

## Washback Effects of Linguistic Competitions on Teaching and Learning Practices

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### ABSTRACT

*The impact of tests or assessments on teaching instruction and learning is known as “washback”. The study of washback effects through empirical research began with Alderson and Wall’s significant work from 1993. Further research about washback analyzed its various effects afterwards the initial investigations. This research paper targeted to evaluate how washback affected teaching personnel since they participated in linguistic competitions to understand performance relationship amid classroom teaching practices, learning, and assessment. A test’s impact on instruction remains essential although it cannot independently determine classroom instructional methods and teacher learning because various active participants such as teachers and students and their environment act as intervening agents. Teachers have the sole potential to generate positive washback from target tests despite other factors at work. This study ends with specific recommendations from literature for teachers to create positive washback effects.*

**Keywords:** Washback, Learning, Assessment

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Study

The impact of any test or effect of assessment on teaching as well as learning is known as “washback” (Rahman et al., 2023). The study of washback effects through empirical research began with Alderson and Wall’s significant work from 1993. Within British Applied Linguistics the term washback prevails while educational literature uses backwash (Baksh et al., 2016). The 'Washback' or 'backwash' effect represents a well-researched academic phenomenon which affects all institutional learning processes.

Assessment together with evaluation functions as an essential educational force that shapes the development of instructional approaches along with shaping student learning patterns (Albondog, 2023). Educational assessments create the washback effect which describes the way tests along with competitions modify teaching approaches and student learning methods. The assessment effect generates either positive or negative consequences that depend on several factors including the assessment design and the significance of outcomes as well as stakeholder reception (Marvakis et al., 2019).

The field of applied linguists consider washback as a fundamental aspect that determines how well language assessments perform and produce their intended effects for evaluation purposes. As a standardized extracurricular evaluation instrument the International Kangaroo Linguistics Competition (IKLC) holds particular importance in testing language abilities of students. Students receive a distinctive opportunity to demonstrate motivational levels along with learning performance and participation engagement through linguistic competitions instead of traditional high-stakes standardized tests.

### **Defining Washback and Its Educational Significance**

The term washback (or backwash) was first introduced in language testing to describe how tests influence classroom instruction and student learning (Alderson & Wall, 1993). It can be categorized into two types:

- **Positive Washback:** When an assessment encourages beneficial learning behaviors, fosters motivation, and promotes skill development beyond rote memorization.
- **Negative Washback:** When an assessment leads to narrow test-focused learning, undue stress, or limits creativity in teaching and learning.

Washback is particularly relevant in linguistic competitions, as these events not only test students' language knowledge but also affect their motivation, learning autonomy, and perception of language acquisition. Unlike conventional classroom-based assessments, competitions like the IKLC introduce an element of challenge and excitement that can foster intrinsic motivation, enhance language exposure, and provide a real-world application of linguistic skills.

### **The Relevance of Washback in Linguistic Competitions**

In the contextual conditions of linguistic competitions, washback demonstrates in multiple ways: The language competition creates better motivation in students through independent learning methods while they study language materials that extend beyond classroom textbooks. The competitions cause students to develop performance anxiety through feelings of academic pressure to excel (Puspitasari, 2024). Linguistic competitions affect teacher instruction by having educators select competition-based learning techniques for their curricula and by omitting these contests from instruction when they do not fit official teaching targets (Rahmat et al. 2022). Competitions can function as supplemental measures of assessment to reinforce language learning methods which cannot be found in traditional evaluation methods (Rathnayake, 2025).

This research conceives the premise whether or not a linguistic competition has any washback effect what could be observed in the teaching beliefs and practices of teachers in education. Aim is to conduct an empirical research investigation to get the quantitative proof of the phenomenon from the teachers working in the field of educational research. It necessitates to explore how Washback affects teachers' beliefs and practices about Linguistic Competitions.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This research targets to empirically investigate the washback effects of the IKLC on teaching and learning practices. By analyzing teacher perspectives, the study seeks to:

1. Determine whether participation in the IKLC positively or negatively influences teacher practices and language learning.
2. Examine the extent to which the competition affects teaching methodologies in the field of education.

**Primary Objective** stands to investigate whether IKLC creates positive or negative washback effects on teaching and learning in Pakistani context.

### **Setting secondary objectives**

1. There is a need to examine if IKLC influences teaching practices.
2. Determine the impact of IKLC on regular teaching learning.
3. Identify the sources and causes of pressure related to teachers' participation.
4. Explore whether IKLC supports Institutional curricula and teaching methodologies.
5. The washback effect of IKLC is perceived more positively than negatively.

The following hypotheses are established to testify:

- **H1:** IKLC positively impacts teachers' practices and engagement in learning.
- **H2:** IKLC creates pressure on teachers, which may lead to negative washback effects.
- **H3:** IKLC does not align well with Institutional curriculum, affecting regular teaching.

### **Significance of the Study**

Future educational policies together with instructional methods require knowledge of washback effects from linguistic competitions such as the IKLC. The study seeks to measure the outcomes generated by these competitions to build knowledge about educational assessment and motivation research. The collected data will assist educators together with policymakers and competition organizers in enhancing linguistic competition design to generate stronger positive results and reduce unfavorable outcomes.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The washback effect of linguistic competitions, like the **International Kangaroo Linguistics Competition (IKLC)**, can be understood through various theoretical models in language assessment, motivation, and learning psychology. This study draws upon key theories to explain the impact of IKLC on teaching practices, and learning outcomes. This study is gritty to explore the wash back effects of the international kangaroo linguistic competition (IKLC) on teaching and learning practices, particularly focusing on teacher perceptions. To understand this phenomenon, we integrate recent theoretical advancements in wash research and language learning motivation.

### **Washback Theory in Language Assessment**

The **washback effect**, a key concept in language testing research, refers to the impact of a test on teaching and learning (Alderson & Wall, 1993). It can be positive (encouraging deeper learning) or negative (leading to test-oriented rote learning).

### The Washback Hypothesis

Alderson and Wall proposed the **Washback Hypotheses**, which proposes that tests leave impact:

1. What teachers impart (curriculum alignment).
2. How teachers demonstrate (teaching methods).
3. What students learn (learning focus).
4. How students learn (study strategies). (Alderson & Wall, 1993)

This study applies **Washback Theory** to analyze whether IKLC has a positive influence (enhanced motivation, participation) or a **negative influence** (stress, pressure, curriculum mismatch) on students and teachers.

### High-Stakes vs. Low-Stakes Washback

- High-Stakes Tests (**e.g., IELTS, TOEFL**) often create negative washback by forcing rigid, test-focused learning (Bailey, 1996).
- Low-Stakes Tests & Competitions (**e.g., IKLC**) tend to produce positive washback, as students voluntarily participate and are intrinsically motivated to improve (Bailey, 1996).

Since **IKLC** is a low-stakes competition, it is expected to have a mostly positive washback effect, encouraging students to engage with language learning autonomously. As **IKLC** is seen as a prestigious event, students may perceive it as valuable, reinforcing their motivation to participate.

### Summary of Theoretical Framework

Theory	Key Idea	Application to IKLC
Washback Theory (Alderson & Wall, 1993)	Tests influence teaching & learning.	IKLC has positive washback on motivation but limited curriculum alignment.
Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985)	Intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation.	Students voluntarily participate, <b>boosting</b> intrinsic motivation.
Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002)	Students engage based on success expectancy & value.	IKLC encourages participation due to prestige & learning value.
Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978)	Learning happens through social interaction.	IKLC allows students to learn collaboratively and challenge themselves.
Autonomous Learning Theory (Benson, 2001)	Self-directed learning improves engagement.	Students prepare independently, fostering language exploration.
Curriculum Alignment Theory (Shepard, 1993)	Tests should reflect what is taught in classrooms.	IKLC's lack of curriculum alignment limits its formal learning benefits.

### **Expanded Washback Conceptualization**

Unlike the past researches, recent studies broadened the indulgent of washback by recognizing the roles of various stakeholders and contextual factors in mediating its effects. This perspective suggests that washback is not a unidirectional influence from assessment to teaching but involves a complex interplay among teachers, students, institutional policies, and societal expectations. For instance, a 2023 study highlighted that the inherent quality and a test value are demarcated by its stakeholders and contextual uses, indicating that both teachers and learners might engage in practices they otherwise wouldn't if the tests were absent.

### **Stakeholder-Centric Washback**

This approach emphasizes that the perceptions and actions of stakeholders, including teachers and students, significantly shape the nature of washback. Teachers' interpretations of test demands can influence their instructional strategies, while students' perceptions can affect their learning behaviors. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for comprehending how assessments like the IKLC impact educational practices.

### **Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) in Language Learning**

Role of AGT is acknowledged as a prominent charter for understanding motivation in educational contexts. AGT postulates that personnel assume different types of achievement goals, which influence their motivation, learning strategies, and performance outcomes. In the context of learning language, AGT provides an effective agenda to justify motivation in relation to social achievement and learning environments, addressing outcomes regarding cognitive and behavioral facets.

### **Types of Achievement Goals**

- **Mastery Goals:** Focus remains on evolving competence and comprehension. Learners with mastery goals are intrinsically motivated and engage in deep learning strategies.
- **Performance Goals:** Aim to demonstrate competence related to others splitting into performance based goals (through outperforming others) and avoiding performance goals (avoiding performing worse than others).

Applying AGT to the IKLC context allows for an examination of how participation in the competition influences teachers and students' goal orientations and, consequently, their learning behaviors and outcomes.

### **Integration of Theories**

By integrating these recent theoretical advancements, this study examines the IKLC's washback effect through a multifaceted lens:

- **Stakeholder Perspectives:** Understanding how teachers and students perceive and react to the IKLC provides insights into the competition's impact on teaching methodologies and learning behaviors.
- **Motivational Dynamics:** Applying AGT helps in analyzing how the competition influences students' achievement goals, which in turn affect their engagement and performance.

## Summary

The theoretical framework conceived for this study tends to integrate washback effects, motivation theories, constructivist learning, and curriculum alignment to analyze the influence of IKLC. The findings suggest that **IKLC** fosters motivation and self-directed learning but could be more effective with better curriculum alignment. By applying these theories, this research provides a structured foundation to comprehend influence of linguistic competitions on teaching and learning practices.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study followed quantitative design of research to examine the washback effects of the International Kangaroo Linguistics Competition (IKLC) on teaching practices and learning. The research relies on survey-based empirical data collected from teachers to examine their perceptions and experiences related to the competition. A questionnaire-oriented approach was used, ensuring that responses were structured and quantifiable, allowing for statistical analyses of trends and correlations. The study is cross-sectional, capturing data gathering at one point of time to assess attitudes and experiences.

### Participants and Sampling Technique

The study targeted teachers from schools participating in the IKLC. A convenience sampling method was employed, selecting schools within accessible locations while ensuring diversity in school types (elite and non-elite institutions).

- Teacher Participants: 50 teachers who had prior experience with IKLC.

This purposive sampling ensured that participants had direct exposure to the competition and could provide meaningful insights regarding its washback effects.

### Data Collection Method

Data was collected through structured questionnaires designed separately for teachers and students. The questionnaires were developed based on previous washback studies and adapted to the context of linguistic competitions. For developing this research paper, Teacher Questionnaire was targeted which aimed to explore:

- Teachers' perceptions of **IKLC's** impact on student motivation and performance.
- The level of **pressure** felt by teachers and whether it was transferred to students.
- The extent to which **IKLC** content aligns with school curricula.
- The positive and negative effects of IKLC on teaching practices.

The survey questionnaires included multiple-choice questions and Likert-scale items to quantify perceptions and attitudes, allowing for statistical comparison and analysis.

### Data Analysis Method

An analysis of the data was made through descriptive and inferential statistics:

## Descriptive Statistics and Chi-Square Test Results

### Descriptive Statistics Summary

- Teacher Pressure: 30% of teachers reported feeling pressure, while 70% did not.
- Pressure Transfer: 40% of teachers transferred pressure to students, while 60% did not.
- IKLC and Knowledge Measurement: 60% believed IKLC measures innate knowledge, while 40% did not.
- IKLC and Motivation Measurement: 74% believed IKLC enhances student motivation.
- Participation Increase: 70% of teachers observed an increase in participation.
- Curriculum Alignment: 60% of teachers felt IKLC did not match their curriculum.
- School Attitude: 96% of schools treated IKLC as an extracurricular competition rather than an academic test.
- Motivation in Weaker Students: 80% of teachers believed IKLC induced motivation in weaker students.

### Inferential Statistics

Test Variable	Chi-Square	Value	p-Value	Significance
Pressure Related to Performance	8.0	0.0046	Significant	
Pressure Transfer to Students	2.0	0.1573	Not Significant	
IKLC Measuring Knowledge	2.0	0.1573	Not Significant	
IKLC Measuring Motivation	11.52	0.0006	Significant	
Participation Increase	8.0	0.0046	Significant	
Curriculum Match	2.0	0.1573	Not Significant	
School Attitude (Academic vs. ECA)	42.32	0.004	Highly Significant	
Motivation in Weaker Students	18.0	0.003	Highly Significant	

### Key Interpretations

- Teacher Pressure is Significant ( $p = 0.0046$ ): Teachers do feel a statistically significant amount of pressure, but it is not transferred significantly to students.
- IKLC as a Motivation Tool is Highly Significant ( $p = 0.0006$ ): Teachers overwhelmingly believe IKLC boosts student motivation, supporting its positive washback effect.
- Participation Increase is Statistically Significant ( $p = 0.0046$ ): A growing number of students choose to participate in IKLC over time.
- Curriculum Misalignment is Not Significant ( $p = 0.1573$ ): Though 60% of teacher report IKLC does not match their curriculum, the variation is not statistically significant.
- IKLC's Role as an Extracurricular Activity is Highly Significant ( $p < 0.0001$ ): Almost all schools classify IKLC as an extracurricular competition rather than an academic test.
- Motivation in Weaker Students is Highly Significant ( $p = 0.003$ ): Teachers strongly agree that IKLC fosters motivation, especially among weaker students.



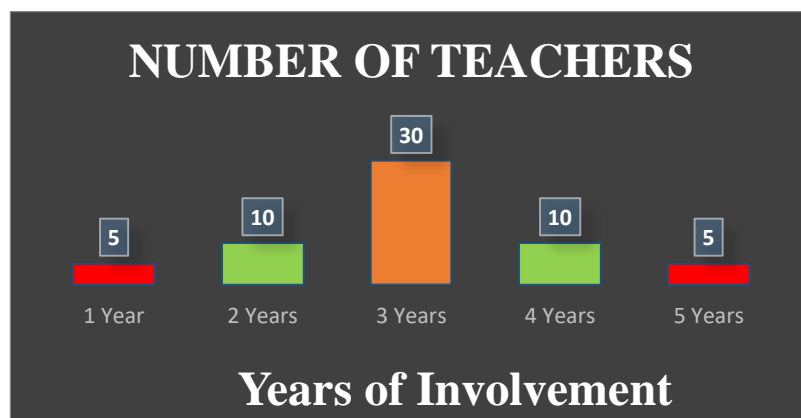
## RESULTS

This section presents the quantitative findings from the teacher questionnaire, analyzing the perceived perceptions about washback effects of IKLC on teacher practices. The data is displayed using tables and bar charts for clarity.

### Tenure of Teachers in IKLC

Teachers were asked about their experience in administering IKLC. Most teachers had 3 years of involvement, suggesting familiarity with the competition.

Years of Involvement	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years
Number of Teachers	5	10	30	10	5



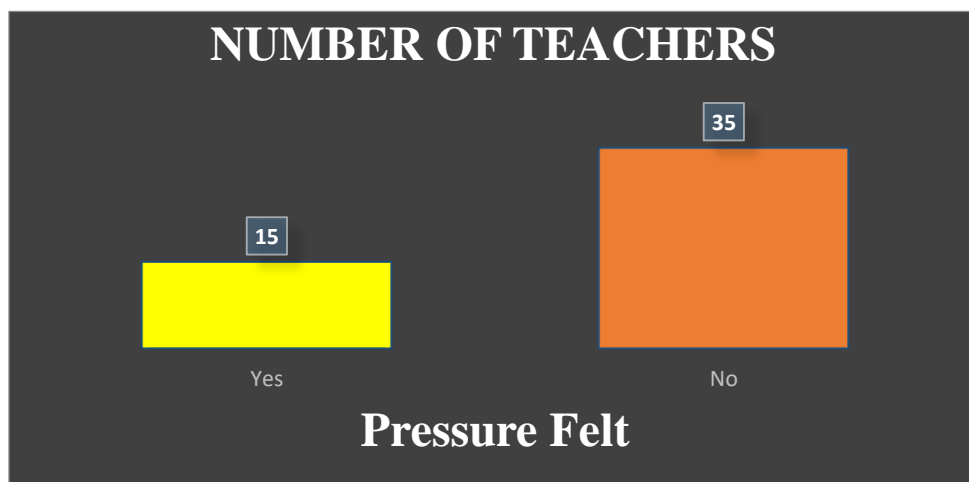
**Figure 1: Teacher Experience with IKLC**



### **Pressure Related to Student Performance**

Teachers were asked if they felt pressure due to student performance in IKLC. The majority (70%) did not feel pressured, while 30% reported experiencing pressure.

Pressure Felt?	Yes	No
Number of Teachers	15	35



**Figure 2: Teacher-Reported Pressure Due to IKLC**

### **Pressure Transferred to Students**

Among teachers who felt pressure, 40% acknowledged transferring it to students, while 60% did not.

Pressure Transferred?	Yes	No
Number of Teachers	20	30

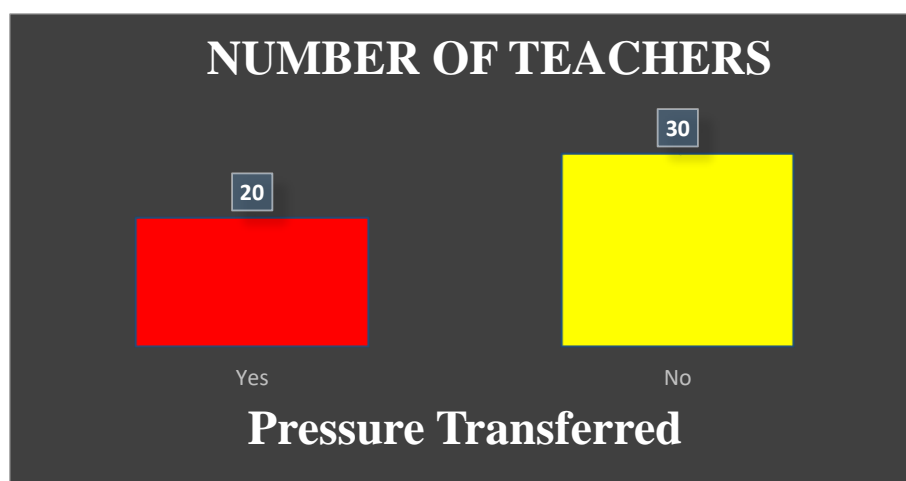


Figure 3: Sources of Pressure Transferred to Students

#### Sources of Performance Pressure

Teachers identified various sources of performance pressure, with administration and parents being the primary contributors.

Source of Pressure	Yourself	Administration	Parents	Students Themselves
Number of Teachers	10	15	15	10

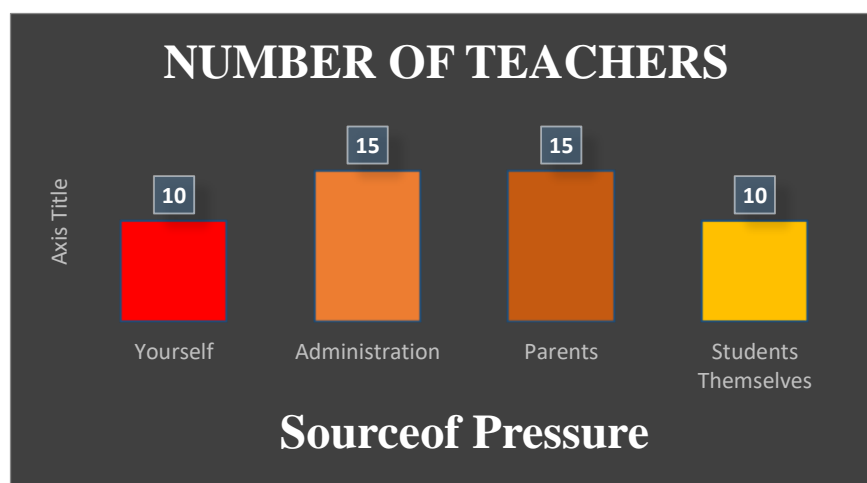
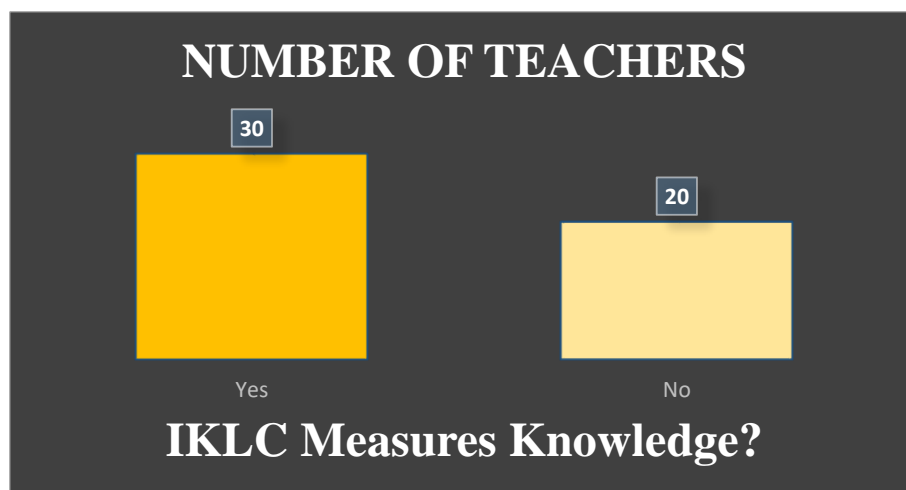


Figure 4: Sources of Teacher Pressure

#### Does IKLC Accurately Measure Innate Knowledge?

Teachers were asked whether IKLC reflects students' innate linguistic knowledge. A majority (60%) agreed, while 40% disagreed.

IKLC Measures Knowledge?	Yes	No
Number of Teachers	30	20

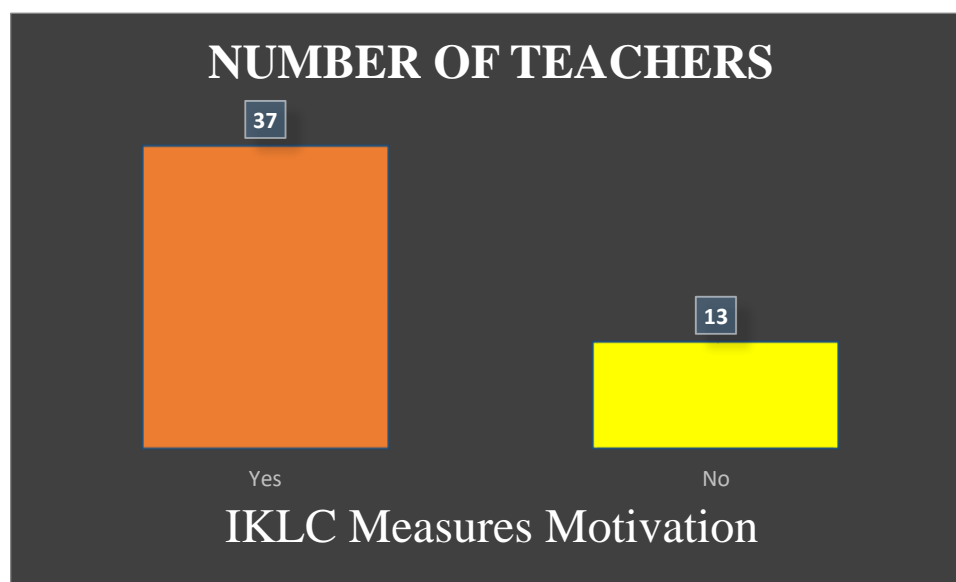


**Figure 5: Sources of IKLC Measures knowledge**

#### Does IKLC Accurately Measure Student Motivation?

The majority of teachers (74%) believed that IKLC positively impacts student motivation.

IKLC Measures Motivation?	Yes	No
Number of Teachers	37	13

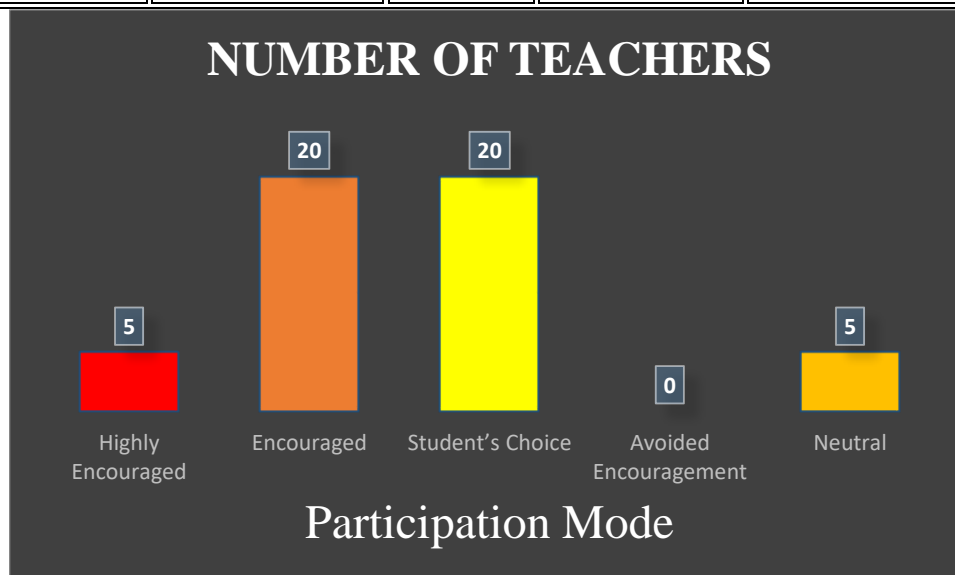


**Figure 6: Teacher Views on IKLC and Motivation**

#### Attitude Towards Participation

Teachers reported how students were encouraged to participate in IKLC. 40% of students participated by choice, while 50% were encouraged by teachers.

Participation Mode	Highly Encouraged	Encouraged	Student's Choice	Avoided Encouragement	Neutral
Number of Teachers	5	20	20	0	5

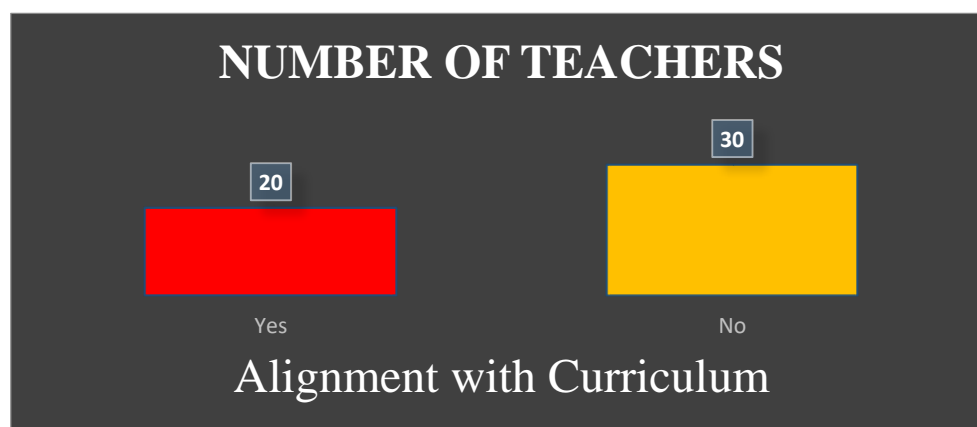


**Figure 7: Teacher Views on Participation Mode**

#### Does IKLC Align with School Curriculum?

A significant number of teachers (60%) felt that IKLC does not fully align with their school's grammar and vocabulary teaching.

Alignment with Curriculum?	Yes	No
Number of Teachers	20	30

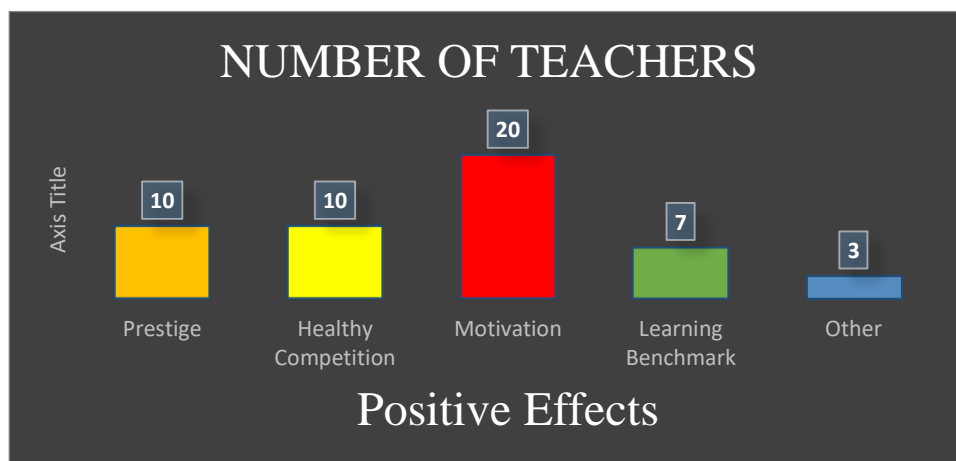


**Figure 8: Teacher Views on Alignment with Curriculum**

### Perceived Positive Effects of IKLC

When asked about the most positive aspect of IKLC, teachers ranked motivation highest (40%), followed by prestige and healthy competition (20% each).

Positive Effects	Prestige	Healthy Competition	Motivation	Learning Benchmark	Other
Number of Teachers	10	10	20	7	3



**Figure 9: Positive Aspects of IKLC**

### Perceived Negative Effects of IKLC

Interestingly, 60% of teachers saw no negative aspects of IKLC. However, 7 teachers mentioned interference with regular teaching.

Negative Effects	Fear	Effect on Regular Teaching	Distraction from Studies	Unhealthy Competition	None/Other
Number of Teachers	3	7	5	5	30

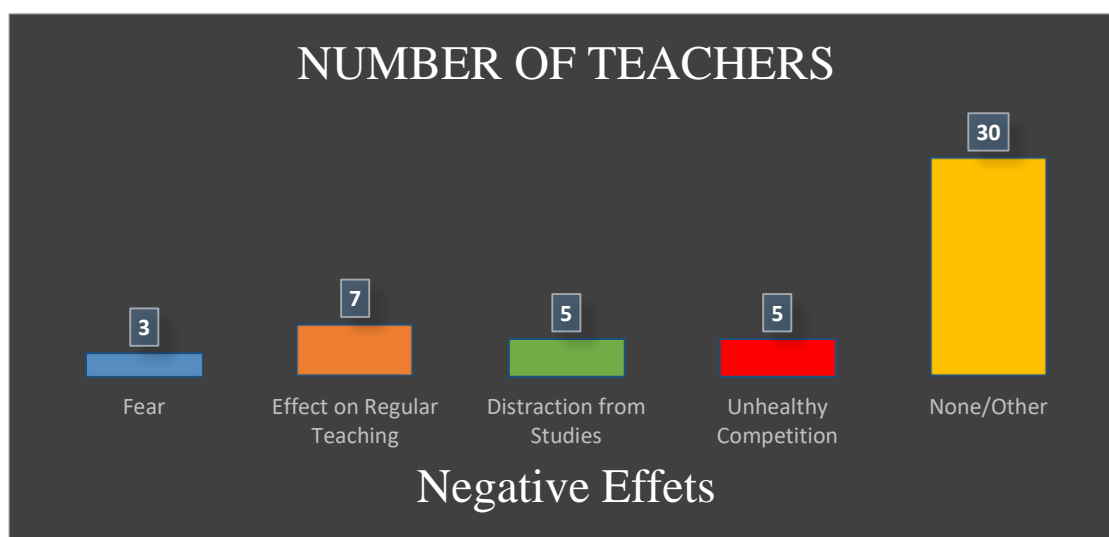


Figure 10: Negative Aspects of IKLC

#### Has Participation in IKLC Increased?

When asked whether IKLC participation increased over the years, 70% of teachers reported a rise in participation.

Change in Participation	Increased	Decreased
Number of Teachers	35	15

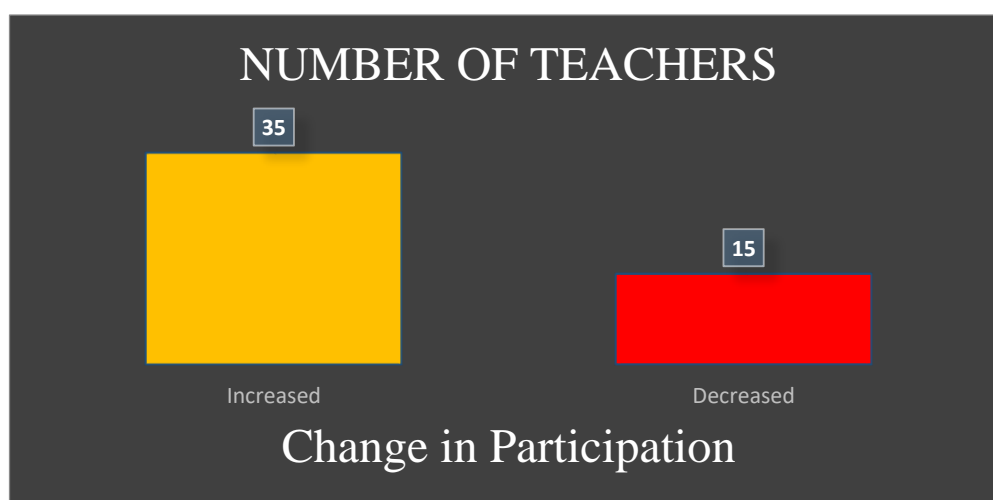
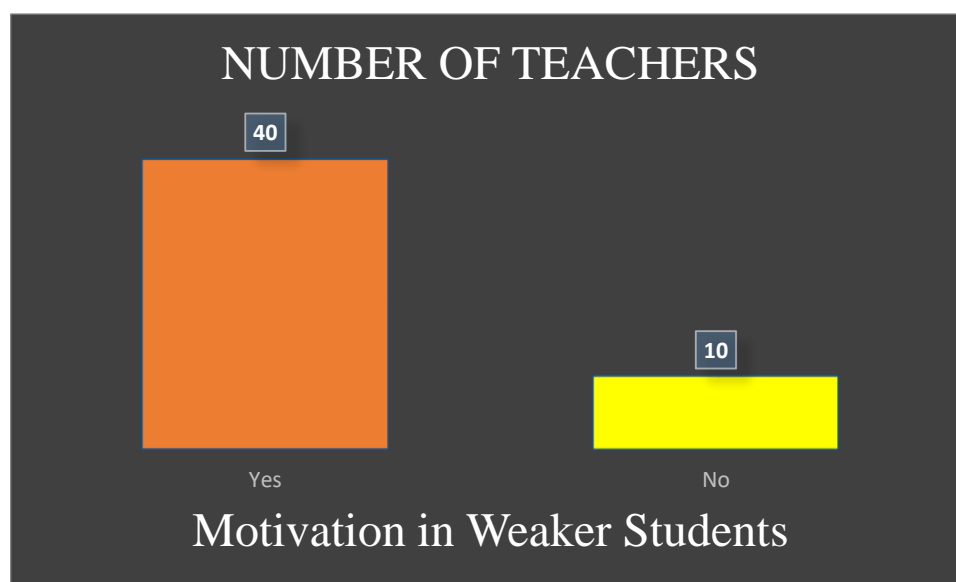


Figure 10: Participation Trends Over Time

### Has IKLC Induced Motivation in Weaker Students?

A strong majority (80% of teachers) believed that IKLC helped motivate weaker students to engage in language learning.

Motivation in Weaker Students?	Yes	No
Number of Teachers	40	10



**Figure 12: IKLC Impact on Weaker Students**

### Summary of Findings

Most teachers (60%) believe that IKLC accurately measures innate knowledge, and an even higher percentage (74%) agree it enhances student motivation.

Minimal pressure is reported—only 30% of teachers feel pressured, and 40% transfer it to students.

Participation has increased over the years, with 70% of teachers observing a rise in student engagement.

Teachers identified motivation (40%) as the most significant benefit, while 60% reported no negative impact on teaching.

Only 40% believe IKLC aligns with school curricula, indicating a potential area for improvement.

### DISCUSSION

This section interprets the research findings in light of past studies on washback effects in linguistic competitions and standardized assessments. The results from the teacher questionnaire provide valuable insights into the positive and negative washback effects of the International Kangaroo Linguistics Competition (IKLC) on teaching and learning practices. These findings are now compared with existing literature on the washback phenomenon.

#### 1. Positive Washback Effects: Alignment with Past Research



### **IKLC as a Source of Motivation**

A major finding of this study was that 74% of teachers believed that IKLC positively influences student motivation, and 80% reported that weaker students benefited from participation. These results align with Cheng (2005) and Alderson & Wall (1993), who argued that when students find a test challenging but not overly stressful, it can lead to increased motivation and engagement. Additionally, Watanabe (2004) stated that low-stakes language assessments tend to create positive washback by encouraging students to engage in self-directed learning. Since the IKLC is perceived as an extracurricular competition rather than a high-stakes standardized test, students may view it as an enjoyable challenge rather than a burden, leading to increased participation over time (as 70% of teachers observed).

### **Increase in Participation Over Time**

A majority of teachers (70%) reported that participation in IKLC has increased over the years. This observation is supported by Shohamy et al. (1996), who suggested that linguistic competitions encourage a culture of learning and repeated participation when students feel a sense of achievement. Similarly, Deci & Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory emphasizes that competency-based challenges enhance intrinsic motivation, which could explain why participation rates continue to rise.

### **IKLC and Autonomous Learning**

Several teachers noted that IKLC fosters a positive learning environment where students develop autonomous learning skills. This is consistent with Little (1991) and Benson (2001), who found that extracurricular linguistic activities contribute to learner autonomy, encouraging students to explore language outside the formal curriculum.

### **Negative Washback Effects: Areas of Concern**

#### **Mismatch Between IKLC and School Curriculum**

A notable concern raised in this study was that 60% of teachers believed that IKLC does not fully align with school grammar and vocabulary teaching. This aligns with findings from Wall & Alderson (1993), who noted that tests with unfamiliar content can cause discrepancies in learning outcomes, leading to curriculum misalignment.

In a Pakistani context, standardized tests like NTS (National Testing System) are known for their content misalignment with school curricula (Ahmed et al., 2012). The findings suggest that a more structured integration of IKLC-related content into school syllabi could enhance its effectiveness as a learning tool.

#### **2.2 Limited Preparation Support from Schools**

A surprising finding was that 95% of schools do not conduct preparatory classes for IKLC, meaning that students participate with minimal school support. While this reinforces the idea of IKLC as a competition rather than a test, it contrasts with Hughes (2003), who argued that proper test preparation can maximize positive washback by reinforcing structured learning strategies.

A possible recommendation here is that schools could introduce voluntary preparatory workshops without making IKLC a compulsory part of the curriculum. This would allow students to gain the benefits of test familiarity without turning it into a stressful high-stakes event.

### **Teacher Perceptions of Pressure and Student Stress**

One of the less significant negative washback effects observed was that only 30% of teachers felt pressure, and only 40% reported transferring it to students. Compared to high-stakes tests such as the SAT, IELTS, or university entrance exams, which often lead to intense anxiety and test-driven teaching (Green, 2007), the IKLC appears to exert minimal pressure on educators and learners.

This is consistent with Bailey (1996), who suggested that low-stakes assessments have a lower risk of negative washback because they do not directly impact academic progression. However, in cases where pressure was transferred to students, teachers cited parental expectations and administrative pressure as key sources, reflecting external influences on test-related anxiety (Cheng & Curtis, 2004).

### **Key Comparisons with Past Research**

Research Aspect	Findings from This Study	Comparison with Past Studies
Impact on Motivation	74% of teachers said IKLC increases motivation	Supports Cheng (2005), Deci & Ryan (1985), Watanabe (2004)
Impact on Participation	70% of teachers reported increased participation	Supports Shohamy et al. (1996)
Curriculum Alignment	60% of teachers found IKLC misaligned with school curricula	Supports Wall & Alderson (1993), Ahmed et al. (2012)
Preparatory Classes	95% of schools do not provide preparation	Contrasts Hughes (2003), Green (2007)
Teacher Pressure	Only 30% felt pressure; 40% transferred it to students	Supports Bailey (1996), Cheng & Curtis (2004)

### **Overall Interpretation of Findings**

- The study confirms that IKLC has a strong positive washback effect on motivation and participation, aligning with past research on low-stakes language assessments.
- The lack of curriculum alignment and preparatory classes suggest that IKLC functions more as an extracurricular learning experience rather than a structured academic assessment.
- Minimal pressure on teachers and students further reinforces IKLC's role as a learning tool rather than a stress-inducing standardized test.

### **Implications for Future Research and Policy**

1. **Curriculum Alignment:** Schools could consider integrating IKLC-related content into lesson plans for vocabulary and grammar improvement.
2. **Teacher Support:** Providing voluntary preparatory sessions could enhance learning outcomes while maintaining the competition's stress-free nature.
3. **Longitudinal Studies:** Future research should track student motivation and performance over multiple years to analyze long-term washback effects.
4. **Comparative Studies:** Investigating how IKLC compares to other linguistic competitions could provide deeper insights into different models of test-induced washback.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings from this study confirm that IKLC induces positive washback effects, particularly in motivation, participation, and autonomous learning. While some concerns exist regarding curriculum alignment and preparatory support, the overall impact is largely beneficial. By aligning these results with past research, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on washback effects in linguistic competitions, reinforcing the need for balanced, engaging, and low-stakes assessments in language education.

### **Summary of Key Insights**

This study examined the washback effects of the International Kangaroo Linguistics Competition (IKLC) on teaching and learning practices, focusing on teacher perceptions. The findings highlight both positive and negative washback effects, with a strong emphasis on motivation and participation as key positive outcomes.

#### **Positive Washback Effects**

**Increased Motivation:** 74% of teachers agreed that IKLC enhances student motivation, particularly for weaker and less motivated learners (80%). **Growing Participation:** 70% of teachers observed a steady increase in student participation, supporting the idea that linguistic competitions create a culture of engagement and challenge. **Autonomous Learning:** Many teachers noted that students engaged in self-directed learning as part of their IKLC preparation, reinforcing learner independence. **Low Pressure Environment:** Unlike high-stakes standardized tests, IKLC does not impose significant stress on teachers or students—only 30% of teachers felt any pressure related to student performance.

#### **Negative Washback Effects**

**Curriculum Misalignment:** 60% of teachers felt that IKLC does not align with their school's grammar and vocabulary instruction, which could limit its effectiveness as a formal learning tool. **Lack of School Support:** 95% of schools do not provide preparatory classes, meaning students participate with minimal structured guidance. **External Pressure on Students:** While school-related pressure was low, some students experienced pressure from parents or administration, as noted by 40% of teachers.

### **Recommendations for Future Implementation**

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made to maximize positive washback while mitigating potential concerns:

#### **Enhancing the Positive Effects**

✓ **Integrate IKLC Content into School Curriculum**

Schools should consider aligning vocabulary and grammar instruction with IKLC-style questions to make participation more academically relevant. This integration could help bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use.

✓ **Encourage Voluntary Preparatory Workshops**

While schools should not turn IKLC into a high-pressure event, they could offer optional workshops or practice sessions to help students become more familiar with the competition format. This would provide students with better preparation without making it a stressful experience.

✓ **Promote IKLC as a Motivational Tool**

Since teachers overwhelmingly believe in IKLC's role in increasing motivation, it should be actively promoted as a learning opportunity rather than just a competition.

Schools can use success stories and past participants' experiences to encourage future participation.

### **Addressing the Negative Effects**

- ☐ Reduce Curriculum Misalignment

Collaboration between IKLC organizers and educators could ensure that test content reflects real classroom instruction, making it a more effective learning tool.

- ☐ Address External Pressure on Students

Schools and parents should maintain a balanced approach, encouraging participation without creating unnecessary performance pressure.

Teachers can play a role in fostering a growth mindset, where students focus on learning rather than competition-based rankings.

### **Future Research Directions**

While this study provides empirical insights into the washback effects of IKLC, further research is needed to:

- ☐ Conduct a longitudinal study to analyze long-term motivational effects of IKLC.
- ☐ Compare IKLC with other linguistic competitions to understand how different test designs impact learning and teaching.
- ☐ Investigate student perspectives in greater detail to corroborate teacher observations.

### **Final Thoughts**

The results of this study confirm that IKLC fosters a positive washback effect in terms of motivation, participation, and engagement with language learning. While challenges such as curriculum misalignment and lack of structured preparation exist, they can be addressed through strategic curriculum adjustments and voluntary support initiatives. By refining the way linguistic competitions are integrated into educational settings, they can serve as powerful tools for language acquisition and student motivation.

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