AN INVESTIGATION OF FEEDBACK TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS FROM THE CAMBRIDGE OVERSEAS SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (COSC) ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXAMINATIONS IN LESOTHO

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Abstract
This study investigates how feedback from the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) English language examinations marking board is transmitted to the teachers and other stakeholders for effective teaching and learning in Lesotho secondary schools. The aim was to discover teachers’ and other stakeholders’ views, feelings and reactions to examiners’ reports. The focus was also on the general information that comes from the marking board. In carrying out this study, interviews, questionnaires and documents were used to examine the extent to which teachers access and make use of this information in improving their pedagogical practices. End of year results, from selected schools, covering a period of five years, were analysed. The major findings of the research revealed that there was a correlation between the feedback and students’ results. Based on feedback from the marking board there were positive washback effects on teaching methods and on teachers’ perceptions, resulting in improved students’ scores. Nevertheless, there were contradicting views on the issue of washback effects and this situation simply highlighted the ambivalence of the concept of washback, especially on the high-stakes tests such as the COSC discussed here. One major discovery was in relation to the issue of full localization of COSC. An overwhelming majority of the respondents suggested that localized marking of the COSC has positive washback effects on teaching and learning of English language in the context of Lesotho, and more positive results are envisaged with full localization of such examinations and the curricula. It is hoped that the MOE, will make informed policy modifications using some of the findings in this report.
**List of Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COSC</td>
<td>Cambridge Overseas School Certificate</td>
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<td>ECOL</td>
<td>Examinations Council of Lesotho</td>
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<td>ERs</td>
<td>Examiners’ Reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
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<td>HOD</td>
<td>Head of Department (English Language)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGCSE</td>
<td>International General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
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<td>JC</td>
<td>Junior Certificate</td>
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<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCDC</td>
<td>The National Curriculum Development Centre</td>
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<td>NUL</td>
<td>The National University of Lesotho</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTM</td>
<td>Non-Teacher-Marker</td>
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<tr>
<td>STL(s)</td>
<td>Senior-team-leader(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td>Subject Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Teacher-Marker</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBLSEC</td>
<td>The University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland Examinations Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCLES</td>
<td>University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

Dedication (i)

Acknowledgements (ii)

Declaration (iii)

Abstract (iv)

List of Figures and Tables (v)

### Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Overview 1

1.2. Purpose of the Study 1

1.3. Context and Background to the Study 2

1.4. English and Colonialism 5

1.5. Localisation of Examinations in Lesotho 7

1.6. Aim 12

1.7. Research Questions 12

1.8. Rationale 13

1.9. Limitations of the Study 17

1.10. Overview of Chapters 18

### Chapter Two: Review of Literature and Theoretical Background to the Research

2.1. Overview 20

2.2. Assessment 20

2.3. Assessment of English Language in Lesotho 24

2.4. Dilemmas of Washback 25
Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1. Overview

3.2. Research Approach

3.3. Methods of Data Collection and Selection

3.3.1. Research Site

3.3.2. Participants

3.4. Data Collection Tools and Strategies

3.4.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

3.4.1.1. Interviewees

3.4.2. Questionnaires

3.4.2.1. Respondents to the Questionnaires

3.4.3. Documentary Sources

3.4.3.1. Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) Results

3.4.3.1. Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) Results

1998-2002

3.5. Ethical considerations

Chapter Four: Data Description and Analysis

4.1. Overview
4.2. Results of Interview Questions

4.2.1. Respondents’ Views on Dissemination of Examiners’ Reports

4.2.2. Utilisation of Examiners’ Reports

4.2.3. Students’ Results

4.2.4. Teachers’ Views on Effects of localized marking on Teaching and Learning and on the Results

4.2.5. Teachers’ Views on Students’ Strengths and Weaknesses

4.2.6. Teachers’ Involvement in Marking

4.2.6.1. Positive Washback Effects of Teachers’ involvement in marking

4.2.6.2. Negative Effects of Teachers’ involvement in marking

4.2.7. Stakeholders’ suggestions for Improvement of COSC

4.3. Results of the Questionnaire

4.3.1. Overview

4.3.2. Profiles of Teachers who responded to the Questionnaire

4.3.3. Teachers’ Responses about Feedback from Marking Board

4.3.4. Teachers’ Views on Utilisation of ERs

4.3.5. Positive Effects of ERs on Teaching and Learning of English Language

4.3.6. Teachers’ Views on Impact of full Localisation on Classroom Instruction

4.3.7. Teachers’ Suggestions for Improvement in Marking and Dissemination of Feedback

4.3.8. Teachers’ Views on Recommendations from Examiners’ Reports

4.3.9. Overview

4.3.10. Students’ Writing Skills
Chapter Five: Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1. Overview

5.2. Reflections on the Main Issues of the Study

5.2.1. Major Findings: Positive Effects

5.2.2. Availability and utilization of ERs

5.2.3. Benefits of Detailed Scores

5.2.4. Usefulness of ERs

5.2.5. Opposing Views on full localization of COSC Examinations and Curricula

5.2.6. Selection and Training of Markers
5.2.7. Teachers and Students’ Negative Attitudes 119
5.2.8. Threats to Students about English Language 120
5.2.9. Positive effects on Teaching Methods 120
5.2.10. Central Inspectorate must Monitor Dissemination of ERs 121
5.3. Recommendations 121
5.4. Recommendations for further Research 123
5.5. Conclusion 124

References 127

Appendices A-E