



**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**WASHBACK EFFECT OF *BECE* AND *WASSCE* ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE TESTS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING OF  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN GHANA**



**MAY, 2017**



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**A Thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of  
Foreign Languages Education and Communication, submitted to  
the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of the Doctor of  
Philosophy (Applied Linguistics) degree**

**MAY, 2017**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Sefa Owusu, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Prof. Thomas Essilfie (Principal Supervisor)

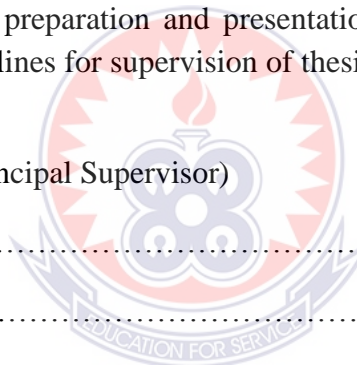
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Dr Kingsley Andoh-Kumi (Co-Supervisor)

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## **DEDICATION**

In memory of my Dad, the late Emmanuel Owusu



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## DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

**ASL:** Arabic as a Second Language

**BECE:** Basic Education Certificate Examination

**Communicative Competence:** Language user's internalised grammatical knowledge as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately

**Communicative Language Teaching:** Helping second/foreign language learners to produce authentic language and to communicate with others

**Communicative Language Testing:** A test of second/foreign language learners' language performance in real life situations.

**CRDD:** Curriculum Research and Development Division

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**GBCE:** General Business Certificate Examination

**GEPT:** General English Proficiency Test

**High-Stakes Test:** A test whose results are used to make important decisions about students or stakeholders in education

**HKCEE:** Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination in English

**IELTS:** International English Language Testing System

**Integrated Approach/Teaching:** focusing on the four main language skills - *reading, writing, speaking and listening* through a *Communicative Language Teaching* methodology

**JHS:** Junior High School

**MoE:** Ministry of Education

**NALAP:** National Literacy Acceleration Programme

**Segregated-Skills Approach/Teaching:** Helping second/foreign language learners to master discrete language skills

**SHS:** Senior High School

**SPSS:** Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

**SSSCE:** Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination

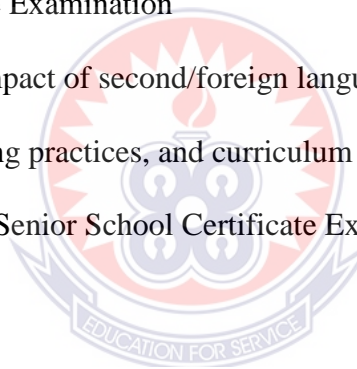
**TESL:** Teaching English as a Second Language

**TOEFL:** Test of English as a Foreign Language

**UEE:** University Entrance Examination

**Washback Effect:** The impact of second/foreign language testing on learning behaviours, teaching practices, and curriculum design

**WASSCE:** West African Senior School Certificate Examination



## ABSTRACT

The term, *washback* or *backwash* is used in Applied Linguistics to refer to the influence high-stakes tests have on teaching and learning of second/foreign language. The *Basic Education Certificate Examination* (BECE) and the *West African Senior School Certificate Examination* (WASSCE) English language tests administered by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) are high-stakes tests which have very important consequences for the junior and senior high school leavers respectively. The English language syllabus for both junior high school and senior high school levels has *listening*, *reading*, *writing*, and *speaking* components. Unfortunately, the BECE and WASSCE English language tests do not assess students on all the language skills. Although the WASSCE English language test has *oral English* component (which was introduced in 1999), it assesses candidates on *listening comprehension* only. Since teachers and students are likely to concentrate on what is going to be assessed, there may be negative *washback* effect on teaching and learning of English language in junior and senior high schools in Ghana. The main objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of BECE and WASSCE English language tests on teaching and learning of English language in junior and senior high schools in Ghana. *Questionnaires*, *interviews*, *classroom observation*, and *document analysis* were conducted with 374 students (from 3 junior high schools and 5 senior high schools) and 24 English language teachers (from 4 junior high schools and 8 senior high schools). Qualitative and quantitative analysis of data revealed that although both the BECE and the WASSCE had negative washback effect on students, the BECE tended to exert a greater negative washback effect on the students than the WASSCE, and that this negative washback adversely affected students' communicative competence in

speaking. This means that the BECE/WASSCE English language test did not allow the students to concentrate on activities that would help them to speak the language fluently in real life situations.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background to the study

It may be correct to say that passing a language test does not necessarily make one a fluent user of the language. The language learners may be able to *read* and *write* the language well, since formal education focuses mainly on *reading* and *writing*. The researcher became interested in knowing the impact of high-stakes language tests on teaching and learning of language between 1994 and 1999, when he was a teacher of English at *Abuakwa State College*, Kibi, in the Easter region of Ghana. He was inspired by the excellent performance of some Liberian refugees at the then *Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) Twi language* test. The *Twi language* was a core subject so all the students, including foreigners, were offered it in the school. Many of the Liberian refugees, who could hardly speak Twi, performed better at the SSSCE than many of the native speakers of the language. If these foreigners had chosen to learn the *Twi language* on their own without having the SSSCE in view, they would have certainly concentrated on activities that would help them to speak the language fluently. The teachers were given a syllabus to follow in order to prepare the students for the SSSCE *Twi language* test. In the end, the students performed well in the test, but they could hardly speak the language. Many of the native speakers, who spoke the language every day, performed poorly at the SSSCE *Twi language* test. The SSSCE (now West African Senior School Certificate Examination, WASSCE) was then the high-stakes test at the end of the three year secondary school education. Marchant, (2004) defines high-stakes tests as those tests that *carry serious consequences for students or educators*. Test

results of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) are used to determine whether students advance to a second cycle school or whether they receive a BECE certificate. The test results of the WASSCE are also used to determine whether students advance to a tertiary institution or whether they receive a WASSCE certificate.

What is there in *language tests* that sometimes make foreigners who cannot speak the language fluently perform better than fluent native speakers? It is reasonable to believe that when students are studying for high-stakes tests, they tend to concentrate more on areas that will help them to perform well at the test. They tend to ignore areas that may help them in life but do not contribute directly in helping them to perform well at the tests. There may be some language skills or areas that are not covered in BECE/WASSCE English language test. The BECE and WASSCE candidates may ignore those areas that are not covered in the tests, although those areas may help them to use language fluently. This thesis examined the washback effect of the two high-stakes English language tests in Ghana (BECE and WASSCE English language tests) on teaching and learning of English language in Ghana.

### **1.1 The WAEC English Language Test and Washback**

The English language syllabus (for both BECE and WASSCE) issued by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the Ministry of Education is designed to assist students to:

- i. develop the language skills of *listening, speaking, reading, and writing*.
- ii. generate in students the love for reading for pleasure and the development of creative potentials.

- iii. improve the communicative competence of students and give them the confidence to communicate.
- iv. enable students to communicate effectively through the speaking and writing of English.

The learning of English at both junior and senior high levels comprises Language and Literature. The Language component is an integration of both the *receptive* (listening and reading) and *productive* (speaking and writing) skills in English. Learners use the *receptive* skills (listening and reading) to receive information (for knowledge and understanding). The *productive* skills (speaking and writing), on other hand, are used to give information (for use of knowledge). *Knowledge and Understanding* refers to the ability to identify and recall which is done through listening and reading. *Use of Knowledge* implies the ability to use the language in writing and in speaking. These two profile dimensions (*Knowledge and Understanding* and *Use of Knowledge*) and the four language skills have been specified for *teaching, learning* and *testing* in the English language syllabus as shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Relationship between Profile Dimensions and Language Skills**

Profile Dimensions	Receptive Skills		Productive Skills		Total
	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing	
Knowledge and Understanding	10%	30%			40%
Use of Knowledge			30%	30%	60%
Total	10%	30%	30%	30%	100%

*Source: National syllabus for English (junior high school), (2012), page viii*



The English language syllabus for the BECE requires that 10% of *teaching*, *learning*, and *testing* should be devoted to listening skills, and 30% should be given to each of the other three language skills (reading, speaking, and writing skills). That of the WASSCE requires that 5% should be devoted to listening skills, 35% to reading skills, 30% to speaking skills, and 30% to writing skills. The last but one row, shows the marks allocated to each of the four skills. Only 5% is allocated to listening skills at the senior high school level because it is expected that students would have acquired proficiency in listening skills.

If the content or focus of the BECE or WASSCE is different from these requirements of the English language syllabus, teachers and learners can adjust their behaviour in order to meet the demands of the examination. We are yet to find out whether:

- i. The examiners or the test developers of BECE/WASSCE English language test take the objectives or the requirements of the English language syllabus into consideration.
- ii. Teachers of English and their learners have changed their teaching and learning strategies according to the demands of the BECE/WASSCE.
- iii. Teachers of English in Ghana are *teaching to the test*.
- iv. It is the BECE/WASSCE or the syllabus that determines what is taught and learned.

## **1.2 The History of English Language in Ghana**

The use and learning of English began with the introduction of formal education in Ghana. The early European merchants set up schools in their castles to educate their

mulatto children by native women. By 1529, the Portuguese had set up a school in their castle at Elmina (Antwi, 1992). The Portuguese were later ousted by the Dutch from the West African coast. The Dutch also established a school in the Elmina Castle in 1644. Similar schools were set up by the British and the Danes in the Cape Coast and the Christianborg Castles in 1694 and 1722 respectively. In all these schools, the language of the merchants was used. The British remained after the departure of the other European merchants and imposed the English language on the local people.

The activities of the merchants preceded the coming of the missionaries who continued the formal education to serve the primary purpose of evangelisation. The missionaries educated the local people so that they could read the Bible. In effect, the English language was imposed on the people as a result of trade, evangelisation, and colonialism. The training in literacy of the English language was for the purpose of training interpreters to assist the British colonists in trade. According to Antwi (1992), a few local boys such as Jacob Capitein and Anthony William Amo of Axim, Christian Protten of Christianborg, and Philip Quaque of Cape Coast were selected to continue their studies in Europe at the expense of the merchant companies. According to Sey (1973), the main objective of promoting the European languages was to train cheap manpower for the administration of the colonies.

The primary objective of the colonial administration was to train many of the indigenous people as possible to satisfy their needs, and not for the welfare of the local people. Those who became fluent in the English language were offered relatively lucrative jobs by the British. There was therefore a lot prestige attached to being fluent in the English language. Today, many Ghanaians still think that it is very important to be

fluent in English because being fluent in English brings prestige and confidence. It also makes one influential and successful. Many educated Ghanaians therefore make every endeavour to make both their written and spoken English as impeccable as possible. Many educated Ghanaians tend to feel humiliated and embarrassed when they make a grammatical mistake in their spoken English, but they may feel proud for not being able to speak their mother tongue well, once they are able to speak impeccable English. This may explain the reason why some Ghanaian parents speak English to their school-going children at home instead of their mother tongue.

It was quite impossible to adopt any of the indigenous languages as a national language (in any of the British colonies) after independence because English was seen as the language that could *de-emphasize ethnicity and build up a sense of nationhood* (Phillipson, 1996). Although we have political independence, and *Ghana, our beloved country is free for ever*, linguistically we are still under our colonial master. We are not clear whether English has been an impediment or a contributor to our development. In any case, we must accept it as an important international language of communication with the outside world. Today, English is used as one of the official or working languages in the AU, and it is used for different communicative purposes in 53 African countries (Negash, 2011). According to Wang (2006), one third of the world's population speaks English, 75% of the television programmes are produced in English, 95% of the United Nations conferences and meetings are conducted in English, and 80% of information on the Internet is presented in English

Obviously, English has a role to play in the development of Ghana. Coleman (2010) identifies four important roles played by English in today's world:

- i. for employability
- ii. for international mobility
- iii. for unlocking developmental opportunities
- iv. for accessing information.

Today, the status of English is very high even in African countries which were not British colonies. For instance, Ethiopia, the only African country to defeat a European colonial power and retain her sovereignty as an independent country, adopted English as a language of science and education in the 1940's to facilitate knowledge and technology transfer from the West (Haile-Michael(1993), Bogale(2009), Negash(2005). Although Amharic is recognized in Ethiopia as the official working language, English is still the most widely spoken foreign language, and is the medium of instruction in secondary schools. The role of English in Africa's development cannot be overemphasized. Today, English is used in entertainment and the media, for commerce and tourism, and to facilitate migration from the developing countries to the developed countries. For this reason, English language tests should be well-designed to assess students on all the relevant language skills needed for today's world.

### **1.3 The Language of Formal Education in Ghana**

Ghana is linguistically heterogeneous. Ethnologue, (2017) lists a total of 81 living languages for Ghana. There is however a diglossic situation in Ghana today, where the English language is used in formal education and for official purposes and a Ghanaian language is used at home and for ordinary conversation. The language of formal education in a linguistically heterogeneous society like Ghana is always a concern to

educational planners. According to Owu-Ewie (2006), between 1974 and September, 2002 a Ghanaian language was used as a language of instruction for the first three years of formal education. Between 2002 and 2008, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) led by President J. A. Kuffour introduced another language policy which sought to make English the only medium of instruction at all levels of education in Ghana (Ameyaw-Akumfi, 2002). The introduction of this language policy became a disincentive for the German Development Agency in Ghana (GTZ) that had been working feverishly to provide Science and Mathematics textbooks in some Ghanaian languages for primary junior secondary schools in the country. According to Prof. Ameyaw-Akumfi, the new language policy was introduced as result of difficult problems such as lack of resources, inadequate relevant textbooks in Ghanaian languages and insufficient teachers with Ghanaian language proficiency to implement the former policy.

Prof. Ameyaw-Akumfi further provided the following reasons for the *English-only language policy*:

- i. Teachers abused the previous policy of using a Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction for first three years of formal education, as many of the teachers continued with the Ghanaian language, and never used English in class after class three.
- ii. A good number of basic school leavers are unable to read and write *good* English sentences.
- iii. In cosmopolitan cities like Accra, Tema, Kumasi, and Takoradi, it becomes virtually impossible to adopt one Ghanaian language as a language of instruction, as pupils in each class speak different languages.

- iv. There is lack of materials in the Ghanaian languages.
- v. There is lack of teachers who are specifically trained to teach content subjects in the Ghanaian languages.
- vi. There is no standard written form for many of the Ghanaian languages.
- vii. English continues to be the lingua franca of Ghana, and we should make every endeavour to help school children to acquire the right level of competence in both the spoken and written forms of the language (Ameyaw-Akumfi, 2002).

In 2009, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) led by the late President J. E. A. Mills replaced the *English only* policy by the Kuffour administration with a new language policy. The new policy called for the use of a Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction in the first three years of basic education. According to Asare-Danso (2012) this new language policy is in line with the Basel Mission education policy. The Basel Mission believed that the individual's mother tongue provides the best medium to be used for one's conversion. This idea encouraged Johann Gottlieb Christaller, a Basel missionary, to translate the Bible into Akuapem Twi in 1871 to be used by the Akuapem converts at that time.

In many African countries, school children are usually instructed in the colonial master's language that they do not even speak at home and in the community. This makes the students perform poorly in their final examinations. According to Daaku (2010), many of the BECE candidates are not able to pass their exams not because they are not clever but because they cannot read the instructions and questions written in the English language. According to a report by Kay Leherr Education Development Center (2009), only 26% of pupils who reach the sixth and final year of primary school are literate in

English. It was against this background that a new programme, National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP), which sought to address the literacy crisis, was introduced nationwide in September 2009. NALAP aims at ensuring that all children from kindergarten to grade three have quality literacy materials, effective instruction, and public support to learn to read and write in their mother tongue and English. It directly supports the language policy of the Ministry of Education (MoE) between 1970 and 2001, which makes use of a Ghanaian language as medium of instruction from kindergarten to stage three.

#### **1.4 The Problem**

According to Alderson and Wall, (1999) high-stakes tests will have washback. The BECE and the WASSCE English language tests are the only pre-tertiary high-stakes tests in Ghana. Their results are used to determine whether students advance to the next level in their formal education or whether they receive a BECE/WASSCE certificate. There has been virtually no empirical research investigating the impact of the BECE/WASSCE English language test on learning behaviours and teaching practices of students and teachers respectively. Available research works in Ghana (Amua-Sekyi 2016, Oduro-Okyireh & Narh-Kwao 2014, Agbeti 2011, Ofori-Bekoe 2006, Kankam 2005) which are documented in PhD theses and articles are not related to second language assessment.

The *West African Examinations Council* has been conducting English language tests since its inception in 1952. However there have been virtually no studies about the impact of these English language tests on teaching and learning in Ghana. Since the

BECE and WASSCE English language tests are high-stakes tests, this study aimed at finding out whether or not these second language tests exerted washback effect on learners and teachers of English and exploring the nature and intensity of washback. According to Pan (2009), high-stakes tests can force second language teachers to teach what they do not find suitable or appropriate for students. On the other hand, the tests can put pressure on the teachers to skip what they find useful for the total development of the students. What this means is that the BECE and WASSCE English language tests can be used as a device to introduce innovations into the English Language curriculum. In effect, the results of this research work could have important implications for the BECE/WASSCE English language test system reform, and the roles high-stakes language tests play in shaping ESL classroom practices in Ghanaian schools.

### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the impact of BECE and WASSCE English language tests on teaching and learning of English language in junior and senior high schools in Ghana. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to examine:

- i. The influence of BECE/WASSCE English language test on the learning behaviours of students
- ii. The extent to which the BECE/WASSCE English language test is aligned with the English language curriculum
- iii. The effect of BECE/WASSCE English language test on instructional practices of teachers



- v. How the BECE/WASSCE English language test influences *what* students learn
- vi. How negative/positive washback affects students' communicative competence

## 1.6 Research Questions

The study intended to respond to the following research questions:

1. How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence the learning behaviours of students?
2. To what extent is the BECE/WASSCE English language test aligned with the English language curriculum?
3. How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence instructional practices of teachers?
4. How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence *what* students learn?
5. How does negative/positive washback affect students' communicative competence?

## 1.7 Methodology

In order to answer the above research questions, *questionnaire, structured interviews, observations of classroom teaching, and document analysis* were used to collect data on the impact of the BECE and WASSCE English language test on teaching and learning of English language in junior and senior high schools in Ghana. A total of 374 students from 5 senior high schools and 3 junior high schools were purposively sampled for the study. The schools were made up of grade *A* schools, grade *B* schools,

and grade C schools at both JHS and SHS levels. 344 of the students answered questionnaires; however 30 of them (who were available at the time) were only interviewed. The teachers were made up of 24 teachers of English from 4 junior high schools and 8 senior high schools. The data from the *interviews*, *classroom observation*, and *document analysis* were analysed qualitatively using the descriptive and contextual methods while the ones from the *questionnaires* were analysed using the 22 version of the IBM SPSS software. In addition, BECE and WASSCE English language past questions from 2014 to 2016 were analysed to find out whether their content was directly related to the content of the prescribed English language syllabus.

### **1.8 Significance of the Study**

It was hoped that the findings of the study would provide valuable information to encourage the stakeholders in Education to improve the testing system, in order to better assess the goals and objectives of the English language curriculum and thus promote second language learning in Ghana. In addition, this study may be a valuable resource for future washback studies in Ghana. It will also educate test developers, teachers of English, and researchers about the influence high-stakes tests have on teaching and learning of English language in Ghana.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

Selecting mainly students from popular schools in the Central Region schools only for the study may not give the true reflection of the general washback effect of *BECE* and *WASSCE* English language examination in Ghana. This is because some

teachers and learners in some public schools in deprived communities in the country may not be as examination-conscious as their counterparts in big towns and cities. Again, the study relied on teachers' and students' self-reported data, and the researcher cannot tell how truthful a respondent might have been, or how much thought he/she had put in.

### **1.10 Delimitations of the Study**

English is learnt at all levels of education in Ghana, but the study is limited to junior and senior high schools in the country. This is because the BECE and WASSCE are the two main pre-tertiary high-stakes examinations in Ghana. The population of the study comprised all junior and senior high schools in Ghana. However the study was conducted in 3 junior high schools and 5 senior high schools in Ghana due to time and financial constraints. The questionnaire of the study was administered in 2 *grade A* senior high schools in Cape Coast, namely *Wesley Girls' High School*, and *St. Augustine's College*, (which scored 99.60%, and 98.69%, respectively in the 2013 West African Senior School Certificate Examination). *Grade B* and *grade C* schools were represented by *Aggrey Memorial A.M.E. Zion Senior High School* and *Obrachire Senior High Technical School* respectively. They scored 65.77% and 28.10% respectively in the 2013 West African Senior School Certificate Examination. These schools represented the senior high schools in the study. The junior high schools were represented by *West End International School*, Kasoa (*grade A*), *Saint Patrick's Junior High School*, Kasoa (*grade B*), and *Saint Mary's Anglican Junior High School*, Kasoa (*grade C*).

### **1.11 Organization of the Study**

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is the introduction. It deals with the background of the problem of the study. Chapter Two discusses the related literature concerning the study. Chapter Three is devoted to the methodology used in the study. The chapter examines the data collection strategy, the instrument, and the administration of the instrument. Chapter Four discusses data analysis and presentation. Chapter Five looks at the conclusions, summary of research findings, and recommendations.

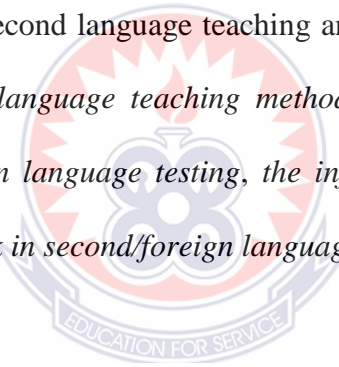


## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.0 Introduction

As shown in the previous chapter, the main aim of this study is to investigate the influence of the BECE and the WASSCE English Language tests on the teaching and learning of English Language in Ghana. This chapter discusses the related literature about the study. It critically discusses a collection of empirical washback studies carried out in different education settings (China, Hong Kong, Japan, Iran, Israel, Libya, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, UK, and USA). This is, however, preceded by the discussion of the major issues surrounding second language teaching and testing, i.e. *meaning of the term washback, second/foreign language teaching methods, characteristics of a good test, standards in second/foreign language testing, the influence of assessment on teaching and learning, and washback in second/foreign language testing.*



#### 2.1 Washback: What is it?

According to Alderson & Wall (1993), *washback* or *backwash* refers to the influence of testing on teaching and learning. Popham (1987) uses the term *measurement-driven instruction* to refer to the notion that testing influences teaching and learning. This idea that examinations tend to have some impact, directly or indirectly, on the curriculum or teaching and learning is not new in Applied Linguistics and Education (Alderson 1986, Pearson 1988, Hughes 1989, Khaniya 1990). Although the operation of testing is distinct from teaching, testing tends to have an impact on teaching and learning. According to Pearson (1988), public examinations influence the attitudes, behaviour, and motivation of

teachers, learners, and parents. What is assessed always becomes what is valued, which becomes what is taught (McEwen 1995:42). Examinations can be used as a means of promoting curriculum change, as teachers tend to ignore subject areas and activities that do not contribute directly to passing examinations. Examinations therefore have the tendency of *distorting the curriculum* (Vernon 1956), thereby bringing about negative washback. Current research on the impact of examinations on the curriculum focuses on positive washback. This is because it is hoped that proper or well-designed language tests can go a long way to improve the quality of classroom teaching and learning.

Although the washback phenomenon was acknowledged before 1993, (Alderson 1986, Pearson 1988, Hughes 1989, Khaniya 1990), not much attention was paid to identifying the nature of washback until Alderson and Wall (1993). They investigated the effect of the introduction of new tests in Sri Lanka on the teaching of English as a foreign language by secondary school teachers, and posited the following possible washback hypotheses:

- 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 content, method, etc. of teaching/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 teachers and some learners, but not for others. (1993a:120-121)*

It was not, however, the intention of Alderson & Wall to provide empirical evidence to confirm all these hypotheses. The washback hypotheses were meant to *lay the foundation* for research questions that washback studies would seek to address in future.

## **2.2 Second Language Teaching Methods and Communicative Competence**

Although the aim of teaching a second or a foreign language is to equip language learners to develop *communicative competence*, the focus and the *language teaching method* are always changed when teachers teach with the aim of preparing learners for high-stakes tests. There have been several competing methods and approaches to second language teaching over the last few decades. Some of these approaches are *Grammar-Translation Approach*, *Direct Approach*, *Reading Approach*, *Audio-lingual Method*, *Suggestopedia*, and *Total Physical Response*. However, there is no single method or approach that can meet the goals and needs of all learners. What has emerged from these developments in second language teaching is a variety of *communicative/integrated language teaching* methodologies. The *Communicative/Integrated Language Teaching* approach is based partially on the theory of systemic functional linguistics developed by

Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday. The systemic functional grammar is concerned with the social and pragmatic functions of language (Halliday, 1985).

The *Communicative Language Teaching* approach makes use of almost any activity that can engage the learner in authentic and meaningful communication. The objective is to help learners to achieve *communicative competence* as opposed to *grammatical competence*. Powers (2010) defines *communicative competence* as the ability to use language correctly and appropriately in order to accomplish specific communicative goals. Although foreign or second language learners may not be able to use the target language exactly as the native speaker, they are expected to use the language correctly and appropriately to achieve desired goals. According to Canale and Swain (1980), the second language learner is expected to achieve competence in four areas, namely *grammatical competence*, *sociolinguistic competence*, *discourse competence*, and *strategic competence*. *Communicative competence* is achieved as a result of *communicative/integrated language teaching* approach.

The proponents of *communicative/integrated language teaching* method argue that grammatical competence is not the only thing involved in learning a second language, because one can master the rules of the target language but may not be able to use the language for meaningful communication. For this reason, language techniques should be developed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, and functional use of language for meaningful communicative purposes (Brown, 2001). The teacher is expected to put his students in language situations which are as close to real life as possible, to facilitate communication in the classroom and to act like an adviser and guide to the learner. The teacher should motivate the learner to communicate in the target language by overlooking



or tolerating learner errors and returning to them later with an *accuracy-based* activity. The learner, on the other hand, is encouraged to practise the target language in *listening, speaking, reading, and writing* activities, in order to develop fluency in using the target language in spontaneous communication.

### **2.3 Characteristics of a Good Test**

Testing is defined as a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given area (Brown 1987). It is a method or process of measuring how much a person has learned. It is through testing that a learner's performance is turned into numbers. Testing of language skills of learners is a very important component of language teaching. Effective language teaching should be accompanied with effective language testing. Testing evaluates both the progress and the achievement of learners and the effectiveness of the teaching materials and methods used. According to Coughlin (2006), a good test can also be used as a valuable teaching tool, as it will aim at locating the specific and precise areas of difficulties experienced by the learner. For a test to play the desired role in the language development of the learner or the testee, the test items should be constructed properly. The examiner should make sure that test items are free from errors. Errors occur when test items are ambiguous or poorly designed. It is estimated that 90% of test items in schools in the U.S. lack face validity, and that 13% of students fail in class because of faulty test items (Wilén, 1992). According to Brown (1987) a good test should be *valid, reliable, and practical*.

### 2.3.1 Validity

The term validity refers to the degree to which a test actually measures what it is intended to measure (Brown 1987). If a test is not valid, it means that it is not linked to its intended focus. To achieve validity, the teacher must consider the objective of the course and the language skill he wants to emphasize in a particular test. Types of validity are:

- i. Face validity
- ii. Content validity
- iii. Empirical validity/Criterion-related validity
- iv. Construct validity
- v. Washback validity

**Face Validity** refers to the extent to which a test is subjectively or unscientifically viewed by stakeholders as covering the concept it purports to measure. According to Brown (1987), a test that has *face validity* appears to test what it is designed to test just on the *face* of it. This is an informal opinion as to whether or not the test is well constructed and useful. A test lacks face validity when the:

- i. font size is either too small or too large.
- ii. test items are not arranged properly.
- iii. language used in constructing the test items is full of typographical or grammatical errors.
- iv. test items or the instructions are ambiguous or not clear.

**Content Validity** addresses the match between test items and the content or the language skill the test is intended to assess. The test content must reflect the knowledge and skills required for a given language area. A test has content validity if the test items

form a fair and balanced representation of the domain of language skills being tested. The content of the test should reflect the content of the curricula in such a way that the test is *representative, relevant, and comprehensive*.

**Empirical Validity/Criterion-Related Validity** refers to the degree of effectiveness with which performance on a test predicts performance in a real-life situation. For instance, if a learner performs well in an oral test, this performance should reflect in his speaking skills, that is, his speaking skills should also be excellent. If the test scores fail to predict or estimate accurately the testee's true abilities, then the test has weak empirical validity.

**Construct Validity** explores the adequacy of a test in relation to theory (Sequera, 1995). A test that has *construct validity* should be able to measure, adequately, the concept being studied. A construct is a skill or ability that is based on an established theory. For instance, *Communicative Competence* is a construct in language learning. A test that is designed to measure *Communicative Competence* of language learners should be able to measure the four basic areas of language skills: *listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills*.

**Washback Validity** refers to the effect or impact of testing on teaching and learning. Testing should create a positive washback effect. Unfortunately, testing often results in a situation where teachers teach learners what they need to know for the test only. If a second language test creates a negative washback effect, then it does not reflect the content of the syllabus, it is not *comprehensive*, and it lacks *washback validity*. That is why it is important to find out whether or not the BECE and the WASSCE English Language tests have washback validity.

### 2.3.2 Reliability

Bachman and Palmer (1996) define *reliability* as *the consistency of measurement*, that is, the extent to which tests are repeatable and consistent. Brown (1987) also says a reliable test is a test that is consistent and dependable. If the test is given to the same people or subjects on two different occasions (other things being equal) it should produce similar results. A reliable test may not necessarily be valid; however, as Hughes (2003) puts it, if a test is not reliable it cannot be valid. Some factors can affect reliability of a test. According to Bachman (1990), test participants' personal characteristics, that is, age, gender, and factors regarding the test environment and condition of the participants can affect test reliability. No two tests, according to Wells and Wollack (2003), will consistently produce identical results (although the scores may be similar). This is true because there may be environmental variables or measurement errors such as:

- i. *examinee-specific factors* such as motivation, concentration, fatigue, boredom, momentary lapses of memory, carelessness in marking answers, and luck in guessing.
- ii. *test-specific factors* such as the specific set of questions selected for a test, ambiguous or tricky items, and poor directions.
- iii. *scoring-specific factors* such as non-uniform scoring guidelines, carelessness, and counting or computational errors.

According to Hughes (2003), a test can be made more reliable through the following technical approaches:

- i. Enough samples of behavior should be taken.

- ii. Candidates should not be allowed too much freedom on choosing test items.
- iii. Test items should be unambiguous.
- iv. Clear and explicit instructions should be provided.
- v. Tests should be well laid out and perfectly legible.
- vi. Effort should be made to ensure that candidates are familiar with the format and testing techniques.
- vii. Effort should be made to ensure scorer reliability by means of adopting items that permit scoring to be as objective as possible and that make comparisons between candidates as direct as possible.

### 2.3.3 Practicality

According to Brown (1987), a test that is practical is the one that is within the means of financial limitations, time constraints, ease of administration, and scoring and interpretation. Bachman and Palmer (1996) also define *practicality* as the relationship between the resources that will be required in the design, development, and use of a test and the resources that will be available for these activities. A good test must not only be valid and reliable, it must be practical as well. A test may be highly valid and reliable for a particular situation, but it should not require more resources than what are available to administer it. Fig 1 below (adopted from Bachman and Palmer, 1996) illustrates test practicality.

#### **Fig 1: Test Practicality**

$\Sigma = \text{practicality}$

$X = \text{available resources}$

$Y = \text{required resources}$

$$\Sigma = \frac{X}{Y}$$

$\Sigma \geq 1$  (practical)

$\Sigma < 1$  (not practical)

When we divide *available resources* (  $X$  ) by *required resources* (  $Y$  ), the result (  $\Sigma$  ) must either be equal to 1 or greater than 1 for a test to be practical. If the result (  $\Sigma$  ) is less than 1, then the test is not practical. In the words of Brown (1987), such a test is *prohibitively expensive*. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), the available resources may include:

i. ***Human resources*** (e.g. test writers, scorers or raters, test administrators, and clerical support)

ii. ***Material resources***

*Space* (e.g. rooms for test development and test administration)

*Equipment* (e.g. typewriters, word processors, tape and video recorders, computers)

*Materials* (e.g. paper, pictures, library resources)

iii. ***Time***

*Development time* (time from the beginning of the test development process to the reporting of scores from the first operational administration)

*Time for specific tasks* (e.g. designing, writing, administering, scoring, analyzing)

## 2.4 Standards in Language Testing

Tests must be standardized in order to make them more *valid*, *reliable*, and *practical*. Language teachers and examiners must aim at achieving and maintaining certain standards of language testing. Alderson, Clapham, and Wall (1995) define a standard as an agreed set of guidelines which should be consulted and (as far as possible) heeded in the construction and evaluation of a test. Standardized tests are empirically

developed with established reliability and validity. The aim of standardization is to make sure that all test takers are assessed under uniform conditions so that interpretation of their performance is comparable and not influenced by differing conditions. Standardized tests are administered in accordance with an agreed set of guidelines and specifications, so that testing conditions are the same for all test takers.

Almost all standardized tests are also high-stakes tests. A high-stakes test is a test whose results are used to make important (often life-altering) decisions in the life of learners. It may be a test whose results are needed for graduation, promotion, or progression from one level of education to another. As stated in 1.4, the BECE and WASSCE English language examinations are high-stakes tests because failing to pass these examinations will prevent a student from gaining admission into a second cycle institution or a tertiary institution in Ghana. A BECE candidate who desires to progress beyond the basic education level to any second cycle institution in Ghana should at least score grade six (credit) in English language. Similarly WASSCE candidates must also score grade C6 (credit) in English language before they can be offered admission into any tertiary institution in Ghana. The current grading system of WAEC is shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: WAEC Grading System**

Grades		Definition		Interpretation
<i>BECE</i>	<i>WASSCE</i>	<i>BECE</i>	<i>WASSCE</i>	
1	A1	Highest	Excellent	80% - 100%
2	B2	Higher	Very Good	75% - 79%
3	B3	High	Good	70% - 74%
4	C4	High Average	Credit	65% - 69%
5	C5	Average	Credit	55% - 64%
6	C6	Low Average	Credit	50% - 54%
7	D7	Low	Pass	45% - 49%
8	E8	Lower	Pass	40% - 44%
9	F9	Lowest	Fail	0% - 39%

One of the major problems with standardized tests is that teachers tend to *teach to test*. This can bring about negative washback effect which can hinder a student's overall learning potential. Since there is always some pressure on the teachers to get their students ready for the test, the teachers may neglect to teach the students some important skills that go beyond the tests. In spite of the problems with standardized testing, today's educational system still relies heavily on it due to the fact that:

- iv. It can hold teachers and schools accountable.
- v. It allows students in various schools to be compared.
- vi. It tends to be more valid and reliable.
- vii. It is objective in nature.



- viii. It can provide accurate comparisons between sub-groups.

## **2.5 The Purpose of Language Tests**

Language testing as a form of assessment can be administered to measure test-takers' knowledge or skill in a given language. The main purpose of testing is to improve learners' learning and teachers' teaching. This means both learners and teachers respond to the information tests provide. Traditionally, five types of test are recognized. Language tests are usually administered for *placement*, *diagnosis*, *achievement*, *proficiency*, or *aptitude* purposes.

### **2.5.1 Placement Tests**

Some private schools in Ghana use placement tests in subjects like Mathematics and English to check the academic skill levels of entering students. Placement tests are administered to assess the language levels of learners so that they can be placed in an appropriate class for effective teaching and learning. Placement tests are designed to determine how a learner's previous knowledge or skill fits into the course sequences of a school, so that learners can be placed in the right class.

### **2.5.2 Diagnostic Tests**

Diagnostic tests enable teachers to find out any areas of weakness or difficulty, so that they can then plan and implement an appropriate remedial teaching programme. These tests may also be used to assess the knowledge and skills of learners in particular aspects of language before the start of a course. These tests are closely related to the syllabuses of specific classes so that the teacher will be guided to give more attention to

the important language areas that have hitherto been neglected by previous teaching programmes.

### **2.5.3 Achievement Tests**

Achievement tests measure the extent to which a learner has *achieved* something, acquired certain information, or mastered certain skills based on a particular syllabus that has been followed over a period of time. Unlike the other types of tests which can be constructed by the classroom teacher, achievement tests are usually more formal and are rarely constructed by the classroom teacher. The BECE and WASSCE administered by the West African Examinations Council are examples of achievement test.

### **2.5.4 Proficiency Tests**

Language proficiency tests may be standardized tests but they are not usually based on a particular syllabus. They are used to measure achievement in relation to a specific future task that the candidate may be required to perform at a subsequent point of time. For instance, a language proficiency test in English may set out to determine whether a foreign student from a francophone country has sufficient English to follow a course of study at the University of Education, Winneba, or to do a job that requires the use of English. These tests rarely take into account any syllabus that a student may have followed. They are more concerned with future potential performance rather than past achievement. They are usually administered to learners with varied language learning backgrounds.

### 2.5.5 Aptitude Tests

Learners are expected to have some *aptitude* or natural ability for learning a foreign language. Parry and Stansfield (1990) define *aptitude for learning* as the amount of time it takes an individual to learn the task in question. An aptitude test is a test that is designed to predict how well (in relation to other learners) a learner can learn a foreign language in a given amount of time and under given conditions. It is assumed that learners have inherent strengths and weaknesses, and are naturally inclined towards success or failure in learning a language. An aptitude test does not aim at testing knowledge, that is, it is not a test that one can study for. It merely predicts a learner's possible performance in learning a particular language. Aptitude tests may have standardized methods of administration and scoring with the results quantified and compared with how other test-takers have performed at the same tests.

### 2.6 Testing Language Skills

Foreign or second language learners are expected to achieve communicative competence in all the four modes of communication: *listening*, *reading*, *writing*, and *speaking*. These four basic skills in language are all equally important, so the language teacher should make every endeavour to incorporate all of them into his teaching and assessment. According to Powers (2010), *listening* and *reading* (receptive skills) are frequently assessed through computer-scored, multiple-choice items, while *speaking* and *writing* (productive skills) are often best evaluated using constructed-response tests. There is the need for a comprehensive assessment of all the four language skills. Powers (2010) argues that failing to measure all these important aspects of proficiency may leave

critical gaps in a test taker's language proficiency profile, and that selective testing can result in greater attention paid to some language skills than others, which can result in uneven profiles of proficiency in overall communication skills of learners.

### 2.6.1 Testing Listening Skills

Listening comprehension can be considered as the first step in acquiring or learning language, as learners listen before they speak. Learners generally have greater listening comprehension than ability to produce the appropriate word (Gottlieb, 2006). Listening is the ability to receive, attend to, interpret, and respond to verbal messages. In listening comprehension tests, the students are tested on segmental sounds and supra-segmental features of the target language. In addition to the test of segmental sounds and supra-segmental features, the students listen to passages and then answer multiple-choice questions that address various levels of literal and inferential comprehension. It is important to consider the following essential elements in all listening tests:

- i. ***The listening stimuli:*** The material that is selected for the test should model the language that students might naturally be expected to hear in the classroom, in various media, or in conversations. Since listening performance is strongly influenced by motivation and memory, the passages should be interesting and relatively short.
- ii. ***The questions,*** which are always multiple-choice items, should focus on the most important aspects of the passage but not trivial details, and should measure skills from a particular domain. Correct answers should be derived from the passage, without reliance on the student's prior knowledge or experience.

*iii. The test environment* for a listening test should be free of external distractions. If stimuli are presented from a tape, the sound quality should be excellent. If stimuli are presented by a test administrator, the material should be presented clearly.

### 2.6.2 Testing Speaking Skills

Speaking skills can be considered as the most important of the four language skills, because language is meant to be spoken. It is an undeniable fact that speaking existed long before writing did, and that there are many languages around the world that have not yet been reduced to writing. In spite of the importance of the speaking skills, many language teachers overlook assessment of speaking skills of language learners. Equal importance must be attached to the assessment of each of the four language skills. According to Powers (2010), the language skills of *listening*, *reading*, *writing*, and *speaking* are distinct from one another. Although testing one language skill individually may provide indirect information about a test taker's ability to perform in the other skills, it cannot provide a comprehensive assessment of one's overall communicative ability. The learner must therefore be assessed in all the four language skills.

In testing speaking skills, different test items can be used based on the relevant purposes or target information to be tested. Luoma (2004) provides three frameworks about general purposes of testing speaking skills as *linguistically oriented*, *communication-oriented* and *situation-based*. Examiners usually use structured speaking tasks to assess learners on linguistic features such as *pronunciation*, *grammar*, and *vocabulary*. The students are expected to apply their understanding of linguistic rules in communication. The *communication-oriented* activities evaluate the learners' overall

ability to speak fluently with correct pronunciation of segments and supra-segmental features of the target language. This can be done through communication activities such as telling a narrative or expressing and defending an opinion, discussing factors that support the chosen opinion and arguing against others, and comparing and contrasting tasks. *Linguistically oriented* and *communication-oriented* task designs are usually used in assessing speaking skills in language. *Situation-based* task design is not normally used in language testing. According to Luoma (2004), the *situation-based* approach is typically used in specific-purpose testing and in vocational and professional education.

### **2.6.3 Testing Reading Skills**

As pointed out in 1.3, many of the BECE candidates (and even some WASSCE candidates) often have problems mastering Science, Mathematics, or Social Studies concepts because they are not able to read and comprehend the textbooks written in the English language (Daaku, 2010). The ability to read in English at a reasonable rate and with some comprehension is very important for success in all the educational levels in Ghana. According to Hedge (2003), reading helps learners to build their language competence, become more independent in their studies, acquire cultural knowledge, and develop confidence and motivation to carry on learning. Reading helps greatly in exposing ESL learners to English so that they can read and understand other school subjects which are taught in English. Teachers of English should therefore be equipped with the appropriate techniques of teaching and assessing reading skills of their students. Students need to be taught the strategies to read more efficiently. A test that is designed to assess the reading skills of learners may include the following:

- i. Reading for gist, main ideas, or details
- ii. Understanding inferences and implied meaning
- iii. Recognizing a writer's opinion, attitudes, and purpose
- iv. Following the development of an argument

#### **2.6.4 Testing Writing Skills**

Writing is the one of the basic skills of the language. It is generally considered as one of the most difficult skills for foreign or second language learners. Because of the fact that the writing system of natural languages is man's invention, and that it requires a well-structured way of presentation of thoughts in an organized and planned manner, even native speakers sometimes have difficulties in gaining communicative competence in writing. According to Bok (2006), the writing skill of students has been declining even among American students. Students need to have a command over handwriting and spelling to make their writing more meaningful and expressive.

The WAEC English language test assesses candidates' ability to communicate in writing on topics such as:

- i. Letter writing
- ii. Speech writing
- iii. Story writing
- iv. Description writing
- v. Debate/argument writing
- vi. Report writing

vii. Article writing

viii. Creative writing

Candidates are assessed on their ability to write a response which is appropriate in terms of *content, organization, expression, and mechanical accuracy*.

- i. **Content:** Candidates are expected to discuss the relevant ideas to the topic and the specified audience and purpose.
- ii. **Organization:** Credit is given for a suitable introduction, proper arrangements of paragraphs to form the logical sequence of the composition, and a suitable conclusion.
- iii. **Expression:** Candidates are assessed on their ability to use words and collocations which are particularly appropriate to the purpose of the writing, the audience, and the situation.
- iv. **Mechanical Accuracy:** As much as possible, the writing should be free from undeniable errors in grammatical structure, punctuation, and spelling.

## 2.7 Influence of Assessment on Teaching and Learning

Assessment always has an overwhelming influence on *what, how and how much* teachers and students teach and learn respectively. According to Havnes (2004) assessment does not influence only teaching and learning, but also textbooks and even the entire educational system. Depending on how the results are used, assessment can be considered as *formative* or *summative*. Formative assessment enables the teacher to find out whether or not his lessons have been effective, in order to determine appropriate remedial activities to help his students. Stiggins (2002) refers to this type of assessment



as *assessment for learning*. Summative assessment on the other hand, is conducted at the end of a programme. It is designed to ascertain the level of the learners' achievement at the end of the programme or course of study. Agbeti (2011) refers to summative assessment as *assessment of learning*. This type of assessment, which always takes the form of high-stakes tests, can be used to change or modify the curriculum or teaching content in a positive way, to improve teaching and learning, or a negative way, where teachers pay more attention to test content at the expense of the syllable content. The course syllabus is the primary document through which the teacher or the instructor communicates to students his course goals, expectations of students, and assessment criteria. Student learning process is always enhanced by a properly developed syllabus and a carefully designed assessment instrument. A valid test or assessment should reflect the various components of course syllabus, such as the learning outcomes, standards, content, and scope.

Syllabus design is a subsidiary component of curriculum design. According to Nunan (1988), curriculum is concerned with the planning, implementation, evaluation management, and administration of education programmes. It is the overall written plan about what teachers should teach and what students should learn, based on clearly defined standards and learning outcomes. Syllabus only looks at the selection and grading of content. The *intended curriculum* by the educational authorities should be delivered by the teacher and learnt by the student. The assessment cannot be said to be valid or comprehensive, if the *delivered curriculum* (the content actually delivered by the teacher) and the *achieved curriculum* (the content actually learnt by students) deviate from the *intended curriculum* (the content provided by the state or the educational authorities).

Authentic assessment that evaluates what is taught and valued should be aligned with the curriculum. All the component of the educational system, such as performance standards, content of the syllabus, instruction, and assessments must work together to achieve the desired goals. When assessments deviate from the content of the curriculum, teachers and students respond by concentrating on the subject areas that are likely to be tested. In order not to deviate from the learning outcomes and the performance standards, assessment should be comprehensive enough to cover all the important areas of the curriculum. Teachers may not necessarily rely on textbooks to determine what is taught and assessed, because the textbooks may not thoroughly address the desired match between the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Education should be based on the holistic understanding and mastery of real subjects and not just on preparing students for standardized tests. One of the washback hypotheses posited by Alderson & Wall (1993) is that *a test will influence what teachers teach*. Research has also shown that high-stakes testing can, in the words of Shih (2009), trigger some unethical test preparatory practices. There is the tendency for teachers to alter the teaching content by eliminating important curricular content not covered by the test. According to Rich (2003) high-stakes testing can cause teachers *to teach to the test* thereby limiting their ability to focus on a holistic understanding of the subject matter. This practice of teaching to the test has been noted in countries such as Canada, United States, England, Australia, Japan, Israel and the Czech Republic (Levinson, 2000). *Teaching to the test* tends to reduce the depth of instruction in specific subjects. It also narrows the curriculum so that non-tested subject areas and disciplines receive less attention.

Teachers should aim at addressing the entire curriculum (*curriculum teaching*, Popham, 2001), when preparing their students for standardized tests. According to Volante (2004) the practice of addressing the entire curriculum will provide students with a solid foundation for future success. Although tests can assess only part of the curriculum, they should be comprehensive enough to minimize negative washback effects. According to Green (2013), a well-designed test should encourage good teaching. It is rather a poorly designed test that tempts teachers and students into practices that have limited value in relation to long term learning goals. If a test is poorly designed, teachers and educational authorities will continue to focus on preparing students for the tests at the expense of holistic understanding of subject matter which leads to applied learning and thinking skills.

## **2.8 Washback in Language Testing**

Washback refers to the *effect of testing on teaching and learning* (Hughes, 1989) or *the unforeseen side-effects of testing* (Spolsky 1994). It is an undeniable fact that the process of teaching and learning can be affected by tests. Traditionally, tests should come at the end of teaching and learning process (Cheng, 1997). However, it seems that the direction has been changed. Teachers and learners nowadays consider testing or examinations before teaching and learning process. Testing now determines what is taught and learnt. Teaching and learning strategies are always altered to agree with the demands of the test.

We cannot blame teachers and learners too much if they adapt their teaching and learning respectively to reflect the demands of the test, because every normal student aims at

obtaining good grades in high-stakes tests. What is important is that test designers should make every endeavour to match the curriculum and assessment. There should not be any gap between the prescribed curriculum and the assessment. If the test is not aligned with the curriculum, teachers will certainly *teach to the test* and the test will be used to control the curriculum, which can result in unexpected, harmful consequences.

### **2.8.1 Negative Washback**

Washback can be negative. Negative washback refers to the unexpected, harmful consequences of a test. According to Bailey (1996), negative washback effect impedes the accomplishment of educational goals, as there is a mismatch between the stated goals of the curriculum and the focus of assessment. When there is little or no correlation between the curriculum goals and the focus of assessment, teachers and learners abandon the curriculum goals in favour of test preparation. In the words of Madaus (1988:83), *it is testing, not the official stated curriculum, that is increasingly determining what is taught, how it is taught, what is learned, and how it is learned*. What this means is that assessment is used, inadvertently, to drive the curriculum, teaching methods, and students' approaches to learning. When this happens, teachers and students begin to narrow the curriculum to those areas most likely to be tested. It is believed that the easiest way to change students' learning is to change the assessment system, and not the curriculum (Elton and Laurillard, 1979). It is this assessment driven curriculum that leads to a negative washback effect, which can go a long way to, adversely, affect learners' communicative competence. Pan (2009) summarizes negative washback effect as follows:

- i. Tests encourage teachers to narrow the curriculum which leads to loss of instructional time, leading to *teaching to the test*.
- ii. Tests bring anxiety both to teachers and students thereby distorting their performance.
- iii. Students may not be able to learn real-life knowledge; they rather learn isolated points of knowledge that are tested.
- iv. Cramming for the tests will lead students to have a negative attitude toward tests and consequently alter their learning motivation.

### **2.8.2 Positive Washback**

A well-designed test should encourage good teaching and promote the accomplishment of the desired goals of the curriculum. A test that has positive influence on students and stakeholders in education can be said to have a positive washback effect. According to Bachman (1990), positive washback occurs when testing reflects the skills and content taught in the classroom. Every good test designer or examiner would like to use tests to make students pay more attention to learning. Unfortunately, high-stakes tests often put pressure on teachers and students, thereby reducing classroom instruction to practicing test-related techniques rather than language learning activities. A test that has washback validity does not impede the accomplishment of educational goals. Tests should be designed in such a way that it will not be easy for teachers and students to use them to drive the curriculum. Positive washback occurs when there is a very strong correlation between the curriculum goals and the focus of the test. The following points from Pan (2009) summarize positive washback effect.

- i. Tests should be able to induce teachers to cover their subjects more thoroughly, making them complete their syllabi within the prescribed time limits.
- ii. Tests should be able to motivate students to work harder to have a sense of accomplishment.
- iii. Good tests should be able to encourage positive teaching-learning processes.

## **2.9 Examinations Conducted by the WAEC**

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) was established in 1952 after the Governments of Gold Coast (now Ghana), Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia enacted the West African Examinations Council Ordinances in 1951. Liberia later joined the Council in 1974. The main objectives of the Council are conducting of examinations and awarding of certificates. The WAEC conducts the following examinations in the member countries:

- i. Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)
- ii. West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE)
- iii. General Business Certificate Examination (GBCE).

The BECE is conducted for both certification and selection to Senior High Schools and Technical Institutions. This examination, which is conducted nationwide in June each year in Ghana, is eligible for candidates in the third year of Junior High Schools approved by the Ghana Education Service. The following are the subjects for the Basic Education Certificate Examination:

- i. English Language
- ii. Ghanaian Language and Culture

- iii. Social Studies
- iv. Integrated Science
- v. Mathematics
- vi. Basic Design and Technology
- vii. Information and Communication Technology
- viii. French (optional)
- ix. Religious and Moral Education

The WASSCE is administered to school candidates in the third year of their West African Senior School courses and to private candidates. The examination is meant for both selection to tertiary institutions and for certification. It is conducted in May and June (for school candidates) and October and November (for private candidates) each year. Candidates for any of the programmes (Agriculture, Business, Technical, Vocational, Arts, and Science) are required to take the following core subjects:

- i. English Language
- ii. Integrated Science
- iii. Mathematics (Core)
- iv. Social Studies

## **2.10 Previous Washback Studies**

Following the first empirical washback study by Alderson & Wall (1993), many washback studies have been carried out in different settings by different researchers:

- i. Israel: Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt & Ferman (1996)

- ii. Japan: Watanabe (1996)
- iii. Sri Lanka: Wall (1996)
- iv. U.S.A: Alderson & Hamp-Lyons (1996)
- v. Hong Kong: Cheng (1997), (1999)
- vi. New Zealand: Hayes & Read (2004)
- vii. U.K: Scott (2007) Green (2007)
- viii. Taiwan: Shih (2007), Hsiu-yu Chu (2009)
- ix. New Zealand: Mizutani (2009)
- x. China: Peng (2011)
- xi. Libya: Onaiba (2013)
- xii. Iran: Ghorbani & Neissari (2015)

These studies of washback effects in language testing have either investigated the impact of high-stakes language testing programmes or researched into how changes in systems of these tests affect teaching and learning. For instance, Shohamy, et al. (1996) examined the impact of national tests of *Arabic as a Second Language (ASL)* and *English as a Foreign Language (EFL)* in Israel. They found out that the ASL exerted greater negative washback effect on students than the ESL, and that washback changes over time because of factors including language status and test uses. The summary of Shohamy, et al. (1996) is shown in Table 3 below.



**Table 3: Shohamy, et al. (1996)**

<b>Exam(s) studied</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodologies</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
Arabic as a Second Language (ASL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Israel	To examine the impact of 2 national tests in and beyond classroom settings	1. Student questionnaires 2. Structured interviews with teachers and inspectors 3. Analysis of inspectorate bulletins	More positive washback found in ESL but more negative washback found in ASL. However, Washback changes over time because of factors including language status and test uses.

Alderson & Hamp-Lyons (1996) also investigated the influence of *Test of English as a Foreign Language* (TOEFL) on classroom teaching. According to Alderson & Hamp-Lyons (1996) TOEFL affects both *what* and *how* teachers teach, but the effect varies with teachers. This is summarised in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, (1996)**

<b>Exam(s) studied</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodologies</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)	To ascertain the influence of the TOEFL on class teaching	1. Interviews with teachers and students 2. Classroom observations	TOEFL affects both what and how teachers teach, but the effect varies with teachers.

Cheng (1999) investigated the possible washback effects from the 1994 revised *Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination in English* (HKCEE) on teachers and students in Hong Kong secondary schools. It was found out that the change on teaching content rather than methodology was attributed to inadequate training and qualifications of secondary English teachers. Table 5 below summarises Cheng (1999).

**Table 5: Cheng (1999)**

<b>Exam(s) studied</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodologies</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination in English (HKCEE)	To compare teachers' perceptions about the new and the old HKCEE	1. Teacher and student questionnaires 2. Structured interviews with teachers 3. Classroom observations	The change on teaching content rather than methodology was attributed to inadequate training and qualifications of secondary English teachers.

Green (2007) investigated whether test preparation classes were advantageous in assisting students trying to improve their *International English Language Testing System* (IELTS) writing scores. He concluded that although the test scores of the learners in the test preparation classes improved, this improvement in their test scores did not continue to reflect on their academic writing skills at the university setting. In effect the test preparation classes had no apparent benefit to improve the learners' future performance in English. Table 6 below summarises Green (2007).

**Table 6: Green (2007)**

<b>Exam(s) studied</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodologies</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
IELTS Writing Test	To find out whether dedicated test preparation classes gave learners an advantage in improving their writing test scores.	1. Two IELTS writing tests 2. Questionnaires	Findings indicated no clear advantage for focused test preparation.

Using interviews and classroom observations, Shih (2007) also investigated the washback of the General English Proficiency Test on English learning in Taiwan.

Findings indicated that existing theories did not fully explain the washback of this test on educational context, so a new, tentative washback model was proposed. Table 7 below summarises Shih, (2007)

**Table 7: Shih, (2007)**

<b>Exam(s) studied</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodologies</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
General English Proficiency Test (GEPT)	To explore the effects of GEPT exit requirements on learning	1. Interviews with department heads, teachers, students, and family members 2. Classroom observations	The current washback theory didn't account for GEPT washback, so a new learning washback model has been developed.

Onaiba, (2013) investigated the washback effect of a revised EFL public examination on teachers' instructional practices in Libya, concluding that the teachers tended to narrow the syllabus to meet the content of the examination. Table 8 below shows the summary of Onaiba, (2013).

**Table 8: Onaiba, (2013)**

<b>Exam(s) studied</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodologies</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)	To investigate how English teachers in Libyan schools were influenced by introducing a reformed EFL public examination, called the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)	1. Teacher and student questionnaires 2. Structured interviews with teachers 3. Classroom observations	Washback was observed on the content of the curriculum. Some teachers tended to narrow the syllabus to meet the content of the exam.

Using student questionnaires, Ghorbani & Neissari, (2015) also investigated the impact of the Iranian University Entrance Examination (UEE) on Iranian students at senior high schools, and concluded that the examination distorted *teaching* and *learning* and it had detrimental effects on creative and innovative learning activities. The summary of Ghorbani & Neissari, (2015) is shown in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: Ghorbani & Neissari, (2015)**

Exam(s) studied	Objective	Methodologies	Conclusion
Iranian University Entrance Examination (UEE)	To study the impact of the UEE on Iranian students at senior high schools	Student questionnaires	The UEE dominates classroom activities and so distorts teaching and learning. It has detrimental effects on creative and innovative learning activities.

In Ghana, some attempts have been made to investigate the effects of assessment on teaching and learning. For instance, Oduro-Okyireh & Narh-Kwao (2014) look at the extent to which assessment in general promotes effective teaching and also influences classroom learning in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. According to the study, teachers' classroom assessments improve learning. Nothing is said about whether or not the teachers focus their attention on preparing the students for the assessment.

Agbeti (2011) considers the influence of external assessment on teaching and learning in junior high schools in Ghana. He concludes that the examination influences

*what* and *how* teachers teach, and that the teachers' self-worth, prestige and public esteem depended on the performance of their students in the examination.

Unlike Oduro-Okyireh & Narh-Kwao (2014) and Agbeti (2011), who focus their attention on the effects of assessment in general on teaching and learning, Ofori-Bekoe (2006) evaluates the impact of the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) on the Social Studies curriculum as a whole, with specific reference to teachers' classroom practices, curriculum content, its implementation and students' attainment. He concludes that the SSSCE does not adequately cover all the goals and objectives of Social Studies in Ghana and that it has a constraining impact on teachers' classroom practices.

The review of the available related literature shows that some studies have been conducted on the influence of second/foreign language tests on teaching and learning of English as a second language or as a foreign language in countries where the English Language is used either as a second language or as a foreign language. The English Language is used in Ghana as the only official language and as a second language. The available research works in Ghana on the influence of high-stakes assessment on teaching and learning (Amua-Sekyi 2016, Oduro-Okyireh & Narh-Kwao 2014, Agbeti 2011, Ofori-Bekoe 2006, Kankam 2005) which are documented in PhD theses and articles are not related to second language assessment. The West African Examinations Council has been conducting English language tests since its inception in 1952, however very little is known in Ghana about the impact of these English language tests on teaching and learning of the English Language. As it has been done in several countries where the English Language is used as a second/foreign language, it important to conduct a study in Ghana to find out whether or not the BECE/WASSCE English Language tests exert

washback effect on learners and teachers of English and to explore the nature and intensity of washback. The results of this research work could have important implications for the BECE/WASSCE English language test system reform, and the roles high-stakes language tests play in shaping ESL classroom practices in Ghanaian schools. It is for this reason that this study (which may be the first of its kind in Ghana) has been undertaken.



## CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

This chapter explains the sources of data, data collection strategy and how the research was carried out. The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of the BECE and WASSCE English language tests on teaching and learning of English language in Ghana. In order to achieve both validity and reliability of this research, the researcher employed the use of the mixed method approach of *questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis*. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in data collection and analysis. According to Creswell et al., (2003) *mixed method* research design is the collection or analysis of both *quantitative* and *qualitative* data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially. Because of the methods used in data collection and analysis for this study, i.e. collecting and analysing both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, it became necessary to adopt the mixed method approach. Quantitative data was first collected through student and teacher questionnaires, followed by the collection of qualitative data through *interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis*, i.e. reviewing syllabuses and analysing past exam papers.

The first empirical study of washback (Alderson & Wall, 1993) employed mainly observation to investigate the impact of a new English examination in Sri Lanka on language teaching. Since then, methodologies in washback research have been mainly a mixed method approach, that is, classroom observation, interviews, and questionnaires. (Shohamy, et al. 1996, Alderson & Hamp-Lyons 1996, Cheng 1999, Green 2007, Shih

2007, China: Peng 2011, Pan 2013). This is because the mixed method approach provides a better understanding of washback research. According to Bailey (1999), research methods issues which are particularly important in investigations of washback are observing classrooms and asking participants about washback. Washback is a complex phenomenon which requires various kinds of triangulation and the use of quantitative and qualitative data. In the words of DeVincenzi (1995), *data collection in this area is complicated by the fact that variables such as pedagogical methods, levels of teaching expertise, and attitudes towards teaching and testing area as diverse as the political, social, and economic environments in which they are embedded (1995:180).*

### 3.2 Sampling Technique

The population comprised all the students and teachers of English in junior and senior high schools in Ghana. However, because time and financial constraints, a non-probability sampling procedure was used to select 3 junior high schools and 4 senior high schools. The schools were categorised into *grade A*, *grade B*, and *grade C* based on their performance. A *grade A* school is the one with excellent performance, *grade B* is the one with average performance, and *grade C* is the one whose performance is below average in the BECE/WASSCE. This sampling technique was used in order to get a fair representation of excellent, average, and poor schools in the study. The junior high schools were represented by:

- **Grade A:** West End International School, Kasoa,
- **Grade B:** Saint Patrick's Junior High School, Kasoa
- **Grade C** Saint Mary's Anglican Junior High School, Kasoa



The senior high schools were represented by:

- **Grade A:** Wesley Girls' High School, and St. Augustine's College, Cape Coast,
- **Grade B:** Aggrey Memorial A.M.E. Zion Senior High School, Cape Coast
- **Grade C:** Obrachire Senior High Technical School, Obrachire

Wesley Girls' High School, Aggrey Memorial A.M.E. Zion Senior High School, and Obrachire Senior High Technical School scored 99.60%, 65.77% and 28.10% passes respectively in six subjects in the 2013 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (Ministry of Education, 2013).

### 3.3 Population and Sample Size

The sample size for the study was 398 participants, which was made up of 374 students and 24 teachers of English. The students were drawn from 5 senior high schools and 3 junior high schools. The schools were made up of grade A schools, grade B schools, and grade C schools at both JHS and SHS levels. 344 of the students answered questionnaires; however 30 of them (who were available at the time) were only interviewed. The teachers were selected from 4 junior high schools and 8 senior high schools. The students were drawn from *Wesley Girls' High School* in Cape Coast, *Aggrey Memorial A.M.E. Zion Senior High School* in Cape Coast, *Obrachire Senior High Technical School*, Obrachire, near Bawjiase, *West End International School*, Kasoa, *Saint Patrick's Junior High School*, Kasoa and *Saint Mary's Anglican Junior High School*, Kasoa. The numbers sampled varied from school to school because those were the students who were available at the time. The numbers printed in red were only interviewed. The teachers were made up of 15 teachers of English from the above

schools, and 9 sandwich students who were reading for Master of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at the University of Education, Winneba. Table 10 below shows the distribution of the participants across the various schools.

**Table 10: Participants**

<b>School</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>
Wesley Girls' High School	51 (SHS 2)	4
St. Augustine's College	10 (SHS 3)	1
Adisadel College	10 (SHS 3)	4
Aggrey Memorial A.M.E. Zion Senior High School	50 (SHS 2) 10 (SHS 3)	2
Obrachire Senior High Technical School	50 (SHS 2)	3
West End International School	50 (JHS 3)	2
Saint Patrick's Junior High School	66 (JHS 3)	2
Saint Mary's Anglican Junior High School	77 (JHS 2)	2
Akrofuom, Kanton, St. John's, & Uncle Rich	-----	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>24</b>

As can be seen from the Table 10 above, 374 students and 24 teachers of English took part in the study. The SHS students and the JHS students were preparing for the WASSCE and BECE respectively. On the other hand, all the teachers were non-native

speakers of English whose teaching experience ranged between 6 and 20 years. The teachers were purposively selected because they were either teaching a final year class or they had once taught it.

### **3.4 Data Gathering Tools and Procedures**

As indicated in 3.1 this is a mixed method study that employs the use of *questionnaires, interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis*. It is important to combine these instruments to achieve some validity and reliability, since washback is a complex phenomenon. For instance, the teachers indicated in the questionnaires that they were using *communicative language teaching* method in their teaching, however, through observation; I got to know that they rather focused on *knowledge of the language* (competence) instead of focusing on *actual use of the language in concrete situations* (performance). According to Bailey (1999), it is important to investigate washback by observing classroom teaching and asking participants about the effect of a language test on teaching and learning. It is for this reason that the study employs the use of *questionnaires, interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis*.

#### **3.4.1 Questionnaire for Teachers**

A questionnaire with 40 items was employed to collect data from 24 teachers of English. The teachers were selected from:

***Senior High Schools:***

- i. Wesley Girls' High School, Cape Coast
- ii. Aggrey Memorial A. M. E. Zion Senior High School, Cape Coast

iii. Obrachire Senior High Technical School, Obrachire

***Junior High Schools:***

- i. West End International School, Kasoa
- ii. Saint Patrick's Junior High School, Kasoa
- iii. Saint Mary's Anglican Junior High School, Kasoa

***Others:***

This is made up of teachers of English who had come to the University of Education, Winneba to read for Master of Education (M.Ed.) in *Teaching English as a Second Language* (TESL)

The questionnaire was piloted with 12 teachers of English from *Morning Star School* in Accra, *Uncle Rich School* at Winneba, *Adisadel College* in Cape Coast, and *Saint Augustine's College* in Cape Coast. This was done to test the clarity and validity of the items. Feedback from the teachers helped me rephrase item 34 more clearly. Item 34 was initially written as

*\*Describe how would you teach English language if your students were not going to write BECE/WASSCE?*

The questionnaire was designed to uncover the:

- iv. The influence of BECE/WASSCE English language test on the learning behaviours of students
- v. The extent to which the BECE/WASSCE English language test is aligned with the English language curriculum
- vi. The effect of BECE/WASSCE English language test on instructional practices of teachers

vii. How the BECE/WASSCE English language test influences *what* students learn

viii. How negative/positive washback affects students' communicative competence

The first 20 items were designed on the model of Shohamy (2005), Maniruzzaman (2012), and Agbeti, (2011) and used a five-graded Likert Scale: *strongly agree, agree, uncertain/not applicable, disagree, and strongly disagree*. The second part of the teachers' questionnaire was made up of 20 open-ended items designed to give opportunity to respondents to give further or additional information that could not be derived from the close-ended items.

### 3.4.2 Questionnaire for Students

A questionnaire was again employed to collect data from 343 students who were being prepared for BECE or WASSCE. The questionnaire for students, which was simplified and reduced to their level of understanding, was made up of 20 close-ended and 8 open-ended items. Like the questionnaire for the teachers, that of the students was also piloted with 120 students from *Morning Star School* in Accra, *Uncle Rich School* at Winneba, *Adisadel College* in Cape Coast, and *Saint Augustine's College* in Cape Coast to find out whether the items were valid. The items were found to be comprehensive enough to collect all the information needed to address the following research questions:

- i. How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence the learning behaviours of students?

- ii. How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence *how* and *what* students learn?

### 3.4.3 Observation

Observation is one of the essential tools in washback studies. Bailey (1999) defines *observation* (in this context) as the systematic, purposeful recording of interactions and events in classrooms. As stated in 3.1, the first empirical study of washback (Alderson & Wall, 1993) employed classroom observation in 14 schools in five different areas to report on the impact of a new English language examination on English language teaching in Sri Lanka.

The purpose of the observation was to find out the extent to which the BECE/WASSCE influences the teachers' selection of a particular language teaching method. Again, in their response to item 29 of the questionnaire, many of the teachers indicated that they were using the *communicative language teaching* method in their teaching. The observation afforded the researcher the opportunity to find out whether the teachers were indeed familiar with the *communicative language teaching* method and whether it is the method that is being used in their teaching. Table 11 below shows the details of class observation in the various schools:

**Table 11: Classroom Observation Check List**

<b>Date</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Aggrey Memorial SHS	60	2Science4	8:50am-10:10am	Verbs
10 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Wesley Girls' SHS	38	2Science5	8:45am-10:05am	Summary Writing
10 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Obrachire SHS	24	2Business	1:15pm-2:35pm	Concord
24 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Saint Mary's Anglican JHS	108	2B	9:00am-10:10am	Reading Comprehension
25 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	West End International School	26	2Lily	8:00am-9:20am	Complex Prepositions
26 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Saint Patrick's JHS	25	3B	8:00am-9:20am	Question Tags

#### 3.4.4 Interview

A semi-structured interview was conducted with 6 teachers (one teacher from each of the schools) and 30 students from *Saint Augustine's College* in Cape Coast on Tuesday, 24th of November, 2015. The teachers were however interviewed immediately after the classroom observation. This is because *observations* on their own cannot give a full account of what is happening in classrooms. It was necessary to employ additional means of data collection (Alderson & Wall 1993). The teachers were interviewed to:

- i. seek any clarification regarding the classroom observation

- ii. find out the teachers' views on the extent to which the BECE and WASSCE cover the goals and objectives of English language curriculum in Ghana.
- iii. find out the extent to which their language teaching methods were influenced by the demands of the BECE/WASSCE, since a teacher's selection of a methodology is highly influenced by the thought that his students have to take a certain test (Ahmad & Rao, 2012).

The students, on other hand, were interviewed to find out how the WASSCE English language test influenced the way they learned English. This data gathering tool was employed to collect additional data to answer the research questions 2, 3 and 4. The length of the interview was between 15 and 20 minutes.

#### **3.4.5 Document Analysis**

It is said that it is not the official stated curriculum that determines *what is taught* and *what is learned*. It is rather *testing* that is increasingly determining *what is taught*, *how it is taught*, *what is learned* and *how it is learned* (Madaus, 1988:83). It therefore became very necessary to analyse the official teaching syllabus for both BECE and WASSCE English language and the examination question papers in order to provide grounds for this research. Document Analysis was the last research methodology that was used in this study. This data gathering tool was used to collect data to answer the research questions 2 and 5. The English language syllabus and the BECE and WASSCE English language past questions from 2010 to 2014 were analysed to further establish the relationship between the BECE/WASSCE English language test items and the prescribed English language syllabus. The purpose was to:



- i. find out whether the content of the BECE/WASSCE English language test was directly related to the content of the prescribed English language syllabus issued by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the Ministry of Education.
- ii. examine which language skills are being tested in the BECE/WASSCE to assess students' communicative competence.

#### **3.4.5.1 The Teaching Syllabus for English Language (JHS)**

As indicated in 2.9, the English language syllabus (for both BECE and WASSCE) issued by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the Ministry of Education is designed to assist students to develop the language skills of *listening, speaking, reading, and writing*. The English language syllabus requires that 10% of *teaching, learning, and testing* should be devoted to *listening skills*, and 30% should be given to each of the other three language skills (*reading, speaking, and writing skills*) at the junior high school level. According to the English language syllabus for the BECE issued by the CRDD of the Ministry of Education, the aims of teaching English language at the junior high school level are to:

- i. develop the basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- ii. attain high proficiency in English to help him/her in the study of other subjects and the study of English at higher levels.
- iii. cultivate the habit of and interest in reading.
- iv. communicate effectively in English.

The BECE English language syllabus is divided into five sections as shown in Table 12 below:

**Table 12: Summary of the Teaching Syllabus for English Language (JHS)**

<b>Language Skill/Area</b>	<b>General Objectives</b>
<i>Section 1:</i> Listening and Speaking	The student will be able to: 1. articulate speech sounds and words correctly. 2. develop confidence and skills in listening and speaking. 3. increase his/her ability to express himself/herself orally.
<i>Section 2:</i> Grammar	The student will be able to use grammatical structures/forms accurately in speech and in writing.
<i>Section 3:</i> Reading	The student will be able to read, understand and derive information from texts of varied nature.
<i>Section 4:</i> Writing	The student will be able to: 1. generate and organise ideas logically. 2. communicate ideas fluently and effectively through writing.
<i>Section 5:</i> Literature	The student will be able to: 1. develop the love for reading. 2. appreciate oral and written literature. 3. appreciate the use of literary techniques developed for creative writing. 4. develop the skills of creative writing.

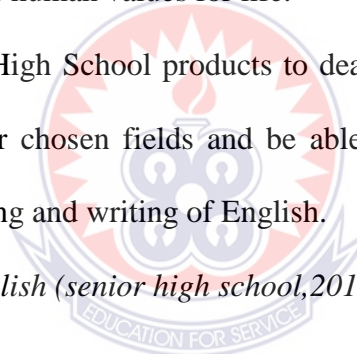
### **3.4.5.2 The Teaching Syllabus for English Language (SHS)**

The senior high school is the second level of education in Ghana. According to the English language syllabus for the WASSCE issued by the CRDD of the Ministry of Education, the general aims of teaching English at the senior high school level are to:

- i. reinforce language skills and competencies acquired at the Junior High School level.
- ii. develop further the language skills and competencies which were acquired at the Junior High School level.

- iii. improve the communicative competence of students and give them the confidence to communicate.
- iv. generate in students the love for reading for pleasure and the development of creative potentials.
- v. raise students' level of proficiency in English usage and their ability to communicate with other users of English.
- vi. prepare students to function effectively on their own
  - a. in offices and other work situations.
  - b. in tertiary institutions.
    - i. develop in students human values for life.
    - ii. enable all Senior High School products to deal effectively with the accumulated knowledge of their chosen fields and be able to communicate such knowledge through the speaking and writing of English.

*(National syllabus for English (senior high school, 2012))*



Like the BECE English syllabus, the WASSCE syllabus is divided into five sections as shown in Table 13 below:

**Table 13: Summary of the Teaching Syllabus for English Language (SHS)**

<b>Language Skill/Area</b>	<b>General Objectives</b>
<i>Section 1:</i> Listening and Speaking	Students will be able to: 1. articulate various English speech sounds. 2. listen to, understand and speak English accurately and fluently.
<i>Section 2:</i> Reading Comprehension and Summary	Students will be able to: 1. develop the use of various skills and techniques for effective reading. 2. acquire the skills of answering comprehension questions accurately and appropriately. 3. acquire the skills of summarizing passages/texts. 4. acquire the skills of deriving moral and other values from passages/texts.
<i>Section 3:</i> Grammar	Students will be able to: 1. use grammatical forms accurately in speech and writing. 2. identify and state the functions of the various grammatical forms in given contexts.
<i>Section 4:</i> Writing	Students will be able to: 1. acquire and develop skills for writing. 2. be able to write composition pieces on a variety of topics. 3. compose pieces containing human values.
<i>Section 5:</i> Literature	Students will be able to: 1. appreciate the forms of oral and written literature. 2. derive ethical values from literary works. 3. cultivate the habit of reading. 4. identify and appreciate literary terms in literary works. 5. apply literary techniques in creative writing. 6. appreciate various genres of written literature (prose, drama, poetry).

### 3.4.5.3 The Examination Syllabus for English Language (JHS)

According to the examination syllabus for English Language (JHS), the syllabus topics outlined for English Language have been extracted from the detailed syllabus developed for use in Junior High Schools by the Ghana Education Service. It therefore advises teachers and prospective candidates to thoroughly acquaint themselves with the scope and the depth of materials to be covered, to ensure adequate preparation for the examination. In effect, as far as the BECE is concerned, there is no difference between the teaching syllabus and the examination syllabus.

### 3.4.5.4 The Examination Syllabus for English Language (SHS)

The scope of the examination syllabus for English is quite different from that of the teaching syllabus. Although the teaching syllabus requires that 30% of *teaching*, *learning*, and *testing* should be devoted to *speaking skills*, the examination syllabus by the WASSCE does not make provision for speaking skills. According to examination syllabus for English Language (SHS), issued by the WAEC, the *receptive* and *productive* abilities of candidates are tested in the following forms:

- i. Reading Comprehension,
- ii. Summary,
- iii. Vocabulary,
- iv. Lexis and Structure,
- v. Listening Comprehension, and recognition of different aspects of spoken English.

### 3.4.5.5 The BECE English Language Test

The BECE English language test consists of 3 parts. Part I (which is based on the Section 2 of the BECE English Language Syllabus) is made up of 32 multiple-choice items on *lexis and structure*, which is further divided into Sections A, B, C, and D. Section A is a test of grammatical structure of English. It consists of 17 multiple-choice items with alternatives lettered A to D. The candidate is expected to choose from the 4 alternatives the one which most suitably completes each of the given sentences, as in 1 to 3 below, which are extracted from 2014 to 2016 English language past examination papers by the WAEC.

#### ***Section A***

1. The lion.....under the tree waiting for its prey.
  - A. lie
  - B. lain
  - C. lay
  - D. laid
  
2. Shika was absent yesterday,.....?
  - A. isn't she
  - B. has she
  - C. didn't she
  - D. wasn't she



3. The students were hostile..... the lazy teacher.
- A. on
  - B. to
  - C. from
  - D. with

Sections B and D (which consist of 5 items each) are tests of vocabulary which assess the candidates' ability to recognise *synonyms* and *antonyms* respectively. The candidate is expected to choose from alternatives lettered A to D the one which is nearest in meaning or most nearly opposite in meaning to a word that is underlined in a given sentence, as in 4 and 5 below.

**Section B**

Choose from the alternatives lettered **A** to **D** the one which is **nearest in meaning** to the underlined word in **each** sentence.

4. The new headmaster met the staff and made his maiden speech.
- A. first
  - B. fresh
  - C. official
  - D. original

**Section D**

From the list of words lettered **A** to **D**, choose the one that is **most nearly opposite** in meaning to the word underlined in **each** sentence.

5. The man was disgraced in public.

- A. respected
- B. honoured
- C. welcomed
- D. accepted

**Section C**

Section C (which is made up of 5 items) assesses the candidate's ability to recognise idiomatic expressions. The candidate is expected to choose from alternatives lettered A to D the one that *best explains* an underlined group of words in a given context, as in 6 below.

6. The student was caught red-handed breaking the louvers. This means that the student was caught

- A. while committing the offence.
- B. with blood on his hands.
- C. before the act.
- D. after the act.

Part II of the BECE English language test (which consists of 8 multiple-choice items) is based on the Section 5 of the syllabus. This section of the BECE English language test assesses the candidate's ability to recognise and appreciate the use of literary terms and techniques, as in 7 and 8 below.



7. The sequence of events in a play is the
  - A. theme.
  - B. plot.
  - C. conflict.
  - D. resolution.
8. An address directed at oneself is known as
  - A. monologue.
  - B. Dialogue.
  - C. apostrophe.
  - D. soliloquy.

Part III of the BECE English language test is made up of 2 sections: sections A and B. Section A, which is based on the Section 4 of the syllabus, is on essay-writing. Candidates are required to use not less than 250 words to write on one of the three essay topics. Section B is based on the Section 3 of the syllabus. This section tests the students' ability to read, understand and answer questions based on a given comprehension passage.

#### **3.4.5.6 The WASSCE English Language Test**

The WASSCE English language test consists of 3 papers. Paper 1 (which consists of 2 parts; A and B) is made up of 80 multiple-choice items. Part A, which is on *lexis and structure*, is divided into 5 sections; I, II, III, IV, and V. Sections I and III (which are made up of 10 items each) are tests of vocabulary. They test the candidates' ability to

recognise *antonyms* and *synonyms* respectively. In Part A Section I, the candidate is required to choose from a list of words lettered A to D the one that is **most nearly opposite** in meaning to an underlined word and which can, at the same time, **correctly fill** a gap in a given sentence, as in 9 and 10 below.

9. Though the man rudely dismissed us, his wife .....asked us to come in.

- A. hurriedly
- B. politely
- C. casually
- D. meekly

10. This book is .....but there are some exciting portions.

- A. big
- B. lengthy
- C. torn
- D. boring



Part A, Section III assesses the candidates' ability to recognise *synonyms*. The candidate is required to choose from a list of words lettered A to D the word which is **nearest in meaning** to an underlined word or expression in a given sentence, as 11 and 12 below.

11. The dress you bought is comparable in colour to mine.

- A. agreeable
- B. equal
- C. quite
- D. similar

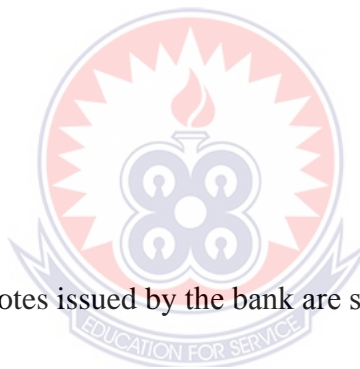
12. There was anarchy when the rebels took over the city.

- A. fear
- B. lawlessness
- C. injustice
- D. oppression

Part A, Section *II* (which is based on the Section 3 of the WASSCE English syllabus) is always made up of 10 items. It tests candidates' ability to use grammatical forms and vocabulary appropriately in a given context, as in 13 and 14 below.

13. The chairman was given a standing.....after his speech.

- A. reception
- B. position
- C. order
- D. ovation



14. The old currency notes issued by the bank are still.....circulation.

- A. with
- B. under
- C. in
- D. on

Part A, Section *IV* (which consists of 10 items) is a test of *idiomatic expressions*. The candidate is required to choose from alternatives lettered *A* to *D* the expression he considers *most appropriate* in a given context, as in 15 below.

15. Muniratu was not happy in her new school because the other girls called her names. This means that the other girls

- A. teased her.
- B. insulted her.
- C. gave her several names.
- D. objected to her real name.

Part A Section V is made up of 10 items. It tests candidates' ability to recognise appropriate *words, expressions, and idioms* used in a particular context. In this section, the candidate is required to choose from a list of words lettered A to D the one which is **most suitable** to fill each numbered gap in a given passage, as in 16 below.

16. *The ambulance took the injured man to the...1....ward. After....2...his injured leg, the doctor ordered that an...3...be taken of the leg and he should be admitted to the hospital.*

- |             |            |           |                 |
|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| A.          | B.         | C.        | D.              |
| 1. labour   | emergency  | female    | male            |
| 2. feeling  | diagnosing | examining | taking pictures |
| 3. analysis | enquiry    | anatomy   | X-ray           |

Part B of Paper I (which is based on the Section 5 of the WASSCE English syllabus) is divided into 3 sections; Sections I (*prose*), II (*drama*), and III (*poetry*). Each section (which is based on prescribed set books) is made up of 10 multiple-choice items. This part of the WASSCE English language test assesses candidates' ability to understand and appreciate various genres of written literature (prose, drama, poetry).

The Paper 2 of the WASSCE English language test consists of 3 sections; Sections *A* (*essay*), *B* (*comprehension*), and *C* (*summary*). The Section *A* of Paper 2 is based on the Section 4 of the WASSCE English language syllabus. Candidates are required to use not less than 450 words to write on only one of the five essay topics. The Sections *B* and *C* of Paper 2 are based on the Section 2 of the syllabus. The Section *B* tests candidates' reading skills and ability to answer comprehension questions accurately and appropriately. The Section *C*, on the other hand, assesses candidates' ability to summarise passages or texts appropriately.

The Paper 3 of the WASSCE English language test (which is made up of 60 multiple-choice items) is based on the Section 1 of the syllabus. It is a *listening comprehension* test which is designed to assess candidates' ability to recognise segments and supra-segmental features of English pronunciation. Cassette or DVD players are used to administer this test. This test is further divided into 8 tests. Tests 1 to 5 are tests of English segments. Tests 6 and 7 are tests of *emphatic stress* and *intonation* respectively. Test 8 is a test of basic comprehension, which is made up of conversations and narratives.

### **3.5 Data Collection Protocol**

All the data for the study were collected between March and November, 2015. The questionnaires were administered between March 2, 2015 and May 29, 2015 while the observation was done from 5<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2015. Each of the heads of the schools I visited was given a copy of a letter of introduction written by the head of department of Applied Linguistics, which sought to introduce me as a PhD student from the University

of Education, Winneba. The heads of the various schools granted me access to gather data through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation in their schools.

In all the schools I visited, the headmaster or the assistant headmaster invited the head of English department or any of the teachers of English who were available. These teachers eventually became my respondents. The teachers willingly offered their classrooms to me to interact with the students and to explain certain portions of the questionnaires which they found quite difficult to understand. For instance, at the Saint Mary's Anglican Junior High School, some of the students asked me to explain some of the items to them in Twi before they could give their responses. Because I interacted directly with the students in their various classrooms, there was 100% success rate in the return of the questionnaire for the students. However, the return rate of that of the teachers was 50%. I distributed 30 copies of the questionnaire for teachers, but out of the 30 teachers who were given the questionnaire, only 15 handed their completed questionnaire back to me when I went back to collect them. Again, out of the 20 teachers of English who were reading for master of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at the University of Education, who were given the questionnaire, only 8 returned the completed questionnaire. The BECE and WASSCE English past questions used for this study were purchased from the WAEC office in Accra. The official copies of the BECE English syllabus and the WASSCE English syllabus were given to me by the heads of department of English at Uncle Rich School, Winneba and Saint John's Grammar School in Accra respectively.

### 3.6 Procedure of Data Analysis

The data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative technique was used to analyse the data gathered through *document analysis*, *class observation* and *interview*. The responses to the close-ended items in the *questionnaire* were however analysed quantitatively using the 22.0 version of the IBM SPSS software.

#### 3.6.1 Document Analysis

The official teaching syllabus and the examination question papers were analysed to find out the extent to which the BECE and WASSCE cover the goals and objectives of English language curriculum in Ghana, and language skills that are tested. The four language skills (*listening*, *speaking*, *reading*, and *writing*) and their curriculum objectives were analysed to find out whether the test items had been so constructed to address the curriculum objectives, and whether the BECE and WASSCE English language tests are comprehensive enough. Table 14 below shows how the document analysis was done:

**Table 14: Procedure of Document Analysis**

Language Skill	Curriculum Objectives	Skills Covered in BECE/WASSCE
Listening	.....	.....
Speaking	.....	.....
Reading	.....	.....
Writing	.....	.....

### 3.6.2 Questionnaire

As indicated in 3.6 above, the data gathered through the close-ended items in the questionnaire were analysed quantitatively using the 22.0 version of the IBM SPSS software. I coded the responses and input them into the software after selecting those that were relevant to the research questions. I then presented the summary of the findings through statistical charts, diagrams, and tables.

### 3.6.3 Classroom observation

One of the washback hypotheses is that high-stakes tests will influence *how* teachers teach. As I indicated in 3.4.3, the responses of most of the teachers showed that they were using *communicative language teaching* method in their teaching. However, through classroom observation, I found out that the situation was different. The qualitative data gathered through the class observation was added to the one gathered through the interviews to answer the **Research Question 3**.

### 3.6.4 Interview

A sound recorder was used in recording of the interviews. The relevant responses were transcribed, coded, and categorised. The responses were then summarised and placed under relevant themes, based on the research questions as in Table 15 below.



**Table 15: Procedure of Data Analysis: Interviews**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Interviewee 1</b>	<b>Interviewee 2</b>	<b>Interviewee 3</b>	<b>Interviewee 4</b>	<b>Interviewee 5</b>	<b>Interviewee 6</b>
BECE/WASSCE English Language Test and the Goals of the BECE/WASSCE English Language Syllabus						
Suitable Language Teaching Method(s) for BECE/WASSCE						



## CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

### 4.0 Introduction

The data that were used for this study were gathered from *questionnaires*, *interviews*, *classroom observation*, and *analysis* of the official English language syllabus and the BECE/WASSCE English language paper. The data from the *interviews*, *classroom*, *observation*, and *document analysis* were analysed qualitatively using the descriptive and contextual methods while the ones from the *questionnaires* were analysed using the 22 version of the IBM SPSS software. The data were analysed and presented in respect of the following research questions:

1. How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence the learning behaviours of students?
2. To what extent is the BECE/WASSCE English language test aligned with the English language curriculum?
3. How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence instructional practices of teachers?
4. How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence *what* students learn?
5. How does negative/positive washback affect students' communicative competence?

### 4.1 The Influence of the BECE/WASSCE English language test on the learning behaviours of students

This section presents findings on the influence of the BECE/WASSCE English language test on the learning behaviours of students. Languages are usually taught and assessed in terms of the four basic skills: *listening*, *speaking*, *reading*, and *writing*.

Ideally, the BECE/WASSCE should be able to test students on all these language skills, as specified in the official English language curriculum. According to Powers (2010), it is important to test for each of these four skills individually because each is a critical aspect of communicative competence. Unfortunately, not all of them are covered in the BECE/WASSCE. This section presents results on the kind of attention given to the important language areas that are not covered in the BECE and WASSCE. This section analyses the data gathered through *questionnaires* and *interviews* to provide answers to the research question 1:

***How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence the learning behaviours of students?***

A total of 374 students from 3 junior high and 5 senior high schools were sampled for the study. All the available senior high school students were second year students. On the other hand, the available junior high students were made up of 77 second year students and 116 final year students.

Out of this number, 30 students (10 final year students each from Saint Augustine's College, Adisadel College, and Aggrey Memorial Zion SHS) were interviewed to gather additional data on how the BECE/WASSCE English language test influences the learning behaviours of students. It was hypothesised that students would not give the required attention to language areas or skills that are not covered in the BECE/WASSCE.

#### 4.1.1 The Language Areas Students Expect Teachers to Focus on

This section analyses the views of students on whether or not they want their teachers to teach them only language areas or skills that would make them perform well at the BECE/WASSCE. Table 16 below shows the summary of the students' responses to the questionnaire item 1 (*Our teachers should teach language areas that will only make us perform well at the BECE/WASSCE*). 136 and 198 of the students *agree* and *strongly agree* respectively with the statement. This means that they want their teachers to concentrate on language areas that will only make them perform well in their final examinations.

**Table 16: Our teachers should teach language areas that will only make us perform well at the BECE/WASSCE.**

		Q1				Total
		D	U	A	SA	
JHS 2	Count	0	0	29	48	77
	Expected Count	1.3	.9	30.4	44.3	77.0
JHS 3	Count	0	0	51	65	116
	Expected Count	2.0	1.3	45.9	66.8	116.0
SHS 2	Count	6	4	56	85	151
	Expected Count	2.6	1.8	59.7	86.9	151.0
Total	Count	6	4	136	198	344
	Expected Count	6.0	4.0	136.0	198.0	344.0

Table 17 below shows the Chi-Square Tests. The *df* (degree of freedom) and the *Value* of **6** and **14.049<sup>a</sup>** respectively mean that there is no significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies. It was expected that the students would put pressure on their teachers to concentrate on examinable areas. The result

confirms the washback hypothesis by Alderson and Wall, (1993) that *a test will influence learning*. The analyses of the students' responses to questionnaire item 1 showed that the students agreed that their teachers should teach them language areas that would only make them perform well at the BECE/WASSCE. They therefore wanted their teachers to concentrate on language areas or skills that would only make them perform well at the final examinations.

**Table 17: Chi-Square Analysis of Questionnaire Item 1**

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.049 <sup>a</sup>	6	.029
Likelihood Ratio	17.713	6	.007
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.108	1	.043
N of Valid Cases	344		

a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .90.

Table 18 also shows the analysis of the students' responses to the questionnaire item 1 in respect of *percentage, mean, and standard deviation*. The *standard deviation* of **.494** for BECE shows that the responses of JHS students did not differ much from one another. The BECE candidates were almost saying the same thing. They wanted their teachers to teach them examinable areas. On the other hand, the standard deviation of **.737** for WASSCE shows that the views of the SHS students differed slightly from one another compared with that of the JHS students. 4% of the SHS students disagreed with the statement while 2.2% were undecided. Again the *mean* of **4.59** and **4.46** for BECE and WASSCE respectively shows that the BECE candidates tended to put more pressure on their teachers to concentrate on examinable areas than the WASSCE candidates.

**Table 18: Summary of Students' Responses to Questionnaire Item 1**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	0	0	0%	0%
Disagree 2	0	6	0%	4%
Undecided 3	0	4	0%	2.6%
Agree 4	80	56	41.5%	37.1%
Strongly Agree 5	113	85	58.5%	56.3%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	4.59	4.46		
Standard Deviation	.494	.737		

#### 4.1.2 The Influence of the BECE/WASSCE English Language Test on how Students Learn English

According to Alderson & Wall, (1993) a test will influence *how* learners learn. That is, a test will influence the way or manner learners learn; learners may not be able to learn in a relaxed manner because of the test. It is this tension that causes learners to develop negative attitudes towards high-stakes tests. This section analyses the views of students on *how* they will learn English if there is no BECE/WASSCE. Table 19 below shows the analysis of students' views on questionnaire item 3. (*If there is no BECE/WASSCE, how I learn will be different*). The results show that the BECE/WASSCE influences how students learn English. None of the students disagreed

with the statement and 5 were undecided. 174 and 165 *agreed* and *strongly disagreed* respectively with the statement. Table 20 shows the Chi-Square Tests of the students' views on how the BECE/WASSCE influences *how* they learn English. The *Pearson Chi-Square* value of **4.778<sup>a</sup>** means that expected frequencies are not different from the observed frequencies. This confirms the washback hypothesis by Alderson and Wall, (1993) that *a test will influence how learners learn*.

**Table 19: If there is no BECE/WASSCE, how I learn will be different.**

**Crosstab**

		Q3			Total
		U	A	SA	
JHS 2	Count	1	40	36	77
	Expected Count	1.1	38.9	36.9	77.0
JHS 3	Count	0	64	52	116
	Expected Count	1.7	58.7	55.6	116.0
SHS 2	Count	4	70	77	151
	Expected Count	2.2	76.4	72.4	151.0
Total	Count	5	174	165	344
	Expected Count	5.0	174.0	165.0	344.0

**Table 20: Chi-Square Analysis of Questionnaire Item 3**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.778 <sup>a</sup>	4	.311
Likelihood Ratio	6.172	4	.187
Linear-by-Linear Association	.217	1	.641
N of Valid Cases	344		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.12.

Further analysis of students' views on how the BECE/WASSCE influences *how* students learn English is presented in Table 21 below. None of the students disagreed

with the statement. 0.5% and 2.6% of BECE and WASSCE candidates respectively were undecided. The analysis shows that both BECE and WASSCE influenced *how* the students learned English. However, the *mean* of 4.48 and *standard deviation* of .552 for WASSCE are slightly higher than that of BECE with the *mean* of 4.45 and *standard deviation* of .509. It can therefore be concluded that when it comes to *how* students learn English, there is not much difference between the JHS students and the SHS students in the study.

**Table 21: Summary of Students' Responses to Questionnaire Item 3**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	0	0	0%	0%
Disagree 2	0	0	0%	0%
Undecided 3	1	4	.5%	2.6%
Agree 4	104	70	53.9%	46.4%
Strongly Agree 5	88	77	45.6%	51.0%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	4.45	4.48		
Standard Deviation	.509	.552		



#### **4.1.3 Students' attention on language areas that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE.**

This section analyses the views of students on the kind of attention given to language areas or skills that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. Table 22 below shows the summary of students' responses to the questionnaire item 5. (*Students should focus their attention on language areas that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE.*) None of the students disagreed with the statement. 180 and 144 *agreed* and *strongly agreed* respectively with the statement, while 20 were undecided. The analysis of the views of the students shows that the students would like to focus their attention on language areas that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE. Although 20 students were undecided, the results of Chi-Square Tests (**Value: 23.750<sup>a</sup>; df: 4**), as shown in Table 23, indicate that the expected frequencies are not too different from the observed frequencies. Although both JHS and SHS students focused their attention on language skills and areas that are covered in the BECE/WASSCE, the results as shown in Table 24 indicate that the BECE candidates focused their attention on the examinable areas more than the WASSCE candidates. The *mean* and the *standard deviation* of **4.44** and **.508** respectively for BECE are higher than that of the WASSCE with the *mean* and the *standard deviation* of **4.26** and **.668** respectively.

**Table 22: Students should focus their attention on language areas that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE.**

**Crosstab**

		Q5			Total
		U	A	SA	
JHS 2	Count	0	39	38	77
	Expected Count	4.5	40.3	32.2	77.0
JHS 3	Count	1	67	48	116
	Expected Count	6.7	60.7	48.6	116.0
SHS 2	Count	19	74	58	151
	Expected Count	8.8	79.0	63.2	151.0
Total	Count	20	180	144	344
	Expected Count	20.0	180.0	144.0	344.0

**Table 23: Chi-Square Tests for Questionnaire Item 5**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.750 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	27.944	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.936	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	344		

a 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.48.

**Table 24: Summary of Students' Responses to Questionnaire Item 5**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	0	0	0%	0%
Disagree 2	0	0	0%	0%
Undecided 3	1	19	.5%	12.6%
Agree 4	106	74	54.9%	49.0%
Strongly Agree 5	86	58	44.6%	38.4%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	4.44	4.26		
Standard Deviation	.508	.668		

#### 4.1.4 Skipping Language Areas that are not Examined in the BECE/WASSCE

It is said that when there is a mismatch between the stated goals of the curriculum and the focus of examination, teachers and students abandon curriculum goals in favour of examination (Bailey, 1996). This section analyses the views of students on whether or not their teachers should skip language areas or skills that are not covered in the BECE/WASSCE. Table 25 below shows the summary of students' responses to the questionnaire item 6 (*Our English teachers should skip language areas that are **not** examined in the BECE/WASSCE*). Only 1 out of the 344 students disagreed with the statement while 19 were undecided. 135 and 189 *agreed* and *strongly agreed* respectively with the statement. This means that the students agreed that their teachers should skip language areas or skills that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. The results were

further subjected to *Chi-Square* test (as shown in Table 26) to find out whether the expected frequencies are the same as the observed ones. The Chi-Square *value* of **9.019<sup>a</sup>** and the *df* of **6** means that there is no significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies. Table 27 below shows the comparison of the results between the BECE candidates and the WASSCE candidates. The WASSCE candidates, with the *mean* and *standard deviation* of **4.52** and **.564** respectively, expressed a stronger desire to skip language areas that are not examined than the BECE candidates with the *mean* and *standard deviation* of **4.46** and **.653** respectively. This confirms the washback hypothesis that *a test will influence what learners learn*.

**Table 25: Our English teachers should skip language areas that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE.**

			Q6				Total
			D	U	A	SA	
d2	JHS 2	Count	1	8	30	38	77
		Expected Count	.2	4.3	30.2	42.3	77.0
	JHS 3	Count	0	6	43	67	116
		Expected Count	.3	6.4	45.5	63.7	116.0
	SHS 2	Count	0	5	62	84	151
		Expected Count	.4	8.3	59.3	83.0	151.0
Total		Count	1	19	135	189	344
		Expected Count	1.0	19.0	135.0	189.0	344.0

**Table 26: Chi-Square Tests for Questionnaire Item 6**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.019 <sup>a</sup>	6	.172
Likelihood Ratio	8.100	6	.231
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.748	1	.097
N of Valid Cases	344		

a. 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

**Table 27: Summary of Students' Responses to Questionnaire Item 6**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	0	0	0%	0%
Disagree 2	1	0	.5%	0%
Undecided 3	14	5	7.3%	3.3%
Agree 4	73	62	37.8%	41.1%
Strongly Agree 5	105	84	54.4%	55.6%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	4.46	4.52		
Standard Deviation	.653	.564		

#### 4.1.5 Applying Classroom Learning to Practical Problems

This section reports on views of students on whether their teachers set questions that demand application of what is learnt in the classroom to practical problems or questions that would only prepare the students to perform well in the BECE/WASSCE. According to Wrenn and Wrenn, (2009), educators desire their students not only to learn theory and understand why theories are important but also to learn how to apply what is learnt in the classroom to practical problems. Table 28 shows the analysis of the questionnaire item 7 (*Our English teachers always set questions that ask us to apply what we learn to practical problems*). The results show that teachers do not ask students to apply what they learn to practical problems; rather *teaching, learning, and testing* are

directed towards the BECE/WASSCE. 72 of the students were *uncertain* while 112 and 160 *strongly disagreed* and *disagreed* respectively with the statement. Table 29 also shows the *Chi-Square* test results of students' views on whether or not teachers set questions that demand application of what they learn to practical problems. The *Chi-Square* value of **12.577<sup>a</sup>** and the *df* of **4** show that there is no significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies in this case. It can therefore be concluded that teachers do not set questions that demand application of what is learnt in the classroom to practical problems. However, the *mean* result of **1.97** and **1.77** for BECE and WASSCE respectively (as shown in Table 30) indicates that BECE questions are closer to solving practical problems than the WASSCE, according to the students.

**Table 28: Our English teachers always set questions that ask us to apply what we learn to practical problems.**

**Crosstab**

			Q7			Total
			SD	D	U	
d2	JHS 2	Count	14	45	18	77
		Expected Count	25.1	35.8	16.1	77.0
	JHS 3	Count	39	48	29	116
		Expected Count	37.8	54.0	24.3	116.0
	SHS 2	Count	59	67	25	151
		Expected Count	49.2	70.2	31.6	151.0
Total		Count	112	160	72	344
		Expected Count	112.0	160.0	72.0	344.0

**Table 29: Chi-Square Tests for Questionnaire Item 7**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.577 <sup>a</sup>	4	.014
Likelihood Ratio	13.290	4	.010
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.792	1	.005
N of Valid Cases	344		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 16.12.

**Table 30: Summary of Students' Responses to Questionnaire Item 7**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	53	59	27.5%	39.1%
Disagree 2	93	67	48.2%	44.4%
Undecided 3	47	25	24.4%	16.6%
Agree 4	0	0	0%	0%
Strongly Agree 5	0	0	0%	0%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	1.97	1.77		
Standard Deviation	.721	.713		

#### 4.1.6 The Use of Past Exam Papers in Teaching and Learning of English

The importance of past exam papers in effective revision for exams cannot be overemphasised. Ideally students are expected to consult past exam papers after they have successfully gone through the syllabus. However, high stakes tests have the tendency of putting pressure on students to concentrate on solving past exam papers, rather than concentrating on completing the syllabus. This section analyses views of students on the teachers' use of past exam papers in teaching. Table 31 shows the analysis of the questionnaire item 9 (*Our teachers should use BECE/WASSCE past questions in their teaching*). Only 1 of the students disagreed with the statement while 3 were undecided. 121 and 219 agreed and strongly agreed respectively with the statement. The results show that the students wanted their teachers to teach with past exam papers instead of syllabus. This implies that concentrating on completing the syllabus would be considered as a waste of students' time. The study further subjected the views of the students analysed in Table 31 to *Chi-Square* test to find out whether the expected frequencies are the same as the observed ones this case. The *Chi-Square* results (as shown in Table 32) with the *value* of **14.738<sup>a</sup>** and *df* of **6** indicate that there is no significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies. The findings show that both JHS and SHS candidates wanted their teachers to teach with past questions. However, the *mean* and the *standard deviation* of **4.67** and **.524** respectively for BECE are higher than that of the WASSCE with the *mean* and the *standard deviation* of **4.56** and **.511** respectively, as indicated in Table 33 below. What this means is that the JHS students expressed a stronger desire for their teachers to teach



with past questions than their SHS counterparts. The results confirm the washback hypothesis that *a test will influence how learners learn*.

**Table 31: Our teachers should use BECE/WASSCE past questions in their teaching.**

**Crosstab**

			Q9				Total
			D	U	A	SA	
d2	JHS 2	Count	1	2	18	56	77
		Expected Count	.2	.7	27.1	49.0	77.0
	JHS 3	Count	0	0	39	77	116
		Expected Count	.3	1.0	40.8	73.8	116.0
	SHS 2	Count	0	1	64	86	151
		Expected Count	.4	1.3	53.1	96.1	151.0
Total		Count	1	3	121	219	344
		Expected Count	1.0	3.0	121.0	219.0	344.0

**Table 32: Chi-Square Tests for Questionnaire Item 9**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.738 <sup>a</sup>	6	.022
Likelihood Ratio	14.632	6	.023
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.959	1	.085
N of Valid Cases	344		

a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

**Table 33: Summary of Students' Responses to Questionnaire Item 9**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	0	0	0%	0%
Disagree 2	1	0	.5%	0%
Undecided 3	2	1	1.0%	.7%
Agree 4	57	64	29.5%	42.4%
Strongly Agree 5	133	86	68.9%	57.0%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	4.67	4.56		
Standard Deviation	.524	.511		

#### 4.1.7 Students' Preference for Teachers who are WAEC Examiners

Being an examiner and teacher affords one a deeper understanding of what is required of their students in the examination room. However, being an examiner would not necessarily make one a good teacher. It is said that a good teacher is the one that instils love of learning in their students and not the one who prepares students just to pass an examination. This section reports on the views of students on their preference for teachers who are examiners. The section analyses students' responses to the questionnaire item 11 (*I would like my teacher to be an examiner for WAEC*). As indicated in Table 34, only 1 student disagreed with the statement while 7 were undecided. 101 and 235 agreed and strongly agreed respectively with the statement. This means that the students wanted their teachers to be WAEC examiners. The results were further subjected to *Chi-Square*

test as shown in Table 35. Chi-Square *value* of **6.763<sup>a</sup>** and *df* of **6** mean that there is no significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies. Table 36 also shows the *mean* and the *standard deviation* application to the results. The results show the *mean* and *standard deviation* of **4.67** and **.524** respectively for BECE and **4.64** and **.546** respectively for WASSCE. What this means is that the JHS students expressed a stronger preference for teachers who are examiners than their SHS counterparts. It is believed that teachers who are WAEC examiners will be more conversant with the requirements of the BECE/WASSCE English Language test than the teachers who are not WAEC examiners.

**Table 34: I would like my teacher to be an examiner for WAEC**

			Crosstab				Total
			Q11				
			D	U	A	SA	
d2	JHS 2	Count	0	0	21	56	77
		Expected Count	.2	1.6	22.6	52.6	77.0
	JHS 3	Count	0	5	33	78	116
		Expected Count	.3	2.4	34.1	79.2	116.0
	SHS 2	Count	1	2	47	101	151
		Expected Count	.4	3.1	44.3	103.2	151.0
Total		Count	1	7	101	235	344
		Expected Count	1.0	7.0	101.0	235.0	344.0

**Table 35: Chi-Square Tests for Questionnaire Item 11**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.763 <sup>a</sup>	6	.343
Likelihood Ratio	8.022	6	.236
Linear-by-Linear Association	.962	1	.327
N of Valid Cases	344		

a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

**Table 36: Summary of Students' Responses to Questionnaire Item 11**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	0	0	0%	0%
Disagree 2	0	1	0%	.7%
Undecided 3	5	2	2.6%	1.3%
Agree 4	54	47	28.0%	31.1%
Strongly Agree 5	134	101	69.4%	66.9%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	4.67	4.64		
Standard Deviation	.524	.546		

#### 4.1.8 Students' Desire to be Coached to Answer BECE/WASSCE Questions

It was found out in 4.1.7 above that the students in this study wanted their teachers to be WAEC examiners. Perhaps the students wanted their teachers to be WAEC examiners so that they can be given special instructions on how to answer examination questions appropriately. This section analyses the views of students on their desire to be coached to answer BECE/WASSCE questions. The section analyses the students' responses to the questionnaire item 12 (*I think that our teachers should coach us to answer BECE/WASSCE questions*). As shown in Table 37, only 3 out of the 344 students disagreed with the statement while 5 were undecided. 84 and 252 agreed and strongly

agreed respectively with the statement. This means that the students wanted their teachers to coach them to answer BECE/WASSCE questions. Table 38 also shows the *Chi-Square* test of the results shown in Table 37 to find out whether the expected frequencies are the same as the observed ones. The *Chi-Square* value of **12.009<sup>a</sup>** and the *df* of **6** mean that the expected frequencies are not too different from the observed frequencies. Table 39 shows the comparison between the views of BECE candidates and that of WASSCE candidates. The *standard deviation* of **.447** and **.640** for BECE and WASSCE respectively suggests that the views of the BECE candidates did not significantly differ, as compared to that of the WASSCE candidates. Again, the *mean* of **4.73** and **4.67** for BECE and WASSCE respectively suggests that the BECE candidates expressed a stronger desire to be coached to answer BECE questions than the WASSCE candidates.

**Table 37: I think that our teachers should coach us to answer BECE/WASSCE questions**

			Q12				Total
			D	U	A	SA	
d2	JHS 2	Count	0	0	22	55	77
		Expected Count	.7	1.1	18.8	56.4	77.0
	JHS 3	Count	0	0	31	85	116
		Expected Count	1.0	1.7	28.3	85.0	116.0
	SHS 2	Count	3	5	31	112	151
		Expected Count	1.3	2.2	36.9	110.6	151.0
Total		Count	3	5	84	252	344
		Expected Count	3.0	5.0	84.0	252.0	344.0

**Table 38: Chi-Square Tests for Questionnaire Item 12**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.009 <sup>a</sup>	6	.062
Likelihood Ratio	14.976	6	.020
Linear-by-Linear Association	.551	1	.458
N of Valid Cases	344		

a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .67.

**Table 39: Summary of Students' Responses to Questionnaire Item 12**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	0	0	0%	0%
Disagree 2	0	3	0%	2%
Undecided 3	0	5	0%	3.3%
Agree 4	53	31	27.5%	20.5%
Strongly Agree 5	140	112	72.5%	74.2%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	4.73	4.67		
Standard Deviation	.447	.640		

#### 4.1.9 Students' Anxiety about the BECE/WASSCE

According to Spratt, (2005) examinations generate *an atmosphere of high anxiety and fear of test results among both teachers and students*. It is this examination anxiety that sometimes leads to negative washback effect. This section analyses the views of students on how the BECE/WASSCE creates anxiety in them. The section analyses the students' responses to the questionnaire item 13 (*I am always anxious about the BECE/WASSCE*). As shown in Table 40 and, only 2 and 9 students *strongly disagreed* and *disagreed* respectively with the statement while 15 were undecided. 169 and 149 *agreed* and *strongly agreed* respectively with the statement. This implies that the students were always anxious about the BECE/WASSCE. Table 41 also shows the *Chi-Square* test analysis of the results presented in Table 40. The Chi-Square *value* of **16.744<sup>a</sup>** and the *df* of **8** mean that there is no significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies. The *mean* and the *standard deviation* results are shown in Table 42 below. The *mean* of **4.40** and **4.21** for BECE and WASSCE respectively shows that the BECE creates a higher level of anxiety in students than the WASSCE. Again, the *standard deviation* of **.570** and **.884** for BECE and WASSCE respectively implies that the views of WASSCE candidates differed more significantly than that of the BECE candidates.

**Table 40: I am always anxious about the BECE/WASSCE**

**Crosstab**

			Q13					Total
			SD	D	U	A	SA	
d2	JHS 2	Count	0	0	0	43	34	77
		Expected Count	.4	2.0	3.4	37.8	33.4	77.0
	JHS 3	Count	0	1	5	59	51	116
		Expected Count	.7	3.0	5.1	57.0	50.2	116.0
	SHS 2	Count	2	8	10	67	64	151
		Expected Count	.9	4.0	6.6	74.2	65.4	151.0
Total		Count	2	9	15	169	149	344
		Expected Count	2.0	9.0	15.0	169.0	149.0	344.0

**Table 41: Chi-Square Tests for Questionnaire Item 13**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.744 <sup>a</sup>	8	.033
Likelihood Ratio	22.125	8	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.826	1	.016
N of Valid Cases	344		

a. 7 cells (46.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .45.



**Table 42: Summary of Students' Responses to Questionnaire Item 13**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	0	2	0%	1.3%
Disagree 2	1	8	.5%	5.3%
Undecided 3	5	10	2.6%	6.6%
Agree 4	102	67	52.8%	44.4%
Strongly Agree 5	85	64	44.0%	42.4%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	4.40	4.21		
Standard Deviation	.570	.884		

### Results from Interviews

Similar results on students' attitudes towards language skills/areas that are not covered in the final examinations were obtained from the students' responses to interviews as shown in Table 43 below. With the exception of Interviewees 6, 8, 9, and 11 who seemed to be saying that the WASSCE had positive effect on their learning, the rest (87%) of the Interviewees indicated that the WASSCE influenced them negatively. A majority (87%) of the interviewees seemed to be indicating that the WASSCE did not adequately test skills that could prepare them for life, and that the examination was too theoretical. The students therefore tended to concentrate on examinable areas by relying heavily on past questions in their studies. For instance, Interviewee 24 said that his

learning of English was geared towards passing examination. Many of the students therefore learnt with question-and-answer booklets.

**Table 43: Students’ Interview Responses to how the WASSCE Influences the way they Learn English**

Question	Summary of Responses
<p>2. How does the WASSCE influence the way you learn English language?</p>	<p><i>(Interviewees 1 to 10 were from St. Augustine’s College, 11 to 20 were from Adisadel College, 21 to 30 were from Aggrey Memorial SHS).</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 1</u>: <i>I learn only examinable topics to help me acquire good grades.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 2</u>: <i>I learn English with WASSCE in mind.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 3</u>: <i>WASSCE puts pressure on students to learn more theory than the practical aspect</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 4</u>: <i>I learn English with thought that I have to get good grades in order to continue their education.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 5</u>: <i>Students don’t have the freedom to concentrate on what would help them in life. Everything is based on theory and on the WASSCE.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 6</u>: <i>WASSCE helps me to read more and in order to communicate well in English.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 7</u>: <i>I am compelled to solve more past questions to become familiar with the WASSCE English language test.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 8</u>: <i>WASSCE influences my English in a positive way.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 9</u>: <i>Some students may think that they are learning English because of the WASSCE, but in the end what they learn because of the exam will help them to use English properly.</i></p>

	<p><u>Interviewee 10</u>: <i>Since not all the language areas are examined, students are compelled to concentrate on examinable areas in order to get good grades.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 11</u>: <i>WASSCE has no influence on the way I learn English.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 12</u>: <i>WASSCE restricts students to certain areas in English language.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 13</u>: <i>I learn English in a way that will help me to pass the WASSCE.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 14</u>: <i>I always learn English with WASSCE past questions and answers to know the demands of the exam.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 15</u>: <i>We learn English because we want get good grades in the WASSCE so that we can continue our education.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 16</u>: <i>I learn English with the mind that I have to write WASSCE and get good grades, so I learn how to answer summary and comprehension questions and how to write good essays meet the standard set by the WASSCE.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 17</u>: <i>I don't have the freedom to select what I want to learn. Learning is always centred on the demands of the WASSCE.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 18</u>: <i>WASSCE puts pressure on me to focus on examinable areas, and not on every aspect of English.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 19</u>: <i>If I have my own way, I will not learn summary writing and phrases and clauses because they are difficult. But I have to learn all these difficult aspects of English because of the WASSCE.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 20</u>: <i>Students learn examinable things or things that are likely to come in the exams.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 21</u>: <i>WASSCE compels me to learn English and solve past questions.</i></p>
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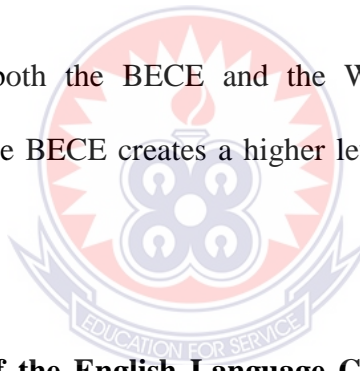
	<p><u>Interviewee 22</u>: <i>I think we learn English because of the WASSCE. It is the examination that will measure our level of competence.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 23</u>: <i>I always learn what will help me to perform well in the WASSCE.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 24</u>: <i>My learning of English is geared towards passing examination. Many of us students therefore learn with question-and-answer booklets.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 25</u>: <i>Our main aim of learning English is getting good grades in the WASSCE so that we can gain admission into the university.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 26</u>: <i>I concentrate on areas that are examined in the WASSCE. I want my English teacher to also do that because we don't have much time.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 27</u>: <i>I am always anxious about the WASSCE, so I concentrate on examinable areas. I don't like teachers who waste students' time on 'non-sylla'.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 28</u>: <i>I learn by always solving past questions. I use past questions to guide my learning.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 29</u>: <i>WASSCE restricts me from reading wide outside the syllabus.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 30</u>: <i>WASSCE does not allow students to learn English for life. Even the oral English aspect does not allow students to speak the language, we only listen and shade.</i></p>
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#### 4.1.10 Conclusion

After analysing the students' questionnaire and interviews on the *students' attitudes towards language skills that are not covered in the BECE/WASSCE*, the following are the findings:

- i. Students wanted their teachers to concentrate on language areas that would only make them perform well in their final examinations. However, the BECE candidates tended to put more pressure on their teachers to concentrate on examinable areas than the WASSCE candidates.
- ii. The BECE/WASSCE influenced *how* students learn English. There is not much different between the JHS students and the SHS students on *how* they learn English. This confirms the Alderson and Wall's washback hypotheses that *a test will influence what and how learners learn*.
- iii. The students focused their attention on language areas that were examined in the BECE/WASSCE, but the BECE candidates focused their attention on the examinable areas more than the WASSCE candidates.
- iv. The students wanted their teachers to skip language areas or skills that were not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. However, the WASSCE candidates expressed a stronger desire to skip language areas that are not examined than the BECE candidates.
- v. Teachers do not set questions that demand the application of what is learnt in the classroom to practical problems.

- vi. The students wanted their teachers to teach with past exam papers instead of syllabus. However, the JHS students expressed a stronger desire for their teachers to teach with past questions than their SHS counterparts.
- vii. The students wanted their teachers to be WAEC examiners, but the JHS students expressed a stronger preference for teachers who are examiners than their SHS counterparts.
- viii. The students wanted their teachers to coach them to answer BECE/WASSCE questions, but the BECE candidates expressed a stronger desire to be coached to answer BECE questions than the WASSCE candidates.
- ix. Although both the BECE and the WASSCE create some anxiety in students, the BECE creates a higher level of anxiety in students than the WASSCE.



#### **4.2 The Objectives of the English Language Curriculum and the Focus of the BECE/WASSCE**

A good test should have *content validity*, that is, it should reflect the objectives and the content of the curriculum, so that the test would be representative, relevant, and comprehensive. It is said that for a test to promote positive washback, it should reflect the course objectives upon which the test content is based (Pearson, 1988; Shohamy, 2001; Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). The BECE/WASSCE English language test should therefore reflect the objectives of the English language curriculum. This section presents the views of the teachers of English and students on whether or not the BECE/WASSCE

English language test covers the objectives and the content of the English language curriculum in Ghana. The section makes use of the data gathered through *questionnaires*, *classroom observation*, and *document analysis* to provide answers to the research question 2:

*To what extent is the BECE/WASSCE English language test aligned with the English language curriculum?*

#### **4.2.1 Language Areas/Skills in the Syllabus that are not Examined in the BECE/WASSCE**

A good test should be able to measure the objectives of the course, that is, it should have *content validity*. According to Abdo Rajhy, (2014), the test needs to have a representative sample of the teaching or the instructional contents as defined and covered in the curriculum. The BECE/WASSCE English language test should reflect the content and objectives of the English language curriculum. However, the teachers and the students indicated that there were some topics or areas in the English language syllabus that were not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. This means the BECE/WASSCE English language test lacks *washback validity*, that is, it does not fully reflect the content of the syllabus. Table 44 and Fig 11 below show the views of teachers on the washback validity of the BECE/WASSCE English language test, in their response to the questionnaire item 4:

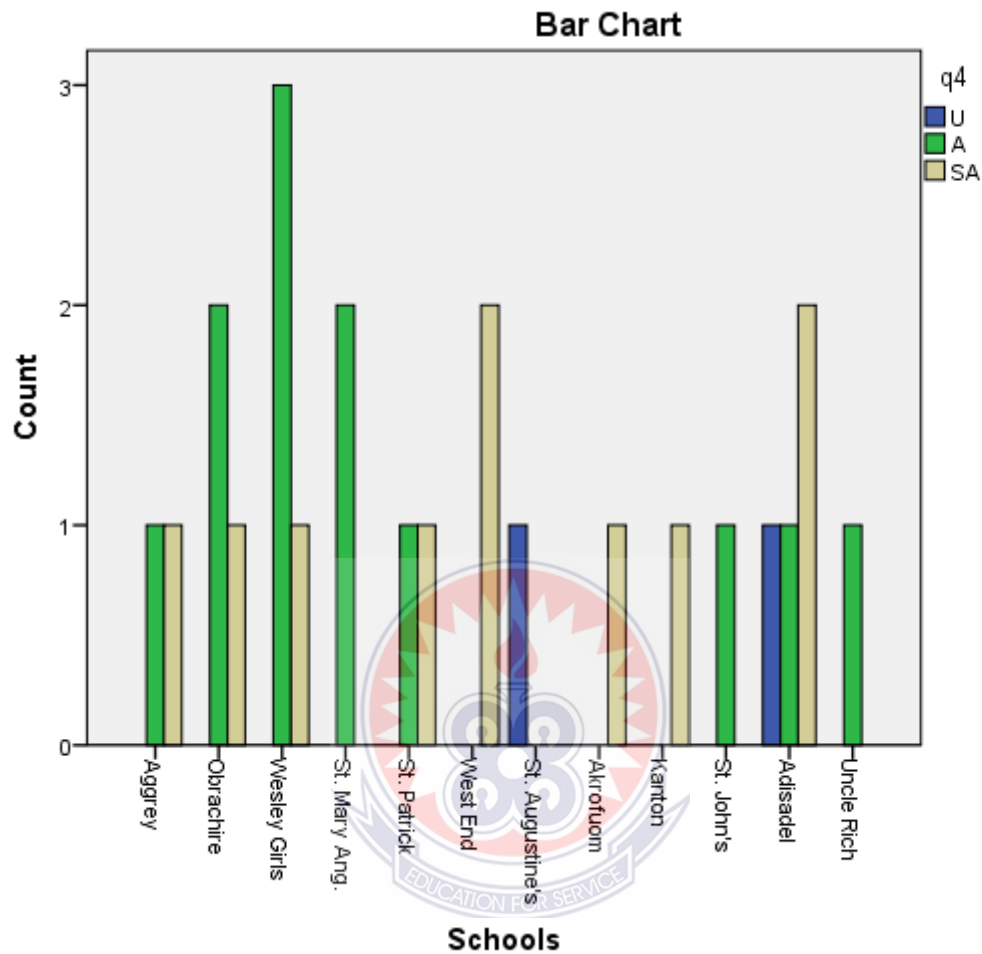
*There are some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE*

**Table 44: There are some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. (Teachers' Views)**

		Q4			Total
		U	A	SA	
Aggrey	Count	0	1	1	2
	Expected Count	.2	1.0	.8	2.0
Obrachire	Count	0	2	1	3
	Expected Count	.3	1.5	1.3	3.0
Wesley Girls	Count	0	3	1	4
	Expected Count	.3	2.0	1.7	4.0
St. Mary Ang.	Count	0	2	0	2
	Expected Count	.2	1.0	.8	2.0
St. Patrick	Count	0	1	1	2
	Expected Count	.2	1.0	.8	2.0
West End	Count	0	0	2	2
	Expected Count	.2	1.0	.8	2.0
St. Augustine's	Count	1	0	0	1
	Expected Count	.1	.5	.4	1.0
Akrofuom	Count	0	0	1	1
	Expected Count	.1	.5	.4	1.0
Kanton	Count	0	0	1	1
	Expected Count	.1	.5	.4	1.0
St. John's	Count	0	1	0	1
	Expected Count	.1	.5	.4	1.0
Adisadel	Count	1	1	2	4
	Expected Count	.3	2.0	1.7	4.0
Uncle Rich	Count	0	1	0	1
	Expected Count	.1	.5	.4	1.0
Total	Count	2	12	10	24
	Expected Count	2.0	12.0	10.0	24.0



**Fig 11: There are some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. (Teachers' Views)**



As showed in Table 44 and Fig 11 above, none of the 24 teachers disagreed with the statement. Two of them (1 each from St. Augustine' SHS and Adisadel SHS) were however uncertain. 12 and 10 *agreed* and *strongly agreed* respectively with the statement. This means that the teachers agreed that there were some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that were not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. This suggests that the English language curriculum is not aligned with the English language test, that is, the examination lacks content validity or is not comprehensive enough. This will certainly create room for the teachers to *teach to the test*. When teachers aim at *teaching*

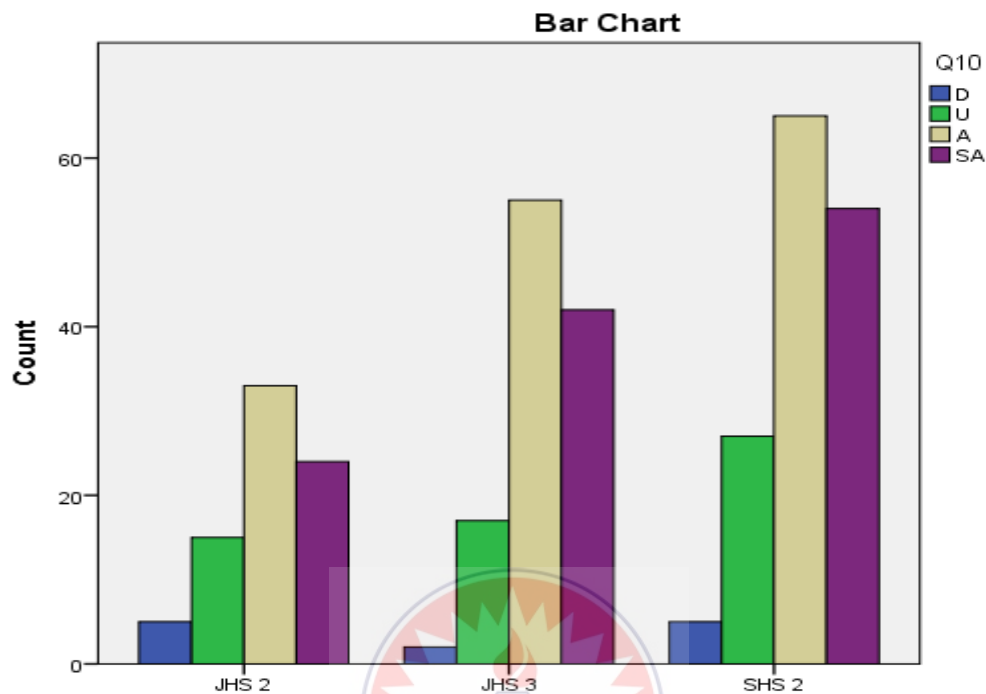
to the test, students' performance at the exam will be excellent but learning may not change (Shepard, 2000; Smith & Fey, 2000).

The views of the students were also sought on the language areas or skills in the syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. As shown in Table 45 and Fig 12 below, 12 of the students disagreed with the statement while 59 were uncertain. 153 and 120 *agreed* and *strongly agreed* respectively with the statement. This suggests that the students also agreed that there were some language areas or skills in the syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE.

**Table 45: There are some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. (Students' Views)**

			Q10				Total
			D	U	A	SA	
d2	JHS 2	Count	5	15	33	24	77
		Expected Count	2.7	13.2	34.2	26.9	77.0
	JHS 3	Count	2	17	55	42	116
		Expected Count	4.0	19.9	51.6	40.5	116.0
	SHS 2	Count	5	27	65	54	151
		Expected Count	5.3	25.9	67.2	52.7	151.0
Total		Count	12	59	153	120	344
		Expected Count	12.0	59.0	153.0	120.0	344.0

**Fig 12: There are some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. (Students' Views)**



#### **4.2.2 Teachers' Knowledge about the Goals and Objectives of the English Language Syllabus**

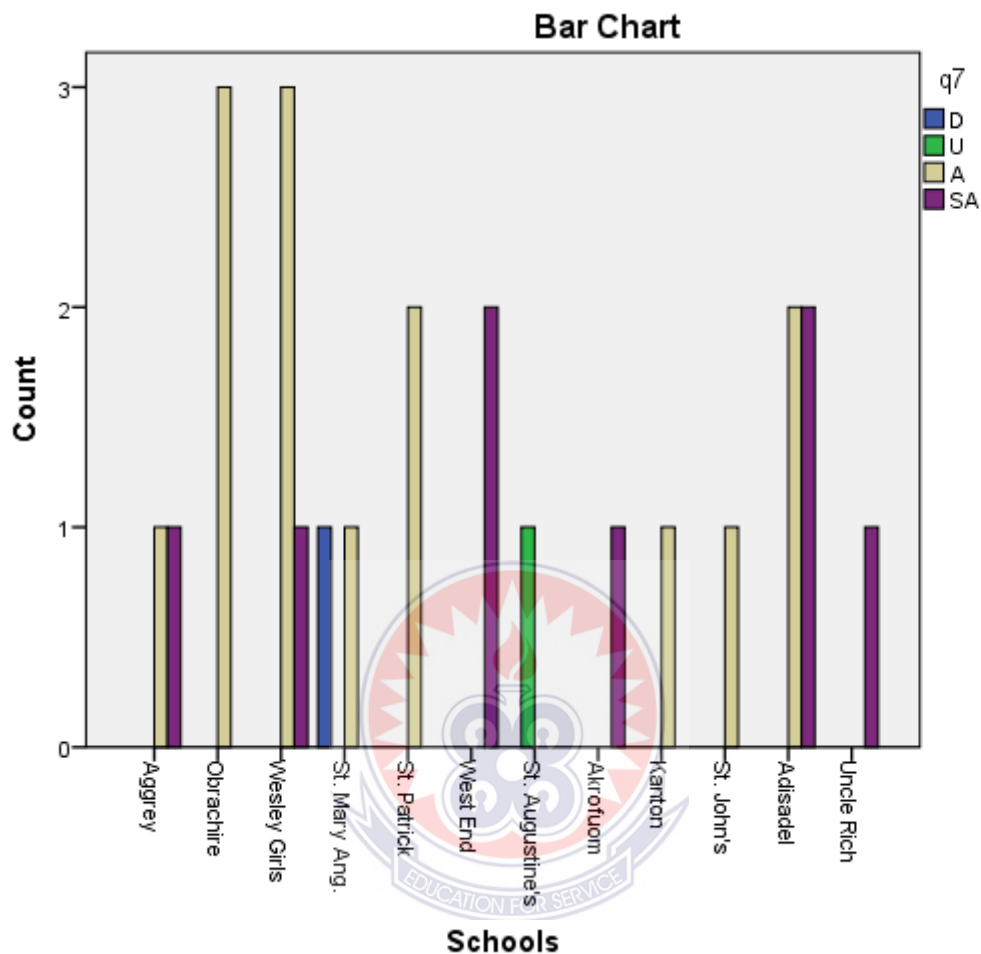
The teachers indicated in 4.2.1 above that there were some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that were not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. This section analyses the views of the teachers on whether they are truly conversant with the goals and objectives of the English language curriculum. Table 46 and Fig 13 below show that the teachers are conversant with the goals and objectives of the English language syllabus. Only 1 out of the 24 teachers disagreed with the statement. This means that it was only that teacher (from St. Mary's Anglican JHS) who had no idea about the goals and objectives of the English language curriculum. The teacher from St. Augustine's SHS was also uncertain. Apart from these 2 teachers, the rest of the teachers either agreed or

disagreed with the statement. This suggests that the teachers were conversant with the goals and objectives of the English language syllabus. That is why they were able to indicate in 4.2.1 above that there were some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that were not examined in the BECE/WASSCE.

**Table 46: I am conversant with the goals and objectives of the English Language syllabus.**

			Q7				Total
			D	U	A	SA	
Schools	Aggrey	Count	0	0	1	1	2
		Expected Count	.1	.1	1.2	.7	2.0
	Obrachire	Count	0	0	3	0	3
		Expected Count	.1	.1	1.8	1.0	3.0
	Wesley Girls	Count	0	0	3	1	4
		Expected Count	.2	.2	2.3	1.3	4.0
	St. Mary Ang.	Count	1	0	1	0	2
		Expected Count	.1	.1	1.2	.7	2.0
	St. Patrick	Count	0	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.1	.1	1.2	.7	2.0
	West End	Count	0	0	0	2	2
		Expected Count	.1	.1	1.2	.7	2.0
	St. Augustine's	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.0	.0	.6	.3	1.0
	Akrofuom	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.0	.0	.6	.3	1.0
	Kanton	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.0	.0	.6	.3	1.0
	St. John's	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.0	.0	.6	.3	1.0
	Adisadel	Count	0	0	2	2	4
		Expected Count	.2	.2	2.3	1.3	4.0
	Uncle Rich	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.0	.0	.6	.3	1.0
Total		Count	1	1	14	8	24
		Expected Count	1.0	1.0	14.0	8.0	24.0

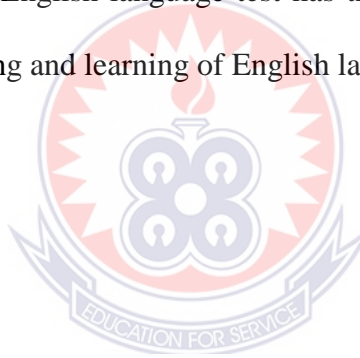
Fig 13: I am conversant with the goals and objectives of the English Language syllabus.



#### 4.2.3 The BECE/WASSCE English Language Test and the Goals and Objectives of the Syllabus

It is said that when the content and the techniques of a test are at variance with the goals and objectives of the syllabus, then there is likely to be a harmful backwash effect (Siddiek, 2010). A test that has a positive washback effect is designed to reflect the goals and objectives of the curriculum, and all the areas are also tested in suitable proportion. The teachers in this study indicated in 4.2.2 above that they were conversant with the

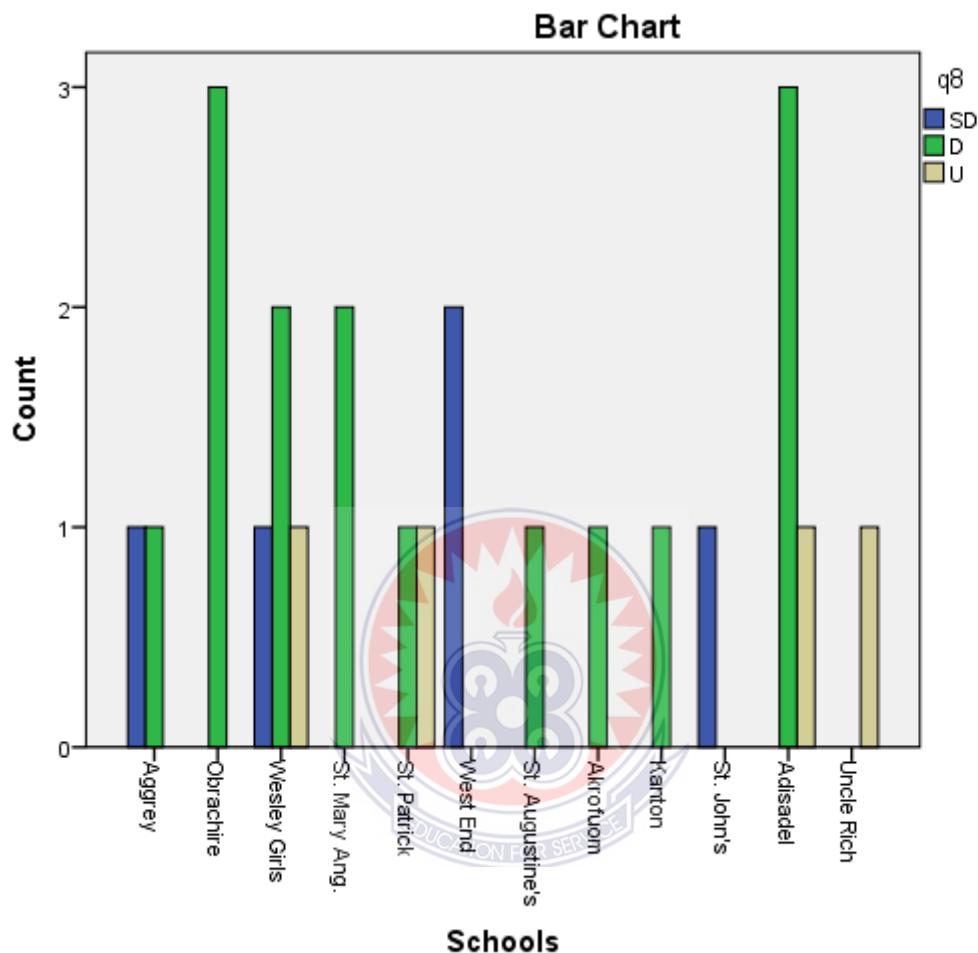
goals and objectives of the English language syllabus. This section analyses the views of the teachers on whether the BECE/WASSCE English language test covers the goals and objectives of the English language syllabus. Table 47 and Fig 14 below show the summary of the teachers' responses to the questionnaire item 8 (*BECE/WASSCE English Language test covers the goals and objectives of the English Language syllabus*). None of the teachers agreed with the statement; 4 of them were uncertain; 5 and 15 *strongly disagreed* and *disagreed* respectively with the statement. What this means is that the teachers are of the view that the BECE/WASCE English language test does not cover the goals and objectives of the English language syllabus. The implication of this finding is that the BECE/WASSCE English language test has the tendency of creating a negative washback effect on teaching and learning of English language in Ghana.



**Table 47: BECE/WASSCE English Language test covers the goals and objectives of the English Language syllabus.**

			Q8			Total
			SD	D	U	
Schools	Aggrey	Count	1	1	0	2
		Expected Count	.4	1.3	.3	2.0
	Obrachire	Count	0	3	0	3
		Expected Count	.6	1.9	.5	3.0
	Wesley Girls	Count	1	2	1	4
		Expected Count	.8	2.5	.7	4.0
	St. Mary Ang.	Count	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.4	1.3	.3	2.0
	St. Patrick	Count	0	1	1	2
		Expected Count	.4	1.3	.3	2.0
	West End	Count	2	0	0	2
		Expected Count	.4	1.3	.3	2.0
	St. Augustine's	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.6	.2	1.0
	Akrofuom	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.6	.2	1.0
	Kanton	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.6	.2	1.0
	St. John's	Count	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.6	.2	1.0
	Adisadel	Count	0	3	1	4
		Expected Count	.8	2.5	.7	4.0
	Uncle Rich	Count	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.2	.6	.2	1.0
Total		Count	5	15	4	24
		Expected Count	5.0	15.0	4.0	24.0

**Fig 14: BECE/WASSCE English Language test covers the goals and objectives of the English Language syllabus.**

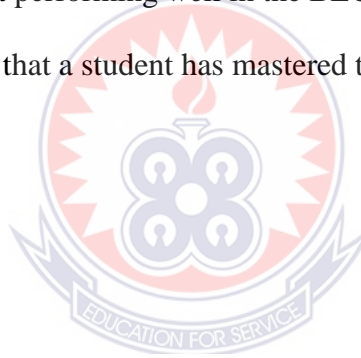


#### 4.2.4 Measuring how much of the Syllabus Content Students have Mastered

If examinations can play their role of determining whether or not students have mastered the syllabus content, then the test items must be tied to the key outcomes identified in the syllabus. An analysis of the students' performance can provide useful information about whether or not the students are mastering the key areas in the syllabus. For instance, if a student scores 80% in a final language test, he should be proficient in all the language skills. The language test must be comprehensive enough in order to measure



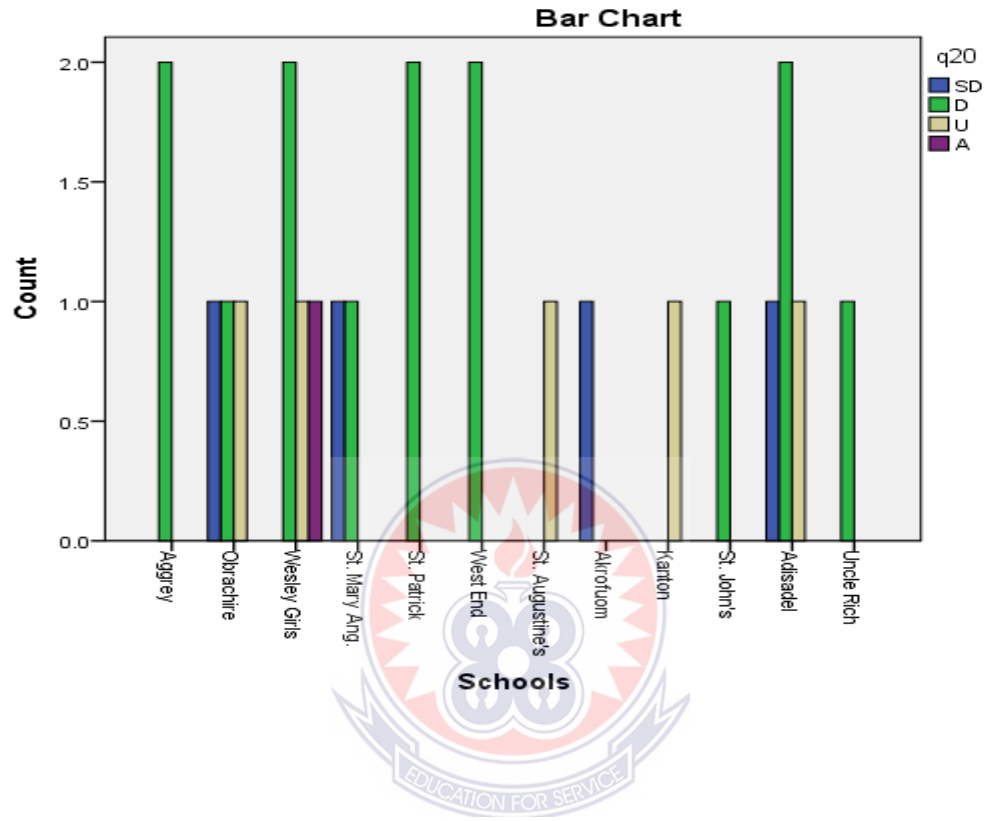
how much of the syllabus content students have mastered. This section analyses the views of the teachers to find out whether or not the BECE/WASSCE English language test is able to measure how much of the syllabus content students have mastered. Table 48 and Fig 15 below show the summary of the teachers' responses to the questionnaire item 20 (*BECE/WASSCE is intended to measure how much of the syllabus content students have mastered*). Only 1 of the teachers agreed with the statement; 5 of them were uncertain; 4 and 14 of them *strongly disagreed* and *disagreed* respectively with the statement. This means that the teachers did not think that the BECE/WASSCE English language test was intended to measure how much of the syllabus content students have mastered. This implies that performing well in the BECE/WASSCE English language test does not necessarily mean that a student has mastered the content of the English syllabus.



**Table 48: BECE/WASSCE is intended to measure how much of the syllabus content students have mastered.**

			Q20				Total
			SD	D	U	A	
Schools	Aggrey	Count	0	2	0	0	2
		Expected Count	.3	1.2	.4	.1	2.0
	Obrachire	Count	1	1	1	0	3
		Expected Count	.5	1.8	.6	.1	3.0
	Wesley Girls	Count	0	2	1	1	4
		Expected Count	.7	2.3	.8	.2	4.0
	St. Mary Ang.	Count	1	1	0	0	2
		Expected Count	.3	1.2	.4	.1	2.0
	St. Patrick	Count	0	2	0	0	2
		Expected Count	.3	1.2	.4	.1	2.0
	West End	Count	0	2	0	0	2
		Expected Count	.3	1.2	.4	.1	2.0
	St. Augustine's	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.6	.2	.0	1.0
	Akrofuom	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.6	.2	.0	1.0
	Kanton	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.6	.2	.0	1.0
	St. John's	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.6	.2	.0	1.0
	Adisadel	Count	1	2	1	0	4
		Expected Count	.7	2.3	.8	.2	4.0
	Uncle Rich	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.6	.2	.0	1.0
Total		Count	4	14	5	1	24
		Expected Count	4.0	14.0	5.0	1.0	24.0

**Fig 15: BECE/WASSCE is intended to measure how much of the syllabus content students have mastered.**



#### 4.2.5 Content Analysis of Past Exam Papers and the Curriculum

Again, content analysis of the English language curriculum and the 2014 past questions showed that the BECE/WASSCE English language test did not fully cover the objectives and the content of the English language curriculum, as shown in Table 49 below.

**Table 49: BECE English Language Test and the Objectives of the English Language Curriculum**

Language Skill	Curriculum Objectives	Content of the BECE
Listening (10%) and Speaking (30%)	The student will be able to: 1. articulate speech sounds and words correctly. 2. develop confidence and skills in listening and speaking. 3. increase his/her ability to express himself/herself orally.	Listening and Speaking skills not examined
Reading (Including Literature): 30%	The student will be able to: 1. read, understand and derive information from texts of varied nature. 2. develop the love for reading. 3. appreciate oral and written literature. 4. appreciate the use of literary techniques developed for creative writing. 5. develop the skills of creative writing.	There is a section that tests the students' ability to read, understand and answer questions based on a given comprehension passage. (Part II and Part III, Section B): 40%
Writing: 30%	The student will be able to: 1. generate and organise ideas logically. 2. communicate ideas fluently and effectively through writing.	There is a section on essay-writing. (Part III, Section A): 30%
Grammar ( <i>is taught to be applied in speech and in writing</i> )	The student will be able to use grammatical structures/forms accurately in speech and in writing.	There is a section that tests grammatical structure of English. (Part 1): 30%

As shown in Table 49 above, the BECE English language examination does not test candidates on *listening* and *speaking* skills, although the English language syllabus for the BECE requires that 10% and 30% of *teaching*, *learning*, and *testing* should be devoted to *listening* and *speaking* skills respectively. The curriculum objectives are not fully reflected in the final examination as far as *listening* and *speaking* skills are concerned. This is reflected in the teachers' responses to the questionnaire item 17:

***I do not teach my students speaking skills since they are not tested in the BECE.***

6 out of the 7 junior high school teachers agreed that they did not teach their students *speaking* since it is not tested in the BECE. However, when they were asked what changes they would initiate in their class if there was no BECE, 85.7% (6) of them indicated that if there was no BECE, they would concentrate more on the *speaking* or *oral skills*. After all, language is meant to be spoken rather than written, because there are many living languages that still do not have writing systems.

The BECE English language test however has sections that test candidates on *reading* and *writing* skills. Part III of the BECE English language test is made up of 2 sections: sections A and B. Section A, is on *essay-writing*. Candidates are required to use not less than 250 words to write on one of the three essay topics. Part III, Section B tests the students' ability to read, understand, and answer questions based on a given comprehension passage. To some extent, *reading* and *writing* skills are covered in the BECE. Again, since the students are expected to use *grammatical structures/forms* accurately to communicate their ideas fluently and effectively through writing, there is a section in BECE English language examination that tests *grammatical structure* of English. The teachers, therefore, concentrate on *grammatical structure*, *reading*

*comprehension*, and *essay writing*, as evidenced in the classroom observation of the junior high schools shown in Table 50 below. When the teachers' classes were observed, they were found teaching either *reading comprehension* or *grammatical structure* of English. At the Saint Mary's Anglican JHS, the teacher, who was found teaching *reading comprehension*, did not even allow the students to read the selected reading passage; she did all the reading herself. The teachers of *West End International School* and *Saint Patrick's JHS* were found teaching *Complex Prepositions* and *Question Tags* respectively.

**Table 50: Classroom Observation at the Junior High Schools**

Date	School	Number of Students	Class	Time	Topic
24 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Saint Mary's Anglican JHS	108	2B	9:00am- 10:10am	Reading Comprehension
25 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	West End International School	26	2Lily	8:00am- 9:20am	Complex Prepositions
26 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Saint Patrick's JHS	25	3B	8:00am- 9:20am	Question Tags

As far as *literature* is concerned, the curriculum objectives are not fully reflected in the BECE English language test. According to the official English syllabus for junior high schools, the students are expected to *develop the love for reading, appreciate oral and written literature, appreciate the use of literary techniques developed for creative writing*, and to *develop the skills of creative writing*. In addition, the students are given

selected literature books to read in school. Unfortunately, the BECE English language examination only tested candidates on *literary terms*. The BECE English language examination does not test BECE candidates on the selected literature books. Therefore the teachers and their students concentrate only on the *literary terms*, because that is what is tested in the BECE as far as literature is concerned.

The WASSCE English language test, on the other hand, consists of three papers. Paper 1 is an objective test which consists of 80 multiple-choice questions on *lexis and structure* (50 questions) and *literature* (30 questions). Paper 2 consists of three sections: A, B, and C, which are on *essay-writing*, *comprehension*, and *summary writing* respectively. Paper 3 is a listening comprehension test. According to the official English language syllabus for the WASSCE, 5% of *teaching*, *learning*, and *testing* should be devoted to *listening skills*, 35% to *reading skills*, 30% to *speaking skills*, and 30% to *writing skills*. Table 51 below shows that these requirements are not fully reflected in the WASSCE.

**Table 51: WASSCE English Language Test and the Objectives of the English Language Curriculum**

Language Skill	Curriculum Objectives	Content of the WASSCE
Listening: 5%	Students will be able to listen to, understand and speak English accurately and fluently.	Paper 3: Listening Comprehension: 10%
Speaking: 30%	Students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. speak English accurately and fluently.</li> <li>2. make use of appropriate stress and intonation in their reading and speech.</li> </ol>	Speaking skill is not tested
Writing: 30%	Students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. develop writing skills acquired and use them accurately.</li> <li>2. be able to write essays on a variety of topics.</li> <li>3. be able to practise creative writing.</li> </ol>	Paper 2, Section A: Essay-Writing: 25%

Reading(including Literature): 35%	Students will be able to: 1. develop the skills of reading and answering comprehension questions accurately and appropriately. 2. develop the skills of summarizing passages/texts.	Paper 2, Sections B and C and Paper 1,Part B: Comprehension, Summary, and Literature: 40%
Grammar ( <i>is taught to be applied in speech and in writing</i> )	Students will be able to: 1. identify and use grammatical forms accurately in writing and in speech. 2. observe the functions of the various grammatical forms in given contexts.	Paper 1, Part A: Lexis and Structure: 25%

The WASSCE English syllabus requires that 5% of *teaching, learning, and testing* should be devoted to *listening skills*. However, as can be seen from Table 51 above, the WASSCE English language test deviates from this curriculum requirement; it allocates 10% to *listening skills*. Again, although the syllabus requires that 30% of *teaching, learning, and testing* should be devoted to *speaking skills*, WASSCE does not test candidates on *speaking skills* at all. Because *speaking* is not tested, the teachers do not teach it. In their response to the questionnaire item 17, 13 out of the 17 SHS teachers indicated that they did not teach *speaking* since it was not tested in the WASSCE.

The teachers again indicated that it was possible for WASSCE candidates to perform well in the English examination without being communicatively competent. This is confirmed by the teachers' responses to the questionnaire item 38. All the 17 SHS teachers indicated that (looking at structure of the WASSCE English language exam) it was possible for a candidate to perform well without being able to speak good English. This is because majority of the students always concentrated on examinable areas by studying *question and answer* booklets instead of studying the prescribed textbooks for English.



Since examinations (but not the syllabus) now determine what is taught and learnt, teachers and learners will certainly ignore language areas or skills in the syllabus that do not contribute directly to passing the WASSCE. The WASSCE English language test allocates 25%, 40%, and 25% to *writing*, *reading*, and *grammatical structure* respectively. There is the tendency for the teachers and their learners also to concentrate on these language areas. Classroom observation showed that the teachers were found teaching either *grammatical structure* or *summary writing*, as shown in Table 52 below. The teachers tended to concentrate on areas that were covered in the WASSCE. The next section, 4.3 looks at the effect of the BECE/WASSCE on teachers' instructional practices

**Table 52: Classroom Observation at the Senior High Schools**

<b>Date</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Aggrey Memorial SHS	60	2Science4	8:50am-10:10am	Verbs
10 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Wesley Girls' SHS	38	2Science5	8:45am-10:05am	Summary Writing
10 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Obrachire SHS	24	2Business	1:15pm-2:35pm	Concord

#### 4.2.6 Conclusion

Analysis of the *questionnaires, classroom observation, and the examination of the English language curriculum and the 2014 past questions* on the content validity of the BECE/WASSCE English language test revealed the following:

- i. There were some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that were not examined in the BECE/WASSCE that is, the English language curriculum is not aligned with the English language test.
- ii. The teachers are conversant with the goals and objectives of the English language syllabus.
- iii. The BECE/WASCE English language test does not fully cover the goals and objectives of the English language syllabus.
- iv. The BECE/WASSCE English language test is not intended to measure how much of the syllabus content students have mastered.

The findings show that the BECE/WASSCE English language test lacked *washback validity*. This means that the objectives of the English language curriculum are not fully reflected in the BECE/WASSCE, since some topics or areas in the English language syllabus are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. This gap between the objectives of English language curriculum and the focus of the BECE/WASSCE encouraged the teachers to *teach to the test*, thereby concentrating on the areas that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE. The teachers concentrated on *grammatical structure, reading comprehension, and essay writing*.

### 4.3 The Impact of BECE/WASSCE on Teachers' Instructional Practices

Alderson and Wall's washback hypotheses state, among other things, that tests that have important consequences will have washback, and that a test will influence attitudes to content, method, etc. of teaching (Alderson & Wall, 1993a). This section reports on the impact of the BECE/WASSCE English language test on teachers' classroom practices. The section makes use of the data gathered through *questionnaires*, *semi-structured interviews* and *classroom observation* to answer the research question 3: ***How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence instructional practices of teachers?***

A key concept of the English language syllabus for both JHS and SHS levels is the *integrated approach* (as opposed to *segregated-skills approach*) to the teaching of language skills. Like the *communicative language teaching method*, the *integrated approach* exposes English language learners to authentic language and challenges them to interact naturally in the language (Oxford, 2001). The designers of the English curriculum believe that the *receptive* (listening and reading) and *productive* (speaking and writing) skills are interrelated and hence complementary, and they must not be taught separately. Teaching language skills separately in language learning setting has been defined as the *traditional approach to teaching second or foreign language* (Su, 2007). According to the English language curriculum, Ghanaian teachers of English should move away from the *traditional approach* to teaching of English to the *integrated* or *communicative approach* to language teaching. For instance, a reading lesson must provide ample opportunity for the practice of related *listening*, *speaking* and *writing*

skills. Grammar should not be taught in isolation; it should to be applied in *speech* and in *writing*.

The *integrated approach* is used in several countries in Africa where English is taught as a second language. For instance, in Kenya, the Ministry of Education requires that English language must be taught using the *integrated approach* (Manyasi, 2014). If the teachers of English are expected to adopt *integrated or communicative language teaching*, then the BECE/WASSCE English language test must also be *communicative*, otherwise, the teachers and the learners will adapt their teaching and learning respectively to reflect the demands of the examination. A communicative language test measures how learners are able to use language in real life situations. Grammar is therefore not tested in isolation. Unfortunately, 30% of the BECE English language examination is on grammar that is tested in isolation. In the WASSCE English language examination, 25% of the total marks are devoted to grammar that is tested in isolation.

The *integrated or communicative language teaching approach* will certainly help the students to attain communicative competence but they may not be able to perform well in the final examinations. This is because the BECE and the WASSCE English language examinations are not communicative enough as they are not designed to measure students' ability to use English in authentic situations. They rather focus on testing knowledge about vocabulary and grammar. A communicative language test is devoted to testing both learners' knowledge of a language and how to apply this knowledge to meaningful communicative situations. A communicative language test should cover the four language skills of *listening, speaking, reading, and writing*, as it is designed on the basis of communicative competence.

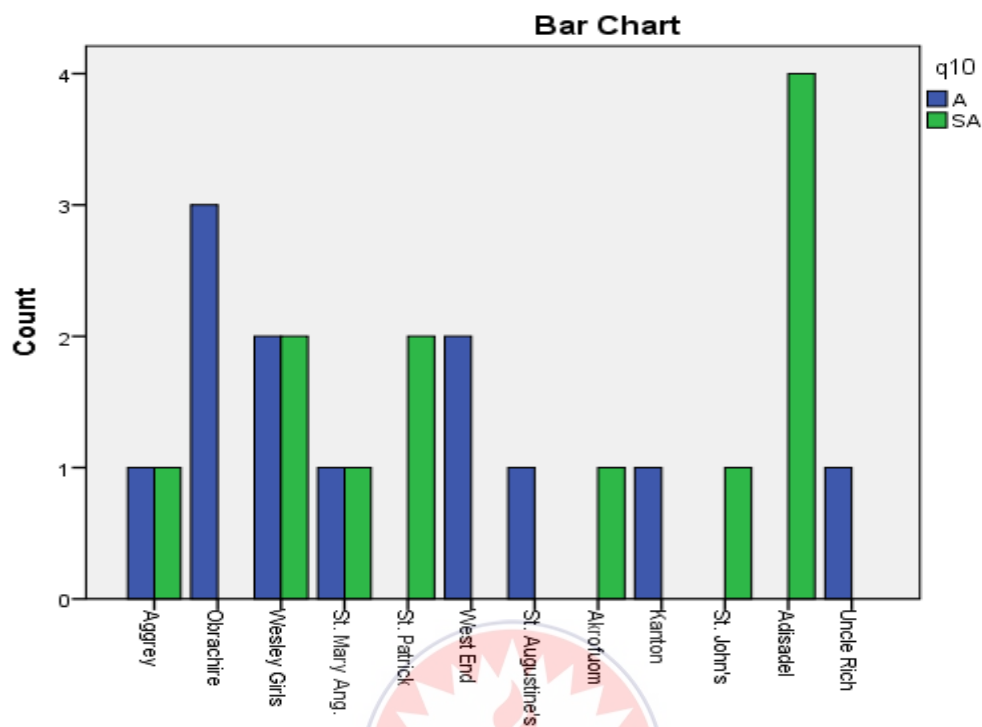
### 4.3.1 Teachers' Instructional Content

When an examination has a positive washback effect, teachers and students will naturally direct teaching and learning respectively at the curriculum content. As indicated in 4.2 above, the BECE/WASSCE English language test lacked *washback validity*. There is therefore the tendency for the teachers to adjust their teaching *method* and *content* to reflect the demands of the BECE/WASSCE English language test. This section analyses the views of the teachers to test the Alderson and Wall's hypothesis that *a test will influence what teachers teach*. The section analyses the teachers' responses to the questionnaire item 10 (*If there is no BECE/WASSCE, the content of my teaching will be different from the content I am teaching now*). Table 53 and Fig 16 below show the views of teachers on their instructional content. None of the teachers disagreed with the statement; all the 24 teachers either *agreed (A)* or *strongly agreed (SA)* with the statement. This means that they would alter the *content* of their teaching if there was no BECE/WASSCE. This implies that it was the BECE/WASSCE that influenced **what** the teachers taught, but not the syllabus.

**Table 53: If there is no BECE/WASSCE, the content of my teaching will be different from the content I am teaching now**

			Q10		Total
			A	SA	
Schools	Aggrey	Count	1	1	2
		Expected Count	1.0	1.0	2.0
	Obrachire	Count	3	0	3
		Expected Count	1.5	1.5	3.0
	Wesley Girls	Count	2	2	4
		Expected Count	2.0	2.0	4.0
	St. Mary Ang.	Count	1	1	2
		Expected Count	1.0	1.0	2.0
	St. Patrick	Count	0	2	2
		Expected Count	1.0	1.0	2.0
	West End	Count	2	0	2
		Expected Count	1.0	1.0	2.0
	St. Augustine's	Count	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.5	.5	1.0
	Akrofuom	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.5	.5	1.0
	Kanton	Count	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.5	.5	1.0
	St. John's	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.5	.5	1.0
	Adisadel	Count	0	4	4
		Expected Count	2.0	2.0	4.0
	Uncle Rich	Count	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.5	.5	1.0
Total		Count	12	12	24
		Expected Count	12.0	12.0	24.0

**Fig 16: If there is no BECE/WASSCE, the content of my teaching will be different from the content I am teaching now**



The teachers indicated that they were restricted by the BECE/WASSCE. When they were asked what language skills they would teach if their students were not going to write BECE/WASSCE, the majority of them indicated that they would concentrate on the productive skills (speaking and writing). Unfortunately, the BECE and the WASSCE do not test students on *speaking skills*. The individual responses of the teachers are shown in Table 54 below. Teachers 1, 5, 6, 7, 13, 16, 18, and 23 indicated that if their students were not going to write BECE/WASSCE, they would focus more on *speaking* and *writing*. Teachers 8, 10, and 14 also indicated that they would give more attention to *speaking* skills. It is only Teacher 22 who indicated that his teaching would not change even if his students were not going to write WASSCE. The rest of the teachers indicated that their teaching was controlled, in a way, by the standard set by the BECE/WASSCE,

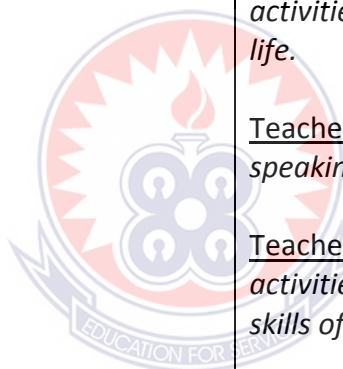
that is, their teaching content was influenced by the demands of the BECE/WASSCE. The teachers and their students are at the mercy of the BECE/WASSCE. It is the examinations that determine what is taught and learned. The BECE/WASSCE does not allow the teaching and learning to be based on the official English language curriculum issued by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the Ministry of Education. Teacher 19 indicated that if her students were not going to write WASSCE she would strictly follow the official English language curriculum. This means that she was not following the official English curriculum because of the standard set by the WASSCE.

**Table 54: The Focus of Teaching if there was no BECE/WASSCE**

Item	Responses
34. What language skills would you teach if your students were not going to write BECE/WASSCE?	<p><u>Teacher 1</u>: <i>I would focus more on writing and speaking skills.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 2</u>: <i>I would give equal attention to all language skills.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 3</u>: <i>I would teach my students how to use English to communicate well in everyday life.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 4</u>: <i>I would use the integrated method to teach all the language skills.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 5</u>: <i>I would still use the integrated approach, but I would do more speaking and writing skills.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 6</u>: <i>I would focus on helping students to speak and write well.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 7</u>: <i>More time would be given to practising speaking and writing.</i></p>



	<p><u>Teacher 8</u>: <i>More attention would be given to speaking skills.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 9</u>: <i>I would concentrate on helping my students to attain communicative competence.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 10</u>: <i>I would focus on areas that would help my students to speak with confidence.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 11</u>: <i>I would teach all the language skills.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 12</u>: <i>My focus would be on activities that could prepare students for life.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 13</u>: <i>I would give more attention to speaking and writing skills.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 14</u>: <i>I would concentrate on activities that would enhance the speaking skills of my students.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 15</u>: <i>I would use the integrated method to identify the problems of my students, and address those problems.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 16</u>: <i>I would concentrate on speaking and writing skills.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 17</u>: <i>I would concentrate more on reading and pronunciation.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 18</u>: <i>I would still use the integrated method, but I would concentrate more on speaking and writing skills.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 19</u>: <i>I would strictly follow the official English language curriculum.</i></p>
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	<p><u>Teacher 20</u>: <i>I would teach more writing and reading skills.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 21</u>: <i>I would involve my students in the selection of topics to teach.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 22</u>: <i>Not much would change. I would still use the integrated method.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 23</u>: <i>I would give more attention to writing and speaking skills.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 24</u>: <i>I would concentrate on activities that would prepare my students for life.</i></p>
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#### 4.3.2 Teachers' Instructional Method

Because of the fact that the BECE/WASSCE English language examination is not fully designed to measure students' ability to use English in authentic situations, the majority of the teachers also adopt *segregated-skills* approach to the teaching of English by teaching grammar in isolation just to meet the demands of the examination. In their response to the questionnaire item 29, 71% (17) of the teachers indicated that they used *integrated/communicative approach* in their teaching. (6 of the teachers however said that they had no idea about the language teaching methods.) Table 55 below shows the teachers responses to the questionnaire item 29:

**Table 55: Teachers' Responses to Language Teaching Methods**

Item	School	Teachers	Responses
29. Which language teaching method(s) do you use?	Aggrey Memorial SHS	Teacher 1	Integrated Approach
		Teacher 2	No idea
	Obrachire SHS	Teacher 3	Communicative Method
		Teacher 4	Integrated Method
		Teacher 5	Integrated Approach
	Wesley Girls' SHS	Teacher 6	No idea
		Teacher 7	Communicative Method
		Teacher 8	Integrated Method
		Teacher 9	Integrated Method
	St. Mary's Anglican JHS	Teacher 10	No idea
		Teacher 11	No idea
	St. Patrick's JHS	Teacher 12	Total Physical Response
		Teacher 13	No idea
	West End JHS	Teacher 14	Integrated Method
		Teacher 15	Integrated Method
	St. Augustine's SHS	Teacher 16	Communicative Method
	Akrofuom SHS	Teacher 17	Communicative Method
	Kanton SHS	Teacher 18	Integrated Method
	St. John's Grammar	Teacher 19	Communicative Method

	Adisadel College	Teacher 20	No idea
		Teacher 21	Communicative Method
		Teacher 22	Integrated Method
		Teacher 23	Integrated Method
	Uncle Rich JHS	Teacher 24	Communicative Method

The classroom teaching of six of the teachers was observed. I discovered that all the teachers who were found teaching grammatical structure of English isolated those grammatical structures and taught them in isolation, instead of teaching them through *speech, writing, or reading passages* as required by the English syllabus. The official English language syllabus requires that grammar should be taught through *speech, writing or reading*. The teachers' refusal or failure to use the *integrated/communicative approach* in their teaching suggests that they are either ignorant of what the approach entails or they are just *teaching to the test*. This means that the selection of teaching methodology is highly influenced by the thought that the students have to sit for the BECE/WASSCE but not that they have to attain communicative competence. If we want the teachers to use the *integrated* or *communicative* method in their language teaching, then the examination must also be *communicative*. According to Phan, (2008), *communicative language tests* are used with the aim of measuring language learners' ability to use language in real life or authentic situations. Unfortunately, the BECE/WASCE English language test is not devoted to testing candidates' ability to use English in real life situations. According to Fulcher and Davidson, (2007), a communicative language testing system requires tests which are devoted to testing not

only learners' knowledge of a language and how to use it (competence) but also to what extent learners apply their knowledge to meaningful communicative situations (performance). This means that the ideal language test should be able to measure both the language *competence* and *performance*, not only *competence*. As can be seen from a portion of the BECE 2015 past questions in 1 to 3 below, grammar, for example is tested in isolation. Grammar can best be tested through a reading comprehension passage or through productive (speaking and writing) skills. It is little wonder that grammatical structure of English is also taught using the *segregated-skills* approach. This is similar to what Nawab, (2012) observes in Pakistan. According to Nawab, (2012), Pakistani teachers of English do not teach English in order to help students to communicate freely in authentic situations; English is rather taught the same way other subjects such as *Social Studies, History, Mathematics*, etc. are taught. One of the reasons behind this approach to the teaching of English (according to Nawab, 2012) is *memory driven exam system*.

1. Edwin prefers fish ..... meat
  - A. to
  - B. for
  - C. from
  - D. than
  
2. You are a member of the society, ..... ?
  - A. isn't it
  - B. are you
  - C. aren't you
  - D. weren't you

3. The students set ..... early on their journey.

- A. up
- B. in
- C. out
- D. about

(BECE English Language Test, 2015)

When I observed the classroom lessons of 3 JHS teachers and 3 SHS teachers, I found out that *grammar* was not taught through *speech, writing, or reading*. This means that there is a disparity between curriculum developers' expectations and classroom practice. The teachers did not integrate the teaching of *grammar* with the language skills of *speaking, reading or writing*. Table 56 shows the summary of classroom observation. *Verbs, concord, complex prepositions, and question tags* were taught in isolation. The teacher at Saint Mary's Anglican JHS who was found teaching *reading* did not even allow the students to read the selected passage; she did all the reading herself and explained the meaning of the passage to the students. She ended the lesson with the techniques of answering BECE questions on *reading comprehension*.

The teacher at the Wesley Girls' SHS also directed his instruction towards the WASSCE. He kept repeating that the writer of the English textbook (Sackeyfio, 1999), that was being used in class, had been a chief examiner for English for many years. He therefore urged the students to take note of the summary writing tips given in the textbook. The students were, in effect, taught the techniques of answering summary questions in the WASSCE English language examination, but not how to develop the

skills of summarizing passages or texts in order to derive relevant information from reading materials as required by the curriculum.

**Table 56: Classroom Observation**

Date	School	Number of Students	Class	Time	Topic
5 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Aggrey Memorial SHS	60	2Science4	8:50am-10:10am	Verbs
10 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Wesley Girls' SHS	38	2Science5	8:45am-10:05am	Summary Writing
10 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Obrachire SHS	24	2Business	1:15pm-2:35pm	Concord
24 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Saint Mary's Anglican JHS	108	2B	9:00am-10:10am	Reading Comprehension
25 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	West End International School	26	2Lily	8:00am-9:20am	Complex Prepositions
26 <sup>th</sup> June, 2015	Saint Patrick's JHS	25	3B	8:00am-9:20am	Question Tags

Although the teachers' responses to the questionnaire item 29 showed that 71% of the teachers used the *integrated/communicative* approach in their teaching, they however indicated (as shown in Table 57) that their teaching was geared towards preparing students for the BECE/WASSCE. This is contradictory as the *integrated/communicative* approach is not reflected in the BECE/WASSCE. This suggests that the teachers did not actually use the *integrated/communicative* approach in their teaching. This is confirmed by the teaching method I found through the classroom

observation. Classroom observation showed that many of the teachers used the *segregated-skills* approach instead of the *integrated/communicative* approach. This finding is similar to that of Ahmad & Rao, (2012) who also observed that the teachers of English in their study claimed to use communicative approach in their teaching, but classroom observation showed a different situation.

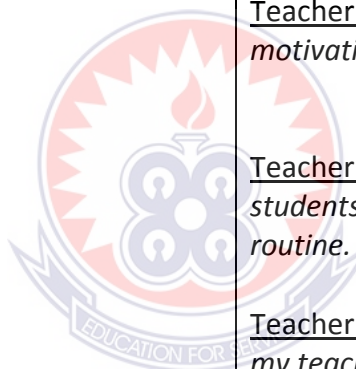
Table 57 below shows the summary the teachers' responses to questionnaire item 31 (*Do you think that your teaching is affected by the BECE/WASSCE? In what ways?*) Teacher 1 said that his students were always anxious about their exam, so teaching must be geared towards helping them to do well in the exam. According to Teacher 4, the three-year period is too short, so teachers are forced to concentrate on areas that are examined in the WASSCE. All the other teachers indicated that they were compelled to direct instruction towards the BECE/WASSCE. This means that their teaching is affected by the BECE/WASSCE. Ideally, teaching should be directed towards helping students to communicate freely in authentic or real life situations. This is what the teachers indicated they would do if their students were not going to write any high-stakes examination. The BECE/WASSCE compels the teachers of English to adopt the *segregated-skills* approach (instead of the required *integrated method*) to the teaching of English language in Ghana.

**Table 57: Teaching is affected by the BECE/WASSCE.**

Item	Responses
31. Do you think that your teaching is affected by the BECE/WASSCE? In what ways?	<p><u>Teacher 1</u>: Yes. Students are usually anxious about their exam; so teaching must be geared towards helping them to do well in the exam.</p> <p><u>Teacher 2</u>: Yes. I spend more time on the areas that are examined.</p> <p><u>Teacher 3</u>: Yes. Doing well in the WASSCE is our priority.</p>



	<p><u>Teacher 4</u>: Yes. The three-year period is too short, so you are forced to concentrate on areas that are examined in the WASSCE.</p> <p>Teacher 5: Yes. Teaching is done to suit the demands of the WASSCE.</p> <p><u>Teacher 6</u>: Yes. I am tempted to focus more on areas that are usually examined.</p> <p><u>Teacher 7</u>: Yes. I sometimes concentrate on areas that are examined.</p> <p><u>Teacher 8</u>: Yes. Teaching is influenced by the WASSCE</p> <p><u>Teacher 9</u>: Yes. The WASSCE is my main motivation for teaching.</p> <p><u>Teacher 10</u>: Yes. I teach and prepare students for the BECE as a matter of routine.</p> <p><u>Teacher 11</u>: Yes. I am compelled to relate my teaching to the demands of the BECE.</p> <p><u>Teacher 12</u>: Yes. You must teach in such a way that your students will be able to perform well in the BECE.</p> <p><u>Teacher 13</u>: Yes. Your focus is on the exam.</p> <p><u>Teacher 14</u>: Yes. I am forced to concentrate on areas that are covered in the BECE.</p> <p><u>Teacher 15</u>: Yes. I don't have the leeway to explore other language areas for the total development of my students.</p> <p><u>Teacher 16</u>: Yes. You are compelled to focus more on the examinable topics in</p>
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	<p><i>order for your students to perform well.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 17:</u> <i>Yes. I am always influenced by the thought that students have to sit for the WASSCE, instead of focusing on their total development.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 18:</u> <i>Yes. Teaching is geared towards preparing students for the WASSCE.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 19:</u> <i>Yes. Students demand to be taught to perform well in the WASSCE.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 20:</u> <i>Yes. I usually give more attention to the areas that are likely to be tested.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 21:</u> <i>Yes. The WASSCE restricts you.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 22:</u> <i>Yes. The WASSCE puts pressure on me to work harder to help my students to perform well in the exam.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 23:</u> <i>Yes. When it is getting to the time of the exam, we tend to focus on the exam alone.</i></p> <p><u>Teacher 24:</u> <i>Yes. Sometimes you are forced to focus on the demands of the BECE.</i></p>
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The teachers' responses to the questionnaire item 11 showed that they would like to change their method of teaching English if their students were not going to write BECE/WASSCE. All the 24 teachers sampled agreed that if there was no BECE/WASSCE, the method of their teaching would change, as shown in Fig 16. This confirms the claim by Madaus, (1988) that it is examination, but not the official stated curriculum, which is increasingly determining *what* is taught and *how* it is taught. As

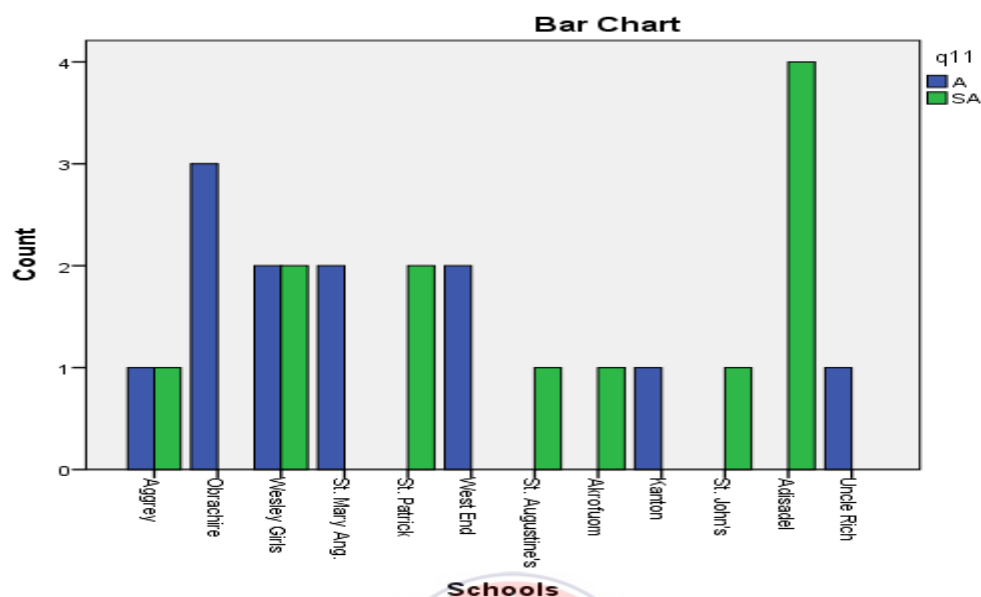
shown in Table 58 and Fig 17, the teachers from *Uncle Rich School, Kanton SHS, West End International School, Saint Mary's Anglican JHS, Obrachire SHS*, 2 teachers from *Wesley Girls' SHS* and one teacher from *Aggrey Memorial SHS* agreed (A) that they would change their language teaching method if their students were not going to write the BECE/WASSCE. All the 4 teachers from *Adisadel College*, the teachers from *Saint John's SHS, Akrofuom SHS, Saint Augustine's College, Saint Patrick's JHS*, 2 teachers from *Wesley Girls' SHS*, and one teacher from *Aggrey Memorial SHS* strongly agreed (SA) that if there was no BECE/WASACE, the method of their teaching would be different from the method they had been using.



**Table 58: If there is no BECE/WASSCE, the method of my teaching will be different from the method I am using now.**

			Q11		Total
			A	SA	
Schools	Aggrey	Count	1	1	2
		Expected Count	1.0	1.0	2.0
	Obrachire	Count	3	0	3
		Expected Count	1.5	1.5	3.0
	Wesley Girls	Count	2	2	4
		Expected Count	2.0	2.0	4.0
	St. Mary Ang.	Count	2	0	2
		Expected Count	1.0	1.0	2.0
	St. Patrick	Count	0	2	2
		Expected Count	1.0	1.0	2.0
	West End	Count	2	0	2
		Expected Count	1.0	1.0	2.0
	St. Augustine's	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.5	.5	1.0
	Akrofuom	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.5	.5	1.0
	Kanton	Count	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.5	.5	1.0
	St. John's	Count	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.5	.5	1.0
	Adisadel	Count	0	4	4
		Expected Count	2.0	2.0	4.0
	Uncle Rich	Count	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.5	.5	1.0
Total		Count	12	12	24
		Expected Count	12.0	12.0	24.0

**Fig 17: If there is no BECE/WASSCE, the method of my teaching will be different from the method I am using now.**



Similar results on the impact of BECE/WASSCE on teachers' instructional practices were obtained from interviews as shown in Table 59 below. The following teachers took part in the interview:

1. Teacher 1 (Interviewee 1): Aggrey Memorial SHS
2. Teacher 5 (Interviewee 2): Obrachire SHS
3. Teacher 9 (Interviewee 3): Wesley Girls' SHS
4. Teacher 10 (Interviewee 4): St. Mary's Anglican JHS
5. Teacher 12 (Interviewee 5): St. Patrick's JHS
6. Teacher 15 (Interviewee 6): West End JHS

It can be inferred from the interviews that the teachers' instructional practices are affected by the demands of the BECE/WASSCE. *Interviewee 1* indicated that he was not using the *integrated method* because the three year period was too short, so teaching must be directed towards the WASSCE. *Interviewee 6* also said that the integrated language teaching method is good in helping students to attain communicative competence, but it

may not be the best approach in preparing students to pass well in the BECE. *Interviewee 5* also indicated that whatever language teaching method we adopt would be useless if it does not prepare students well to pass the BECE. This means that the teachers' language teaching method is influenced by the demands of the BECE. Some of the teachers know that they are required to use the *integrated* language teaching method in their teaching. They are, however, not using it because of the standard set by the BECE/WASSCE.

**Table 59: Teachers' Interview Responses on Language Teaching Method if there was no BECE/WASSCE**

Item	Responses
Is your language teaching method influenced by the demands of the BECE/WASSCE? Explain.	<p><i>Interviewee 1: Yes. I know teachers of English in Ghana are expected to use the integrated language teaching method, but sometimes I don't use it because the three year period is too short, and students expect you to always direct instruction to the WASSCE.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 2: Yes. My language teaching method is somehow influenced by the WASSCE because students learn with past questions, so teaching must also be directed towards helping students to answer WASSCE past questions. This will help them to know that you are not teaching them 'non-sylla'.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 3: Yes. Students are always anxious about the WASSCE, so we must use any method that will prepare them well to pass the final exam.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 4: I am not aware of any language teaching method because I am not a trained teacher, but I teach with the sole aim of helping my students to do well in the BECE.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 5: Yes. I think every serious teacher would have to consider the demands of the BECE before looking at the</i></p>

	<p><i>English syllabus. Whatever language teaching method we adopt would be useless if it does not prepare students well to pass the BECE.</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee 6: Yes. The integrated language teaching method is good in helping students to attain communicative competence, but it may not be the best approach in preparing students to pass well in the BECE. As a teacher, my main motivation for teaching is to help my students to do well in the BECE.</i></p>
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### 4.3.3 Teachers' Attitudes towards Speaking Skills

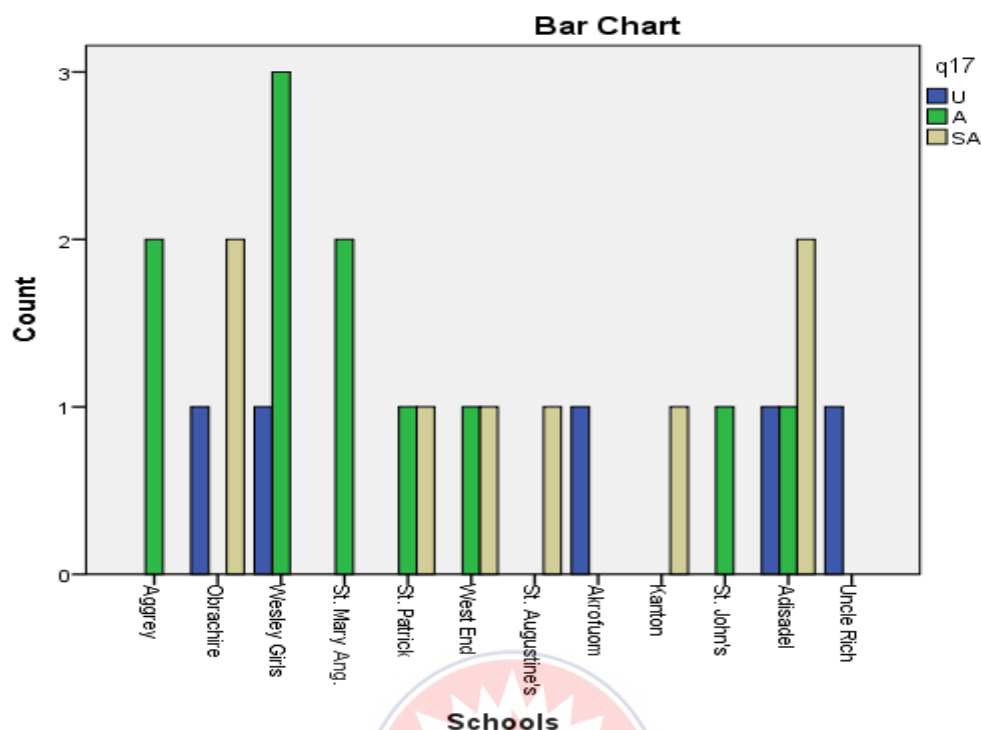
According to Richards, (2008) the mastery of *speaking skills* in English is a priority for many second-language or foreign-language learners, as learners often evaluate their success in language learning on the basis of how much they feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency. As indicated in 4.2.5, both the BECE and the WASSCE do not test candidates on *speaking skills*, even though the syllabus requires that 30% of *teaching, learning, and testing* should be devoted to *speaking skills*. Consequently, students may be able to perform well in the exam but may struggle to communicate in English through speaking. Nakata, (2014) observes a similar situation in Japan. According to Nakata, (2014), many Japanese students (including international students pursuing doctorate degrees) struggle to communicate in English because they do not learn how to *use* the English language; they rather learn the language for their tests. This section analyses the views of the teachers on the kind of attention that is given to *speaking skills*. The section analyses the teachers' responses to the questionnaire item 17 (*I do not teach my students speaking skills since they are not tested in the BECE/WASSCE*). As shown in Table 60 and Fig 18, none of the teachers disagreed with

the statement while 5 were undecided (U). 11 and 8 *agreed* (A) and *strongly agreed* (SA) respectively with the statement. This suggests that the teachers do not teach *speaking* because it is not tested in the BECE/WASSCE.

**Table 60: I do not teach my students speaking since it is not tested in the BECE/WASSCE**

			Q17			Total
			U	A	SA	
Schools	Aggrey	Count	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.4	.9	.7	2.0
	Obrachire	Count	1	0	2	3
		Expected Count	.6	1.4	1.0	3.0
	Wesley Girls	Count	1	3	0	4
		Expected Count	.8	1.8	1.3	4.0
	St. Mary Ang.	Count	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.4	.9	.7	2.0
	St. Patrick	Count	0	1	1	2
		Expected Count	.4	.9	.7	2.0
	West End	Count	0	1	1	2
		Expected Count	.4	.9	.7	2.0
	St. Augustine's	Count	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.2	.5	.3	1.0
	Akrofuom	Count	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.5	.3	1.0
	Kanton	Count	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.2	.5	.3	1.0
	St. John's	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.5	.3	1.0
	Adisadel	Count	1	1	2	4
		Expected Count	.8	1.8	1.3	4.0
	Uncle Rich	Count	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.5	.3	1.0
Total		Count	5	11	8	24
		Expected Count	5.0	11.0	8.0	24.0



**Fig 18: I do not teach my students speaking skills since it is not tested in the BECE/WASSCE**

#### 4.3.4 Teachers' Attention to Language Skills that are Examined

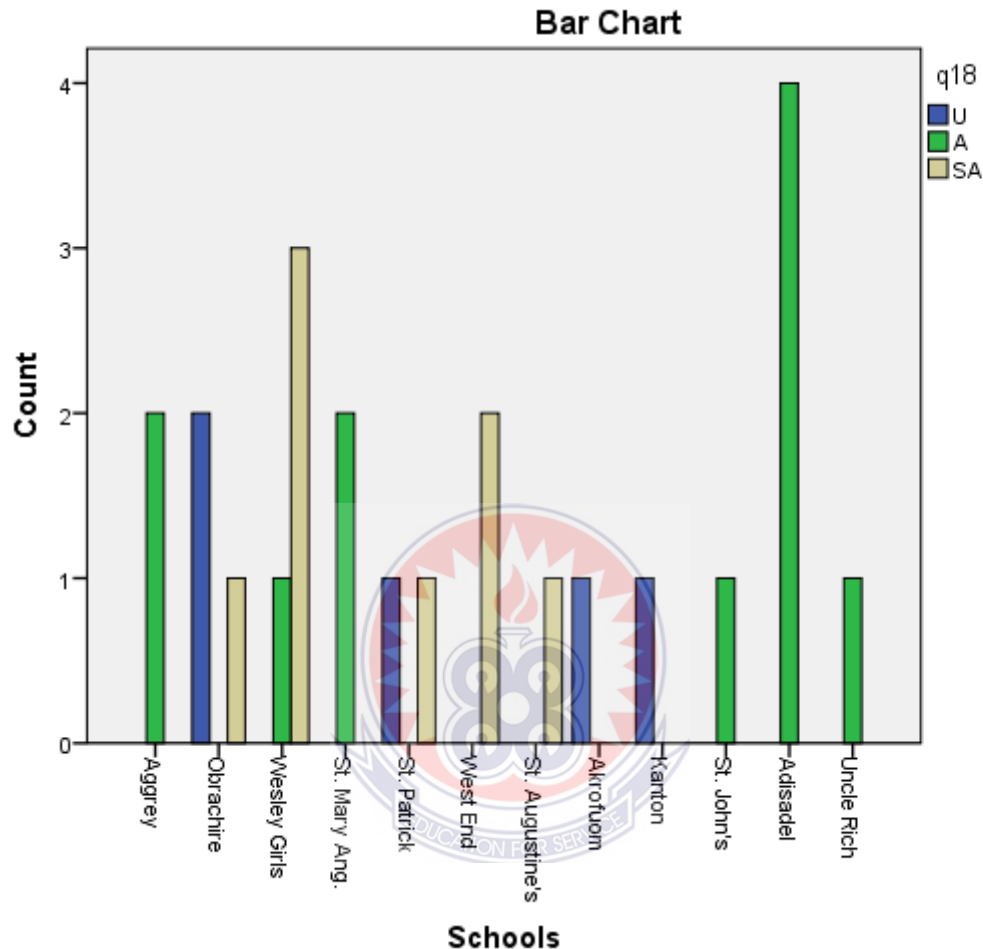
The teachers have already indicated that they are conversant with the goals and objectives of the English language syllabus, and that they do not teach their students *speaking* since it is not tested in the BECE/WASSCE. This presupposes that they will surely concentrate on areas or skills that are tested. This section analyses the teachers' responses to the questionnaire item 18 (*I will teach my students to improve their language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE*). As shown in Table 61 and Fig 19 below, although 5 out of the 24 teachers were undecided (U), none of them disagreed with the statement. 11 and 8 of the teachers *agreed* (A) and *strongly agreed* (SA) respectively with the statement, with all the 4 teachers from Adisadel College agreeing with the statement. What this means is that the teachers made every endeavour to help their students to improve their language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE. This

implies that very little or no attention is given to the language skills that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE.

**Table 61: I will teach my students to improve their language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE.**

			Q18			Total
			U	A	SA	
Schools	Aggrey	Count	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.4	.9	.7	2.0
	Obrachire	Count	2	0	1	3
		Expected Count	.6	1.4	1.0	3.0
	Wesley Girls	Count	0	1	3	4
		Expected Count	.8	1.8	1.3	4.0
	St. Mary Ang.	Count	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.4	.9	.7	2.0
	St. Patrick	Count	1	0	1	2
		Expected Count	.4	.9	.7	2.0
	West End	Count	0	0	2	2
		Expected Count	.4	.9	.7	2.0
	St. Augustine's	Count	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.2	.5	.3	1.0
	Akrofuom	Count	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.5	.3	1.0
	Kanton	Count	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.5	.3	1.0
	St. John's	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.5	.3	1.0
	Adisadel	Count	0	4	0	4
		Expected Count	.8	1.8	1.3	4.0
	Uncle Rich	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.2	.5	.3	1.0
Total		Count	5	11	8	24
		Expected Count	5.0	11.0	8.0	24.0

**Fig 19: I will teach my students to improve their language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE.**



#### 4.3.5 Conclusion

The official English language syllabus requires that teachers of English in Ghana should employ the *integrated language teaching* approach in their teaching. This means that *grammar*, for example, should not be taught separately. It should rather be taught through *speech, writing, or reading*. Learners should be allowed to interact naturally in the language. Analysis of the *questionnaires, semi-structured interviews* and *classroom observation* showed the following:

- i. The teachers were not using the *integrated language teaching* approach because the approach is not reflected in the BECE/WASSCE English language test. In effect, teachers do not teach students to communicate freely in English through speaking; teaching is rather geared towards preparing students to pass examinations.
- ii. The teachers would alter the *content* and the *method* of their teaching if there was no BECE/WASSCE. The teachers would rather focus more on *speaking skills* if their students were not going to write BECE/WASSCE.
- iii. The BECE/WASSCE does not allow teaching and learning to be based on the official English language curriculum issued by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the Ministry of Education.
- iv. The teachers do not teach speaking because it is not tested in the BECE/WASSCE.
- v. Teachers concentrate on language skills or areas that are covered in the BECE/WASSCE.

#### **4.4 The Influence of the BECE/WASSCE English Language Test on the Content of Students' Learning**

It is said that high-stakes or standardized tests limit student learning because the tests focus only on cognitive dimensions, ignoring many other qualities that are essential to student success in life (Squire, 2014). According to Alderson and Wall, (1993), *a test will influence what learners learn*. This means that just as high-stakes tests influence teachers' instructional practices, the tests also have the tendency of dictating what learners learn. In all the schools I visited, it was only the teachers who had possession of the official English language syllabus. The students did not bother themselves to have copies of the syllabus. However, many of the students had in their possession copies of questions and answer booklets. This showed that the students were not interested in familiarising themselves with the content of the syllabus; they were rather interested in learning language areas that were covered in the BECE/WASSCE. In effect, the curriculum is narrowed to those areas most likely to be tested (Alderson and Wall, 1993). The notion that tests drive learning is referred to as *measurement driven instruction* (Popham, 1987). This section reports on how the BECE/WASSCE English language test directs English language learning, that is, what candidates for the BECE/WASSCE actually learn in order to prepare and to perform well in the exam. This analyses data gathered through *questionnaires* and *interviews* to answer the research question 4:

***How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence what students learn?***

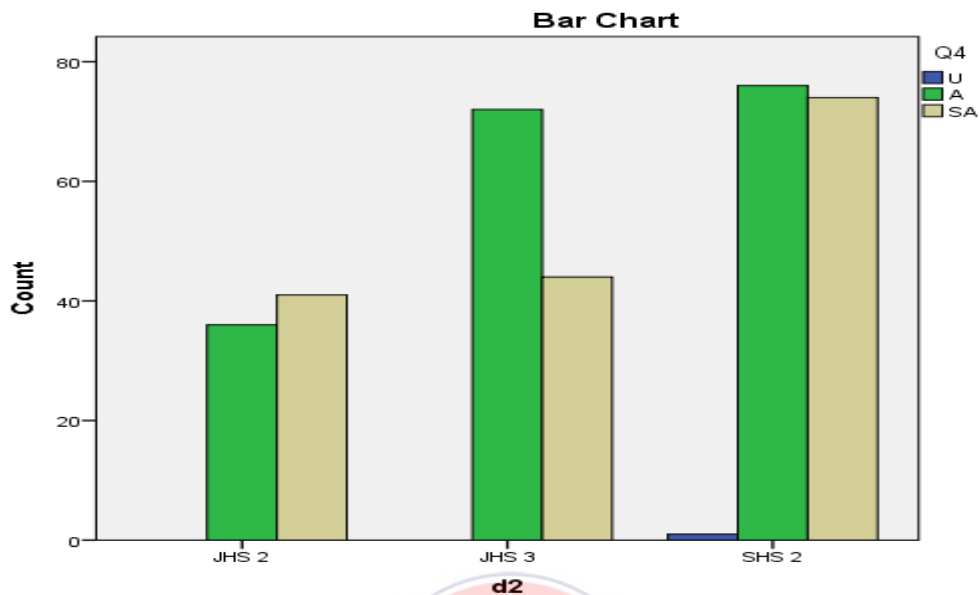
#### 4.4.1 The Content of Students' Learning

Syllabuses are intended to provide the list of topics that learners should study in a subject and to communicate the course *goals* and *content* to the learners. According to Parkes, and Harris, (2002), syllabuses serve three major roles: *the syllabus as a contract*, *the syllabus as a permanent record*, and *the syllabus as a learning tool*. Learners are required to familiarise themselves with the *goals* and *content* of the syllabus. Ideally students should be concerned about completing syllabuses before sitting for examinations. English language learners in Ghana are expected to be more concerned about the *objectives* and the *content* of the English language curriculum than the focus of the BECE/WASSCE. This section analyses the responses of the students to the questionnaire item 4 (*If there is no BECE/WASSCE, what I learn will be different*). The findings (as shown in Table 62 and Fig 20) indicate that the students rather consider the focus of the examination but not the objectives and the content of the syllabus.

**Table 62: If there is no BECE/WASSCE, what I learn will be different.**

			Q4			Total
			U	A	SA	
d2	JHS 2	Count	0	36	41	77
		Expected Count	.2	41.2	35.6	77.0
	JHS 3	Count	0	72	44	116
		Expected Count	.3	62.0	53.6	116.0
	SHS 2	Count	1	76	74	151
		Expected Count	.4	80.8	69.8	151.0
Total		Count	1	184	159	344
		Expected Count	1.0	184.0	159.0	344.0

Fig 20: If there is no BECE/WASSCE, what I learn will be different.



As shown in Table 62 and Fig 20 above, as many as 53.5% (184) and 46.2% (159) of the students *agreed* and *strongly agreed* respectively with the statement. This means that the students agree that if there is no BECE/WASSCE, they will alter *what* they are learning now. This confirms Alderson and Wall's washback hypothesis that *a test will influence what learners learn*. The students are always very mindful of their exam results. They therefore expect their teachers to direct instructions towards the BECE/WASSCE. These findings are similar to that of Anderson, (1990), Cheng, (1999), Shohamy, (2001), Ozmen, (2011), Ahmad & Rao, (2012), and Ghorbani & Neissari, (2015). The above results were further subjected to *Chi-Square* test (as shown in Table 63). The *Chi-Square* value of **6.610<sup>a</sup>** and the df of **4** means that there is no significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies. Table 64 also compares the views of the BECE candidates with that of WASSCE candidates. The *mean*

of **4.44** and **4.48** for BECE and WASSCE respectively suggests that WASSCE exerts a stronger influence on students than the BECE.

**Table 63: If there is no BECE/WASSCE, what I learn will be different.**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.610 <sup>a</sup>	4	.158
Likelihood Ratio	7.004	4	.136
Linear-by-Linear Association	.073	1	.787
N of Valid Cases	344		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

**Table 64: If there is no BECE/WASSCE, what I learn will be different.**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	0	0	0%	0%
Disagree 2	0	0	0%	0%
Undecided 3	0	1	0%	0.7%
Agree 4	108	76	56.0%	50.3%
Strongly Agree 5	85	74	44.0%	49.0%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	4.44	4.48		
Standard Deviation	.498	.515		



#### 4.4.2 Students' Learning with Past Questions

As indicated in 4.1.6, the students wanted their teachers to teach with past exam papers instead of the syllabus. This section analyses the students' dependence on past exam papers to prepare for the BECE/WASSCE English language test. The section analyses the students' responses to the questionnaire item 14 (*I always try my hands at BECE/WASSCE past questions*). As shown in Table 65 and Fig 21, only 1 of the students disagreed (D) with the statement, while 3 were undecided (U). 126 and 214 agreed (A) and strongly agreed (SA) respectively with the statement. This suggests that the students did not only demand to be taught with past exam papers, they also tried their hands on past BECE/WASSCE papers. The *Chi-Square* value of **2.474<sup>a</sup>** and the df of **6** (as shown in Table 66) mean that there is no significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies.

**Table 65: I always try my hands at BECE/WASSCE past questions**

			Q14				Total
			D	U	A	SA	
d2	JHS 2	Count	0	0	29	48	77
		Expected Count	.2	.7	28.2	47.9	77.0
	JHS 3	Count	0	1	41	74	116
		Expected Count	.3	1.0	42.5	72.2	116.0
	SHS 2	Count	1	2	56	92	151
		Expected Count	.4	1.3	55.3	93.9	151.0
Total	Count		1	3	126	214	344
	Expected Count		1.0	3.0	126.0	214.0	344.0

Fig 21: I always try my hands at BECE/WASSCE past questions

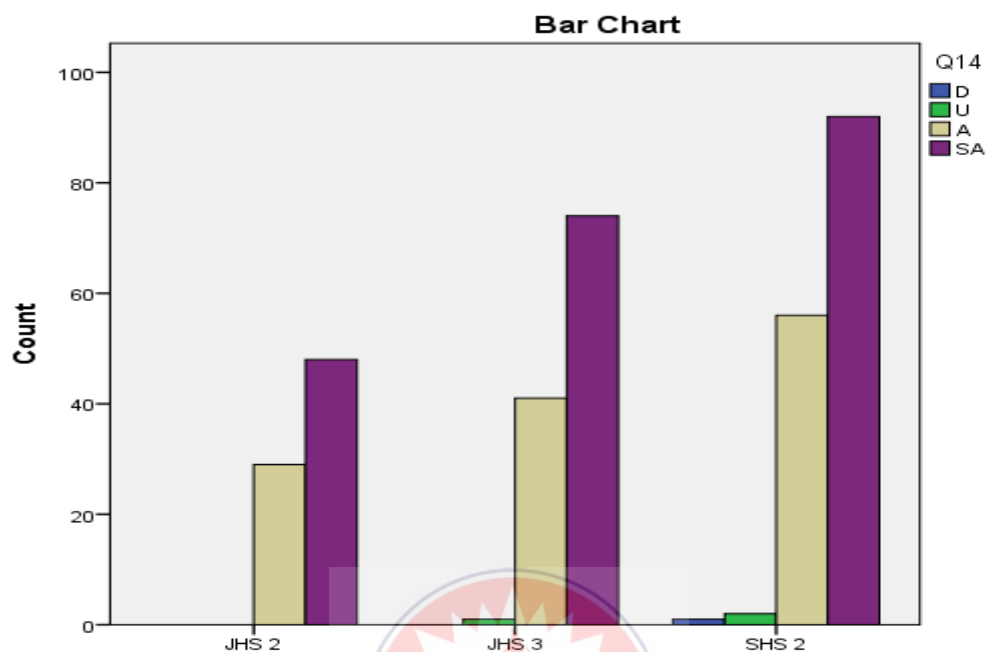


Table 66: Chi-Square Test for the Questionnaire item 14

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.474 <sup>a</sup>	6	.871
Likelihood Ratio	3.466	6	.749
Linear-by-Linear Association	.423	1	.515
N of Valid Cases	344		

a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

The findings show that both JHS and SHS candidates depend heavily on past questions to prepare for the BECE/WASSCE English language test. However, the *mean* figures of **4.63** and **4.58** for BECE and WASSCE respectively (as indicated in Table 67 below) suggest that the JHS students relied more on past questions than their SHS counterparts.

**Table 67: Summary of Students' Responses to the Questionnaire Item 14**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	0	0	0%	0%
Disagree 2	0	1	0%	0.7%
Undecided 3	1	2	0.5%	1.3%
Agree 4	70	56	36.3%	37.1%
Strongly Agree 5	122	92	63.2%	60.9%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	4.63	4.58		
Standard Deviation	.496	.558		

### Results from Interviews

The additional results obtained from interviews confirmed the above findings. All the students who were interviewed were final year SHS students. The interview was conducted on the 24th of November, 2015. It is little wonder that they tended to focus more on the examinable areas. The findings show that the WASSCE English language test exerts negative influence on the students' learning. 90% (27) of the students who were interviewed indicated that they were solving past questions in order to prepare well for the WASSCE. Although Interviewees 18, 19, and 21 do not mention past questions, it can be inferred from their responses that it is the WASSCE that influences *what* they

learn. For instance, Interviewee 18 said that he was revising and learning new things to enhance his performance in the WASSCE. Interviewee 19 also said that his focus was on the examinable areas, and that he was working hard on those areas. Interviewee 28 also said that he was revising what he needed to know for the WASSCE. Table 68 below shows the summary of their responses to the question: *How are you preparing for the BECE/WASSCE?*

**Table 68: How Students Prepare for the WASSCE**

Item	Responses
How are you preparing for the BECE/WASSCE?	<p><u>Interviewee 1</u>: I am just solving past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 2</u>: I am revising my notes and solving past questions</p> <p><u>Interviewee 3</u>: I am reading the English textbooks and solving some past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 4</u>: I am reading my notes and solving past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 5</u>: I study examinable areas and try my hands on past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 6</u>: I am going through past questions and learning the areas that are always covered in the WASSCE.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 7</u>: I am learning and solving past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 8</u>: I learn more about the examinable areas and solve past questions also.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 9</u>: I solve more past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 10</u>: I do read the notes given by our teacher and try my hands on past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 11</u>: I am reading my notes and the English textbook and solving some past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 12</u>: I am preparing for the WASSCE through constant revision and solving of trial questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 13</u>: I am revising my notes solving past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 14</u>: I am revising my notes and solving more past questions.</p>

	<p><u>Interviewee 15</u>: I am learning by solving past questions and likely examination questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 16</u>: I am solving past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 17</u>: I am reading and solving past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 18</u>: I am revising and learning new things to enhance my performance in the WASSCE.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 19</u>: My focus is on the examinable areas. I am working hard on them.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 20</u>: I am solving past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 21</u>: I am solving a lot of past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 22</u>: I am solving any past questions I come across.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 23</u>: I am preparing by solving a lot of past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 24</u>: I am preparing for the WASSCE by solving more past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 25</u>: I am reading and answering a lot of past questions daily.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 26</u>: I am reading my English textbook, learning more vocabulary, and solving past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 27</u>: I am learning very hard by increasing study hours and solving more past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 28</u>: I am revising what I need to know for the WASSCE.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 29</u>: I am reading and solving more past questions.</p> <p><u>Interviewee 30</u>: I am reading my notes and solving more past questions.</p>
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#### **4.4.3 The Use of BECE/WASSCE Past Questions in Class Tests and Mock**

##### **Examinations**

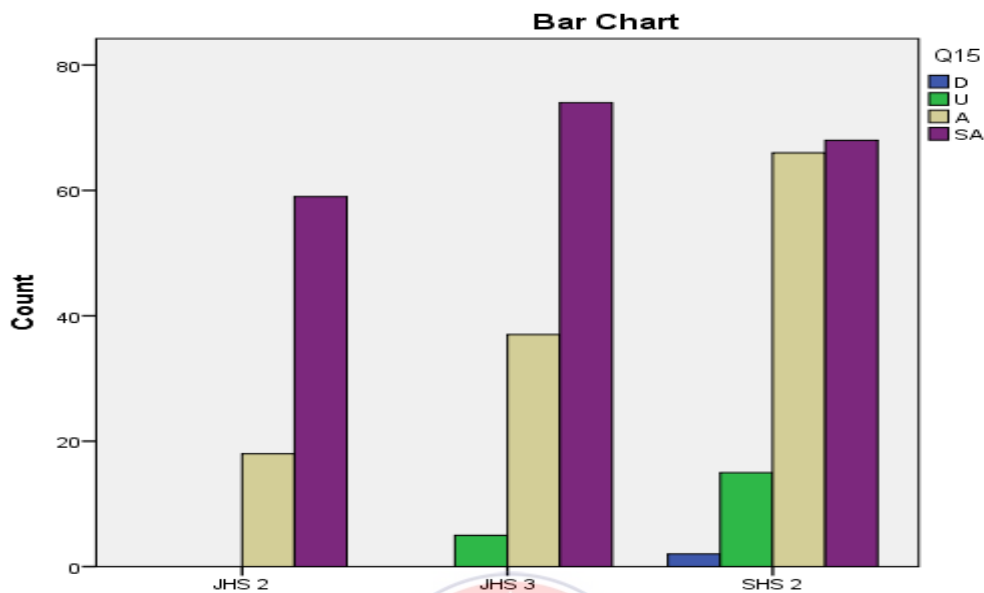
As indicated in 4.1.6 and 4.4.2, the students wanted their teachers to teach them with past BECE/WASSCE papers because they also depended heavily on the past exam papers in their preparation towards the examination. Teaching and learning are not based on the content of the syllabus; they are rather directed towards the demands of the BECE/WASSCE. This section analyses the views of the students on the use of

BECE/WASSCE past questions in class tests and mock examinations. The section analyses the students' responses to the questionnaire item 15 (*Our teachers should use BECE/WASSCE past questions in all class tests and mock examinations to make us familiar with the questions*). As shown in Table 69 and Fig 22, only 2 of the students disagreed (D) with the statement while 20 were undecided (U). 121 and 201 *agreed* (A) and *strongly agreed* (SA) respectively with the statement. This suggests that the students wanted their teachers to use BECE/WASSCE past questions in all class tests and mock examinations. Table 70 also shows the *Chi-Square* test of these results. The *Chi-Square* value of **27.991<sup>a</sup>** and the *df* of **6** suggest that there is no significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies.

**Table 69: Our teachers should use BECE/WASSCE past questions in all class tests and mock examinations to make us familiar with the questions.**

			Q15				Total
			D	U	A	SA	
d2	JHS 2	Count	0	0	18	59	77
		Expected Count	.4	4.5	27.1	45.0	77.0
	JHS 3	Count	0	5	37	74	116
		Expected Count	.7	6.7	40.8	67.8	116.0
	SHS 2	Count	2	15	66	68	151
		Expected Count	.9	8.8	53.1	88.2	151.0
Total		Count	2	20	121	201	344
		Expected Count	2.0	20.0	121.0	201.0	344.0

**Fig 22: Our teachers should use BECE/WASSCE past questions in all class tests and mock examinations to make us familiar with the questions.**



**Table 70: Chi-Square Tests for Questionnaire Item 15**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.991 <sup>a</sup>	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	32.661	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	27.101	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	344		

a. 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .45.

Table 71 below compares the views of BECE candidates with that of WASSCE candidates. The *mean* and the *standard deviation* of 4.66 and .526 respectively for the BECE and 4.32 and .708 respectively for WASSCE suggest that the JHS students expressed a stronger desire to be tested with past exam papers than their SHS counterparts, and that the views of the JHS students did not differ significantly from each other as compared with the SHS students. What this means is that the JHS students were almost saying the same thing.

**Table 71: Summary of Students' Responses to the Questionnaire Item 15**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	0	0	0%	0%
Disagree 2	0	2	0%	1.3%
Undecided 3	5	15	2.6%	9.9%
Agree 4	55	66	28.5%	43.7%
Strongly Agree 5	133	68	68.9%	45.0%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	4.66	4.32		
Standard Deviation	.526	.708		

#### 4.4.4 Conclusion

Analysis of the data gathered through *questionnaires* and *interviews* revealed the following as far as the content of students' learning is concerned.

- i. It was the BECE/WASSCE that influenced *what* students learned, but not the syllabus. The students therefore considered past questions more important than the syllabus. The content and the objective of the curriculum were not considered important in the students' learning.
- ii. The students were concerned with the focus of the BECE/WASSCE but not the objectives and the content of the syllabus.



- iii. If there was no BECE/WASSCE, the students would change the content and the focus of their learning.
- iv. The students depended heavily on past questions to prepare for the BECE/WASSCE English language test.
- v. The students wanted their teachers to use BECE/WASSCE past questions in all class tests and mock examinations.

#### **4.5 Negative Washback and Learners' Communicative Competence**

According to the official English language syllabus issued by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the Ministry of Education, the aim of teaching English is to assist learners to communicate effectively in English and to improve their communicative competence so that they can communicate effectively and confidently with other users of English. To achieve this aim of teaching English, teachers of English in Ghana are required to adopt the *integrated approach* to the teaching of *receptive* (listening and reading) and *productive* (speaking and writing) skills.

The foregoing discussions show that students and teachers tend to concentrate on language areas or skills that are covered in the BECE/WASSCE, and that the BECE/WASSCE encourages teachers to narrow the curriculum leading to *teaching to the test* (Pan, 2009). The teachers, therefore, do not use the *integrated* language teaching method in their teaching. One of the teachers I interviewed said that the *integrated* language teaching method was good in helping students to attain communicative competence, but it might not be the best approach in preparing students to pass well in the BECE. As the teachers and the students narrow the curriculum to those areas most

likely to be tested, there is bound to be *negative washback effect* on teaching and learning of English language. This is because the major concern of the teachers is just to help their students to perform well in examinations, but not to help the students to communicate freely in authentic or real life situations. This section reports on how negative washback affects students' communicative competence. The section makes use of data gathered through *questionnaires* and *interviews* to answer the research question 5:

***How does negative/positive washback affect students' communicative competence?***

#### **4.5.1 The Relationship between Students' Performance at the BECE/WASSCE and Communicative Competence**

Just as it is possible for a literate native speaker of a language to fail an exam in their native language, it is also possible for a non-native speaker to perform well in a language exam but may not be able to speak the language fluently. According to Lewis, (2016) studying a language, just like passing a language exam, *will never help learners to speak the language*. Studying a language can help learners to know the linguistics of the language and to pass an exam that is also designed to test linguistic competence of learners. It is therefore possible for many students to perform well in the BECE/WASSCE English language test but they may not be able to speak the language fluently. This is because the BECE/WASSCE English language test is designed primarily to test linguistic competence of learners. However, the ability to translate linguistic competence into actual performance in authentic situations does not come automatically. The exam must also test the students' ability to use the language in real life situations. This section analyses the views of the teachers on the possibility of passing the

BECE/WASSCE English language test without being able to speak the language fluently in authentic situations. As shown in Table 72 below, all the 6 teachers who were interviewed indicated that it was possible for a candidate to perform well in the English language exam without being communicatively competent. This is because, as interviewee 3 indicated, teaching and learning were not geared towards preparing students to communicate freely in the language, but just to perform well in the examination. Interviewee 6 also said that because the examination was not meant to test the communicative competence of candidates, a lot of people pass the exam but they struggle to communicate in English. What this means is that there is very little or no direct correlation between the performance of students at the BECE/WASSCE and communicative competence. That is, candidates who perform well in the BECE/WASSCE English test may be able to read and write the language well but may struggle to speak the language in authentic situations. This is because, as indicated by the Interviewee 5, teachers and students focus more on *writing* and *reading* skills.

**Table 72: Teachers' Interview Responses on BECE/WASSCE English Language Test and Students' Communicative Competence.**

Item	Responses
10. Looking at the structure of the BECE/WASSCE, is it possible for a candidate to perform well in the English language exam without being communicative competent? Explain.	<p><u>Interviewee 1:</u> <i>Yes. The students need to concentrate more on examinable areas than the speaking skills.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 2:</u> <i>Yes. The students familiarize themselves with the demands or the areas of the examination and concentrate more on those examinable areas.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 3:</u> <i>Yes, because teaching and learning are not geared towards preparing students to communicate freely in the language, but to perform well in the examination.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 4:</u> <i>Yes. The students are able to study and follow the pattern of the</i></p>

	<p><i>examination.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 5:</u> <i>Yes, because teachers and students focus more on writing and reading skills, but language is spoken rather than written.</i></p> <p><u>Interviewee 6:</u> <i>Yes, because the examination is not meant to test the communicative competence of candidates. A lot of people pass the exam but they struggle to communicate in English.</i></p>
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#### **4.5.2 Students' Perception about the Impact of the BECE/WASSCE English Language Test**

The students indicated in 4.4 that if there was no BECE/WASSCE, they would alter the *content* and the *focus* of their learning. This suggests that the BECE/WASSCE English language test influences what the students learn. According to Bailey, (1999) tests are often perceived as exerting a conservative force which impedes progress. However a good language test will have a positive influence on the learner. This section analyses the views of the students on how they perceive the BECE/WASSCE English language test. The section analyses students' responses to the questionnaire items 19 (*BECE/WASSCE influences my English in a positive way*).

As shown in Table 73 and Fig 23 below, 135 of the students were undecided (U) while 3 and 7 *agreed* (A) and *strongly agreed* (SA) respectively with the statement. 136 and 63 *disagreed* (D) and *strongly disagreed* (SD) respectively with the statement. 199 (57.8%) of the students did not think that the BECE/WASSCE English language test influenced them in a positive way. This means that the BECE/WASSCE English language test is considered as exerting a negative washback effect on the students. It is little wonder that the students focused on practising examination techniques rather than language learning

activities. The implication of this is that students are not able to learn real-life knowledge but instead learn discrete points of knowledge that are covered in the BECE/WASSCE.

**Table 73: BECE/WASSCE influences my English in a positive way.**

			Q19					Total
			SD	D	U	A	SA	
d2	JHS 2	Count	19	34	20	2	2	77
		Expected Count	14.1	30.4	30.2	.7	1.6	77.0
	JHS 3	Count	11	46	59	0	0	116
		Expected Count	21.2	45.9	45.5	1.0	2.4	116.0
	SHS 2	Count	33	56	56	1	5	151
		Expected Count	27.7	59.7	59.3	1.3	3.1	151.0
Total		Count	63	136	135	3	7	344
		Expected Count	63.0	136.0	135.0	3.0	7.0	344.0

**Fig 23: BECE/WASSCE influences my English in a positive way.**

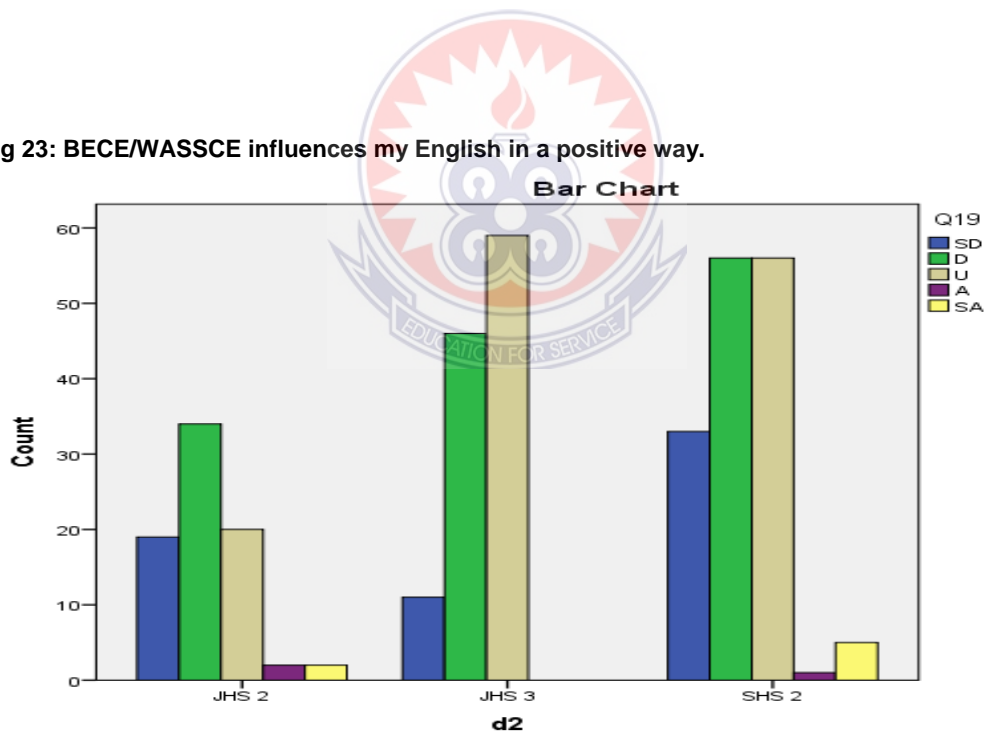


Table 74 below shows the comparison of the results between the BECE candidates and the WASSCE candidates. The results show that both the BECE and the WASSCE exert a *negative washback effect* on the students. The *mean* values of **2.26** and

**2.31** for the WASSCE and the BECE respectively show that there is no significant difference between the views of the WASSCE candidates and the BECE candidates, and that the students disagreed with the statement that *BECE/WASSCE influenced their English in a positive way*. What this means is that they were of the view that the BECE/WASSCE influenced them negatively. In effect, the aim of learning English language, according to the students, is not to use the language to communicate freely in authentic situations, but just to perform well in the BECE/WASSCE. The students consider passing the BECE/WASSCE English language test more important than their ability to communicate effectively and confidently in English with other users of the language, as specified in the English language syllabus.

**Table 74: BECE/WASSCE influences my English in a positive way.**

	Frequency		Percentage	
	BECE	WASSCE	BECE	WASSCE
Strongly Disagree 1	30	33	15.5%	21.9%
Disagree 2	80	56	41.5%	37.1%
Undecided 3	79	56	40.9%	37.1%
Agree 4	2	1	1.0%	0.7%
Strongly Agree 5	2	5	1.0%	3.3%
Total	193	151	100%	100%
Mean	2.31	2.26		
Standard Deviation	.781	.922		

### 4.5.3 *Teaching to the Test* and Students' Communicative Competence

According to Phelps, (2011), *teaching to the test* refers to the practice of teaching students with the sole aim of equipping them to pass tests rather than teaching the subject. The foregoing discussions have shown that there some topics in the English language syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. Since what is tested always becomes what is valued and taught (McEwen 1995:42), teachers who are anxious about their students' performance at the exam will surely concentrate on those examinable areas. This will adversely affect the students' communicative competence if the areas that are not examined are essential for the total development of the students. Although *speaking* is fundamental to human communication, both the BECE and the WASSCE do not test *speaking skills*. Because of this, the teachers indicated that they did not teach *speaking skills* to their students. It seems obvious that teaching only topics and language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE will adversely affect students' communicative competence. This section examines the extent to which *teaching to the test* affects the students' communicative competence. The section analyses the teachers' responses to the questionnaire item 19 (*Teaching only topics and language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE will adversely affect students' communicative competence*).

As shown in Table 75 and Fig 24 below, none of the teachers disagreed with the statement. However, 6 of them (3 JHS teachers and 3 SHS teachers) remained neutral or were undecided (U). 11 (46%) and 7 (29%) *agreed* (A) and *strongly agreed* (SA) respectively with the statement. This means that 75% of the teachers agreed with the statement, which also means that the teachers are of the view that teaching only topics

and language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASCE will adversely affect students' communication competence.

The BECE/WASSCE English language test focuses mainly on *writing* and *reading* skills. *Speaking*, which is fundamental to human communication, is not covered in the BECE/WASSCE English language test. If teachers and students concentrate on only examinable areas or skills, students who pass the BECE/WASSCE English language test may be good at *reading* and *writing* but they may struggle to communicate through *speaking* in real life situations.

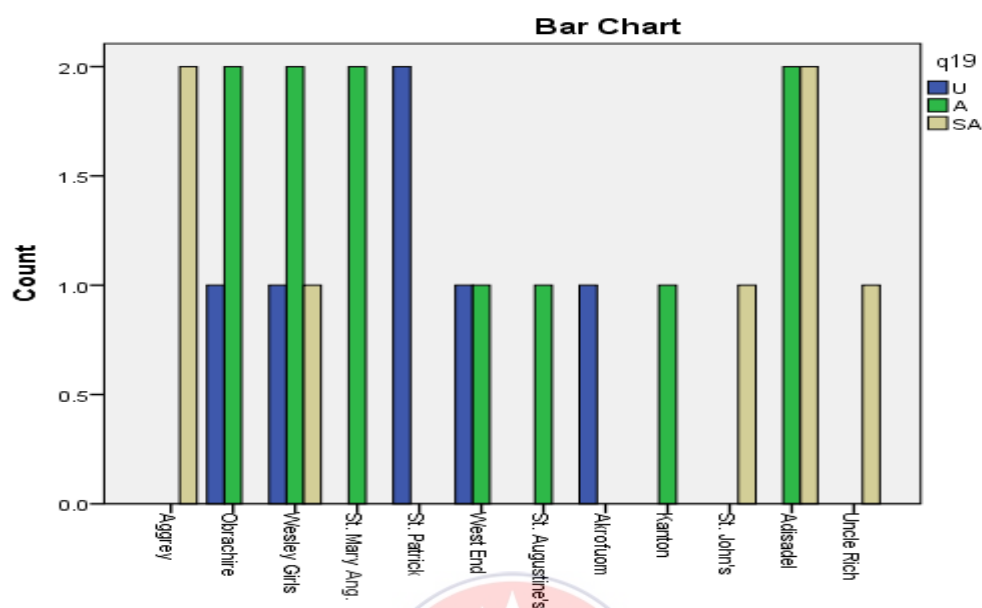




**Table 75: Teaching only topics and language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE will adversely affect students' communicative competence.**

			Q19			Total
			U	A	SA	
Schools	Aggrey	Count	0	0	2	2
		Expected Count	.5	.9	.6	2.0
	Obrachire	Count	1	2	0	3
		Expected Count	.8	1.4	.9	3.0
	Wesley Girls	Count	1	2	1	4
		Expected Count	1.0	1.8	1.2	4.0
	St. Mary Ang.	Count	0	2	0	2
		Expected Count	.5	.9	.6	2.0
	St. Patrick	Count	2	0	0	2
		Expected Count	.5	.9	.6	2.0
	West End	Count	1	1	0	2
		Expected Count	.5	.9	.6	2.0
	St. Augustine's	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.3	.5	.3	1.0
	Akrofuom	Count	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	.3	.5	.3	1.0
	Kanton	Count	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	.3	.5	.3	1.0
	St. John's	Count	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.3	.5	.3	1.0
	Adisadel	Count	0	2	2	4
		Expected Count	1.0	1.8	1.2	4.0
	Uncle Rich	Count	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	.3	.5	.3	1.0
Total		Count	6	11	7	24
		Expected Count	6.0	11.0	7.0	24.0

**Fig 24: Teaching only topics and language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE will adversely affect students' communicative competence.**



#### 4.5.4 Conclusion

The analysis of *questionnaires* and *interviews* on how *teaching to the test* and *negative washback* impact on students' communicative competence revealed the following:

- i. It is possible for a candidate to perform well in the BECE/WASSCE English language exam without being communicatively competent.
- ii. The BECE/WASSCE English language test is considered as exerting a negative washback effect on the students.
- iii. *Teaching to the test* adversely affects students' communicative competence.

## **CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSIONS, SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is the concluding part of the thesis. It presents the summary of the main research findings and recommendations. The study has examined the impact of the BECE/WASSCE English language test on teaching and learning of English language in Ghana. The objectives of the study were to investigate:

- i. The influence of BECE/WASSCE English language test on the learning behaviours of students
- ii. The extent to which the BECE/WASSCE English language test is aligned with the English language curriculum
- iii. The effect of BECE/WASSCE English language test on instructional practices of teachers
- iv. How the BECE/WASSCE English language test influences *how* and *what* students learn
- v. How negative/positive washback affects students' communicative competence

### **5.2 Discussions on Findings to Research Question One**

The study made use of the data gathered through *questionnaires* and *interviews* to provide answers to the research question 1:

***How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence the learning behaviours of students?***

The areas explored under the research Question 1 were the following:

- i. The language areas students expected their teachers to focus on
- ii. How the BECE/WASSCE influenced *how* students learn English
- iii. Language skills or areas that attracted students' attention
- iv. The use of past exam papers in teaching and learning of English
- v. Students' preference for teachers who were WAEC examiners
- vi. Students' desire to be coached to answer BECE/WASSCE questions
- vii. Students' anxiety about the BECE/WASSCE

The analysis of the students' *questionnaire* and *interview* showed that both JHS students and SHS students wanted their teachers to concentrate on language areas that would only make them perform well in their final examinations. However, the JHS students and BECE candidates tended to put more pressure on their teachers to concentrate on examinable areas than the WASSCE candidates. This means that the BECE exerted a greater negative washback effect on the students than the WASSCE. This might be attributed to the criterion used in the selection of JHS leavers into SHS. It is not only the grades of the candidates that are considered for selection into senior high schools. Selection of JHS leavers into SHS is also based on the raw scores of candidates. As indicated in 2.4, *grade 1* is between 80% and 100%. Two candidates, *A* and *B* with the average scores of 82% and 98% respectively have both got grade 1, but the *candidate B* could be considered first for a *grade A school* or for their *first choice school*. This makes the competition in the JHS keener than that of the SHS.

The study again revealed that although both the BECE and the WASSCE created some anxiety in students, the BECE created a higher level of anxiety in students than the WASSCE. This is because, unlike the selection into second cycle institutions which is based on candidates' raw scores, the selection into tertiary institutions and programmes is only based on students' grades. For this reason:

- i. The BECE candidates tended to put more pressure on their teachers to concentrate on examinable areas than the WASSCE candidates.
- ii. The BECE candidates focused their attention on the examinable areas more than the WASSCE candidates.
- iii. The JHS students expressed a stronger desire for their teachers to teach with past questions than their SHS counterparts.
- iv. The JHS students expressed a stronger preference for teachers who were examiners than their SHS counterparts.
- v. The BECE candidates expressed a stronger desire to be coached to answer BECE questions than the WASSCE candidates.

In effect, the BECE tended to exert a greater negative washback effect on the students than the WASSCE in the study. Although this comparison of washback effect of the BECE and the WASSCE English language test on JHS students and SHS students respectively was not the focus of the study, it became necessary because the present washback study considered the two high-stakes examinations. An examination of the related literature showed that many of the washback studies examined the impact of only one high-stakes examination on teaching and learning at a time. The current study is among the few washback studies that focus on two high-stakes examinations.

The findings revealed that both BECE and WASSCE English language tests exerted negative influence on the students' learning, and that very little attention was given to language areas or skills that were not covered in BECE and WASSCE. The BECE/WASSCE English language test had detrimental effects on students' communicative competence. This is because there was a mismatch between the content of the syllabus and the focus of the BECE/WASSCE English language test. The study again revealed that there was not much difference between the JHS students and the SHS students on *how* they learnt English. Both examinations influenced *how* students learnt English. This confirms the Alderson and Wall's washback hypotheses that a test will influence *what* and *how* learners learn.

In order to bring about a positive washback effect, WAEC should make every endeavour to assess students on all the language skills at all levels, namely: *listening skills, reading skills, writing skills, and reading skills*. Until this is done, teachers of English and their students will continue to concentrate on only examinable areas.

### **5.3 Discussions on Findings to Research Question Two**

The study employed the use of the data gathered through *questionnaires, classroom observation, and document analysis* to provide answers to the research question 2:

***To what extent is the BECE/WASSCE English language test aligned with the English language curriculum?***

The following were the areas explored under the research Question 2:

- i. Language areas or skills in the syllabus that were not examined in the BECE/WASSCE
- ii. Teachers' knowledge about the goals and objectives of the English language syllabus
- iii. The BECE/WASSCE English language test and the goals and objectives of the syllabus
- iv. Measuring how much of the syllabus content students had mastered

The study revealed that there were some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that were not examined in the BECE/WASSCE, that is the English language curriculum was not aligned with the English language test. This means that the BECE/WASSCE English language test did not fully reflect the content of the syllabus. This tended to create room for the teachers to *teach to the test*. For instance, the teachers indicated that they were conversant with the goals and objectives of the English language syllabus however they consciously concentrated on examinable areas.

The study also revealed that the BECE/WASCE English language test did not fully cover the goals and objectives of the English language syllabus. The English language syllabus, issued by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the Ministry of Education, has been designed, among other things, to assist the pupil to develop the basic language skills of *listening, speaking, reading* and *writing*. Teachers of English in Ghana are therefore expected to get their students to speak English as much as possible for them to be able to acquire effective skills in listening and speaking the English language. Regrettably, not all these skills were covered in the BECE/WASSCE. It is little wonder that the study revealed that the BECE/WASSCE

English language test was not intended to measure how much of the syllabus content students had mastered. The study again showed that teachers did not teach their students *speaking* because it was not tested. They however indicated that if there was no BECE/WASSCE, they would concentrate more on the *speaking* or *oral skills*, because language is spoken rather than written.

As indicated in 2.3.3, one of the features of a good test is *practicality*, that is, a good test should be practical. What this means is that the test should not require more resources than what are available to administer it. We cannot fault the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) too much if the Council lacks the needed human and material resources to administer *speaking skills* for now. For instance, a total of 461,013 candidates from 14,267 public and private junior high schools sat for the BECE in 2016. When it comes to teaching and testing *speaking skills*, we are in a quandary. According to the WAEC, the Council had to abandon the oral aspect of Oral English in the 1980's because it was too expensive and not effective.

In spite of the above constraints, the WAEC must make every endeavour to test candidates on all the language skills in future to make the BECE/WASSCE English language test more comprehensive and to minimise *teaching to the test*. The test must be designed to reflect the goals and objectives of the curriculum, and all the language skills and areas must also be tested in suitable proportion. In the words of Siddiek, (2010), the *content* and the *techniques* of the test should not be at variance with the goals and objectives of the syllabus.



#### 5.4 Discussions on Findings to Research Question Three

The study made use of the data gathered through *questionnaires*, *semi structured interviews* and *classroom observation* to answer the research question 3:

***How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence instructional practices of teachers?***

The following were the areas investigated under the research question 3:

- i. Teachers' instructional content
- ii. Teachers' instructional method
- iii. Teachers' attitudes towards speaking skills
- iv. Teachers' concentration on language skills that are examined

The study revealed that the BECE/WASSCE English language test did not allow teaching and learning to be based on the official English language syllabus issued by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the Ministry of Education. The teachers indicated in the study that they would alter the *content* and the *method* of their teaching if there was no BECE/WASSCE. The *language teaching method* recommended in the official English language curriculum to teachers of English in Ghana is the *integrated/communicative approach*. The aim of this *language teaching method* is to expose students to authentic language and to challenge them to interact naturally in the language. One can deduce from this that the curriculum is designed primarily to help students *to speak* the language fluently in authentic situations. However, the BECE/WASSCE English language test was not designed to measure students' ability to speak English in authentic situations.

It was again revealed that the BECE/WASSCE English language test did not cover *speaking skills* and that the recommended language teaching method was not reflected in the test. For instance 30% and 25% of the BECE English language test and WASSCE English language test respectively was on *language structure* or *grammar* that was tested in isolation. For this reason, the teachers in the study also employed the *segregated-skills approach* in their teaching, just to satisfy the requirements of the examination. Some of the teachers indicated that the *integrated language teaching approach* could help the students to attain communicative competence but that language teaching method might not help students to perform well in the BECE/WASSCE English language test.

The teachers showed a negative attitude towards the teaching of *speaking skills* because both BECE and WASSCE did not cover *speaking skills*. Very little or no attention was given to the language skills or areas that were not examined in the BECE/WASSCE. The teachers only concentrated on language skills or areas that were covered in the BECE/WASSCE. The teachers therefore taught their students with *past questions* instead of the *syllabus*.

It is therefore recommended that the *integrated language teaching approach* should be reflected in the BECE/WASSCE English language test. That is, the BECE/WASSCE English language test should be designed to test students' ability to communicate or speak freely in authentic or real life situations. If this is done, teachers of English will naturally employ the recommended *language teaching method* in their teaching. This is because it was the BECE/WASSCE English language test that

compelled the teachers of English to adopt the *segregated-skills approach* (instead of the required language teaching method).

### **5.5 Discussions on Findings to Research Question Four**

The study employed the use of data gathered through *questionnaires* and *interviews* to answer the research question 4:

***How does the BECE/WASSCE English language test influence what students learn?***

The aspects explored under the Research Question 4 were:

- i. The content of students' learning
- ii. Students' learning with past questions
- iii. Students' desire to be taught with past questions

The findings showed that it was the BECE/WASSCE that influenced what students learned, but not the syllabus. The students therefore considered past questions more important than the syllabus. The *content* and the *objective* of the curriculum were not considered important in the students' learning. The students in the study were rather concerned with the focus of the BECE/WASSCE English language test but not the *objectives* and the *content* of the syllabus. Learning was not based on the *content* of the syllabus; it was rather directed towards the demands of the BECE/WASSCE English language test. They therefore depended heavily on past questions to prepare for the BECE/WASSCE English language test. The JHS students, however, relied more on past questions than their SHS counterparts. They also wanted their teachers to use BECE/WASSCE past questions in all class tests and mock examinations. However, the JHS students expressed a stronger desire to be tested with past exam papers than their

SHS counterparts. As indicated in 5.2, the BECE exerted a greater negative washback effect on the students than the WASSCE, because there was keener competition among the BECE candidates for places in the *grade A* schools. It was therefore not surprising that the JHS students expressed a stronger desire to be tested with past exam papers than their SHS counterparts. This means that negative washback does not automatically have negative effects on students. Negative washback can bring about healthy competition among students.

The findings again showed that the students just concentrated on solving past questions to prepare for the BECE/WASSCE English language test. It was again revealed that the WASSCE English language test exerted a negative influence on the students' learning. For this reason, the students indicated that if there was no BECE/WASSCE, they would change the *content* and the *focus* of their learning.

To minimise the negative washback effect and to encourage students to focus on completing the syllabus before sitting for the examination, the BECE/WASSCE English language test should reflect fully the *content* and the *focus* of the syllabus. The BECE/WASSCE English language test should cover all the language skills and important areas in appropriate proportions.

## **5.6 Discussions on Findings to Research Question Five**

The section makes use of data gathered through *questionnaires* and *interviews* to answer the research question 5:

***How does negative/positive washback affect students' communicative competence?***

The areas explored under the research Question 5 were the following:

- i. The relationship between students' performance at the BECE/WASSCE and their communicative competence
- ii. Students' perception about the impact of the BECE/WASSCE English language test
- iii. *Teaching to the test* and students' communicative competence

The findings showed that there was very little or no direct correlation between the performance of students at the BECE/WASSCE English language test and communicative competence in speaking. This means that candidates who performed well in the BECE/WASSCE English test might be able to read and write the language well but might struggle to speak the language in authentic situations, as teachers and students focused more on *writing* and *reading* skills.

It was again revealed that the BECE/WASSCE English language test influenced students negatively. The students did not aim at learning English language in order to speak the language freely in authentic situations, but just to perform well in the BECE/WASSCE. The students considered passing the BECE/WASSCE English language test more important than their ability to speak the language freely and confidently with other users of the language. The results showed that the BECE/WASSCE English language test exerted a negative washback effect on the students. For this reason the students perceived the BECE/WASSCE English language test as exerting a negative influence on their learning. The BECE/WASSCE English language test did allow the students to concentrate on activities that would help them to speak the language fluently in real life situations. It was therefore not surprising that they

concluded that if there was no BECE/WASSCE, they would concentrate more on *speaking skills*.

The findings showed that the teachers concentrated on teaching students with the sole aim of equipping them to pass tests rather than concentrating on helping the students to attain communicative competence. The results showed that this practice of *teaching to the test* by teachers adversely affected students' communicative competence in speaking.

*Teaching and testing* are interrelated. Therefore, to discourage *teaching to the test* by teachers, the BECE/WASSCE English language test should be designed to test learners' language performance in real life situations. That is, the examination should be *communicative*. When this is done, the teachers will consequently adopt the *communicative/integrated language teaching* method to help students to attain communicative competence. That may be the only way to compel the teachers to employ *communicative/integrated language teaching* method in their teaching and to refrain from *teaching to the test*. The BECE/WASSCE English Language test forced the teachers to skip what they found suitable or appropriate for the students. The tests can therefore be used as a device to introduce innovations into the curriculum. A communicative language test would therefore trigger communicative language teaching. Until the test is designed to measure the learners' ability to use the language in real life or authentic situations, the teachers will continue to *teach to the test*.

## 5.7 Suggestions for Future Research

According to Shohamy et al, (1996), washback varies over time, owing to many factors such as the status of the language and the uses of the test. The findings in this thesis cannot therefore remain static all the time. The washback effect of the BECE/WASSCE English language test on teaching and learning in Ghana can change if the content or the focus of the examination is altered to improve the quality of the exam or to minimise the negative washback effect of the test. Longitudinal washback studies should therefore be conducted over certain periods of time to explain *how* learners and teachers react to high-stakes English language tests in Ghana.

Washback studies have always been focusing on either the impact of existing high-stakes examinations on teaching and learning of second/foreign language or the impact of new second/foreign language tests on learners and teachers. The *Listening Comprehension* test component of the WASSCE English language test was introduced in 1999. However, there has not been any washback study to investigate the impact of the introduction of this aspect of the English language test. There should have been a washback study to find out how teaching and learning are affected by the introduction of the *Listening Comprehension* test. The first washback study (Alderson & Wall (1993) investigated the effect of the introduction of new tests in Sri Lanka on the teaching of English as a foreign language by secondary school teachers. In future if the *West African Examinations Council* introduces *Listening Comprehension* test at the junior high school level, there can be a washback study to find out the effect of the introduction of that test on teaching and learning of English language at that level. It is hoped that one day the *West African Examinations Council* will find it necessary to test *speaking skills* at both

JHS and SHS levels. When this is done, a washback study can again be conducted on the effect of the new test on teaching and learning of English language in Ghana.





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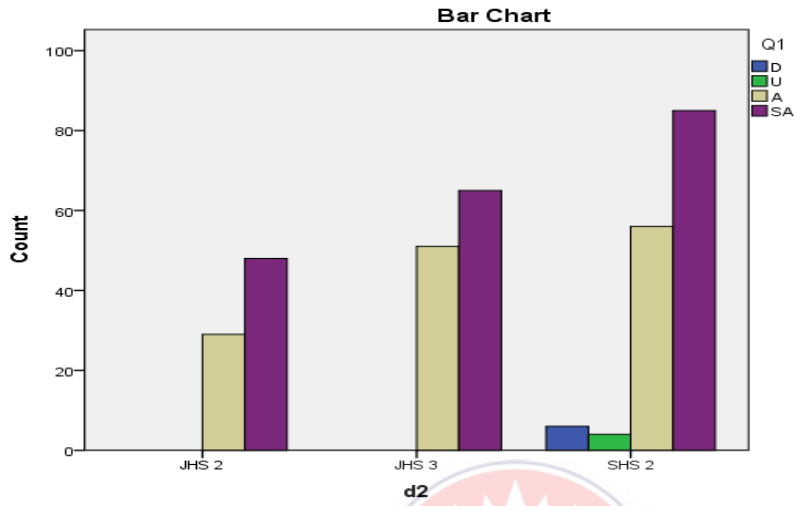
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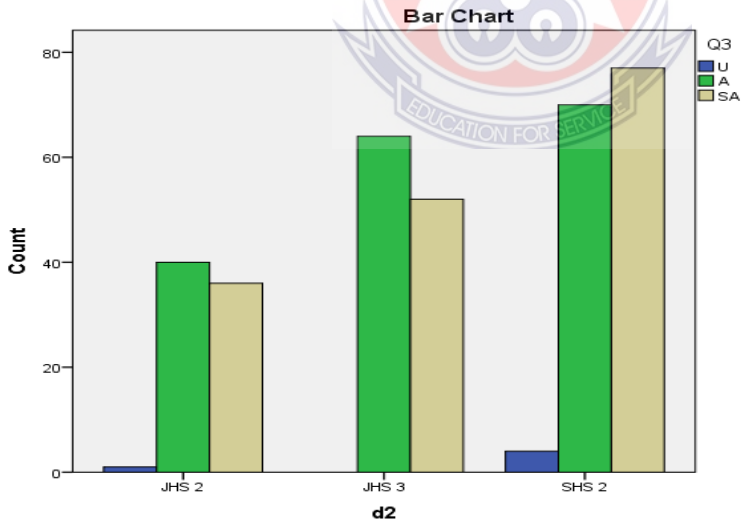


**Appendix A: Bar chart Results**

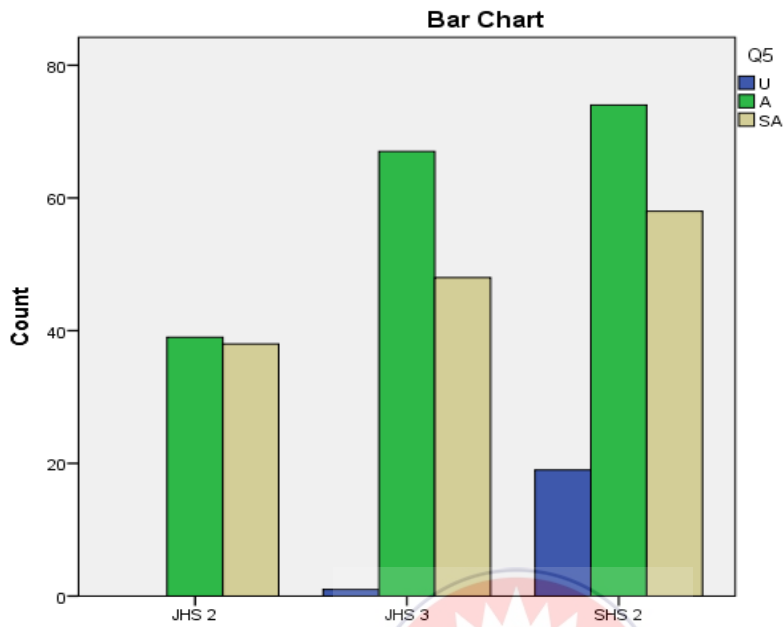
**Fig 2: Our teachers should teach language areas that will only make us perform well at the BECE/WASSCE.**



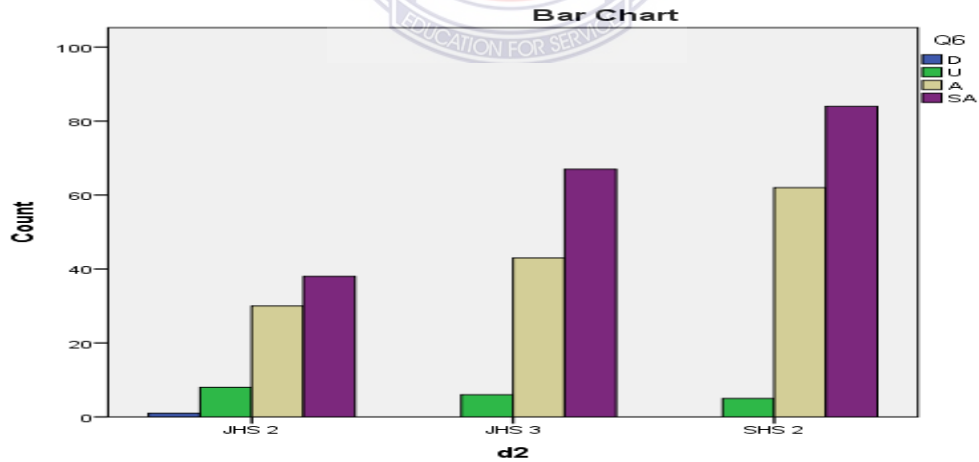
**Fig 3: If there is no BECE/WASSCE, how I learn will be different.**



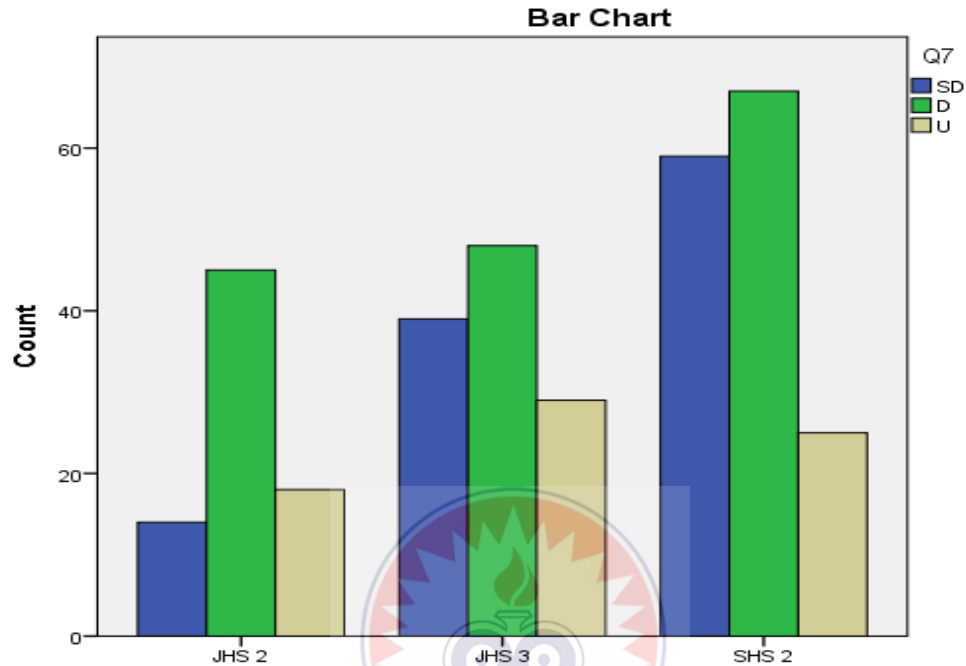
**Fig 4: Students should focus their attention on language areas that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE.**



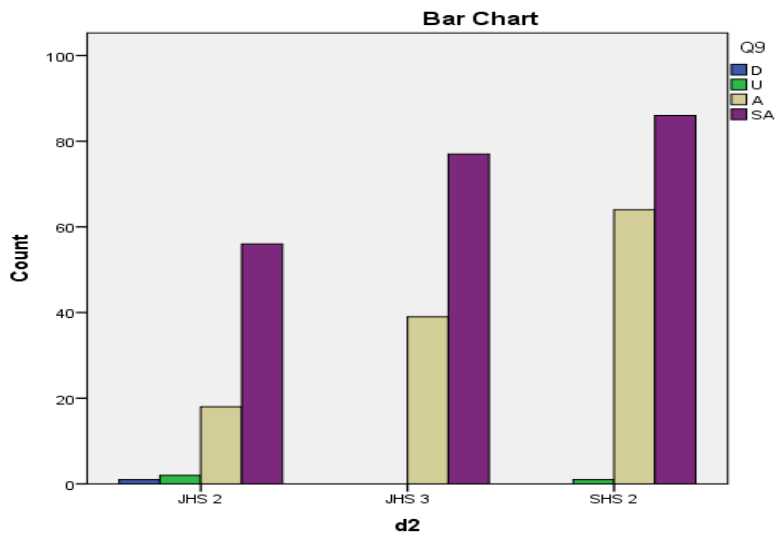
**Fig 5: Our English teachers should skip language areas that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE.**



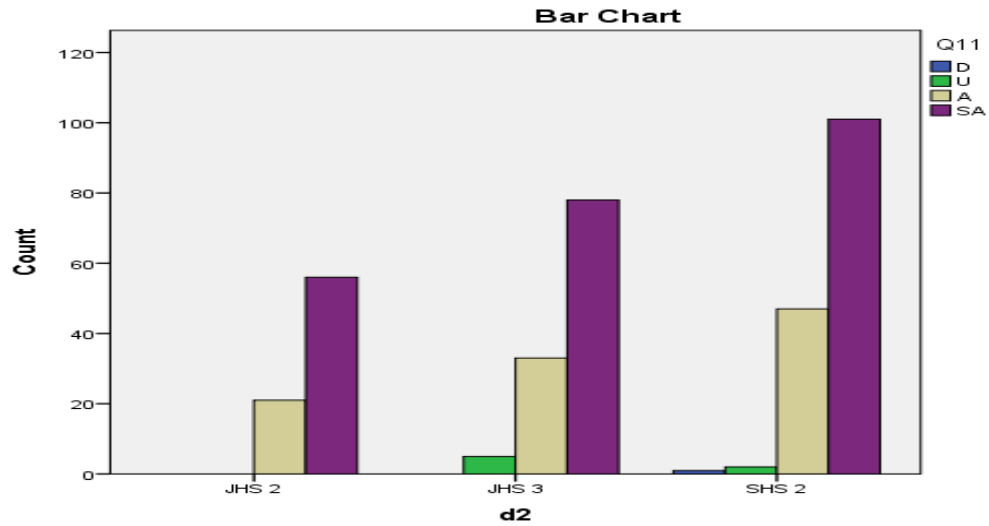
**Fig 6: Our English teachers always set questions that ask us to apply what we learn to practical problems.**



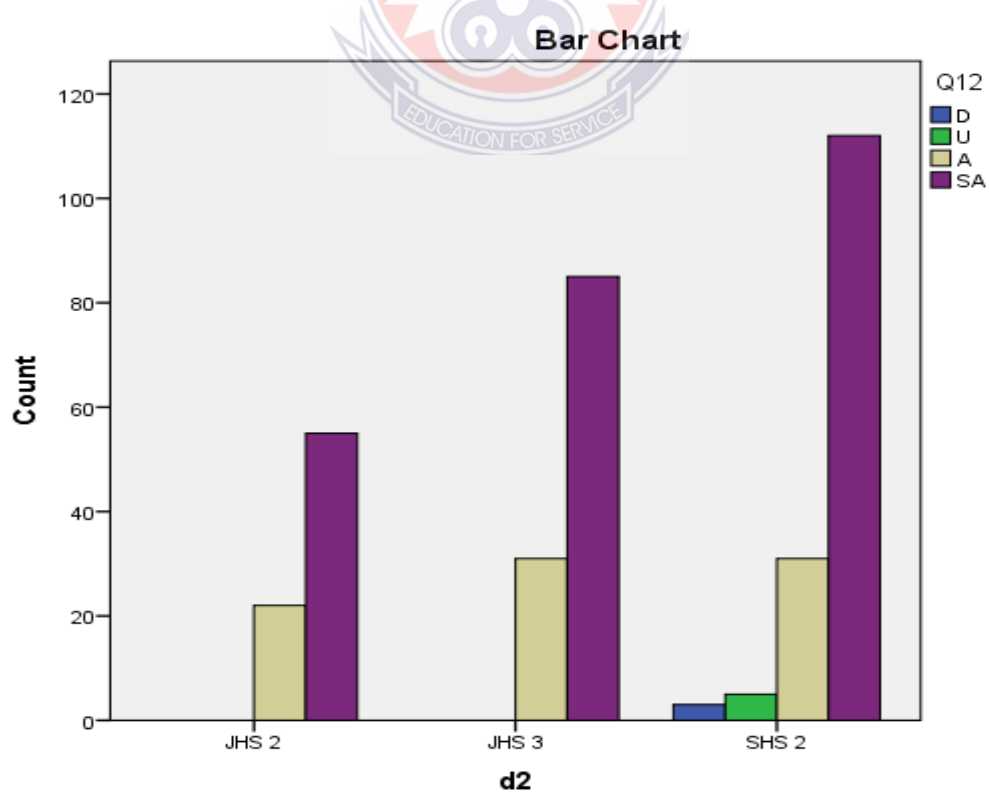
**Fig 7: Our teachers should use BECE/WASSCE past questions in their teaching.**



**Fig 8: I would like my teacher to be an examiner for WAEC**

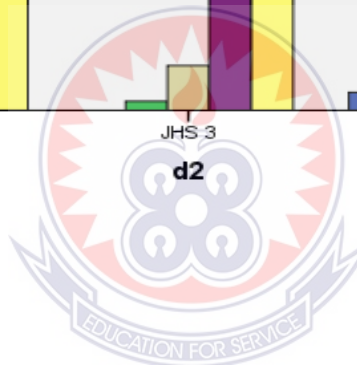
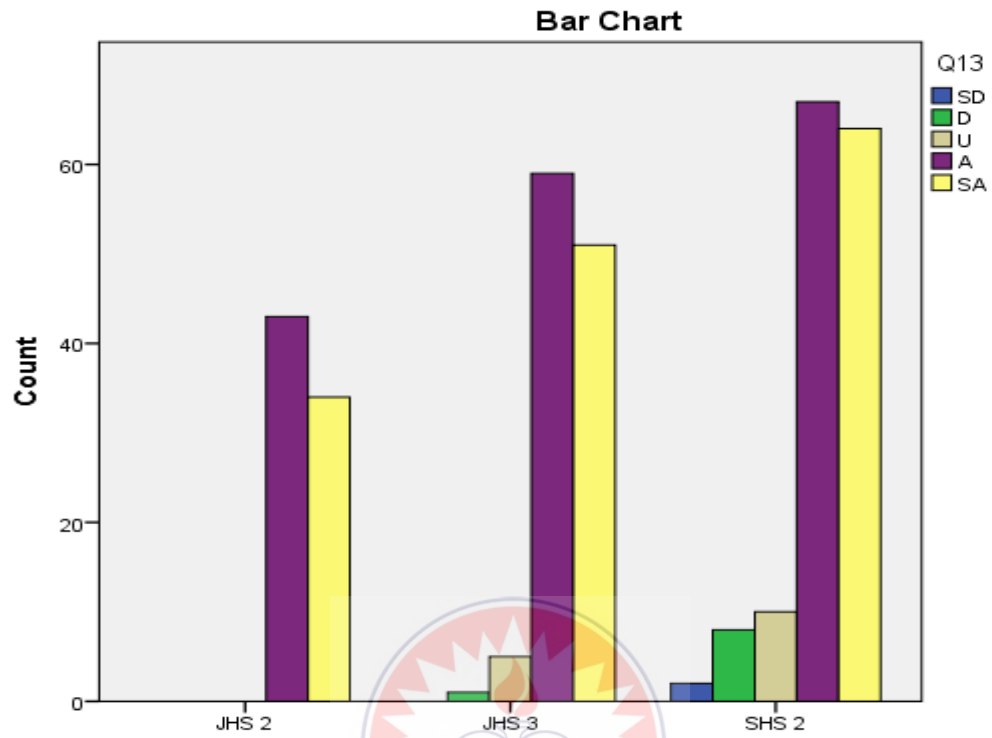


**Fig 9: I think that our teachers should coach us to answer BECE/WASSCE questions**





**Fig 10: I am always anxious about the BECE/WASSCE**



## Appendix B: A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA  
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS**

P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana. Tel: 233-048-22139/40

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Sefa Owusu is a final year Ph.D candidate in the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Education, Winneba.

He is investigating the impact of high-stakes tests on teaching and learning of English language in Ghana.

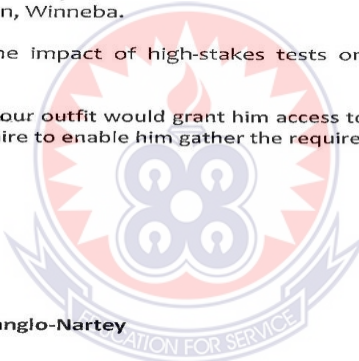
I would be grateful if your outfit would grant him access to interviews, and cooperate with him in filling his questionnaire to enable him gather the required data for his project.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Akpanglo-Nartey'.

**Dr. Mrs. Rebecca Akpanglo-Nartey**  
Head of Department



**Appendix C**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH**

I am Sefa Owusu, a PhD candidate in the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Education, Winneba. Your sincere responses on this questionnaire will help me to investigate the impact of high-stakes tests on teaching and learning of English language in Ghana. Your responses will be treated with complete confidentiality. Thank you.

Institution:					
Age:	20-25 <input type="checkbox"/>	26 - 30 <input type="checkbox"/>	31-40 <input type="checkbox"/>	41-49 <input type="checkbox"/>	50+ <input type="checkbox"/>
Number of years Teaching:					

Please complete the following questionnaire by placing a CROSS (X) in the appropriate box.

	strongly agree	agree	uncertain/ not applicable	disagree	strongly disagree
1. Teachers of English in Ghana should focus much of their teaching on what will make students perform well at the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Students should be taught all the language skills they need to know, even if some of those skills are not going to be examined in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I am conversant with the requirement of the BECE/WASSCE English Language test.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. There are some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Teachers should focus their attention on language areas that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Teachers should skip language areas that are <b>not</b> examined in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7.	I am conversant with the goals and objectives of the English Language syllabus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	BECE/WASSCE English Language test covers the goals and objectives of the English Language syllabus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Teachers should use BECE/WASSCE past questions in their teaching.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	If there is no BECE/WASSCE, the <b>content</b> of my teaching will be different from the content I am teaching now.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	If there is no BECE/WASSCE, the <b>method</b> of my teaching will be different from the method I am using now.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	I think that students should be coached to answer BECE/WASSCE questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	My students are always anxious about the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	I feel valued as a teacher if my students do well in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Teachers should use BECE/WASSCE past questions in all class tests and mock examinations to make candidates familiar with the questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Teaching in a final year class is more focused on BECE/WASSCE than teaching in a first year class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	I do not teach my students speaking skills since they are not tested in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	I will teach my students to improve their language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Teaching only topics and language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE will adversely affect students' communicative competence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20 BECE/WASSCE is intended to measure how much of the syllabus content students have mastered.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--

21. As a teacher of English, what basically does your job involve?

.....  
.....  
.....

22. How long have you been teaching English?

.....

23. Have you taught a final year class before?

.....

24. Are you teaching a final year class this year?

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25. What do you think of the BECE/WASSCE English language exam?

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26. Are there some topics or language skills in the English Language syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE?

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27. Do you teach your students all the topics or the language skills in the English language syllabus?

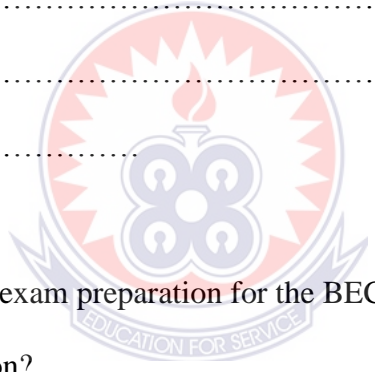
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28. What language skills do you teach?

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29. Which language teaching methods do you use? Can you give some examples?

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30. When do you start exam preparation for the BECE/WASSCE? How often do you do exam preparation?

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31. Do you think that your teaching is affected by the BECE/WASSCE? In what ways?

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32. Do you think that students' learning is affected by the BECE/WASSCE? In what ways?

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33. Do you think that the BECE/WASSCE motivates your students to learn? Explain.

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34. What language skills would you teach if your students were not going to write BECE/WASSCE?

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.....How are the BECE/WASSCE test items related to the goals and objectives of the English language syllabus?

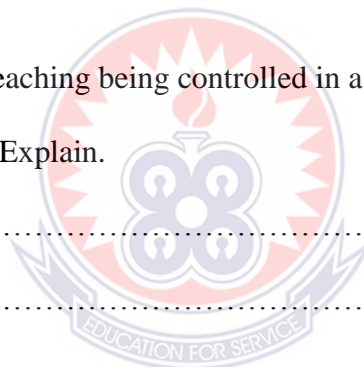
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35. Do you see your teaching being controlled in a way by the standards set by the BECE/WASSCE? Explain.



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.....Do you think teachers should skip language areas that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE? Explain.

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36. Looking at the structure of the BECE/WASSCE, is it possible for a candidate to perform well in the English language exam without being communicative competent? Explain.

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37. What changes would you initiate in your class if there was no BECE/WASSCE?

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38. What is the purpose of learning English language at the junior/senior high school level?

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## Appendix D

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

I am Sefa Owusu, a PhD candidate in the Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Education, Winneba. Your sincere responses on this questionnaire will help me to investigate the impact of high-stakes tests on teaching and learning of English language in Ghana. Your responses will be treated with complete confidentiality. Thank you.

Institution:	<input type="text"/>
Class:	<input type="text"/>

Please complete the following questionnaire by placing a CROSS (X) in the appropriate box.

		strongly agree	agree	uncertain/ not applicable	disagree	strongly disagree
1.	Our teachers should teach language areas that will only make us perform well at the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Students should be taught all the language skills they need to know, even if some of those skills are not going to be examined in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	If there is no BECE/WASSCE, <b>how</b> I learn will be different.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	If there is no BECE/WASSCE, <b>what</b> I learn will be different.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Students should focus their attention on language areas that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Our English teachers should skip language areas that are <b>not</b> examined in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7.	Our English teachers always set questions that ask us to apply what we learn to practical problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I attend extra classes to prepare me well for the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Our teachers should use BECE/WASSCE past questions in their teaching.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	There are some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	I would like my teacher to be an examiner for WAEC.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	I think that our teachers should coach us to answer BECE/WASSCE questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	I am always anxious about the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	I always try my hands at BECE/WASSCE past questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Our teachers should use BECE/WASSCE past questions in all class tests and mock examinations to make us familiar with the questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	I learn English because of the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	I will not learn any language skill that is not tested in the BECE/WASSCE.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	I will learn language skills that are examined in the BECE/WASSCE only.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	BECE/WASSCE influences my English in a positive way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20 BECE/WASSCE influences my English in a negative way. .	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
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21. Why is it necessary to learn English language at the junior/senior high school level?

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22. How does the BECE/WASSCE influence the way you learn English language?

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23. Do you like the way your English teacher teaches you? Explain.

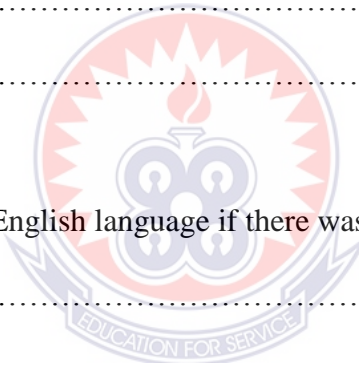
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24. Does your English teacher teach you some topics or language skills that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE?

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25. Describe the topics or language skills that you don't like, and why.

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26. How would you learn English language if there was no BECE/WASSCE?

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27. How are you preparing for the BECE/WASSCE?

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28. How is your learning in JHS3/SHS3 different from that of JHS1/SHS1 in relation to preparation for the BECE/WASSCE English language test?

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**Appendix E**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH TEACHERS**

1. As a teacher of English, what basically does your job involve?
2. How long have you been teaching English?
3. Have you taught a final year class before?
4. Are you teaching a final year class this year?
5. Do you have any idea about the language teaching methods? Which language teaching method(s) do you use?
6. Is your language teaching method influenced by the demands of the BECE/WASSCE? Explain.

7. How useful are BECE/WASSCE past questions to you when you plan your lessons?
8. Looking at the BECE/WASSCE past questions, how do they compare with the goals of the teaching syllabus for English language? How are they related to the goals of the BECE/WASSCE English language syllabus?
9. How would you teach English language if your students were not going to write BECE/WASSCE?
10. Looking at the structure of the BECE/WASSCE, is it possible for a candidate to perform well in the English language exam without being communicative competent? Explain.

## **Appendix F**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH STUDENTS**

1. Why is it necessary to learn English language at the junior/senior high school level?
2. How does the BECE/WASSCE influence the way you learn English language?
3. Are conversant with the demands of the BECE/WASSCE?
4. Are there some topics or areas in the English Language syllabus that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE?
5. Does your English teacher teach you some topics or language skills that are not examined in the BECE/WASSCE?
6. Do you expect your English teacher to direct instruction toward the BECE/WASSCE?

7. It is said that examinations are not necessary. What is your view about examinations in general?
8. Have you tried to answer any past BECE/WASSCE questions on your own? Can you explain why?
9. Does your English teacher use past questions in his/her lessons or in his/her class tests?
10. How are you preparing for the BECE/WASSCE?
11. How would you learn English language if there was no BECE/WASSCE?





## Appendix G: BECE Past Examination Paper

001/2&1 BECE June 2015 ENGLISH LANGUAGE 2 & 1 Essay and Objective 1 hour 45 minutes	<b>2 &amp; 1</b>
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Name.....

Index Number.....

THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL  
GHANA

Basic Education Certificate Examination

June 2015

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 2 & 1

1 hour 45 minutes

*Do not open this booklet until you are told to do so. While you are waiting, read and observe the following instructions carefully. Write your name and index number in ink in the spaces provided above.*

*This booklet consists of two papers. Answer Paper 2 which comes first, in your answer booklet and Paper 1 on your Objective Test answer sheet. Paper 2 will last 1 hour after which the answer booklet will be collected. Do not start Paper 1 until you are told to do so. Paper 1 will last 45 minutes.*



2

PAPER 2  
ESSAY

*This paper consists of two parts: A and B. Answer two questions in all; one question from each part. Your composition should be about 250 words long. Answer all the questions in your answer booklet.*

*Credit will be given for clarity of expression and orderly presentation of material.*

*Answer two questions in all; one question from part A and all the questions in Part B. Your composition should be about 250 words long.*

PART A  
ESSAY WRITING  
[30 marks]

*Answer one question only from this part.*

1. You have won a scholarship to study abroad. Write a letter to your friend telling him or her **at least two** things that you will miss while away.
2. Write an article for publication in your school magazine suggesting **at least two** ways by which cheating in the BECE can be stopped.
3. Write a story that ends, *This is why our friendship came to an end.*

PART B  
COMPREHENSION  
[30 marks]

4. *Read the following passage carefully and answer all the questions which follow.*

In the Western world, the family is simply made up of the husband, wife and children. This is called the nuclear family. In Africa, the family includes relatives from both the maternal and paternal sides. This is known as the extended family.

This relationship binds every member whose origin can be traced to the same ancestor. This has developed into such complex groups as clans among the Akans and kinship relations in other parts of Ghana and Africa.

Wherever the extended family is practised, its benefits seem greater than its disadvantages. In Ghana, at the small community level, it brings unity among people. They share everything among themselves — wealth or problems. The system even binds and caters for others who may be separated by social factors such as marriage.

However, it often makes people look up to others for help when they could solve the problems themselves. It also, makes some members become lazy. In the long run the only well-to-do person in the family is made to shoulder the responsibilities of more people than he can really cope with.

Now, the question to ask is, has the extended family system any chance of continuing when the nuclear family is now gaining so much ground? Whether the extended family will continue or die out will depend on how strong the nuclear family becomes.

- (a) What does the word 'family' mean to:
  - (i) the people in the Western world?
  - (ii) the African?

spd15/001/2&1/mao

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- (b) What links people in the extended family system?
- (c) Mention **two** advantages of the extended family system.
- (d) Give **two** reasons why you would support the nuclear family system.
- (e) Explain the following expressions in your own words.
  - (i) look up to
  - (ii) made to shoulder
  - (iii) gaining so much ground
- (f) For **each** of the following words, give another word or phrase that means **the same**, and can fit into the passage:
  - (i) binds;
  - (ii) origin;
  - (iii) caters for;
  - (iv) in the long run;
  - (v) cope with.

***END OF ESSAY TEST***



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**DO NOT TURN OVER THIS PAGE  
UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.**

**YOU WILL BE PENALIZED SEVERELY IF YOU ARE  
FOUND LOOKING AT THE NEXT PAGE BEFORE  
YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.**

PAPER 1  
OBJECTIVE TEST





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






































































































































Answer all the questions on your Objective Test answer sheet.

1. Use 2B pencil throughout.
2. On the pre-printed answer sheet, check that the following details are **correctly** printed: Your **surname** followed by your **other names**, the *Subject Name*, your *Index Number*, *Centre Number* and the *Paper Code*.
3. In the boxes marked *Candidate Number*, *Centre Number* and *Paper Code*, **reshade** each of the shaded spaces.
4. An example is given below. This is for a candidate whose name is Aba Edem DUAH. Her *index number* is 772384188 and she is writing the examination at *Centre Number* 77234. She is offering *English Language 1* and the *Paper Code* is 0011.

**THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL, GHANA  
BASIC EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION  
OBJECTIVE ANSWER SHEET**

<b>CANDIDATE NAME:</b> DUAH ABA EDEM	<b>SUBJECT:</b> ENGLISH LANGUAGE 1
---	---------------------------------------

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Use 2B pencil, Press firmly.  | 4. your first mark completely.  |
| 2. Answer each question by choosing one given letter and then, shade through the letter chosen like this     . | 5. If only four alternative answers are for each question, ignore the letter E. |
| 3. If you want to change an answer, erase  | 5. Your question paper may have fewer than 60 questions.                        |

CANDIDATE NUMBER	CENTRE NUMBER	PAPER CODE	For Supervisors only. If candidate is absent shade this space. 
7 7 2 3 8 4 1 8 8	7 7 2 3 4	0 0 1 1	
        	   	   	
        	   	   	
        	   	   	
        	   	   	
        	   	   	
        	   	   	
        	   	   	
        	   	   	

Answer **all** the questions.

Each question is followed by **four** options lettered A to D. Find the correct option for each question and shade **in pencil** on your answer sheet the space which bears the same letter as the option you have chosen. Give only **one** answer to each question. An example is given below.

From the list of words lettered A to D choose the one which is **closest in meaning** to the underlined word in the sentence.

The pupils laughed at the story because they thought it was incredible.

- A. strange
- B. interesting
- C. unbelievable
- D. funny

The correct answer is unbelievable, which is lettered C and therefore answer space C would be shaded.

A  B  C  D  E

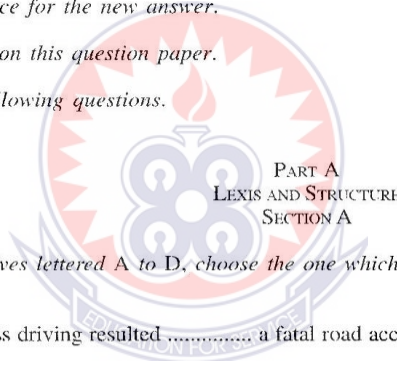
Be sure you understand the instructions at the beginning of each section before you try to answer any of the questions that follow them.

Do **not** spend too much time on a question. If you find a question difficult, leave it and go on and try it again later.

Use **pencil** throughout. If you wish to change an answer, erase your first answer completely and shade the appropriate space for the new answer.

Do all rough work on this question paper.

Now answer the following questions.



From the alternatives lettered A to D, choose the one which **most suitably completes** each sentence.

1. Ntim's careless driving resulted ..... a fatal road accident.
  - A. in
  - B. to
  - C. into
  - D. with
2. Abibatu takes ..... her mother in many ways.
  - A. by
  - B. on
  - C. up
  - D. after
3. Araba goes to school ..... foot.
  - A. by
  - B. in
  - C. on
  - D. with

4. The doctor advised the patient to abstain ..... smoking.  
A. by  
B. from  
C. upon  
D. with
5. The relationship ..... group A and group B is cordial.  
A. of  
B. with  
C. among  
D. between
6. Edwin prefers fish ..... meat.  
A. to  
B. for  
C. from  
D. than
7. His neighbour complained that the radio was ..... loud.  
A. far  
B. too  
C. much  
D. enough
8. The white horse is ..... than the black one.  
A. the fastest  
B. very faster  
C. much the faster  
D. very much faster
9. I ..... him; then I changed my mind.  
A. had told  
B. have told  
C. am telling  
D. was going to tell
10. By the end of the day I ..... the house.  
A. shall paint  
B. shall be painting  
C. shall have painted  
D. shall have been painting
11. You are a member of the society, .....?  
A. isn't it  
B. are you  
C. aren't you  
D. weren't you
12. Our captain is not a very reliable person, .....?  
A. is he  
B. isn't he  
C. does he  
D. doesn't he
13. You have been to Lagos, .....?  
A. did you  
B. have you  
C. didn't you  
D. haven't you

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**Turn over**



14. Joseph is the ..... in the class.  
 A. cleverer  
 B. cleverest  
 C. more clever  
 D. very clever
15. The triplets love ..... very much.  
 A. each other  
 B. themselves  
 C. theirselves  
 D. one another
16. .... the watch is old, it is still working.  
 A. Since  
 B. Besides  
 C. Although  
 D. However
17. The students set ..... early on their journey.  
 A. up  
 B. in  
 C. out  
 D. about

## SECTION B

Choose from the alternatives lettered A to D the one which is **nearest in meaning** to the underlined word in **each** sentence.

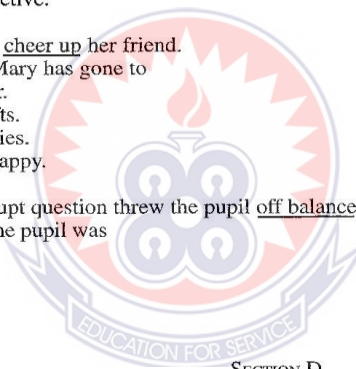
18. If you are a true friend you will not disclose a secret.  
 A. give  
 B. show  
 C. display  
 D. reveal
19. As John waited for the interview, he was very nervous.  
 A. sad  
 B. afraid  
 C. alarmed  
 D. uneasy
20. Patricia was satisfied with the results of the examination.  
 A. pleased  
 B. convinced  
 C. pampered  
 D. encouraged
21. The attitude of the gateman was very hostile.  
 A. harsh  
 B. strange  
 C. abusive  
 D. unfriendly
22. It was not his intention to hurt his younger brother.  
 A. aim  
 B. decision  
 C. interest  
 D. ambition



## SECTION C

In **each** of the following sentences a group of words has been underlined. Choose from the alternatives lettered A to D the one that **best explains** the underlined group of words.

23. Ibrahim registered for the course at the eleventh hour.  
This means that Ibrahim registered  
A. at eleven o'clock.  
B. a few hours before closing time.  
C. during eleven hours of registration.  
D. when it was almost too late.
24. Bob lives within a stone's throw of the Jubilee Park.  
This means that Bob  
A. travels on a stony road.  
B. lives in a hut in the park.  
C. lives very close to the park.  
D. often throws stone at the park.
25. When James heard the sound of gun-shots, his hair stood on end.  
This means that James  
A. was worried.  
B. started crying.  
C. was frightened.  
D. became inactive.
26. Mary has gone to cheer up her friend.  
This means that Mary has gone to  
A. shout at her.  
B. give her gifts.  
C. tell her stories.  
D. make her happy.
27. The teacher's abrupt question threw the pupil off balance.  
This means that the pupil was  
A. hurt.  
B. annoyed.  
C. worried.  
D. confused.



## SECTION D

From the list of words lettered A to D, choose the one that is **most nearly opposite in meaning** to the word underlined in **each** sentence.

28. While the majority voted for a change, the ..... were against any change.  
A. rivals  
B. members  
C. minority  
D. opposition
29. Imported rice is expensive these days.  
A. free  
B. cheap  
C. tasty  
D. scarce

**Turn over**

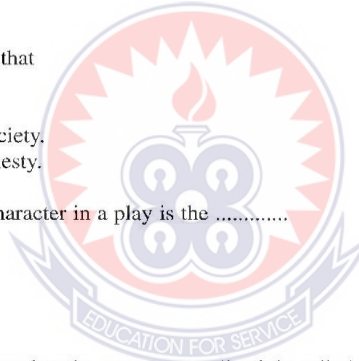
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30. The student was condemned for his poor work.
- A. cheered
  - B. praised
  - C. rewarded
  - D. recommended
31. Although he had applied for a permanent post, he was only given a ..... one.
- A. useful
  - B. boring
  - C. labouring
  - D. temporary
32. Some people pay much attention to their physical needs.
- A. basic
  - B. moral
  - C. financial
  - D. spiritual

PART B  
LITERATURE

*From the options lettered A to D, choose the one that **correctly** answers **each** question or completes the sentence.*

33. A comedy is a play that
- A. ends sadly.
  - B. ends happily.
  - C. condemns society.
  - D. preaches honesty.
34. The main female character in a play is the .....
- A. hero
  - B. chorus
  - C. heroine
  - D. persona
35. Expressions that appeal to the senses are collectively called .....
- A. irony
  - B. devices
  - C. pictures
  - D. imagery
36. The purpose of a comic relief is to .....
- A. reduce tension
  - B. teach a moral lesson
  - C. set a moral standard
  - D. compound a character's problems
37. A play is better enjoyed when .....
- A. acted
  - B. read
  - C. discussed
  - D. memorised



38. A narrative poem usually .....
- A. praises actions
  - B. tells a story
  - C. mourns the dead
  - D. condemns actions

*Read the following extract below and answer Question 39.*

So fair art thou my bonnie lass  
So deep in luv am I  
And I will luv thee still my dear  
Till all the sea gang dry

39. The last line is a/an .....
- A. litotes
  - B. hyperbole
  - C. euphemism
  - D. understatement
40. The rhyme scheme of the stanza is .....
- A. abcd
  - B. abca
  - C. abcb
  - D. abba



## Appendix H WASSCE Past Examination Paper



Name.....

Index Number.....

### THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

#### West African Senior School Certificate Examination for School Candidates

SC 2016

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 2&1

3 hours

*Do not open this booklet until you are told to do so. While you are waiting, read and observe the following instructions carefully. Write your **name** and **index number** in the spaces provided above.*

*This booklet consists of two papers. Answer Paper 2, which comes first, in your answer booklet and Paper 1 on your Objective Test answer sheet. Paper 2 will last 2 hours after which the answer booklets will be collected. Do not start Paper 1 until you are told to do so. Paper 1 will last 1 hour.*



2

PAPER 2

2 HOURS

Answer **three** questions in all: **one** question from Section A and all the questions in Sections B and C.

SECTION A

ESSAY

[50 marks]

Answer **one** question **only** from this section.

All questions carry equal marks. Your answer should not be less than 450 words.

You are advised to spend about 50 minutes on this section.

1. A friend of yours wants to study in your school and has written to you for information and advice. Write a reply to him, telling him all that he needs to know about the school.
2. Some core values in your society have been eroded by modernization. Write an article suitable for publication in a national newspaper on the need to revive these values for a better society.
3. The Parent-Teacher Association of your school has decided to transform the school into a single-sex school. As the Senior Prefect, write a letter to the Chairman giving, at least, **three** reasons why you disagree with the decision.
4. You are the main speaker in a debate on the topic: *Education is the best legacy a parent can give a child*. Write your argument for **or** against the motion.
5. Write a story to illustrate the saying: *Pride goes before a fall*.

SECTION B  
COMPREHENSION  
[20 marks]

You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this section.

6. Read the following passage **carefully** and answer the questions on it.

We believed that the teacher would not be home that weekend. My father had strictly warned us not to go out at night since recent happenings had shown that it was unsafe. However, the thought of those mouth-watering fruits in the teacher's compound made us spend many sleepless nights. We decided that fateful night to sneak out and get some delicious mangoes to feast on.

Towards midnight, my two cousins and I crept stealthily out of the house. The fresh air invigorated us. The moon shone with unusual brightness and that enabled us to see our way clearly and the ripe mangoes as well. We soon reached the teacher's house, a stone's throw from ours. We climbed over the wall, as nimbly as monkeys. Since I was skilled in climbing, my cousins asked me to go up the tree which was laden with ripe mangoes. In no time, I reached the branch which appeared to be most heavy with fruits. I shook it and many juicy mangoes fell to the ground. My cousins gathered them into their bags and we blessed our stars for this windfall.

Suddenly, the powerful headlights of an approaching car warned us of impending danger. To our amazement, it was the teacher and he had already spotted us. In my haste to get down, I lost my balance and fell heavily, injuring my arm. My cousins ran like the wind and escaped, leaving me to my fate. I attempted to run away but could not. I lay on the ground groaning in pain.

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The teacher raised an instant alarm and the neighbours came rushing to the scene. I pleaded with them not to harm me. The teacher and another man lifted me up and brought me to my father's house. The teacher called my father to open the door but he did not answer.

'We have your son here and he is wounded,' the teacher explained.

'My son is sleeping peacefully in his room,' my father retorted.

My mother, who had been awake all this while and listening to these exchanges, went into our room to verify the truth. My cousins pretended to be fast asleep. When she discovered my absence, she gave a heart-rending cry which at last brought my father out. He took the whole scene in at a glance and stood speechless, gazing at me in shock and disbelief. He thanked the teacher profusely. After my mother had bandaged my arm, my father sat me down and rained abuses on me. I broke down in tears and made a clean confession. This softened him but did not prevent him from giving my cousins the spanking of their lives.

- (a) Why did the writer's father warn the boys against going out at night?
- (b) Quote a phrase in the second paragraph which shows that the teacher's house was not far from the writer's own.
- (c) What enabled the teacher to discover the boys?
- (d) Describe what led to the writer's injury.
- (e) Why did the writer's father refuse to open the door?
- (f) ... *an instant alarm* ...  
 (i) What is the grammatical name given to this expression as it is used in the passage?  
 (ii) What is its function?
- (g) ... *like the wind* ...  
 (i) What figure of speech is contained in this expression?  
 (ii) What does it mean?
- (h) For **each** of the following words, find another word or phrase which means the same and which can replace it as it is used in the passage:  
 (i) recent;  
 (ii) delicious;  
 (iii) stealthily;  
 (iv) approaching;  
 (v) spotted;  
 (vi) verify.



*You are advised to spend about 40 minutes on this section.*

*Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions on it.*

7. The announcement in 2011 that the world population had hit the seven billion mark seemed to have taken many people by surprise. Most people wondered how humanity could have grown by a billion within two decades. However, anyone conversant with factors relevant to human growth should understand this phenomenal increase. Let us examine the factors that have prompted the rise in population.
- To begin with, think of the health facilities obtainable some centuries earlier compared with now. Man's knowledge of medical care was appalling some centuries ago. Today, with medical centres within easy reach of most people, and with drugs available to combat virtually all forms of diseases, death rate has been drastically reduced, while life expectancy has risen significantly in most countries. This has caused the great reduction in infant mortality and subsequently increased the number of senior citizens.
- Similarly, there is the vital role of education. The spread of education has created a great level of awareness about human welfare and health. Even primary school pupils know the dangers of drinking unwholesome water, living in an unclean environment and ignoring simple rules of hygiene. Besides, education has deflated the various myths and superstitions that pervaded our fathers' lives.
- Nutrition is also a significant contributor. As agricultural practices continue to be aided by serious research efforts, and as tools for farming the land continue to be more available, food supply has been greatly enhanced in an unprecedented way. Today, more food crops can be available on less land area than was the case. Thus, the monster of hunger that used to cause starvation and death is being progressively tamed.
- Finally, think of the relative security humanity has enjoyed in the past few decades. In the past centuries, major wars were a common phenomenon. Wars that ravaged Europe and Africa for many decades have almost been forgotten. Although there are still some skirmishes in some parts of the world, these have not been serious enough to bring about a significant change in population.
- What then is the net result? Each factor translates to a healthier, safer and longer life. Consequently, our population multiplies at a consistent rate. So, we need not be surprised that the world population is seven billion. Indeed, in the next quarter of a century, another billion may be added, and by the end of this century we may have double the present number. But in this lies another danger: that of gross over-population. If the present trend continues unabated, the planet Earth may soon become too small to house mankind. For example, arable land may be grossly inadequate to support food production for the very large population. Also, if the population continues to grow unchecked, there will be too many people who may contribute to polluting the environment. Just imagine the amount of waste that would be generated daily by homes, industries and institutions. These waste and debris, if not collected regularly and disposed of properly, may lead to environmental degradation. We should, therefore, watch it.
- (a) In **four** sentences, **one** for **each**, summarize the factors that have prompted the rapid increase in world population.
- (b) In **two** sentences, **one** for **each**, summarize what is likely to follow the continuing rapid population growth.

***END OF ESSAY TEST***

**DO NOT TURN OVER THIS PAGE  
UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.**

**YOU WILL BE PENALIZED SEVERELY IF YOU ARE  
FOUND LOOKING AT THE NEXT PAGE BEFORE  
YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.**

**WHILE YOU ARE WAITING, READ THE FOLLOWING  
INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY**

PAPER 1  
OBJECTIVE TEST  
[50 marks]

1 hour

1. Use 2B pencil throughout.
2. On the pre-printed answer sheet, check that the following details are **correctly** printed:
  - (a) In the space marked *Name*, check your **surname** followed by your **other names**.
  - (b) In the spaces marked *Examination*, *Year*, *Subject* and *Paper*, check 'WASSCE', '2016', 'ENGLISH LANGUAGE', and '1' in that order.
  - (c) In the box marked *Index Number*, your **index number** has been printed vertically in the spaces on the left-hand side, and each numbered space has been shaded in line with each digit. **Reshade** each of the shaded spaces.
  - (d) In the box marked *Subject Code*, the digits 302212 are printed vertically in the spaces on the left-hand side. **Reshade** the corresponding numbered spaces as you did for your index number.
3. An example is given below. This is for a male candidate whose *name* is Sam Abu OCRAN. His *index number* is 7102143958 and he is offering *English Language 1*.

**THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL  
ANSWER SHEET**

PRINTED IN BLOCK LETTERS.		GHA
Name: OCRAN SAM ABU		
Examination: WASSCE	Year: 2016	
Subject: ENGLISH LANGUAGE	Paper: 1	

**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

1. Use grade 2B pencil throughout.
2. Answer each question by choosing one letter and shading it like this:  A  B  C  D  E
3. Erase completely, any answer you wish to change.
4. Leave extra spaces blank if the answer spaces provided are more than you need.
5. Do not make any markings across the heavy black marks at the right hand edge of your answer sheet.

INDEX NUMBER		SUBJECT CODE	
7	0	3	0
1	0	2	0
0	0	2	0
2	0	2	0
4	0	2	0
3	0	2	0
9	0	2	0
5	0	2	0
8	0	2	0

**For Supervisors only**  
If candidate is absent shade this space.

spw/16/SC3022&1/jkk/tbo



Answer **all** the questions.

Each question is followed by **four** options lettered A to D. Find out the correct option for **each** question. Shade in **pencil** on your answer sheet the answer space which bears the same letter as the option you have chosen. Give only **one** answer to **each** question. Be sure you understand the instructions at the beginning of each section before you try to answer any of the questions that follow them. Do not spend too much time on a question. If you find a question difficult, leave it and go on and try it again later.

Use pencil throughout. If you wish to change an answer, erase your first answer completely and shade the appropriate space for the new answer.

An example is given below:

From the words lettered A to D, choose the word that **best completes** the sentence.

The three-month notice of resignation which the manager gave ..... in two weeks' time.

- A. expires
- B. lapses
- C. disrupts
- D. develops

The correct answer is expires which is lettered A and therefore answer space A would be shaded.

A  B  C  D  E

Now answer the following questions.

PART A

LEXIS AND STRUCTURE

SECTION 1

In **each** of the following sentences, there is a word underlined and one gap. From the list of words lettered A to D, choose the word that is **most nearly opposite** in meaning to the underlined word and that will, at the same time, **correctly fill** the gap in the sentence.

1. Though the manager had forgotten, Kofi could ..... his ordeal in the company.
  - A. recollect
  - B. reflect
  - C. review
  - D. reconsider
2. The louvre blades down here are opaque while those up are .....
  - A. distinct
  - B. transparent
  - C. plain
  - D. bright
3. While Members of Parliament endorsed the motion, the Cabinet ..... it.
  - A. refuted
  - B. registered
  - C. rejected
  - D. condemned
4. The accused confirmed his statement at the court but his accomplice ..... his.
  - A. discredited
  - B. scrutinised
  - C. denied
  - D. declined

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5. The water in that pond is muddy but that in the overhead tank is .....  
 A. plain  
 B. clear  
 C. stagnant  
 D. potable
6. Adama was admitted to hospital, but was ..... after three days.  
 A. relieved  
 B. freed  
 C. released  
 D. discharged
7. Efua looks moody this morning but Ama is .....  
 A. delighted  
 B. satisfied  
 C. cheerful  
 D. fine
8. It is more difficult to scale the hill than to ..... it.  
 A. descend  
 B. dismount  
 C. slide  
 D. disembark
9. The school authorities could not rescind their decision because the Board had ..... it.  
 A. verified  
 B. proved  
 C. confirmed  
 D. recognized
10. Though they are twins, Panyin is haughty whereas Kakra is .....  
 A. calm  
 B. quiet  
 C. humble  
 D. wicked

SECTION II

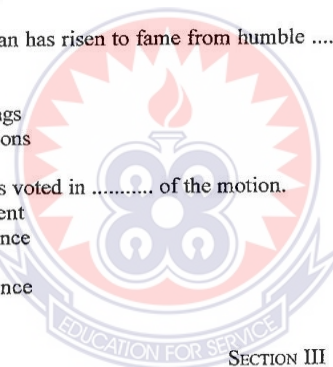
*From the words lettered A to D, choose the one that best completes each of the following sentences.*

11. Most people are prone ..... conflicting emotions.  
 A. by  
 B. to  
 C. from  
 D. with
12. Good traders have a keen eye ..... profit.  
 A. about  
 B. over  
 C. around  
 D. on
13. The commission has placed a ban ..... all public protests.  
 A. across  
 B. down  
 C. on  
 D. in
14. There is no point in acquiring a tool unless one means to use it, .....  
 A. wasn't there?  
 B. is there?  
 C. isn't there?  
 D. doesn't there?

spw16/SC3022&1/jkk/fbo

**Turn over**

15. Not many people are capable of ..... intense pain.  
A. enduring  
B. bearing  
C. sustaining  
D. suffering
16. The country produces oil in ..... quantities for export.  
A. profuse  
B. trading  
C. abundant  
D. commercial
17. The project was ..... for lack of funds.  
A. abandoned  
B. forgotten  
C. rejected  
D. postponed
18. The play was a long one but the musical ..... made it very interesting.  
A. interplay  
B. interim  
C. interval  
D. interlude
19. Many a great man has risen to fame from humble .....  
A. roots  
B. ranks  
C. beginnings  
D. foundations
20. All the delegates voted in ..... of the motion.  
A. agreement  
B. compliance  
C. favour  
D. acceptance

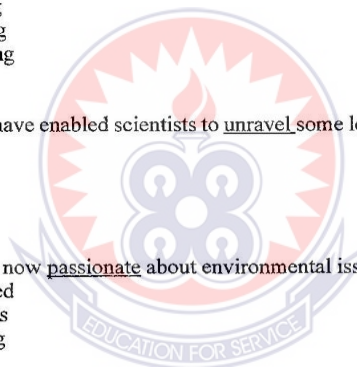


Choose from the alternatives lettered **A** to **D** the one which is nearest in meaning to the underlined word or expression in each sentence.

21. Injuries keep many sportsmen from achieving their full potential.  
A. power  
B. pinnacle  
C. capacity  
D. merit
22. It is possible to draw a parallel between the two positions.  
A. liking  
B. agreement  
C. similarity  
D. line

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23. Writing became the focal point of his life after his retirement.  
 A. singular  
 B. central  
 C. actual  
 D. chosen
24. Abena made derogatory remarks about the standard of my work.  
 A. uncomplimentary  
 B. senseless  
 C. ignorant  
 D. unsupportive
25. We took along with us a gift that is typical of our region.  
 A. presentable  
 B. remarkable  
 C. manufactured  
 D. characteristic
26. The unforgettable learning experience has fortified my determination.  
 A. promoted  
 B. mounted  
 C. boosted  
 D. assisted
27. I wish Catherine would stop pestering me about decorating the house.  
 A. bothering  
 B. reminding  
 C. compelling  
 D. involving
28. New inventions have enabled scientists to unravel some long-standing mysteries.  
 A. realize  
 B. assess  
 C. explain  
 D. explore
29. Many people are now passionate about environmental issues.  
 A. concerned  
 B. conscious  
 C. appealing  
 D. fussy
30. She vowed to avenge the inhuman treatment meted out to her.  
 A. retaliate  
 B. repay  
 C. return  
 D. reciprocate



SECTION IV

*After each of the following sentences, a list of possible interpretations of all or part of the sentence is given. Choose the interpretation you consider **most appropriate** for **each** sentence.*

31. Joanita told Ken fair and square to pack his bags and go. This means that Joanita told him  
 A. very pleasantly.  
 B. in fair terms.  
 C. several times.  
 D. very clearly.

**Turn over**

32. She knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was lying. This means that she was quite
- A. profound.
  - B. blunt.
  - C. right.
  - D. certain.
33. The once illustrious leader has become a pale shadow of himself. This means that the leader
- A. has been chasing shadows.
  - B. is not what he used to be.
  - C. has failed in his purpose.
  - D. is in a wrong career.
34. In his determination to succeed, Adam threw caution to the wind. This means that he
- A. started to take risks.
  - B. explored every chance.
  - C. threw aside every distraction.
  - D. started to make sincere efforts.
35. Stephanie's hardwork eventually paid off. This means that her hardwork
- A. increased her problems.
  - B. made her restless.
  - C. yielded good dividends.
  - D. led her astray.
36. The festivities reached a climax when celebrities arrived. This means that the festivities
- A. became most solemn.
  - B. became most exciting.
  - C. were full of speeches.
  - D. were full of displays.
37. The baker said he was fresh out of flour. This means that the baker
- A. ordered a new supply.
  - B. reserved a little for the future.
  - C. recently finished his supply.
  - D. had just made fresh flour.
38. The findings are at odds with what is going on in the rest of the country. This means that the findings are
- A. under the direction of the government.
  - B. out of the ordinary.
  - C. made public.
  - D. different from reality.
39. At the conference yesterday, we covered much ground. This means that we
- A. refused to discuss many things.
  - B. forgot many issues.
  - C. treated a lot of issues.
  - D. used a lot of space.
40. We arrived at the party late and saw our father, of all people, dancing. This means that we
- A. did not know our father was there.
  - B. should have gone to the party earlier.
  - C. found our father dancing with everybody.
  - D. were surprised to find our father dancing.

## SECTION V

In the following passage the numbered gaps indicate missing words. Against each number in the list below the passage, four choices are offered in columns lettered A to D. For each numbered gap, choose from the options provided for that number, the word that is most suitable to fill the gap.

Everyone on the parade ground recognised the - 41 - of the Promising Future Party. There were enthusiastic cheers all round as the man of the - 42 - arrived. He had mastered the art of - 43 - speaking and was expected to deliver a powerful speech.

When it was time to deliver his well-rehearsed speech to the expectant crowd, he mounted the dais. He started by appealing to the - 44 - for their mandate in the forth-coming elections. The on-going - 45 - campaign was just a reminder of the fact that power belonged to the people. He asked them to look around for clear evidence of the achievements of the - 46 - party during its tenure. All those successes were made possible as a result of the sound - 47 - pursued by his administration. He promised that, if voted into power for another - 48 -, there would be job openings for the youth and prosperity for the entire citizenry.

He concluded by appealing to his listeners to vote wisely. Continuity should be the watchword. He then moved to the front of the rostrum and shouted the party - 49 -: 'VICTORY!' The party - 50 - chanted in response, 'ALL THE WAY!' The meeting broke up in jubilation.

	A.	B.	C.	D.
41.	chief	flag-bearer	governor	captain
42.	moment	crowd	masses	people
43.	public	social	open	standard
44.	members	classes	college	electorate
45.	electioneering	polling	membership	appealing
46.	managing	presiding	controlling	ruling
47.	policies	solutions	projections	procedures
48.	time	term	period	session
49.	motto	logo	slogan	greeting
50.	loyals	backers	faithfuls	administrators

**Turn over**



12

PART B  
LITERATURE

Answer 30 questions in this part: 10 questions on Prose, 10 questions on Drama and 10 questions on Poetry.

Prose

Answer any set of 10 questions numbered 51 to 60 in either Section I or Section II.

SECTION I  
CHARLES DICKENS: *Oliver Twist*

Read the following extract and answer questions 51 to 53.

... the boy crossed over; and walking close up to Oliver, said  
'Hullo, my covey! What's the row?'

Ch.8, Pg. 63

51. Where was Oliver?  
A. At Mr. Sowerberry's house  
B. In London  
C. In the town of Barnet  
D. At a hut in the open field
52. The boy in the extract refers to  
A. Charley Bates  
B. Jack Dawkins  
C. Monks  
D. Dick
53. Where did the boy lead Oliver to?  
A. Mr. Fang's place  
B. Sunbury Church  
C. Back to the workhouse  
D. To Fagin's place

Read the following extract and answer questions 54 to 56.

"As we have met today, we meet no more;  
but in other relations than those in which This conversation has placed us,  
we may be long and happily entwined; and may every blessing that the prayers of a time and  
earnest heart can call down from the source of all truth and sincerely, cheer and prosper you!"  
Ch. 35, Pg. 306

54. *Us* in the passage refers to  
A. Maylie and Oliver.  
B. Bumble and Grinuria.  
C. Harry and Rose.  
D. Harry and Losberne.
55. What reason did the speaker give for rejecting the addressee?  
A. She and the addressee are blood relations.  
B. She wants to travel abroad.  
C. She is in love with someone else.  
D. She holds an inferior status.
56. How did the underlined expression prove to be prophetic?  
A. They were joined in matrimony.  
B. They became close relatives.  
C. They joined the same class.  
D. They were partners in a prosperous business.

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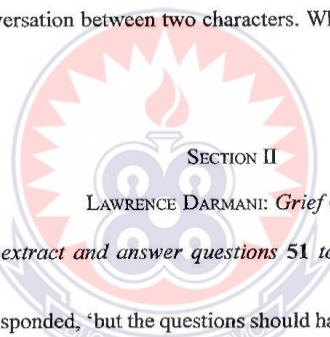
13

Read the following extract and answer questions 57 to 60.

'You may burn a candle' said the Jew, putting one upon the table.  
'And here's a book for you to read, till they come to fetch you.  
Good night!  
'Good night!' replied Oliver, softly.

Ch. 20, Pg. 172

57. What was the book about?  
A. Lives of criminals  
B. History of London  
C. Adventures from ancient times  
D. Crime fighting techniques
58. Who came to fetch Oliver?  
A. Rose  
B. Bumble  
C. Nancy  
D. Toby
59. To whom was Oliver taken?  
A. Fagin  
B. Mr. Bill Sikes  
C. Bulls-eye  
D. Mr. Noah Claypole
60. The extract is a conversation between two characters. What literary term describes this?  
A. Monologue  
B. Dialogue  
C. Drama  
D. Mime



LAWRENCE DARMANI: *Grief Child*

Read the following extract and answer questions 51 to 53.

'Yes, mother' Adu responded, 'but the questions should have something to do with the story'  
'Adu is right, Yaa.'  
'All right, let's go on. Now listen, because Rope was tall, he could see the foot and branches of the tree at the same time.'

Ch. 7, Pg. 50

51. What question had Yaa just asked?  
A. Why are stories only told at night?  
B. Are stories just for entertainment?  
C. Was Rope male or female?  
D. What purpose does such a narration serve?
52. What is the figure of speech of the underlined expression?  
A. Apposition  
B. Personification  
C. circumlocution  
D. Exaggeration
53. What is the time setting of this dialogue?  
A. At midnight  
B. At noon  
C. In the morning  
D. In the evening

**Turn over**



54. What name is given to stories in which animals act as human beings like Birago's story?
- A. Farce
  - B. Comedy
  - C. Fable
  - D. Parody
55. How did Adu's mother and sister die?
- A. They were drowned in the river.
  - B. They were murdered.
  - C. They were struck by lightning.
  - D. They perished under a fallen bough.

*Read the following extract and answer questions 56 to 57.*

Her curiosity grew. 'If it's not a secret, why won't you tell me?' Adu was silent. Ama was his best friend, but what Anane had revealed to him was too shocking to be true.  
Ch.17, pg. 131

56. The underlined expression is a
- A. rhetorical question.
  - B. paradoxical statement.
  - C. satirical question.
  - D. demonstrative statement.
57. What secret does Anane reveal?
- A. Goma is not Ama's real mother.
  - B. Adu's involvement in the palace theft case.
  - C. Goma's intention to travel abroad.
  - D. Appiah's intention to marry another wife.
58. What ailment did Anane suffer from?
- A. Hair loss
  - B. Hearing defect
  - C. Speech impediment
  - D. Lameness in one leg
59. Who was Goma's trading partner?
- A. Beckie
  - B. Mansa
  - C. Birago
  - D. Yaa
60. Why did many people leave Susa?
- A. Shortage of land
  - B. Recent calamities that befell the town
  - C. Scarcity of food
  - D. Harassment from robbers in the neighbourhood

15

DRAMA

Answer any set of 10 questions numbered 61 to 70 in either section I or II.

SECTION I

W. SHAKESPEARE: *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Read the following extract and answer questions 61 to 63.

Beatrice: “Not till God make men of some other metal than earth, would it not grieve a woman to be over-mastered with a piece of valiant dust?  
To make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I’ll none.  
Adam’s sons are my brethren, and, truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.”  
Act II, Sc. I, Lines 53 - 58

61. What is the dominant figure of speech in the above extract?
  - A. Interrogative statement
  - B. Investigative statement
  - C. Rhetorical question
  - D. Satirical question
62. What does Leonato ask Beatrice to do?
  - A. To accept Benedick as her husband
  - B. To make Don Pedro aware of Claudio’s intention
  - C. To acquaint Claudio about Hero’s readiness
  - D. To try to accept her part of the inheritance
63. *Adam’s sons are my brethren*. By this statement Beatrice means that to marry is
  - A. rebellious.
  - B. undesirable.
  - C. incestuous.
  - D. illicit.

Read the following extract and answer questions 64 to 66.

Beatrice: Dead, I think. Help, uncle!  
Hero! Why, Hero! Uncle! Signor Benedick! Friar!

Leonato: O fate! Take not away thy heavy hand.  
Death is the fairest cover for her shame.

Act IV, Sc. I, Lines 115 - 118

64. What does the series of interjection marks tell you about the first speaker’s mode of speaking?
  - A. She has a speech impediment.
  - B. She indulges in comic outburst.
  - C. She pours out her emotions.
  - D. She is spitting out her words.
65. *O fate!* What is the figure of speech of this expression?
  - A. Irony
  - B. Apostrophe
  - C. Vocative
  - D. Flashback
66. What happened to Hero immediately after?
  - A. She smiled.
  - B. She escaped.
  - C. She exclaimed.
  - D. She stirred.

**Turn over**

Read the following extract and answer questions 67 to 70.

Benedick: I'll tell you what, Prince. A college of witerackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram.  
Act V, Sc IV Lines 98 - 100

67. How did Claudio and Hero help the marriage of Benedick and Beatrice to become a reality?
- A. They sent numerous invitations to royal courts.
  - B. They produced love letters from each lover.
  - C. They gave rich presents.
  - D. They provided lavish entertainment.
68. What is an *epigram*?
- A. A seemingly contradictory statement
  - B. A statement in which opposites are balanced
  - C. A short witty saying
  - D. A clever but false saying
69. What happened to Benedick and Beatrice at the end of the drama?
- A. They were united in matrimony.
  - B. They became mere trading partners.
  - C. They became ardent students of the studio.
  - D. They were made more religious.
70. What news was brought shortly before the second marriage ceremony?
- A. Don John had crossed over into the continent.
  - B. Dogberry and Verges were deposed.
  - C. Don Pedro had left for Arragon.
  - D. Don John had been captured back to Messina.

SECTION II

EFO KOJO MAWUGBE: *In The Chest Of A Woman*

Read the following extract and answer questions 61 to 63.

Okyeame Bonsu: Nana, the chief messenger from your brother's palace has refused to help anyone's ears with the load on his tongue, except yours.  
Ch. 1, Pg.6

61. What was the traditional prescription for receiving strangers?
- A. To give mashed yam and eggs
  - B. To beat drums
  - C. To offer water
  - D. To offer cola
62. What is its significance?
- A. Assurance of intimate relationship
  - B. Sign of respect
  - C. Token of warm welcome
  - D. Assurance of protection
63. The setting of this speech is the palace at
- A. Anobeng.
  - B. Nkwanta.
  - C. Kyeremfaso.
  - D. Ebusa.

64. *I know no such son under the sun.*

What literary device is employed in the line above?

- A. Repetition
- B. Parallelism
- C. Pun
- D. Symbolism

*Read the following extract and answer questions 65 to 68.*

Adwoa:           What do you take me for? Am I not a slave like you ...  
                          and don't I remember what our forefathers said ...

Akosua:         Enough, I'll tell you.

Ch. 4, Pg. 62

65. What is the literary device used in Adwoa's speech?

- A. Ironical statement
- B. Rhetorical question
- C. Vocative statement
- D. Apostrophe question

66. What does Akosua tell her friend?

- A. That she is in love with Owusu
- B. That she is about to marry
- C. That Ekyaa and Owusu are to marry
- D. That Ekyaa is pregnant

67. What did the two women do before this conversation?

- A. They pretended to sweep the palace grounds.
- B. They checked to see that no one was coming.
- C. They were eavesdropping.
- D. They were feasting.

68. How did Adwoa receive the news?

- A. With glee
- B. With doubt
- C. With shock
- D. With sympathy

69. What punishment was prescribed for the one who made Ekyaa pregnant?

- A. Execution
- B. Ostracism
- C. Solitary confinement
- D. Insults and beating

70. What happened to Nana Oppong immediately after he was apprehended?

- A. He was bound hand and foot.
- B. He was severely rebuked.
- C. He was assaulted by the guards.
- D. He was blindfolded.

18

POETRY

Answer any set of 10 questions numbered 71 to 80 in either Section I or Section II.

SECTION I

NON- AFRICAN POETRY

ROBERT FROST: *Stopping By the Woods On a Snowy Evening*

71. Why does the horse give his harness bells a shake?
- A. It is in a playful mood.
  - B. It feels that the snow is too cold.
  - C. It seems that there is something amiss.
  - D. It is in a lovely environment.
72. The last two lines are repeated. The literary name is
- A. regular endings.
  - B. regular lines.
  - C. rhyming repetition.
  - D. rhyming couplet.

GEORGE HERBERT: *Death*

73. The imagery of the poem *Death* is
- A. visual.
  - B. tactile.
  - C. metaphorical.
  - D. sensational.
74. Flesh being turned to dust, and bones to sticks.
- The underlined words are examples of
- A. apostrophe.
  - B. synecdoche.
  - C. hyperbole.
  - D. symbolism.

WILLIAM BLAKE: *The Tiger*

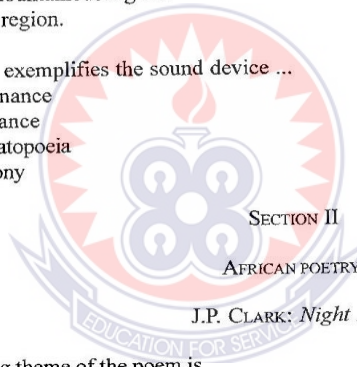
75. *And watered heaven with their tears*  
*Did he smile his work to see?*
- What two things are being contrasted in the two lines?
- A. Heaven and smile
  - B. Water and work
  - C. Head and work
  - D. Tears and smile
76. *When the stars threw down their spears* is a/an
- A. personification.
  - B. exaggeration.
  - C. assonance.
  - D. consonance.

G.G. LORD BYRON: *She Walks In Beauty*.

77. The dominant imagery in the poem is  
A. visual.  
B. auditory.  
C. imaginative.  
D. supernatural.
78. *She walks in beauty, like the night ...*  
What two things are compared?  
A. Woman and man  
B. Night and stars  
C. Beauty and night  
D. Environment and sky

MOHAN SINGH: *A Village Girl*

79. *Peep through the green grass  
And becomes a part of the green tree*  
The above lines show that the setting is a  
A. vast expanse of water.  
B. sandy wasteland.  
C. bare mountainous region.  
D. forest region.
80. *hips swinging* exemplifies the sound device ...  
A. consonance  
B. assonance  
C. onomatopoeia  
D. harmony



71. The overriding theme of the poem is  
A. discomfort resulting from labour.  
B. effects of magical practice.  
C. natural disaster affecting humanity.  
D. fundamental concerns about existence.
72. What aspect of the mother's character is revealed in the poem?  
A. Benevolence  
B. Hopelessness  
C. Contentment  
D. Industry

KOJO GYINAE KYEI: *I Have Been a Victim*

73. The poet is in the mood of  
A. despondency.  
B. excitement.  
C. optimism.  
D. lamentation.

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**Turn over**



74. *My mother cut off from  
The very mains*

The above lines show that the mother is

- A. not allowed to exercise control over her children.
- B. unable to reap the fruits of her labour.
- C. required by custom to join the ethnic group.
- D. made to dissociate herself from her own.

KWABENA EYI ACQUAH: *Gently*

75. The line, *people used to live there* means
- A. they have promised to live there.
  - B. they now prefer to live there.
  - C. they are accustomed to living there.
  - D. they no longer live there.
76. *Brothers, break them gently* is an example of
- A. assonance.
  - B. alliteration.
  - C. exaggeration.
  - D. consonance.

RICHARD NTIRU: *The Pauper*

77. The poem highlights the conflict between
- A. the rich and the poor.
  - B. the patriotic and unpatriotic citizens.
  - C. rural and urban surroundings.
  - D. natives and foreigners.
78. What feeling has the persona for the addressee?
- A. Love
  - B. Indignation
  - C. Sympathy
  - D. Repulsion

JARED ANGIRA: *No Coffin No Grave*

79. *Under the jacaranda tree beside his palace ...*

This kind of environment is

- A. clean and shabby.
- B. waste.
- C. gloomy.
- D. exquisite scenic beauty.

80. The poem exemplifies the situation in which the opposite of what is expected occurs. What literary device can **best** describe it?
- A. Simile
  - B. Irony
  - C. Rhyme
  - D. Contrast

**END OF PAPER**

P3023/A WASSCE  
November 2014  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE 3  
(CORE) **3**  
Objective Test  
Listening Comprehension Test  
45 minutes

Name.....

Index Number.....

THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL  
West African Senior School Certificate Examination

November 2014

ENGLISH LANGUAGE 3

45 minutes

ORAL

Listening Comprehension Test

OBJECTIVE TEST

Do not open this booklet until you are told to do so. While you are waiting, read and observe the following instructions carefully. Write your name and index number in ink in the spaces provided above.

Answer all the questions on your Objective Test answer sheet.

- Use 2B pencil throughout.
- On the pre-printed answer sheet, check that the following details are correctly printed:
  - In the space marked *Name*, check your surname followed by your other names.
  - In the spaces marked *Examination*, *Year*, *Subject* and *Paper*, check 'WASSCE November', '2014', 'ENGLISH LANGUAGE', and '3' in that order.
  - In the box marked *Index Number*, your index number has been printed vertically in the spaces on the left-hand side, and each numbered space has been shaded in line with each digit. Reshade each of the shaded spaces.
  - In the box marked *Subject Code*, the digits 302343 are printed vertically in the spaces on the left-hand side. Reshade the corresponding numbered spaces as you did for your index number.
- An example is given below. This is for a male candidate whose name is Okai Dzifa BLAY. His index number is 7102143958 and he is offering *English Language 3*.

THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL  
ANSWER SHEET

PRINTED IN BLOCK LETTERS.		GHA	
Name: <b>BLAY OKAI DZIFA</b>			
Examination: <b>WASSCE November</b>		Year: <b>2014</b>	
Subject: <b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE</b>		Paper: <b>3</b>	

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES  
1. Use grade B pencil throughout.  
2. Answer each question by choosing one letter and shading it in this:  A  B  C  D  E  
3. Erase completely any wrong answer with the eraser.  
4. Leave extra spaces blank if the answer spaces provided are more than you need.  
5. Do not make any markings across the row, back marks the height and edge of your answer sheet.

INDEX NUMBER		SUBJECT CODE	
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2

TEST 1

Listen carefully. In this test there are **three** words to a line. I am going to read one word from each line. Beside the word I read, there is a letter. Shade this letter on your answer sheet. Here are two examples.

**Example 1:** A. beat B. bit C. bet

The word I read was b-e-a-t, beat; so the correct answer for Example 1 is A. This is recorded by shading answer space A against number 1.

1.  A  B  C  D  E

**Example 2:** A. peak B. pick C. park

The word I read was p-a-r-k, park; so the correct answer for example 2 is C. This is recorded by shading answer space C against number 2.

2.  A  B  C  D  E

Now get ready to answer the rest of Test 1 on your answer sheet. Start at Number 1.

	A	B	C
1.	gall	girl	gale
2.	drool	drawl	droll
3.	stone	stun	stern
4.	wren	ruin	reign
5.	pod	pad	paid
6.	hag	hug	hog
7.	boil	bowl	ball
8.	fare	four	foe
9.	peal	pill	pall
10.	rote	route	writ



TEST 2

Listen carefully. In this test there are **three** words to a line. I am going to read one word from each line. Beside the word I read, there is a letter. Shade this letter on your answer sheet. Here are two examples.

**Example 1:** A. seats B. seeds C. scenes

The word I read was s-e-e-d-s, seeds; so the correct answer for Example 1 is B. This is recorded by shading answer space B against number 1.

1.  A  B  C  D  E

**Example 2:** A. bent B. bend C. belt

The word I read was b-e-n-t, bent; so the correct answer for Example 2 is A. This is recorded by shading answer space A against number 2.

2.  A  B  C  D  E

Now get ready to answer the rest of Test 2 on your answer sheet. Start at Number 11.

	A	B	C
11.	can	pan	ban
12.	lodge	log	lock
13.	bash	badge	batch
14.	thinker	tinker	winker
15.	drain	train	crane
16.	couch	cowed	cowl
17.	miss	myth	mid
18.	batter	banger	banner
19.	shin	chin	gin
20.	stark	start	starred

## TEST 3

Listen carefully. In this test there are **four** words to a line. I am going to read one word from each line. Beside the word I read, there is a letter. Shade this letter on your answer sheet. Here are two examples.

**Example 1.** A. witch B. wish C. wash D. watch

The word I read was w-a-t-c-h, watch; so the correct answer for Example 1 is D. This is recorded by shading answer space D against number 1.

1.  A  B  C  D  E

**Example 2.** A. slime B. rhyme C. cream D. crime

The word I read was s-l-i-m-e, slime; so the correct answer for example 2 is A. This is recorded by shading answer space A against number 2.

2.  A  B  C  D  E

Now get ready to answer the rest of Test 3 on your answer sheet. Start at Number 21.

	A	B	C	D
21.	keep	cape	gape	jeep
22.	stout	scout	shout	snout
23.	slip	sleep	sheep	ship
24.	twine	twice	mice	whine
25.	same	shame	tame	game
26.	soldier	solder	moulder	milder
27.	joke	jack	jerk	germ

## TEST 4

Listen carefully. In this test there are **three** sentences in each group. I am going to read one sentence from each group. Beside the sentence I read, there is a letter. Shade this letter on your answer sheet. Here are two examples.

- Example 1.**
- A. He's just shot a goal.
  - B. He's just shot a girl.
  - C. He's just shot a gull.

The sentence I read was sentence C, 'He's just shot a gull.' So the correct answer for Example 1 is C. This is recorded by shading answer space C against number 1.

1.     A  B  C     D     E

- Example 2.**
- A. This steam has power.
  - B. This team has power.
  - C. This theme has power.

The sentence I read was sentence A, 'This steam has power.' So the correct answer for Example 2 is A. This is recorded by shading answer space A against number 2.

2.     A     B     C     D     E

Now get ready to answer the rest of Test 4 on your answer sheet. Start at Number 28.

28.    A. I said "Eat them"  
       B. I said "Heat them"  
       C. I said "Hit them"
29.    A. He's a bother.  
       B. He's a brother.  
       C. He's a boarder.
30.    A. He'll jump it.  
       B. He'll dump it.  
       C. He'll clamp it.
31.    A. You kised him?  
       B. You fixed him?  
       C. You missed him?
32.    A. Please take it.  
       B. Please bake it.  
       C. Please make it.
33.    A. That's an incredible hulk!  
       B. That's an incredible hump!  
       C. That's an incredible hunk!
34.    A. It's sparse.  
       B. It's scarce.  
       C. It's past.

In this test the word that you will hear does **not** appear on your word list. That word only rhymes with one of the words on the list.

Listen to this word: pet. Which of the four words in Example 1 rhymes with pet?

- Example 1.**
- A. sent
  - B. belt
  - C. set
  - D. rent

The correct word is set. The other words do not rhyme with pet. The letter written against set is C and this is recorded by shading answer space C against number 1.

1.       A  B  C  D  E

Listen to this word: sing. Which of the four words in Example 2 rhymes with sing?

- Example 2.**
- A. sink
  - B. singe
  - C. snick
  - D. wing

The correct word is wing. The other words do not rhyme with sing. The letter written against wing is D and this is recorded by shading answer space D against number 2.

2.       A  B  C  D  E

Now get ready to answer the rest of Test 5 on your answer sheet. Start at Number 35.

- |     |   |     |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 35. | A. fare<br>B. tyre<br>C. far<br>D. fir            | 39. | A. foal<br>B. mould<br>C. flowed<br>D. mood |
| 36. | A. eight<br>B. eat<br>C. fat<br>D. might          | 40. | A. just<br>B. first<br>C. west<br>D. dares  |
| 37. | A. breath<br>B. wretch<br>C. soothe<br>D. breathe | 41. | A. one<br>B. won<br>C. wan<br>D. none       |
| 38. | A. cot<br>B. caught<br>C. rock<br>D. doubt        | 42. | A. edge<br>B. egg<br>C. dodge<br>D. merge   |

**Turn over**

You are now going to hear some questions and answers. The questions will all be different and the answers always the same. You have to choose the **one** question which goes with the repeated answer. Here are two examples.

**Example 1.**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer</i>
A. Who borrowed your newspaper?	He <u>borrowed</u> my newspaper.
B. Did John borrow your newspaper?	He <u>borrowed</u> my newspaper.
C. Did he steal your newspaper?	He <u>borrowed</u> my newspaper.

The correct answer is C, because 'He borrowed my newspaper' answers the question 'Did he steal your newspaper?' This is recorded by shading answer space C against number 1.

1.     A  B  C  D  E

**Example 2.**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer</i>
A. What is the capital of Britain?	<u>London</u> is the capital of Britain.
B. Is London a city in Britain?	<u>London</u> is the capital of Britain.
C. What country is London the capital of?	<u>London</u> is the capital of Britain.

The correct answer is A, because 'London is the capital of Britain' answers the question 'What is the capital of Britain?' This is recorded by shading answer space A against number 2.

2.     A  B  C  D  E

In the test which follows you will hear only the answers; the questions will not be read. Now get ready to answer the rest of Test 6 on your answer sheet. Start at Number 43.

43. A. Is our lesson on Friday?  
B. Is their lesson on Monday?  
C. Is their test on Friday?
44. A. Are her clothes dirty?  
B. Are his shoes dirty?  
C. Are his clothes clean?
45. A. Is John kind?  
B. Is Henry wicked?  
C. Was John wicked?
46. A. Is Paul a professional boxer?  
B. Is Peter an amateur boxer?  
C. Is Peter a professional wrestler?
47. A. Did she lose everything?  
B. Did he lose something?  
C. Did he gain everything?
48. A. Should children be responsible?  
B. Can children be responsible?  
C. Should parents be irresponsible?

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7

49. A. Did they go home?  
B. Did we come home?  
C. Did we go abroad?
50. A. Does Adwoa dance well?  
B. Does Ama play well?  
C. Does Ama dance badly?
51. A. Did we invite John?  
B. Did they invite Samuel?  
C. Did we dismiss Samuel?
52. A. Does Mum like that film?  
B. Does Dad like that book?  
C. Does Mum like this book?

## TEST 7

*You are now going to hear some short conversations. After each conversation, read the three statements on your question paper and decide which of them is correct. Shade the appropriate space on your answer sheet. Here is an example.*

MAN: He said the exercise was well-done.

WOMAN: That's what he said.

- A. The man is certain that the exercise was well-done, but the woman is doubtful.  
B. The man is doubtful as to whether the exercise was well-done, but the woman is certain.  
C. Both are doubtful as to whether the exercise was well-done.

Both are doubtful as to whether the exercise was well-done. *The correct answer is therefore statement C. This is recorded by shading answer space C.*

A  B  C  D  E

*Now get ready to answer the rest of Test 7 on your answer sheet. Start at Number 53.*

53. A. The man is sure, the woman is not.  
B. The woman is sure, the man is not.  
C. Both of them are not sure.
54. A. The man is certain, the woman is not.  
B. The woman is certain, the man is not.  
C. Both of them are certain.
55. A. The man is optimistic, the woman is not.  
B. The woman is optimistic, the man is not.  
C. Both of them are optimistic.
56. A. The man is sure, the woman is not.  
B. The woman is sure, the man is not.  
C. Neither of them is sure.

**Turn over**



TEST 8

*You are now going to hear a short conversation between two speakers, a man and a woman; and a narrative. Both the conversation and the narrative will be played to you twice. Immediately after hearing each of them, you will be asked two questions. From your question paper decide on the **correct** answers. On your answer sheet shade the space of the appropriate letter.*

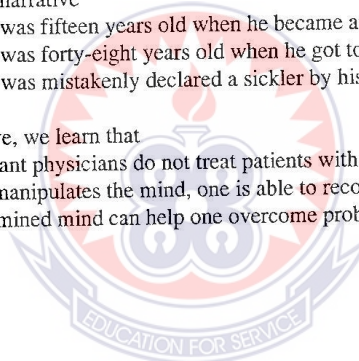
*There are no examples for this test. Therefore get ready to start at Number 57.*

CONVERSATION

57. According to the conversation
- A. there is too much stress on people these days.
  - B. people don't know their family members these days.
  - C. it's impossible for people to rush early to work.
58. From the conversation we learn that
- A. it's better for people to change their clothes in cars.
  - B. people need to find time to relax these days.
  - C. people should attend funerals in their home towns.

NARRATIVE

59. According to the narrative
- A. Panyin was fifteen years old when he became an ailing sickler.
  - B. Panyin was forty-eight years old when he got to know he was a sickler.
  - C. Panyin was mistakenly declared a sickler by his doctor.
60. From the narrative, we learn that
- A. consultant physicians do not treat patients with drugs.
  - B. if one manipulates the mind, one is able to recover miraculously.
  - C. a determined mind can help one overcome problems.



**END OF OBJECTIVE TEST**