

A Comparative Analysis of IELTS and TOEFL in an Iranian Context: A Case Study of Washback of Standard Tests

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Abstract—Having desired results represents a type of success on what the teachers and the learners have been working on. In order to obtain the correlation of the standard tests of IELTS and TOEFL 120 applicants have been selected. They were grouped under IELTS study phase and non-IELTS study group and also TOEFL study group and non-TOEFL study group. The applicants were at C1, C2, and B2 level of CEFR in the first group and Advanced and intermediate high of ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. The applicants received treatment and took six tests along with a pretest and a post test. Therefore, there were four groups in the study as receiving the treatment and the placebo thereof. Besides, the applicants were interviewed in order to get their ideas and personal attitudes to the success or failure of standard exams. In order to do so a questionnaire was developed and its reliability and validity was gauged. The results of the testing procedure represents more plausible scores on IELTS test results. This could be attributed to the recent trend among Iranian graduate and post graduate learners to IELTS exam. The results of the total study reveals the idea of teaching to the test and studying for the test which verifies the washback of the tests and reflects washback on teaching and learning.

Index Terms—IELTS, TOEFL, CEFR, ACTFL proficiency guidelines, washback effect

I. INTRODUCTION

For almost many years two standard tests have been in use in order to gauge the learners or university applicants immigrating the English or non-English speaking countries. TOEFL has been one of these successful exams. Within the past decade TOEFL exam has been pushed away a little bit in its use in some developing countries such as Iran. This fact doesn't insinuate that it is the weakness or the superiority of either of the aforesaid tests that such a thing is happening in Iran, on the other hand it is due to the growing use of the IELTS test in some universities that Iranian students or applicants can easily be accepted without visa problems.

Therefore, in this study the correlation of these two standard tests have been checked out in order to reveal the influence or the result of the recent trend among the Iranian applicants.

The other side of this research study reflects the importance of the exams on the applicants' lives or the influence of the exams that make the learners to learn in a specific way and the teachers to teach in a specific way. This specific way is the guarantee that the learners are looking for in order to obtain an acceptable score and for the teachers to have their students to do so (Bailey, 1996). The influence of the exam in such an important issue suggests and substantiates the washback of the tests. This study is trying to represent other dimensions of washback in a type of case study. As a result a test will influence how teachers teach and test will influence how learners learn (Wall and Alderson, 1993). In this study these panoramas of washback are under investigation and the results represent a logical understanding from the present day applicants of standard exams like TOEFL and IELTS in Iran.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Having desired scores has always been the longing desire of teachers and the learners. Developing tests that would truly gauge the learners achieved skills and reflecting the teachers efforts seem to be an ideal. However, looking for positive outcomes of the tests on learning and teaching is a plausible attitude that caught the attention of the researchers active in the literature of language teaching and testing for almost two decades (e.g. Green, 2007; Chen, 2002; Wall, 2000; Cheng, 1997; Alderson and Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Shohamy et al., 1996; Wall and Alderson, 1993; Khaniya, 1990). The plausible outcomes of the tests are referred to as washback. A term which is widely used having no superiority over backwash. Washback is the outcomes or the influence of testing on teaching or learning. The existence of washback has already been substantiated through different studies.

In the recent years the study of washback has taken different angles. Researchers have shown interest of obtaining the washback effect of standard tests such as IELTS or the TOEFL tests (Saif, 2006; Green, 2005; Qi, 2004 and Alderson and Hamp-Lyons, 1996). Apart from these studies there are different studies of washback on other skills in non-native contexts (Shih, 2007; Andrews et al. 2001; Badders, 2000 and Herman and Golan, 1993). As far as these two standard tests still play an important role in the selection of applicants the correlation of the two tests in a non-native context seems to be a critical question all in all.

In a developing country such as Iran many applicants tend to learn the most common foreign language which is English language. As far as the private sector is very active in Iran; therefore, many applicants learn the very basic issues related to the language studies at school and such knowledge that they gain would not prepare them for standard exams like IELTS and TOEFL test. Different research studies have been done on obtaining the washback of the standard tests in Iran on different angles (e.g. Mohammadi, 2007) or the Nation Wide Entrance Exam for the bachelor degree (Salehi and Yunus, 2012). Although many studies of these kinds have been done on the concept of washback the very study concerning the correlation of the two tests in a non-native environment is missing in the literature. Therefore in this study after having a scrupulous selection of the applicants and a long term preparation courses for the applicants, the correlation of the two standard tests have been the core idea of this research study.

In recent studies the trend of the washback study has been toward positive washback effect (Saif, 2006 and Brown, 2002 to name a few). Positive washback effect in general seems to be an ideal. Having a test with pure positive effects and no negative influence seems to be an illogical issue. In this study the main aim is to prepare the learners for the standard exams and later on obtain the correlation of the two tests. Then it would be logical to ask the role of washback. Later on through oral interview of the applicants and colleagues who cooperated in the study it proved that it was the influence of the tests that makes the learners to learn in a specific way and the teachers to teach in a specific way. In other words the teachers teach to the test and the learners learn for the passing or acceptable scores (Messik, 1996).

Having this background this study is trying to find the correlation of the two standard tests by taking standard exams and comparing the results and also by interviewing the learners and the teachers to prove the claim that the teachers teach for the test and the learners learn for the test.

III. METHOD

A. *Participants*

A pilot study had been done in order to select the capable learners to take part in the research study. The participants had been divided into two main groups. They were grouped as those who were going to be part of the IELTS study group and the TOEFL study group. Later on the test takers who were in the IELTS study group had been divided into two sub-groups as the study group to receive treatment and a placebo group. The same happened to those who had been selected as the TOEFL study group. They had been divided into a study group and a placebo group. Most of the learners were planning to take part in the IELTS or TOEFL tests in order to pursue their education abroad.

After the pilot test, which contained two sections one as the written phase and the oral interview, 120 learners had been selected. 60 of the learners who were willing to take part in the IELTS test had been selected from among those who were C1 and C2 level of CEFR. It should be mentioned that almost 20 of them were at B2 level of CEFR. This has been done for logistic reasons. The good point about these 20 was that they were to leave their country in less than a year. The participants had been selected non-randomly through testing and oral interview. They had been selected gender-free though 37 of them were males and 23 of them were females. 20 of the test takers were from the northern city of Rasht and the researcher interviewed them in person, 10 of them were from the Central city of Arak, 16 from Tabriz, 8 from Ahvaz not particularly Ahvazi, but students of Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, and finally 6 of them from Tehran. The colleagues, who collaborated in this research study were from the same cities mentioned and again they were males and females. 5 of them were males and 4 females.

After the pilot test those who had been selected as the TOEFL study group were again grouped as two groups each one containing 30 learners. The test takers were at superior, advanced plus and intermediate high of ACTFL proficiency guidelines. The same as the IELTS section the test takers were from different cities. The researcher interviewed 6 of them himself, 23 of them were from Tehran, 5 from Ahvaz, 6 from Arak, 5 from Urumieh, 6 from Mashhad, and the other 9 of them were from Kish Island. Similarly in this phase the learners were males and females the same as the colleagues, 35 of them were males and 25 were females.

The learners in the IELTS and in the TOEFL groups not the placebo ones received 9 hours of instruction on reading skills, reading strategies, grammatical instruction, vocab instruction, phrasal verbs, and different types of texts and questions in each of the major test.

B. *Materials*

a. **structure and content of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire has been selected based on previous research topics being done on reading skill and the attitudes of the learners and teachers toward it. The original questionnaire had been applied in English speaking contexts and is available on www.aaic.au, though some changes had been done to be well-adapted to the current research study. The questionnaire had two main categories as Learners and Teachers. The first main part includes 14 questions which

contains multiple choice questions. For the multiple choice questions the applicants i.e. the learners had to select from among the items or just put a check mark for yes or no answer. Therefore, the first part of the answers were of yes-no type in some questions. The percentages of all these results will be provided in the results section. The original questionnaire had been prepared and it was reviewed by two professors holding Ph.D. of language teaching methodology. Two points have been considered while analyzing the first draft of the questionnaire. The clarity of each item and the appropriateness of the individual items concerning the topic. The revised form of the questionnaire was given to the experts and to ensure the content validity and the face validity of the questionnaire it was launched as the pilot study was being done. The piloting of the first draft of the questionnaire was to test the internal reliability. In order to achieve so Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the questionnaire to gauge the internal reliability. The coefficient was found to be 0.91 representing an acceptable reliability. All of these have been done due to some changes that have been done to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed to determine the role of tests in general, the importance of strategies on reading and vocab along with grammatical rules. The results of the questionnaire will be provided in details in the result section.

b. the Materials

The materials in the study were in all in all of the same type and nature with some slight differences due to the differences of the exams. The similarities were on the area of presenting the materials, the time of presentation and the amount of the interaction the colleagues spent in their classes. There were some books applied in the research study as well. These books had been applied to prepare the learners to achieve some of the objectives of the study. On the IELTS part of the study IELTS Practice Exams (2010), and Cambridge IELTS (2000), 504 Essential Words (2006), 1100 Words You Need to Know (2008), Phrasal Verbs in Use (2004), Advanced Grammar in Use (2005), Understanding and Using English Grammar (1999).

On the TOEFL side of the study some of the books were similar to the previous side of the coin such as 504 Essential Words (2006), 1100 Words You Need to Know (2008), Phrasal Verbs in Use (2004), Advanced Grammar in Use (2005), Understanding and Using English Grammar (1999), Grammar Digest (2004), and TOEFL Actual Test (2004).

On the IELTS Pre-Test and Post Test the latest versions had been selected from the Web page of International Testing Service. And the TOEFL pre-test and post-test had been selected from the TOEFL Actual Test. The sample tests that they had been taken after two instruction session on IELTS section they had been selected from the Cambridge IELTS and the sample tests on the TOEFL tests had been selected most of the time from the TOEFL tests from the TOEFL Preparation Course.

The CEP test of reading had been selected as a non-TOEFL or non-IELTS test in order to obtain the correlation of the two tests in the final run. This test is available at http://www.examenglish.com/cpe/cpe_reading.

C. Procedures

When the pilot study was being done and the learners have been divided into different study and control groups, the major tasks of the teachers involved in this study started. In order to obtain the washback effect of the tests the learners were supposed to be prepared to take the tests.

In the first phase of the IELTS study group the applicants were familiarized with the general information about the IELTS reading questions. Besides, they were taught the ways of reading for an exam and the types of the texts. The teachers taught the applicants how to skim the texts, how to scan the texts, what is intensive reading? What was extensive reading? Skimming and scanning as the major reading habits (Brown, 2001; Nunan, 2001) should be involved in any reading course. At this phase the teachers' tried to identify the reading strategies of the learners. Some of the learners' had the habit of reading the questions and looking for the answers without spending the time on reading the texts in advance. Some of the learners reported that they were very good with the comprehension questions, some other expressed that they had difficulty with the words or identifying the main idea of the texts. Finally, at this stage the learners were taught some grammatical rules that would help them understand the texts and would benefit the overcome the fear of the difficulty of the texts. 3 hours which would be considered as the two sessions of their class had been spent on developing the skimming, scanning and working on the concept of the tense in English language. As far as the subjects were at an advanced or upper intermediate level it was expected that they are familiar with many of the tenses and this expectation was a plausible one, for this was the true fact about the classes and they were really good. At some classes it had been reported that the learners were that much prepared that the teachers hadn't spent much on the tenses and most of the time of the class and been spent on exercises on the skimming and scanning.

As far as the researcher's previous experience had proved to him that one of the problematic areas on which learners have the difficulties answering the IELTS questions where on the yes, no and not given questions. This took an hour and a half that was a session of a class and also some classes needed to review the tenses as well. At this stage the learners received some issues related to the phrasal verbs and the importance of the phrasal verbs in English in general and in reading in particular. Vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in reading comprehension (Nation, 2009). That is why this part has been part of the reading instruction and phrasal verbs were the first stage of vocabulary expansion. Word collocations were another important issue covered in this phase. The teachers again reviewed skimming and scanning.

The next step on developing the reading skills of the learners focused on "No More than Three Words," on IELTS questions. These types of questions are problematic due to the fact that they have to understand from which part they

have been extracted and what should be provided as the answer. These types of the questions require a kind of mental organization of the ideas that the learners or better to say the readers receive. This mental organization was the core concept to be taught and how to provide the appropriate response was the issue that the teachers and colleagues tried to improve. On grammar section of the course passive had been reviewed and the importance of passive tense in English language along with its importance on the reading. Many of the classes showed weaknesses on this section though they knew how to make passive sentences they had problems differentiation some passive tenses such as past perfect passive, future perfect passive, and some unique ones such as future perfect continuous passive or past perfect continuous passive. After a review on phrasal verbs the teachers asked the learners 10 lessons of 504. This happened in an oral manner.

The next stage on developing the IELTS reading skills was working on the type of questions where the applicants were to select a title from a list of headings. One of the important factors that the learners had shown weakness in the past three tests was the idea of time management. Many of the learners used to complain that they were slow on reading and answering the questions and when they finish reading a test it seems that the time is almost over. The teachers from this session tried to review the issues on skimming again, and remind them that they don't have to read scanning type of questions the same as the comprehension questions. Such weaknesses even appeared to be among those who were very good on the oral interview as part of the pilot test. On grammar section of the course the learners received the notes on reported speech, Conditionals and gerunds. As far as the learners' proved to be very good with words, they covered 504 Essential words and moved to practice on 15 lessons of 1100 essential words. This stage took 3 hours.

The other stage contained the practice on multiple choice questions. The results showed that the learners were much better on these types of questions. This could be due to the fact that the learners from Iran are used to such questions from the time of their entrance exam they have practiced them and therefore they are very good on them. On vocabulary section 30 lessons of 1100 words you need to know had been covered the on the grammar section the teachers reviewed the gerund that they had covered in the other session and they pursued the lesson with infinitives, and word words. This all in all took an hour and half.

The last stage on the IELTS reading development was working on such questions with a list of names and then matching them. This could be considered as matching questions again. Time management was covered as well. On grammar section the learners were taught the concept of subordination, adjective clauses, adverb clauses and noun clauses no matter defining or non-defining. This took almost three hours. On the vocabulary section the learners had to practice 40 lessons of 1100 words you need to know along with some lessons of IELTS essential words.

The TOEFL side of the research was done when the IELTS phase learners were on the one month gap of themselves to prepare themselves for the post test of IELTS. There are some similarities between the steps taken which had been designed as the six phases, but the differences lie on the differences of the two tests themselves. Therefore, the difference of the types of the instructions was done due to the requirements of the TOEFL test itself. The research study started on September the first, 2013 and ended on December, the fifth 2013.

The phase one of the TOEFL test instructions began by working on and de facto apprising of the learners with the overall ideas about the reading test of TOEFL. They had been informed that there are differences in the nature of TOEFL and IELTS reading tests and each one of them require some technical exercises. The learners later on were taught the skills of skimming and scanning in order to answer the main idea questions. On the grammar section a short review of the tenses had been provided. Due to the lack of time the learners received the three hour instruction on one day afternoon and not in two different an hour and half sessions. The vocabulary instruction began by working on phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions.

The next phase of the instructions began while the learners had one week to prepare themselves for the first test. And after the first test was taken the instruction sessions began.

The third phase of the TOEFL preparation began by a review on the issues concerning implied ideas in the text, stated ideas in the text. Later on the questions and the issues related to the organization of the test and different types of TOEFL reading texts had been provided. The learners had to practice 30 lessons of 504 essential words. On grammar section the learners were taught some issues on direct and indirect speech. Prior to the instruction on the third phase the second test was taken. This instruction phase lasted two hours. At the end of the instruction session the teachers began asking the learners of the types of reading strategies that they had and the results of such interviews will be provided later on.

The other phase of the TOEFL instruction began by a two-week gap and then the third test was taken. After the test there were some review notes on the concepts being practiced so far. Later on the teachers taught the applicants some issues on finding the type of questions where they had to identify the referent of the noun or pronoun. On grammar section they received the notes on conditionals. They had to be prepared for all of the lessons on 504 essential words.

The fifth phase of the instruction began by a two week gap for the fourth test. Transition questions were the next series of the questions that the learners had been prepared. On grammar section the learners were taught the concept of verbal i.e. gerunds, infinitives, and word verbs. This session lasted an hour and half. 15 lessons of the book 1100 words you need to know had been covered.

The last phase of the instruction began again by a two week gap to take the 5th test. The learners were taught how to face a test with unfamiliar words or a text filled with technical words of a particular field of science such as medical,

astronomy, physics, chemistry etc. the other issue being covered in this session was the underlined words in the texts and also answering the questions asking the meaning of the words. On grammar section the learners were taught the concept of subordination.

Finally an independent Standard English test had been selected in order to gauge or in order to reach the possible correlation that the two prominent tests may have. The test had been selected among many other tests that would have been applied though some of the tests recommended by colleagues were not beneficial for example GMAT reading test or GRE General reading test were not suitable. Other reading tests could have been chosen such as CAE reading test. All in all CPE test of reading had been selected. And the test is still available at http://www.examenglish.com/cpe/cpe_reading. This test was given one week after the post test of each groups had been done. One week has been given the time of gap due to logistic reasons, bearing in mind that some of the applicants were about to leave the study in two week. The test is provided in the Appendix.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Previously it has been provided that this study aims to achieve some specific objectives. The objectives or specifically speaking the questions of the study were:

What would be the correlation of a test for applicants who had been trained based on the two frameworks?

1. What would be impacts of such tests on teachers teaching strategies of reading skill?
2. What would be the impacts of such tests on learners learning strategies of reading skill?

Based on such questions the following hypotheses would be conducive.

Ho: there is no correlation between the results of the two tests.

In order to confirm or reject the abovementioned hypotheses the results of the tests would be satisfying, while in order to achieve logical results concerning the two final questions the interviews and de facto the questionnaire would pacify the controversy and take the readers and the researcher away from the uncharted waters toward secure destinations.

A. *The General Descriptions and the Pilot Study*

It has been suggested that the data collection started earlier by a pilot study. As far as most of the applicants were from other cities, the researcher himself was not able to visit all of them and interview them in person. Therefore, some of the colleagues from other cities agreed to cooperate cordially and willingly. The very thing that was an important issue on the interview section of the learners was the fluency of the applicants. The reading skill of the learners was not the only criterion to be taken as the scale to be included or excluded, on the other hand their fluency in speaking and listening were of importance as well. Among the total number of the applicants 120 had been selected.

B. *The Correlation of IELTS and TOEFL*

So far the data collection and the data analysis has been circulating the first two hypotheses which were the possibilities of obtaining washback through two standard examinations as the outcomes of two major guidelines on teaching and testing English. The third hypothesis that requires the numeric data collection procedures is the correlation of the two standard tests. In order to do so, another independent test was needed. Therefore, CEF test has been selected. In the following section the correlation of the two tests would be provided.

1. **The correlation between the students' scores of IELTS and CPE**

IELTS and TOEFL are popular standardized tests; however, this study investigated to assess the criterion validity of these tests. To this aim, the participants took CPE which is considered as a standardized test. It made the researcher able to compare the scores of CPE test with the scores of IELTS and TOEFL. The main aim of doing this is to check whether IELTS or TOEFL enjoy higher validity.

This type of validity investigates the correspondence between the scores obtained from IELTS and TOEFL and the scores obtained from some independent criteria (such as CPE test). The degree of the correlation between the two sets of tests will be an indication of the criterion validity of the IELTS and TOEFL.

For a better understanding of the correlation between the two sets of tests, the tables of the scores of IELTS and TOEFL and the scores of the CPE test are available at the Appendix section.

Pearson correlation coefficients, the most commonly reported measure of correlation, were calculated between the scores of the two sets of tests. Correlation coefficients are used to quantitatively describe the strength and direction of a relationship between two variables. The following table provides simple summaries about the basic features of the data.

TABLE 4.9.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE IELTS & CPE

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
IELTS	31.93	4.168	30
CEF	24.93	3.118	30

Table 4.9. indicates the variables being correlated and the name of each variable is listed in the left column of the table (i.e. IELTS & CPE). And N shows the sample size for the correlation—30.

The correlation coefficient can range from -1 to +1, with -1 indicating a perfect negative correlation, +1 indicating a perfect positive correlation, which is rare in the research studies, and 0 indicating no correlation at all. (A variable correlated with itself will always have a correlation coefficient of 1.) A positive correlation means that as one variable goes up, the other also goes up; in other words, as one variable increases in value, the second variable also increases in value. Similarly, as one variable decreases in value, the second variable also decreases in value. This is called a positive correlation. Moreover, as the correlation score gets closer to 1, it can be concluded that it is getting stronger. The following table indicates the correlation of the two scores in this study.

TABLE 4.10.
THE CORRELATION OF THE IELTS & CPE

		IELTS	CPE
IELTS	Pearson Correlation	1	.822**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
CPE	Pearson Correlation	.822**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to table 4.10 the first value in the cell reports a correlation coefficient of .822. A correlation of .822 is positive, and it is so close to be perfect. It can be concluded that when the IELTS scores increase (the first variable), the CPE scores (the second variable) also increases. The researcher can reject the directional hypothesis and conclude that the relationship between the IELTS and the CPE scores is statistically significant.

Sig. (2-tailed) is the p-value associated with the correlation. If the sig value is below the present criterion of significance (0.01), SPSS will put asterisks next the correlation value. Therefore, according to the footnote under the correlation table, the double asterisks signify correlation that is significant at the 0.01 level. In the result of this study, the p-value is .000, which means the odds of finding this relationship between these two variables just due to chance is less than .001, or less than 1 in a thousand. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between the IELTS and the CPE scores. Moreover, it means, increases or decreases in one of the variables significantly relate to increases or decreases in other variable.

For a better understanding of the result of the correlation, it is worth mentioning a visual representation of the data. Therefore, a scatterplot is available. A scatterplot is a graphic representation of the relationship between two variables. This type of graph can represent the degree of relationship between the variables. Figure 4.11. Presents this graph.

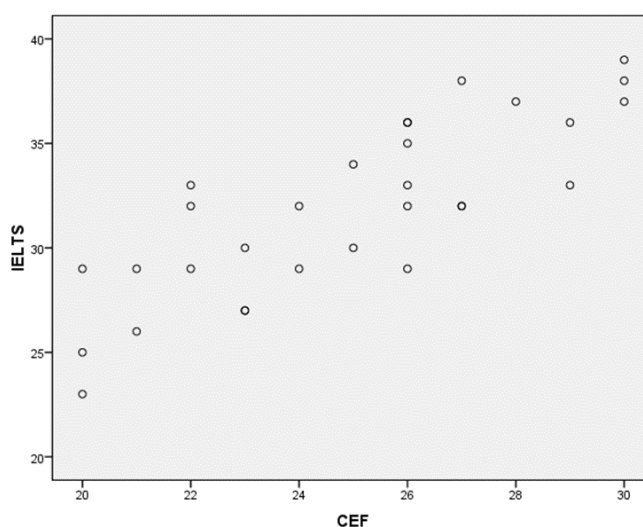


Figure 4.11. The scatterplot of the IELTS & CPE scores

According to the graph, the CPE scores are plotted on the x axis, and the IELTS scores are plotted on the y axis. The points in the graph tend to be rising, and it is almost a clearly positive relationship since points are to some extent

clustered to show a clear straight line. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is good positive correlation between the two variables.

2. The correlation between the students' scores of TOEFL and CPE

The following table provides simple summaries about the basic features of the data.

TABLE 4.12.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE TOEFL & CPE

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
TOEFL	27.80	2.592	30
CPE	22.77	1.888	30

Table 4.12. indicates the variables being correlated and the name of each variable is listed in the left column of the table (i.e. TOEFL & CPE). And N shows the sample size for the correlation—30.

TABLE 4.13.
THE CORRELATION OF THE TOEFL & CPE

Correlations

		TOEFL	CPE
TOEFL	Pearson Correlation	1	.751**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
CPE	Pearson Correlation	.751**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to table 4.13. the first value in the cell reports a correlation coefficient of .751. A correlation of .751 is positive, and it is not perfect. It can be concluded that when the TOEFL scores increase (the first variable), the CPE scores (the second variable) also increases. The researcher can reject the directional hypothesis and conclude that the relationship between the TOEFL and the CPE scores is statistically significant. It is worth mentioning that the result of IELTS showed that it has higher level of validity.

The following is a scatterplot of TOEFL and CPE scores.

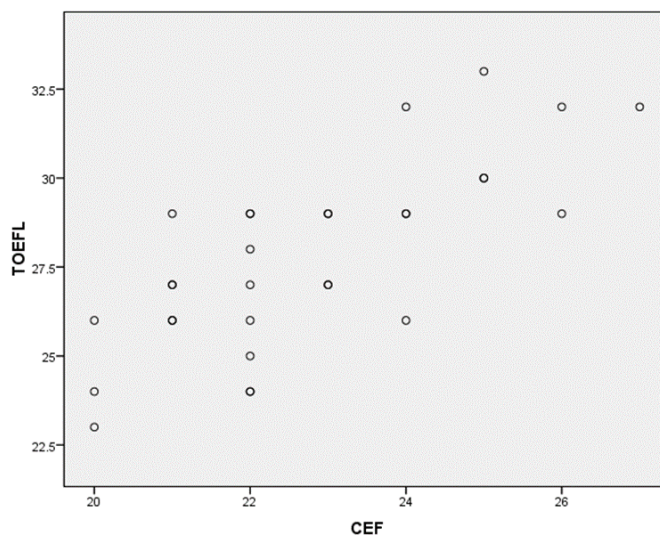


Figure 4.14. The scatterplot of the TOEFL & CPE scores

According to the graph, the CPE scores are plotted on the x axis, and the TOEFL scores are plotted on the y axis. The points in the graph tend to be rising, and it is not a clearly positive relationship since points are not clustered to show a clear straight line. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is medium positive correlation between the two variables.

In the literature it has been suggested that CEFR doesn't work for some contexts due to the cultural differences and the limitations of the levels that no exact level could be understood (Weir, 2005). The same story goes for the American

counterpart. Earlier this study was meant to delve into the concept of washback in order to obtain the positive washback effect though it seems to be an ideal perfect by itself, but it is somehow imperceptible.

In different articles it has been suggested that the test makes the teachers teach the way the test wants this is a very rough understanding of the concept of washback. All in all washback deals with the influence of the tests, such influence is easily seen in the results of the interviews. "I just read the materials for the exam, you know. I don't care what other materials would be beneficial for my understanding, I just wanna pass the exam," Ali a student of Civil Engineering at Guilan University told me. "Tests are just waste of time," Parvaneh 28 years old studying Electronics at Azad University of Lahijan. Many of them said the same phrase, "passing the exam."

Arash, a colleague of 12 years friendship, told me, "they need to pass the exams, we must stick to the questions and notes that's all. The exam is no kidding they need the passing score I need the money, it's a business you know." Many other teachers had the same ideas that the learners want to pass the tests and they needed the money. The researcher is not looking for a moral judgment here, but to provide the understanding of the people active in the field. It is the tests results and the test itself that makes them behave so. It has been suggested that language teaching changes due to the tests (Simin and Barati, 2012).

The finding of this study is in line with (Ferman, 2004; Wattanabe, 2004; Andrews et al., 2002; Brown, 2000; Alderson and Hamp-lyons, 1996; and Andrews, 1995). All in all, it is the importance of these two frameworks and the two standard tests representing their use. This comparative analysis proved that the teachers active in the field teach to the test or teach for the test. On the other hand the learners learn for the desired scores. This study was not to select either of the tests to represent as superior or inferior it meant to compare to understand the nature of the existing washback. That would be to other researchers to compare them for effectiveness and efficacious use of the two standard tests.

TABLE.4.14.
LEARNERS ATTITUDES AND ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1.	56% yes
2.	65% yes
3.	32% scientific; 20% new words; 17% comprehension questions; 13% true false; 6% implied meanings or messages, 3% literary texts; 2% historical texts, 5% finding the dates
4.	10%A; 45% rereading; 35%C; 10D
5.	83% yes
6.	47%A; 46%B; 6%C
7.	80% yes
8.	20% Yes
9.	Yes no not given 60% in IELTS; implied ideas 70% in TOEFL
10.	47% yes
11.	83% different
12.	85% sure different styles
13.	65% Yes; 35% no,
14.	75% teacher

TABLE.4.15.
TEACHERS ATTITUDES AND ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1.	Yes 68%
2.	36% Yes
3.	30% yes
4.	60% yes
5.	70% yes different,
6.	42% yes
7.	63% directly
8.	59% yes
9.	12% they don't need
10.	60% yes
11.	43% yes it would
12.	86% yes for the test

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this study the correlation of two standard tests has been computed. In the recent years Iranian students and applicants have showed a yen for IELTS test rather than the American counterpart. One of the reasons that the applicants in this study showed a little improvement over the TOEFL applicants could be attributed to this fact. In this study one of the main skills in language learning has been the core of the study. The texts and the materials that have been applied meant to develop the reading ability and comprehension of the learners. The results showed that the materials worked well. Moreover, the interviews revealed that the teachers are studying and preparing themselves for the tests and the teachers are teaching to the tests. This by itself suggests the role of the test on learning and teaching.

Such an undying influence in the literature is considered as the washback of the tests. Though in the recent studies positive washback have been considered as the ideal washback, it seems that the ideal would remain an ideal.

APPENDIX

The questionnaire for the Learners:

1. Is your reading slow and choppy? A. Yes B. No
2. Do you have trouble understanding what you read? A. Yes B. No
3. What kinds of reading material do you find most difficult understanding? A. Literary B.
4. What do you do when you come to a word that you don't know? Sounding out B. Rereading C. Reading-on D. Chunking
5. Do you use guessing as a reading strategy? A. Yes B. No
6. Do you understand what you read better when.. You read silently B. You read aloud C. Someone reads to you
7. Having a vast vocabulary knowledge would guarantee comprehension? A. Yes B. No
8. Grammatical rules or grammar knowledge would lead to comprehension of the text? A. Yes B. No
9. What types of questions you find the most difficult in IELTS reading Exam? In TOEFL reading Exam?
10. Do you apply reading strategies such as KWL, scanning, and other skills when taking a reading comprehension test? Yes which one No
11. When you are studying for different courses, the way you practice is the same or different? For example a reading test, or a writing test or a general English test? Yes how No
12. In a particular English course do you expect that the teacher would teach different styles and strategies than a general English course? Yes what? No
13. Would a test influence your future if you would not be able to get the results you wish? Yes how? No
14. If the learners do not achieve what they wish, who should be blamed?

Questionnaire for the teachers:

1. Reading strategies would improve reading comprehension in English. If yes which of them?
2. Grammatical rules would improve the understanding of a test.
3. Vocabulary knowledge would improve comprehending the text.
4. Stress management and relaxation exercises would improve student performance on reading comprehension tests.
5. Is teaching reading comprehension different to you in a non-IELTs or non-TOEFL class from a TOEFL or IELTS class?
6. Do you often focus on reading strategies to improve learner's comprehension ability?
7. Should the strategies be developed directly or indirectly?
8. ESL/EFL teachers should use supportive language techniques to raise their students' self-esteem before a reading comprehension test.
9. ESL/EFL students don't need reading strategies to do a reading comprehension test in English.
10. Would the pass or fail of the learners influence your career?
11. Would a test itself make you teach the way you don't like to?
12. Would you teach for the exam or the course outcomes?

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