

## **Impact of a Public Examination Change on Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes towards Their Classroom Teaching Practices**

**Dr. Abdulhamid Elmurabet Onaiba**

*Department of English, Faculty of Education, Misurata University, Misurata, Libya*

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**Abstract:** *The effect of language tests on teaching and learning is described in language education as "washback". Highstakes public examinations, thus, are often used as tools of control in the school system. Recently, the Libyan Education Authority adopted major changes into the existing Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in English aiming to promote a positive washback effect on classroom teaching. This paper investigates the kind of relationship between testing and teaching according to teachers' beliefs and perceptions of the introduced exam. To address these issues, the mixed method approach was utilized: questionnaires were distributed to 100 teachers and interviews were conducted with the examination board director and 11 teachers from the same sample surveyed. The study found that teachers expressed negative rather than positive views towards the exam. Teachers criticized the exam especially in terms of practicality and content validity as most teachers declared that congruence between the new exam and the curriculum is tenuous. However, teachers welcomed the policy regarding exam format and style. While some desired aims were achieved through the exam, others were not. Findings showed that the exam did exert washback effect in that teachers experienced and/or implemented changes in their classroom instructional practices. Thus findings indicated that exams did exert washback on teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards their classroom teaching. However, particularly in this study, data was self-reported via questionnaires and interviews, classroom observations would have provided more tangible evidence on teachers' actual classroom teaching practices as a result of exam change.*

**Keywords:** *BECE, classroom practices, exam, teachers' attitudes, teachers' perception, washback*

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### **I. Introduction**

Researchers are becoming progressively more aware of the assumption that an inevitable initial step causing the washback effect is that the nature of a test might first influence teachers' feelings, attitudes and perceptions—evaluative reactions. These feelings and attitudes, being likely as a response to learners' expectations, might in turn affect how teachers carry out their work (Hughes, 1993 cited in Bailey, 1999). Moreover, the literature has indicated that examinations, especially those newly-introduced or revised, influence stakeholders, especially teachers' attitudes and feelings towards their instructional behaviour in the sense that they "increase teachers' stress and lower their morale" (Abu-Alhija, 2007: 57), or, in contrast, motivate teachers to work harder and adopt innovative methods and techniques "more in line with communicative and, to some extent, humanistic teaching" (Prodromou, 1995:15). Cheng (2005) and Tsagari (2009b) noted in their studies that teachers were anxious and felt stressed by trying hard to cover all the materials on the syllabus, especially when the date of the exam drew closer.

Shohamy (1993) and Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt and Ferman (1996) found that teachers still had negative feelings towards the Arabic test (ASL), complaining that the test was of no importance. These teachers, in contrast, approved of the EFL oral test: they viewed the test as important since it encourages students to improve their English oral skills. However, this exam is said to "create an atmosphere of high anxiety and fear of test results among teachers and students" (Shohamy *et al.*, 1996: 309-10).

Thus, teachers are affected by the expectations of other stakeholders. Particularly, they are pressured, for instance, by school administrators, students and their parents (*systemic stressors* in Gregory and Burg, 2006) to direct their methodologies (Wall, 2000). Consequently, this may present teachers with a dilemma leading to what Spratt (2005: 24) calls "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. Thus the dictates of high-stakes tests may reduce the professional knowledge and status of teachers and exercise a great deal of pressure on them to improve test scores, which eventually makes teachers experience negative feelings of shame, embarrassment, guilt, anxiety and anger (Madaus, 1988; Smith, 1991a; Gipps, 2011).

Despite their deleterious effects, however, pressure on teachers and their anxiety associated with the introduction of high-stakes tests can also have positive effects on the educational process. It may make teachers more accountable. Conclusions drawn from the studies of Shohamy *et al.* (1996), Andrews *et al.* (2002) and

Ferman (2004) demonstrated that teachers focused on the oral skills of the language, as these were tested in the introduced exams, encouraging teachers to spend more time on more meaningful learning tasks. In a similar vein, Wall's (2005) observations and interviews with teachers revealed that they had mixed but mainly positive reactions towards the exam. Further, Amengual-Pizarro (2009) reported that the majority of teachers in her study seemed to have positive attitudes towards the introduced test. She concluded that, according to teachers, the test "was thought to be useful and necessary" as well as "reliable" (592).

Teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards the exam are deemed important in mediating the impact of testing washback. These perceptions and beliefs can play a major role in promoting or impeding washback, and affect whether and how teachers plan and implement their classroom teaching and the content of lessons. As expressed by Chapman and Snyder (2000: 462): "it is not the examination itself that influences teachers' behavior, but teachers' beliefs about changes". Language teachers' beliefs, thus, could be a trigger for their reactions to examination change, and hence, filter the way they perceive their teaching and influence their practice (Mark, 2011).

## **II. Context Of The Study**

The testing context for this study is the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in English. The BECE is a high-stakes public examination administered to grade nine students of the basic education stage as a school-leaving exam. It is mandated as a gate-keeping exam across Libyan basic education schools to select students at the end of their basic education for entering secondary schools. The BECE is taken, therefore, as a screening norm-referenced test. The results obtained in the BECE are consequently of critical importance in students' lives since the scores are decisive in determining the choice of their future education. The study was conducted in public schools in Misurata, Libya.

According to the ministry of education in Libya, the purposes and aims of the new administered exam are:

- to facilitate the way in which candidates answer the exam questions;
- to cover, comprehensively and equally, all the components and contents of the curriculum [as previously there has been a mismatch between exam content and curriculum content, as reported above;
- to provide students with a gauge of their language learning achievement as far as the material of the prescribed syllabus is concerned;
- to minimize the risk of cheating;
- to score the answer sheets mechanically, and hence to disseminate the results quickly, adequately and as transparently as possible.

## **III. Purpose**

The main goal of this study is to examine the washback effects associated with the BECE on teachers' attitudes and perceptions in relation to their classroom instructional practices. This includes the method of teaching, teaching materials and curriculum. It is important to mention here that some parts of this work is originally based on some data gathered during the current researcher's PhD thesis submitted to the university of Leicester, UK in 2013.

## **IV. Methodology**

### **4.1 Participants**

One hundred and forty Grade 9 teachers in 162 schools were the target population of the study; 100 teachers completed and returned questionnaires in full. This has given the research results relatively the advantage of generalizability. Eleven teachers were interviewed from the questionnaire respondents. Also the examination board director in the context of the study was interviewed to shed more light on some issues related exam change.

### **4.2 Materials**

For the purpose of the study, a mixed methods approach of research design was utilized. Data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews elicited from 100 teachers – data triangulation between methods. The questionnaire items were closed-ended (see appendix 1) intended to elicit the teachers' views and attitudes of the BECE and its influence on their classroom teaching. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires. Content analysis was deployed to interpret the qualitative data elicited from the interviews' questions (see appendix 2).

## V. Results And Analysis

It was hypothesized that teachers' perceptions of the exam would impact their reaction as far as their teaching practices are concerned. Therefore, in this study three sub-themes relating to teachers' perceptions are categorized, namely: a) perceptions of the reasons behind implementing the new exam; b) attitudes towards the new exam and its quality; and c) perceptions of the new exam in relation to their classroom practices.

### 5.1 Teachers' perceptions of the reasons behind implementing the new exam

Question 11 was devised on the bases of the aims of introducing the new exam (BECE) as outlined above. It asked teachers about the major reasons they perceived for the change. Table 5.1 shows the results, giving the mean scores on a Likert scale of agreement.

It can be seen that teachers, on average, disagreed that the revised exam was implemented 'to provide students with a gauge of their language learning achievement regarding the English curriculum' or 'to motivate students to use integrated skills' or 'to cover all the components of the curriculum' and/or 'to prepare students for future education'. However, they generally perceived the purpose of the test as 'to score the answer sheets mechanically', 'to eliminate the risk of cheating' and 'to disseminate the results quickly, adequately and as transparently as possible' as the main reasons behind implementing the new exam.

Table 5-1 Teachers' perceptions of the reasons for implementing the new exam.

Variables	1 str. Disagree	2 disagree	3 Undecided	4 agree	5 str. Agree	Mean	SD	Rank
To score answer sheets mechanically	-	-	-	53%	47%	4.47	.501	1
To eliminate the risk of cheating	-	-	-	55%	45%	4.45	.500	2
To disseminate the results quickly and transparently	-	-	-	73%	27%	4.27	.446	3
To prepare students for their future education	-	66%	5%	28%	1%	2.64	.926	4
To cover all the components and content of curriculum	32%	47%	-	20%	1%	2.11	1.10	5
To motivate student to use	33%	67%	-	-	-	1.67	.472	6
To provide students with a gauge of their achievement regarding the curriculum	61%	38%	-	1%	-	1.41	.552	7

The above finding was reflected by those elicited from interviews conducted with teachers. For example, one teacher said "one of the advantages of this exam is that it considerably reduced the risk of cheating. Also, the exam papers are marked mechanically, helping disseminate the results quickly and transparently" (T2, Abdullah). Furthermore, most of the interviewees stated that the exam did not motivate students to use integrated language skills which indicates that this kind of activity is ignored in the new exam. One teacher said: "one disadvantage of the new exam is that it does not consider students' future education, say, when they pursue their postgraduate studies, especially in an English speaking environment. . Also, it discourages the use of integrated skills in class and not all the syllabus is covered" (T8, Alghoul). Additionally, some interviewed teachers perceived 'economic and financial purposes' (i.e. to reduce cost) as other reasons behind implementing the exam which were not announced by the exam policy makers.

Thus, based on teachers' anecdotes it is to suggest that the new exam policy, further to its purpose as a disciplinary tool, serves economic purposes, to switch to multiple-choice tests and eliminate essay tests to cut costs. Interestingly, this was supported by the examination board director when he was opined about the claim that the new exam has been imposed to drive down costs. He agreed, stating: "yes, it placed less financial burden on the budget of the authority of education as all work is being done now by computers, recruiting far less people compared with the old exam policy" (EBD). This particular finding supports the claim that high-stakes standardized tests can be manipulated to hold down testing costs, to save time and money, albeit their troubling consequences.

The above findings revealed, to some extent, that there is a discrepancy between what teachers perceived to be the reasons and intentions behind the imposition of the exam, and the intended washback of the exam as envisaged by its constructors. This indicates that teachers are likely to react to the exam according to their educational beliefs, not according to exam constructors' beliefs and intentions, which raises the possibility of unintended consequences from the exam.

Question 12 was designed to explore the extent to which teachers perceived the change(s) and to elicit their opinions of the new exam. It can be seen below from Table 5.2 that the overwhelming majority of teachers regarded 'more emphasis on reading texts stated in students' textbooks' and 'more emphasis on grammatical usage' as two main issues characterizing the new exam, whereas all teachers agreed that the new exam was neither more closely related to the principles of the English curriculum nor more focused on essay writing. This finding indicates that teachers knew what the changes were in the new exam though none of the teachers

(according to teachers' responses to TQ9) had been involved in workshops relating to the exam. This result was confirmed by the informants during the interviews.

**Table 5-2 Teachers' awareness of key differences between new and old exams**

Variables	1 str. Disagree	2 disagree	3 Undecided	4 agree	5 str. Agree	Mean	SD	Rank
More emphasis on reading texts stated in the textbooks	-	2%	-	62%	36%	4.32	.58396	1
More emphasis on grammatical usage	-	4%	4%	92%	-	3.88	.43298	2
More related to the principles of the current curriculum	55%	45%	-	-	-	1.45	.50000	3
More emphasis on essay	64%	36%	-	-	-	1.36	.48242	4

### 5.2 Teachers' Attitudes towards the New Exam and Its Quality

In addition to TQ12, TQ13 asked teachers about their views towards the new exam's format and quality. As shown in Table 5.3, all teachers have similar negative attitudes about the exam. The vast majority of teachers opined the exam as not 'a good tool to gauge students' performance' and 'inappropriate'. All teachers regarded the exam as not a good indicator of a student's ability in using language in real life situations. However, for the fourth value, ranked 1, a high proportion of teachers (59% agreed and 37% strongly agreed) considered the exam as to some extent appropriate if it included testing other aspects such as: listening and speaking, and also testing reading and writing properly. This indicates that the exam is not comprehensive, which later was verified during the interviews. These results may be linked to teachers' responses to TQ15, where all teachers agreed that it is better to assess students in all four language skills and their components (this is elaborated in Table 5.5 below).

**Table 5-3 Teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards the new exam.**

Variables	1 str. Disagree	2 disagree	3 Undecided	4 agree	5 str. agree	Mean	SD	Rank
To some extent appropriate but it needs to include other aspects such as: listening and speaking, and testing reading and writing properly	-	1%	3%	59%	37%	4.32	.58396	1
Not appropriate at all	8%	61%	26%	5%	-	2.28	.68283	2
A good tool to gauge students' performance	3%	89%	2%	6%	-	2.11	.52982	3
A good tool indicator of students' ability in using language in real life situation	71%	29%	-	-	-	1.29	.45605	4

Similar results were obtained from interviews. This finding suggests that teachers' perceptions of the changes in the revised exam are, to a large extent, incompatible with the intended washback envisaged by exam constructors, especially with regard to aspects that relate directly to language learning and teaching.

During the interviews, teachers also claimed that it is easier to work under the conditions of the new exam, enabling their students do well in it. Transcripts showed that students can do well in the new exam without the need to study as hard if they have practiced the way of answering the questions. This indicates that the exam's face validity is quite high, as the possibility of the participants making haphazard responses was reduced by providing both an example and instructions which were translated into Arabic; besides, adequate time was given to students to complete the test. One teacher said: "the method and style of the exam is good and useful for students. It makes students answer the exam easily without a need to compose answers, they instead choose one appropriate answer, and that is it (T5, Almadani). Another teacher stated "I and many other teachers find teaching English under the conditions of the new exam easier than before. But this does not mean that the exam is a good language test" (T7, Badi).

Despite the above positive views, notwithstanding, most teachers criticized the exam in terms of practicality and content validity. In the first instance, informants indicated that the exam lacks practicality as some teachers mentioned that last year exam contained spelling mistakes and ambiguous items, as a consequence, students did not know what was exactly needed. The exam was also criticized in relation to students' language level, as one teacher stated:

The exam results do not reflect the students' real levels in English. That is, we find some students who succeeded the exam with a very high mark, but cannot express themselves in a real life situation or even write a very short well-structured paragraph (T8, Alghoul).

Another teacher stressed:

I believe that the exam encourages our students to memorise some information stated in the texts of the course-book prescribed. For example, the exam regularly includes questions about general information, such as dates of specific events or asking about places of some capital cities. So, if students grasp such information they would be able to pass it (T6, Asghayer).

So, admitting that exam content is usually more important than its format, teachers' views about the exam and its implementation were generally negative. These results indicate that the exam has failed to achieve some important objectives as envisaged by exam constructors; however, it succeeded in fulfilling others. Also, other unintended consequences have emerged.

Thus the results of the interviews concerning the research participants' attitudes towards the new exam confirm the findings of the responses to teacher questionnaires as shown above in Table 5.3. Particularly, teachers criticized the exam especially in terms of its content validity as most teachers declared that congruence between the new exam and the curriculum is tenuous. This indicates that the exam does not constitute a representative sample of the language skills it purports to test, and needs to be recast to cover most components and achieve the objectives of the current English curriculum. Also, the transcripts indicated that the new exam focused on rote learning skills which in turn discouraged understanding and classroom participation. However, evidence to the contrary also existed, as contradictions occurred throughout interviews. For example, whilst most teachers found the exam poor in terms of content, the same teachers welcomed the policy regarding exam format and style.

### 5.3 Teachers' perceptions of the exam concerning their classroom practices

Regarding teachers' questionnaire, this category was dealt with based on two sub-categories: any possible pressure or extra work the new exam has put on teachers in terms of their classroom instruction (TQ14); and the language areas in which they think students should be tested (TQ15). These perceptions are reported below in Tables 5.4 and 5.5.

Firstly, as shown in Table 5.4, teachers indicated that 'feeling more responsible for the success or failure of students on the new exam', 'organizing focused activities that reflect exam activities' and 'familiarizing students with the content and format of the new exam' were the greatest demands on them under the conditions of the new exam. Also, most teachers (71% agreed and 1% strongly agreed) felt that the exam forced them to revise the existing teaching materials. However, the majority (92%) perceived that the exam did not encourage them to follow a new teaching syllabus, i.e. resorting to teaching resources other than the existing textbooks (see also 5.4). The findings relating to these particular issues indicate that the exam did have a direct effect on teachers' perceptions in relation to their classroom instruction.

Table 5.4 Extra work or pressure involved in teaching towards the new exam

Variables	1 str. Disagree	2 disagree	3 Undecided	4 agree	5 str. Agree	Mean	SD	Rank
Feeling more responsible for the success or the failure of your students on the test	-	1%	1%	58%	40%	4.37	.56237	1
Organizing more focused activities that reflect exam activities	-	-	-	64%	36%	4.37	.48242	2
Familiarising students with the content and format of the revised exam	-	-	-	86%	14%	4.14	.34874	3
Employing new teaching methods	-	24%	6%	69%	1%	3.47	.86987	4
Revising the existing teaching materials that you have	-	27%	1%	71%	1%	3.46	.90364	5
Doing more lesson preparation	-	41%	-	51%	8%	3.26	1.08823	6
Following a new syllabus	-	92%	4%	4%	-	2.12	.43398	7

Secondly, when teachers were asked about the language areas in which they think students should be tested (TQ15), all teachers, as depicted in Table 5.5 below, showed disapproval on the idea of assessing students in only one aspect/skill of the language. They, instead, perceived an integration of the four language skills and their components would be a better way of assessing students' language achievement in class. These aspects include: 'oral and listening skills', 'writing and spelling', 'reading and vocabulary' and 'grammar'. Teachers were given space after this question to add their own comments. However, none added anything. The findings under this category are in accordance with the results reported above in section 5.2, Table 5.3, rank 1.

**Table 5-5** Language areas in which teachers think it is better to assess students

Variables	1 str. Disagree	2 disagree	3 Undecided	4 agree	5 str. agree	Mean	SD	Rank
An integration of all aspects mentioned above	-	-	-	13%	87%	4.87	.33800	1
Only oral and listening skills	100%	-	-	-	-	1.00	1.0000	2
Only writing and spelling	100%	-	-	-	-	1.00	1.0000	2
Only reading and vocabulary	100%	-	-	-	-	1.00	1.0000	2
Only grammar	100%	-	-	-	-	1.00	1.0000	2

This finding was elaborated during the interviews. Teachers declared that the exam strategy does not represent the current English curriculum by ignoring some of its important elements. For example, one teacher declared that “the exam is not comprehensive, in that, it does not cover the whole components of the textbook prescribed. What the exam, further, needs is to include questions on writing, speaking and listening” (T5, Almadani).

## VI. Discussion

The aspects explored in this study were:

- teachers' perceptions of the reasons behind implementing the new exam;
- teachers' attitudes towards the new exam and its quality; and
- teachers' perceived classroom practices in response to the new exam.

Results showed that most teachers were aware of the change in the new BECE pattern. Teachers' understanding of the new exam paved the way for inducing washback effect from the introduced exam. This result confirms findings of other studies (e.g. Alderson and Wall, 1993; Wall, 2005; Chapman and Snyder, 2000).

Most teacher-participants, however, held negative views about the new examination policy. Their perceptions of the reasons for implementing the new examination were to some extent inconsistent with the underlying theories behind the new policy. The incompatibility between teachers' perceptions and policymakers' intentions suggested negative reactions towards the implementation. Most teachers stated that the new examination was of low quality. They criticized the exam for not redressing the balance between its content and that of the existing curriculum. Teachers, generally, stated that the new examination could not be an effective tool to assess students' integrative skills or prepare students for their future education, and nor did it cover the major components of the prescribed teaching syllabus. According to these negative views the exam was considered much more limited; and thus may be described as construct under-representative, in relation to curriculum content.

The results of the interviews in particular suggested that the new BECE showed a minimum standard level of students' competence in English and that it put more pressure on teachers although they were able to cope with it, because the success or failure of their students in the exam reflected on their performance as teachers. Some teachers, however, stated that the exam was not hard enough, stressing the fact that it did not adequately discriminate among students in general. Indeed, some interviewees suggested recasting the exam to include the oral and aural aspects of language as well as writing skills. Should these suggestions be seriously taken by policy makers, this would have an important implication that washback from public examinations play an integral part in examination reform.

Conversely, some teachers welcomed the new policy in terms of the exam pattern, as automation ensured that the exam papers were marked accurately and the results disseminated quickly and transparently. The exam policy also helped to considerably reduce cheating associated with the administration of the old BECE. Interviews, furthermore, revealed that most teachers liked the exam because more students passed it and it was easier to teach to. Questionnaire responses, however, showed that the new exam placed extra demands and more pressure on some teachers, especially when the exam was imminent—the seasonality of washback (Baily, 1999; Cheng, 2005). These findings support the belief of some authors that there can be washback from examination on teachers' feelings, perceptions and attitudes, and in turn these outcomes may affect what and how teachers conduct their classroom instruction (Wall and Alderson, 1993; Shohamy *et al.*, 1996; Cheng, 2005; Spratt, 2005).

Teachers' attitudes to the new policy in this study seemed quite different from other studies. Wall (2005) and Amengual-Pizarro (2009), for instance, highlighted that teachers had mixed but positive reactions and attitudes to the introduced exams, whilst in this study, teachers also had mixed attitudes, but they were generally negative. The reasons in this case can be ascribed to stakeholders' perceptions of the quality of the test introduced. It may thus be argued that the quality of the introduced exam can have direct effects on determining the nature of washback induced by that exam. Indeed, washback can be predictable and stable; sound tests would likely induce positive washback and poor ones would probably have negative washback.

Regarding teachers' perceived classroom instruction and curriculum use, the majority of teachers perceived that introducing the new exam influenced the way they shaped their classroom practices to reflect its different demands. Although research data indicated that teachers perceived to teach to the test in order to meet its demands, this behaviour could not be further elaborated due to limitations of self-reported data via questionnaires and interviews.

## VII. Conclusion

In light of the results, attitudinal/perceptual washback is discernible. This finding goes in line with that of Cheng, Andrews and Yu (2011) discussed earlier, confirming Alderson and Wall's (1993: 120) assumption: "a test will influence attitudes to the content, methods, etc. of teaching ...". Also this may support the view that whilst tests induce negative consequences, they may have some positive effects on instruction (Gregory and Burg, 2006). High-stakes tests, thus, do exert washback effects on teachers' feelings and attitudes, ranging from positive to negative, but what is not clear is how and to what extent these effects generate effective teaching. So, research on test anxiety and its effects on teachers during their teaching are worth investigating in relation to washback. However, this study endeavours to cast light on teachers' feelings and perceptions towards the new examination, and the extent to which these perceptions have an influence on their instruction and curriculum use.

Methodologically, the findings were based on data gathered through teachers' anecdotes elicited from questionnaires and interviews, that is, perception data of the teachers on what they think, what they perceive, what they do, and how they react to exam change. This research would have benefited more from classroom data based on more regular observation visits to the same teachers participated in the same study. This will add more insights to our understanding of the phenomenon of washback.

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**Appendix 1 Teacher Questionnaire**

**Dear Teacher,**

I would like to ask you for your opinions of the English examination administered recently to grade 9 students in your schools. To help me, please fill in this questionnaire based on your own experience.

**\*Please give yourself a code reference for future contact \_\_\_\_\_**

**PART I:**

**Please tick one appropriate answer or provide written answers.**

- (1) Your gender: Female Male School name and city: \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Your age: 22 - 30 31 - 40 41 - 50 above 50
- (3) Your academic qualification: Bachelor of Arts  Bachelor of Education  
Teacher's diploma  others \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) Number of years you have been teaching English: 0 - 2 3 - 6 7 - 10 11 – 15   
above 15
- (5) Grades/Classes you are currently teaching other than Grade Nine. You may tick more than one box:   
 Grade five  Grade six  Grade seven  Grade eight
- (6) Number of periods you teach English per week: 8 – 12 14 – 18 20 – 24
- (7) The typical size of each class you teach in terms of student numbers  
 20 – 30  31 – 40  above40
- (8) The length of time between the announcement of the exam change and its first implementation was:   
 1 – 3months  4 – 8months  09 – 16months
- (9) Have you been involved in workshops relating to the revised exam? yes  no
- (10) Have you taken courses specifically in testing and evaluation? yes no

**PART II:**

**In the brackets [ ], please mark the following on a five point scale as: [1]**

**Strongly disagree [2] Disagree [3] Undecided [4] Agree [5] Strongly Agree**

(11) What do you see as the major reasons for the education authority to change the old English exam by administering a new revised one?

- [ ] To prepare students for their future education
- [ ] To motivate students to use integrated skills
- [ ] To cover all the components and contents of the English curriculum
- [ ] To eliminate the risk of cheating
- [ ] To score the answer sheets mechanically
- [ ] To disseminate the results quickly, adequately and as transparently as possible
- [ ] To provide students with a gauge of their language learning achievement regarding the English curriculum
- [ ] If you think there are other reasons, please add them here:  
\_\_\_\_\_

(12) What are the key changes that you have perceived in the revised exam paper with comparison to the previous exam?

- [ ] More related to the principles of the current English curriculum
- [ ] More emphasis on reading passages stated in the textbooks
- [ ] More emphasis on grammatical usage
- [ ] More emphasis on essay writing
- [ ] Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

(13) According to your own beliefs, the new revised exam is

- [ ] A good tool to gauge students' performance in classrooms
- [ ] A good indicator of students ability in using language in real life situation
- [ ] Not appropriate at all.
- [ ] Appropriate but it needs to include other aspects such as: listening and speaking, and also testing reading and writing properly.
- [ ] Other opinions: \_\_\_\_\_

(14) What kind of extra work or pressure if any do you think the revised exam has put on you in your teaching?

- [ ] Following a new syllabus
- [ ] Doing more lesson preparation
- [ ] Feeling more responsible for the success or failure of your students on the test
- [ ] Revising the existing teaching materials that you have
- [ ] Familiarizing students with the content and format of the revised exam
- [ ] Employing new teaching methods

Organizing more focused activities that reflect exam activities

(15) According to your educational beliefs, it is better to assess students in the following area(s) of language:

- Only oral and listening skills  
 Only writing and spelling  
 Only reading and vocabulary  
 Only grammar  
 An integration of all aspects mentioned above

**Thank you very much for your help!**

#### **Appendix 2 Teachers' Interview Questions**

1. What do you think of the current English exam? What do you think are the positive and negative aspects of this exam? How, if at all, it could be improved?
2. To what extent is the new exam different from or similar to the previous one?
3. What language area do you think most important for students to learn? Why?
4. What other constructs do you think should be tested in the exam? Why?
5. Do you think that students can do well in the exam without taking coaching lesson or studying too much for it?
6. Regarding classroom instructional time, how often do you talk in class? Please give a percentage. In this regard, could you estimate how much time do you usually spend on practicing exam-related activities in class?
7. Have you observed any changes in your students' behaviour since the implementation of the revised exam such as asking exam-related questions?
8. Have you observed any changes in your own instructional behaviour as a teacher since the implementation of the revised exam?
9. Do you train your students on the tasks of the exam? (if yes) How?
10. Have you observed any (other) changes in your classroom, which you feel, were a result of exam change? (if so) could you please describe and explain them?
11. Has the implementation of the new exam led to your using any different teaching methods? (if yes) How are they different? Did you notice this with lower-level grades? Why did you think this change happened? Or (if no) why do you think your teaching methods did not change?
12. Has the implementation of the new exam led to your using any different teaching materials? (if yes) How are they different? Why did you think this change happened? Did you notice this with lower-level grades? Or (if no) why do you think you did not resort to any teaching materials other than the existing one in your classroom teaching?
13. (if yes to any of questions 7 – 12 above) Think back on the answers you have just given, do you think these changes are the direct result of the implementation of the revised exam
14. Would you like to add anything concerning the influence of the revised exam on EFL teaching and learning in Libyan schools?

***Thank you very much for your time!***