

# Innovations

## Comparative study of students' perceptions of the influence of high-stakes English examination on learning

**Getachew Desalegn Debisa**

Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia

**Tamene Kitila (PhD)**

Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Rufael Disassa (PhD)**

Wollega University, Nekemte, Ethiopia

**Corresponding Author: Getachew Desalegn Debisa**

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**Abstract:** *The main objective of the study is to examine students' perceptions of the influence of high-stakes English examination on learning. It also aimed to make comparative analysis of a difference in perception of the influence of the examination on students' learning because of their academic achievements. To address the issues, descriptive survey research design with mixed approach was employed. Questionnaire, focused group discussion and document analysis were utilized as data collection tools. The data was collected using random sampling from two schools: Arjo and LekaNekemte secondary schools which are found in East Wollega zone, Oromia regional state of Ethiopia. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data obtained from surveying 94 students by using statistical package for social sciences version 20. The analysis of transcribed contents of data elicited from students' focused group discussion was interpreted qualitatively. The findings showed that the students' perceptions of the influence of Ethiopian Secondary School Leaving Certificate English Examination (ESSLCEE) on purpose of learning English, contents of textbook, choices of materials and teacher-made classroom tests were remarked. Comparing the report of perception differences among students in relation to their academic achievement levels, there were no statistically significant difference on learning purpose of English and contents of students' textbook. However, the differences were statistically significant on choices of materials. It is inferred that students favored the influence of Secondary School Leaving Certificate English Examination on their learning. The study's findings have implications for test takers, educators, assessors, testers and curriculum designers of educational system in Ethiopia and elsewhere.*

**Keywords:** 1. Students' Perceptions, 2. High-stakes English Examination 3. ESSLCEE, 4. Students' Academic Achievement

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### 1. Introduction

Education came to light the world and assessment emerged to outshine teaching and learning. When assessments take place in teaching and learning process, learners are differentiated, educators get feedback and curriculum designers may get valuable information. With no assessment or testing, it is nearly impossible to talk about education: teaching-learning (Resnick&Schantz, 2017). Thus, teaching, learning and assessments are dependable and inseparable entities.

In language education, different assessment tools like observation, oral questions, paper and pencil tests and portfolio have been employed. Though it is difficult to find out when these language assessment devices were first used, what noted from Bible about the oral pronunciation can be considered as excellent example of one of the earliest written

documents related to some kind of language assessment. As the Old Testament (Judges 12:5-6) evidenced in Hopkins, Stanley, and Hopkins (1990), the oral test was provided by Gileadites' troops for Ephraimites. Gileadites asked Ephraimites a word "shibboleth" to correctly pronounce it and be saved or by wrongly pronouncing it as "sibboleth" as a case to be killed. These days, testing is one of the language assessment tools that are dominantly used to provide quantifiable figures about the language ability of learners (Cheng & Curtis, 2004).

Language testing is indispensable in the contexts of language education. It is central to language teaching and learning (Islam et al, 2021; Salehi and Yunus, 2012). Heaton (1990) noted that the three units: teaching, learning and testing are so closely interrelated that it is practically impossible to work in either field without being constantly concerned with the other. Language testing is employed for various purposes: providing quantifiable figures about the language ability of learners (Cheng and Curtis, 2004), working as a criterion for admission of students in higher education (Manjarres, 2005), evaluating quality of education (Cheng, 2005), controlling nepotism in the allocation of scarce opportunities (Beikmahdavi, 2016).

## 2. Statement of the problem

The influence of testing on teaching-learning, washback, is complex and multi-faceted in its nature. Starting from the 1990's declaration of the existence of washback (Alderson and Wall, 1993), till these days, it is hard to delineate exactly what washback looks like. The reason is that, there may be no a linear relationship between tests and the teaching-learning processes (Shih, 2009). Scholars have attempted to unveil the complex nature of the washback by crafting models (Alderson and Wall, 1993; Hughes, 1993; Bailey, 1996). It is stated that a test may impact (positively or negatively) its participants' (teachers, learners, materials designers and so on) teaching and learning processes (Hughes, 1993).

Regarding one of the key participants of the influence of testing, students, it demands immense attention to be given. Some studies reported that students' perceptions and attitudes towards teaching, learning and testing are important mediating factors in washback (Read and Hayes 2003, Shohamy et al., 1996). In addition, (Tsagari, 2007) stressed the importance of students' views to be taken into consideration in the study of washback. Testing may change learners' perceptions towards their learning and in the long term, it influences their performance in the class (Green, 2007; Xie, 2015). The test takers are either positively or negatively influenced by the washback of the testings when they prepare for the test. That is, tests and its results have considerable impact on individual test takers' lives (Taylor, 2005; Stoneman, 2006; Manjarres, 2005). For that matter, there are some studies (Shohamy, 2001; Read and Hayes 2003; Tsagari, 2007; Cheng, Andrews, and Yu, 2011; Xie 2015) conducted in connection with the students' perception and washback effect of tests on learning. However, the area has been assumed to be studied fewer comparing with other key participants, teachers. Regarding the context of the present study, washback researches (Negede, 2002; Mihretie, 2007; Degefu, 2017; Gashaye, 2020 and 2021) done deemed as the case of learners did not get particular attention. On the other hand, comparative analysis of the influence of high-stakes public English examinations that may have uneven impacts on the participants with different academic achievement levels (Alderson and Wall, 1993; Cheng, 2005, Pan, 2014) is untouched part. Hence, the present study aimed to fill the identified gaps by addressing about five research objectives.

## 3. Objectives of the study

- To identify students' perception of influence of ESSLCEE on purposes of learning English?
- To investigate students' perception of influence of ESSLCEE on contents of textbook?
- To assess students' perception of influence of ESSLCEE on choices of materials?
- To identify students' perception of influence of ESSLCEE on classroom tests?
- To make comparative analysis of students' differences in perceptions of influence of ESSLCEE on their learning because of their academic achievements

**4. Methodology**

To address the aforementioned research questions, comparative analysis method with descriptive survey design was employed. It is assumed that such design helps to describe attitudes, opinions, and characteristics of the sample population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; McCombes, 2022). It is mainly chosen to determine the individual students' views in relation to the washback of ESSLCEE. The research made use of both quantitative and qualitative methods prioritizing the research questions to be answered sequentially. The study sites are twopublic secondary schools (LekaNekemte and Arjo) which are found in East Wollega zone. The sample of 94 students of grade 12 (47 participants from each school) learners during data collection at both schools was selected randomly. The selected participants were identified with their semester academic achievements.

For the focus group discussions, six students from each school participated. The discussant students were selected based on their willingness to obtain rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Dörnyei, 2007).

Questionnaire was employed as one of data gathering tools to find out and make inferences about respondents' perceptions (Punch, 2005; Bryman, 2008). To substantiate the data obtained from questionnaire, FGDs with students were conducted. Before collecting data, first, in November 2020, the study sites were visited to obtain permissions from the administrative bodies. After that, the data collection carried out procedurally. First, participants' semester academic achievements were taken from the record offices, and then, questionnaire was administered in February 2021, and, lastly, FGD were conducted in March 2021.

After data collection, the presentation and discussions of the findings were organized based on the research questions to be answered. The data obtained from questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively whereas data obtained from FGD were scrutinized qualitatively. Thus, the analyses and findings from the student questionnaire together with FGD were presented concomitantly to answer the first four research questions. The data from students' FGD was transcribed and triangulated with data from questionnaire. To answer research question number five, one of the inferential statistics, one-way ANOVA, was employed using participants' academic achievements. Then, the discussions and conclusions of results obtained from both quantitative and qualitative data analyses were made.

The validity of student questionnaire and FGD items was checked. The internal consistency reliability of items was tested using Cronbach's alpha. As a result, the items reliability of students' perception questions ranged from 0.716 to 0.785 which signposts its acceptance (Pallant, 2020). The responses on students' perception of the washback of ESSLCEE on purposes of learning English, contents of the textbook, choices of materials and teacher-made classroom tests were tabulated and the mean score was computed. For triangulation purpose, FGD was discussed qualitatively.

**5. Results and Discussions**

This section provides an overview about students' perceptions of influence of ESSLCEE on their learning purposes of English. Students were provided with questions (item 1-5) aimed to investigate their' understanding of the washback of ESSLCEE on the goal of learning of English (Table 1).

**Table 1: Students' views of influence of ESSLCEE on purpose of learning English**

I	What do you think of the goal of learning English?	N <sub>o</sub> .	M	STDV
1	To improve my communicative skills of the language.	94	3.49	0.992
2	To pass examination and join university.	94	4.09	0.912
3	To obtain jobs.	94	3.76	0.785
4	To satisfy school requirements.	94	3.56	0.911
5	To get chance of going abroad where English works as official language.	94	3.62	0.963

As it can be seen from Table 1, the mean value of the response of the students to choose learning English to improve their communicative skills of the language is 3.49 (STDV=0.992). The result indicates that students did not show their agreement to learn the language for improvement of the skills. Similarly, the respondents expressed less agreement on the purpose of learning English to get the chance of going abroad (M=3.62; STDV=0.963) and to satisfy school requirements (M=3.56; STDV=0.911). On the other hand, it is evident that students showed their agreement with highest average mean score (M=4.09; STDV=0.912) to pass examination and join university. From the report, it is possible to deduce that students choose to learn English to pass the examination and join university.

FGD made with the students substantiate the report obtained from the questionnaire. One of the Participant students (PS) forwarded his views on the issue as such:

PS9: My first aim of learning this English is to pass university entrance exam. On top of that, the language is a base of my knowledge for my further education.

As the excerpt indicates, the student described as the main purpose of learning English is to score grade that able him join university. And the discussant reported as he had also interest to learn the subject to be benefited from the skill of the language in his further education. The report from the discussions infers that the main objective is to pass university entrance exam and pursue their education. Another participant of the discussion supported the above discussant by saying:

PS2: First, since education in the worldwide is given in English, learning English helps me to improve my education. Second, it helps me to score better grade in Grade-12 Entrance exam because if I do not know the language, it is difficult for me to understand what I learn.

According to the discussant, his learning purpose of English is aimed at two main points. One is to get academic information in the worldwide, and the second one is to pass university entrance exam.

The report from the questionnaire and FGD show that students favored of learning English for their success of passing examination in order to join higher institution.

**Table 2: Students’ views of influence of ESSLCE on learning contents of textbook**

II	What do you think of learning contents of English textbook?	No.	M	STDV
6	I would like to learn all language components in the textbook.	94	2.96	0.903
7	I would like to learn selective language components that may appear on ESSLCEE.	94	3.91	0.771
8	I would like to learn skipping contents that may not appear on ESSLCEE.	94	3.83	0.958
9	As I am preparing for ESSLCEE, I am interested in learning from textbook.	94	2.72	0.885
10	As I am preparing for ESSLCEE, I feel as dealing with textbook is wasting of time.	94	3.67	1.061

It is revealed that students’ choice of learning selective language components that may appear on ESSLCEE was recorded with the mean value (3.91) out of the five sub-categories Likert Scale. They also expressed their agreement to learn English skipping contents that may not appear on ESSLCEE and as they feel dealing with textbook is wasting of time with the average mean value of 3.83 and 3.67 respectively. On the other hand, the mean value of the students’ responses on their choice of learning all language components prescribed in the contents of the textbook is 2.96 out of the five levels Likert that is the least mean value scored among the the five items. Similarly, the mean score of the level of students’ agreement to be interested to learn from the textbook when preparing for ESSLCEE is 2.72 which ranges

from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The report shows that students inclined to choose learning of English language components which are likely to come on the national examination.

The FGD made with the students substantiated the report of the questionnaire. As a sample, one of the participants of the discussion stated as below:

PS9: Most of the time teachers teach us based on the textbook, but the textbook does not help us to prepare for entrance exam. .... So, depending on the contents of the textbook is not good.

Here above, the student complains a teacher who teaches valuing the activities prescribed in the contents of the textbook. This is to mean, the students are more interested to be taught selective contents that possibly appear on entrance exam. Further, another student confirmed the above stated views in such a way:

PS1: The contents of the text may help us to learn new vocabularies, speaking and improve our general language skills, but if we use only the textbook, it does not help us for entrance exam.

The participant's view shows as he believes the contents in the textbook help them improving their vocabulary and communicative skills. However, he was not as such motivated to learn all contents of the textbook because he had hesitation to succeed entrance exam by learning from contents of the textbook. To say in few words, as the data from FGD reveals, for the success of the ESSLCEE, students had no trust on what they learn from the textbook.

When the data obtained from students' questionnaire is integrated with FGD report, it can be generalized as such students' awareness about the contents of the textbook they had to learn is under the influence of washback of ESSLCEE. Therefore, the result implies that the washback effect of ESSLCEE on students' perception about learning contents of the textbook is discernible. This particular finding confirms the assumption that Alderson and Wall stated as a test will influence attitudes to the content of learning (Alderson and Wall, 1993: 120).

**Table 3: Students' views of the influence of ESSLCEE on choices of materials**

III	What do you think of learning from additional materials other than the textbook?	No.	M	STDV
11	I choose to learn from materials that have relevance with textbook contents.	94	3.30	0.926
12	I choose to learn from commercially produced materials that have relevance with ESSLCEE.	94	3.79	0.620
13	I choose to learn from newspapers, magazines, audio and video recorded materials prepared in English version.	94	2.95	1.167
14	I choose to learn from materials that reflect the ESSLCEE formats and contents.	94	4.12	0.653
15	I don't want to learn from any supplementary material; students' textbook is sufficient.	94	2.38	0.689

Item number 11 to 15 asked about the preferences of the students learning from supplementary materials. Regarding item 11, the respondents expressed as they reserved themselves from agreeing or disagreeing (M=3.30) to learn from materials that have relevance with textbook contents.

On the other hand, the least mean value (2.38) was reported on the sufficiency of the students' textbook (item 15). In reply to the students' choice of learning from materials that reflect the ESSLCEE formats and contents (item 14), the mean score is 4.12 which is the highest mean value. Similarly, students were asked (item 12) about their choice of learning from commercially produced materials that have relevance with ESSLCEE and the response showed that the mean value is 3.79. Though the student respondents showed their agreement of learning from ESSLCEE oriented

materials, they reported as they more of disagree (M=2.38) to choose learning from newspapers, magazines, audio and video recorded materials prepared in English version. As can be seen from the mean score of all the five items, the respondents showed their agreement of choosing materials that comprises similar questions and formats with ESSLCEE.

The FGD made with the students more outshined the report of the questionnaire. As a sample, the following extracts are sufficiently evidential:

PS4: It is better if our teachers teach us relating the contents of the textbook with books that contains entrance exam related questions. It is not good to rush to complete the contents of the textbook.

As to the response of PS4, she was interested to a teacher who teaches relating the textbook with other books that prepared focusing on entrance exam questions. She stressed that rushing to cover the contents of the textbook is not appropriate. For her, the headache is relating the contents of the textbook with the entrance exam related materials. Similarly, PS11 reported as such:

PS11: I think it is better if we learn relating textbook with entrance exam related materials. Since we do have short time, it is better if we learn the main points.

The response of PS11 also supports what PS4 already stated. He reported that as it is better learning by relating the textbook lessons with the entrance exam related materials. Additionally, one of the participants of the group discussion, PS8, strengthens the above points by saying:

PS8: Teaching by relating the textbook with supplementary materials is very useful for students. Since the primary thing is to pass entrance exam ...teaching comparing with entrance exam is advisable as to me. The teachers should teach us from the book like 'Extreme'; it should not be only from the textbook.

It is identified that the students assumed as entrance exam related materials like 'Extreme English Series' are better or more useful than the textbook. Here, the report from students confirmed the choice of materials made by the respondents are more of favoring the ESSLCEE questions than to attaining the objectives of the syllabus.

The reports from questionnaire and FGD show that students viewed as they were more interested to learn from additional materials that give emphasis to the contents and formats of ESSLCEE questions. The report exposed as the students' views about their choice of learning materials is potentially influenced by the washback of ESSLCEE.

**Table 4: Students' views on teacher-made classroom tests (TMCT)**

IV	What do you think classroom tests or assessments you take?	No.	M	STDV
16	I would like to take classroom tests that focus on contents of textbook.	94	3.33	0.694
17	I would like to take classroom tests that assess my communicative skills of English language.	94	3.10	0.928
18	I would like to take classroom tests that have similarity with ESSLCEE questions.	94	4.13	0.691
19	Preparing for ESSLCEE makes me worry to have classroom tests that are similar in content and format with ESSLCEE questions.	94	3.83	0.650
20	My worry is how to get good mark for transcript; I don't care about ESSLCEE.	94	2.81	0.780

Students were asked to reflect their views if their perception about teacher made classroom tests had association with the washback of SSLCEE. It is reported that (item 3 and 4) the mean score of the students' choice to take classroom

tests that have relevance with ESSLCEE questions, and their very concern to take classroom tests that are similar in content and format with ESSLCEE questions are 4.13 and 3.83 respectively. This showed that the students disclosed their agreement to take classroom tests that focus on questions that have close relation with ESSLCEE in their contents and formats. On the other hand, the respondents were observed when reporting less likely to agree with taking classroom tests that focus on contents of the textbook ( $M=3.33$ ) and communicative skills of the language ( $M=3.10$ ). From the report, it is possible to deduce two main points. In the first, students inclined to show their agreement to take classroom tests that are similar in content and format with ESSLCEE. In the second, in contrary, the students portrayed their less interest to take classroom tests that focused on questions of communicative skills and contents of the textbook. The finding reveals that the students' perception about teacher made classroom tests has connection with of the washback effect of ESSLCEE.

The focus group discussions made with the students share the views of the report from students' questionnaire:

PS2: Tests that we take out of 60 in class are not as such related with the entrance exam questions. What we take in the class is not as complex as the entrance exam. It is difficult to understand questions that appear on entrance exam. It makes us to ask a question: Are these questions set from the textbook? We could not get the questions unless we read additional materials.

In the above report, the participant criticized the classroom tests because the questions of the tests are not as difficult as the entrance exam questions. This statement of the participant indicates that the relevance of classroom tests with entrance exam questions were not as such the expectation of the student. He believed that the classroom tests that are unfamiliar with entrance exam questions have no contribution to prepare the students for entrance exam. As a solution, he commented as the students had to read additional materials that contain similar questions with entrance exam. The view of participant shows that the classroom tests should follow the content and format of entrance exam questions. Additionally, PS1 explained the view he had on classroom tests by saying:

PS1: The current teaching-learning may help us some for classroom assessments, but not for entrance exam. The reason is that classroom tests may contain some lessons we learn in the class, but it has no questions that come on entrance exam. For example, it has no dialogue or very rare questions. The tests we take in class need improvement.

As PS1 reported, the student was less satisfied with the classroom test questions, and his intention was to have classroom tests that are similar with the entrance exam contents and format. For the reason, he commented for the improvement of classroom test to follow the format of entrance exam. Because of the classroom tests had no similarity with entrance exam questions like dialogue, the participant assumed that the classroom assessment had less value for passing entrance exam. This does mean, the student had no trust from his teacher on the classroom tests he could prepare because he believed that the classroom tests lack relevance with ESSLCEE.

Furthermore, PS8 elaborated a view that confirms the above participants as such:

PS8: My opinion is, when teachers prepare mid and final exam, it is better if they prepare them as the items help us for entrance exam. If they take questions from worksheets and different books like 'Extreme Series English', we search from where the questions are taken and read them.

The participant explained that as he prefer classroom tests that are prepared as the questions can help the students to pass entrance exam. In addition, he commented as the questions for classroom tests should be taken from additional materials like worksheets and 'Extreme Series English' so that the students could be forced to read different materials for entrance exam.

The report shows that the student was much interested to take classroom tests that are similar with the entrance exam questions. Therefore, students’ perception about teacher-made classroom tests is influenced by E SSLCEE.

From the analysis of questionnaire FGD, it is noted that Grade 12 EFL students had awareness about the influence of SSLCEE on the kinds of items to be tested in the classroom. Thus, tudents’ perception about the classroom tests was under the influence of the washback of SSLCEE.

To sum up, the findings of the discusstions made regarding students’ perception about the goal of learning English, contents of the textbook, material choices and TMCTs indicate that the influenceof ESSLCEE on learners’ perception is remarked.

**6. Comparative analysis of students’ diffrences in perceptions ofthe influence of ESSLCEE on students because of their academic achievements**

One of the objectives of the research was to make comparative analysis of students’ academic achievement differences and their perceptions about the influence of ESSLCEE on their learning.To describe the students’ differences in perceptions because of their achievements, students’ first semester results were taken from the targeted schools’ recorded offices. The students’ academic score were arranged into five intervals based on the scales provided by Ethiopian Ministry of Education. The intervals are the values assigned for the students’ achievement on the report card as: Poor (<50) = poor, (50-59%), =fair, (60-79%) = satisfactory, (80-89%) = very good, (90-100%) =excellent. Thus, the researchers used the intervals to see the differences in perceptions among students because of their achievements. From the collected data, there were no student respondents that scored below 50 which were categorized as poor, so the category was excluded from the analysis (see Table 1).

**Table 5: Distribution of student participants with their achievementscore range**

Achievement Scale	Achievement Score Range	Frequency	Percent
Fair	50-59	25	26.6
Satisfactory	60-79	43	45.7
Very Good	80-89	19	20.2
Excellent	90-100	7	7.4
	Total	94	100.0

In the headed findings, it is substantiated that students’ perception favored entrance exam. Regarding the fourth research question, it is intended to describe if there is statistically significant difference in perception of the washback of ESSLCEE among students because of their academic achievements.

The mean score of students’ perception about the washback of ESSLCEE based on their academic achievement category made as fair, satisfactory, very good and excellent. The data was computed based on the themes arranged using one-way ANOVA separately. To conduct the test, assumptions of parametric test statistics were computed and met.

**Table 6: ANOVA test result of items on purpose of learning English**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.011	1	.011	.004	.953
Within Groups	277.447	92	3.016		
Total	277.457	93			

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) was conducted to explore if there is significant difference among students in perception of the washback of ESSLCEE on the purposes of learning English because of

their academic achievements. Consequently, there is no statistically significant difference in perceptions of the influence of washback of ESSLCEE among students in their academic achievements,  $F(1, 93) = .004, p > .05$ .

**Table 7: ANOVA test result of items on learning contents of the students' textbook**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.642	1	3.642	.666	.417
Within Groups	503.347	92	5.471		
Total	506.989	93			

The result of the above table depicted that there is no statistically significant differences among the groups of students in their academic achievements related thematic group questions reflecting the washback of ESSLCEE on students' perception of learning the contents of the textbook as the significance value is greater than .05. Statistically put:  $F(1, 93) = .666, p > .05$ .

**Table 8: ANOVA test result of items on students' views of influence of ESSLCEE on TMCT**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	21.312	1	21.312	3.272	.074
Within Groups	599.241	92	6.513		
Total	620.553	93			

The above table portrayed that there is no statistically significant differences among the groups of students in their academic achievements related thematic group questions reflecting the washback of ESSLCEE on students' perception of teacher made classroom tests as the significance value is greater than .05. Statistically put:  $F(1, 93) = 3.272, p > .05$ .

**Table 9: ANOVA test result of items on students' views of the influence of ESSLCEE on choices of materials**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	174.016	3	58.005	9.137	.000
Within Groups	571.356	90	6.348		
Total	745.372	93			

Regarding students' views of the washback of ESSLCEE on choices of materials, one-way between-groups analysis of variance was computed. The result showed that there is statistically significant difference among students in their academic achievements at  $F(3, 93) = 9.137$ , Sig value is = .000 which is less than .05. Thus, post-hoc test was conducted to identify where the difference lies.

**Post Hoc Tests**

**Multiple Comparisons**

**Table 10: Post-hoc test results of students' views of influence of ESSLCEE on choices of materials**

**Dependent Variable: Material Choices**

(I) Achievement	(J) Achievement	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Fair (50-59)	Satisfactory (60-79)	-.263	.634	.982	-2.07	1.54
	Very Good (80-89)	-2.924*	.767	.004	-5.11	-.74
	Excellent (90-100)	-3.811*	1.077	.008	-6.88	-.74
Satisfactory (60-79)	Fair (50-59)	.263	.634	.982	-1.54	2.07
	Very Good (80-89)	-2.661*	.694	.003	-4.64	-.68
	Excellent (90-100)	-3.548*	1.027	.010	-6.47	-.62
Very Good (80-89)	Fair (50-59)	2.924*	.767	.004	.74	5.11
	Satisfactory (60-79)	2.661*	.694	.003	.68	4.64
	Excellent (90-100)	-.887	1.114	.888	-4.06	2.29
Excellent (90-100)	Fair (50-59)	3.811*	1.077	.008	.74	6.88
	Satisfactory (60-79)	3.548*	1.027	.010	.62	6.47
	Very Good (80-89)	.887	1.114	.888	-2.29	4.06

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As a result, to identify where mean differences observed among the five groups compared, column with 'Mean Difference' having asterisks (\*) was used as per the convention of ANOVA. Accordingly, fair achiever students with very good and excellent achievers; satisfactory achiever students with very good and excellent achievers, very good achievers with fair and satisfactory achievers, and excellent achievers with fair and satisfactory achiever students are significantly different in their perception of the influence of ESSLCEE on the choices of materials. To generalize, there were mean differences among students in their perception to the influence of ESSLCEE on their learning. However, the differences were not significant regarding the purpose of learning English, learning contents of the textbook and teacher-made classroom tests.

**7. Conclusions**

The objective of the study was to explore students' perceptions of the influence of ESSLCEE (the high-stakes one) on their learning the subject. To address the objectives of the study, research questions were formulated. These were students' perception of the influence of ESSLCEE on purpose of learning English, contents of students' textbook, choices of materials, teacher-made classroom tests and the students' difference in perception of the influence of ESSLCEE on learning because of their academic achievements.

The study utilized comparative analysis with descriptive survey design and mixed method approach as the study contained both quantitative and qualitative data. Questionnaire and FGD were used to collect data. All the data were collected from East Wollega zone of Oromia Regional State, Arjo and Leka Nekemte secondary schools. The reliability of the items of students' questionnaire were statistically computed and checked using Chronbach's alpha coefficient. For validity case, the items were given to language experts and researchers in TEFL for their comments. The results of study were briefly discussed according to the research questions intermingle. At the end, all the data obtained from instruments were triangulated. The findings showed that students' perceptions were found to be under the influence of ESSLCEE. The results of comparative analysis using one-way between-group ANOVA showed mean differences

among the four groups of students in their academic achievements on the purpose of learning English, contents of students' textbook, choices of materials and teacher-made classroom tests. However, the difference is significant between fair-satisfactory achiever students and very good-excellent achievers in their perception of the influence of ESSLCEE on the choices of materials.

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**Corresponding Email : [gechvich@gmail.com](mailto:gechvich@gmail.com)  
[kitalatame@gmail.com](mailto:kitalatame@gmail.com)  
[rufitii5@gmail.com](mailto:rufitii5@gmail.com)**