Researching on Washback with LRN ESOL Exams: investigating teachers’ perspectives and practices and their contribution to LRN ESOL Candidates’ performances

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Abstract
This study attempts to investigate the washback effects on ESOL classes in which students are prepared for the LRN ESOL exams around the world. Washback effect refers to the impact of testing on curriculum design, teaching practices, and learning behaviours. This study attempts to investigate the influences of LRN testing in the choices of learners and teachers.

More specifically, a multi-dimensional questionnaire and interviews will be carried out with teachers preparing students for LRN Exams around the world. The questionnaire and the interviews will focus on recording teachers’ perspectives with regard to the priorities of the ESOL classroom, the students’ needs and preferences. In parallel, they will also focus on the practices of the teachers in the ESOL exam-preparation classrooms as for the development of the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing– in relation to the LRN ESOL and IELCA exams and the exam item types they consist of.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews will be carried out and short questionnaires will be distributed to students of LRN ESOL Exams for B1, B2, C1 and C2 candidates. In this way, an attempt will be made towards identifying their needs, their preferences and their strategies of learning within the context of the LRN Exams. Moreover, this will create a framework of students’ profile and priorities which can be of help for LRN ESOL exam makers.

Through this joint study on teachers and students, a clearer understanding will be achieved in relation to the washback effects of LRN Testing system on language development context of students around the world.