

TESTING WRITING: THE WASHBACK ON “CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH: FIRST” PREPARATION COURSES IN SOUTHERN SPAIN

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Abstract

This paper analyses the potential washback of the “Cambridge English: First” on test preparation courses by considering the choice of writing tasks and the key aspects for success in the test according to learners and teachers. For that purpose, several approaches about washback have been considered and they have inspired the research process, in which six institutions, 136 students and 17 teachers have taken part. After discussing the results obtained from questionnaires and teaching diaries in the light of the latest views on washback, several conclusions have been drawn. The washback is evident in the task types used and also in the activities considered more effective to pass the test.

Keywords: accreditation exams, language courses, washback, writing skills.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza el efecto que el examen de B2 “Cambridge English: First” puede tener en la enseñanza de idiomas. Para ello se ha basado en los autores más relevantes y ha estudiado las actividades empleadas para desarrollar la escritura en seis centros de enseñanza de idiomas, así como los aspectos que 136 alumnos y 17 profesores consideran clave para aprobar dicho examen. Tras reflexionar sobre los resultados obtenidos al analizar cuestionarios y programaciones de aula teniendo en cuenta las tendencias más actuales en la materia, el estudio llega a las siguientes conclusiones: el examen tiene un efecto evidente a la hora de elegir actividades de escritura y también en los aspectos que se consideran más eficaces para aprobar el propio examen.

Palabras clave: exámenes de acreditación, cursos de idiomas, efecto de los exámenes en la enseñanza, destrezas escritas.

1. Introduction

Teaching has always been a challenging and demanding task since teachers are expected to make informed decisions that will certainly have an impact on students' present and future. Teaching and assessment have been closely intertwined because the latter aims to guarantee the quality of the learning and teaching process and offer ways to improve. There are several forms of assessment. They all serve different purposes and are, therefore, relevant. Nowadays, formal assessment in language courses is even more important as the results obtained by learners may have life-changing consequences, that is, they can be said to have consequential validity. Thus, gaining knowledge about assessment and the effect it may have on lessons is paramount to improve our teaching practice and to meet our students' needs.

The interest in 'washback' (Alderson and Wall, 1993; Bailey, 1996; Messick, 1996; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt and Ferman, 1996) or 'backwash' (Biggs, 1995; Hughes, 1988; and Spolsky, 1994), that is, the effect that testing may have on teaching and learning (Bailey, 1996:5) increased radically after the seminal work by Alderson and Wall (1993), who asked themselves whether washback really existed. Since then, relevant scholars have researched into this complex phenomenon and, as a result of decades of work, it can be stated "that there is no longer any doubt that washback does indeed exist" (Alderson, 2004:ix). Nevertheless, the most recent research has focused on understanding what washback really entails and on identifying the factors that influence it.

This paper tries to offer some insights into the effect that the "Cambridge English: First" (FCE, henceforth), and more precisely its writing paper, may have on courses which prepare future candidates of this well-known accreditation exam. The effect is studied in terms of the text types used and the activities that are considered key for success in this test. In order to do so, it compares general English courses and the above-mentioned preparation courses in language schools located in Southern Spain.

2. Theoretical background

"Testing and teaching are so closely interrelated that it is virtually impossible to work in either field without being constantly concerned with the other" (Heaton, 1990:5). In fact, the different language teaching approaches have somehow influenced the evolution and current trends in testing. Similarly, prestigious scholars such as Alderson and Wall (1993), Bailey (1996 and 1999), Cheng (2005), Green (2007) or Prodromou (1995) to name just a few have discussed the effect that tests may have on teaching and learning.

2.1. Washback

Test-related aspects may have an impact at different levels: society, language courses, people’s attitudes, or course materials. But what does washback mean? According to Alderson and Wall (1993), washback refers to the effect that tests have on teaching and learning. However, they limit the scope of the term because “we might not want to call anxiety caused by having to take an exam washback” (*op cit.*:7). While many scholars follow this definition of washback, others such as Messick (1996:4) pay especial attention to the influence on teaching and describe washback “as the extent to which the introduction and use of a test influences teachers to do things they would not otherwise do”.

In the light of the above, the complexity that underlies washback seems evident. In fact, well-known scholars have highlighted it. First, Alderson and Wall (1993:7) already referred to it when they claimed that “a naïve deterministic view would assume that the fact of a test having a set of qualities is sufficient in itself to bring about change” and they went on saying that “what influences how or when teachers and learners change their behaviour/beliefs is certainly complex” (Prodromou, 1995). More than a decade later, Cheng (2005:8) tapped into this complex nature of washback when she described it as “an intended or unintended direction and function of curriculum change on aspects of teaching and learning”.

If in 1993 Alderson and Wall wondered whether washback really existed, now most scholars would agree that it does exist and hence current research focuses on identifying the factors affecting washback. Prodromou (1995) claims that there is no one-to-one relationship between tests and the effect they produce. A similar idea is indeed mentioned by Alderson and Wall (1993:7) when they say that what influences how, when, etc. teachers and learners change their behaviours is certainly complex. Thus, it is important to understand the factors that influence washback. Among them, Spratt (2005) includes: exam-factors, teachers’ beliefs and attitudes towards the test, teaching methods..., teachers’ education and training, resources available, and the school. It is not surprising at all to see that teachers’ influence is considered as a key factor for washback. This is what Alderson (2004:x) calls ‘the teacher factor’ and it is something that is also observed in Peña Jaenes (2015).

Another aspect related to washback that has been subject to debate is its value or direction. Washback can be said to be positive when it boosts motivation, makes objectives clearer or improves the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, it can also be seen as something negative if it narrows the curriculum (Shohamy, 1992:514) or encourages teachers and students to use only non-authentic material and exam

practice. In this sense, exam boards and the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE, henceforth) are aware of their responsibility for striving to achieve a positive impact when designing a test. The next section will focus on a key aspect when designing a test: the task type.

2.2. Task type

Tests serve different purposes and, as a consequence, may have a wide variety of formats and hence of tasks. Finding the most suitable task type is challenging because there are several factors involved and no fewer constraints. It is widely believed that validity, reliability, practicality and authenticity are key aspects in a test. However, authors such as Bachman (1990), Messick (1996) and William (1996) point out that it is very unlikely or even impossible to produce a test which is 100% valid, reliable, practical and authentic and that, therefore, it is necessary to reach a balance that is satisfactory. Similarly, Green (2007:18) cites Haertel (1999) and explains how practical constraints such as time available, viability of item formats, methods of scoring, etc. increase the complexity of creating the perfect test. Finally, William (1996) adds one more challenge by mentioning that some skills are more difficult to test than others. This may be the case of written production abilities, which without a doubt pose several problems in proficiency tests.

Writing tests must assess language use, punctuation and spelling, content, stylistic skills, and judgement skills (Bueno González, 1996). In order to do so, test developers need to produce tasks that are authentic (Asociación de Centros de Lenguas en la Enseñanza Superior, 2014), i.e. that describe meaningful situations, which might be encountered by candidates in real life. Moreover, they must have a clear purpose and a well-defined audience (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate: 2013a, 2013b). Besides, they must elicit language at the right level, and they should test the students as regards their writing ability and nothing else (Bueno González, 1996). Ideally, they should include the direct testing of the skill; in other words, candidates should produce a text that the examiner will mark.

2.3. The “Cambridge English: First”

The FCE is a criterion-referenced test as it is intended to measure candidates' abilities at B2 level of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, henceforth)* (Council of Europe, 2001) and it allows test users to interpret a score with reference to the already mentioned level of the *CEFR*.

Besides, if we follow the definition of high-stakes tests by Madaus (1988 in Luxia, 2005:142), who points out that high-stakes tests are those whose results are used to make important decisions that immediately and directly affect the test takers and other stakeholders, the FCE can be said to be high-stakes since its results have an impact on life changing events.

There are two versions of the test: one version is aimed at candidates who are younger than eighteen while the other one is for adults. Both versions have four papers: Reading and Use of English, Speaking, Listening and Writing. The latter is divided into two parts and must be done in one hour and twenty minutes. Part 1 includes an essay and candidates need to give their opinion and support it. This task has an opening rubric –instructions for the task– of 120 words to set the scene, an essay question and two prompts plus an additional prompt that candidates have to provide. The subject of the essay is of general interest and should be written in no more than 190 words.

Part 2 of the test gives teenagers four different options and three options to adults. They should all choose one. All the options provide candidates with a clear context, topic, purpose and target reader. The rubric has a maximum of 70 words. In this part, candidates may have to write an article, an email or a letter, a review and either a report if they are adults, or a story if they are under age. The version for teenagers also includes a question based on a set novel that the candidates may choose if they have read it. The word number in the answer must range from 140 to 190 (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2013a and 2013b).

3. Literature review

For the last decades proficiency tests have become more and more widely used for immigration, study and work purposes all over the world (Cheng, 2010¹; Rahimi, Esfandiari and Amini, 2016; University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2017). Despite their social role, the views towards them are diverse. While some scholars see them as opportunities to foster good teaching, others such as Bachman and Palmer (2010 in Green, 2013) claim that the skills needed to succeed in a test can never fully equate to the skills required for success in a target language domain. Crooks (1988 in Green, 2013) has a negative view especially towards high-stakes tests. According to this author, they are said to have the most harmful effects as they have significant gate-keeping functions and hence their results are important for candidates.

¹ Edited online in 2010 but published on paper in 1997.

Research carried out to date has paid special attention to testing principles (Davies, 2008 in Green, 2014:172) to guarantee that major proficiency tests are valid, reliable, practical and fair (Rahimi, Esfandiari and Amini, 2016:8). Similarly, scholars have studied the effect that tests may have on educational practice (Spratt, 2005 in Zhan and Wan, 2016, Green, 2013; Rahimi, Esfandiari and Amini, 2016:7, Xie and Andrews, 2012:51). Nevertheless, the focus has been mostly on teachers and classroom practices (Cheng, 2014 and Watanabe, 2004 in Allen, 2016:2), as we can see in the studies by Cheng (2010 and 2005), Green (2006a), Mickan and Motteram (2008), and Prodromou (1995). These studies have investigated the ongoing effects of established testing programmes or looked into how changes in systems of assessment affect education practice. Recently the focus has shifted and authors such as Cheng and Deluca (2011), Gosa (2004), Green (2006b), Lumley and Stoneman (2000), Michaelides (2014), Mickan and Motteram (2009), Stoneman (2006), Xie and Andrews (2012), Zhan and Andrews (2014), and Zhan and Wan (2016) have paid greater attention to learners and to score gains as it is the case of Elder and O’Loughlin (2003), O’Loughlin and Arkoudis (2009), and Robb and Ercanbrack (1999).

Despite the large number of studies carried out in other countries and regions such as Canada, Central and Eastern Europe, China, Japan, UK and Sri Lanka (Tzagari, 2011:432) and the number of Spanish candidates taking accreditation exams every year, there are very few studies about the washback that well-known language proficiency exams may have in Spain.

4. Objectives

According to Hawkey and Milanovic (2013), four million people take Cambridge exams every year in 130 countries. What is more, in its 40 years of history, over 25 million candidates have taken the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (The Hindu, 2011). Similarly, 1.5 million candidates take the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) every year (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2016). This is, among other reasons, because “language ability is being used increasingly as one of the key criteria for life changing decisions such as immigration, education and employment” (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2013c:1). Besides, it has become a key factor for economic success, according to Graddol (2006).

In the light of the above, it is clear that accreditation tests are high-stakes and hence are likely to produce a washback effect on teaching and learning. The main objective of this paper is to have a better understanding of the washback effect that

the Cambridge English First test may have on language courses, and in order to do so this article is aimed at:

- Analysing the use of text types in general English courses and in test preparation courses.
- Studying the activities that are considered key for success in B2 tests both by teachers and learners.
- Attempting to obtain evidence of washback produced by the FCE exam.

In order to judge whether these objectives have been achieved, the following research questions have been asked:

- Which types of texts are practised in the general English programmes and in the FCE preparation programmes studied? Do they differ? If so, in which ways?
- Which tasks are thought to be crucial for passing the FCE according to the participants in this research project?
- Does the FCE produce washback in the preparation programmes under study? If so, in which way?

Finally, this study may help teachers understand the impact that tests might have on learning and teaching and help them make the right decisions to improve their teaching.

5. Methodology

5.1. Study design

Accreditation exams like Cambridge tests have become relevant worldwide. This is also true in Spain and more precisely in Southern Spain, where this study has been conducted. As a consequence, the number of test preparation programmes has increased considerably and it has become necessary to research into how these tests may affect teaching and learning. This study has been designed to analyse classroom practices, thus it can be found within the framework of practical research, which is centred on the classroom (Bueno González, n.d.); in other words, it has been aimed at a formal setting, where, following Madrid and Bueno (2005:644), “the L2 learning takes place through conscious study, with the help of the L2 teacher and some teaching resources”. According to the source of information, it is an example of primary research because it is derived from a primary source of information (Bueno González, n.d.), who are 17 teachers and 136 students of general English courses and FCE preparation courses of six institutions located in Southern Spain. As far as the approach is concerned, it can be said to be analytic since it tries to identify two factors which are constituents of potential washback. Regarding the purpose, it is inductive because it tries to find

evidence of washback from the documentation and investigation of classroom practice.

To carry out this research, qualitative and quantitative data were deemed necessary. This eclectic or ‘hybrid’ approach is considered adequate by different scholars such as Ellis (1984:284 in Madrid, n.d.:14):

There is no need to oppose qualitative and quantitative research. Each is capable of “critical thinking” and each has its place in IL (interlanguage) studies. The danger is... in failing to acknowledge the contribution that can be made by “hybrid” research (i.e. research that employs both qualitative and quantitative procedures).

Quantitative data have been obtained from questionnaires that were applied to students and teachers at a single point in time, that is, following a cross-sectional method whereas qualitative data have been taken from diaries, which analyse teaching practice longitudinally, and questionnaires. Both forms of data were collected by means of quasi-experimental methods and have been analysed mainly through subjective methods; in other words, following an interpretative approach although the analysis of some data objectively was also essential.

“Cambridge English: First” is one of the most popular –in terms of number of candidates who take it every year– accreditation exams in Jaén, where most of the study was conducted. This is the reason why this test was chosen to analyse the potential washback on language programmes. The institutions that kindly agreed to take part in the research shared the characteristic of offering B2 programmes and having a suitable number of students and teachers. As for the professionals who kindly offered information about their teaching practice, they were in charge of B2 programmes. The study selected a control group –general English courses– and an experimental group –FCE preparation courses–. For practical reasons that will be explained below the most convenient collection data methods were questionnaires and teaching diaries. They were designed and trialled with a group of ten informants, both teachers and students, who did not take part in the data collection process. As a result of this trialling stage, some changes were made to make the items clearer and more accurate. Questionnaires were applied simultaneously and teaching diaries were analysed at the end of the data collection stage.

5.2. Questionnaires

Questionnaires have advantages and disadvantages but for the present study they were the most suitable option for several reasons. First, they can be emailed,

printed and applied on the same days without major problems. This is extremely useful for the study as the sample of the population is composed of students and teachers of different institutions and periodical classroom observation would be impossible to carry out. Similarly, interviewing around 160 people would be difficult due to time constraints. Besides, being able to collect all the data at the same time is important because it increases the accuracy of the information (cf. Madrid and Bueno, 2005:659). Furthermore, questionnaires are filled in anonymously, which minimises students’ anxiety over the consequences of their answers. The main drawback is that the data provided in questionnaires may be subjective (Madrid and Bueno, 2005:659). For this reason, it was deemed necessary to contrast the answers with the information obtained through teaching diaries.

Two models of questionnaires were used: one was filled in by teachers (see Appendix 1) while the other was filled in by students (see Appendix 2). The design of the questionnaires is very similar but the number of questions and the data they elicit are different.

5.2.1. Questionnaires for students

The questionnaire for students is written in Spanish, which is their mother tongue. The reason is that although the sample is composed of B2 students, there are some questions, such as 3 or 12, which could cause problems. For instance, some students may struggle to write their job in English and the nuances in question 12 may also lead to inaccurate answers. Moreover, writing the questionnaires in English would not make any difference for the research. Consequently, it was decided to write the questionnaires in Spanish to reduce the risk of obtaining inaccurate answers due to linguistic problems.

The questionnaires for students have three different sections and a short introduction which states the reasons why they are given the questionnaire and how the information they provide will be used and by whom. The objective of this introduction is to make students aware of the importance that providing accurate and honest answers will have for the research. The questionnaire is semi-structured as it includes 16 closed-ended questions and five open-ended questions. The objective of this design was to have as many closed questions as possible to reduce the number of unrelated answers and to make the analysis of the data easier. However, for some items it was very difficult to design a closed question and in other cases it was interesting to have open questions to have more information that had not been expected.

Section 1 includes 12 questions related to the students' profile. The main purpose of this section is to learn more about students' contact with English. Furthermore, it is interesting to know if they are familiar with the Cambridge exam format and if they have prior experience with accreditation exams. The age ranges included in question 1 were chosen following education stages and hence they try to cover different priorities and needs in life. In question 9, there are three options because various intensive courses offered in the private institutions which took part in the study have a duration of 30 teaching hours while these institutions consider that extensive courses should have a duration of at least 60 teaching hours.

Section 2 elicits information related to the students' perspective towards English and B2 accreditation exams. The purpose is to understand students' reasons for studying English and to obtain more information about their abilities. In question 16, the number of months used as a reference was based on the fact that most students enrol in courses at the beginning of the academic year – October– and drop out towards the end of it –May–². Moreover, most of the institutions which participated in the study base their configuration on their own experience, which seems to indicate that most students need between 9 and 18 months of instruction to pass from a B1 to a B2 level of Cambridge scale. Finally, section 3 focuses on the English course the students are attending and more precisely on the writing activities used, the time devoted to them and how often they are carried out. In question 18, the writing tasks were chosen following the criteria used by Cambridge Examinations in their FCE (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2013a, 2013b). Similarly, the can-do statements in question 21 are based on Cambridge First test marking criteria for the writing paper (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2013a, 2013b).

Finally, the students can add any comment they consider useful for the research. According to the results obtained from the trialling stage of the questionnaire, students need between 7 and 10 minutes to fill it in. That would make it feasible to apply the questionnaires during the lessons to increase the response rate.

² *Centro de Estudios Británicos* and London English School offer programmes beginning in mid-September and finishing in mid-June. *Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Lenguas Modernas* has programmes beginning in mid-September and finishing at the end of December and others starting in mid-January and finishing in mid-May.

5.2.2. Questionnaires for teachers

The questionnaire for teachers is written in English since the linguistic variable will not be a problem for them. As in the students’ version, there are three sections and a short introduction providing some information about the research. The questionnaire is semi-structured because it combines 12 closed-ended questions and six open-ended questions. The objective is to obtain quantitative data but also to gather additional information that can be useful to gain a better understanding of the teaching practices. Section 1 elicits information about teaching experience and qualifications and enquires about information which is valuable to contextualise questions that can be found later in the questionnaire. Section 2 focuses on the teachers’ opinions about language courses and accreditation exams. Question 10 was included to compare teachers’ perception to that obtained by Green (2007:88) in his Pilot Study 6.

Section 3 is aimed at teachers who are teaching B2 courses and it is designed to obtain information about the type of writing tasks, the time devoted to writing and how often writing is the main skill practised. The table in question 11 is very similar to the one that can be found in question 18 of the questionnaire for students. The main difference is that time ranges are much more detailed for teachers since they plan their lessons and can report more accurately the time they devote to writing. Nevertheless, such specific time ranges were found too confusing for students in the trialling stage. The reason for choosing six teaching hours as a reference is that most teachers follow textbooks that include a writing section in each unit and cover it in two weeks. The other difference is that the table does not include the last type of task that can be found in the questionnaire for students and refers to skills integration. The table in question 16 is again very similar to that found in question 21 of the questionnaire for students. The objective is to compare students and teachers’ perceptions of the students’ abilities.

5.3. Teaching diaries

Teaching diaries were also used in order to make the study more valid and reliable in the data collection stage and teachers working in *Centro de Estudios Británicos* (CEB, henceforth) provided them with the headmaster’s permission. The diaries covered a longer time span and they can offer a more accurate and detailed view of the writing activities carried out as well as the frequency and time patterns that each teacher followed when teaching writing. The information was obtained from the teachers’ lesson plans, thus it turned out to be a very personal and reliable source of information.

Once the data were obtained, they were analysed following an action research approach, which can be said to enable “researchers to develop a systematic, inquiring approach toward their own practices (Frabutt et al., 2008) oriented towards effecting positive change in this practice (Holter and Frabutt, 2012), or within a broader community (Mills, 2011, cited by Hine, 2013:152). In fact, the author herself took part in the research as part of the population and analysed her own lesson plans together with her colleagues’ plans to try to identify the text types more widely used, how often they were practised and also to gain greater understanding of the activities that led to their students’ success in the FCE exam. The ultimate goal has been to make teaching more effective and useful. Such an approach goes in line with the objectives that, according to scholars, action research pursues and with the methods used to attain them because “action research in education can be defined as the process of studying a school situation to understand and improve the quality of the educative process (Hensen, 1996; Johnson, 2012; McTaggart, 1997). It provides practitioners with new knowledge and understanding about how to improve educational practices or resolve significant problems in classrooms and schools (Mills, 2011; Stringer, 2008)” (Hine 2013:152).

5.4. Institutions and participants

A total of 17 teachers³ kindly accepted to take part in this study and offer information on how they teach writing. These professionals worked in six different institutions, all of them in Spain:

First, Britannia opened at the beginning of the academic year 2014-2015 in Málaga and it is part of a larger company. The staff was composed of six teachers who are in charge of general and test preparation courses. Most of the students enrolled in this centre are younger than fourteen but there are also older teenagers and adults. Less than 10% of them sat an official exam from September 2014 to May 2015.

Second, *Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Lenguas Modernas (CEALM)*, which is part of the University of Jaén, was officially founded in 2011 and it offers language training –general as well as test preparation courses– and certification services. Between 2014 and 2015, the school employed 13 teachers. The learners are university lecturers, university staff and university students and around 20% of them sit an official exam every year.

³ The teachers who took part in this study are both native and non-native speakers of English. As for the students, all of them are native speakers of Spanish. Nevertheless, this factor was not considered relevant for the present study.

Third, *Centro de Estudios Británicos* was founded in 1990 in Jaén and it offers English courses. In 2014-2015, there were eight teachers, who were in charge of test preparation courses and general English courses. Students attending lessons in this school are mainly teenagers, although there are also young children and adults. In general, around 25% of them take an official test every year.

Fourth, Language House was founded in 2013 in Granada. When the study was conducted, there were ten teachers in charge of general English as well as test preparation courses. Students are children, teenagers and adults and between 85% and 90% of them sit an official test every year.

Fifth, London English School opened in September 2011 in Jaén. It offers general English and test preparation courses. As for the students, there are children and teenagers but most of them are young adults. About 70% of them take an official exam every year. Regarding the staff, there were eight teachers working there.

Finally, Top School was founded in 1983 in Murcia. It offers general and test preparation courses. In 2014 and 2015, there were seven professionals teaching students of all ages. Around 30% of them took an official test that academic year.

5.5. Data collection

The questionnaires were filled in anonymously by professionals from the six language centres mentioned above and by students of CEB, CEALM and London English School. The idea was to collect data from a variety of institutions offering general English courses and test preparation courses, and, if possible, which train students for the FCE. The institutions should offer lessons that are not part of the students’ compulsory education in order to understand the “real” reason for studying English. Besides, the institutions had a similar number of teaching hours per week, which made the frequency patterns easier to compare and contrast although they offered different types of courses with different duration. The study was conducted mainly in Jaén because it is where the author works but colleagues working in other cities such as Málaga, Granada and Murcia were contacted and they kindly accepted to take part in the research.

As for the data collection process, the table below offers information about the date when questionnaires were applied, how they were filled in and the number of students who returned them.

Table. 1: Data collection process

Institution	Teachers received questionnaire	Teachers returned questionnaire	Email/paper	School received students' questionnaires	Students who returned the questionnaires	Questionnaires collected from institution
London English School	15/04/2015	30/04/2015	paper	22/04/2015	13 ⁴	30/04/2015
CEALM	17/04/2015	20/04/2015 - 23/04/2015 ⁵	paper	20/04/2015	38 ⁶	23/04/2015
Britannia	17/04/2015	20/04/2015	email	-----	-----	-----
Top School	20/04/2015	23/04/2015	email	-----	-----	-----
Language House	21/04/2015	27/04/2015	email	-----	-----	-----
CEB	17/04/2015	20/04/2015	paper	20/04/2015	83 ⁷	21/04/2015 - 23/04/2015

The objective was for the teachers to fill in the questionnaires before their students did so that they were not influenced by the students' answers or questionnaires. Although this was impossible in London English School and for one teacher who worked at CEALM, it has not affected the results of the study given the overall number of participants.

Regarding the questionnaires for students, in the case of London English, most of the learners filled in the questionnaires at home. As for CEB, students received the questionnaires during class time. They could ask questions if there was something they did not understand. The main problem was that they did not know what *educación superior* (a term included in the questionnaire) was and did not know the duration of the course they were attending. Some of them had the time to fill in the questionnaires in class but the rest finished them at home. The teachers had received some guidelines about the type of questions they could answer and they did not report experiencing any problems when solving doubts. This was not possible in London English School as only its headmaster was given the guidelines. In CEALM, the author herself applied the questionnaires in three of the four groups who took part in the research. The questionnaires were filled in during class time and doubts regarding the duration of the course were solved. The questionnaires of the fourth group were distributed by a teacher who had witnessed how the questionnaires had been applied to her students. All in all, no problems regarding the understanding of the questionnaires were reported because all the participants had the opportunity to solve their doubts.

Two main problems were faced during the data collection process. On the one hand, the fact that there were different schools taking part in the research made

⁴ Initially 45 students were going to take part in the research but in the end only 13 students filled in the questionnaire.

³ One of the CEALM teachers did not return the questionnaire.

⁶ The total number of students attending B2 lessons is 61.

⁷ There were 96 students enrolled.

it difficult to coordinate the teachers and students so that everyone had the same time to fill in and return the questionnaires. Besides, the initial figures of participants were higher than they finally were because of the high dropout rates especially in some institutions. In the end, 136 students returned their questionnaires and 17 teachers took part in the research.

5.6. Quality control

According to Denzin (1970:472), “At least two perspectives are necessary if an accurate picture of a particular phenomenon is to be obtained”. If this is always true, relying on different forms of triangulation is even more necessary when the researcher is studying her own students as well as others. Consequently, data and methodological triangulation became vital in this study.

First, quantitative and qualitative data were obtained by means of questionnaires and teaching diaries. This made it possible to compare and contrast the teachers’ approach towards writing. In addition, the questionnaires were applied in April 2015 while the teaching diaries describe the lessons from October 2014 to May 2015. Furthermore, the teachers’ and the learners’ perspectives were obtained because, despite some differences in the format and content, the questions about task types and frequency patterns were designed to obtain the same type of information.

Second, the data gathering can be said to be reliable because the research procedures were consistent. The author supervised that the participants had the same information to avoid biased answers. Moreover, most of the questions in the questionnaires were structured to reduce the number of unrelated answers. Finally, although the teaching diaries were very personal and hence unique, only the data regarding task types and frequency patterns were considered for this paper and they were analysed as objectively as possible.

Third, careful planning and reflection were necessary to strive for the maximum internal and external validity. In this sense, the FCE was the exam chosen to analyse its effect on language courses. This is because Cambridge tests are well-known as prestigious proficiency tests and are probably the most popular among English students in Jaén, where the largest part of the study was carried out. As a result, most private language centres offer test preparation courses and most if not all students have some knowledge about the test.

Finally, the objective was to be able to generalise the study results and for this reason several institutions, which offer different types of courses, with different durations and characteristics, were asked to take part in the research. As for the subjects, native and non-native teachers with several years of experience

accepted to take part. Regarding the students, they were adults and teenagers who were studying English at B2 level when the questionnaires were applied.

6. Results

6.1. Text types

6.1.1. Report about the students' answers

In part 3 of the questionnaires participants were asked about the text types they practised. The table focused on the texts that may appear in the FCE regardless of the version –reports, letters, essays, reviews, articles, shorts stories– (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2013a, 2013b). However, the option of a different type of writing was also included to find out if despite not appearing in the test, students had practice in a different type of writing. The information below corresponds to the students' answers. It must be noted that the data included in this section were analysed considering the different institutions as different categories so that comparisons among the way writing is taught in CEALM, CEB and London could be drawn.

Reports

The results show that London students are the ones who write this text type more often because 64% of the students say they do it more than once. This contrasts with the results obtained in CEB (48%) and CEALM (26%). The percentage of students who do not answer the question or select “I don't know” is 8% for CEB, 26% for CEALM, and 7% for London.

Letters

The results are very similar. London students are those who write letters more often because 63% do it more than once as opposed to CEB students (51%) and CEALM students (46%). The percentage of participants is also similar: 6% for CEB, 23% for CEALM, and 7% for London.

Essays

The answers for this question are interesting because they require careful reflection to fully understand them. This is due to the fact that although London students report writing essays more often (64% say they do it more than once a month) than CEB students (56%) and CEALM, if one looks at the percentages of students who answered that they wrote essays only once (40% in the case of CEB, 33% in the case of CEALM, and 36% in the case of London), one may think that

CEB students are those who write essays less frequently. However, this is not the case since only 28% of CEALM students report writing essays more than once. The rest of CEALM students (38%) do not answer the question or tick “I don’t know”.

Reviews

Once again, the results obtained require reflection. In spite of the percentages given for working on reviews once a month, which would suggest that CEB students are those who write reviews less frequently –45% of its students give that answer as opposed to 33% of CEALM students, and 29% of London–, actually almost the same percentage of London and CEB students seem to work on reviews more than once –47% for CEB and 49% for London–. What is clear is that CEALM students are those who work less on reviews because 49% of them did not provide an answer.

Articles

The results change slightly when compared with the previous ones because CEALM has the lowest percentage of students who write articles only once a month –it must be noted that for most of the above-mentioned text types London had the lowest percentage in this frequency–. According to participants’ answers, CEB students are those who write articles more often: 46% as opposed to London students (35%) and CEALM (23%). However, it must be highlighted that almost the same number of CEB students (49%) report writing articles only once a month. Finally, the percentage of students who fail to answer the question or say “I don’t know” is again very high in CEALM (44%) while for the other institutions it is quite low (5% for CEB and 7% for London).

Short Stories

This text type does not appear in the FCE for adults and the questionnaires show interesting results. First, the percentage of students who report writing short stories once a month is very similar in all the institutions: 47% in CEB, 44% in CEALM, and 43% in London. However, the main differences appear when looking at those students who say that they write short stories more than once because CEALM has the lowest percentage (26%) when compared with London (50%) and CEB (43%). What makes the results interesting is that although London has fewer students aged between 12 and 17 (23%) than CEB (80%), its students still work on short stories more often than CEB students even if they may be potential candidates for the FCE for adults, which does not include short stories, as said above.

Other text types

Finally, when asked about writing other types of texts the answers show that London students are those who do other types of writing more often as 50% report doing it more than once a month as opposed to CEALM (31%) and CEB (32%). It is interesting to note that the percentage of students who do not answer the question or say “I don’t know” is high –35% for CEB, 28% for CEALM, and 21% for London–, which may lead us to think that many students do not write other types of text.

6.1.2. Report about the teachers’ answers

Once the students’ answers have been presented, it is time to look at the teachers’ perspective. Their questionnaire also included a very similar table on text types and other writing-related activities. The answers were also analysed considering the teachers who worked in the three institutions. However, in this case the differences were not very relevant as most professionals –43% in the case of reports and letters, 38% in the case of essays, 40% in the case of reviews, and 46% in the case of articles and short stories– report working on each text type on a monthly basis. Nevertheless, differences were observed in terms of the amount of time devoted to the different task types every month. In this sense, 40% of CEB teachers claim that they work on text types for between one and two hours a month while none of the teachers who work at CEALM and London reported devoting such amount of time every month to any text type.

One of the most interesting questions for this research was the one enquiring about whether teachers gave their students practice in other text types that do not appear in the FCE. Most of the teachers gave a negative answer and they justified it on the basis of time and workload. To be more precise, 100% of CEALM teachers gave a positive answer, while only 20% of CEB teachers opted for that option and none of London English School teachers included other text types in their lessons. Those who gave a positive answer said that they did it because they consider that students should have preparation in all genres and because they want to give their students as much practice as possible. Some of the tasks they mentioned were writing formal letters and descriptions and also working on content by asking students to read texts and guess the title, to rephrase sentences or fill in the gaps to work on linking devices. While it is true that in test preparation courses students’ aim could be expected to be only to receive preparation for the exam and hence teachers may be asked to teach only what is included in the test, this question was deemed relevant because it could show if the teachers believed

that the content of the exam is limited and decided to expand the range of text types or if, on the contrary, they only taught the exam contents.

6.2. The most effective task types

The results obtained [Figure 1] show students’ perceptions towards key activities for success in B2 writing paper. They are quite interesting because the most effective task is said to be doing writing tasks –51% included this option in the top three–, the second in terms of usefulness is said to be working on grammar –41% of the participants included it in the top three– and the third one is learning vocabulary –40% of the students mentioned it–. Nevertheless, it is surprising that only 1% of the students think that correcting and comparing writings with partners or individually, or reflecting on the task are helpful.

Figure 1: Most effective tasks to pass the B2 test (students’ questionnaires, section 3, question 19)

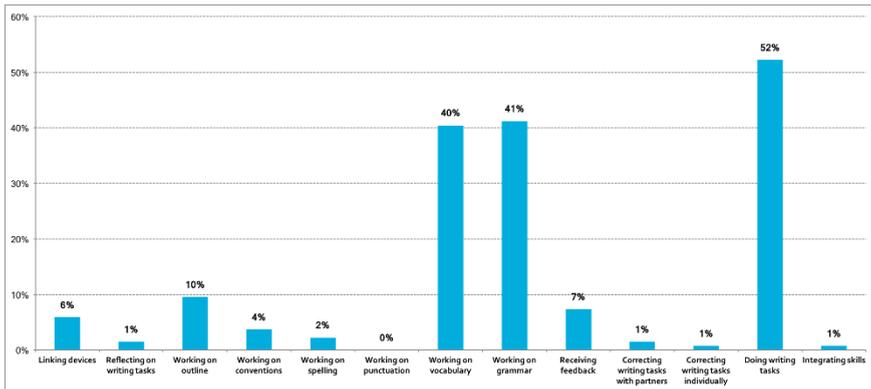
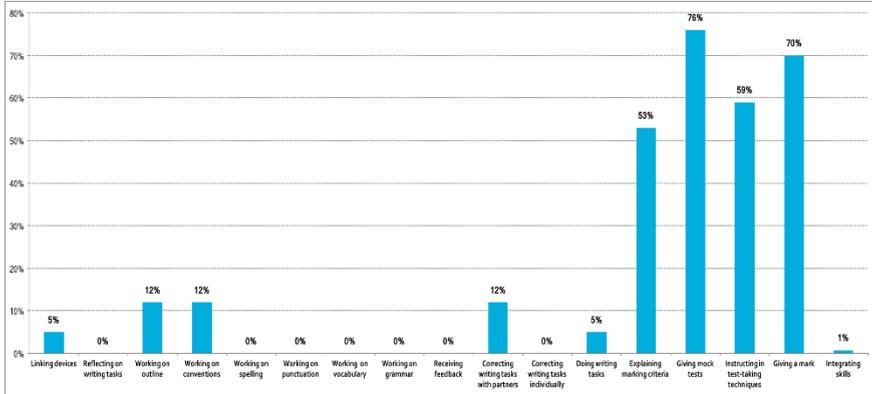


Figure 2: Most effective tasks to pass the B2 test (students' questionnaires, section 3, question 13)



Question 13 [Figure 2] asked teachers to choose which three activities of the ones included in questions 11 and 12 they consider help their students most to pass the writing paper of the FCE. Among the activities chosen, working on conventions, working on outline, instructing in test-taking techniques, explaining marking criteria, working on linking devices and writing different text types as well as comparing and correcting writing tasks with partners, and giving a mark instead of just correcting a piece of writing can be highlighted. The fact that teachers identify doing test tasks or mock tests and obtaining information regarding test-taking techniques and marking criteria among the three activities that help students most goes in line with the opinion expressed by 58% of the students, who wanted to do mock tests regularly, and by 51%, who said that doing writing tasks was one of the three most important activities to pass the B2 writing paper. What is more, it totally agrees with Green's (2007:72) findings and with other data obtained from the teachers' questionnaires. Nevertheless, the other activities chosen by the teachers contrast with students' answers since the latter included working on grammar and vocabulary as the other two key activities for success in the B2 writing paper.

7. Discussion

This study collected evidence on the potential washback effect that FCE has on preparation courses located in Southern Spain. The data analysis seems to reveal that this exam has an impact on the choice of texts. Regarding the most effective tasks for success in the exam, the effect of the FCE could be said to be

more obvious in the teachers’ choice. These results are going to be discussed considering other studies in the field mentioned in Section 3 Literature review.

7.1. Text types

The results presented in the previous section show that the three institutions mainly work on task types tested in the FCE. In this sense, the washback of the test would seem obvious as only 29% of the teachers reported working on other types of tasks. Furthermore, it is important to note that while in the case of CEB and London English School the questionnaires were applied to teachers offering training for the FCE, in the case of CEALM the questionnaires were given to instructors in charge of general English courses. This clarification is necessary because, as we saw above, all the teachers working for CEALM gave a positive answer when asked if they gave their students practice in other types of texts and this clearly contrasts with those working at CEB and London English School. As a result, it is evident that the washback of the accreditation test is strong when selecting the tasks. This influence was also perceived by Green (2007:75), who found that “teachers, for their part, also reported that IELTS influenced their choice of activities”, by Tsagari (2011:237), who concluded that “the exam encouraged teachers and students to place more value on the skills and activities that were assessed on the exam”, by Patton (1987 cited by Tsagari, 2009:9) and by Cheng (2010:49), who claimed that “it would be natural for teachers to employ activities similar to those activities required in the examination” and, in fact, found evidence of that in her interviews and classroom observation. This opinion was also shared by course providers and students, who believed that the design of IELTS test dictated practices on preparation courses (Green, 2007:90).

The reason why professionals choose to give practice only in the text types tested in the writing paper might be explained by the fact that the FCE writing paper includes a wide variety of texts and all the most frequently used ones. In fact, when asked about the other texts that they practised in class, professionals only mentioned descriptions⁸. What is more, one could argue that description is included in some text types such as reviews or short stories, which are part of the FCE writing paper, part 2.

Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that some teachers explained that they did not plan lessons to explain and practise other types of writing tasks due to workload and lack of time. While this attitude could be said to be an example of

⁸ One of the teachers mentioned formal letters. However, this is one of the types of texts tested in part 2 of the FCE writing paper.

negative washback, the reality is that teachers in general English courses do not practise text types that are totally different from the ones practised in test preparation programmes. The interviews carried out by Tsagari (2011:438), also showed that teachers had a negative perception of the washback of FCE as they “indicated that the examination influenced the content of their ordinary teaching and classroom assessment (e.g. made them pay more attention to grammar and vocabulary and the written skills rather than to the aural/oral skills)”. However, the author (Tsagari, 2011:438) points out that “this cannot be attributed to the direct influence of the exam because the exam placed equal emphasis on all four skills” and hence “if the [FCE] exam were to have an influence on the content of their teaching and classroom assessment as teachers said it did, it would have encouraged them to focus on all skills tested in the exam” because the rationale of the FCE exam does not preclude communicative teaching (Tsagari, 2011:438).

In the light of the results mentioned above, the washback of the FCE on the courses under study could be said to be positive since it does not narrow down the curriculum (Shohamy, 1992:514) as far as the types of texts used is concerned. This is because, as the teachers’ questionnaires showed, the participants in charge of general English courses and those responsible for test preparation courses use virtually the same text types. Besides, the writing paper of FCE encourages students and teachers to practise writing skills.

7.2. The most effective tasks for success in the B2 writing paper

With regard to the key tasks for passing a B2 test, the washback seems to be slightly different depending on whether the participants are teachers or students. This finding goes in line with Green (2007:303). According to students, writing is essential to obtain a pass mark and teachers as well as scholars totally agree with that perception. A similar belief was expressed by teachers and students when interviewed by Green (2007:86). This emphasis on writing is beneficial and can be said to be an example of positive washback because it motivates the learners to develop their writing skills. It fosters the communicative approach because students have to overcome their language deficiencies and find ways to communicate by paraphrasing and being ambitious. It considers language as a whole and gives priority to fluency.

Nevertheless, most teachers pointed out that only writing without reflecting on what one writes is not enough to improve. This is because being aware of one’s mistakes and understanding them is vital to stop making them and to find other ways to express one’s thoughts. Unfortunately, students do not share this point of view [see Figure 1 above]. This can be due to the perception that reflecting and

thinking –like planning what they are going to write– is a waste of time because they are not given marks for that. Another potential cause could be based on the urgency to pass the test. However, this “mechanical” approach to writing prevents many candidates from succeeding and can be blamed for the hopelessness and despair experienced by some learners. These feelings are an example of what Bailey (1996) called ‘washback to the learner’, as reported by Tsigari (2009:8).

As for the two other activities considered key for success, students named grammar and vocabulary. In fact, when they were enquired about their expectations towards the lessons they attended, they outlined that grammar and vocabulary play an important role; almost as important as practising the five linguistic skills, language and culture contents or only working on oral skills. A similar view towards the importance of grammar in test preparation was perceived by Tsigari (2011:438) and by Green (2007:90), who reported that “IELTS preparation classes tended to place a greater emphasis on grammar than did other EAP classes, a feature that would not seem to be directly related to test content”. This is also true for FCE preparation courses; however, it could be thought that since these examinations include grammar and vocabulary –also referred to as language– among the criteria to mark candidates’ written production, it makes sense to teach it. On the other hand, Tsigari (2009:8 and 2011:438) tapped into the influence of local teaching practices and beliefs to explain why grammar aspects are still considered as key for success in accreditation tests. Nevertheless, this idea contrasts with the latest and more popular teaching approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching or Content Based Instruction, which reflect teachers and scholars’ views towards good teaching.

8. Conclusion

This paper aimed to gain better understanding of the effects that a well-known widely recognised proficiency test such as the FCE may have on language courses. In order to do so, the author focused on the choice of task types and on the key aspects for success in the test. The ultimate goal was to be able to make informed decisions that would benefit the learners and hence would make the learning and the teaching process successful.

With this objective in mind, insightful and enriching approaches to washback have been considered. They have guided and inspired the research process, which has gathered opinions and information coming from six institutions, 136 students and 17 teachers. Their valuable views have been essential to reach the conclusions that follow.

On the one hand, the effect of the test is observed in the task types that are practised in class. This washback can be said to be positive because the FCE covers a wide range of text types and hence fosters the practice of writing skills in a variety of texts and topics, as mentioned by teachers and students, who identify writing practice as a key factor for success in the test.

On the other hand, it is interesting to see that, as mentioned by Green (2007:303), the washback on teachers and students is slightly different. This is because although both teachers and learners identify writing practice as the most useful activity to pass a B2 test, they disagree when choosing other key factors.

9. Further research

The results of the present study show that, despite the importance that accreditation exams have nowadays, they may not be the only factor shaping the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language. Besides, they highlight the complexity of washback –also noted by well-known authors such as Alderson and Wall (1993); Wall (1999); and Andrews 2004, all of them cited by Tzagari (2011:439)– when it comes to analysing how it affects different stakeholders. This article also points at aspects such as the ‘teacher factor’, students’ beliefs and teaching practices as factors which also affect how English is taught and learned in this region of Spain.

Nevertheless, it would be necessary to analyse other factors such as the score obtained by the students who took part in the study and also their score gain throughout the course to obtain greater understanding about the effect that practising the text types mentioned in this study and working on the activities considered as key for passing the FCE test really has. Such a study would go in line with the latest trends in washback research and would contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

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ANNEX 1: Questionnaire for teachers

Questionnaire for teachers

Please answer the following questions honestly. The information you provide in this questionnaire will be data used anonymously in the MA Thesis of Victoria Peña Jaenes.

Section 1

In this section I would like to learn about your teaching qualifications and experience.

1. What is your degree?

2. Do you possess any of these English-language teaching qualifications? Please circle.

- a. TEFL
- b. CELTA
- c. DELTA
- d. MA in Education

3. How many teaching hours do you have per week? Please circle.

< 10 11-15 16-20 21-25 26-30 > 30

4. What levels do you teach according to the Common European Framework of Languages? Please circle.

A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2

5. What type of courses are you teaching at the moment? Please circle.

- a. Extensive General English courses (≥60 teaching hours)
- b. Intensive General English courses (< 60 teaching hours)
- c. Extensive English for Specific Purposes course (≥60 teaching hours)
- d. Intensive English for Specific Purposes courses (< 60 teaching hours)
- e. Extensive Cambridge First test preparation course (≥60 teaching hours)
- f. Intensive Cambridge First test preparation course (< 60 teaching hours)

6. How old are your B2 students? Please circle.

- a. Teenagers
- b. Adults
- c. I do not teach B2 level

Section 2

In this section I would like to learn about your opinion about language courses and accreditation exams in general.

7. How are test preparation courses different from general English courses?

8. If a student passes Cambridge First test, it means that s/he has a B2 level. Please circle.

- a. I strongly disagree
- b. I disagree
- c. I agree

- d. I strongly agree
- e. I do not know

Why?

9. From your point of view and on the basis of your experience, how important are these factors for success in Cambridge First test or a similar B2 test? Please tick the box.

FACTOR	Not important at all	Not so important	Important	Very important	Don't know
1. Student aptitude and ability					
2. Educational experience					
3. Openness to instruction and willingness to follow the teacher's guidance					
4. Maturity					
5. Motivation					
6. Age					
7. Class attendance					
8. Participation in class					
9. Personal work					
10. Exposure to English outside the class					
11. Exam preparation (attending a B2 preparation course/lessons)					

10. In your experience, how long does an adult student need to pass from a B1 level to a B2 level? Please circle.

- < 30 teaching hours
- 31-60 teaching hours
- 60-120 teaching hours
- >120 teaching hours

Section 3

In this section I would like to learn about how you teach writing and how you prepare your students for the writing paper of First test. Please answer the

questions on the basis of your B2 adults group (general English course or First test preparation course). If you do not have a B2 adult group, it is not necessary to answer the questions included in this section.

11. How often do you do this in your classes? Please tick the box.

	6 teaching hours			9 teaching hours			12 teaching hours			I don't do it
	<30 min	30-60 min	> 60 min	<30 min	30-60 min	> 60 min	<30 min	30-60 min	> 60 min	
Working on linking devices (explanation and/or practice)										
Reflecting on writing tasks (discussing target reader, style, content points)										
Working on outline (paragraphs, ideas organisation)										
Working on writing conventions (letter opening and closing phrases, headings, titles, rhetorical questions)										
Writing for fluency										
Working on accuracy (spelling)										
Working on accuracy (punctuation)										
Work on accuracy (vocabulary)										
Work on accuracy (grammar)										
Giving feedback on writing tasks (written or oral)										
Correcting and comparing writing tasks as a whole group activity or in pairs										
Correcting and comparing writing tasks as an individual activity										
Writing a report either in class or for homework										
Writing an informal letter either in class or for homework										

Why (not)?

16. What has been your students’ progression over the last two months? Tick the box that goes in line with your students’ performance in general terms.

	Few (1 or 2 out of 10) of my students do it	Some (3-4) of my students do it)	5-7 students in the class can do it	Most (8-9) of my students can do it	All can do it
Identify the text type they need to write					
Use the text type conventions					
Communicate straightforward ideas					
Produce well organised and coherent texts					
Use a variety of cohesive devices					
Use the adequate register consistently					
Include all the content points					
Use a variety or everyday vocabulary appropriately					
Use some less common lexis appropriately					
Use a range of simple grammar with a good degree of control					
Use some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

ANNEX 2: Questionnaire for Students

Cuestionario para estudiantes

Por favor, rellene con sinceridad este cuestionario sobre el curso de inglés al que usted asiste. La información que proporcione será utilizada de forma anónima por Victoria Peña Jaenes para la elaboración de su Proyecto Final del Máster en Lingüística Aplicada a la enseñanza del inglés.

Sección 1

Con esta sección me gustaría conocer un poco más de su perfil como estudiante de inglés.

1. Señale su edad con un círculo. 12-17 18-20 21-25 ≥ 26
2. Indique su nacionalidad _____
3. Educación (señale con un círculo el máximo nivel académico que ha superado)
 - a) Educación Primaria
 - b) Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (E.S.O.)
 - c) Educación Secundaria no Obligatoria (Bachillerato)
 - d) Grado/ diplomatura/ licenciatura
 - e) Máster
 - f) Doctorado
4. Indique si es estudiante o, si está trabajando, su actividad profesional

5. ¿A qué edad empezó usted a aprender inglés? (en años). Señale la opción que más se ajusta a usted.

< 6 6 -11 12 – 17 ≥ 18
6. Señale la opción que más se ajusta a su perfil. Ha estudiado inglés en...

Educación infantil	SÍ	NO
Educación primaria	SÍ	NO
Educación secundaria	SÍ	NO
Educación superior	SÍ	NO
Clases de inglés extraescolares	SÍ	NO
7. Señale la opción que más se ajusta a su perfil. Ha participado en el programa de bilingüismo en...

14. ¿Qué busca en sus clases de inglés? Señale con una cruz la casilla que representa la opción que más se ajusta a su opinión.

CUESTIÓN	Muy de acuerdo	De acuerdo	No estoy de acuerdo	Total desacuerdo	No sé
1. Quiero que en las clases se practique principalmente las destrezas orales: listening y speaking.					
2. Quiero que en las clases haya únicamente práctica para el examen de B2.					
3. Quiero aprender aspectos culturales de los países de habla inglesa.					
4. Quiero que en las clases se explique y se practique gramática y vocabulario principalmente.					
5. Quiero que en las clases se enseñen todos los aspectos de la lengua - pronunciación y fonología, gramática y vocabulario, cultura, y las 5 destrezas (listening, speaking, writing, reading, interacting).					
6. No estoy interesado en hacer pruebas periódicamente, busco aprender inglés a mi ritmo.					

15. ¿Cómo de importante es para usted aprobar el examen de B2? Señale con un círculo la opción que más se ajusta a su perfil.

1	2	3	4	5
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1 Muy importante

5 nada importante

16. Señale el número que mejor representa su percepción de la dificultad del examen de First.

1	2	3	4	5
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1 Estoy seguro de que aprobaré después de máximo de 18 meses de preparación

5 Es imposible aprobar el examen en 18 meses de preparación

17. ¿Cuál es su percepción respecto al inglés? Señale la opción que más se ajusta a su percepción.

- a) Me gusta aprender inglés y todo lo relacionado con la cultura inglesa
 - b) Necesito aprender inglés y por eso lo estudio
 - c) Me gusta aprender inglés y además lo necesito
 - d) No me gusta aprender inglés
 - e) Otra. Por favor, indique cuál
-

Sección 3

En esta sección se busca conocer mejor el curso de inglés al que asiste con especial interés por las tareas de redacción (writing).

18. ¿Con qué frecuencia hace estas actividades en sus clases o como deberes? Señale con una cruz la casilla.

ACTIVIDAD	1/mes	2/mes	3/mes	4/mes	Más de 4/mes	No sé
Trabajar conectores a través de explicación y/o práctica						
Reflexionar sobre tareas de redacción (hablar sobre el lector, el estilo, los puntos de que se debe incluir)						
Trabajar en la organización de la tarea (párrafos, organización de ideas, etc.)						
Trabajar en convenciones (cómo empezar y acabar la redacción, títulos, encabezamientos, uso de preguntas retóricas...)						
Trabajar en ortografía						
Trabajar en puntuación						
Trabajar el vocabulario						
Trabajar la gramática						
Recibir feedback de las tareas que he realizado (oralmente o por escrito)						
Corregir y/o comparar redacciones en grupo o en parejas						
Corregir y/o comparar redacciones individualmente						
Realizar un informe (report)						
Realizar una carta (letter)						
Realizar un ensayo de opinión (essay)						
Realizar una crítica (review)						
Realizar un artículo (article)						
Realizar una historia corta (short story)						
Realizar otro tipo de redacción						

19. Elija las tres actividades que crea que le ayudan más a aprobar la parte escrita del examen de B2

- _____
 - _____
 - _____

20. ¿Cuánto tiempo dedica a estudiar inglés fuera de clase? Señale con un círculo la opción que más se ajusta a su situación.

- <1 hora a la semana
- 1-2 horas a la semana
- 3-4 horas semanales
- > 4 horas semanales

21. ¿Cree que ha progresado en los últimos meses? Señale con una cruz la opción que más se ajusta a su situación actual.

	No puedo	Puedo pero me cuesta	Puedo y me resulta fácil	No sé a qué se refiere
Identificar el tipo de texto que tengo que escribir				
Usar las convenciones que corresponden al tipo de texto				
Comunicar ideas sencillas				
Producir textos bien organizados y coherentes				
Usar varios conectores (but, however, besides...)				
Escribir el texto en estilo formal o informal				
Incluir toda la información que se me pide				
Usar vocabulario frecuente correctamente				
Incluir correctamente algunos ejemplos de vocabulario más avanzado				
Usar correctamente varias estructuras gramaticales sencillas				
Usar correctamente algunos ejemplos de estructuras gramaticales más complejas				

¿Desea añadir algún comentario?

Gracias por completar este cuestionario.

