



THE WASHBACK EFFECT OF CET4 READING COMPREHENSION TEST ON EFL COLLEGE STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING ATTITUDE

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ABSTRACT

Washback in language testing studies how important exams affect teaching and learning. The College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) is a major foreign language test in China, and this study focuses on how it impacts students' attitudes toward reading comprehension. While previous research has looked at CET-4's impact on teaching and materials, there's a gap in understanding how students feel about the reading comprehension part. This study used a survey to investigate non-English major college students from two departments in one college in China about their experiences in CET-4 Reading Comprehension. The results show both positive and negative effects of CET-4 on students' attitudes. The study suggests ways to enhance the positive impact and reduce the negative, which can influence how students approach learning and feel about CET-4.

Keywords: *Washback; CET4 Reading Comprehension Test; EFL College Students; Language Learning Attitude*

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

1. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data provided comprehensive insights into the research questions.
2. The study results show that CET-4 reading comprehension has positive and negative washback effects on non-English majors' language learning attitudes.
3. The research results yield some implications on how positive washback can be maximized and negative washback can be minimized regarding how future test takers perceive their learning efforts and how their language learning attitudes towards CET-4 can be developed positively.

Research Objectives

RO: To explore the relationship between the challenges faced by undergraduate students regarding CET-4 reading comprehension and their attitude towards CET-4 reading comprehension.

HI: There is a significant positive correlation between the challenges faced by undergraduate students regarding CET-4 reading comprehension and their attitude towards CET-4 reading comprehension.

Methodology

In this quantitative investigation, the researcher aimed to uncover the tangible impact of CET-4 reading tests on students' attitudes toward English learning. The researcher designed a survey structured around the ABC model of attitudes, encompassing affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions. The questionnaire included items addressing challenges encountered in CET-4 reading comprehension. Data collected from the survey were inputted into SPSS version 26, and demographic information of the participants was tabulated. Mean scores, derived from questionnaire responses, were computed to evaluate students' perspectives on the CET-4 reading comprehension washback effect. To gain

further insights, a scrutiny of students' attitudes toward English learning was carried out using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

Results

1. Harnessing the positive feeling of pride while reading in English can enhance student confidence. The absence of intimidation with extensive English text and the relatively low discomfort with reading aloud create opportunities for educators to design activities that promote reading longer passages or practicing oral reading in a supportive environment (Gu, 2023). This, in turn, cultivates a more comfortable learning atmosphere for students.
2. Recognizing students' behaviors and challenges empowers educators to develop effective strategies for improving students' English reading skills, ultimately benefiting their future performance in CET-4 reading comprehension.
3. Understanding cognitive attitudes is crucial for educators and curriculum designers. Emphasizing the importance of vocabulary development, grammar instruction, and regular practice becomes essential in enhancing reading skills. It underscores the need for promoting the significance of reading skills in education.
4. Equipping students with cognitive strategies and educational resources is vital for overcoming challenges and achieving proficiency in language skills. The implications of these findings extend to educational practitioners and curriculum developers, offering valuable guidance for crafting effective pedagogical approaches (Hasanudin et al., 2023) that address the intricate interplay between attitudes and challenges.

Findings

To amplify the positive washback impact of the CET4 reading comprehension test, various implications have been proposed. These encompass reducing the stakes associated with the CET4, propelling forward the reform initiatives related to CET4, accentuating the development of learner autonomy, and extending support to both college teachers and students. Looking forward, it is predicted that forthcoming studies on washback will contribute to a more holistic understanding of how language tests influence those directly affected by them. This present study serves as a foundation for continuous innovation attempts and is poised to initiate further investigations into potential realms of washback, ultimately catalyzing favourable influences on the learning of English as a foreign language.

References

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