manzo, 2018, p. 456), but the teacher-respondents did not care about the objectives of the lessons set by the curriculum, rather they were interested in and emphasized on communicating the examination instructions to the students. So, the evidence of negative washback clicked at the very first minute of starting of the lesson. Wang (2008) in his study demonstrates that teacher factors have significant influences on teaching practices in the language classroom.

The findings of this study reveal that teacher did not teach every section of the textbook in the classroom. Teachers skipped and ignored some of the lessons of the textbook that were not or less expected and set to be set in the JSC examination (similar to the findings of the studies conducted by Rind, & Mari, 2019; Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2011; Qi, 2004). Fullilove (1992, p. 139) termed such exams as “little more than cloners of past exam papers”. Teachers narrowed the content of the textbook so that it can match and resemble the content of the JSC English examination. The same findings were also revealed by several other studies in other contexts at home and abroad (Sultana, 2018; Choi, 2008; Abu-Alhija, 2007; Hoque, 2016; Cheng, 2005; Stecher, 2002)

where it was noticed that high-stakes tests were instrumental in limiting the curriculum to those items only which were likely to be set in the test.

The findings of lesson observation data from all the English lessons observed buttressed by other sources show that the main focus of all the lessons except one (T10) were reading, writing activities or vocabulary and grammar. Only one of them (T10) focused on speaking activities and none of them focused on any listening activity in the class. T10 appeared to be the “individual teacher” whom Spratt (2005, p. 12) indicated in his paper. He argued, “There has been a perception that washback affects teaching content but not teaching methods. This perception is not fully supported It seems to be true in some circumstances but not others, suggesting that whether the exam affects methods or not may also depend on factors other than the exam itself, such as the individual teacher.”

Cimbricz (2002) in his washback study conceded that testing itself is not the only influencing factor to form teachers’ understandings and interpretations of the centrally administered testing. Teachers’ beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and experience also has a significant role to play. Shohamy *et al.* (1996) explored that in contrast to novice language teachers, experienced teachers were more responsive and sensitive to high-stakes testing and more likely “to teach to the test” (p. 280). The differences of classroom teaching practice between T10 and the other fifteen teachers confirm the comments of the above-mentioned researchers. T10 is new to teaching (experience), has an undergraduate degree in English and a post-graduate degree in ELT (knowledge).

However, most of the teachers commented that the JSC English test did not encourage learners to apply integrated language skills. The findings of the current study indicate that the teachers did not use English to clarify the text in the classroom. It was specified that mostly Bangla along with English was used as the language of instructions in the classroom. Nor did the English teachers encourage learners to ask any question.

The findings of the current study also indicate that English teachers taught their students whatever they liked to teach and English teachers' preference and choice of chapters and topics got priority in the classroom teaching and learning. English teachers hardly involved them to practice on learning and speaking English. Teachers greatly engaged themselves in the test-oriented tasks and activities and disregarded the tasks, activities and skills which were not likely to be tested and required to pass the English test. Even if these two skills were ever taught, the way they were taught could hardly benefit the students to develop their proficiency in these two skills. For example, in the case of assessing listening skill, usually teachers read the text of the book loudly and instructed their students to listen to them attentively. At times they translated the text in English into Bangla so that their students could easily understand the contents of the text. When the reading of the text was over, they asked questions to their students from the text. On the other hand, for assessing students' speaking skill teachers instructed the students to work in pairs or in groups to practice some dialogues from the English textbook or guide books. Teacher and students spent almost entire class time on practicing grammar, reading, writing and vocabulary related tasks.

6.10.3 Answer to Guiding Question 2:

What is the common assessment practice of English teachers at secondary schools?

- a) What do they assess in the classrooms?
- b) How do they assess in the classrooms?
- c) What is their understanding of the present assessment system?
- d) To what extent is the summative and formative assessment system reflected in their classroom assessment?

Through document analysis, FGIs with students and teacher interviews, it was explored that all the schools follow two types of in-the-school assessments. These are summative assessment and formative assessment. Two terminal examinations take the form of summative assessment and 80% marks are allocated for this type of assessment. These terminal examinations are usually the replica of the JSC English test. On the other hand, 20% marks are allocated for formative assessment (which is in the form of class tests), although according to the curriculum, this 20% marks should be allocated to speaking test (10% marks) and listening test (10% marks).

But interview with teachers and FGIs with students reveals that 20% marks were not allocated to speaking test and listening test. Rather, two things happened instead. Most teachers considered these as class-tests which is a partial version of terminal test. That is, instead of testing speaking and listening, they tested their students reading, writing, vocabulary or grammar skills similar to the JSC English test. Hence, the study reveals that teachers assessed their students' reading and writing skills, their stock of vocabulary

and mastery over grammatical forms and structures in the English classrooms.

Although teachers and some students informed that all the four language skills (e.g. listening, speaking, reading and writing) are being practiced and assessed in the classrooms, classroom observation data show that listening and speaking skills are not practiced and assessed in the real term. Since listening and speaking skills are not tested in the JSC English test, teachers did not teach and/or assess these two skills. Even if these two skills were ever taught, the way they were taught could hardly benefit the students to develop their proficiency in these two skills. Speaking skill practice is done only in the form that teachers ask questions to students and they reply to these. Moreover, students were found to give one-word answers to the questions.

Sometimes, for assessing students' speaking skill teachers instructed the students to work in pairs or in groups to practice some dialogues from the English textbook or guide books. Some of the teachers informed that they requested a pair of students to come to the front of the class and engaged them in role play activities where students tried to speak in a given situation or they read out the dialogue loudly from their English textbook. As far as assessment of listening skill is concerned, usually teachers read the text of the book loudly and instructed their students to listen to them attentively. At times they translated the text in English into Bangla so that their students could easily understand the contents of the text. When the reading of the text was over, they asked questions to their students from the text.

FGIs with the students too exposed that students had no idea about the appropriate and effective assessment method of listening skill. When the

researcher asked them about the practice and assessment of listening skill in the classroom, they informed him that their teacher read out an excerpt from the textbook and told them to attentively listen to him. When his reading was over, their teacher asked some questions based on the excerpt. No planned and real-time speaking or listening practiced is found in any classroom.

For assessing students' reading skill teachers instructed them to read the text of the book individually and then they were engaged in question-answer sessions or asked to fill in the blanks from the English textbook or model question book and guide books. Teachers informed that for writing exercises, they engaged their students in answering true or false statements, writing the correct answers to the given questions, and filling in the gaps. Students were also involved in writing paragraphs, letters and essays.

However, besides class tests, as a part of continuous assessment, students informed that they were assessed during the class-hour on a daily basis. They were involved in responding orally to questions individually or in chorus. Sometimes teachers wrote down questions on the black/white boards and asked students to answer orally or in writing. At times teachers assessed them by engaging them in pair or in group works. Most of the time teachers assessed them in the middle of the class. Some teachers assessed previous day's lesson at the beginning of the lesson. All teachers gave home-works at the end of almost every lesson.

Teachers generally preferred to ask questions to the whole class, that is, to all students in general and waited for the students to show their willingness to answer by raising their hands. Teachers also tend to ask questions directly to individual students.

Students' FGIs and classroom observation data reveal that teachers tend to ask questions to good students than the weak ones. And with regard to position, teachers preferred to ask questions to the front benchers. They hardly reached to the backbenchers. Teachers asked mostly such type of questions that demanded memorization. There were only very few questions asked by the teachers which involved students to reply based on their own thinking or real-life experience. Almost all the questions asked by the teachers were closed questions. Only very few questions gave clues to students to understand and answer previous questions or to motivate them towards learning.

The questions asked by the teachers in the classroom were mostly from the knowledge sub-domain of the cognitive domain. Only a very few numbers of questions which covered other sub-domain or higher domain of the cognitive domain such as application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation were asked. Thus, the used questions were related to measure lower order of learning.

The practiced classroom assessment (only through oral questioning and class tests) is competitive, straightforward and content-related rather than goal-oriented and its feedback is evaluative rather than descriptive. As a result, the nature of classroom assessment indicates mostly to 'assessment of learning' than 'assessment for learning'.

The study, thus, reveals that assessment in the classrooms mostly revolved around test-oriented activities and teachers ignored tasks and activities which not directly related to passing the JSC examination. It also indicates that teachers spent much more time on assessment and tests in the classrooms. Teachers opined that although they realized much time is spent on tests and

test-focused activities in the classrooms, they claimed that it was difficult for them to reduce the time they spent on these.

The source and content of classroom exercises, practicing mock tests, frequent review and correction of these exercises and tests indicate that this is the common classroom culture and it contributes to the classroom dynamic. The majority of the participants believed that constant drills and homework, alongside recurrent practice tests, can be instrumental in facilitating the learners “to grind the iron bar into a needle” (Pong & Chow, 2002, p. 3). Both the respondents claimed that correcting exercises over and over again assisted learners to prepare them well for the JSC English test and helped increase the chance of cutting good figures eventually. Therefore, both the respondents pressurize themselves to practice as many exercises as possible on the learners’ part during this year of high-stake public examination.

Another major finding that indicates the influence (washback) of the JSC English test on English teaching and learning at grade 8 is the sheer frequency of using JSC English full or partial model or mock test in the language classroom. Giving model tests and reviewing them forms a *de facto* course at all the schools observed. Class time is dedicated for the JSC candidates to sit for the mock test.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This chapter of the current doctoral dissertation first summarizes the major findings of the study conducted. Then some recommendations based on the results and experience of the study are put forward. After that, it also offers certain suggestions for further research. Finally, it closes the dissertation with concluding remarks based on the results and findings of this doctoral study.

7.2 Summary of the Findings

This study focuses firstly on JSC English teaching-learning practice in the classrooms, secondly, on the existing assessment practice used in JSC English, thirdly and most importantly, on the interplays between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice, how they influence (facilitate or hinder i.e. washback effect) each other. Therefore, the purposes of this study were (a) to examine the effect of assessment (JSC English Test) on English teaching-learning at secondary schools, and (b) to examine the effect of any other teacher, students and context-dependent variables.

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study, mixed method research approach was applied to collect relevant data. The researcher used in-depth interviews with teachers and students, classroom observations (COLT scheme) and analysis of JSC curriculum, textbook, commercially produced books or materials and other examination related documents to elicit qualitative data and conducted questionnaire surveys for students and teachers to obtain quantitative data, which provided ample insights into the current study. As far

as analysis of relevant data is concerned, a thorough analysis of the features of the JSC English test was made and reported. Analysis of qualitative data derived from the classroom observation and the interviews involved the application of transcript-based analysis (for teacher interviews) and tape-based analysis (for FGIs) approach (Krueger & Casey, 2020), thematic analysis (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016), and constant comparative method (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Glasser and Strauss, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and the relevant data were classified into categories.

On the other hand, to analyze the quantitative data derived from the questionnaire surveys for students and teachers involved frequency counts (and/or percentages by category), and descriptive statistics. Eventually, the study has explored some noteworthy and interesting findings that were cross-referenced through a number of research instruments already mentioned. These findings of the study are summarized and thematically presented below.

7.2.1 Findings on the JSC Syllabus and Curriculum

- The analysis of the syllabus and curriculum indicates that the JSC English curriculum (2012) was designed and developed communicatively. However, the findings received from questionnaires and interviews with the respondents exposed that only a few of the interviewed teachers possessed proper understanding and awareness of the objectives of JSC English curriculum.
- The majority of the interviewed teachers lacked proper understanding and awareness of the objectives of JSC English curriculum, while the rest of

them had no idea about the curriculum. They only knew the JSC English test format and taught accordingly. This finding was buttressed by the findings of the observation of teachers' classroom practice. Chen (2002) claimed that teachers preferred to 'teach to the test' when they lacked sufficient idea and knowledge of curriculum goals.

- How the JSC English test dictates the national English curriculum (2012) can be concluded through the presence of two strong indicators: (a) commercially produced test-oriented model/mock test book, test papers, suggestion books, notes and guidebooks are the sole texts used in the classroom along with a very limited use of the NCTB produced national textbook (*English for Today*); (b) teachers themselves confirm that since JSC examination is a high-stake public exam, examination preparation is the core focus of this year.

7.2.2 Findings on Textbook and other teaching materials

- The majority of the respondents opined that the textbook included adequate exercises for practice and that was what the English curriculum (2012) also claimed. They believed that the JSC English textbook was suitable and appropriate for practicing so as to develop learners' communicative competence in English. They also found the contents of the *English for Today* stimulating and interesting.
- Students, however, admitted that they did not go through the lessons of the textbook attentively and seriously. The majority of the teachers also found their students reluctant to study the textbook, rather they depended highly on commercially produced model/mock test book, test papers, suggestion books, notes and guidebooks which contained test-related materials.

- Similarly, teachers themselves were also found to rely much more on such teaching materials than the textbook. The study also reveals that teachers were not found to use authentic materials in their English classroom, although the use of authentic materials in the language classrooms is considered vital for promoting positive washback (Bailey, 1996). The study reveals that this phenomenon happened because of misalignment between the JSC English textbook and the test.
- The current study also indicates that while teaching, teachers did not share the objectives of the lessons of the textbook with the students. They did not care about the objectives of the lessons set by the curriculum, rather they were interested in and emphasized communicating the examination instructions to the students.
- The findings of this study reveal that every section of the textbook was not taught in the classroom. Teachers skipped and ignored some of the lessons of the textbook that were not or less expected and set to be set in the JSC examination (Rind, & Mari, 2019; Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2011; Qi, 2004). Fullilove (1992, p. 139) termed such exams as “little more than cloners of past exam papers”. Teachers narrowed the content of the textbook so that it can match and resemble the content of the JSC English examination. They put emphasis and taught only those sections of the lessons or lessons which they deem important for the JSC English examination (Rind, & Mari, 2019).
- The study found that test-items were quite commonly repeated almost every year. Consequently, the learners took resort to memorizing those test-items got from the commercially produced guidebooks or their teachers. Hence, the washback effect of JSC English test made the learners dependent on commercially produced guidebooks. Since they knew it well that they could

cut a good figure by preparing only a limited number of reading texts, vocabulary items, dialogues, paragraphs, and emails, they informed that they prepared a short but probable list of topics to memorize. And those who are efficient and capable of memorizing things, can easily get good scores in the test (Ali and Sultana (2016).

7.2.3 Findings on JSC English test

- The majority of the respondents believed that the JSC English test did not align with the objectives of the JSC English curriculum. This particular finding triangulated positively with the analysis and evaluation of the JSC English test.
- This test could not cater to the intended or desired outcomes in a number of ways. For example, it did not comprehensively equally include all the key components and the contents of the national English curriculum (2012). Besides, it did not offer learners with an appropriate scale to measure their English language skills and their achievement. More importantly, though the curriculum desired that a more communicative approach to English teaching and learning would be encouraged, and practice and assessment of all the four skills of language would be there, it did not happen, since this test could not create such effect.
- The JSC English test is more orientated to discrete-point testing instead of its being integrative testing. Consequently, learners cannot gain real-life language skills, rather they learn and master the discrete points of skills and knowledge. Pointing to this type of test, Onaiba (2013) wrote, the scores and grades the students receive hardly represent their real English language

performance and proficiency. All the respondents too opined that the current JSC English test is not an ideal instrument to measure the students' performance of using English language in real-life situation, rather they termed it as 'inappropriate'.

- This study found that the content and construct validity of the question-items of the JSC English Test is questionable. Most of the teachers criticized this test for failing to redress the expected balance between its contents and the content of the national English curriculum (2012). However, despite having criticism regarding the validity of the JSC English test, this test was found successful in realizing some intentions while missed the other bigger and larger intentions. In comparison to the grammar-translation method based old English examination (which was held as final examination in the respective schools), this test succeeded in involving the candidates to practice a range of reading and vocabulary activities, besides writing tasks and assessing them through a variety of test-items.
- Usually the implementation of high-stakes testing has a very genuine purpose. These implementations of high-stakes test are done to bring about specific and intended changes in the teaching and learning system in context. But, the implementation of JSC English test had no such intention to use it as a means of bringing about educational change. The study found no mentioning of JSC testing policy by interviewed teachers to bring about specific and intended changes in English language teaching and learning.
- The respondents had undergone internal and external pressure for better scores. Students regretted that they felt pressure from their parents, relatives and school authorities to score high grades. Similarly, external pressures (e.g., school authority, education ministry and guardians) to

achieve a high passing rates and good grades in the JSC examination posed a challenge for the majority of the teachers.

- The study reveals that if students performed poorly or failed in the examination, both students and teachers felt embarrassed and frustrated. The students could hardly concentrate on learning English due to examination pressure. Students had firm belief that if they were not pressurized to cut a good figure in JSC test, it would be easy for them to learn English. On the other hand, teachers considered the score gained by their students in the JSC English Test as the determinant of their professional performance and excellence.

7.2.4 Findings on Teaching Methods

- The findings indicate that all the classrooms were teacher-centered and test-oriented. It was found that teachers consumed too much time of the entire class hour and spent it on test-related materials. Content selection and control of the lesson and activities in the classroom were heavily lied with the class-teacher.
- The format and demands of the JSC English test greatly influenced the interviewed teachers' instructional practices in their classroom with their students, tailoring it to the test. The influence, however, was more prominently observed in terms of choice and selection of teaching contents, classroom tasks and activities, and skills practiced, rather than teaching methods and approaches applied in the classroom.
- Teachers were found not to apply task-based instruction (TBI) or content-based instruction (CBI) which are two realistic, effective and holistic

approaches of communicative language teaching and learning (Latimer, 2009; p. 182).

- The teachers did not use English to clarify the text in the classroom. It was specified that mostly Bangla along with English was used as the language of instructions in the classroom. Nor did the English teachers encourage learners to ask any question. Both teachers and students' low level of English proficiency was found to be the reason of the overriding use of Bangla as the language of instructions in the classroom.
- English teachers taught their students whatever they liked to teach and English teachers' preference and choice of chapters and topics got priority in the classroom teaching and learning. English teachers hardly involved them to practice learning and speaking English, instead they were taught the strategies to answer the English questions to ensure high scores and good grades.
- Teachers greatly engaged themselves in the test-oriented tasks and activities and disregarded the tasks and activities which were not likely to be tested and required to pass the English test. The participants also informed that more time was used on practicing grammar, reading, writing and vocabulary related tasks since these were tested mostly in the JSC test, i.e., "*what is tested is taught*" (Onaiba, 2013, p.254).
- Thus, the JSC English test not only dictates English teaching and learning at grade 8 at all the schools observed, but also takes the form of the curriculum itself, hidden curriculum (Minarechová, 2012; Booher-Jennings, 2008) for parts of the academic year.

7.2.5 Findings on Classroom Activities and Tasks

- Because of the demand of the JSC English test, both the respondents are overtly conscious about the importance of acquiring strong and solid grammatical knowledge and having mastery over this and spend considerable time and energy on grammatical forms and instructions, besides, working on reading and writing skills.
- The source and content of classroom exercises, practicing mock tests, frequent review and correction of these exercises and tests indicate that this is the common classroom culture and it contributes to the classroom dynamic.
- The majority of the participants believed that constant drills and homework, alongside recurrent practice tests, can be instrumental in facilitating the learners “*to grind the iron bar into a needle*” (Pong & Chow, 2002, p3). Both the respondents claimed that correcting exercises over and over again assisted learners to prepare them well for the JSC English test and helped increase the chance of cutting good figures eventually. Therefore, both the respondents pressurize themselves to practice as many exercises as possible on the learners’ part during this year of high-stake public examination.
- As mentioned above, since test-items of the JSC English test were quite commonly repeated almost every year, students received short-listed suggestions on reading texts, vocabulary items, grammatical tasks, dialogues, paragraphs, and email writing. Such dependency on short-listed suggestions and commercially produced notes and guidebooks negatively impacted their learning strategies. Since they were confident that they could get these short-listed writing topics in their final examination, they did not

bother to practice reading, vocabulary or writing and became unwilling to write anything on their own.

- The majority of the schools visited were found to arrange supplementary classes for their students before or after the regular school hour. Taking extra classes were so common that most of the interviewed students believed that if they did not attend these classes, it will disadvantageous for them. They considered this “*imperative for successful learning achievement*” (Hamid, Sussex & Khan, 2009, p.281).
- Another major finding that indicates the influence (washback) of the JSC English test on English teaching and learning at grade 8 is the sheer frequency of using JSC English full or partial model/mock test in the language classroom. Giving model tests and reviewing them forms a *de facto* course at all the schools observed. Class time is dedicated for the JSC candidates to sit for the mock test.
- Taking extra classes were so common that most of the interviewed students believed that if they did not attend these classes, it will disadvantageous for them. They considered this “*imperative for successful learning achievement*” (Hamid, Sussex & Khan, 2009, p.281). A large majority of the interviewed students informed that they spend a substantial amount of their time and money to join private tuition or coaching classes after their school hours.
- Thus, the entire English teaching and learning activities including the classroom discourse influenced and shaped by the JSC English test goes against the two essential aspects of “communicative competence and communicative teaching, namely *student output and interaction* (Latimer, 2009; p182)”.

- English language teaching and learning at grade 8 in the secondary schools of Bangladesh is negatively influenced and dictated by the JSC English test format, consequently limiting participation in communicative tasks and activities in the classroom. Such classroom culture and environment limit learners' "overall communicative and SLA development" (Latimer, 2009; p184).

7.2.6 Findings on Summative and formative assessment

- The study indicates that all the schools follow two types of in-the-school assessments. These are summative assessment and formative assessment. Two terminal examinations take the form of summative assessment and 80% marks are allocated for this type of assessment. These terminal examinations are usually the replica of the JSC English test. On the other hand, 20% marks are allocated for formative assessment (which is in the form of class tests), although according to the curriculum, this 20% marks should be allocated to speaking test (10% marks) and listening test (10% marks).
- But interview with teachers and FGD with students reveals that 20% of marks were not allocated to speaking test and listening test. Rather, two things happened instead. Most teachers considered these as class-tests which is a smaller version of the terminal test. That is, instead of testing speaking and listening, they tested their students reading, writing, vocabulary or grammar skills similar to JSC English test. Hence, the study reveals that teachers assessed their students' reading and writing skills, their stock of vocabulary and mastery over grammatical forms and structures in the classrooms or at school.

- Although teachers and some students informed that all the four language skills (e.g., listening, speaking, reading and writing) are being practiced and assessed in the classrooms, classroom observation data show that listening and speaking skills are not practiced and assessed in the real term.
- Since listening and speaking skills are not tested in the JSC English test, teachers did not teach and/or assess these two skills. Even if these two skills were ever taught, the way they were taught hardly could benefit the students to develop their proficiency in these two skills.
- However, besides class tests, as a part of continuous assessment, students informed that they were assessed during the class-hour on a daily basis. They were involved in responding orally to questions individually or in chorus. Sometimes teachers wrote down questions on the blackboards and asked students to answer orally or in writing. At times teachers assessed them by engaging them in pair/group-works. Most of the time teachers assessed them in the middle of the class. Some teachers assessed the previous day's lesson at the beginning of the following day. All teachers gave home-works at the end of almost every lesson.
- Teachers generally preferred to ask questions to the whole class, that is, to all students in general and waited for the students to show their willingness to answer by raising their hands. Teachers also tend to ask questions directly to individual students.
- Students' FGDs and classroom observation data reveal that teachers tend to ask questions to good students than the weak ones. And with regard to position, teachers preferred to ask questions to the front-benchers. They hardly reached to back-benchers. Teachers asked mostly such type of questions that demanded memorization. There were only very few questions

asked by the teachers which involved students to reply based on their own thinking or real-life experience. Almost all the questions asked by the teachers were closed questions. Only very few questions gave clues to students to understand and answer previous questions or to motivate them towards learning.

- The questions asked by the teachers in the classroom were mostly from the knowledge sub-domain of the cognitive domain. Only a very few numbers of questions which covered other sub-domain/higher domain of the cognitive domain like application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation were asked. Thus, the used questions were related to measure lower order of learning.
- The practiced classroom assessment (only through oral questioning and class tests) is competitive, straightforward and content-related rather than goal-oriented and its feedback is evaluative rather than descriptive. As a result, the nature of classroom assessment indicates mostly to ‘assessment of learning’ than ‘assessment for learning’.
- The study, thus, reveals that assessment in the classrooms mostly revolved around test-oriented activities and teachers ignored tasks and activities which not directly related to passing the JSC examination. It also indicates that teachers spent much more time on assessments and tests in the classrooms. They opined that although they realized much time is spent on tests and test-focused activities in the classrooms, they claimed that it was difficult for them to reduce the time they spent on these.

7.2.7 Findings on Skills Practiced

- Since listening and speaking skills are not tested in the JSC English test, teachers did not teach these two skills. Even if these two skills were ever taught, the way they were taught hardly could benefit the students to develop their proficiency in these two skills. For example, in the case of assessing listening skill, usually teachers read the text of the book loudly and instructed their students to listen to them attentively. At times they translated the text in English into Bangla so that their students could easily understand the contents of the text. When the reading of the text was over, they asked questions to their students from the text. On the other hand, for assessing students' speaking skill teachers instructed the students to work in pairs or in groups to practice some dialogues from the English textbook or guide books.
- Teacher and students spent almost entire class time on practicing grammar, reading, writing and vocabulary related tasks since these were tested mostly in the JSC test. The findings of lesson observation data from all the English lessons observed show that the main focus of almost all the lessons were reading activities, writing activities, and activities related to vocabulary and grammar. Only one of the teachers focused on speaking activities and none of them focused on any listening activity in the class.

7.2.8 Findings on Teacher and Contextual Factors

- The findings of the current doctoral study also reveal that the JSC English test was not the sole reason behind these unwelcomed English teaching and learning practices in the classroom by the English teachers and their

students. Teacher characteristics including teachers' educational background, their beliefs, and their past experience also play a significant role in this regard.

- On the other hand, context characteristics or factors include large student population, small class size, insufficient time allotted for instruction, large contents of syllabus, the grades teachers teach, their heavy workloads, students' low levels of proficiency in English, pressure from authority (school and education ministry), and parents of the students to improve scores, no reflection of the marks of speaking and listening tests in public (JSC) examinations, poor socio-economic conditions of teachers, absence of monitoring and supervision by concerned authorities like NCTB, education boards, etc. are also indirectly responsible for this.

7.3 Recommendations

In order to ensure positive interplays between English language teaching, learning and assessment (testing), several things need to be done. These are pointed out below:

1. The goals, objectives and contents of JSC English Curriculum, JSC English Textbook (*English For Today*) and the JSC English test must reciprocate one another. For this, massive revamping of the content, format and test-items of the JSC English test is required.
2. The JSC English test must include test-items covering all four language skills (namely listening, speaking, reading and writing skills) equally.
3. Earlier, the arrangement of assessment of students' listening and speaking skills had not been done showing the reason that practicing these skills by the students and administering assessment of these skills are costly. Neither the students or school, nor the ministry of education can afford to defray the cost associated with these. Situations have changed a lot now. Smart phones are quite cheap now and almost every family throughout the country has smart phones nowadays. So, arranging the provision of listening skill development is no longer a challenge.
4. To ensure positive washback, implementing authority should make sure that 1) participants understand the purpose of the test and positive and intended use(s) of results of the test, 2) test is based on sound theoretical principles, 3) test is on clearly articulated objectives (TLU), 4) test measure what program intends to teach, 5) test utilizes authentic texts and tasks, 6) results are perceived as believable and fair.

5. Redistribution of test-items is required. Seen comprehension (reading test based on text taken directly from the textbook which students have already gone through several times) must be omitted. If learners' reading skill is to be tested, it must be based on reading texts which not already read by students. In place of dialogue writing (which is an invalid test-item already discussed in the Findings Chapter of this thesis), completion of stories or any other meaningful and valid test-item should be set. Considering students' level in terms of grades they are studying and English proficiency, to test their capability of using vocabulary only cloze test with clues should be there in the question-paper as test-item and cloze test without clues should be removed.
6. Repetition of reading texts and other test-items including writing topics must be avoided.
7. Items must not be limited to the measurement of recall/recognition of information, but should attempt to measure higher order outcomes.
8. Since changes in the learning needs of the learners and the context and situations happen so frequently in this era of change throughout the world, the contents of the textbook should be reshuffled and modifies every five years.
9. Examinations, both in content and in difficulty level, should reflect their certification function.
10. Any introduction of a testing format or system must have clearly articulated purposes and objectives. In fact, every test-item of a language test must have a reason of inclusion and clearly articulated aims and objectives. Document study during the study found no such things.

11. Moreover, any future introduction of a testing format or system must have tailor-made guidance and support for all teachers on instructional and assessment practice.
12. All English teachers should be given effective training on the features of communicative curriculum and the textbook. “The challenge is to change the teaching culture: to open teachers’ eyes to the possibilities of exploiting the exam to achieve positive and worthwhile educational goals” (Lam, 1994: 96). Besides, “constant guidance and support over time are essential in order to help teachers use the system appropriately and therefore create positive washback” (Muñoz and Álvarez, 2010:33).
13. To ensure assessment literacy among all English teachers, they should be given effective training on communicative testing and assessment.
14. Question setters and examiners should be trained properly. And they should produce a question paper following the criteria mentioned above.
15. Detailed guidelines for question setters and examiners must be formulated and conveyed to the question setters and examiners, so that they can follow these guidelines.
16. Measures should be taken to encourage classroom-based performance assessment (e.g., role plays, interviews).
17. Formative assessment (Class Tests and quizzes) must be as par instruction already given by NCTB (i.e., these tests should assess the listening and speaking skills of the students).
18. The use of commercially produced books (hidden syllabus) in the class should be banned.
19. Feasibility study should be conducted before bringing any reform in English education to find out and remove factors that may hinder its implementation and success.

20. To deemphasize the power of tests, consideration needs to be given to how to secure teacher consent, participation and active involvement in the process.
21. In order to ensure positive interplays between English language teaching, learning and assessment (testing), the researcher recommends that before bringing innovation or change in curriculum or assessment system, a bottom-up, not a top-down approach should be adopted, where teachers' and learners' opinions will be more priority than following instructions received from the top.
22. Above all, emphasis on alignment of assessment, curriculum, teaching and learning practices must be given.

7.4 Contribution and Implications of the Study

This current doctoral study has made a number of original contributions to English language teaching and assessment research. This also has several significant implications for policy makes, test creators, teachers and other stakeholders.

The present study addresses three gaps in washback literature available till date. These three gaps are the paucity of empirical washback studies in Bangladesh (Rahman et al, 2018), absence of washback study on JSC English test, and absence of students' perspectives in the washback studies (Wu, 2015), especially in Bangladesh.

The current doctoral study gives answers to a unique context and scenario which was not thoroughly examined and explored before. This research was carried out in a unique context (JSC) as opposed to a number of washback studies on SSC and HSC English tests conducted in Bangladesh. To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first and only comprehensive, systematic and methodologically sound empirical study to investigate and explore the interplays between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice, more specifically the influence of JSC English test on English teaching-learning.

Hence, it can be considered as one of the very few formal and comprehensive research studies conducted on the influence (washback) of assessment (the public examination) on English teaching and learning in the context of the JSC level in particular and secondary level schools of Bangladesh in general.

While studying relevant documents, the researcher of this study thoroughly analyzed and explained the strong and weak sides of the JSC English Curriculum, JSC English textbook and JSC English test. This is the first time ever in Bangladesh that any study or work has done this. This original contribution bears significant implications for policy makers, curriculum developers, textbook writers, question-setters, examiners and teachers.

Another important contribution of this study is that it included students as an important stakeholder and could equally convey their opinion through both student questionnaire and in-depth interviews in broad based mixed method study, whereas none of the other similar studies on SSC and HSC English test (Ali & Hamid, 2020; Sarwer & Haque, 2019; Hoque, 2016; Maniruzzaman & Hoque, 2016; Ali & Sultana, 2016; Rubina, 2010) conducted in Bangladesh included in-depth interviews with students to listen to their stories in this regard.

In comparison to other similar studies on washback, this current study offers a more comprehensive viewpoint on understanding washback of the JSC English test as a complex phenomenon: what it does, how it operates, and why it exists.

Methodology applied in this current research and the results and findings of the study have important implications for future research on language assessment and washback both in JSC and other language testing contexts.

Besides, English teaching-learning and assessment practice are self-regulated processes operating in the educational and social contexts. Considering these contexts can help gain significant information in terms of interplays between English teaching-learning and assessment practice. Keeping this in mind, this

research highlights the contextual factors and social contexts which contribute to washback.

This study has also lent some significant insights into language assessment theory and practice both in Bangladesh and elsewhere. From the practical viewpoint, it was able to create cognizance of the significance of JSC English test as manifested in the study. The study explored that the test is not doing what it should do. Moreover, as the study made an extensive analysis of the design, format and content of the test, the findings in terms of the design, format and content of the test also provide significant insights for designers of curriculum, assessment and testing and other stakeholders involved in the Bangladeshi educational system and elsewhere. The JSC English Curriculum (2012) was designed and developed communicatively with the intention that a more communicative approach to English teaching and learning would be encouraged, and practice and assessment of all the four skills of language would be there, but it did not happen, since this test could not create such effect.

Bachman (2000) comments that the contents of a language test have to be consisted of activities and tasks that can measure learners' language proficiency if it would like to be considered communicative language testing. But this JSC English test lacked these properties, and hence, was considered very limited and can be termed as "construct under-representative" (Onaiba, 2013, p244). Andrews et al. (2000) claimed that such an inappropriate test must yield negative washback on language learning and teaching. The design of the JSC English test should, hence, be revised. International Language Testing Association (ILTA, 2018) recommended that working for the improvement of

the quality of a language test should be continuous. But it is not the case here in Bangladesh.

One means of improving the test to an expected level is by including all the stakeholders (e.g. policy makers, test creators, teachers and students (Tan & Turner, 2015) in the test development process. It, however, does not say that students should also be in the question-setters panel, but a need analysis of the stake-holders should be conducted to find out what should be included and what not in the test battery.

The study has also put forward some suggestions on how the JSC English test can be improved. For example, massive revamping of the content, format and test-items of the JSC English test is required. It should include test-items covering all four language skills (namely listening, speaking, reading and writing skills) equally; avoid repetition of reading texts and other test-items including writing topics etc. Thus, the study confirms the great influence of high-stakes public exam has on teaching and learning practice in the classroom, particularly in the secondary schools of Bangladesh and more generally elsewhere, which help the concern authority to work effectively for future reforms.

7.5 Limitations of the Study

Like all other research studies conducted earlier, the current doctoral study has certain limitations which should be acknowledged. These limitations recognize the latent weaknesses of this study.

This study has limitations in terms of available previous information in the context of Bangladesh. Literature review indicates that in this particular area (JSC English assessment) no rigorous study was conducted in Bangladesh earlier. Hence, the current study failed to get necessary guidelines and clues in the context of Bangladesh which might facilitate it. However, studies conducted in the context of other grades of students (SSC and HSC) in Bangladesh, and around the world played a significant role in designing the present study.

If the current doctoral study is to be simulated, the most important thing which should be taken care of is the sample size and geographical areas and locations of the study. In terms of the generalizability of the findings, the mixed method study of English teachers and students contains a sample of only five hundred students (for questionnaires) among whom one hundred and twenty-eight participated in FGI while it contains only thirty-two English teachers (for questionnaires) among whom sixteen participated in the in-depth interviews. Hence, even though efforts are taken to accumulate a sample for the study as representative as possible, the risk of the precision of the data cannot be ignored if the findings of the study are generalized. Moreover, the use of nonprobability sampling in the quantitative section of the study, (which was done as a compromise due to practical reasons) decreases the generalizability of the findings of the present study. However, the homogeneity and centralisation of the school system in Bangladesh (Hossain & Tavakoli, 2008) indicate that even if the findings are specific to the particular research contexts, other schools are undeniably likely to be facing the same phenomena.

The study of the previous literature (Wall and Horak, 2011; Shohamy et al., 1996) indicates that washback of a test can evolve over time. Hence, a longitudinal study for this kind of research would probably be the better option to investigate the washback of the JSC English test. This, however, was not possible because of the time limitation that the PhD research had. Yet, more

interesting findings and results might be obtained if the student-participants for the study could be selected from different grades of the schools. The duration of data collection was also limited. Therefore, follow-up research is required for observing long-term effect of the test. However, this follow-up research was beyond the scope and practicality of the current doctoral study.

Finally, one of the less significant limitations of the study is related to the translation of interview data. Considering the low level of English proficiency of the respondents, interviews with teachers and students were conducted in Bangla, and then they were translated into English. Although considerable attention was paid to the translations, and asked a colleague to cross-check the translated data, the process cannot be said that it was beyond any drawbacks. However, translations done were compared and high consistency was found. I, as a researcher, am confident and satisfied that the translated data stanchly extracted the meanings, which were communicated by the interviewees.

7.6 Suggestions for Future Research

The current doctoral study has expanded our understanding and knowledge of the washback mechanism. Further study, however, can be built on certain aspects. This research has explored a few areas where more study is required.

Further study is required for “a phenomenon on whose importance all seem to be agreed, but whose nature and presence have been little studied” (Alderson and Wall, 1993, p. 115). Since courses on exam preparation transform over time, the current researcher thinks that future studies on washback should include a longitudinal approach. Alderson (1992) recommended future studies on exploring the best practice in examination preparation courses. He writes,

“In an ideal world ...the way teachers prepare students for examinations would look no different from how they teach every day, and how they teach every day would match both the aims and the methods that the examinations intend to inculcate, and the methodology that the textbooks and the teacher education courses advocate. However, it is absolutely clear that teachers will indeed engage in special test preparation practices, and therefore it is important to consider what best practice in test preparation should look like (p35).”

Since washback is a complex phenomenon, the current researcher suggests that future research on washback, especially in the Bangladeshi secondary school context should study the internal (e.g. teacher factor) and external (e.g. student) factors intensively.

Although the washback hypothesis—” a test will influence attitudes to content, method, etc. of teaching/learning” (Alderson & Wall, 1993) – has been proved true in numerous washback studies (already mentioned above in the previous chapter) including the current doctoral study, works or studies conducted on the effects of test on the identity of language teachers as professionals, practitioners and educators are scarce. Hence, future studies should be conducted in such areas, because findings of such studies could assist to build an effective and efficient teacher education and teacher support systems in the schools. Such research, the researcher believes, could create adequate understanding of how tests and policies related to testing might influence language teachers in their careers and professions, and how these influences could generate issues in teacher training and their professional development.

Since washback is a complex phenomenon, in order to be able to understand the issues more in-depth, future studies should apply more sophisticated statistical analysis, and ethnographic and longitudinal data.

The conclusions and justifiable limitations of the current doctoral study also paves the way for further research. For example,

A series of research studies on the same context will be useful. The current study focused only on the relation between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment/testing including only teachers and students as participants, and carried out by a single researcher. However, it would be rather comprehensive and hence, more useful if a team of researchers could tie up and act together to conduct a series of empirical studies on diverse aspect of this relationship including more diverse participants (e.g. head teachers, parents, curriculum and textbook writers, and question-setters).

Wall (2012) criticized that washback researchers did not often develop their research on previous washback studies and wrote, *“it is rare to see research that truly builds on work that has been done previously, which replicates or only slightly adapts the work of others”* (p.89). He recommended that researchers who wished to conduct a study on washback, should build their research study on washback by basing on previous washback studies, if possible, in the same context. Cheng (2008) advised that “[i]t would be the best use of resources if a group of researchers could work collaboratively and cooperatively to carry out a series of studies around the same test within the same educational context” (p.360). By doing this, it would be possible “to cross-

reference their findings to build up a comprehensive picture of the same washback operating therein” (Wall, 2012, p89).

Since no previous study on JSC English teaching-learning and assessment or testing was conducted, this current study had been developed on Hoque’s (2016 and 2011) and Maniruzzaman and Hoque’s (2010) studies on HSC English examination, and Maniruzzaman’s (2012) study on SSC English examination. In the first instance, the current study can give a comprehensive picture of the relation between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment/testing and can be considered a base-line study for the researchers researching on the same or similar issues and context in the future.

The current doctoral study has identified its sample size and limited geographical locations as limitations of the study which restricted its generalizability. Further research studies of a similar nature should be conducted in more schools, spreading more geographical areas including both urban and rural areas. Moreover, the use of ICT and the internet will be useful to include more and diverse research participants from around the country.

Comprehensive yet intensive research needs to be conducted on the effects of examination (washback) on curriculum, syllabus, textbook, teaching and learning materials and aids, teaching approaches and methods.

Alongside research on the existence of washback and its positive or negative effect, further research could also be done on asking how an effective test could be designed to bring about desired changes in teachers’ teaching approaches and methods.

7.7 Concluding Remarks

This study focused firstly on JSC English teaching-learning practice in the classrooms. Secondly, it attempted to explore the existing assessment practice used in JSC English. Thirdly and most importantly, it examined the interplays between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice, how they influenced (facilitate or hinder i.e., washback effect) each other, because “any given test needs research tailor-made to examine its washback” (Shih, 2007: p. 137).

Thus, the overarching aim of this study was to investigate the effect of assessment (the JSC English Test) on English teaching-learning at secondary schools. Alongside, it sought to examine the effect of any other teacher, students and context-dependent variables that may contribute to positive or negative interplays between JSC English teaching-learning and assessment practice.

The findings of the study imply that the JSC English curriculum (2012) and textbook were designed and developed communicatively, but the JSC English test was not designed in the same line. This test negatively influences what English teachers teach, and how they teach in the classroom, what their students learn and how they learn English. The one and only goal of language learning of these teachers and learners is to get a good grade in the JSC English test. But the scores and grades the students receive hardly represent their real English language performance and proficiency. All the classrooms were teacher-centered and test-oriented. Teachers taught to the test. Teachers skipped and ignored some of the lessons of the textbook that were not or less expected and set to be set in the JSC examination (Rind, & Mari, 2019; Kirkpatrick & Zang, 2011; Qi, 2004). Fullilove (1992, p. 139) termed such exams as “little more than cloners of past exam papers”. Teachers narrowed the

content of the textbook so that it can match and resemble the content of the JSC English examination.

It was specified that mostly Bangla along with English was used as the language of instructions in the classroom. Both the teachers and their students depended highly on commercially produced model/mock test book, test papers, suggestion books, notes and guidebooks which contained test-related materials. Teachers and students were greatly engaged in the test-oriented tasks and activities. The main focus of almost all the classes/lessons were reading activities, writing activities, and activities related to vocabulary and grammar. There was hardly any focus on speaking and listening activity in the classroom, since these two skills were not tested in the JSC English test.

The study also reveals that the JSC English test was not the sole reason behind these unwelcomed English teaching and learning practices in the classroom by the English teachers and their students. Teacher characteristics, student characteristics and contextual factors also play a significant role in this regard.

Thus, the study like a number of previous well-known washback studies has explored enough evidence that washback is a complex phenomenon which include multiple stakeholders. In these circumstances, ensuring effective and positive interplays among the components and elements of the current English education system will not a simple and straight forward task. Required reform should have its beginning from the decision-making level ensuring inclusion and assimilation of the voices of all the stakeholders and available and required resources and swim through intervening level and finally end fruitfully with the implementing level.

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Appendix 1A: Interview Questions for English Teachers

It has been developed for the purpose of a **PhD research study** in the Department of Language Education, Institute of Education & Research (IER), University of Dhaka. The questions here are related to the thesis titled *“Interplays between English Teaching-Learning and Assessment Practice in Secondary Schools”*

1. Do you know about goals and objectives of English Language Curriculum?
2. What issue(s) do you consider during the presentation of subject content in the classroom?
3. What method(s) do you follow when you teach the English lesson?
4. Do you use any teaching aids in the classroom?
5. Do you know about the assessment system of English Language curriculum? How do you know about that?
6. What techniques do you practice in the classroom to assess your students?
7. How do you give feedback to your students?
8. How do you ensure that your students perform well in the JSC examination?
9. Does the present assessment system influence English teaching and learning practice? If so, how does it influence?
10. Do you think that present assessment system is appropriate for evaluating students' learning outcome of English language? If yes, explain why? If no, explain why not?
11. What challenges do you think you and your students face in ensuring effective interplays between English teaching-learning and assessment practice?

Appendix 1B: Focused Group Interviews (FGIs) Schedule for Students

It has been developed for the purpose of a **PhD research study** in the Department of Language Education, Institute of Education & Research (IER), University of Dhaka. The questions here are related to the thesis titled *“Interplays between English Teaching-Learning and Assessment Practice in Secondary Schools”*

1. Do you like learning English? Why? Why not?
2. Let's talk about a recent topic that you have studied.
 - a. What activities were used by the teacher in the English classes?
 - b. Do you remember the materials that were used for this lesson?
3. In what different ways are you assessed in class?
 - a. Example- individual task, question-answer session, quiz test etc.
 - b. When - beginning, end, during-class?
 - c. How often are you assessed in English classes? Everyday/weekly/monthly?
4. What are you assessed on in English (skills) – reading, writing, listening, speaking?
 - a. Which one(s) do you like best? Why?
 - b. Which one(s) do you dislike? Why?
5. Do you get any feedback in the English classes? If so, how? When?
6. How do you prepare for English examinations?
 - a. Preparation time, how many days before the examinations
 - b. Do you prepare yourself for specific questions? If so, how?
 - c. Do you go to coaching classes/private lessons for exam preparation?
7. Do you have extra preparation classes prior to the exams?
8. Do you receive suggestions from the teacher for the examinations?
9. Does your teacher provide feedback on the terminal examinations?
 - a. If so, in what way does your teacher provide feedback (when, how)?
10. Is this feedback useful to you in improving your English?

Appendix 1C: Teacher Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been developed for the purpose of a **PhD** study in the Department of Language Education, Institute of Education & Research (IER), University of Dhaka. The questions here are related to the thesis titled *“Interplays between English Teaching-Learning and Assessment Practice in Secondary Schools”*

The researcher gives you full assurance that the information will be used only for the research purpose and will be strictly kept confidential.

Thank you for cooperation!

Demographic Information:

**Please give yourself a code reference for future contact _____*

Please tick one appropriate answer or provide written answers.

School name and city: _____

- (1) Your gender: (2) Your age: (3) Your academic qualification:
 (4) Number of years you have been teaching English:
 (5) Grades/Classes you teach: (6) Number of students in a class:

JSC English Teaching-Learning and Assessment:

Put a tick mark (✓) in the box next to each item, which best expresses your opinion:

Key: Strongly Agree (SA)- 5; Agree (A)-4; No Opinion (N)-3; Disagree (D)-2; Strongly Disagree (SD)-1

| A | Curriculum and Syllabus | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|----------|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1 | I am aware of the objectives of the JSC curriculum and syllabus. | | | | | |
| 2 | I teach every section in the textbook (<i>English for Today</i> for class 8) although some sections are unlikely to be tested in the examination. | | | | | |
| 3 | I feel pressure to cover the syllabus before the final examination. | | | | | |
| 4 | JSC examination tests overall competence of my students in English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) | | | | | |
| B | Textbooks and other Materials | | | | | |
| 5 | I follow and communicate the lesson objectives with the students while planning my lessons. | | | | | |
| 6 | I think the textbook covers sufficient exercises and opportunities for practicing English. | | | | | |
| 7 | I think my students do not seriously study the textbook materials. | | | | | |
| 8 | I skip certain sections in the textbook because they are less likely to be tested in the examination. | | | | | |
| 9 | The textbook, <i>English for Today</i> (for classes 8) is well-suited to developing communicative competence in English language. | | | | | |
| 10 | I rely on the test-related materials, such as test papers, past questions, and model questions to prepare my students for the examination. | | | | | |
| 11 | I find textbook contents interesting. | | | | | |
| 12 | If I teach the whole textbook (<i>English for Today</i>), my students will perform badly in the JSC examination. | | | | | |
| 13 | I use authentic materials (eg. newspaper articles, radio and television, | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| | news bulletin, texts of real life incidents, etc.) and modern equipment besides textbook for the students' practice of English language in the class. | | | | | |
| C | Teaching Methods | | | | | |
| 14 | I teach and explain the text in English. | | | | | |
| 15 | I encourage my students to speak English in the class | | | | | |
| 16 | I use Bangla along with English to make my students understand better. | | | | | |
| 17 | I teach whatever I think important to teach, no matter whether it is important or not for the exam. | | | | | |
| 18 | My role as an English teacher is to transmit knowledge to my students through explaining texts and giving examples. | | | | | |
| 19 | I do not make my students practise how to learn and speak English language but make them practice on how to answer questions in exam | | | | | |
| 20 | I believe that the test score in the JSC examination in English is an appropriate indicator of a student's English ability. | | | | | |
| D | Classroom Tasks and Activities | | | | | |
| 21 | I ignore the task and activities that are not directly related to passing the examination. | | | | | |
| 22 | I give model tests and questions of past exams to the students to do better in the final examination. | | | | | |
| 23 | I spend more time teaching grammar, reading and writing to some extend because I think they are more likely to be tested in the exam. | | | | | |
| 24 | I can give little concentration on teaching English language due to examination pressure. | | | | | |
| 25 | I teach test-taking strategies, especially when the examination date gets closer. | | | | | |
| 26 | The examination influences my decision on which language skills are more important to be taught in the class. | | | | | |
| 27 | Listening is not practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| 28 | Speaking is not practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| E | Attitudes, and Perception Towards the Test | | | | | |
| 29 | I feel pressure from my authority to improve my students' test score. | | | | | |
| 30 | My students can score good marks without improving their English language proficiency. | | | | | |
| 31 | My students suffer from anxiety and tension for the examination. | | | | | |
| 32 | The present examination system helps my students improve language proficiency. | | | | | |
| 33 | I could teach English better if there were no pressures for good results in the examination. | | | | | |
| 34 | Examinations influence my students' future career. | | | | | |
| 35 | I feel embarrassed if my students fail or perform badly in the exam. | | | | | |

Appendix 1D: Student Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been developed for the purpose of a **PhD research study** in the Department of Language Education, Institute of Education & Research (IER), University of Dhaka. The questions here are related to the thesis titled *“Interplays between English Teaching-Learning and Assessment Practice in Secondary Schools”*

The researcher gives you full assurance that the information will be used only for the research purpose and will be strictly kept confidential.

Thank you for cooperation!

Put a tick mark (✓) in the box next to each item, which best expresses your opinion:

Key: Strongly Agree (SA)- 5; Agree (A)-4; No Opinion (N)-3; Disagree (D)-2; Strongly Disagree (SD)-1

| A | Curriculum and Syllabus | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|----------|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1 | I am aware of the objectives of the JSC syllabus. | | | | | |
| 2 | Our English teacher teaches us every section in the textbook (<i>English for Today</i> for class 8) although some sections are unlikely to be tested in the examination. | | | | | |
| 3 | I feel pressure to cover the syllabus before the final examination. | | | | | |
| 4 | JSC examination tests my overall competence in English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) | | | | | |
| B | Textbooks and Materials | | | | | |
| 5 | Our English teacher does not tell us the lesson’s objectives while teaching. | | | | | |
| 6 | I think the textbook covers sufficient exercises and opportunities for practicing English. | | | | | |
| 7 | I do not seriously study the textbook materials. | | | | | |
| 8 | Our English teacher skips certain sections in the textbook because they are less likely to be tested in the examination. | | | | | |
| 9 | The textbook, <i>English for Today</i> (for classes 8) is well-suited to developing communicative competence in English language. | | | | | |
| 10 | I rely on the test-related materials, such as test papers, past questions, and model questions to take preparation for the examination. | | | | | |
| 11 | I find interest in studying the textbook materials. | | | | | |
| 12 | If we study the whole book (<i>English for Today</i>), we will perform badly in the final examination. | | | | | |
| 13 | Our English teacher uses newspaper articles, radio and television, news bulletin, texts of real-life incidents, etc. for teaching us English language. | | | | | |
| C | Teaching Methods | | | | | |
| 14 | Our English teacher teaches and explains the text in English. | | | | | |
| 15 | Our English teacher encourages us to speak English in the class. | | | | | |
| 16 | Our English teacher uses Bangla along with English to make us understand better. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 17 | Our English teacher teaches whatever he thinks important to teach, no matter whether it is important or not for the examination. | | | | | |
| 18 | Our English teacher teaches us the meaning and theme of the topic by explaining the texts line by line, and giving examples. | | | | | |
| 19 | Our English teacher does not make us practise how to learn and speak English language but makes us practise how to answer questions in the examination. | | | | | |
| 20 | My examination results will indicate my genuine language competence and proficiency. | | | | | |
| D | Classroom Tasks and Activities | | | | | |
| 21 | We ignore the task and activities that are not directly related to passing the examination. | | | | | |
| 22 | Our English teacher gives us model tests & questions of the past examinations for practice before the final examination starts. | | | | | |
| 23 | We spend more time practicing grammar and reading because they more likely to be tested in the exam. | | | | | |
| 24 | We give little concentration on learning English language due to examination pressure. | | | | | |
| 25 | Our English teacher gives us guidelines on how to answer the questions in the examination. | | | | | |
| 26 | We practise the English skills and elements as per our English teacher's design and decision. | | | | | |
| 27 | Listening is practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| 28 | Speaking is practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| E | Attitudes, and Perception Towards the Test | | | | | |
| 29 | My parents pressure me to make good results in the examination. | | | | | |
| 30 | Learning English is more difficult than obtaining good grades in the examination | | | | | |
| 31 | I feel tension for the test preparation. | | | | | |
| 32 | The present examination system helps me improve language proficiency. | | | | | |
| 33 | I could learn English better if there were no pressure for good results in the examination. | | | | | |
| 34 | The results of my JSC Examination will influence my future career. | | | | | |
| 35 | I may be frustrated if I fail or perform badly in the examination. | | | | | |

Appendix 2: Original Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) Scheme

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Materials | Use | | No Control | | | | | | | |
| | | | Semi Control | | | | | | | |
| | | | High control | | | | | | | |
| Source | | | Non-pedagogic | | | | | | | |
| | | | Semi-pedagogic | | | | | | | |
| | | | Pedagogic | | | | | | | |
| Type | Visual | | | | | | | | | |
| | Audio | | | | | | | | | |
| | text | | | | | | | | | |
| content | Topic Control | | Extended | | | | | | | |
| | | | minimal | | | | | | | |
| | | | student | | | | | | | |
| | | | Teacher/student | | | | | | | |
| | | | teacher | | | | | | | |
| | Other Topics | Broad | | other | | | | | | |
| | | | | World T. | | | | | | |
| | | | | Imagination | | | | | | |
| | | | Pers./Ref. | | | | | | | |
| | | | abstract | | | | | | | |
| limited | | other | | | | | | | | |
| | | School T. | | | | | | | | |
| | | Fam./Com. | | | | | | | | |
| | | Row./Soc. | | | | | | | | |
| | | personal | | | | | | | | |
| narrow | | other | | | | | | | | |
| | | Pers.Bio | | | | | | | | |
| | | Stereotyp. | | | | | | | | |
| | | classroom | | | | | | | | |
| Language | | sociolinguistics | | | | | | | | |
| | | discourse | | | | | | | | |
| | | function | | | | | | | | |
| | | form | | | | | | | | |
| MAN. | | discipline | | | | | | | | |
| | | procedure | | | | | | | | |
| Participants organization | Individual Seat Work | -tools | | | | | | | | |
| | | + tools | | | | | | | | |
| | Group Work | Different tasks | | | | | | | | |
| | | Same task | | | | | | | | |
| | | + mentor | | | | | | | | |
| | Whole class | S-S/C | WTC | | | | | | | |
| S-S/C | | Random assignment | | | | | | | | |
| S-S/C | | Pre-planning | | | | | | | | |
| T-S/C | | | | | | | | | | |
| Student Modality | Open discussion | | | | | | | | | |
| | Speaking limited to answering a question | | | | | | | | | |
| | writing | | | | | | | | | |
| | Group/pair discussion | | | | | | | | | |
| | Watching video | | | | | | | | | |
| | listening | | | | | | | | | |
| | presenting | | | | | | | | | |
| | reading | | | | | | | | | |
| Activity | | | | | | | | | | |
| Time | | | | | | | | | | |

Appendix 3A: Teacher Questionnaire (by Hoque, 2011)**Department of English
Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka**

This questionnaire has been developed for the purpose of a research project in the Department of English at Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka. The questions here are related to the “Washback of the Public Examination on Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh”. The researcher gives you full assurance that the information will be used only for the research purpose, and will be strictly kept confidential.

Thank you for cooperation!

Put a tick mark (√) in the box next to each item, which best expresses your opinion:

Key: Strongly Agree (SA)- 5; Agree (A)-4; No Opinion (N)-3; Disagree (D)-2; Strongly Disagree (SD)-1

| A | Curriculum and Syllabus | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|----------|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1 | I am aware of the objectives of the HSC syllabus and curriculum. | | | | | |
| 2 | The present HSC syllabus and curriculum can enhance English teaching and learning. | | | | | |
| 3 | I teach every section in the textbook (<i>English for Today</i> although some sections are unlikely to be tested in the examination. | | | | | |
| 4 | I do not care about the syllabus and curriculum while teaching my students. | | | | | |
| 5 | I feel pressure to cover the syllabus before the final examination. | | | | | |
| 6 | JSC examination tests overall competence of my students in English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) | | | | | |
| 7 | I give more attention to teaching to the syllabus opposed to practicing the test items.). | | | | | |
| B | Textbooks and Materials | | | | | |
| 8 | I follow and communicate the lesson objectives with the students while planning my lessons. | | | | | |
| 9 | I think the textbook covers sufficient exercises and opportunities for practicing English. | | | | | |
| 10 | I think my students do not seriously study the textbook materials. | | | | | |
| 11 | I skip certain sections in the textbook because they are less likely to be tested in the examination. | | | | | |
| 12 | The textbook, <i>English for Today</i> is well-suited to developing communicative competence in English language. | | | | | |
| 13 | I rely on the test-related materials, such as test papers, past questions, and model questions to prepare my students for the examination. | | | | | |
| 14 | I find interest in teaching the textbook materials. | | | | | |
| 15 | If I teach the whole textbook (<i>English for Today</i>), my students will perform badly in the HSC examination. | | | | | |
| 16 | I use authentic materials along with the textbook for the students' practice of English language in the class. | | | | | |
| 17 | I use any modern equipment to teach the English language skills. | | | | | |
| C | Teaching Methods | | | | | |
| 18 | I teach in a way that my students understand everything. | | | | | |
| 19 | I teach and explain the text in English. | | | | | |
| 20 | I encourage my students to ask questions during the class. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 21 | I encourage my students to speak English in the class | | | | | |
| 22 | I use Bangla along with English to make my students understand better. | | | | | |
| 23 | I teach whatever I think important to teach, no matter whether it is important or not for the exam. | | | | | |
| 24 | My role as an English teacher is to transmit knowledge to my students through explaining texts and giving examples. | | | | | |
| 25 | I do not make my students practise how to learn and speak English language but make them practice on how to answer questions in the exam. | | | | | |
| 26 | I believe that the test score in the HSC examination in English is an appropriate indicator of a student's English ability. | | | | | |
| D | Classroom Tasks and Activities | | | | | |
| 27 | I ignore the task and activities that are not directly related to passing the examination. | | | | | |
| 28 | I give model tests to the students to do better in the final exam. | | | | | |
| 29 | I spend more time teaching grammar because I think grammar is more likely to be tested in the examination. | | | | | |
| 30 | I make my students practise and solve the questions of the past exams. | | | | | |
| 31 | I give little concentration on teaching English language due to examination pressure. | | | | | |
| 32 | I teach test-taking strategies, especially when the exam date gets closer. | | | | | |
| E | English Skills and Elements | | | | | |
| 33 | The examination influences my decision on which language skills are more important to be taught. | | | | | |
| 34 | Listening is practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| 35 | Speaking is practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| 36 | Reading is practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| 37 | Writing is practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| F | Beliefs, Attitudes, and Perception Related to the Test and Teaching | | | | | |
| 38 | I feel pressure from my authority to improve my students' test score. | | | | | |
| 39 | My students can score good marks without improving their English language proficiency. | | | | | |
| 40 | I get feedback on my teaching from the examination results. | | | | | |
| 41 | My students suffer from anxiety and tension for the examination. | | | | | |
| 42 | The present examination system helps my students improve language proficiency. | | | | | |
| 43 | I could teach English better if there were no pressures for good results in the examination. | | | | | |
| 44 | Examinations influence my students' future career. | | | | | |
| 45 | I feel embarrassed if my students fail or perform badly in the exam. | | | | | |

Appendix 3B: Student Questionnaire (by Hoque, 2011)**Department of English
Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka**

The questionnaire has been developed for the purpose of a research project in the Department of English at Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka. The questions here are related to the “Washback of the Public Examination on Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh”. The researcher gives you full assurance that the information will be used only for the research purpose, and will be strictly kept confidential.

Thank you for cooperation!

Put a tick mark (√) in the box next to each item, which best expresses your opinion:

Key: Strongly Agree (SA)- 5; Agree (A)-4; No Opinion (N)-3; Disagree (D)-2; Strongly Disagree (SD)-1

| A | Curriculum and Syllabus | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|----------|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1 | I am aware of the objectives of the HSC syllabus and curriculum. | | | | | |
| 2 | The present HSC syllabus and curriculum can enhance English teaching and learning. | | | | | |
| 3 | Teacher teaches us every section in the textbook (<i>English for Today</i>) although some sections are unlikely to be tested in the examination. | | | | | |
| 4 | I do not care about the syllabus and curriculum while preparing for the examination. | | | | | |
| 5 | I feel pressure to cover the syllabus before the final examination. | | | | | |
| 6 | HSC examination tests my overall competence in English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) | | | | | |
| 7 | The teacher gives little attention to practicing the test items necessary for the examination. | | | | | |
| B | Textbooks and Materials | | | | | |
| 8 | The teacher does not tell us the lesson’s objectives while teaching. | | | | | |
| 9 | I think the textbook covers sufficient exercises and opportunities for practicing English. | | | | | |
| 10 | I do not seriously study the textbook materials. | | | | | |
| 11 | The teacher skips certain sections in the textbook because they are less likely to be tested in the examination. | | | | | |
| 12 | The textbook, <i>English for Today</i> is well-suited to developing communicative competence in English language. | | | | | |
| 13 | I rely on the test-related materials, such as test papers, past questions, and model questions to take preparation for the examination. | | | | | |
| 14 | I find interest in studying the textbook materials. | | | | | |
| 15 | If we study the whole book (<i>English for Today</i>), we will perform badly in the final examination. | | | | | |
| 16 | The teacher uses newspaper articles, radio and television news bulletin, texts of real life incidents, etc. for teaching us English language. | | | | | |
| 17 | The teacher does not use any modern equipment to teach the English language skills. | | | | | |
| C | Teaching Methods | | | | | |
| 18 | The teacher considers whether we can understand and follow his instruction. | | | | | |
| 19 | The teacher teaches and explains the text in English. | | | | | |
| 20 | The teacher encourages us to ask questions during the class. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 21 | The teacher encourages us to speak English in the class. | | | | | |
| 22 | The teacher uses Bengali along with English to make us understand better. | | | | | |
| 23 | The teacher teaches whatever he thinks important to teach, no matter whether it is important or not for the examination. | | | | | |
| 24 | The teacher teaches us the meaning and theme of the topic by explaining the texts line by line, and giving examples. | | | | | |
| 25 | The teacher does not make us practise how to learn and speak English language but makes us practise how to answer questions in the exam. | | | | | |
| 26 | My examination results will indicate my language competence and proficiency. | | | | | |
| D | Classroom Tasks and Activities | | | | | |
| 27 | We ignore the task and activities that are not directly related to passing the examination. | | | | | |
| 28 | The teacher gives us model tests before the final examination starts. | | | | | |
| 29 | We spend more time practicing grammar because grammar is more likely to be tested in the exam. | | | | | |
| 30 | My teacher makes us practice and solve the questions of the past exam | | | | | |
| 31 | We give little concentration on learning English language due to examination pressure. | | | | | |
| 32 | My teacher gives us guidelines on how to answer the questions in the exam | | | | | |
| E | English Skills and Elements | | | | | |
| 33 | We practise the English skills and elements as per the teacher's design and decision. | | | | | |
| 34 | Listening is practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| 35 | Speaking is practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| 36 | Reading is practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| 37 | Writing is practiced in the class. | | | | | |
| F | Beliefs, Attitudes, and Perception Related to the Test and Teaching | | | | | |
| 38 | My parents pressure me to make good results in the examination. | | | | | |
| 39 | Learning English is more difficult than obtaining good grades in the exam | | | | | |
| 40 | I get feedback on my learning from the examination results. | | | | | |
| 41 | I feel tension for the test preparation. | | | | | |
| 42 | The present examination system helps me improve language proficiency. | | | | | |
| 43 | I could learn English better if there were no pressure for good results in the examination. | | | | | |
| 44 | The results of my HSC Examination will influence my future career. | | | | | |
| 45 | I may be frustrated if I fail or perform badly in the examination. | | | | | |

Appendix 5: Preface to *English for Today*

Preface

The aim of secondary education is to make the learners fit for entry into higher education by flourishing their latent talents and prospects with a view to building the nation with the spirit of the Language Movement and the Liberation War. To make the learners skilled and competent citizens of the country based on the economic, social, cultural and environmental settings is also an important issue of secondary education.

The textbooks of secondary level have been written and compiled according to the revised curriculum 2012 in accordance with the aims and objectives of National Education Policy-2010. Contents and presentations of the textbooks have been selected according to the moral and humanistic values of Bengali tradition and culture and the spirit of Liberation War 1971 ensuring equal dignity for all irrespective of caste and creed of different religions and sex.

The present government is committed to ensure the successful implementation of Vision 2021. Honorable Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina expressed her firm determination to make the country free from illiteracy and instructed the concerned authority to give free textbooks to every student of the country. National Curriculum and Textbook Board started to distribute textbooks free of cost since 2010 according to her instruction.

In the era of globalization, English is one of the most powerful tools for pursuing higher studies, using technology, inter-cultural and inter-personal communications, and job markets at home and abroad. The curriculum makes it explicit that language learning will be graded and contents will reflect real life situations as the ultimate purpose of language learning is to communicate. The English for Today textbooks have been developed to help students attain competency in all four language skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. The contents and illustrations of this textbook have been developed in order to suit the learners' age and cognitive level.

I thank sincerely all for their intellectual labor who were involved in the process of revision, writing, editing, art and design of the textbook.

Professor Narayan Chandra Saha

Chairman

National Curriculum and Textbook Board, Bangladesh

Appendix 6: NCTB Sample English Question Papers for Class 8**SET 1****Sample question for JSC English examination****Full marks: 100; Time: 3 hours****Marks for individual items are mentioned next to the test items.****A: Seen part****Read the text and answer questions 1 and 2.**

Bangladeshi cuisine is rich and varied with the use of many spices. We have delicious and appetizing food, snacks and sweets.

Boiled rice is our staple food. It is served with a variety of vegetables, curry, lentil soup, fish and meat. Fish is our main source of protein. Fishes are now cultivated in ponds. Also we have fresh-water fishes in the lakes and rivers. More than 40 types of fishes are common. Some of them are *carp*, *ru*, *katla*, *magur* (catfish), *chingri* (prawn or shrimp). *Shutki* or dried fishes are popular. *Hilsha* is very popular among the people of Bangladesh.

Panta-ilish is a traditional platter of *Panta bhat*. It is steamed rice soaked in water and served with a fried *hilsha* slice, often together with dried fish, pickles, lentil soup, green chilies and onion. It is a popular dish on the *Pohela Boishakh*.

The people of Bangladesh are very fond of sweets. Almost all Bangladeshi women prepare some traditional sweets. *Pitha*, a type of sweets made from rice flour, sugar, syrup, molasses and sometimes milk, is a traditional food loved by the entire population. During winter *Pitha Utsab*, meaning *pitha* festival, is organized by different groups of people. Sweets are distributed among close relatives when there is good news like births, weddings, promotions, etc.

Sweets of Bangladesh are mostly milk-based. The common ones are *roshgolla*, *sandesh*, *rasamalai*, *gulap jamun* and *cham-cham*. There are hundreds of different varieties of sweet preparations. Sweets are therefore an important part of the day-to-day life of Bangladeshi people.

1. Choose the correct answer to each question from the alternatives given and write the corresponding number of the answers in your answer script. 1x7=7

- i) The word 'cuisine' in line 1 of the text means
 - a) a style of cooking; b) a special kind of food;
 - c) cooking spicy dishes; d) a combination of different dishes
- ii) The words 'appetizing food' in line 1 of the text mean
 - a) expensive food; b) food that makes you feel hungry
 - c) food that is cooked with spices; d) food that has good nutritional value
- iii) The word 'platter' in line 8 of the text means
 - a) a large plate to serve food; b) a meal served on a large plate
 - c) a dish with a variety of food items on it; d) all of the above
- iv) The main source of protein for Bangladeshi people is
 - a) boiled rice; b) lentil soup; c) fish; d) meat
- v) *Panta bhat* is usually served with
 - a) dried fish; b) green chili and onion; c) *hilsha*; d) all of the above
- vi) *Panta-ilish* is eaten with much festivity
 - a) throughout the year; b) to the wedding guests; c) on a special day; d) in winter
- vii) A popular food item in winter is
 - a) lentil soup; b) *pitha*; c) *panta bhat*; d) dried fish

2. Answer the following questions from your reading of the above text. 2x4 = 8

- a) Name four fresh water fishes. b) How is *panta bhat* prepared?
- c) Name four milk-based sweets. d) Where are most of the fish cultivated?

3. Read the following text and fill in the gaps with appropriate words to make it a meaningful one. 1x5 = 5

In a plane, oxygen and the air pressure are always being monitored. In the event of a lack of oxygen, an oxygen mask will automatically (a) _____ in front of you. Pull the mask towards you and (b) _____ it firmly over your nose and mouth. Secure the elastic band behind your head, and

breathe normally. If you are travelling with a child or someone who requires (c) _____, secure your mask on first, and then help the other person. Keep your mask on until a uniformed crew member advises you to (d) _____ it. In the event of an (e) _____ please assume the bracing position.

B: Unseen part

Read the following text and answer questions 4 and 5.

Meera is a singer with a great zeal for folk songs. She is a dancer too. She enjoys dancing with folk songs. She performs at national events and also represents our culture in different countries. Besides singing she also studies Computer Science in a university in China. Manosh and Rudro are also two promising folk singers of our time. Manosh passed the S.S.C examination in 2018 when Rudro was a student of class eight. Manosh won the Star Voice Singing competition in 2012 in the folk song category. Rudro won that award in 2015 in the same category. He performed in the Boishakhi open concert at Dhaka University campus in 2016. Both Manosh and Rudro love folk songs because it appeals to our root culture. They believe that folk music can reach the heart of our common people easily. In 2018 Manosh successfully released his first album titled ‘Mon Janala’.

4. Complete the table below. Write no more than three words and/or numbers for each answer. 1X5=5

Who? What? When/where?

Meera studies Computer Science in a university in (1) Meera (2) in foreign countries (3) was awarded Star Voice Singing competition in 2012 Rudro appeared in the Boisakhi concert at (4) in 2016 Manosh released his maiden album (5) in

5. Read the passage again and write, whether the statements are true or false. Give correct answers, if the statement is false. 1x5=5

- a) Meera enjoys singing folk songs.
- b) Meera performs at both national and international levels.
- c) Manosh and Rudro won two different awards.
- d) The first album of Manosh was released in the same year when he passed the S.S.C. exam.
- e) The common people of our country love folk songs.

6. Read the text below and fill-in the gaps using the clues given in the boxes. There are more words than necessary. One word can be used once only. ½ X10=5

The, off, as, namely, This, finances, length, cost, country, width, Roads, touch
 The Padma Multipurpose Bridge is a mega project in the construction history of Bangladesh. This will connect three districts (a) _____, Munshiganj, Shariatpur and Madaripur. With (b) _____ connectivity 21 districts of (c) _____ south-western part of the (d) _____ will come under direct (e) _____ with the capital as well (f) _____ the whole country. It’s total (g) _____ is 6.15 kms. and (h) _____ is 18.1 meters. It will (i) _____ 3.6 billion USD. Bangladesh government (j) _____ this huge project.

7. Read the text below and fill in the gaps using suitable words. 1x5=5

The sun is the source of all energies. All the living beings (a) _____ sunlight directly or indirectly for their (b) _____ on this earth. Sunlight (c) _____ white as we see it with our naked eyes but the actual (d) _____ of sunlight is green. Now, we are going to explain why sunlight looks white (e) _____ it is originally green.

8. Match the part of sentences from columns A and B to make five complete sentences. 1x5=5

| Column A | Column B |
|---|--|
| a. One day a fisherman | i. to see the coins as the fisherman returned home |
| b. Suddenly he saw | ii. began to boast of it before all the friends |
| c. His wife was very happy | iii. a bag full of gold coins in his net |
| d. The fisherman asked his wife to keep | iv. cast his net in the river |
| e. But instead of doing so she | v. the find of gold coins a secret |

C: Grammar part**9. Read the text below and fill in the gaps with the root words in the brackets adding suitable suffix, prefix or both. $\frac{1}{2} \times 10 = 5$**

Altaf Mahmud is a musician, (a) _____ (culture) activist and a (b) _____ (free) fighter of Bangladesh. He took part in the historic Language (c) _____ (move) of 1952. He is the (d) _____ (compose) of the famous song “Amar Bhaier Rokte Rangano”. He wrote that immortal song to honour the language martyrs of 1952. The songs composed and sung by Altaf Mahmud were great source of (e) (inspire) to the people who protested against the (f) _____ (brutal) of Pakistani Government. Altaf Mahmud was very (g) (support) to those who fought for Bangladesh in the Liberation of 1971. He created a camp inside his house to provide (h) _____ (accommodate) to them. His (i) _____ (patriot) songs were then broadcast from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro. He was awarded the Ekushey Padak for his (j) _____ (contribute) to Bengali culture and the War of Liberation.

10. Fill-in the gaps in the following text with appropriate articles (a, an or the). Put a cross (x) where no article is used. $\frac{1}{2} \times 10 = 5$

Friendship is one of (a) _____ most precious gifts of life. (b) _____ person who has true friends in life is lucky enough. Friendship makes (c) _____ life thrilling. It is indeed, (d) _____ asset in life. True friendship is (e) _____ feeling of love, sharing and caring. (f) _____ true friends stand by us when we are in trouble. Lasting friendship is indeed, (g) _____ blessing. However, it is better to have friends of (h) _____ same age group and mentality. In short, friendship is (i) _____ essential condition for (j) _____ happy life.

11. Change the following sentences as directed in the brackets. $1 \times 5 = 5$

Sylhet is one of the most beautiful districts of Bangladesh. (a) In the 14th century, Saint Hazrat Shah Jalal conquered Sylhet. (Make it a passive sentence.) (b) It was declared as a division by the government in 1995. (Make it an active sentence.) (c) The vast green tea gardens attract many tourists. (Make it an interrogative sentence.) (d) The climate of this place is very fine. (Make it an exclamatory sentence.) Sylhet produces a lot of quality pineapple. (e) Sylvi, a local girl, likes pineapple. (Make it a negative sentence.)

12. Rewrite the following passage changing the form of speech: 5

“It’s so unusual! It’s a cold night, but I feel warm now,” the Prince said. “It happens when I do something good to help someone,” he added. The Queen smiled to look at his son and said “Good night” “Good night” The Prince also smiled and said to his mom.

13. Use capital letters and punctuation marks as needed in the following passage. $\frac{1}{2} \times 10 = 5$

one day Neela went to see bela her elder sister bela she found her very depressed there Neela asked what happens darling

D: Writing part**14. Suppose you are Rabid and you are in a restaurant with your sister. Make a dialogue between you and the waiter before ordering your meal. 10**

15. A social organisation in your locality is hiring some volunteers for a fund-raising event. Write an email to the coordinator of that organisation to be a volunteer for the event. The email can be sent to abcd123@charity.org.bd. In your email, you should 10

- write a subject line
- use proper salutation/greetings
- give a brief introduction of you
- express your interest for the role of a volunteer
- mention why you are interested to work as a volunteer
- write a closing remark, your name, and contact address

16. Write a paragraph in 150 words on the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear families. 10

Your writing should address the following questions: 10

- What is a nuclear family?
- What are the advantages of a nuclear family?
- What are the disadvantages of a nuclear family?
- What kind of family do you prefer and why?

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SET 2**Sample question for JSC examination****Full marks: 100; Time: 3 hours****Marks for individual items are mentioned next to the test items.****A: Seen part****Read the text and answer questions 1 and 2.**

Good afternoon passengers. This is your captain Rashid Akbar speaking. First I'd like to welcome everyone on Flight BG 88. We are currently cruising at an altitude of 10058.40 feet at airspeed of 643.7376 km per hour. The time is 1:25 pm. The weather looks good and with the tailwind on our side we are expecting to land in Bangkok approximately fifteen minutes ahead of schedule.

The weather in Bangkok is clear and sunny. The temperature is 32 degrees Celsius for this afternoon. If the weather is good, we should get a great view of the city as we descend. The cabin crew will be coming around in about twenty minute's time to offer you a light snack and drinks. The inflight movie will begin shortly after that. I'll talk to you again before we reach our destination. Until then, sit back, and enjoy the flight.

1. Now choose the correct answer to each question from the alternatives given and write the corresponding number of the answers in your answer script. 1x7=7

- i) What is the job of Rashid Akbar?
 - a) Cabin Crew; b) Announcer; c) Pilot; d) An army officer
- ii) The word cruise means
 - a) moving ahead; b) moving fast; c) travelling at a steady speed; d) None of the above
- iii) The word "tailwind" means
 - a) wind blowing from behind a moving vehicle; b) wind coming from front
 - c) the wind that blows around the tail; d) the wind that propels the tail
- iv) What is the objective of the announcer?
 - a) to call everyone's attention; b) to warn the passengers;
 - c) to begin a communication; d) to give necessary information
- v) When can the passengers get the view of the city?
 - a) within fifteen minutes; b) as the flight comes down
 - c) all through the flight in the sky; d) immediately after the announcement
- vi) Passengers will be treated with some light refreshment within
 - a) 15 minutes; b) 20 minutes; c) 25 minutes; d) 32 minutes
- vii) Where is the temperature 32 degree Celsius?
 - a) inside the plane; b) outside the plane; c) Bangkok; d) In departure city

2. Answer the following questions from your reading of the text above. 2x 4 = 8

- a) Where is the flight now?
- b) What destination is the flight bound for?
- c) When will the in-flight movie begin?
- d) Why did the announcer describe the weather?

3. Read the following text and fill in the gaps with contextually appropriate words 1X5=5

River gypsies are an ethnic group of people in Bangladesh. They are known as *beday* to (a) _____ people. The (b) _____ have their own lifestyle and (c) They live in groups and do not (d) _____ any land. Therefore, they live a nomadic life, (e) _____ from one place to another.

B: Unseen part**Read the following text and answer questions 4 and 5.**

The current world population roughly calculated by the United Nations is 7.5 billion as of September 2017. Six of the seven continents of the Earth are permanently resided on a large scale. Asia is the most populous continent, with its 4.54 billion inhabitants accounting for 60% of the world population. China and India are world's most populated countries. They together have about 37% of the world's population. Africa is the second most populated continent, with around 1.28 billion people and it is

16% of the world's population. The population of Europe is 742 million which is 10% of the world's population as of 2018, while 651 million live in the Latin America and Caribbean regions and it is 9% of the world's population. Northern America primarily consisting of the United States and Canada has a population of around 363 million which is 5% and Oceania is the least-populated region with about 41 million inhabitants which is 0.5% of world population although it is not permanently resided by any fixed population. Antarctica has also a small and varied international population based mainly in polar science station.

4. Complete the grid below with appropriate information. 1X5=5

Continent/ Country Population % of world population

- Asia 4.5 billion i).....
- Africa ii)..... 16%
- iii) 742 million 10%
- U.S.A and Canada iv)..... 5%
- Oceania 41 million v).....

5. Read the passage again and write, whether the statements are true or false. Give correct answers, if the statement is false. 1x5=5

- a) Asia has the largest population among all the seven continents.
- b) Africa is in the third position in case of the number of population.
- c) The number of population in Europe is the same as in Asia.
- d) The United States and Canada are the North American countries.
- e) In Oceania and Antarctica, the number of population rises and falls.

6. Read the text below and fill in the gaps using clues from the boxes. There are more words than necessary. ½ X10=5

connectivity remains cannot without among
Pandora for education strange made dimension

Mobile phone is a wonderful invention of modern science. It has added a new (a) _____ to our everyday life. People (b) _____ think of a single moment (c) _____ a mobile phone. It has (d) _____ life easier by increasing our (e) _____. No doubt the world now (f) _____ in our pocket through this (g) _____ device. It is really a (h) _____ box which can be used (i) _____ different purposes like entertainment to (j) _____.

7. Read the text below and fill in the gaps with words that are appropriate. 1X5=5

The world is changing every day. People are constantly moving to different (a) _____ for different reasons. So people need (b) _____ journey. People also need speed. Wheels (c) _____ made it possible. This is why, (d) _____ of wheels is so important to (e) _____.

8. Match the part of sentences from columns A and B to make five complete sentences. Column B has one more options than required. 1x5=5

| Column A | Column B |
|---|--|
| a. Once upon a time there was a king | i. went everywhere on foot. |
| b. He was extremely | ii. to invent some kind of seat that could move by itself. |
| c. Being afraid of riding horse he | iii. who was known as Prudence. |
| d. Naturally, his soldiers and ministers | iv. cautious and very nervous as well. |
| e. At last, they went to a magician and requested him | v. had to walk on foot too. |
| | vi. To go home. |

C: Grammar part**9. Read the text below and fill in the gaps with the root words in the brackets adding suitable suffix, prefix or both. ½ x10=5**

Visa, the global payment solutions (a) _____ (provide) will introduce (b) _____ (contact) cards in Bangladesh this year. These cards do not have (c) _____ (paid) system and allow customers to make (d) _____ (pay) simply by waving the card near the point of sales machine. It needs no (e) _____ (insert) of the card into the machine. The cards provide customers with improved and (f) _____ (speed) transaction. It will be (g) _____ (fast) and offer increased protection from card fraud than (h) _____ (tradition) cards. Such payment solution will add (i) _____ (secure) to card service (j) _____ (significant).

10. Fill in the gaps of the following text with appropriate articles (a, an or the). Put a cross (x) for zero article. ½ x10=5

(a) _____ violent storm hit Netrokona district last week. The storm blew at (b) _____ speed of 150 km per hour. It hit 12 villages and demolished almost all (c) _____ houses of those villages. It caused (d) _____ severe damage. All (e) _____ the electric poles were blew up and as a result there was a power-cut. People had to remain in darkness for over (f) _____ week. It was (g) _____ unbearable situation for them. (h) _____ poor suffered (i) _____ lot. It was really (j) _____ terrible storm.

11. Change the following sentences as directed in the brackets. 1x5=5

(a) Dhaka was founded by the Mughals in the 17th century. (Make it an active sentence). (b) The Mughals governed the region during the early modern period. (Make it an interrogative sentence). (c) The Mughals constructed many buildings here. (Make it a passive sentence). (d) Ahsan Manjil is one of the attractive buildings. (Make it an exclamatory sentence). (e) Nila is yet to visit Dhaka (Make it a negative sentence in terms of sentence construction).

12. Rewrite the following passage changing the form of speech: 5

Sakina said to Himel, "How are you? I went to your house yesterday but you were not there." "I went to a shop," said Himel, "I had to buy some dresses for my sister."

13. Use capital letters and punctuation marks as needed in the following passage. .5X10=5

daniel defoe the writer of robinson crusoe was born in london in 1660 defoe started to write when he was a young man the idea for writing the great story came from the story of alexander selkirk when he was at the age of 59

D: Writing part**14. Suppose you are Samiya and chatting with your cousin, Subarno. Make a dialogue with him/her about folk songs. 10**

15. You have invited some of your friends to a get together at your place. Unfortunately, you are unable to hold the event as you have fallen sick. Write an email to one of your invited friends telling that the event is postponed now. You may send the email to abcd123@gmail.com. In your email, you should 10

- write a subject line
- use proper salutation/greetings
- tell that the event is postponed
- give reasons for the postponement
- regret for the unfortunate situation
- write a closing remark
- write a closing remark, your name, and contact address

16. Write a paragraph in 150 words on your favourite movie/TV programme. You have to write what the movie/programme is about, why you like it, and what your learning is from this movie/programme.