

The Washback Effect of University Entrance Exam on EFL Teachers' Methodology and Test Development

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ABSTRACT: This study aims at discovering whether university entrance exam (UEE), a high-stake selection test in Iran, influences the high school and pre-university EFL teachers' methodology and test development. The participants of this study included thirty high school and pre-university EFL teachers who were randomly selected from ten different schools. To answer the research questions, five types of materials were employed in this study. The results of this study indicated that the UEE made an impact on the EFL teachers' methodology and test development; however, it needs to be pointed out that the observed impact did not surface uniformly among the targeted grades. To be exact, the results of this study showed that UEE does not influence the high school teachers' methodology and test development as much as it influences the pre-university teachers' teaching methodology and test development. Further, the study showed that UEE has negative washback effect on the content of the English course in high schools and pre-university centers in Iran.

Keywords: washback, negative washback, positive washback, UEE tests, high-stake test

"Washback" is a common terminology in language teaching and testing. As Alderson and Wall (1993) argue, testing reflects what actually happens in classrooms. There is some convincing evidence showing that tests, especially high-stake ones, have powerful impacts on language teaching and learning. Hughes (2003) defines washback as the effect of testing on teaching and states that the effects can be positive or negative. While a poorly developed test can exert negative impacts on the teaching methodology and learning of the materials, a finely developed one can do the reverse and show positive effects. As Hughes believes, this impact can affect learners, teachers, educational systems, and the society at large. As

Pearson (1988) notes, public examinations influence the attitude, behavior, and motivation of teachers and learners.

Many educators concur that high-stake tests exert strong washback effects on the teaching methodology and testing (Luxia, 2005). Teachers tend to tailor their classroom activities toward tests, especially when the test is a decisive one (Buck, 1988, cited in Bailey, 1996). In other words, if teachers know the content of a test, they will teach based on that content, i.e., they will teach to prepare students to take that test. They also develop their tests based on what will be included in the criterion test. According to Vernon (1956) teachers ignore the activities that have little contribution to the passing of the criterion test and focus on those activities which have the maximum amount of contribution.

Many researchers have tried to prove this point by examining the effects of some extant language tests on the teaching methodology and learning. Hughes (2003), for instance, has reported on the effects of a newly developed English proficiency test at Bogazici University in Istanbul. This test was developed to motivate students to work harder on their English. As Hughes reported, the test succeeded in achieving its goals. Li (1990) used a questionnaire to investigate the effects of the Matriculation English Test in China and reported positive effects for the test. Shohamy (1993) examined the effects of three language tests: The Arabic Test, the English Oral Test, and the Reading Comprehension Test. The major finding was that all the three tests had some impact on teaching and learning practices.

Washback seems to be associated primarily with high-stake tests, which are mainly employed for making important decisions (Hughes, 2003; Li, 1990; Shohamy, 1993). This point can be generalized to University Entrance Exam (UEE) in Iran, because it is a high-stake selection test which is used for making important decisions about the test takers. To further support the above stated argument, the present researchers have tried to investigate the effect(s) of UEE on teachers' methodology and test development in high schools and pre-university centers in Iran.

Literature Review

Language testing is a challenging field because tests are used to make decisions about people's lives. For this reason, tests should provide an accurate picture of the test takers' ability to enable test users to make fair decisions. This is what makes testing complex. The separation of testing from teaching and learning is somewhat impossible. As Heaton (1988) argues, testing and teaching are so interrelated that it is impossible to work in either field without being concerned with the other. Language testing is served by the research undertaken in such fields as language acquisition and language teaching (Buck, 1998). Language tests can be valuable sources of information about the effectiveness of learning and teaching. By

using language tests, teachers receive feedback on the students' weaknesses and strengths and their extent of progress during the course. The results of tests also provide teachers with the feedback that helps them identify the effectiveness of the approaches they have employed in their teaching.

Bachman and Palmer (2000) define high-stake decisions as decisions that are likely to have a major impact on the lives of large numbers of individuals. Since high stake tests are employed to make important decisions, researchers have tried to identify the backwash effect of such tests on educational practices. Wesdrop (1982, cited in Alderson & Wall, 1993), among others, investigated the validity of the objections against the integration of multiple-choice tests into the assessment of foreign language education and found that the complaints about the washback effects of such tests were unfounded. Hughes (1988), however, reported a positive washback effect for an English proficiency test that was developed to screen students planning to enter English-Medium Universities in Istanbul. Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996) conducted a study on TOEFL preparation classes in the United States. They found that such classes were different from non-TOEFL classes. TOEFL classes had more test taking, more teacher talk, less turn taking, less pair work, and more reference to TOEFL. Andrew, Fullilove, and Wong (2002) investigated the impact of incorporating an oral section into Hong Kong's Advanced Supplementary Use of English Test and the effect it made on the students' performance on spoken English. The researchers videotaped the test performance of the students for 3 years and analyzed the student's speaking ability. The study revealed that the washback effect was not as much as expected. Cheng (1997) investigated the washback effect of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). The results of this study indicated that washback brought about changes in teaching methodology. Cheng argued that the introduction of HKCEE affected: the teaching content, the curriculum, and teachers' and learners' attitudes and behaviors. Cheng (1998) also investigated the effect of HKCEE on the students' perceptions and attitudes toward their English learning. She concluded that the new examination did not seem to have a considerable impact on the students' learning. For example, students' motivation to learn English and their learning strategies remained unchanged during the study. The students' attitudes toward the test also remained unchanged. However, Cheng emphasized that the test undoubtedly played an important role in the way English was taught and learned at Hong Kong schools. Cheng (2005) also investigated the effect of public exams on teachers and named the following as the most important effects: teaching experience, teacher's education, teacher's fear or embarrassment of their students' poor performance, and teacher's awareness of test content, and the level of stake.

Statement of the Problem

The washback effect, which is addressed by this research, has been one of the greatest concerns for researchers in the field of language testing (Davies, 1990). Researchers have investigated the effects of tests on different aspects of language teaching and learning (e.g., Alderson & Wall, 1993; Buck, 1998; Hughes, 2003). University Entrance Exam in Iran, as a high stake test that is administered annually to select students for university education, has affected teachers and students alike. This test takes a few years of round-the-clock preparation for students, and the success or failure at passing the test might have impacts that might affect the social and personal lives of the test takers. Nevertheless, the main question to ask is whether UEE as a public examination, which serves selection purposes, influences teaching methodology and the way teachers construct their achievement tests at high schools and pre-university centers.

Research Questions

Considering the objectives of this research, the researchers have formulated the following research questions:

1. Does university entrance exam (UEE) influence the EFL teachers' methodology at high school (grades 1, 2, & 3) and pre-university levels in Iran?
2. Does university entrance exam (UEE) influence the EFL teachers' test development at high school and pre-university levels in Iran?

Methodology

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of thirty high school and pre-university EFL teachers with at least 20 years of teaching experience, who were randomly selected from ten different schools in Shahrekord. The teachers' gender was not considered as a determining factor in selecting the participants. Twenty participants had a bachelor's degree in English language, and ten of the participants had a master's degree in TEFL. Twenty-two teachers were simultaneously teaching at high schools (grades 1, 2, and 3) and pre-university centers, but eight participants were high school teachers. The participants were asked to submit their teacher-made achievement tests along with the questionnaire they had received earlier. The researchers also randomly selected ten teachers and interviewed them to identify the effects of UEE on their methodology and test development.

Instruments

Five types of materials were employed in this study: (a) a questionnaire that was developed by the researchers to be completed by the EFL teachers, (b)

teachers' achievement tests (developed by the teachers themselves), (c) UEE tests (2005-2008), (d) classroom observation notes, and (e) an interview with the EFL teachers.

Table1. *Reliability Statistics of Questionnaire*

		N	%
Cases	Valid	30	100.0
	Excluded(a)	0	.0
	Total	30	100.0
Cronbach's Alpha			
	N of Items		
	.701	16	

As shown in Table 1, the questionnaire enjoys a reliability estimate of .701, using Cronbach's Alpha. Considering this figure, it can be argued that the questionnaire was a reliable instrument for eliciting information from the participants. The questionnaire comprised of two sections (see Appendix A). Section A consisted of four general questions about the teachers' experience, information about the schools, and the grades that teachers were assigned to teach. The purpose of these questions was to collect basic information about the participants. Section B of the questionnaire included 16 questions, each targeting the teachers' methodology. The rationale behind this part was to identify the possible variation (similarities or differences) among the teachers, considering the grades they were assigned to teach.

The researchers devised a 5-point Likert scale to construct the questionnaire. The first four Likert-scale items were based on the degree of importance, where the score 5 was assigned to *not important*, 4 was assigned to *less important*, 3 was assigned to *rather important*, 2 was assigned to *important*, and 1 was assigned to *extremely important*. The rest of the items were based on the frequency of an action, where score 5 was assigned to *never*, 4 was assigned to *seldom*, 3 was assigned to *sometimes*, 2 was assigned to *often*, and 1 was assigned to *always*. Moreover, some of the questionnaire items dealt with the techniques and strategies that teachers used to prepare their students for the exam.

Sample UEE tests which were administered over the past four years were also used in this study to verify the existence of washback effect. It should be noted that UEE consists of two sections: (a) general questions section, and (b) specialized questions section that vary according to test takers' major. In the general questions section, all participants, regardless of their major, receive equal number of questions. However, the content of items varies for different majors. It should be mentioned that the UEE follows a multiple-choice format.

For the purposes of this study, the researchers observed six high school and two pre-university classes for a period of one month. Each class was observed for four sessions and each session took about ninety minutes. Based on the interview with the participants, the researchers developed a checklist, which included eleven variables on the amount of time spent on some activities in classroom.

The interview section consisted of five open ended questions, which were presented to 10 different EFL teachers who were randomly selected from among 30 participating EFL teachers. Out of these participants, four were concurrently teaching classes at high schools and pre-university centers and the remaining teachers were teaching high school classes. Each interview took about 20 minutes. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Procedure

The researchers went through several stages for data collection. In the first stage, the questionnaire was distributed among the participants. To identify the existence of washback effect on the teacher made tests, these tests were compared and contrasted with each other and with UEE tests in terms of their content. The rationale for doing this was to identify whether UEE would have more impact on tests constructed for pre-university students in comparison with tests administered to other grades. The classroom observations were carried out during a one month period by the researchers. Based on the interviews, the researchers prepared a checklist that aimed at identifying the existence of washback effect in the classes. During the observation period, the researchers sat at the back of the classroom and took notes on the amount of time spent on each variable. In the last stage, the researchers interviewed the participants. The overall topic of the interview was UEE and its potential impact on EFL teachers' methodology and test development.

Results

Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The results obtained from the teachers' questionnaires indicated that all participants attended to grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension in their teaching. Almost all of the participants indicated that they used translation as a teaching technique (especially translating reading passages) in their classes. The students were often expected to memorize new vocabulary items along with the Persian equivalents. Group work and discussions also received scant attention. However, supplementary materials and out-of-class activities did not receive much attention. Despite these commonalities, differences were also found among the participants.

Actually, these differences formed the basis of comparison among the participants.

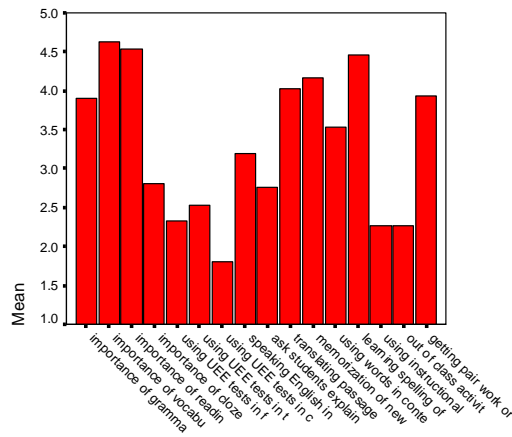


Figure 1. Responses to Questionnaire in Grade1

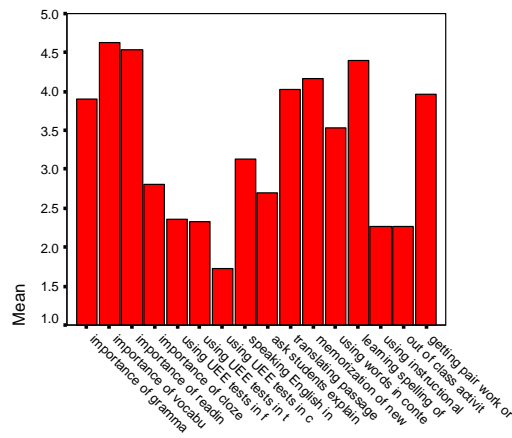


Figure 2. Responses to Questionnaire in Grade2

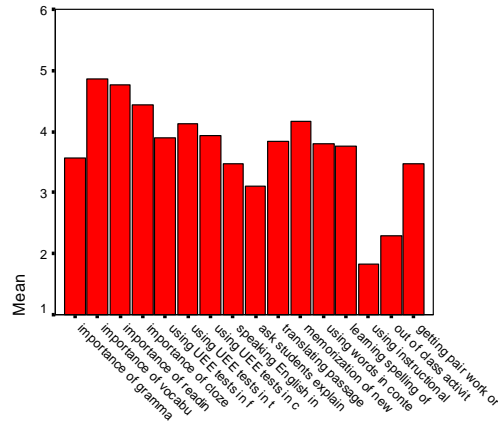


Figure 3. Responses to Questionnaire in Grade3

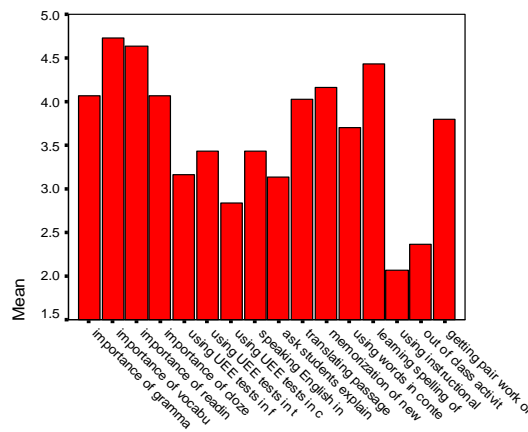


Figure 4. Responses to Questionnaire in pre-university

As indicated by the descriptive statistics (see Appendix B) and Figures 1 to 4, high school teachers pay greater attention to the teaching of grammatical structures compared to pre-university teachers who put more emphasis on vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, and cloze passages. Pre-university teachers are also more concerned with UEE items (they often use UEE tests in their teaching). As indicated by the mean score, pre-university students are also more receptive of UEE test items. Pre-university teachers, unlike high school teachers, are more concerned with providing context for new vocabulary items and raising opportunities for discussing grammatical points. Dictation is the area that receives greater attention from high school teachers. Although speaking is not included in UEE test, pre-university teachers often speak English in their classrooms. The data shows that part of the observed difference between high school

and pre-university teachers is due to the UEE impact. Even though they have plenty of time, pre-university teachers do not make use of such activities as practicing pronunciation, and writing letters. In fact, pre-university teachers try to adjust their method of teaching to the requirements of the UEE. The proof to this claim is the teachers' frequent reference to UEE in their classrooms. Pre-university classes are somehow bombarded with rote-memorization of synonyms and Persian equivalents of the new vocabulary items.

In order to identify whether the difference between the four groups was significant, a series of one-way ANOVA was performed (see Appendix C). The results indicated that the difference between the four grades is significant in the following five areas. The data show that there is a significant difference between teachers in teaching cloze passages [F (3,116) =22.709, p=.000]. In other words, teachers do not teach cloze passages similarly at all levels. Furthermore, high school and pre-university teachers do not use UEE tests similarly in the final exam and during teaching. There is a significant difference between these levels at the above mentioned sections, [F (3,116) = 15.811, p=.000, F (3,116) = 16.938, p=.000]. Likewise, high school and pre-university students do not similarly ask their teachers to use UEE tests in the classroom. It can be concluded that the difference between the four groups at this section is significant [F (3,116) = 24.792, p=.000]. The observed significance for teaching dictation [F (3,116) = 3.916, p=.000] shows that the spelling (dictation) is not emphasized at all levels. In order to identify where the differences lie, post hoc sheffé test was utilized (see Appendix D). The results show that the difference between the four groups is significant in the following areas:

Teaching cloze passages:

- There is a significant difference between pre-university level and grades 1 & 2 (1.63*).
- There is a significant difference between grade 3 and grades 1 and 2 (1.27*).

Using UEE tests in developing achievement tests

- There is a significant difference between pre-university level and grades 1 and 2 (1.53*, 1.57*).
- There is a significant difference between grade 3 and grades 1 and 2 (0.80*, 0.83*).

Using UEE tests during teaching

- There is a significant difference between pre-university level and grades 1 and 2 (1.80*, 1.60*).
- There is a significant difference between grade 3 and grades 1 and 2 (1.10*, 0.90*).

Using UEE tests in class (based on the students' demand)

sentence function was not given any credits. It should be pointed out that sentence function is used in pre-university level instead of language function.

The Result of Classroom Observation

For the analysis of classroom data, the researchers sought to identify variables that would serve to compare and contrast teachers` methodology at each level. The observation checklist (see Appendix F) was provided based on the interviews with some experienced EFL teachers.

Table 3. *The Result of Classroom Observations*

Variables	Grade 1	Grade2	Grade3	Pre-University
1.Vocabulary learning	25%	27%	31%	40%
2. Grammar explanation	36%	40%	40%	27%
3. Teacher talk	40%	45%	36%	63%
4. Student talk	9%	9%	9%	9%
5. Reading activities	36%	45%	45%	63%
6. Group work	17%	17%	10%	5%
7. Persian equivalents of new words	60%	60%	40%	20%
8. Guessing the meaning of new words	2	3	4	5
9. References to UEE	0	0	2	5
10. Translating reading passages by T	1	1	0	0
11. Translating reading passages by s.s	3	3	4	4

As displayed in Table 3, pre-university teachers employ UEE tests more frequently in their classes in comparison with other three grades. Grammatical structures are used at all levels. Teachers tend to dominate the talk in the class, especially at pre-university level. Group work or pair work is rarely used, especially at pre-university level. In addition, pre-university teachers place more emphasis on vocabulary learning as opposed to high school teachers. Translation is also used at all levels to check the meaning of unknown words. The data shows that pre-university teachers concentrate on the aspects that are included in UEE and try to ignore those areas that are not included in UEE. In other words, they try to adjust their method of teaching to the requirements of UEE.

The Results of Interview with the EFL Teachers

The interview questions were designed to explore the influence of UEE on the EFL teachers` methodology and test development at high schools and pre-university centers. (see Appendix G). Regarding the first question, most teachers stressed that they used UEE tests in pre-university classes, but not at high school classes (especially grades1 & 2). Because the areas taught in grades one and two are not included in UEE tests, teachers` concentration is

only on students' final exam. Teachers also pointed out that some UEE items are used in their achievement tests. When asked about the goal of English classes, teachers stated that the educational system expects the students to be prepared for the final exam and UEE (especially for pre-university students). So, teachers are expected to focus on those areas recommended by the Ministry of Education. In addition, most of the subjects asserted that vocabulary is emphasized over other areas in the class, especially in the pre-university classes. They also pointed out that most of the class time is spent on vocabulary learning (mostly in context) and then on learning other areas such as grammatical structures, reading passages, etc. The participants of the study believed that since areas such as dictation or pronunciation are not included in UEE, they should not concentrate on these areas in the classroom. In addition, these areas are not included in the pre-university level achievement tests. In short, due to the importance of UEE, teachers place greater emphasis on the abilities that are tapped by UEE or final exam, and less on those that are not included in UEE.

Discussion

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers verified the existence of two types of washback effect, namely overt and covert, on the teachers' methodology and test development. Some aspects of overt washback effect of UEE can be found in the obtained results of the questionnaire. For instance, the analysis of the teachers' answers to the questionnaire revealed that pre-university teachers often use UEE tests in their teaching as well as exams. In addition, pre-university students often demand that previous UEE items be provided and explained in the classroom. These reactions specify overt endeavors by most of the pre-university teachers and a few high school teachers to prepare their students for UEE.

Other examples of overt washback effect were identified through classroom observation reports and the analysis of teachers' achievement tests. The results of classroom observations clearly showed that in pre-university classes and some classes in grade 3, direct references were made to UEE. Actually, the areas of language that received the greatest emphasis in the classroom were exactly the ones that received more attention and weight in UEE tests. Therefore we can conclude that the areas that receive little attention in UEE will be considered as secondary practices in language classrooms. That is why grammar and vocabulary receive ample attention in language classes and listening, speaking, and pronunciation, receive scant attention. This does not, however, mean that teachers are not aware of the importance of these areas. In fact, teachers' responses verify that EFL teachers, especially pre-university teachers, believe that speaking is an important skill. However, there is a mismatch between what teachers

consider as important and what they actually focus upon in their classes. This mismatch between the teachers' expectations and their fulfillments has also been reported in some other research studies (e.g., Cheng, 1997). The only rational justification for the existing mismatch, in our opinion, can be the effect of UEE.

Besides its overt effects, UEE has also covert consequences for the teachers' methodology. Pre-university classes are usually teacher-fronted and the teacher usually dominates the talk in the classroom. In pre-university classes, interactional activities are rare, and group work and discussions are quite infrequent. Moreover, there is no interaction between teachers and students except for answering the questions. This may indicate that pre-university teachers adjust their teaching methodology to the requirements of the UEE, because the UEE does not test such aspects.

Conclusion

The results of this study provided some support for the existence of washback effect. The study also revealed that teachers' methodology and test development were affected by the UEE. However, it should be noted that the effect was more prominent for pre-university levels. The results of this study do not concur with Wall's (1996) findings, who limited the effects of public examinations to the content of lessons, but not the teaching methodology. Recent research supports the existence of washback effect and makes a distinction between positive and negative effects (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Brown, 1997). According to Bailey (1999), a test has positive washback effect when authentic tasks and activities are included in that test. If this were the case, the UEE's effects would therefore be negative, for it includes inauthentic tasks and activities, which do not assess the learners' communicative ability. The results of this study endorsed the existence of negative washback effect. Thus, it can be argued that UEE exerts negative washback effects on the content, teaching methodology, and test development at pre-university centers in Iran.

Implication and Suggestion for Further Research

The results of this study have some implications for EFL teachers teaching at high schools and pre-university centers. According to Spratt (2005), teachers play a significant role in determining the type and intensity of washback effect, and they can be considered as one of the sources of promoting positive washback. Because many Iranian EFL teachers are not familiar with the adverse effects of teaching for the UEE, they try to adjust their methodology to the requirements of that test. Therefore, they need to become aware of the effect of UEE and try to minimize the negative washback effects. This study also has some implications for UEE test

developers. As it was mentioned earlier, in order to create positive washback effects, authentic tasks and activities should be utilized. Therefore, test developers should change the trend of this test and employ analytical approach in designing UEE.

The present study attempted to determine the influence of UEE on EFL teachers' methodology and test development in high schools and pre-university centers. However, this research could only cover a small area of the subject matter. Further research can be conducted with more participants in other situations. Some suggestions for further study are as follows:

1. Does UEE influence what language learners learn in classroom?
2. Does UEE influence how language learners learn?
3. Does UEE influence the teachers' attitudes and perceptions toward EFL teaching?
4. Does UEE influence the learners' attitudes and perceptions toward EFL learning?
5. Does UEE influence the way textbooks are designed at high schools and pre-university centers?

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Appendix A: Teachers' Questionnaire

Part A: General Questions

- 1) What is your degree?
- 2) How long have you been teaching English in high schools and pre-university schools?
 - a) High school-----year(s)
 - b) Pre-university-----year(s)
- 3) Which schools are you teaching this semester?
- 4) Do you construct your achievement tests or borrow from other test books?

Part B: Answer the following questions

- 1) Are the *grammatical structures* important in your teaching?
 - Grade 1:
 - a) not important
 - b) less important
 - c) rather important
 - d) important
 - e) extremely important
 - Grade 2:
 - a) not important
 - b) less important
 - c) rather important
 - d) important
 - e) extremely important
 - Grade 3:
 - a) not important
 - b) less important
 - c) rather important
 - d) important
 - e) extremely important
 - Pre- university:
 - a) not important
 - b) less important
 - c) rather important
 - d) important
 - e) extremely important
- 2) Is *vocabulary learning* important in your teaching?
 - Grade 1:
 - a) not important
 - b) less important
 - c) rather important
 - d) important
 - e) extremely important
 - Grade 2:
 - a) not important
 - b) less important
 - c) rather important
 - d) important
 - e) extremely important
 - Grade 3:
 - a) not important
 - b) less important
 - c) rather important
 - d) important
 - e) extremely important

Pre- university:

a) not important b) less important c) rather important d) important e) extremely important

3) Is reading comprehension important in your teaching?

Grade 1:

a) not important b) less important c) rather important d) important e) extremely important

Grade 2:

a) not important b) less important c) rather important d) important e) extremely important

Grade 3:

a) not important b) less important c) rather important d) important e) extremely important

Pre- university:

a) not important b) less important c) rather important d) important e) extremely important

4) Is cloze passage important in your teaching?

Grade 1:

a) not important b) less important c) rather important d) important e) extremely important

Grade 2:

a) not important b) less important c) rather important d) important e) extremely important

Grade 3:

a) not important b) less important c) rather important d) important e) extremely important

Pre- university:

a) not important b) less important c) rather important d) important e) extremely important

5) Do you include UEE tests in your final exams?

Grade 1:

a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often e) always

Grade2 :

a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often e) always

Grade3:

a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often e) always

Pre-university:

a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often e) always

6) Do you use UEE tests while teaching in your classes?

Grade1:

- a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade2:

- a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade3:

- a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Pre-university:

- a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

7) Do your students ask you to do previous UEE tests in the class?

Grade1:

- a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade2:

- a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade3:

- a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Pre-university:

- a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

8) Do you speak English in your classes?

Grade1:

- a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade2:

- a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade3:

- a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Pre-university:

- a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

9) Do you ask your students to explain grammatical points of each lesson to you and other students?

Grade1:

- a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- Grade2:*
a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- Grade3:*
a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- Pre-university:*
a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- 10) Do you ask your students to translate the reading passage into Farsi?
Grade1:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- Grade2:*
a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- Grade3:*
a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- Pre-university:*
a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- 11) Do you get your students to memorize the new words of each lesson?
Grade1:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- Grade2:*
a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- Grade3:*
a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- Pre-university:*
a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always
- 12) Do you provide a situation in which students are required to use new words in context?
Grade1:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade2:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade3:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Pre-university:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

13) Do you get your students to learn the spelling of the words?

Grade1:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade2:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade3:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Pre-university:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

14) Do you use instructional aids like computer, internet, DVD players, etc in your classes?

Grade1:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade2:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade3:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Pre-university:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

15) Do you ask your students to take part in out of class activities such as letter writing, sending email, transcribing news, etc?

Grade1:
a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade2:

a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade3:

a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Pre-university:

a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

16) Do you get your students to have pair work or group work in the class?

Grade1:

a) never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade2:

a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Grade3:

a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Pre-university:

a)never b) seldom c) sometimes d) often
e) always

Appendix B
Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
importance of grammar	grade 1	3.90	.759	.139	3.62	4.18	2	5
	grade 2	3.90	.759	.139	3.62	4.18	2	5
	grade 3	4.07	.640	.117	3.83	4.31	3	5
	preuniversity	3.57	.858	.157	3.25	3.89	2	5
	Total	120	3.86	.770	.070	3.72	4.00	2
importance of vocabulary	grade 1	4.63	.669	.122	4.38	4.88	3	5
	grade 2	4.63	.669	.122	4.38	4.88	3	5
	grade 3	4.73	.521	.095	4.54	4.93	3	5
	preuniversity	4.87	.346	.063	4.74	5.00	4	5
	Total	120	4.72	.568	.052	4.61	4.82	3
importance of reading	grade 1	4.53	.629	.115	4.30	4.77	3	5
	grade 2	4.53	.629	.115	4.30	4.77	3	5
	grade 3	4.63	.556	.102	4.43	4.84	3	5
	preuniversity	4.77	.430	.079	4.61	4.93	4	5
	Total	120	4.62	.568	.052	4.51	4.72	3
importance of cloze	grade 1	2.80	1.186	.217	2.36	3.24	1	5
	grade 2	2.80	1.186	.217	2.36	3.24	1	5
	grade 3	4.07	.691	.126	3.81	4.32	3	5
	preuniversity	4.43	.728	.133	4.16	4.71	3	5
	Total	120	3.53	1.216	.111	3.31	3.74	1
using UEE tests in final exam	grade 1	2.37	.999	.182	1.99	2.74	1	4
	grade 2	2.33	.959	.175	1.98	2.69	1	4
	grade 3	3.17	1.147	.209	2.74	3.60	1	5
	preuniversity	3.90	.995	.182	3.53	4.27	1	5
	Total	120	2.94	1.204	.110	2.72	3.16	1
using UEE tests in teaching	grade 1	2.33	1.184	.216	1.89	2.78	1	5
	grade 2	2.53	1.167	.213	2.10	2.97	1	5
	grade 3	3.43	1.104	.202	3.02	3.85	1	5
	preuniversity	4.13	.973	.178	3.77	4.50	1	5
	Total	120	3.11	1.314	.120	2.87	3.35	1
using UEE tests in class	grade 1	1.73	1.081	.197	1.33	2.14	1	5
	grade 2	1.80	1.064	.194	1.40	2.20	1	5
	grade 3	2.83	1.206	.220	2.38	3.28	1	5
	preuniversity	3.93	1.202	.219	3.48	4.38	1	5
	Total	120	2.58	1.442	.132	2.31	2.84	1
speaking English in class	grade 1	3.13	.937	.171	2.78	3.48	1	4
	grade 2	3.20	.925	.169	2.85	3.55	1	4
	grade 3	3.43	.935	.171	3.08	3.78	1	5
	preuniversity	3.47	1.137	.208	3.04	3.89	1	5
	Total	120	3.31	.986	.090	3.13	3.49	1
ask students explain Gr points	grade 1	2.70	1.149	.210	2.27	3.13	1	5
	grade 2	2.77	1.165	.213	2.33	3.20	1	5
	grade 3	3.13	1.167	.213	2.70	3.57	1	5
	preuniversity	3.10	1.269	.232	2.63	3.57	1	5
	Total	120	2.93	1.189	.109	2.71	3.14	1
translating passage by s.s	grade 1	4.03	1.098	.200	3.62	4.44	1	5
	grade 2	4.03	1.098	.200	3.62	4.44	1	5
	grade 3	4.03	1.066	.195	3.64	4.43	1	5
	preuniversity	3.83	1.289	.235	3.35	4.31	1	5
	Total	120	3.98	1.130	.103	3.78	4.19	1
memorization of new words	grade 1	4.17	1.206	.220	3.72	4.62	1	5
	grade 2	4.17	1.206	.220	3.72	4.62	1	5
	grade 3	4.17	1.262	.230	3.70	4.64	1	5
	preuniversity	4.17	1.206	.220	3.72	4.62	1	5
	Total	120	4.17	1.205	.110	3.95	4.38	1
using words in context	grade 1	3.53	1.074	.196	3.13	3.93	1	5
	grade 2	3.53	1.074	.196	3.13	3.93	1	5
	grade 3	3.70	1.208	.221	3.25	4.15	1	5
	preuniversity	3.80	1.126	.206	3.38	4.22	1	5
	Total	120	3.64	1.114	.102	3.44	3.84	1
learning spelling of words	grade 1	4.40	.932	.170	4.05	4.75	1	5
	grade 2	4.47	.730	.133	4.19	4.74	3	5
	grade 3	4.43	.774	.141	4.14	4.72	3	5
	preuniversity	3.77	1.194	.218	3.32	4.21	1	5
	Total	120	4.27	.959	.088	4.09	4.44	1
using instructional aids	grade 1	2.27	1.081	.197	1.86	2.67	1	4
	grade 2	2.27	1.081	.197	1.86	2.67	1	4
	grade 3	2.07	.907	.166	1.73	2.41	1	4
	preuniversity	1.83	.913	.167	1.49	2.17	1	4
	Total	120	2.11	1.002	.092	1.93	2.29	1
out of class activities	grade 1	2.27	1.048	.191	1.88	2.66	1	4
	grade 2	2.27	1.048	.191	1.88	2.66	1	4
	grade 3	2.37	1.189	.217	1.92	2.81	1	5
	preuniversity	2.30	.988	.180	1.93	2.67	1	4
	Total	120	2.30	1.058	.097	2.11	2.49	1
getting pair work or group work	grade 1	3.97	1.033	.189	3.58	4.35	1	5
	grade 2	3.93	1.048	.191	3.54	4.32	1	5
	grade 3	3.80	1.095	.200	3.39	4.21	1	5
	preuniversity	3.47	1.196	.218	3.02	3.91	1	5
	Total	120	3.79	1.099	.100	3.59	3.99	1

Appendix C
ANOVA Results on Teachers` Questionnaire

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
importance of grammar	Between Groups	3.958	3	1.319	2.297	.081
	Within Groups	66.633	116	.574		
	Total	70.592	119			
importance of vocabulary	Between Groups	1.100	3	.367	1.141	.335
	Within Groups	37.267	116	.321		
	Total	38.367	119			
importance of reading	Between Groups	1.100	3	.367	1.141	.335
	Within Groups	37.267	116	.321		
	Total	38.367	119			
importance of cloze	Between Groups	65.092	3	21.697	22.709	.000
	Within Groups	110.833	116	.955		
	Total	175.925	119			
using UEE tests in final exam	Between Groups	50.092	3	16.697	15.811	.000
	Within Groups	122.500	116	1.056		
	Total	172.592	119			
using UEE tests in teaching	Between Groups	62.625	3	20.875	16.938	.000
	Within Groups	142.967	116	1.232		
	Total	205.592	119			
using UEE tests in class	Between Groups	96.625	3	32.208	24.792	.000
	Within Groups	150.700	116	1.299		
	Total	247.325	119			
speaking English in class	Between Groups	2.492	3	.831	.852	.468
	Within Groups	113.100	116	.975		
	Total	115.592	119			
ask students explain Gr points	Between Groups	4.492	3	1.497	1.060	.369
	Within Groups	163.833	116	1.412		
	Total	168.325	119			
translating passage by s.s	Between Groups	.900	3	.300	.230	.875
	Within Groups	151.067	116	1.302		
	Total	151.967	119			
memorization of new words	Between Groups	.000	3	.000	.000	1.000
	Within Groups	172.667	116	1.489		
	Total	172.667	119			
using words in context	Between Groups	1.558	3	.519	.413	.744
	Within Groups	146.033	116	1.259		
	Total	147.592	119			
learning spelling of words	Between Groups	10.067	3	3.356	3.916	.011
	Within Groups	99.400	116	.857		
	Total	109.467	119			
using instructional aids	Between Groups	3.825	3	1.275	1.278	.285
	Within Groups	115.767	116	.998		
	Total	119.592	119			
out of class activities	Between Groups	.200	3	.067	.058	.982
	Within Groups	133.000	116	1.147		
	Total	133.200	119			
getting pair work or group work	Between Groups	4.692	3	1.564	1.304	.276
	Within Groups	139.100	116	1.199		
	Total	143.792	119			

Appendix D
Post Hoc Test on Teachers` Questionnaire

Dependent Variable	(I) grade	(J) grade	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
importance of grammar	grade 1	grade 2	.00	.196	1.000
		grade 3	-.17	.196	.867
		preuniversity	.33	.196	.411
	grade 2	grade 1	.00	.196	1.000
		grade 3	-.17	.196	.867
		preuniversity	.33	.196	.411
	grade 3	grade 1	.17	.196	.867
		grade 2	.17	.196	.867
		preuniversity	.50	.196	.095
	preuniversity	grade 1	-.33	.196	.411
		grade 2	-.33	.196	.411
		grade 3	-.50	.196	.095
importance of vocabulary	grade 1	grade 2	.00	.146	1.000
		grade 3	-.10	.146	.926
		preuniversity	-.23	.146	.471
	grade 2	grade 1	.00	.146	1.000
		grade 3	-.10	.146	.926
		preuniversity	-.23	.146	.471
	grade 3	grade 1	.10	.146	.926
		grade 2	.10	.146	.926
		preuniversity	-.13	.146	.842
	preuniversity	grade 1	.23	.146	.471
		grade 2	.23	.146	.471
		grade 3	.13	.146	.842
importance of reading	grade 1	grade 2	.00	.146	1.000
		grade 3	-.10	.146	.926
		preuniversity	-.23	.146	.471
	grade 2	grade 1	.00	.146	1.000
		grade 3	-.10	.146	.926
		preuniversity	-.23	.146	.471
	grade 3	grade 1	.10	.146	.926
		grade 2	.10	.146	.926
		preuniversity	-.13	.146	.842
	preuniversity	grade 1	.23	.146	.471
		grade 2	.23	.146	.471
		grade 3	.13	.146	.842
importance of cloze	grade 1	grade 2	.00	.252	1.000
		grade 3	-1.27*	.252	.000
		preuniversity	-1.63*	.252	.000
	grade 2	grade 1	.00	.252	1.000
		grade 3	-1.27*	.252	.000
		preuniversity	-1.63*	.252	.000
	grade 3	grade 1	1.27*	.252	.000
		grade 2	1.27*	.252	.000
		preuniversity	-.37	.252	.552
	preuniversity	grade 1	1.63*	.252	.000
		grade 2	1.63*	.252	.000
		grade 3	.37	.252	.552

Dependent Variable	(I) grade	(J) grade	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
using UEE tests in final exam	grade 1	grade 2	.03	.265	.999
		grade 3	-.80*	.265	.032
		preuniversity	-1.53*	.265	.000
	grade 2	grade 1	-.03	.265	.999
		grade 3	-.83*	.265	.023
		preuniversity	-1.57*	.265	.000
	grade 3	grade 1	.80*	.265	.032
		grade 2	.83*	.265	.023
		preuniversity	-.73	.265	.059
	preuniversity	grade 1	1.53*	.265	.000
		grade 2	1.57*	.265	.000
		grade 3	.73	.265	.059
using UEE tests in teaching	grade 1	grade 2	-.20	.287	.922
		grade 3	-1.10*	.287	.003
		preuniversity	-1.80*	.287	.000
	grade 2	grade 1	.20	.287	.922
		grade 3	-.90*	.287	.023
		preuniversity	-1.60*	.287	.000
	grade 3	grade 1	1.10*	.287	.003
		grade 2	.90*	.287	.023
		preuniversity	-.70	.287	.120
	preuniversity	grade 1	1.80*	.287	.000
		grade 2	1.60*	.287	.000
		grade 3	.70	.287	.120
using UEE tests in class	grade 1	grade 2	-.07	.294	.997
		grade 3	-1.10*	.294	.004
		preuniversity	-2.20*	.294	.000
	grade 2	grade 1	.07	.294	.997
		grade 3	-1.03*	.294	.008
		preuniversity	-2.13*	.294	.000
	grade 3	grade 1	1.10*	.294	.004
		grade 2	1.03*	.294	.008
		preuniversity	-1.10*	.294	.004
	preuniversity	grade 1	2.20*	.294	.000
		grade 2	2.13*	.294	.000
		grade 3	1.10*	.294	.004
speaking English in class	grade 1	grade 2	-.07	.255	.995
		grade 3	-.30	.255	.710
		preuniversity	-.33	.255	.636
	grade 2	grade 1	.07	.255	.995
		grade 3	-.23	.255	.840
		preuniversity	-.27	.255	.779
	grade 3	grade 1	.30	.255	.710
		grade 2	.23	.255	.840
		preuniversity	-.03	.255	.999
	preuniversity	grade 1	.33	.255	.636
		grade 2	.27	.255	.779
		grade 3	.03	.255	.999

Dependent Variable	(I) grade	(J) grade	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
ask students explain Gr points	grade 1	grade 2	-.07	.307	.997
		grade 3	-.43	.307	.575
		preuniversity	-.40	.307	.638
	grade 2	grade 1	.07	.307	.997
		grade 3	-.37	.307	.700
		preuniversity	-.33	.307	.758
	grade 3	grade 1	.43	.307	.575
		grade 2	.37	.307	.700
		preuniversity	.03	.307	1.000
	preuniversity	grade 1	.40	.307	.638
		grade 2	.33	.307	.758
		grade 3	-.03	.307	1.000
translating passage by s.s	grade 1	grade 2	.00	.295	1.000
		grade 3	.00	.295	1.000
		preuniversity	.20	.295	.927
	grade 2	grade 1	.00	.295	1.000
		grade 3	.00	.295	1.000
		preuniversity	.20	.295	.927
	grade 3	grade 1	.00	.295	1.000
		grade 2	.00	.295	1.000
		preuniversity	.20	.295	.927
	preuniversity	grade 1	-.20	.295	.927
		grade 2	-.20	.295	.927
		grade 3	-.20	.295	.927
memorization of new words	grade 1	grade 2	.00	.315	1.000
		grade 3	.00	.315	1.000
		preuniversity	.00	.315	1.000
	grade 2	grade 1	.00	.315	1.000
		grade 3	.00	.315	1.000
		preuniversity	.00	.315	1.000
	grade 3	grade 1	.00	.315	1.000
		grade 2	.00	.315	1.000
		preuniversity	.00	.315	1.000
	preuniversity	grade 1	.00	.315	1.000
		grade 2	.00	.315	1.000
		grade 3	.00	.315	1.000
using words in context	grade 1	grade 2	.00	.290	1.000
		grade 3	-.17	.290	.954
		preuniversity	-.27	.290	.838
	grade 2	grade 1	.00	.290	1.000
		grade 3	-.17	.290	.954
		preuniversity	-.27	.290	.838
	grade 3	grade 1	.17	.290	.954
		grade 2	.17	.290	.954
		preuniversity	-.10	.290	.989
	preuniversity	grade 1	.27	.290	.838
		grade 2	.27	.290	.838
		grade 3	.10	.290	.989

Appendix E

levels	Vocabulary		Grammar		Reading comprehension		Cloze passage		Dictation		Pronunciation		Language function		Sentence function		Mini-comprehension		Total score
	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	f	p	
Grade1	7	23%	8	27%	4	13%	0	0	3	10%	2	7%	3	10%	0	0	3	10%	30
Grade2	7	23%	8	27%	4	13%	0	0	3	10%	2	7%	3	10%	0	0	3	10%	30
Grade3	10	25%	10	25%	4	10%	3	8%	4	10%	2	5%	3	7%	0	0	4	10%	40
Pre-uni	12	30%	8	20%	8	20%	6	15%	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5%	4	10%	40

Appendix F

Observation Checklist

- Time spent on grammar explanation per session
- Time available for students to talk in the class
- Teacher talk as percent of total class time
- Time spent on pair work or group work
- Time spent on reading activities in the class
- Number of times reading passages are translated by teacher
- Number of times reading passages are translated by students
- Time spent on vocabulary practice by both teacher and students
- Number of times students were asked to guess the meaning of unknown words
- Number of times Persian equivalents of new words are presented
- Number of times references were made to UEE

Appendix G

Interview with the EFL teachers

1. I want to ask you about the extent to which you use UEE tests in your classes. Could you please describe your use of the UEE in your classes? When you describe it, please think about these questions :a) How often do you use them? b) In what ways do you use them?
2. How much time do you spend on explaining grammatical points in your classes?
3. How much time do you spend on vocabulary learning in the class?
4. Would you teach in another way if there were no university entrance examinations?
5. Are there any rules for developing your achievement tests?

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