

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter is the last part of the study. It concerns about the conclusion, limitation of the study and also a recommendation for future studies.

5.1 Conclusion

In Thailand Case, the national examination is called Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET) while in Indonesia Case it is called Ujian Nasional (UN). They play a significant role in English language teaching and learning in Thai and Indonesian classroom settings.

This present study aimed to investigate and compare the washback effect of the O-NET and UN on English language teaching and learning at the ninth-grade level in Thailand and Indonesia in the academic year 2016. It was an advanced mixed-method design: a multi-case study (Creswell, 2009, 2017). It employed a triangulation as the research design included two cases (Thailand Case and Indonesia Case). In Thailand Case, the participants were two ninth-grade English teachers and 100 students from two secondary schools in Nang Rong, Buriram Province. Similarly, in Indonesia Case, two English teachers and 100 students were from two junior high schools in Bandung, West Java. In this regard, the two teachers from each case were asked to fill out the questionnaire, and both of them participated in in-depth interviews. Moreover, the 100 ninth-grade students of each case were asked to fill out the questionnaire, and six of them from each case participated in in-depth interviews. The data collection was conducted in the 2nd semester of the academic year 2016.

The characteristics of the participants for quantitative and qualitative data collection were as follows:

1) The Thai teacher participants were female. Their ages ranged 46 years old or above. Thai Teacher 1 possessed a bachelor's degree while Thai Teacher 2 obtained a master's degree. They had experiences in teaching English for 16 years or above. Moreover, Thai Teacher 1 taught English between 11-15 hours per week, and Thai Teacher 2 taught English more than 15 hours a week.

2) The Indonesian teacher participants were a male and a female. Their ages ranged between 25-55 years old. Concerning their educational background, all of them possessed bachelor's degree. They had teaching experiences between 11-20 years and taught English more than 15 hours a week.

3) Thai student participants were 100 students including 62% of female and 38% of male. All the participants studied English less than 6 hours per week, most of them did not attend any tutorial schools. Besides, six of the Thai student participants (three males and three females) participated the in-depth interviews. There were two low-achieving, two average-achieving, and two high-achieving students.

4) There were 100 Indonesian students participants (60% were female, and 40% were male). 50% of the participants studied English less than 6 hours per week, and the other 50% studied English more than 6 hours per week. Most of them attended tutorial lessons after school. Besides, similar to Thailand Case, six of the Indonesian student participants participated the in-depth interviews. There were three males and three females including two low-achieving, two average-achieving, and two high-achieving students.

The conclusions of this present study were divided into two parts. The first part is the washback effects of the O-NET and UN on English language teaching, and the other part is the washback effects of the O-NET and UN on English language learning.

5.1.1 The washback effects of the O-NET and UN on English language teaching in Thailand and Indonesia

There were eight areas of washback effects of the O-NET and UN on teaching based on Shih (2009). It included the content of teaching, teaching method, teacher-based assessment, teacher talk, time allotment for a test preparation, teacher assigned homework, nervousness and anxiety, and atmosphere of the class.

Regarding the content of teaching, Thai teachers seemed to use textbooks and grammatical handouts as the main materials in the classrooms. Indonesian teachers also used textbooks and other materials especially authentic materials. However, the use of textbooks was gradually declined among Thai and Indonesian teachers because they emphasized the importance of the O-NET or UN. As a result, they used previous O-NET or UN tests and related materials to tutor students in the 2nd semester. When considering the teaching method, it was striking that in both cases, the teachers tried to implement the communicative English in the classrooms in the 1st semester. Then they taught test-taking strategies and changed their teaching method to help students to perform well on the O-NET or UN in the 2nd semester.

For teacher-based assessment, similarly, Thai and Indonesian teachers created some tests based on the objectives in the syllabuses. However, the test items were often adjusted or taken from previous O-NET or UN tests and had the same formats as in those tests. About teacher talk, there were some different practices between Thai and Indonesian teachers. In Thailand Case, there were different findings between quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data showed that Thai teachers used both English and Thai as the medium of teaching and learning in the classrooms. However, the Thai language was mainly applied in the classrooms. On the contrary, in the Indonesia Case, the qualitative data reflected the quantitative data. It was found that Indonesian teachers primarily spoke the English language as the medium of instruction in the classrooms.

Regarding time allotment for the test preparations, the teachers from both cases often spent the time to help students to improve grammatical knowledge, vocabulary, and English language proficiency, especially in the 1st semester. In the 2nd semester, most of the time, they spent time in the classrooms and extra time to help students to prepare for the O-NET or UN. When considering teacher assigned homework, Thai and Indonesian teachers often assigned homework based on textbooks or the O-NET or UN.

Concerning nervousness and anxiety, Thai teachers usually felt pressure from colleagues and students to improve students' O-NET scores. On the contrary, Indonesian teachers did not feel pressure in terms of improving students' UN scores. However, all the participants feared for the poor results of O-NET or UN. Finally, when considering the atmosphere of the class, Thai and Indonesian teachers usually informed students about the information related to the O-NET or UN. Moreover, they organized mock exams to students. In this regard, in Thailand Case, the mock exam called Pre-O-NET was administered only once while there were six times of mock exams (known as Tryout Tests) in Indonesian Case.

5.1.2 The washback effects of the national exams on English language learning in Thailand and Indonesia

Concerning washback of the O-NET and UN on English language learning, there were five areas of washback based on Shih (2007). It comprised of the content of learning, the total time of learning, learning strategies, learning motivation, and test anxiety.

The first area of washback is the content of learning. Thai and Indonesian students often learned English communicative skills. Moreover, in the 2nd semester, the focus of learning shifted to the O-NET or UN contents. The O-NET or UN preparations were implemented in the classroom intensively. When considering the total time of learning, Thai and Indonesian students spent the time to learn English skills, grammar, and vocabulary in the classrooms. Especially, in the 2nd semester,

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they spent much time to review the O-NET or UN contents and practice previous tests in the classrooms. However, Indonesian students spent more time than Thai students to improve their English proficiency outside the classrooms.

Regarding learning strategies, Thai and Indonesian students learned some test-taking strategies in the classrooms. They often used the rote memorization to help them to prepare for the O-NET or UN. Besides, in terms of learning motivation, Thai students sometimes learned English harder to enhance their language ability and the O-NET scores. On the contrary, Indonesian students often learned English harder to improve their English ability and get satisfied UN scores. Lastly, concerning the test anxiety, Thai and Indonesian students had high anxiety during the O-NET or UN preparation. Also, they often feared for the poor O-NET or UN results.

5.2 Limitation of the Study

This study was conducted in the second semester, the academic year 2016. The period of collecting the data was in March after the O-NET in Thailand was already held. Therefore, though, the UN in Indonesia took place in April, but the test in Thailand was done so that the researcher was not able to observe the classroom activities before the test. Because of which, to collect the data for answering the research questions, the researcher focused on administering the questionnaires and conducting interviews only. Also, the participants were from big-inner-city schools. Therefore, the results of the present study might not be able to generalize to other contexts such as small schools or rural schools since in different contexts, and under different conditions, the results might be different.

5.3 Recommendation

Washback of testing is an interesting topic to study since it influences stakeholders in a broad range of ways. Based on the results of the present study, The stakeholders from both cases such as administrators, parents or interior board of administrators can implement the results of this study to help EFL teachers and students to be successful in the teaching and learning.

Besides, As a pedagogical recommendation, ninth-grade Thai and Indonesian teachers should take the negative washback of the O-NET or UN into account while planing to teach or teaching English. Despite the test preparations is inevitable, the English teaching and learning should be based on the English proficiency's sake. If the importance of English teaching and learning is solely because it is tested in the O-NET or UN, the process of teaching and learning a language will be trivialized. Also, teachers should anticipate and minimize the negative washback of the tests and maximize authentic English language teaching and learning to the classrooms.

Moreover, for future studies, washback of the O-NET in Thailand should be taken seriously because there is less related research which may catch the society's attention regarding its negative washback on Thai education. Futhermore, the focus can be the washback effects of the O-NET or UN on a particular group of stakeholders such as administrators, or parents, or teachers from various contexts and levels. It is due to those groups of people also have some influences on practitioners or teachers and students regarding English teaching and learning. What's more, in order to improve communicative English in classroom setting, future studies can compare teachers' practices regarding teaching communicative English between Thailand and Indonesia since the research results also revealed that Indonesia Case seemed to succeed in promoting students to be successful in learning English more than Thailand Case.

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