

Goldsmiths, University of London  
Department of Educational Studies  
MPhil/ PhD Programme

**'And the teacher started dictating some notes that the students copied diligently...'**

**A washback study of the English literature HSC exams in Mauritius.**

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this is my own work and has not been written for me.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Abstract**

The HSC exams are one of the most competitive exams in multicultural Mauritius which also serves as a pre-university entry exam. As a former teacher trainer, I noticed an inexplicable gap between the theories of teaching and learning that we taught in classrooms and what the teachers ended up using with their students. My instinct was that the competitive Mauritian society, the high stakes nature of the HSC exams along with some unexplored Mauritian classroom reality could be causing this gap. Hence, through this thesis, I wanted to explore this Mauritian reality, by investigating the washback effects of the high stakes Higher School Certificate (HSC) exams on the teaching and learning of English literature on a group of Mauritian teachers and learners.

This study can be considered as innovative because it addresses the limitations of several previous washback studies and aligns itself with the future of washback research as recommended by scholars like Cheng, Sun and Ma (2015). Firstly, I adopted an ethnographic approach to explore the washback phenomenon that included classroom observations, interviews and questionnaires, which helped me to gain richer data compared to other one-method based washback studies; Secondly, I adopted a more expansive definition of washback that sees the phenomenon as beyond a linear relationship between testing and teaching and learning, hereby accepting the complexity of washback; thirdly, I drew from other related theoretical fields such as theories of teaching literature and motivation to better make sense of the teaching and learning practices; fourthly, there were three educational stakeholders that were included as informants in this study, namely teachers, headteachers and learners.

My contribution to the washback research field is that the findings of the study reaffirm washback's status as a multifaceted, multifactorial in nature and that varies from teacher to teacher, from learner to learner and from setting to setting. By focusing on investigating English literature rather than English language, the study also demonstrated how the teachers can use exam preparation activities even with a subject that does not have past exam papers. While the teachers' dominant usage of teaching strategies modelled around the transmission model of teaching literature seems to produce the grades and the laureates, the teaching and learning of English literature remains primarily a 'passive' and non-engaging experience for most of the teachers and the learners; and after two years of learning English literature, it remains difficult to assess whether the students do develop the analytical skills to analyse texts or they rather master in reproducing their notes in the exams.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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In this chapter, I will narrate my academic pathway till I get the priceless Commonwealth Scholarship for Developing countries that financed my living and studies in the UK to conduct this study. Intertwined with this story, I also narrate key instances in my life which inspired me and drove me towards researching the washback phenomenon in the local Mauritian context in a more focused way through the main research question: ***What are the washback effects of the high stakes HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature on a group of teachers and learners in the Mauritian context?***

### 1.1 THE ACADEMIC PATHWAY TOWARDS COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP

After graduating from my undergraduate BA English Hons Degree in 2011, I cultivated a passion for research, and I also looked for opportunities to pursue a postgraduate degree abroad. My dream job has always been to become a lecturer in higher education, and I understood that to become a lecturer in my home country, I needed to do a postgraduate degree abroad, preferably in the UK. On top of that, I also needed to present at academic conferences, and I needed publications in international journals. I started collaborating and working with my former lecturer/friend Dr Owodally. In 2012, I attended two conferences, the 2012 BAAL conference "Multilingual Theory and Practice in Applied Linguistics" at the University of Southampton, and I also presented a paper on "Bilingualism in Peripheral Educational settings: A case study of Mauritian Madrassahs" at the 2012 LGBW Conference at Leeds Metropolitan University. Further, I collaborated on two works with Dr. Owodally. One was to extend my undergraduate research on Literacy practices in a Mauritian madrassah titled Namaz literacy which I presented at BAAL 2019 conference at Manchester Metropolitan University, and the other one, where I worked as a research assistant, I interviewed participants and transcribed interviews for an article which we co-authored namely, Kreol at school: a case study of Mauritian Muslims' language and literacy ideologies (Owodally and Unjore, 2013). All these will help me to gain a competitive edge over other candidates when the lecturer job finally becomes available. After completing my Masters in Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching, I started working at the MIE as a lecturer in the Kreol studies department. At that time, many colleagues at the institution were embarking on PhD programmes offered by the University of Mauritius, Brighton University and other African universities like Kwazunatal University that give postgraduate programmes in tandem with MIE.

I also understood that having a doctorate in academia meant that I would be able to secure a better job, secure funding for research and even get an edge for internal promotions. I always had the desire to do a PhD abroad, and I started seeking pathways to enrol for a PhD abroad, preferably in the UK. I identified the Commonwealth Scholarships UK as a potential thread to start a PhD abroad. However, after documenting myself about the competitiveness of the scholarship, I felt that I was not a strong candidate enough to apply for it, and I will strengthen my profile for one year more before applying for the scholarship. Thus, I strengthened my profile by engaging in social work as a literary officer in a village sociocultural society, whereby I conducted weekly literary activities for children and adults. Additionally, I even organised one debate competition, an elocution contest, and quiz competition at the end of the year. Further, I managed to add one additional academic article to my publication list, namely "Only a group that breathes good dynamics can produce good results"-A case study of a Postgraduate student's group experiences (Unjore, 2014). Moreover, I had to secure a seat in a university before applying for the scholarship, and I approached various universities before finally securing a seat at the Goldsmiths University of London. Afterwards, I applied for the Commonwealth Scholarships for Developing countries. It was a long, tedious and very competitive process that was one and half years long, and it consisted of applying at two levels. First, I had to apply to the Ministry of Education of Mauritius and get selected on a national level before I could apply to the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission (CSC). After being selected at the first level, I applied at the second level, where I had to compete with candidates of other Commonwealth countries, and I had no guarantee that I would get the scholarship. Finally, in August 2016, I received a formal answer that I was awarded the Commonwealth Scholarship, and I could start my MPhil/PhD at Goldsmiths University of London in September 2016.

## **1.2 THE CONCEPTION OF THIS STUDY**

2010, the scene of my father explaining to my young nephew what he has been telling me for years is still etched in my mind: 'Aprann sinon to pas pou gagne enn bon travay apre!' [Study otherwise you will not get a good job afterwards!]. Moreover, I interjected, telling him: 'Aprann, ena tousa gradue chomeur la, dans plantation ena plis kass ek travay aster'. [Studying will not necessarily lead to a job, there are so many unemployed graduates; in plantation work, there is more money and work now]. Of course, he never acknowledges my arguments. For him, a partly educated man that did not finish his primary schooling and who worked both as a sugarcane planter and a watchman; working in the fields means the hardship and sufferings of our ancestors' past. He desires that all his children and grandchildren would study hard and work in an office and not in the field or any blue-collar jobs. As a

child, going to the football ground meant a hazard and a worry for my parents if I get injured...money was readily invested in tuition, books, computer not on a bicycle, PlayStation, games or toys which were considered as distractions for academic success.

2006, I am a student at a state secondary school, preparing for the high-stakes national Higher School Certificate (HSC) exams. I have signed to compete for the National Scholarships (laureates). I have a strict schedule-school, home, revision, no tv shows and a planned revision timetable. I remember sitting beside a boy from Royal College of Curepipe (National/Star College) in one of my tuitions; he explained to me that the formula to become laureate is to take two tuitions in all the three main subjects from teachers reputed in producing laureates. Being laureate remains a difficult ambition for me, but I am taking one tuition for all the five subjects. Moreover, at one point, I even took two tuitions for English literature as I was studying it as a private candidate and had no formal classes at school. In one of the English literature tuitions, I would go to write critic notes from books that the teacher would give us. In the second tuition, the teacher explained the text, dictated notes and handed us photocopies of notes. Everyone knew that I was going for HSC exams, and I was often asked the taunting and pressure question: 'ki resulta to pou amene?' [what results will you bring?] or 'al revise lexamin p vini' [Go to revise, the exams are coming.] Yet, despite not having any formal classes for English literature and preparing 8 texts in one year, I was able to get an A in English literature and I was even ranked after the laureates.

2006, I am a student in Lower six and I opted for Accounting, Economics and French as my principle subjects and Hinduism as advanced subsidiary alongside General Paper. For the entire year, I was failing continuously in accounting, despite having got very good grades at SC level. Then it dawns onto me that I might have chosen the wrong subjects. After much negotiation, I was able to convince the rector of my state secondary school to allow me to do English literature as a private student. The rector was not willing to let me do English main because he expressed serious doubt whether I would be able to complete eight literature texts in one year when students complete this over two years. Another issue remained, my secondary school did not offer English literature as a subject. However, alongside, my economics teacher, Mrs Juleemamode, we were able to convince the rector. For the next 9 months, I started preparing for the English literature exams. I started taking tuition, buying critic books and searching notes on the internet. I still remember I had a quotation notebook for all my texts, and I used to learn the quotes by heart and even the ideas of some key essays. It indeed was the recipe for success because I came close to becoming a laureate. I was unable to get an A in Hinduism, and this went against my final results. However, I discovered a new passion and I eagerly

chose BA English at University of Mauritius, recognising that my strength lies in English rather than in Accounting.

2008, I am the English language/English literature teacher, and I am giving private tuition at home. In my English literature tuition class, I am teaching the *Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri at the HSC level; I assign my five students to read one chapter on a weekly basis. I will start the class by asking them whether they have read the assigned part; some will nod yes, others will remain quiet. I will start by reading the chapter and explain to them what is happening in the text, connecting the information with the different overarching themes, character development, plot structures and probable exam questions. When I come across salient sentences or paragraphs, I will make them underline these parts in their textbooks and further elaborate on them. They are expected to use these underlined parts as quotes/evidence to support their answers in the exams. Afterwards, I will start dictating them notes which will be a summary and analysis of that chapter. Of course, I have already read the text, done my research on the internet, bought a critic book and underlined the salient parts in my own textbook. Often, I will also give them photocopies of model answers and background information on the authors of a text. In one month, time, my students are going for the high stakes HSC exams. I decided to give them extra tuition sessions and to dedicate all the remaining sessions to working past exam questions. I will remind the students to focus on some probable essay themes and parts from the texts that can potentially come out as context-based questions. As a private tuition teacher who takes a monthly fee from them and who knows the students' parents, I do feel the pressure to make the students succeed in the exams. I have even told the students that if they are not willing to work hard, it is preferable they stop coming to tuition as I must answer to their parents afterwards, and this would put me in a problematic position.

2012, I am doing my master's in Applied Linguistics and English language teaching at the University of Nottingham. Using the washback theory (which is also the main theoretical lens in my current study), I explored the difference between the intended washback effects and the resulting washback effects of a newly introduced National Form 3 English exams in Mauritius. The main finding revealed that there were negative washback effects in high achieving schools as the exam level was deemed too easy by the teachers working in these schools. Subsequently, this discouraged the high achievers from improving their level of proficiency, but there were positive washback effects in the low achieving schools as succeeding in a national exam brought a sense of pride and achievement for both the teachers and students working over there.



2013, I am a lecturer at the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE). The role of the institution is to train primary and secondary teachers through courses such as Teacher Diploma Primary (TDP) and Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). One criticism that often comes up in classes, workshops and seminars is that the courses are too theoretical in nature, and many of the things that are taught by the lecturers are cut off from reality- there is a gap between theory and practice. For instance, in the Teaching English literature module, despite being aware of the real teaching practices within the Mauritian English literature classroom; as a lecturer part of an institution, I had to encourage my trainees towards the learner-centred method, discourage them towards using a transmission method and I have also tried to make them aware of their agency and responsibility as teachers.

### **1.3 THE STUDY**

The pervasiveness of high-stakes testing worldwide (Ungerleider, 2004; Cheng, 2008; Klinger et al., 2008) has given rise to growing attention and concerns over its impact on stakeholders, the educational system, and society at large. The growing attention and concerns have led to a fast-growing body of research in education that focuses on investigating the intended and unintended relationships between testing, teaching, and learning. Hughes defines washback as 'the effect of testing on teaching and learning' (1989, p.1), which could be either harmful or beneficial. However, more recent models of washback like that proposed by (Watanabe, 2004a) showcases washback as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon embedded in a broader social context, where the effects of exams on teaching and learning within the classroom is mediated by other washback-mediated factors and other educational stakeholders such as parents, headmasters, policymakers and others. Hence within this study, the washback effects will be investigated from an ethnographic perspective to uncover this complex and multifaceted nature as far as possible, where both the high stakes HSC exams as well as other washback mediated factors influence the type of teaching and learning of English literature (A level) happening within the Mauritian classroom. This will be discussed and elaborated further in the theoretical framework chapter.

From the 1990s till 2014, the different governments in power have tried to reform the education system. One main recurring issue has been the relatively high failure rate at the end of the primary cycle, which averages around 25% on a yearly basis which inevitably lessens the number of children that manages to finish secondary schooling. A cohort analysis of 13 years of education revealed that only 27% of the 1000 students that started Grade 1 (first class of primary school) in 1994 finished HSC (last exams of secondary school) in 2006 (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2009). Diverse reasons have been foregrounded, such as the lack of equity in the education system, the dominance

of a competitive culture that is represented by the pervasion of private tuition and the high pressure that students experience (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2009). The country with the most recent reform Nine-Year Continuous Basic Schooling, is aspiring towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goal 4: 'Achieving inclusive and equitable quality education for all.' ('High-level Political Forum.: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform', n.d.) Through my proposed study, I intend to explore the washback effects of this competitive culture on the teaching and learning of English literature on a group of mix-ability students from a low-achieving and a high-achieving secondary school as participants, thereby trying to gather first-hand evidence in the functioning of this perceived lack of inclusion and equity in the Mauritian education system.

Hereby exploring the real-life effects of this competitive culture and the exam pressure on the teaching and learning of English literature at the HSC level in one high-achieving secondary school, one low-achieving secondary school and a private tuition setting. Using washback as my theoretical lens, my current main research question is: ***What are the washback effects of the high stakes HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature on a group of teachers and learners in the Mauritian context?***

- 1. What teaching strategies are being used by the teachers to teach English literature across the three different settings? And to what extent can these teaching strategies be seen as exam-oriented in nature?**
- 2. What teacher-related factors influenced the teaching practices observed in the three settings?**
- 3. How learner-related factors influenced the washback effects observed in the teaching and learning of English literature?**

I also conducted some additional probing through questionnaires on the text selection process. Moreover, I also probed other learning practices of the learners out of the school/tuition context. Lastly, the interviews of the teachers revealed micro context and macro context factors that influenced the teaching and learning of English literature, and since these affected both teachers and learners, this was included in the learners' chapter.

## 1.4 THESIS OUTLINE

The thesis consists of 8 chapters.

**Chapter 1** presents the background and personal story that inspired me to investigate the influence of exams in the Mauritian Education system.

**Chapter 2** presents and discusses the evolution of the Mauritian Education system from a historical, political, and social perspective.

**Chapter 3** presents and discusses the theoretical framework used in this study and reviews the substantive research literature that informs this study.

**Chapter 4** discusses the choice of methodology, outlines the data collection methods and presents the research setting for this study.

**Chapter 5** discusses the classroom observation findings across the three settings.

**Chapter 6** discusses the teacher-related factors potentially influencing the teaching and learning of English literature.

**Chapter 7** presents the learner perspective and the micro and macro factors affecting the teaching and learning of English literature.

**Chapter 8** discusses the study's findings, proposes a conclusion and recommends future research directions.

## 2 CONTEXT OF STUDY

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is crucial to describe the macro context and the micro context where the test is used as well as the test itself to understand the washback effects of the HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature (A level) in Mauritius. The macro context consists of the broader environment around the research setting, and the micro context consists of the immediate environment where the test is used, which includes the classroom setting and the school system (Watanabe, 2004a). According to Watanabe (2004a), thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973a) of these two contexts also help to establish possible generalisability and applicability of a study to other contexts.

This chapter starts by sketching the macro context by providing an overview of the sociolinguistic profile of the country that describes the social, cultural, and linguistic features of Mauritian society. Secondly, it traces back the history of education during colonial times and the emergence of the Mauritian dream of education fuelled by a competitive culture. Thirdly, it describes some recent key policy decisions and reforms in the Mauritian education system. Additionally, the chapter provides an overview of the current system of education. Further, to better contextualize this study for the reader, it explains the structure, the importance, and the prestige of the HSC exams in the local context. Finally, it describes the teaching and learning of English literature at the secondary level in Mauritius.

## **2.2 HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY**

### **2.2.1 The discovery of Mauritius and the Dutch (1568-1706)**

Already known by the Arab in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century as Dina Morare, Mauritius was visited by the Portuguese from 1500 to 1513 and perhaps the most notable visit is that of Portuguese Sailor Dom Pedro de Mascarenhas, who named Mauritius, Rodrigues and Reunion as the Mascarene Islands (Selvon, 2012). On May 1, 1598, a Dutch fleet under the command of Admiral Wybrand Van Warwyck landed at Grand Port and named the Island 'Mauritius' to honour the Prince Maurice Van Nassau of Holland. For the next 40 years, Mauritius would be used only as a port of call by VOC (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie) ships, but the Dutch will never build any permanent settlement on the Island. In May 1638, the first Dutch settlement on the Island will begin under the command of Governor Cornelis Gooyer. Between 1638 to 1658, under the command of four different governors and with the help of burgers (married slaves) and slaves, the Dutch tried to introduce crop farming, sugar plantation and will engage in the cutting and exportation of the precious Ebony tree (Selvon, 2012). However, their attempts will fail each time because of rats and internal strife between slaves and colonisers within the colony. The Island will be abandoned in 1658, and in 1665, there is a second attempt by the VOC to colonise the Island. This time, the colony was devastated by a big cyclone in 1695, and due to the lack of financial means, the VOC will finally abandon the Island in 1706. The Dutch are remembered for the introduction of Sugar cane- the crop that will become the backbone of the Mauritian economy, deer but also for leading the famous Dodo to its extinction and for the depletion of the ebony trees.

### **2.2.2 The French Occupation (1715-1810)**

In 1715, Guillaume Dufresne d'Arzel placed a French flag near Port-Louis, wrote a document in the presence of his officers and took possession of Mauritius for France (Encyclopedia Mauritiana 2005).

Between 1715 and 1810, the Island will develop significantly under several French governors and perhaps the achievements of four of them namely, Mahe De Labourdonnais, Pierre Poivre and General Deacaen remain the most memorable. Mahe De Labourdonnais will transform Port Louis from a primitive harbor to a flourishing seaport and started building various social amenities such as forts, barracks, warehouses, houses and hospitals. He imported more slaves, encouraged the plantation of crops such as sugarcane, cotton, indigo, coffee and manioc for self-consumption and even inaugurated the first sugar factory at Villebague in 1744. In 1756, when war broke between the French and English in India, Labourdonnais will lead an expedition from Ile de France to India-Madras where he will be able to defeat the British and capture madras. However, his unwillingness to destroy Madras and wanting to hold it to get a ransom from the British will be perceived as a traitor and accused to have taken bribery from the English by his superiors. Subsequently, he will be replaced as the governor of Ile de France and thrown in the Bastille; though deemed innocent and released in 1751, he will die after two years. Pierre Poivre as a governor, was much interested in botanic gardens and he introduced several plants from South America, encouraging agriculture and continuing the development of the harbor. His most notable achievement remains the setup of the Gardens at Pamplemousses, today known as the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden. In 1790, a ship came in Port Louis, bringing news of the revolution in France and the abolishment of slavery– the news was not well received by the colonists. The last French Governor, General Charles Deacaen was appointed by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1803. The latter will favour the continuation of slavery and privateering, which were both seen as profitable for the colonists. It is under the governorship of Deacaen that the first primary schools and the Lycee colonial is constructed.

### **2.2.2.1 *Slavery and code noir***

Slavery was set up in Ile de France on a legal basis from December 1723. The French brought slaves from Africa, India, Madagascar and elsewhere to work on the land (Selvon, 2012). The slaves were treated as 'moveable objects'; they were stripped of their identity, culture, friends and family, and they would be forced to convert to Catholicism which was the official religion of the state. Slaves were governed in accordance with the Code Noir, which described them as the property of their masters, and they were deprived of almost all civil rights (Selvon, 2012). They could not be appointed to public posts or do business. They could not be witnesses in courts of justice either for civil or criminal matters (Selvon, 2012). In cases of act of rebellion, they extremely cruel forms of corporal and moral punishment were used on them. Parts of their body were cut (ears, hands, etc.), and the death penalty was applied upon conviction of a third offence. All slaves had to be converted to the Catholic religion, and any marriage contracted by a non-Catholic was considered invalid (Selvon, 2012). The reason for such forced conversion of slaves from Africa, India and various other parts of the world was that

Catholicism was officially the religion of the State where they had been brought in captivity (Selvon 2012). The result of slavery was, quite naturally, a rebellious attitude on the part of the victims of that inhuman system. And even after the abolition of slavery- they were unwilling to continue working for their masters but were forced under the apprenticeship system (Selvon, 2012).

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### **2.2.3 The British Reign (1715-1968)**

In 1810, the British capture Ile De France and four years later, in 1814, the Island is officially ceded by France to England at the Treaty of Paris and the name of the Island was changed to Mauritius. The British reign in Mauritius was marked by three main events: the abolishment of slavery, the introduction of the indentured labourers and the expansion of the sugar industry.

The transition from a French colony to a British colony was far from simple as when the French capitulated, they sign an agreement with the British that will help them to maintain a stronghold on the Island. One of the conditions was: ' Que les habitants concersveront leurs Religion, Loix et Coutumes.' That is the French would be allowed to keep their religion, laws and culture under the British reign. Thus, even if the British had taken over the Island, the society was still dominated by the Franco Mauritian elite (Bowman, 1991, p.27). This could be explained mainly because there were not many British settlers on the Island and the French were more successful in assimilating the free-coloured and the slaves in the French culture and the British rule was more about divide and rule (Chinapah, 1983). The strength of the French culture can still be seen today in Mauritius especially the French language- most of the written newspapers are in French and the main 7.30 PM news is in French and the French language is used in formal settings and considered prestigious in the Mauritian society.

According to Tinker (1974), French capitulation remains an important event in the history of the country. Though, the starting motive of the British in invading Ile de France was to gain a better control in Indian Ocean and deprive the French of any control. However, a political partnership will be developed between the British officials and the French settlers who were both interested in maintaining this relationship as they shared common interest in Sugar which was the main source of the Island's revenue.

#### **2.2.3.1 The abolishment of slavery and the introduction of the Indentured labourers**

The British Parliament abolished slavery in British colonies in 1807, but it is only in 1835 that slavery will be abolished in Mauritius due to the French resistance (Day-Hookoomsing, 2011). In order to make the abolishment process more acceptable, the British government paid the slave owners 2, 1000, 000 pounds to free some 66000 slaves. However, in order to force the slaves to stay on the Island, they were obligated to a six-year apprenticeship with their former masters. This system will fail

miserably, and the system would be abandoned two years afterwards as many former slaves would prefer to settle in coastal villages to 'resist wage labor...and any forms of organized work' (Bowman 1991, 18). In 1825, the British government decided that Mauritius would export sugar at the same rate of duty as that of the West Indies (Addison and al 1993). Sugar was being established as the country's main export, and with sugarcane planters ready to supply the demand and the setup of sugar mills, the unwillingness or lack of slaves to work in the sugarcane fields, a new cheap source of labour was needed (Bowman, 1991; Day-Hookoomsingh, 2011). Indian labourers or coolies who came "economically downtrodden areas of India ... lured by promises that were never kept" (Bowman, 1991, p.21 ) were brought to work on the Island. The coming of the Indian Indentured labourers will add to the ethnic, religious and cultural composition of the country.

*Table 1: Census Data 1846-1952*

Census Date	General Population	Indo-Mauritians	Chinese	Total
1846	102,217	56,245		158,462
1881	107, 323	248,993	3,558	356,316
1901	108, 422	259,086	3,515	371,023
1921	104, 216	265,524	6,745	376,485
1944	143, 056	265,524	10,882	419,185
1952	148, 236	335,327	17,850	501,415

During that time, the Mauritian population was organized on an official basis in three groups namely, the general population, the Indo-Mauritians, and the Chinese. However, at grass-root level, these categories are further divided in accordance with different linguistic and religious markers. The general population comprises of Creoles which are from African/mixed African and European ancestry and ironically it also includes the Europeans of French descent who colonised and traded the Creole slaves. This group speak Creole, French and also English. On the other hand, the Indo-Mauritian group which comprises of the Hindus and Muslims speak a variety of ancestral languages namely Hindi, Bhojpuri, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Gujrati, Urdu and Arabic as well as Creole. The Chinese group which arrived in the early 1889s included Christians as well as non-Christians whose ancestral language was Haka.

### **2.2.3.2 *Indentured labourers***

Some scholars (Tinker, 1974) have compared the conditions experienced by former slaves with those experienced by Indian labourers. Tinker (1974) identified the Indentured labour system as a new form of slavery who stated that 'lip service was paid to the interests of the Indian coolie while plantation industry was enabled to draw upon a pool of cheap labour with a minimum of restrictions and a maximum of leverage against its workers' (115) The coolies earned around 'ten shillings' per month compared to a labourer in England who was earning around 'three to four shillings a day' (Addison and Hazareesingh, 1993, p.56). Additionally, according to Tinker (1974), the labourer was expected to work six days a week and even do additional unpaid work on Sundays and in case of sickness or absence, he would lose the salary of two days. The coolies were not allowed to move freely around the Island as they were provided with special passes, and they could be subject to arrest and punishment if caught without passes. Overall, the indentured labourers were overworked, ill-treated and they had to do relentless and heavy work. 'Young Indians' perceived getting a government job as a way of the fields (Benedict, 1958), and this is still perception is still prevalent in modern Mauritian society, where youngsters aspire towards the security of a government job rather than work in the fields.

In the 1860s, due to an increase in sugar production globally and the isolation of the Island after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, there was a decline in the sugar industry (Bowman, 1991). This led to a stop in the recruitment of more indentured labourers, and this situation shows the day for a new scheme of parcelling out of land known as the 'grand morcellement'. Under this scheme, the Franco-Mauritians sold small portions of the less profitable land to the Indo- Mauritians. By 1921, Allen (1988) estimated that over 35 per cent of land under cultivation (which was mostly sugar cane) was owned by the Indians. However, this will not help much towards the economy, but on the contrary, it provided the Indian population with opportunities to gain 'a toehold' in the Mauritian economy, and it also provided them with the necessary platform to exercise their demands of political access (Bowman, 1991, p.25). Land ownership would subsequently determine the ability of the Indian labourers to afford education for their children and the children's progress on the social ladder. The arrival of the Indentured labourers would push the African slaves towards the coastal regions where they would live as fishermen, drivers or artisans, and these jobs would naturally lessen their chances of progress within the Mauritian society.

From the 1880s to the 1930s, the politics in the Island was dominated by Franco-Mauritians and a small group of Creole allies. Benedict (1958) describes the occupational division in the country as 'the British held the top positions in government, the Franco-Mauritians owned and managed the sugar



estates, the top stratum of Creoles held white-collar jobs in the government, commerce and on estates, the middle stratum with artisans' jobs on and off estates, and the lowest stratum with fishing; the Chinese with general retail trade; the Gujarati Indians (mostly Muslims) with the importation of grain and cloth; and the vast body of Indians, both Hindu and Muslim, with labour on sugar estates and small holdings....(p. 316-319)'

It is during the 1930s, 1940s that there will be a political discord between the powerful minority of Franco-Mauritians and the dominated majority, which consisted of descendants of slaves, free coloured and indentured Indian labourers (Addison and Hazareesingh, 1993). This period was characterized by instability and class struggle due to the rise in the cost of living, insignificant rise of wages and soaring unemployment (Seegobin and Collen, 1977). And it is during such times that there was the creation of trade unions and the advent of the Labour Party. Tinker (1974) states that at first, the party would be organized on a non-ethnic basis which included Creole artisans as well as the Indian intellectuals – they were able to gather mass support through a combination of trade unions and the political party. Two labour strikes in the country- one in 1937 and the second one in 1943 would pave the way for the electoral reform of 1947, which will grant voting rights to anyone that was able to read and write in any of the languages used in Mauritius. As noted by Day-Hookoomsingh (2011), anyone who could read simple English, French, Gujarat, Hindustani, Tamil, Telegu, Urdu, Chinese or Creole could vote.

These changes helped to overhaul the political landscape of Mauritius in the 1948 elections, as for the first time in the history of the country, the Mauritian people had a representative in the government. In the 1948 elections, the Hindu representatives secured 11 seats, the Creoles seven seats and the Franco Mauritian just one seat (Bunwaree, 1994; Ramdoyal, 1977). Bowman (1991) notes that the shift in power from the Franco-Mauritians and Creole allies to the Indo Mauritian community happened in an atmosphere of communal rivalry but little violence. However, during that period, the other Mauritian minorities were afraid of being at a disadvantage position in a Hindu-dominated government. And this led to many Franco-Mauritians and middle-class Creoles emigrating to Australia, Britain and France as they feared that an Indian-led government would not cater for their rights.

The Labour party, under the leadership of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, will win this election and the subsequent ones in 1953, 1959, 1963 and 1967. In the 1967 elections, the pro-independence party of SSR- the Mauritian Labour party will make a coalition with the Muslim Committee of Action, and the Independent Forward Block faced the Parti Mauricien Social Democrat (PMSD), who were against independence. Upon the victory of the pro-Independence alliance, Mauritius became independent on

12<sup>th</sup> March 1968 with Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam as the Prime Minister. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam was described as a person who had massive popularity and displayed 'enormous capacity for negotiation and reconciliation with all other groups in the population' (Bowman 1991, p.41). Two months before Independence Day, violence would erupt on the Island, but the British made sure that they re-establish civil order before leaving the Island.

## **2.3 HISTORY OF EDUCATION**

### **2.3.1 Education as the pathway to success**

Though Mauritius is a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual country, where people live in peace and harmony, the society remains a very competitive one as every community desire to succeed, and traces of such tensions can be found within its history. This competitive mindset can be traced back to the colonial days when the French brought slaves to build the Island, and later, the British brought Indentured labourers to work in the sugarcane fields.

To grasp a better understanding of this competitiveness, first, it is vital to understand slavery and indentured labours as they were established on the Island. The French brought slaves from Africa, India, Madagascar and elsewhere to work on the land (Selvon, 2001). The slaves were treated as 'moveable objects,' they were stripped of their identity, culture, friends, and family, and they would be forced to convert to Catholicism which was the official religion of the state. Slaves were governed by the Code Noir, which described them as the property of their masters, and they were deprived of almost all civil rights (Selvon, 2001). In cases of the act of rebellion, ruthless forms of corporal and moral punishment were used on them. Parts of their body were cut, and the death penalty was applied upon conviction of a third offence. All slaves had to be converted to the Catholic religion, and any marriage contracted by a non-Catholic was considered invalid (Selvon, 2001). Slavery remained a dark phase of Mauritian history, and the contribution of slaves in building the country is remembered annually on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, which is declared as a public holiday in Mauritius. The British Parliament abolished slavery in British colonies in 1807, but it is only in 1835 that slavery will be abolished in Mauritius due to the French resistance (Day-Hookoomsing, 2011). The British government paid the slave owners 2, 1000, 000 pounds to free some 66000 slaves to make the abolishment process more acceptable. However, to force the slaves to stay on the Island, they were obligated to a six-year apprenticeship with their former masters. This system will fail miserably, and the system would be abandoned two years afterwards as many former slaves would prefer to settle in coastal villages to 'resist wage labour...and any forms of organized work' (Bowman, 1991, p.18). It is

at this point, the British needing a new source of cheap labour to work in the sugarcane fields, decided to introduce Indentured labourers as the slaves were unwilling to work. The result of slavery was, quite naturally, a rebellious attitude on the part of the victims of that inhuman system. And even after the abolition of slavery- they were unwilling to continue working for their masters but were forced under the apprenticeship system (Selvon, 2001). The arrival of the Indentured labourers would further push the African slaves towards the coastal regions where they would live as fishermen, drivers or artisans, and these jobs would naturally lessen their chances of progress within the Mauritian society (Juggernaut, 1987).

It should be noted that the treatment of the indentured labourers was as harsh as that of the slaves. (Tinker, 1971) identified the Indentured labour system as a new form of slavery who stated that

lip service was paid to the interests of the Indian coolie while plantation industry was enabled to draw upon a pool of cheap labour with a minimum of restrictions and a maximum of leverage against its workers (115).

On the other hand, a new scheme of parcelling out of land known as the 'grand morcellement' would see the day due to the decreasing business of sugar exportation. Under this scheme, the Franco-Mauritians sold small portions of the less profitable land to the Indo- Mauritians. By 1921, it was estimated that the Indians owned over 35 per cent of land under cultivation (which was mainly sugar cane). However, this will not help much towards the economy, but on the contrary, it provided the Indian population with opportunities to gain 'a toehold' in the Mauritian economy, and it also provided them with the necessary platform to exercise their demands of political access (Bowman, 1991, p.25). Land ownership would subsequently determine the ability of the Indian labourers to afford education for their children and their children's progress on the social ladder. Young Indians' perceived getting a government job as a way of the fields (Benedict 1958, cited in (Juggernaut, 1987), and this perception is still prevalent in modern Mauritian society where youngsters aspire towards the security of a government job rather than working in the fields or doing blue-collar jobs.

The competition and struggle amongst the different communities within this Mauritian society can be seen in another critical event- the 1948 elections. In the 1948 elections, the Hindu representatives secured 11 seats, the Creoles seven seats and the Franco Mauritian just one seat (Bunwaree, 1994; Ramdoyal, 1977). Bowman (1991) notes that the shift in power from the Franco-Mauritians and Creole allies to the Indo Mauritian community happened in an atmosphere of communal rivalry but little violence. However, during that period, the other Mauritian minorities were afraid of being at a disadvantage position in a Hindu-dominated government. Moreover, this led to many Franco-Mauritians and middle-class Creoles emigrating to Australia, Britain and France as they feared that an

Indian-led government would not cater to their rights. This situation again highlights the early struggles between the different communities to succeed and become part of the Mauritian society.

This historical account showcases the social competition that started between two of the largest Mauritian communities- the Creole community and the Indian community. The former slaves took time to come to terms with their past and present to participate in the nation-building process of the country. On the other hand, the Indian community will rapidly understand the value of education and its role as a pathway to escape the hardships of Indian indentured labourers- values that they will inculcate in their children. Even till today, the famous saying of 'if you do not study, you will go to work in the sugarcane fields' persists in the Mauritian context.

### **2.3.2 The emergence of the Mauritian dream of education**

To understand the value and the importance that Mauritians give to education, this part reviews how from an elitist commodity, education gradually became accessible to all Mauritians and how protests and demands for education from the Mauritian people played a crucial role in changing the situation. Secondly, it also reviews how education also holds cultural and religious values for the Indo-community of Mauritius.

During the start of the French reign, there was no education system provided as rich French colons will send their children to France for education. After the setting up of a new assembly, a national college was set up to cater for the education of everyone; however, this venture will fail. It is only under the leadership of Governor Deacan that an école centrale would be set up, which will later be known as Lycée Colonial and during the British reign as Royal College- which comprised both of Primary and Secondary education. It was the first elitist institution as it was reserved only for the colon's children and not for the coloured children. However, Deacan will also set up two primary schools for free coloured boys. Primary education was provided to both the white elite class and free people of colour; secondary education was reserved for the elite group (Day-Hookoomsing, 2011). The Lycée Colonial symbolized the elitist education that was reserved only for the French colons' children who were part of the higher socio-economic group of the society, and on the other hand, the two-free primary education provided a different kind of education only to free coloured boys excluding girls while the children of slaves received no education at all.

During the British reign, access to education for the coloured children will improve with the arrival of British missionaries and Lebrun. The British government were able to start primary education for 'free coloured'. The Catholic Church has always focused on providing education to the elite class but fearing the work and supremacy of Lebrun; they would start caring about the education of the lower

classes. French Catholic priest Pere Laval would come on the Island, and he would devote himself to the wellbeing and education of the poor and support the cause of free slaves. Laval would attain great popularity and success with the Island's coloured and black population. Laval would die as a martyr, and even today in modern Mauritius, his arrival on the Island is commemorated by a pilgrimage (undertaken by many Mauritians) to his tomb in Rose-Hill.

Reacting to this, under their Anglicization process, the British Government attempted to make the population 'English and Protestant instead of French and Catholic' (Ramdoyal, 1977, p.66). Anglican clergymen were brought to the island to help in the building of Anglican churches and schools in which English was to be used instead of French (Ramdoyal, 1977). Feeling that they have lost their impact on the Creole population, the British started focusing on the education of Indian Indentured Labourers. The education of the non-white population in the colonies of the British Empire was handled mostly by the Church and its missions. In 1836, through the Ordinance No 52, schools could be legally opened in Mauritius without the license and sanction of the Governor. Ramdoyal (1977) notes that this law led to an improvement regarding providing education for the mass as, by 1843, there were seven government schools and 22 diverse missionary schools. The Ordinance 21 also established the Grant-in-Aid system – a system that encouraged the setup of schools by the private sector who could obtain grants from the government and donations from individuals. The GIA system led to an increase in schools in Mauritius-by the end of 1882, there were 47 government schools with 6, 571 students enrolled and 57 Grant-in-aid (GIA) schools with 5, 316 students enrolled. This system empowered the Catholic church in Mauritius as the church operated most of the GIA schools.

One fundamental change under the British is when they freed access to the Lycee Colonial and rebranded it into the Royal College. This event happened in a context where a considerable number of the coloured population were becoming part of an emerging strong middle class, and they occupied lesser but important white-collar jobs in the government (Bowman, 1991). Moreover, there was no provision for secondary education for these people, hence alongside Lebrun, they complained to the British Colonial Government and advocated that the Royal College should be open to all citizens irrespective of race, colour or class. Despite protest from the white population, the Royal College admitted coloured boys for the first time in 1832 (Ramdoyal, 1977). Ramdoyal (1977, p.45) notes that the opening of the Royal college to everyone will eventually 'lead to the overthrow of the colonial structure supported by the twin pillars of poverty and ignorance' and the future of Mauritian education was shaping into a more integrative affair rather than segregation.

Another phenomenon that arose was the emergence of a parallel system of schooling consisting of madrassahs and baitkas that catered for the cultural and religious education of the Indo-Mauritians. Unlike the slaves who were uprooted and lost their culture and religion, the Indo-Mauritians came to

the country with their culture and religion, and they wanted to recreate their practices in Mauritius. Hence, non-mainstream education was the way to preserve and inculcate this culture and religion to the younger generations. In contrast, these non-mainstream institutions posed a threat to the education of the Indo-Mauritian population as the fear was instilled that they will lose their religion and culture if they go to French or English missionary schools that were also providing primary education.

The quality of education in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was seen as of poor quality, and this is reiterated by the report of Dr Bateman- the Director of Education in Mauritius (1901-1923). Dr Bateman stated that 'Schools exist in Mauritius and cannot be closed; but they were better closed than remain monuments of wasted money and useless energy, where children are looked after, perhaps kept out of mischief, but certainly not educated (Ramdoyal, 1977, p.117). Learning was 'bookish and literary' except for some gardening, and the schools lacked staff, and unsuited novice teachers claimed permanent jobs (Ramdoyal, 1977, p.77).

In 1941, there were 50 government schools that provided education to some 16,000 pupils and some 75 GIA schools that catered for 6000 pupils. Far from improving, the situation will continue to deteriorate as the second Director of Education describes the conditions of schools as unhygienic and cramped: 'If I were shown a rabbit-hutch and told it was a school, I should believe it' (Ram 77). However, Ramdoyal (1977) noted that the GIA schools, especially those managed by the Anglican and Catholic Missions had done excellent work.

By the 1940s, the provision and quality of Mauritian education were evolving. The attraction of a pension in a government job meant teachers were more interested in working in government schools rather than in aid-in schools. GIA schools under the Anglican and Catholic churches preferred keeping their autonomy and resisted interference from the government as they feared that the latter might suppress their beliefs and religious influence. Thus, even Hindu and Muslim pupils in GIA schools were obliged to take part in religious education, and they were not receiving instruction in their own languages in those schools (Ramdoyal, 1977).

From 1949 onwards, providing educational opportunities for those denied schooling became the priority rather than providing further education for those who already completed their Primary school. The famous political slogan: 'Education for all' would become famous, and education will be closely linked with achieving a higher literacy rate for a better economic future (Ramdoyal, 1977).

The 'education for all' slogan was also boosted by stronger demand for the Western-type of education by the Indian population. The young Indians saw education as a way out of the sugarcane fields as they aimed towards government employment and other professions (Benedict, 1958). Benedict (1958 cited in Juggernaut, 1987) described the job situation in Mauritius as compartmentalised as different groups held an absolute monopoly over certain jobs- the top posts in the sugar sector were in the

hand of the White and Creole elites, commerce and trade were under the control of the Gujratis and Chinese. Prestige was another strong factor that fuelled this demand. Benedict (1958, p.320, cited in Juggernaut, 1987) succinctly describes the situation as:

There is pride in having passed an examination and in receiving a certificate and often considerable pressure to succeed is applied by a family on a student. The student is permitted special privileges by his family. He is not expected to do manual work. He is given money from what is often a slim budget, for transport, books, food and entertainment as well as for special tutoring... Many parents are faced with the choice of investing in education for their sons or in capital assets such as land and livestock. Increasingly and especially in the towns, they are choosing education.

The increase in demand for education would lead to an increase in the enrollment figures at Primary level. This can be seen in the enrollment figures of Primary Education from 1955 to 1960.

*Table 2: Primary Education Enrollment in Mauritius 1955-1960*

	1955-56	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59	1959-60
All schools	85,446	89,434	102,291	115,629	126, 173

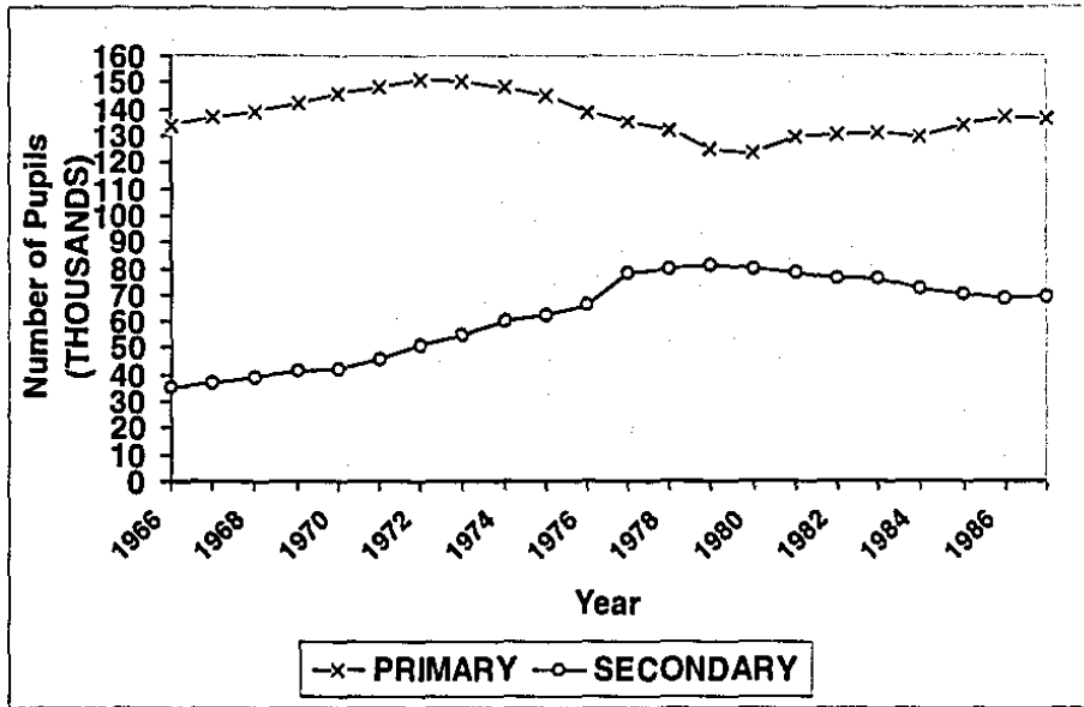
The figures include government, aided and non-aided schools.

This fast expansion came at the expense of the quality of education. Meade (1968) describes the situation as 'the system at present operating is more likely to produce illiteracy... Children leave primary schools in large numbers without having acquired anything worth calling literacy in any language... ( p.207).

Ordinance 31 1941 had ensured the place of English in the Mauritian Government schools only, French would take second position, but the case was different for GIA schools as the Ordinance did not make the English Language compulsory. Hence in the Roman Catholic Aided schools, French alone was taught, and in the Protestant schools, English was taught while Indian languages had no place within the Primary school. However, with mounting pressure by the Indian communities as a majority community, Oriental languages started being provided within government schools. Yet, a lack of qualified teachers meant that Oriental languages were not provided in all schools.

Meade (1968) also criticized the government for focusing solely on primary education rather than paying equal attention at all levels of education. This can be seen clearly when looking at the significant difference in the number of students enrolled in primary schools compared to secondary schools.

Figure 1: Primary and Secondary Enrollments 1966-1987



Source: MEAC (1989). *Mauritius Country Paper*. International symposium on education held between April 3rd-7th 1989 in Mauritius.

In the 1970s, Secondary education within Mauritius would get more importance. At that point, there were seven state colleges (Royal Curepipe and Royal Port-Louis for the boys), State College in Pamplemousses, Dr Maurice Cure State Secondary School, the Queen Elizabeth College, the State College Rose Belle and a further 12 Junior Secondary Schools (built with funds from the World Bank). The State Colleges would gradually gain a more prestigious and popular appeal because of a junior scholarship scheme that granted meritorious pupils at Primary level sponsored entry in the seven State Colleges (Ramdoyal, 1977).

However, these state colleges and Junior colleges would not be able to satisfy the increasing demand for secondary education. There will be the emergence of private colleges- grants in aided and non-aided ones that would provide education to nearly 77% of the pupils. Some of these private colleges would be under the tenure of the religious establishment – six Loreto Convent schools controlled by the Roman Catholic, the Islamic Cultural College and the College St Esprit). Even these colleges that would be known as Confessional Colleges would gain a favourable reputation amongst the people because of their selectiveness to accept students. Continuing increased demand for Secondary



education would lead to the mushrooming of the third type of private colleges that would be considered of poor quality. These colleges were poorly resourced with an uneven standing and are merely profit-making institutions providing a certificate for the mass (Bunwaree, 1994; Ramdoyal, 1977). It should be noted that in Mauritius, there is two elitist type of secondary schools with a French system of Baccalaureat- Lycée Labourdonais and Le Bocage. And Mauritian girls could get into secondary college in 1957- 160 years in comparison to boys who accessed secondary education in 1797 through the Royal College.

### **2.3.3 Post-Independence education system**

After independence, the education system in Mauritius was brought under the control of the Ministry of Education and a centralized administrative system with clearly defined powers and responsibilities delegated to various bodies and this has remained the same over the years (Bunwaree, 1994). Education would subsequently be an essential part for the economic development plan of the country. The National Development Plan 1971-1975 states that:

'The most important resource of Mauritius is its manpower. A well- motivated labour force possessing the requisite mental and physical skills for a modern economy is the most valuable economic asset. While the cultural background and the progress of education in Mauritius has provided the basis for an intelligent and adaptable labour force, there is a need to create the skills required to meet the demand generated by prospective economic development. This would require a change in the quality and content of education from its present generally academic emphasis to more technical and vocational orientation at all levels' (Mauritius Ministry of Economic Planning and Development., 1971, p.68)

Similarly, in the National Development Plan 1992-1994, the opening statements about the state of education in the nation declare:

Education is widely perceived as the major avenue for social and economic mobility. In addition to being a vehicle for social upgrading for the individual, rising literacy and widespread education facilities have enabled the country to affect its demographic transition and to diversify into new economic activities.

The rapid economic transformation of the country, especially in export processing, has been due to the availability of an educated workforce. The ability of Mauritius to continue to adapt flexibly to new market opportunities and to move into more technologically oriented production depends on education producing the required skills. The educational system is called upon to foster a culture of creativity, develop initiative and nurture talent- all of which are essential for Mauritius to maintain its competitive

edge and thus guarantee sustained development (Mauritius Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, 1992, p.83).

In his own foreword to the Master Plan (1991), The Minister of Education, Armoogum Parsuraman, states:

It is the aim of the [Education] Master Plan to establish a long-term strategy embodying the Government's vision of a system of education that will ensure universal access to quality basic education, provide possibilities for further education and training opportunities, meet the needs of the economy, sustain balanced economic and social development and reinforce international competitiveness. This strategy should help us to achieve a smooth transition to the second industrial development phase, leading Mauritius towards newly industrialised status (Parsuramen, 1989).

In the forward of a more recent document that presented the vision 2008-2020 for education, Ministry of Education Bunwaree (2008-2014) stated:

If there is one domain that needs such rigorous application, especially for a country like Mauritius, it is certainly that of education and human resource development. It is in this domain that Innovation and Creativity have to become the by-words for change. Creative learning, which is the acquisition of skills and competencies that unlock the human potential becomes a paramount necessity since education is one of the cardinal drivers of economic growth. The reasons for this are various, but two of the most significant are, first, education builds human capital and enables workers to be more productive, and second, it increases a country's capacity to innovate - an indispensable pre-requisite for growth and competitiveness in today's global knowledge economy. (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2009, p.10).

These statements accentuate the important role that human capital plays for Mauritius. Perhaps owing to the fact that the country possesses no natural resources, the emphasis has always been on the training and education of its labour force. A parallel can be drawn between the social needs and the economic needs and the education provided at different times in Mauritius. In the monocrop economy that was beginning to diversify towards industrialization and services sector - a large pool of literate, cheap and skill-trained workers were required which was supplied to a large extent to the many mushrooming primary schools and training centres. However, in 21<sup>st</sup> century Mauritius, the government is emphasizing on a more technology and globally developed economy, Mauritius requires more mentally trained workers rather than manual-trained workers (Bunwaree, 2001). From Independence onwards, the various government have tried to reform the education system as a whole

especially the Primary education to lessen the number of failures at the CPE level and to increase the pool of qualified labour. Increasing its qualified labour also meant the opening up of more tertiary institutions on Mauritian soil, after the University of Mauritius, other national universities like University of Technology of Mauritius, Open University and even foreign Universities like Middlesex University and, more recently, Aberystwyth university open campuses in Mauritius.

## **2.4 POPULATION PROFILE AND TRENDS**

In 2016, the total population of Mauritius was estimated to be 1.2 million, and it has more than trebled compared to 100 years earlier when the 1911 Census countered 374,000 persons in the country. According to the 2011 census, with 604 persons per sq. km, Mauritius is one of the most densely populated countries worldwide. 40 % of the population are contained in the five towns of the country on 85% of the land area of the country, and villages contain 60 % of the population on 92% of the land area (Mauritius Central Statistics, 2011). One of the reasons that Mauritius is a densely populated country is because of its geographical landscape that contains many mountains and much of the land is still under sugarcane plantations. Though the latter is changing gradually as with the reduced profitability of Sugarcane plantation, many planters with large portions of land are converting agricultural land into Morcellements for sale or building of houses.

The proportion of women in the population is on the rise since women live longer than men. In 2000, there were 98 males per 100 females; by 2012 the ration went down to 97 males per 100 females. The census 2011 also noted that the Mauritian population is an ageing population with a decreased number of births and longer life expectancy: between 2000 to 2012 the child population aged under 15 years went down from 25% to 20% and the elderly population above 60 years old increased from 9% to 13% (Mauritius Central Statistics, 2011). After the 2014 elections and to fulfil the promise made to the population- there was an increase in the pension given to the elderly people- the New Finance Minister, Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo allocated a budget of 2.4 billion rupees to pay people aged between 60 and 80 years old 5000 rupees, 90 to 99 years old 10,000 rupees and centenarians of Mauritius will receive 20,000 monthly. According to the IMF bank, the ageing of the Mauritian population has started weighing on the government's finances and these pressures are bound to increase (Soto et al., 2015).

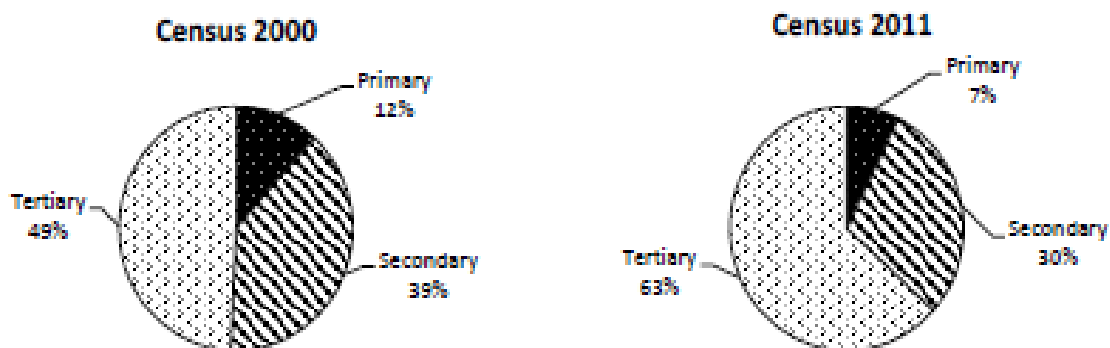
### 2.4.1.1 Socio-economic trends

#### Mauritius

Starting as a Monocrop economy during the colonial period, Mauritius has gradually diversified its economy with the manufacturing sector – EPZ playing an important role in the economic boom of the 1980s and in the 1990s onwards, being an Island with white sandy beaches, Tourism- was gradually established as one of the major economic pillars. Today, Mauritius is expanding its services sector while reinforcing and trying to diversify the economy. According to the census 2011, this sector accounts for 63% of employment compared to 2000 when it only accounted for 49% of employment. The share of the primary sector (mainly agriculture) dropped from 12% in 2000 to 7% in 2011, while that of the secondary sector (mainly manufacturing and construction) decreased from 39% to 29% (Mauritius Central Statistics, 2011)

Employed persons aged 16 years and over by sector, Republic of Mauritius 2000 and 2011 Population Censuses

Figure 2: Employed persons aged 16 years and over by sector, Republic of Mauritius 2000 and 2011 Population Censuses



\*Primary sector: Agriculture, mining & quarrying

Secondary sector: Electricity & water, manufacturing & construction

Tertiary sector: Trade, hotels & restaurants, transport & communication, financial services, community, social & personal services

This increase in employment in the tertiary sector can be explained by more and more people getting higher-level education. According to census data- the percentage of people finishing SC exams increased by 10% from 2000 to 2001 and those obtaining a tertiary qualification increased from 2.3% to 4.9%. The two most common broad fields of study among people with tertiary education were: Business Administration which includes fields such as Management, Accounting, Marketing and Public

administration and Computing which includes fields such as Computing and Information Systems, Computer Programming and Software Engineering (Census Report, 2011). The most common groups of occupations with people having tertiary education were Professionals (53%), Managers (21%) and Technicians/Associate professionals (16%). Among the Professionals, most persons were engaged in: teaching such as Education Officers and Lecturers; Business and administration such as Accountants and Auditors; Information and Communication Technology such as Computer Engineer and System Analysts (Mauritius Central Statistics, 2011)

An increase in the people obtaining a tertiary qualification alongside an increase in the people employed in the tertiary sector and a decrease in the percentage of people employed in the Primary and Secondary sector indicates a population that is more attracted towards the white-collar jobs provided by the Tertiary sector rather than blue-collar jobs that are part of the Primary and Secondary sectors. In one way, it continues the mindset of the educated youth that was seeking a way out of the fields during the colonial times and this mindset prevails in contemporary Mauritius. The parents and grandparents who have worked in the sugarcane fields associate working in the sugarcane fields as hardship and less prestigious and to an extent the colonial hardship imposed onto them by their colonisers. In popular Mauritian expression, educational success is equated to having an office job and being uneducated or failing in exams is equated to working in the fields: 'Aprann pou gagn travay biro, sinon al koup kann'. Hence they try to keep their children far from such hardships by investing in their education heavily (tuition and tertiary education) so that their children can succeed in their exams and one day get a white-collar job preferably in the Government. White-collar government jobs are better valued than white-collar jobs in the private sector as working within the government brings advantages such as pension, duty free cars, more sick and casual leaves and above all job security.

According to the central statistics office, in 2015 the number of persons unemployed was estimated at 46,300 (19,500 males and 26,800 females) as compared to 44,800 (19,400 males and 25,400 females) in 2014. Male unemployment remained at the same level of 5.5% while the female unemployment rate increased from 11.4% to 11.6%. Some 7,500 or 15% had not reached the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) level or equivalent and a further 14,900 (30%) did not have the Cambridge School Certificate (SC) or equivalent. At first quarter 2015, youth unemployed aged 16 to 24 years numbered 23,300 (11,200 men and 12,100 women) compared to 18,400 (8,700 men and 9,700 women) at the corresponding quarter in 2014.

Youth unemployment is another social issue that is gaining prominence. At first quarter 2015, youth unemployed aged 16 to 24 years numbered 23,300 (11,200 men and 12,100 women) compared to 18,400 (8,700 men and 9,700 women) at the corresponding quarter in 2014. Amongst them, 17 percent of male and 36 of female had a qualification below school certificate; 22% of male and 34% of female school certificate; 24% of male and 31% of female higher school certificate; 20% of male and 34% of female had a tertiary qualification.

These employment statistics especially the youth unemployment represent a challenge for the country from an economic perspective, educational perspective and from a social perspective. The expansion of the tertiary sector of the Mauritian economy from 49 % to 63 % indicates the need of more qualified workers in terms of education. The government has come forward with the YEP (Youth Employment Program) to help the youth and according to this organization, the four main reasons of youth unemployment are: skills-mismatch, economic slowdown, lack of experience and the youth as being very selective (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 2014).

#### **2.4.1.2 Cultural diversity**

Owing to its rich past of colonization and immigration, the country comprises of a multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual population but are politically compartmentalized into four categories: Hindus, Muslims, Sino-Mauritians and General Population. The Hindu category comprise of Tamils, Telegus, Marathis and Hindus; Muslims comprise of Sunnis, Tablighs and Amadhis; Sino-Mauritians comprise of Chinese people and General Population comprise of the Creole community and Franco-Mauritians. According to the last 2011 census, Hinduism is the major religion at 48.54% followed by Christianity at 31.70% and Islam 17.3%. Despite the diversity in culture and ethnicity, Mauritians live side by side and intermingle in the workplace, neighbourhood and experience similar living conditions. The Mauritian multiculturalism and celebrations are reflected in the number of public holidays that are given to the main communities to celebrate their respective festivals. All the main communities have public holidays on their respective festivals- Hindus for Mahashivratri and Diwali; Muslims for Eid; Chinese for the Spring festival; Creoles for the Assumption of the Virgin Mary; Tamils for Cavadee; Telegus for Ougadi; Marathis for Ganesha Chaturthi. Though the major celebrations of these festivals would be an in-community event, yet the distribution of sweets to the other communities and well-wishing the celebrating- community for their festival is common practice.

#### **2.4.1.3 Languages**

Eriksen (1990, p.4) described the language situation in Mauritius as 'strongly reminiscent of the Tower of Babel.' Accordingly, in the 2011 census, it was revealed 25 different languages were spoken by different groups of people. These languages were: Mauritian Kreol, Cantonese, Chinese, Hakka,

Mandarin, other Chinese, English, French, other European, Arabic, Bhojpuri, Bengali, Gujrati, Hindi, Marathi, Sinhala, Tamil, Telegu, Urdu, Other Indian, Other Oriental, Africans, Swahili, Malagasy and Russian. With more than 1 million people claiming to speak Mauritian Kreol, around 65 thousand claiming to speak Bhojpuri and around 50 thousand claiming to speak French.

Despite being the most commonly used language by all ethnic communities, Mauritian Kreol has never become the national language of Mauritius (Virahsawmy, 1982). Its lack of prestige, its association with slavery as well as the general perception that it is the language of the Creole community would prevent it gaining national status. Bowman (1991) also states that Mauritians resisted Kreol because of its lack of sophistication and international exposure compared to French and English. Recently in 2012, Mauritian Kreol has been codified and compiled into a dictionary by Carpooran and despite critics, it has also been introduced as an optional language within Primary Schools and would also be taught at Secondary level till Form 3 in the future. The decision behind the introduction of Mauritian Kreol as a subject at Primary level has been described by Minister of Education Bunwaree as to put 'a community at par with other communities...' The recognition of Mauritian Kreol as a language and its introduction in the school has been a long fight especially by the Creole community and considering that the Creole community had no ancestral languages to associate themselves with in schools, Mauritian Kreol provided them a language to associate themselves with on an official basis.

English is the *de facto* official language, the language of education and the language of administration. English remains the language of the intellectual elite (Bowman, 1991). The medium of instruction at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary level is English, and English is taught at all levels. However, English remains a foreign language in Mauritius and has often been described as a library or classroom language as it is used and learnt only in these settings by Mauritian children. Yet its importance can be understood within work settings and especially in the Parliament where debates are undertaken mainly in English and proficiency in English is a prerequisite to become member of the Parliament.

French language in Mauritius is the main language of the written and visual media and is associated with a 'cultured' culture as well as popular culture (Bowman, 1991). The main 7.30 PM news is in French, most of the newspapers especially the main ones L'express and Le Mauritian are in French, Hollywood movies in Mauritian cinemas are played mostly in their French dubbed version. French is taught as a subject and even used as a support language by many teachers within the classroom. Socially, French language is used within close urban circles and it is also present in the office setting, it remains in a way at par with English in terms of importance.

The government also makes provision for the teaching of ancestral languages- Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, Mandarin, Urdu, Arabic and more recently Mauritian Kreol which are available on an optional basis both at primary and secondary levels. These languages are associated with ancestral and religious heritage of the different communities, and it reinforces the multiculturalism of the country. Programs are offered in all the languages on the national television and the national radio.

## 2.5 KEY EDUCATIONAL POLICY DECISIONS AND REFORMS IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

*Table 3: Key educational policy decisions and reforms in the Mauritian education system*

<b>1940</b>	Free Primary Education – with an improvement in social life and demand for education from the mass, the government provided Free Primary Education, and by the year 1968 (Independence), a successful program of building more primary schools leads to extending primary education to all the Mauritians.
<b>1976</b>	Free Secondary Education –In 1975, there were widespread student protests in the Island, complaining about the unequal and lack of infrastructure between the different secondary schools. The then Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam viewed the situation as dangerous and unprecedented. Thus he decided to give free secondary education to all. This led to an increase in the demand for secondary education and an influx of new secondary colleges.
<b>1991</b>	Primary Education made compulsory for everyone.
<b>2002</b>	Abolishment of ranking at Certificate of Primary in Education (CPE) level- The students going through the CPE exams were given a national rank that was published in the local newspapers when the results were out. Only the first 4000 students were ranked. Ranking nationally was a matter of social prestige as well as an opportunity to get a seat in the best secondary schools on the Island. Abolishing it was a first step towards eliminating excessive competition and pressure that was being put on students at that young age (11-12 years old).
<b>2005</b>	Free transport for all students: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary level
	The amendment of the Education Act in 2005 to make education compulsory till the



	age of 16.
	The introduction of HSC colleges. Students will move to new secondary colleges after their SC exams to do their HSC
<b>2012</b>	Introduction of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) secondary, the syllabus Form 1- Form 3 and the National Form 3 exams.
<b>2014</b>	Nine -Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE) reform

Table 6. describes some key educational decisions and reforms that have been taken in the Mauritian education system that has changed the education system in general but also the upper secondary level. In the recent years, there are perhaps three key educational decisions that have affected education at upper secondary level. Firstly, there was the creation of HSC secondary schools in 2005, secondly, there was the development of the National Curriculum Framework secondary, syllabus Form 1 - Form 3 and National Form 3 exams in 2012 and thirdly, it is the change in the eligibility criteria to be promoted in upper secondary and sit for the HSC exams.

In 2005, to improve the pass rate in HSC exams, the Ministry of Education decided to have HSC Secondary schools, that is secondary schools that will only have HSC students. Thus, students would do Form 1 to Form 5 in one secondary school and then pursue their upper secondary schooling in another secondary school. The idea behind HSC secondary schools was to provide HSC students with a more conducive atmosphere to study for the high stakes exams and perhaps to remove the tag of star colleges and non-star colleges as everyone would go and do HSC in an HSC secondary school. One year later in 2006, this decision was reversed when a new political party came into power. Thereby, students again had the choice to continue their upper secondary schooling in the same college. This drastic change in education policy shows that political agendas do not spare even education which remains a national interest and of great importance for a country like Mauritius.

The second decision that was implemented in 2012 was the creation of the NCF secondary that aimed at providing a curriculum at lower secondary for secondary schools. Previously, there was no official curriculum for secondary schools from Form 1 to Form 3; all secondary schools were free to choose their textbooks and design their respective syllabus. They aligned their choices in view with the SC exams that is accompanied by a syllabus provided by Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). Thus, the purpose of the NCF and the National Form 3 exams was to bring uniformity and accountability in what was being taught at lower secondary level in Mauritian secondary schools.

The crucial third decision about the change in the eligibility criteria to advance in Lower 6 will be discussed separately in the HSC section because this affected the teaching and learning of English literature in secondary schools directly.

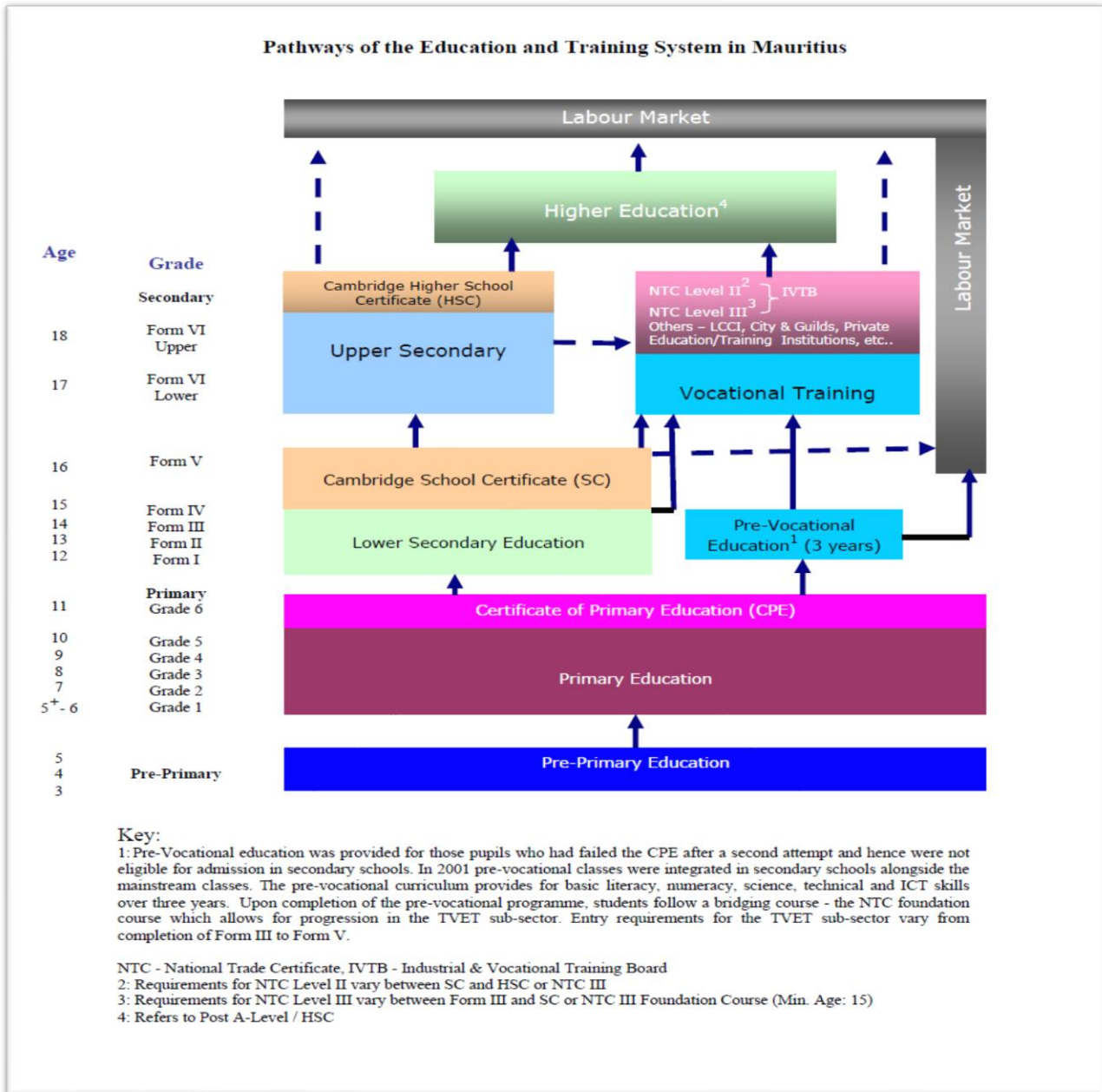
## **2.6 ONGOING REFORM: NINE-YEAR SCHOOLING**

In 2014, the newly elected government launched the NYCBE reform. Broadly, the underlying philosophy of the NYCBE is to provide continuous basic education to all Mauritian children for nine years which will give them ample time to grow holistically and to address their weaknesses before attempting a high stakes exam. As such, under the NYCBE reform, the high stakes CPE exams have been replaced with the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC), a low-stakes exam. Due to its competitive nature, the CPE exams have been generating an enormous amount of pressure and competition for years, and even after the ranking system was abolished, the pressure put on the students remained the same as the stakes for these exams was still high. Further, on average 25% of students have failed in these exams on a yearly basis, and this has been a concern for many governments. The NYCBE was first elaborated and proposed as a remedy to lessen the number of failures as far back as in the 1990s, but due to the lack of political will and its perceived unpopularity with parents of high-achievers, it was never implemented. PSAC has been presented as a low stakes exam as the grades of this exam will no longer determine whether the student will go to a star secondary school or to a non-star secondary school like the CPE exams used to do.

On the contrary, admission in Form 1 will be made on a regional basis that is the students will go to a secondary school based on their results and the proximity of their residence to the institutions. However, NYCBE is not eliminating the pressure, competition and star secondary schools entirely, as it also intends to create a high stakes exam namely, the NCE that students will take at Form 3 level. The results of the NCE exams will determine whether the students will continue their studies in their regional secondary schools or go into an academy and the former star secondary will be converted into academies. Through the provision of nine-year basic continuous education, the reform wants to provide the children more time to develop themselves holistically and to work on their weaknesses before attempting the high stakes exams of NCE in Form 3. Coming back to the role of PSAC exams, it has been stated that PSAC exams are low stakes exams as the results will be used only as an indication whether they have reached the required level to move into Grade 7 within their regional institutions and the children will no longer competing to get into a star secondary school like under the CPE exams. The first batch of Mauritian students will take part in the PSAC exams in October 2017.

## 2.7 THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Figure 3: Pathways of the Education and Training system in Mauritius (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2009, 26)



The Mauritian School system is based on a 6+5+2 system inherited from Britain. As shown in fig.1, there are two main pathways that students can follow in the Mauritian school system, one is the academic pathway, and the other one is the vocational training pathway. The academic pathway which is adopted by most Mauritian students consists of six years (Grade 1 to Grade 6) of primary education that culminates with the high-stakes Certificate in Primary Education (CPE) exams. The results of the CPE exams determine in which secondary school or college (as it is commonly known locally), the students will pursue their secondary studies (Form 1 to Form 5). After spending five years at the secondary level, the students take part in another high stakes exams, the School Certificate (SC) exams. The results of the SC exams determine whether the students will be eligible to be promoted in upper secondary level (Lower 6- Upper 6) and in two years' time, the students take part in another high stakes exams namely, the Higher School Certificate (HSC) exams. Afterwards, the students can pursue their higher education in the different local or foreign universities or get a job in the labour market.

Another parallel pathway that is shown in fig. 3 is the vocational training route. In that particular pathway, the aim is to provide an option to academically less successful students or those students that are more interested in getting a job rather than pursuing further academic studies. After the CPE exams, students choosing this pathway have to gain additional schooling in the pre-vocational stage to make up for the academic deficit built up during the years of primary schooling and to enable skills development for further vocational training. The students cannot go into vocational training directly because as from 2005, it is required by law that schooling is compulsory for all children until the age of sixteen. The vocational education pathway is negatively regarded in the Mauritian society as there is this perception that technical and vocational education is only fit for the academically less proficient students, thus inherently undesirable for both parents and students. It is also interesting to note that the students have different exit points to switch from the academic pathway to the vocational training pathway. The three exit points are at the end of the CPE exams, at the end of the SC exams and the end of the HSC exams.

## **2.8 HSC EXAMS**

As it has been mentioned in the previous section, succeeding in the SC exams is essential to be promoted in upper secondary level and sit for the HSC exams. Thereby, it is crucial to understand how the SC exam's function and connects to the HSC exams. Both the SC and the HSC exams are administered by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES), in conjunction with the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate of the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) board.

After five years at the secondary level, the students take part in the SC exams, in which they are examined in seven or eight subjects. These subjects consist of the compulsory subjects namely, English, Mathematics and French and many optional subjects that includes Science subjects (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), Arts and language subjects (Visual arts, French literature, English literature, oriental languages), Design (Design and Technology, Design and Communication), Economics, Business Studies and Accounting, Computer, Additional Mathematics. The students at this moment choose the subjects in accordance to their preferred field of specialisation and by what subjects they intend to choose as their A level subjects at the upper secondary level. To better illustrate this, for example, a student who is interested in studying language subjects might choose Literature in English, French literature, Hinduism and Hindi as his optional subjects alongside the compulsory subjects namely, Mathematics, English, French at SC level. Depending on his results in the individual subjects, that is whether he can get a minimum of Grade six, he will be eligible to do that subject as one of his A level subjects in upper secondary. As such, assuming that he got Grade 6 in all the subjects at SC level, the student can choose Literature in English, Hinduism and Hindi as his main subjects and one other subject that he may or may not have done at SC level as an advanced subsidiary subject. Added to this, the student also has to do General Paper (English) which is compulsory. Thus, at HSC level, students do three subjects as Advanced level (A level) also known as principal level or main subject and one subject as Advanced subsidiary (As level) with General Paper as the compulsory subject.

Moreover, there are some additional rules such as students can sit for the SC exams only twice in public secondary schools, the first time the students need to have scored grade six in at least four subjects to be promoted in upper secondary and the second time, only in three subjects. Sometimes, the Ministry of education relaxes the criteria to do a subject at A level in Lower 6. The same happened more recently in 2016, when the Ministry of education decided that even if a student has not done Literature in English, French literature and Additional Mathematics at SC level but the student has gained at least a grade six in English, French and Mathematics, the student can still choose to do Literature in English, Mathematics and French as A level subjects in Lower 6. The change in eligibility criteria has been done to help more students to progress in upper secondary level and to have the opportunity to sit for the HSC exams. In some cases when students are low performing or retaking the HSC exams, they can take the Graduate Certificate in Education (GCE) option which is two subjects as main subjects and one subject as advanced subsidiary as well as the compulsory General Paper. Additionally, students can sit for the SC or HSC exams as many times they want as a private candidate, and some state-aided secondary schools give the opportunity to students that have barely met succeeded in their SC exams to sit for the HSC exams in their institutions.

The HSC exams are high stakes exams in Mauritius as its results serve as entry requirements to enrol in universities. For instance, a student who plans to study BA English (Hons) degree at the University of Mauritius, they have to study English literature at A level and also get a good grade in the final exam to enrol in the course. In some years a minimum grade 6 is required, but if there are many candidates, the university can choose to increase the minimum grade required to enrol in the course. For some courses such as Law, Management and Finance or Information Systems, the minimum required grades are usually high because of the high number of applicants. The majority of Mauritian students aim to get into public universities of Mauritius that includes the University of Mauritius, the University of Technology of Mauritius and the Open University of Mauritius. The courses offered by these institutions are highly subsidised by the government and thus more affordable to the mass compared to some other private universities such as Charles Telfair Institute, Middlesex University or the more recently established Aberystwyth University.

HSC results have another larger dimension within the Mauritian society as the students that get the best results; they become Laureates. Each year under the Laureateship system, the best students from the main fields such as Science, Arts and Languages, Economics and Accounting, Design and Technology are given full scholarships by the Government of Mauritius to pursue their studies abroad in any University of their choice. These students would usually choose to go to US and UK universities. The announcement of the HSC results, the laureate names, the number of laureates per school is a Mauritian tradition that is highly mediatised locally both in the newspapers and on the national television. Briefly, 45 laureates are chosen based on their performances in the different fields of study and gender: Science side, Economics side, Arts side and Technical side.

Additionally, four open scholarships are allocated to students in Rodrigues- two for boys and two for girls. Additional scholarships are offered on merit and social grounds. Students that are ranked after the laureates also get scholarships that fund their studies in the local universities.

The competition is on various levels, the secondary school that has got more laureates, the secondary school that has got more pass rate and the competition is usually between the all-girls Queen Elizabeth College versus the all-boys Royal Curepipe College. Over the years, both these secondary schools have been churning most of the laureates and thus got the status of star secondary schools. On that day, the secondary schools that got a laureate give the day off, and there are parades and celebrations of the students in the streets. The media interview the laureates and their stories and emotions as well that of their parents are mediatised. Additional scholarships of lesser prestige and value are given to students that come after the laureates; they usually get to do any course at the University of Mauritius for free. Interestingly, these star secondary schools have been able to maintain their reputation all these years because they were supplied with the best of the Mauritian students

based on the CPE results. At the end of primary schooling, the students took the high stakes-exams known as CPE and the best students would get admission to these star secondary schools while the less performing ones to the other secondary schools.

## **2.9 ENGLISH LITERATURE TEACHING AND LEARNING AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL**

### **2.9.1 Lower secondary (Form 1 to Form 3)**

The NCF secondary 2012 describes the teaching of English literature at lower secondary level in these words:

In the lower secondary curriculum, Literature in English forms an integral part of the language lesson but at Forms IV and V levels, it is studied as a subject. Literature, being a rich source of language used in varied ways, has tremendous potential as a resource for language teaching and the development of analytical skills and critical thinking. Literary texts are used as ready-made contexts to make the teaching of English more meaningful. Different activities are devised to develop the four skills. Knowledge of grammar and vocabulary is simultaneously enhanced. Students learn the language in a pleasurable manner- through stories, poems, plays. At the same time, they become aware of the diversity of cultures in the world and develop appreciation and tolerance. In the upper forms, more emphasis is laid on the development of skills for analysis and appreciation. (Ministry of Education, 2009)

The NCF specifies two usages of English literature at the secondary level; the first one affirms its usage in language lessons to teach English and the second one as a subject at Form 4 and Form 5 level. The teaching and learning of English language at lower secondary level remain textbook driven, and the activities in the textbooks focus on developing reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Moreover, English literature is hardly present as a resource in the activities of the local textbooks, and it remains unclear whether English language teachers use English literature as a resource to teach English. Further research is needed to clarify the actual usage of English literature as a resource in the teaching of English language at the secondary level.

On another note, the NCF secondary does not acknowledge that English literature is taught as a subject at lower secondary and this is reinforced by the lack of explicit guidelines on the teaching and learning of English literature in the Form 1-Form 3 syllabus document. However, irrespective of the lack of guidelines, before and even after the implementation of the NCF secondary, English literature is still being taught as a subject from Form 1 to Form 3 in Mauritian secondary schools, and this was also found to be the case in the two institutions where data was collected. The head of English

departments in the two institutions stated that English literature at lower secondary level is used to introduce the subject to students to help them understand, appreciate and learn the morals behind favourite stories especially classics or canonical literature. English literature is taught as a compulsory subject from Form 1 to Form 3 and usually, one period of thirty-five minutes is dedicated to it on a weekly basis. The subject is taught by the English language teacher and the books that are selected usually consist of abridging versions of classic authors like Shakespeare or a collection of Mauritian stories or a collection of selected poems.

### **2.9.2 School certificate Exams (Form 4-Form 5)**

In Form 4, the students can choose to study Literature in English as an optional subject and subsequently in Form 5 partake in the SC O' level Literature in English exam code 9695. The following provides a broad description of the syllabus aims and the exam format as given by CIE.

The O level Literature in English syllabus (Cambridge International Examinations, 2015, p.23) aims to develop the ability of learners to:

- communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in speech and writing
- understand and respond imaginatively to what they hear, read and experience
- enjoy literature and appreciate its contribution to aesthetic and imaginative growth
- explore areas of universal human concern, which will lead to a better understanding of themselves and Others

Cambridge International O Level Literature in English requires candidates to take one paper that consists of two components namely, (1) Prose and Poetry and (2) Drama. They answer four questions in all in a 3-hour long paper. For each text, there is a choice between two types of questions: one passage-based question and one essay question. In component one, candidates answer two questions each on a different set text. In component two, candidates answer two questions (these may be both on one play, or they may be on two different plays). Hence students usually learn only three texts over a period of two years. A list of texts, poems and short stories is provided in the syllabus, and this list is updated every two years.

### **2.9.3 Upper secondary (Lower 6 and Upper 6)**

In Lower 6, the students can choose to study Literature in English as the main subject (A level) or even as an advanced subsidiary (As level) subject. Mauritian secondary schools choose the Literature



in English A level code 9396 syllabus. The following provides a broad description of the syllabus aims and the exam format as given by CIE.

The A level Literature in English syllabus (Cambridge International Examinations, 2014, p.23) aims to develop:

- appreciation of an informed personal response to literature in English in a range of texts in different forms, and from different periods and cultures
- the interdependent skills of reading, analysis and communication
- effective and appropriate communication
- wider reading and an understanding of how it may contribute to personal development

Cambridge International, A level Literature in English, requires candidates to answer three compulsory papers and one from a choice of optional papers. The compulsory papers are Paper 3 Poetry and Prose, Paper 4 Drama, and Paper 5 Shakespeare and other pre-20th Century Texts. The optional papers are Paper 6 1900 to the Present, Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation, and Component 8 Coursework. In total, the A Level candidate are required to study eight set texts, or six set texts plus two unseen texts if Paper 7 Comment and Appreciation is chosen. In each paper, the candidates answer two questions, each on a different text. Candidates are required to answer questions from a range of poems, prose and plays, with options from the canon of English Literature and modern texts in English. Close study of all the texts chosen is needed in preparation for a choice of essay and passage-based questions. In Paper 5 only, candidates must answer on at least one passage-based question. Despite having variations of paper 7 or component 8 as available options, in all Mauritian colleges, students doing literature in English at A level take the option of paper 3, paper 4, paper 5 and paper 6. A list of texts, poems and short stories is provided in the syllabus, and this list is updated every two years.

*Table 4: English literature HSC statistics*

Year	Total students examined		Total Principal pass		Total Subsidiary pass	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2013	1359	100%	1041	76.60%	64	4.71%
2014	1448	100%	1124	77.62%	47	3.25%

2015	1330	100%	978	73.53%	35	2.63%
2016	1245	100%	863	69.32%	37	2.97%
2017	Not available					

Statistics from (Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, 2018)

In Table 2, it can be seen that in the last four years, 74.26% of students on average have passed English literature (A level) exams which means, on average, 25% of students are not able to pass English literature (A level) exams. This percentage also includes the percentage of students that are not able to reach the level required by A level exams and thus are granted an O' level (SC level) pass grade.

25% indicates a quite significant percentage of students that are not able to meet the required standard set by the CIE. Hence, this is a significant reason to justify the sampling of participants chosen in this study which includes both low proficiency and high proficiency learners in English literature.

## 2.10 SUMMARY

The above discussion focused on outlining the micro and macro context to understand the role and value of the HSC exams in Mauritian society. In this chapter, the rich and complex sociolinguistics profile of the country has been described to help the reader understand the social, cultural and linguistic features of Mauritian society. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrated that the social and political situation surrounding the provision of education during the colonial times played a pivotal role in germinating the Mauritian dream about education. A dream where parents see education as a way for their children to avoid the sufferings of working in the sugarcane fields or in a blue-collar job that is reminiscent of a past of slavery and indentured labourship. This chapter also provided useful information by briefly reviewing some key educational policies, educational reforms and by describing the current education system in Mauritius. Finally, since the primary purpose of this study centres around the HSC exams, the chapter has described the functioning, purpose and prestige of these exams within Mauritian society. Additionally, the chapter has described the teaching and learning of English literature at the secondary level, which revealed a lack of vision from the policymakers about

the role of English literature at the lower secondary level. Lastly, HSC statistics about the English literature exams revealed that a significant percentage of the students taking part in these exams are failing to meet the minimum standard set by CIE.

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Washback phenomenon, which is the focus of this study's investigation, refers to the influence of testing on teaching and learning (Bailey, 1996; Cheng and Curtis, 2004; Hughes, 1989; Saville, 2000). The phenomenon in question is far from straightforward, as research on washback has shown its complex and multifaceted nature.

Foremost, this chapter aims to provide a conceptualisation of washback that will be used within this study to explore the overarching research question: ***What are the washback effects of the high stakes HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature on a group of teachers and learners in the Mauritian context?***

Secondly, this chapter aims to review the relevant washback research literature on teachers and learners and what some other washback studies have reported on washback mediated factors such as micro context factors, macro context factors and test factors in other studies.

Lastly, this chapter also reviews the theories of teaching literature, situating how these may actually help to understand and uncover the washback effects in the current study.

#### 3.2 WASHBACK

##### 3.2.1 Overview

We live in a testing world; our education system pivots around high stakes standardized testing, multiple-choice testing or portfolio assessment. Washback, a term commonly used in applied linguistics, refers to the influence of testing on teaching and learning. The extensive use of examination scores for various educational and social purposes in society nowadays has made the washback effect a distinct educational phenomenon. Washback is a phenomenon that is of inherent interest to teachers, researchers, program coordinators/directors, policymakers, and others in their day-to-day educational activities. According to Linn (2000), over the past 50 years, testing and assessments have played key roles in the five waves of educational reform. Their tracking and selecting a role in the 1950s, their program accountability role in the 1960s; minimum competency testing in the 1970s; school and district accountability in the 1980s; and the standards-based accountability systems in the 1990s (Linn, 2000, p.4).

One of its earliest usage of exams can be found in Imperial China, where examinations were conducted to select civil servants. In order to avoid corruption, scripts were corrected anonymously, and the Emperor supervised the last stage of the examination in person (Arnove et al., 1992; Hu, 1984; Lai, 1970). According to (Spolsky, 1995), the washback effect was to establish and control a program as the candidates prepared themselves for an examination that was both crucial for their own fate and that of the empire. Furthermore, it is clear that tests and assessments are continuing to play a crucial and critical role in education into the new millennium. In today's society also, examinations to encourage the development of talent, to upgrade the performance of schools and colleges, and to counter, to some degree, nepotism, favouritism and even outright corruption in the allocation of scarce opportunities.

Testing occupies a leading place in the educational policies and practices of many countries. Policymakers aware of the power of tests, use testing to manipulate their local educational systems, control curricula and impose (or promote) new textbooks and new teaching methods. Testing and assessment is "the darling of the policy-makers" (Madaus, 1985a, 1985b) despite the fact that they have been the focus of controversy for as long as they have existed. One reason for their longevity in the face of such criticism is that tests are viewed as the primary tools through which changes in the educational system can be introduced without having to change other educational components such as teacher training or curricula. Shohamy (1992) originally noted that "this phenomenon [washback] is the result of the strong authority of external testing and the major impact it has on the lives of test takers" (p. 513). Later Shohamy et al.(1996) and also Stiggins and Faires-Conklin (1992) expanded on this position thus: the power and authority of tests enable policy-makers to use them as effective tools for controlling educational systems.

According to Cheng and Curtis (2004), washback can be seen as rooted in the view that tests or examinations can and should drive teaching and learning. Thereby, the content of a test or examination can act as a powerful catalyst to motivate teachers in meeting the objectives of a test (Cheng, 2005). Policy-makers who recognise this power of testing have been using testing as a tool to manipulate their local educational systems, to control curricula and to impose (or promote) new textbooks and new teaching methods (Shohamy et al., 1996). However, for testing to have a positive impact on the education system or the teaching and learning happening within the classroom, curriculum alignment is essential (Cheng and Curtis, 2004). Curriculum alignment refers to a match or an overlap between the content and the format of the examination, and the content and format of the curriculum (Shepard, 1993). In practice, this can be far from reality as Madaus (1988) points out, 'it is

testing and not the official stated curriculum that is increasingly determining what is taught, how it is taught, what is learned and how it is learned (p.83).’ McEwan (1995, p.42) succinctly described this situation as ‘what is assessed becomes what is value, which becomes what is taught.’ Pearson (1988, p.98) adds to this backward directional nature of washback:

Public examinations influence the attitudes, behaviours, and motivation of teachers, learners and parents, and, because examinations often come at the end of a course, this influence is seen working in a backward direction – hence the term “washback”.

Similar and related terms have been used in the research literature that are closely related to washback such as measurement-driven instruction (Popham, 1987), systematic validity (Frederiksen and Collins, 1989), curriculum alignment (Shepard, 1993), consequential validity (Messick, 1996), test impact (Bachman and Palmer, 1996), and consequences (Cizek, 2001). In the language testing research and Applied linguistics, the term washback is more popularly used to explore the effects of testing on teaching and learning.

In the wake of washback studies, many criticisms have also been made against the side effects of testing (See negative washback section). Educational systems around the world have been emphasising formative assessment and alternative ways of assessment to reduce the pressure and competition within the system. However, exams and testing are here to stay and remain a valuable tool both in the education system and society to implement a system of meritocracy. Cheng (2005) notes that researchers in the language education area still wrestle to understand the nature of washback and lack the knowledge of how to promote positive washback and reduce negative washback effects. Thus, the interest in researching the washback effects of testing on teaching and learning remains intact as the goal is to create positive washback effects and to minimise the negative washback effects of testing. Hence more contextually relevant research like the current study is certainly needed to understand how positive washback can be achieved for specific exams.

### **3.2.2 The scope of washback**

Within the language testing literature, ‘washback’ and ‘impact’ have often been assigned different meanings and scope by different researchers, which at times can be confusing. Some researchers such as Mcnamara (2000) views ‘Washback’ and ‘Impact’ as two separate concepts that investigate two different levels of influence of testing but interrelated. For Mcnamara (2000), ‘impact’ is the effects of tests on macro-levels of education and society, and ‘washback is the effects of language tests on micro-levels of language teaching and learning inside the classroom. Similarly, Hamp-Lyons (1997) differentiates between the two by emphasising that the difference between impact and washback

reside in the scope of the effects of testing—which gives us a view of test consequences between the narrower one of washback and the all-encompassing one of impact.

On the other hand, some researchers such as Bachman and Palmer (1996) and Wall (1997) identify impact as an encompassing term that includes washback. Bachman and Palmer (1996) state that impact operates at two levels—the micro level, that is the effects of testing on individual teachers and students (washback) and the macro level that is the effects of testing on society and its educational systems (impact). Similarly, Wall (1997) proposes an encompassing definition of Impact as: ‘any of the effects that tests may have on individuals, policies or practices, within the classroom, the school, the education system, or society as a whole’ (p.291).

Conversely, other researchers, such as (Peirce, 1993) and Andrews (2004) reject the distinctions between washback and impact as they present washback itself as the encompassing term that includes both the influence on society at a large and within the classroom. Andrews (2004) states that: ‘Instead of adopting Wall’s (1997, p.291) distinction between test impact and test washback, the present chapter uses washback to refer to the effects of tests on teaching and learning, the educational system and the various stakeholders in the education process’ (p.37).

In light of these various definitions from the different scholars, it becomes crucial to decide which term to use and what is the scope of the term within a study in order to avoid any confusion (Green, 2007a). In this study, the term washback will be used as an encompassing term that includes both the narrow and broader effects of testing. Thus, in this study, the term washback will mean the effects of testing on teaching and learning, the institutions, the individuals, the education system and the society as a whole. It should be noted that in this encompassing definition, there are two levels of testing in action here (as differentiated by Bachman and Palmer (1996); the first one is the English literature (A level) HSC exams and the other one is the HSC exams as a whole. The HSC English literature (A level) exams affect the teaching and learning of English literature on a narrow basis. On the other hand, the HSC exams as a whole affect the institutions, the education system and the society at large. Hence when taking an encompassing definition of washback, it is essential to consider both the effects of the English literature HSC exams and the HSC exams.

In this study, the direct effects of the English literature (A level) HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature are investigated in three settings, namely the secondary schools, the private tuition setting and the out-of-school setting which includes revision and exam preparation practices. It should be noted that by taking the investigation outside of the secondary school classroom, the current study can take a first step towards using a broader scope of washback. The study continues using a broader scope of washback by collecting data both from the teachers and learners on their experiences and perception of the HSC exams. Additional data on the personal

experiences and daily lives of the learners would also help to shed some light on the wider effects of the HSC exams. Lastly, by establishing a macro research context (see Chapter Two: Research context) that reviews educational reports, media reports and other contextual information; the study is able to give an account on the documented washback effects of the HSC exams on the education system, the Mauritian society, and the country.

### **3.2.3 Watanabe's Model of washback**

Over the years, many models and theories have been proposed by different scholars to understand and investigate the washback phenomenon. Some key models and theories of washback are Alderson and Wall's (1993) washback hypotheses, Hughes (1993) and Bailey's (1996) 3Ps model that look at washback on Participants, Process and Products, Watanabe's (2004a) comprehensive model of washback, Green's (2007a) model and Shih (2007) models of washback that focused on the washback effects on learners and learning.

The following explicates the washback model proposed by Watanabe (2004a) which is used as the theoretical lens in this study.

#### **a) Dimensions of Washback**

Watanabe (1997) conceptualised washback on five dimensions, each of which represents one of the various aspects of its nature.

**Specificity:** Washback effects may be general or specific in nature. General washback refers to 'a type of effect that may be produced by any test' and Specific washback refers to 'a type of washback that relates to only one specific aspect of a test or one specific test type. (p.20)' An example would be the hypothesis if a test motivates students to study harder than they would have done otherwise like most exams, this refers to general exams. On the other hand, specific washback refers to only one specific aspect of a test or one specific type. For instance, if a grammar component is included in a test, the students and the teachers will focus on this aspect of their learning and teaching.

**Intensity:** Washback can be seen on a continuum between strong and weak. Watanabe (2004a, p.20) explains it as follows:

'If a test has a strong effect, it will determine everything that happens in the classroom and lead all teachers to teach in the same way towards the exams. On the other hand, if a test has a weak effect, then it will affect only a part of the classroom events, or only some teachers and students, but not others.'



Watanabe (2004a) further adds that if the test produces some an effect only on some teachers and students, this highlights the presence of teacher factors. It has been suggested that the intensity of washback may depend on how high or low are the stakes. Washback research has demonstrated that teacher factors play a crucial role in regulating the intensity of washback effects within the classroom, hence factors such as teacher training, beliefs, attitudes and experience play a key role in deciding the intensity of washback within the classroom. Furthermore, measuring this intensity may be a difficult task as the way teachers and students experience the test vary on an individual basis.

Length: The influence of the exams may last for 'a short period of time, or for a long time.' (p.20) Watanabe (2004a), gives the example of an entrance examination whose influence is present only for a short period until the test takers prepare for the test and the influence disappears after entering the institution. However, if the influence of the exams continues even after the test-takers have entered the institution, this is known as long-term washback.

Intentionality: According to Messick (1989), there is unintended as well as intended washback when he wrote, 'judging validity in terms of whether a test does the job it is employed to do... requires evaluation of the intended or unintended social consequences of test interpretation and use (cited in Watanabe, 2004a),. The appropriateness of the intended testing purpose and the possible occurrence of unintended outcomes and side effects are the major issues.' (p.84). Similarly, Mcnamara (1996) states that 'High priority needs to be given to the collection of evidence about the intended and unintended effects of assessments on the ways teachers and students spend their time and think about the goals of education' (p.22).

Value: According to Watanabe (2004a), the value of the washback of an exam may be positive or negative as 'it is not conceivable that the test writers intend to cause negative washback, intended washback may normally be associated with positive washback, while unintended washback is related to both negative and positive washback' (p.20). Value judgement may be regarded as part of evaluation studies and to differentiate between positive and negative value, it is essential to know who the audience is. Researchers need to answer the question, 'who the evaluation is for'. For instance, one outcome may be evaluated as being positive by teachers, whereas the same may be judged to be negative by school principals.

- a) Aspects of learning and teaching that may be influenced by the examination

Testing can influence various aspects of learning and teaching. In the seminal article, 'Does washback exist?', Alderson and Wall (1993, pp.120–121) propose 15 Washback Hypotheses regarding various aspects of classroom teaching and learning that may be affected by testing:

1. A test will influence teaching.
2. A test will influence learning.
3. A test will influence what teachers teach.
4. A test will influence how teachers teach.
5. A test will influence what learners learn.
6. A test will influence how learners learn.
7. A test will influence the rate and sequence of teaching.
8. A test will influence the rate and sequence of learning.
9. A test will influence the degree and depth of teaching.
10. A test will influence the degree and depth of learning.
11. A test will influence attitudes to the content, method of teaching and learning.
12. Tests that have important consequences will have washback.
13. Tests that do not have important consequences will have no washback.
14. Tests will have washback on all learners and teachers.
15. Tests will have washback effects for some learners and some teachers, but not for others.

The different hypotheses encompass test effects on teachers, learners, teaching content, teaching methodology, and the status of the test as well as the extent of test washback. Hughes tried to categorise the different hypotheses by proposing a framework that distinguishes between participants, process and products (Hughes, 1993; cited in Bailey, 1996). In his framework, participants include learners, teachers, textbook designers, administrators and publishers. Process refers to what participants do that may contribute to learning. Moreover, the outcome of learning are the products. According to this framework, testing may directly influence the perceptions and attitudes of its participants towards teaching and learning. These perceptions and attitudes may then influence what the participants do which contributes or impedes the learning outcomes. Bailey (1996) and Watanabe (2004a) proposes that these variables and the hypotheses of Alderson and Wall (1993) can be divided into 'washback to the learner' and 'washback to the programme'. Watanabe states that the former is

linked with hypotheses number 2, 5, 6, 8 and 10 which involves what learners learn, the rate and sequence of learning and the degree and depth of learning, while the latter is linked with hypotheses number 1, 3, 4, 7, 9 and 11 which involves what teacher teach, how teachers teach, the rate and sequence of teaching, and the degree and depth of teaching. It should also be noted that Watanabe's proposed model incorporates Alderson and Wall's (1993) washback hypotheses, Hughes (1993) and Bailey's (1996) model of washback which points to the model's comprehensive and inclusive nature. There has been a bias in the washback research area where most of the studies have explored washback to the program while less attention has been given to learners as they are difficult to access (Watanabe, 2004a).

b) Factors mediating the process of Washback being generated

According to Watanabe (2004a), the research suggests that various factors may mediate the process of washback. The factors are: test factors (for example, test methods, test contents, skills tested, purpose of the test, decisions that will be made on the basis of test within the entire educational system); prestige factors (stakes of the test, status of the test in the entire educational system); personal factors (teacher's educational backgrounds, their beliefs about the best methods of teaching/learning); micro-context factors (the school setting where the test is conducted); and macro-context factors, that is, the society where the test is used (Watanabe, 2004a)

In this section, the washback model of Watanabe (2004a) has been explained and discussed. This study uses this model of washback for several reasons. The dimensions of washback presented in the model inform the researcher about the nature of washback in a particular context, and it incorporates necessary concepts like positive and negative washback effects which will be used in this study.

Moreover, the component on the aspects of learning and teaching that may be influenced by the examination guides the researcher on what to investigate and what to observe when researching the washback phenomenon. Besides, this component has also been used to formulate the initial research question and sub-research questions of this study (refer to 1.1).

Furthermore, by using a model of washback that conceptualises the washback phenomenon as complex and multifaceted in nature, this aligns with the usage of ethnography which is seen as a suitable research method to unravel multi-layered phenomena. This complexity is mainly achieved through the third component of the model which elaborates on factors mediating the process of washback that is being generated. This is an essential component in this study because it is used to guide the investigation of uncovering and understanding the relationship between the different washback mediated factors that generated the washback effects (positive or negative) which are observed in the English literature classroom. Additionally, the thesis will review the extant substantial research literature on the washback phenomenon in the language testing area in other research

contexts. This will be used to make sense of the type of washback effects that were generated in the teaching and learning of English literature in the Mauritian context.

### **3.2.4 Negative washback or positive washback**

It is recognised that testing especially public and high stakes examinations have a negative influence on teaching and learning, also called as 'negative washback'. Under the influence of examinations, Alderson and Wall (1993) explains that there can be a distortion or narrowing of the curriculum (Madaus, 1988; Cooley, 1991; Biggs, 1995), the loss of instructional time and the reduced emphasis on skills that require complex thinking or problem-solving (Frederiksen, 1984; Darling-Hammond and Wise, 1985). This primarily occurs because teachers react negatively to pressure of classroom scores and it has also been foregrounded that teachers with less experience felt greater anxiety and accountability compared to experienced teachers (Fish, 1988). As a consequence, exam-preparation activities take several forms such as teaching test-taking skills, working past examination papers and drilling multiple-choice worksheets with the purpose of boosting exam scores (Noble and Smith, 1994; Davies, 1985). Also, Wiseman (1961) highlighted the format of paid coaching classes as a class that focuses on practising exam techniques rather than language learning activities. This leads to an uninteresting and narrow educational experience for students as such activities limit learning opportunities, curbs the creativity and spontaneity of both teachers and students and condenses the pedagogical value of the teaching profession (Madaus, 1988; Davies, 1985). However, it is noteworthy to understand that there is nothing harmful in exam preparation practices per se as they are even desirable before an exam; negative washback refers more to a situation where exam preparation takes precedence over learning and most of the teaching time is spent on exam preparation activities rather than learning activities.

In his study in elementary schools in the United States, Smith (1991) described the damaging effects of testing as 'substantially reduce the time available for instruction, narrow curricular offerings and modes of instruction, and potentially reduce the capacities of teachers to teach content and to use methods and materials that are incompatible with standardized testing formats' (p. 8). Similarly, in a Canadian study, Wideen et al. (1997) reported that Grade, 12 science teachers stated that they had lost much of their discretion in curriculum decision making, and, therefore, much of their autonomy. When teachers believe they are being circumscribed and controlled by the examinations, and students' focus is on what will be tested, teaching and learning are in danger of becoming limited and confined to those aspects of the subject and field of study that are testable.

On the other side, there is the positive washback scenario which posits that testing may have a positive effect on the teaching and learning within the classroom. Some researchers firmly believe that well-designed exams can be used to influence teaching and learning positively. In this spirit, believing in the power of high stakes testing, governments around the world have introduced new exams to influencing the teaching and learning in the classroom. According to Watanabe (2004a), if the teachers and the learners have a positive attitude towards the examination, and work readily and in a common way towards its objectives, positive washback can be generated. Davies (1985) also sustained that 'creative and innovative testing . . . can, quite successfully, attract to itself a syllabus change or a new syllabus which effectively makes it into an achievement test'(p.8). However, Alderson and Wall (1993) emphasise that the quality of washback effect might be independent of the quality of a test as any test whether good or bad may result in positive or negative washback effects. Another issue is the lack of consensus in the research community which washback effects are specifically positive or negative (Cheng and Curtis, 2004). For instance, Watanabe (2004a) notes that 'one type of outcome may be evaluated as being positive by teachers, whereas the same outcome may be judged to be negative by school principals. Thus, it is important to identify the evaluator when it comes to passing value judgment (p.21). Alderson and Wall (1993) recommend that instead of focusing on deciding whether or not the effects can be classified as positive or negative, it is essential to investigate the complex causes of such a phenomenon. One of the ways of doing this is by thoroughly investigating the broad educational context in which the assessment has been introduced since other forces exist in the society and the education system. If the consequences of a particular test for teaching and learning are to be evaluated, the educational context in which the test takes place needs to be fully understood. Whether the washback effect is positive or negative will largely depend on where and how it exists and manifests itself within a particular educational context.

In this section, it has been seen that washback is generally perceived as bipolar in nature (Green, 2007a), either negative (harmful) or positive (beneficial) but there seems to be a lack of consensus on the categorisation of some effects as positive or other effects as negative. This study intends to accommodate both positions by first assigning value judgements of positive effects or negative effects on the teaching and learning practices, then subsequently a more nuanced discussion of the value of washback effects of HSC exams will be presented from the data gathered. It might seem to be problematic to assign value judgements of positive effects or negative washback effects on the washback phenomenon, yet, distinguishing between these two effects is vital to understand which practices induce which effects. This may help to improve the teaching and learning of English literature in Mauritius. Thus, in this study, positive washback effects are seen as the teaching and learning practices that aligns with developing the intended learning outcomes of the official English literature (A level) curriculum whereas negative washback effects are seen as the teaching and

learning practices that primarily aligns with the exam content and exam format of the English literature (A level) exams. As such, positive washback would involve the teaching and learning practices that help the students to develop their ability to read and analyse the literature texts whereas negative washback would involve the teaching and learning practices that are focused on preparing the students for the English literature (A level) exams.

### **3.2.5 Washback on Teachers**

In the current study, the teacher factors that influences the different English literature teachers' teaching practices are explored, thus it becomes important to review and discuss the investigation of washback effects on teachers as carried out by existing washback studies. The following section reviews and discusses the role and importance of teacher factors within washback studies in the investigation washback effects on teachers.

Washback studies that have investigated large-scale curricular change through textbooks, tests, assessment components and the curriculum, report that the intended changes are not able to substantially affect teaching practices as teacher factors play a crucial role in influencing these practices for example (Wall and Alderson, 1993; Cheng, 1997; Andrews et al., 1995; Turner, 2006; Wang, 2011; Cheng, 2002). In addition, these studies also report that while the test changed the teaching content, but it can hardly be considered as a direct catalyst that affect the way teachers teach within the classroom.

Alderson and Wall (1993, p.68), one of the early scholars who investigated the effects of a large-scale curricular change in Sri Lanka, pointed to the existence of teacher factors: 'tests have impact on what teachers teach but not on how they teach.' Using the power of testing to initiate curricular change, the policy makers in Sri Lanka introduced new textbooks and a new examination in an effort to implement new teaching methods. Alderson and wall (1993) investigated the effects of a newly introduced English language exams through a two-year longitudinal observational study of O-level English classes, together with studies of teachers and pupils' attitudes to the new examination. The researchers concluded that there was no real impact on the way the teachers taught English. Wall and Alderson (1993) pointed out that there may be other factors at play other than testing which affects the teaching and learning happening within the classroom. They pointed out that the washback effect is produced by the teachers' perception of the test rather than the test itself (Wall and Alderson, 1993).

Moreover, Turner (2006), in his study points to the teacher factors such as teachers' beliefs and professional aspects that played a key role in the teachers' response to a new reform in Canada. Turner (2006) focused on investigating the perspectives of teachers when dealing with educational

change introduced through Provincial exams in Quebec, Canada. Through a survey with secondary school ESL teachers, the study attempted to explore the perspectives and beliefs of the teachers when a speaking test was introduced in the education system. Interestingly, unlike other studies, Turner (2006) reported that the teachers tried to integrate the changes proposed by the test into their teaching and assessment practices. Turner (2006) states that the teachers are willing to play their part in aligning curriculum, teaching, assessment and the high stakes exams. In the same vein, there are some other studies namely Davison (2008), Tavares and Hamp-Lyons (2008), Urmston and Fang (2008) and Muoz and Alvarez (2010) that have reported that positive washback through large scale reforms may occur in the long term if proper training, guidance, and support are given to teachers. All these studies downplay the direct influence that testing can possibly have on the teaching practices of teachers and emphasises the importance of teacher factors which can be influenced through training and awareness for the successful implementation of a new reform.

Another washback researcher, Wang (2011) has also concluded that testing alone does not influence teaching practices. In his doctoral thesis, Wang (2011) investigated the washback effects of the reform process carried out in the Chinese context that included the introduction of a revised version of the College English Test (CET) which is a national standardised test. Wang (2011) focused on investigating the resulted change in terms of pedagogical strategies used by the teachers. The study of Wang (2011) found that the teachers resisted the intended changes by the policymakers and the teachers harboured negative attitudes towards the CET. Wang (2011) concluded that the CET did not facilitate or restrained the desired instructional innovation. He further argues that for substantial changes to occur in teaching practices, it is essential to generate changes in teacher knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and thinking which inform their teaching practices (Wang, 2011). He recommends enhanced teacher training to help the teachers in generating and maintaining a positive attitude towards the test and the educational system.

As, it can be seen, the empirical washback research has pointed out the existence and crucial role of teacher factors that affect the way teachers teach within the classroom. Interestingly, the crucial role of the 'teacher factor' in educational change is not solely emphasized in washback research. It is stressed in research in language education and general education as well (Freeman, 2002; Fullan, 1991, 2007; Kennedy, 1987; Richards, 2008; Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Richards and Farrell, 2005; Markee, 1997; Sato and Kleinsasser, 2004; Solomon, 2002; Stobart, 2003; Woods, 2006).

The empirical washback researchers have identified several teacher related factors that mediates the washback effect: The perception and attitudes of the teachers towards the exams' stakes and usefulness, the status of the language and skill tested (Shohamy et al., 1996); the effective teaching methods that can be used to teach the subject (Watanabe, 1996a); the awareness of the existence

and design of the exam (Spratt, 2005); the relationship between the test and the textbook (Wall and Alderson, 1993; Wall, 2005); the teachers perceptions of their students' perceptions (Alderson and Hamps-Lyon 1996), the teachers teaching philosophy ( Lam, 1994).

Another notable teacher factor that has been reported within the washback research is the teachers' education and training that they have received. Andrews (2004) states that the amount of methodological training the teachers have received plays an important role in determining washback, the teachers' training in teaching specific tests and how to use test related textbooks (Wall and Alderson 1993), teachers' readiness to include changes in their teaching practices (Cheng 1997 and 2005). Wall (2005) stated that testing can influence teachers' teaching practices unless teachers have the required skills 'to experiment with, evaluate and make appropriate adjustments to new methods' (p.283). Cheng (2005) also pointed that teachers will not implement change in their instructional practices unless they have the required ability and skills.

Consequently, in this section, it has been discussed that teacher factors play a crucial role in mediating and generating washback effects. Thus, when investigating the effects of the HSC exams on teachers and teaching practices, this study will try to uncover the teacher factors that influences the teaching practices observed within the classrooms across the three settings.

### **3.2.6 Washback on Learners**

In the current study, students' views on the teaching and learning of English literature, their own experiences of the HSC exams and their demographic information are collected to get a broader and deeper understanding of the washback phenomenon. Thus, it becomes important to review and discuss the treatment of learners as found in the extant washback studies. The following section reviews and discusses learner factors within washback studies.

Alderson and Wall (1993) in their proposition of the washback hypotheses, acknowledged the role of testing on learners by pointing that testing will have effects on: 'how learners learn', the rate and sequence of learning, the degree and depth of learning (120). Though there were attempts in some washback studies (Cheng 1998), Hamps-Lyons (1997), Shohamy (1993), Shohamy and al (1996) that have tried to investigate some facets of the effects of testing on learners, in general there still lacked studies that look into this phenomenon. Hamp-Lyons (1997) argued that: 'more studies are needed of student's views and their accounts of the effects on their lives of test preparation, test taking and the scores they have received on tests' (299). Even Wall (2000) acknowledges that 'we know very little about students' perceptions of tests (as opposed to their teachers' impressions of their perceptions) and even less about how new tests influence what students know and can do.' (506) Cheng (2008) also noted that in comparison to the number of washback studies on teachers and teaching, it is only



recently that a large number of empirical research studies on washback on learning and learners have started to appear.

The different washback studies have focused on investigating the effects of testing on learners (their perceptions, their use of learning strategies, motivation, anxiety and affect) and on learning (the content and the learning styles and how they perform on the test). Different washback studies have reported that learners' perceptions and attitudes towards teaching, learning and testing are contributing washback factors that generates and mediates washback (Cheng, 1998; Read and Hayes, 2003; Shohamy et al., 1996; Gosa, 2004; Green, 2005; Xie, 2015).

Gosa (2004) investigated the washback effects of the English component of the Romanian school-leaving exam on a group of learners in the Romanian context. The findings revealed that the students' expectation of assessment was the most important factor that influenced their perspectives on teaching and learning activities. As a whole, Gosa (2004) found that students and teachers, both neglected listening and speaking skills as they were not tested in the Bac papers. The students focused mainly on exam related tasks both in the classroom and in their personal environment as they felt the need 'to extensively practice the exam tasks'.

Cheng (1998) investigated the impact of a public examination change in the existing Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) in English that was introduced with the intention to bring positive washback effects on teaching and learning. Cheng (1998) used a questionnaire to explore the possible changes in the attitudes of students in their classroom activities, practice opportunities and learning strategies. In terms of activities that were conducted in the classroom, it was found that some activities such as speaking, group discussion and language games were being carried out in a great proportion which indicated a match with the requirements of the new HKCEE. However, the study also found that students displayed mixed attitudes towards the new HKCEE as there was minimal change in their motivation and learning strategies. Cheng (1998) pointed that the students 'did not think that examinations were an accurate reflection of all aspects of their study...' and they believed that 'they had to work hard to achieve the best examination scores possible. (p.296).

Latimer (2009) conducted an ethnographic study in an English language program at one Argentinean bilingual school. At the school, the broad-based k-6 bilingual curriculum was effective in promoting students' communicative abilities, their comfort in second language (L2), and eagerness to use the language for academic and social purposes. When the Cambridge ESOL examination preparation became the program goal and curriculum, the students failed to progress in the communicative and analytical language abilities that they would need in future higher education. Latimer (2009) explained the negative effects of the Cambridge exams in terms of the interactions between curriculum,

teaching, and learning, showing that the exams provided a structure for curriculum organization, and motivated both teachers and students. The preparatory texts used at the school, however, restricted classroom interaction and limited extended output from students.

In another study, Green (2007b) focused on the effects of IELTS preparation courses on assisting students in improving their test scores. Participants in this study included three sub-groups: students attending the IELTS preparation courses, students in the pre-sessional EAP courses (with no IELTS component), and students in combination courses (pre-sessional EAP courses with IELTS preparation strands). All participants were asked to take the IELTS grammar/vocabulary tests at the beginning and again at the end of their 4-to-14-week courses. In addition to the test scores, data relating to differences in participants and learning practices were also collected. Analysis of the data revealed that score gains were primarily between two groups of learners: those who planned to take the test again, and those who had low initial writing test scores. Narrow test preparation did not necessarily enhance test scores more effectively than did wider-ranging alternative preparations. Green (2007a) concluded that 'washback to the learner (possibly in the form of motivation to succeed) had more to do with the improvement than did washback to the programme. Green's (2007a) conclusion that test preparation does not contribute much to improving performance is supported by Perrone's reported in Perrone (2010) investigation into the notions of washback and classroom-based assessment within the context of the First Certificate of English (FCE) examination in the UK. This study found that students' mean scores on the FCE in the FCE preparation course and the general EFL course were not significantly different, suggesting that classroom methodology may have had a limited impact on performance. However, results from the study suggested that the classroom assessment task had a differential impact on the accuracy and speed with which the individual learners processed the new target language forms. Therefore, Perrone concluded, while there are limited differences in student test performance between the test preparation and the general EFL classes, there is a significant difference in student learning/processing at the individual level, attributable to the classroom assessment practices they were engaged in.

Other studies have explored test-takers' and students' perspectives in order to explain washback in relation with different factors that relates to the students and to the context. For instance, Murray, Riazi and Cross (2012), conducted a study with a group of overseas-trained teachers that was preparing for a professional gate-keeping test in Australia. They investigated the role of test-taker attitudes in generating and mediating washback. Cheng and Deluca (2011) examined test takers' perspectives in writing a large-scale English language tests in Asia. The findings showed both negative and positive experiences of these test takers. These findings gave the test-takers' a voice on important aspects of language assessment and it reiterated the need to obtain additional evidence from test-takers to validate language tests. Virkiru (2011), who investigated a literacy program that was aimed towards

primary school children in Kenya. The study found that the learners did not perform well on the skills that were not directly tested in the examinations.

Zhan and Wan (2014) examined how the revised CET influenced Chinese non-English major undergraduates' out-of-class English learning practices by following two informants in one university over time. Consistent with Cheng and al.'s (2011) finding, the qualitative data analysis of this study showed that the washback effects from the CET on the two informants' out-of-class English learning practices seemed to vary across time and tended to increase as the test approached.

Booth (2012) conducted a longitudinal study in South Korea to explore the washback on learning as a socially situated process, focusing on the TOEIC, a high-stakes test for Korean university students. Triangulating data collected through semi-structured journals and multiple interviews with students, the study highlighted the important contribution of situated learner goals and actions to the effects of the TOEIC on learning. Booth (2012) drew from a social perspective of learning to frame her study by conceptualizing learning as a process and by discussing the key differences between 'cognitive' and 'social' theories in SLA. Within SLA, there has been much debate regarding the meaning and characteristics of learning in applied linguistics (Booth 2012). Central to this debate is the usage of 'cognitive' and 'social' traditions to theory building, or theoretical pluralism, which can lead to various ways of explaining and researching how the learners learn a second language (Ellis, 2010) (cited in Booth 2012). Within a cognitive psychological perspective, acquisition and learning is seen as distinct mental processes. The role of the researcher is to attribute the observed behaviours of language learners to various internal processes such as: the construction of interlanguage representations, encodings and decodings between individuals, input processing and attentional operations by the learner, or the biological unfolding of linguistic universals' (Lantolf, 2000, p.45). SLA is most concerned with changes made to the cognitive state through the exploration of how the brain processes, stores and constructs knowledge (and meaning) through language (Thorne, 2000; Sfar, 1998). On the other side, Ellis (2010) further summarises 'social', SLA using the following quote from Firth and Wagner (2007): 'In situated social practices, use and learning are inseparable parts of the interaction. They appear to be afforded by topics and tasks and they seem to be related to specific people, with particularised identities, with whom new ways of behaving occur as the unfolding talk demands (Booth, 2012). As such in a social perspective, language learning involves the ongoing negotiation of social identity where intra-and inter-psychological activity takes place in situated sociocultural historical contexts (Booth, 2012). She further considered the importance of the human agency in the language learning process and explores the complex interplay between the learner and their situated (social, cultural and historical) context. Lastly, she proposes Activity Theory as part of Sociocultural theory as the basis from which the study will explore the washback of the TOEIC exams. This research provided evidence for the significant roles of learner factors in directing the washback effect

of the test. Thus, Booth's (2012) findings support the view that washback is a complex system, where a range of factors may mediate the influence that a test has on learning (Alderson and Wall, 1993), therefore he suggests a shift in the direction of washback research towards a more socially situated view.

Lastly, Xie (2015) investigated the changes made to two design aspects of the College English Test (CET) in China. Firstly, the component weightage was adjusted and secondly, open-ended item formats was added in the test, thereby reducing the proportion of multiple-choice items. Using a questionnaire, Xie (2015) investigated the perceptions of these changes amongst students from a Chinese university and the effects on the students' test performance, time management and test preparation. The findings revealed that the students who displayed favourable perceptions of the CET showed a higher level of engagement in the language learning and test preparation activities. For instance, after the allocation of more marks on the listening skills component, the students started spending more time on listening skills. However, the favourable perceptions of the CET were not able to reduce negative washback effects such as drilling and cramming.

Learning seems to encompass three categories namely, learning the subject content, exam-preparation tasks or activities, revision activities and aligning itself with the concept of impact, some of these occur outside the classroom, within private tuitions settings and home settings. Hence this study will investigate the Mauritian learners' learning of the subject content, their exam preparations, their learning and revision style and their personal values and beliefs towards the literature in English HSC exams as well as towards their teachers' choice of pedagogy, curriculum and materials. Again, this study also intends to uncover the broader influence of testing on their lives; their social and economic background as well as their parents and siblings' role as mediating factors of washback will also be investigated.

### **3.2.7 Washback-mediated factors**

### **3.2.8 Test factors**

Washback Studies have found that different aspects of the test itself can influence the characteristics of washback. For instance, the format of the test (Shohamy and al., 1996), the weighting of individual papers (Lam, 1994) and when the test was introduced and how well acquainted are the teachers to it (Andrews et al., 2002). Though the primary argumentation has been that there is not a one-to-one relationship between testing and effects on teaching and learning, yet, it should be pointed out the test

remains one of the factors that affects teaching and learning. Lastly, it is important to note that the test consists of both the syllabus and the test that students need to take at the end.

### **3.2.9 Micro context factors**

According to Watanabe (2004a), the micro-context factors consist of the classroom setting and the school where the teaching and learning is taking place.

The class size is one of the micro-context factors that can potentially interact with the exam to impact on the teaching and learning practices within the classroom. Class size becomes an influential micro context factor especially when communicative language teaching methodologies are desired from the teachers (Wall, 2012; Read and Hayes, 2003). For instance, Onaiba and Mustapha (2014), investigated the washback effects of a revised EFL public examination on teachers' instructional practices in Libyan Basic Education Public schools. In his study, he found that 'the bigger the class, the fewer communicative activities are performed by teachers...' , thus learners have minimal opportunities in such classroom set ups to engage in communicative activities.

Similarly, Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996), in their study found that class size affects teachers' methods of teaching. For example, in TOEFL classes, the teachers could use pair or group work activities because of the small size of the classes. Washback studies also found that the school atmosphere and its cultural factors such as learning traditions also mediate the effects of testing (Watanabe, 2000; Wall, 2005). According to Alderson and Wall (1993) and Shohamy and al. (1996), the grade the teachers are teaching in a school can have an effect in determining washback. Both researchers in their respective studies reported that teachers in upper grade used more test focused instruction to meet test objectives compared to the teachers teaching in lower grades.

### **3.2.10 Macro context factors**

The macro context factors consist of the educational system and the larger society where the test is administered (Watanabe 2004a). The Ministry of Education, the vision of the government and the larger system of education in place may influence the teaching and learning happening within the classroom. Similarly, the social expectations, the prestige of the test within that particular society, level of unemployment and the country's economic status, all may have a bearing on the washback effects. Moreover, Spratt (2005) listed three distinct factors that is part of the macro-context related factors namely, the educational administration, the geographical factors and the political factors. The

educational administration is about the effects of the educational administration in implementing and supporting the desired change onto teachers and learners. The geographical factors relate to the facilities such as transport and electricity and whether the schools are located in war zones. Lastly, political factors relate to the political vision of the government and motivation to bring change in the educational system.

Consequently, it can be seen that different washback studies have reported a list of factors that mediates washback effects on teaching and learning.

Incidentally, the different studies have focused on exploring some factors and not others. For instance, early washback studies focused on disproving the myth that only testing can bring change in teaching and learning within the classroom, again focusing in investigating teachers and their teaching practices. After a call to address the lack of research on washback effects on learners, more studies started to focus on exploring learner factors, and more recently Cheng and al., (2015) recommends that the views of more educational stakeholders such as parents, test constructors and syllabus makers should be taken into account to understand the complexity of the washback phenomenon.

This study takes an exploratory stance through the use of ethnography and reckons the presence of various factors into play but focuses on investigating the salient factors emerging and how they interplay together to generate and mediate the washback effects of the English literature exams on the teaching and learning of English literature.

### **3.3 TEACHING LITERATURE**

This section will review approaches of teaching and learning literature, theories of teaching literature which will help to better understand the observed pedagogy within the classrooms and try to understand how the different approaches/theories can be seen as exam-oriented strategies or strategies that aim towards developing targeted skills.

Over the years, many approaches to teaching literature have been proposed such as Language-Based approach, Paraphrastic approach, Information-Based approach, Moral-Philosophical approach and stylistic approach. The evolution of literary criticism has also influenced the teaching and learning of literature as the role of the author, the text, the reader and the world have been questioned continuously and redefined. Perhaps, the most significant change in literary criticism was from traditional literary criticism to poststructuralist criticism. Traditional literary criticism viewed the text and the author as one entity and poststructuralism argued that they should be seen as two separate entities. Indeed, traditional literary criticism encouraged the incorporation of the intention and autobiographical information of the author when reading and interpreting a text. This position was famously criticised by Barthes (1967) his essay: *The Death of the Author*, where he argued that

readers must separate a literary work from its creator in order to liberate the text from interpretive tyranny. This section discusses three models of teaching literature namely, the transmission model, the transactional model and the sociocultural model that have influenced these different approaches and are still used as a baseline by teachers to teach English literature. These models of teaching literature influenced by the three primary learning theories namely Behaviourism, Cognitivism, and Social Constructivism have described the role of the teacher, the learner and the process of teaching literature.

As such reviewing these models serves two purposes, firstly, the features of each model will be used as reference to identify and understand the teaching methods used by the teachers in this study; subsequently, this will help to understand better how the teachers choice of methods is inducing positive or negative washback effects in the teaching and learning of English literature.

There are three models of teaching literature proposed by Carter and Long (1991), there are several individual approaches based on these three models and these models actually can be situated in different larger theories of teaching literature namely Transmission, transactional and sociocultural mode.

### **3.3.1 Origins of literature in English**

During the 10<sup>th</sup> century, classical literature (Greek and Latin) was essential in the European education system as the study of national literatures were linked to the official national languages (Hall, 2015). English literature as a subject was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in former British colonies such as India with the purpose in providing the people with ‘useful’ reading and learning alongside the expansion of the education system (Hall, 2015). Additionally, governors and missionaries conceived of literature as a means to establish moral and religious values (Hall, 2015). In contemporary times, the study of literature has become more inseparable from the study of English language. English literature is seen more as a source of teaching and learning materials, that the English language teacher can draw upon to help students develop the four language skills. Literature serves a significant role in the teaching and learning of English, especially for non-native speakers of English either ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. Many Studies have been devoted to the teaching of English through literature to ESL/EFL students.

### **3.3.2 Teaching and learning of English literature in postcolonial contexts Empirical research**

The research on the teaching and learning of English literature in postcolonial contexts have taken mainly two strands, one strand has focused on researching English literature's role in the teaching and learning of English literature in ESL and EFL contexts and the other strand which has gained lesser attention has focused on researching the teaching and learning of English literature as a subject.

The research that have focused on the role of English literature in the teaching and learning of English language has shown that literature can be very beneficial in aiding students acquire/develop the four language skills namely, reading, writing, and speaking as well as an excellent source of materials for teaching other components of English such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation (Elkilic et al., 2011, 2011; Floris, 2005; Khatib et al., 2011; Elliott de Riverol, 1991; TÜRKER, 1991; Yeasmin et al., 2011). Other benefits related to the teaching of English literature is that it is seen as a subject that can be used to increase the creativity and imagination of students (Daskalovska and Dimova, 2012) as well as their motivation (Sell, 2005; Vural, 2013) and it also helps to promote cultural awareness (Cruz, 2010).

In the second strand of research that has focused primarily on the teaching and learning of literature, there has been a widespread focus on investigating the different approaches to teaching literature at the secondary level, where the scholars have compared different approaches in their studies. For instance, Aziz and Nasharudin (2010), whose study is based in one ESL classroom in Malaysia, compared the language-based approach and the integrated approach, identifying the preferred teaching methods of the students and teachers and the shortcomings in using both methods. Similarly, other scholars, namely Rashid and al. (2010) compared the information-based and the moral-philosophical approaches and Hwang and Embi (2007) compared the paraphrastic, information-based, and moral-philosophical approaches. Other research has been conducted on particular methods in teaching literature to non-native speakers of English, such as the use of activity-based literature learning by Neranjani (2011), the use of computer-assisted literature teaching (Tseng, 2010), the use of specific novels to introduce classic English literature (Bjarkadóttir, 2009).

These studies have focused chiefly on investigating the different approaches of teaching English literature in the classroom context, their merits and shortcomings, as well as the usage of novel methods of teaching English literature. In my study, my aim is to look at the teaching and learning of English literature happening within the Mauritian classroom in relationship with the high stakes HSC exams and the larger context under the theoretical purview of washback. In a way, my study is also complementing these existing studies by taking a larger perspective on the teaching and learning of English literature compared to these studies.



### **3.3.3 Carter's models to teaching literature**

Carter and Long (1991) state that there are three models of teaching literature, namely the cultural model, the language model and the personal growth model.

In the cultural model is the traditional approach of teaching literature where learners are encouraged to discover, learn and infer the social, political, literary and also the historical context of a text. The learners are encouraged to learn and understand different cultures and ideologies where different texts have been written in relation to their own context. As such, this model is teacher-centred in nature; the teacher who views literature as a source of facts takes the central stage and focuses on passing the knowledge and information to the students.

The Language Model is an approach that provides learners with an opportunity to approach the text in a systematic and methodological way. In this approach, the teacher uses language teaching strategies such as cloze tests, prediction exercises, jumbled sentences, summary writing, creative writing and role-play to analyse texts in order to attain specific linguistic goals. This model relates to the potential of using literature as a resource to teach the English language.

The Personal Growth Model is an approach that aims at the personal development of the students, which includes emotions and personal characteristics. Texts are seen as a way that will make students think, relate and respond to the themes and issues by linking them to their own lives. Literature is seen as a way to promote growth in personality and expand the worldviews of the readers.

These models have been included in different approaches to teach literature.

#### **3.3.3.1 *Language-based approach***

The language-based approach is related to the Language Model proposed by Carter and Long (1991), where literary texts are seen as a means to help the students improve their language proficiency. This is achieved by providing the students exposure to the target language and connecting them to specific vocabulary and other aspects of the language. The aim of this approach is to use literary texts as a resource for stimulating language activities (Duff and Maley, 2004). In like with this approach, a language-based framework for reading literary texts has been proposed by McRae (1991) and McRae and Vethamani (1999). In their framework, they move the analysis of the literary text from lexis (vocabulary), syntax (sentences) to coherence (discourse). It also focuses on phonology (sounds), graphology (visual effect of the text), semantics (meaning), dialect (variations of standard English), register (tone), period (archaisms) and function (message in the text).

### **3.3.3.2 Paraphrastic approach**

According to Hwang and Embi (2007), this approach deals with the surface meaning of the text. This approach allows teachers to use simpler words and sentence structures compared to the more complicated ones often found in texts, and the teachers can even use other languages. This approach is suitable for beginners of the target language as it acts as a strategy to help the students understand the author's work.

### **3.3.3.3 Information based approach**

This approach demands a large input from the teacher, and it is related to the term Literature with a big 'L' proposed by McRae (McRae, 1991). It describes the study of literature as an aesthetically patterned artefact endowed with the knowledge potential's philosophy, culture, morality and humanities. Carter and Long (1991) argue that this involves concepts, literary conventions

### **3.3.3.4 Personal-response approach**

In this approach, the learner's response to the literary text. It encourages the learners to respond to the meanings and the author's intended meanings that may be evident in the text based on their individual understanding and thought. Such an approach helps the learners to read by making connections between the content of the texts and their personal life experiences (Rashid et al., 2010).

### **3.3.3.5 Moral-philosophical approach**

In this approach, as the name implies, the teachers try to incorporate moral values in their lessons. (Carter and Long, 1991; Rashid et al., 2010). The focus is on discovering moral values while reading the literary text. (Rashid et al., 2010).

## **3.3.4 Transmission model**

There are several teaching approaches and theories that have been seen as having some close features with the transmission model of teaching literature, namely, New literary criticism theory, Structuralist theory, Freire's (2000) Banking model of education, Teacher-Centred approach, Direct Instruction approach of reading, Showalter's (2003) Subject-Centred theories of teaching literature.

In the transmission model of teaching literature, the teacher takes an active role within the classroom as he or she uses his authority to dictate what happens in the literature classroom and decides how to

best impart or deposit the necessary knowledge within students (Beach et al., 2011; Freire, 2000). The students, metaphorically described as banks (Freire, 2000), receptacles (Freire, 2000) and empty vessels (Beach et al., 2011), take a passive role within the literature classroom as they wait for the knowledge to be imparted by the teacher. This single exchange of information often takes a narrative dimension where the teacher narrates, emphasises and presents content and information as 'correct answers' to the students who listen patiently, dutifully waiting to be filled up with knowledge (Beach et al., 2011; Freire, 2000; Showalter, 2003).

One of the significant shortcomings of this model is that it does not provide the students opportunities to think for themselves and make up their own mind about a text. It seems to anchor itself in the Behaviourist worldview that considers the learner as passive and having a clean slate (*tabula rasa*); thereby learning is seen as the reinforcement of positive learning behaviour through environmental stimulus (Schunk, 2012). As a consequence, this model encourages a kind of surface learning of literary texts as it is not clear whether the students have read, understood and engaged with the literary text at a first stage and with the information imparted by the teacher at a second stage. Another criticism is that the model encourages teaching towards the exams rather than developing the relevant competency of reading, understanding and analysing literary texts. Through, the notion of imparting 'correct answers' or appropriate 'knowledge', the teacher can be encouraged to teach the correct exam answers or correct analysis of the literary texts to the students rather than helping the later to develop their skills to do the necessary analysis themselves.

### **3.3.5 Transactional model**

Two approaches that form part of the transactional model of teaching literature are the reader-response theory and the poststructuralist approach to read the literary text. In the transactional model of teaching literature, the teacher takes a more background role as the mediator and facilitator within the classroom, and the students are empowered with a more active role. Thereby within the transactional model of teaching literature, the students endorse and are assigned an active role in partaking in the continual meaning-making process of literary texts through their life experiences, culture, society, political situation or literary theory lenses such as postcolonialism, feminism, modernism and others (Probst, 1987; Zima, 2002; Davis and Womack, 2002; Eagleton, 2011). A critical aspect of this 'reciprocal, mutually defining relationship' between the reader and the text is about the changing and subjective nature of a literary text, an experience that is different for every reader (Probst, 1987).

Probst (1987) offers several suggestions that can be used to teach literature within the transactional model of teaching. According to him, within the transactional model of teaching, primary responses of students are considered as the teacher encourage the students to articulate responses about the texts by reflecting upon them and analysing them in light of other readings, interpretations of other students, critics or information about literature (Probst, 1987). The classroom atmosphere is seen as cooperative rather than combative as the debating format might not be an appropriate model for discussing literature. The teacher thus does not lead classes carefully along with foreseen conclusions, sustained by critical authority, about literary works. This shows that the teacher shifts from teacher-centred where he is an authority in the classroom to a learner-centred pedagogy that would allow him to assume a role of facilitator and mediator in order to lead his learners towards an independent ability to read, assimilate and appreciate literary texts (Probst, 1987).

This model of teaching literature seems to be a drastic change from the teacher-centred model presented in the transmission model of teaching to a more student-centred model. One of its principal merits remains in rethinking the role of the reader from a passive, empty receptacle to one that is endorsed with a more active role and given the opportunity to understand, formulate and argue his own opinions on a literary text.

Another merit of this model, according to (Rosenblatt, 1985)(cited in Probst, 1987), is that it fosters a better understanding of the students as individuals and of their society: The literary transaction in itself may become a self-liberating process, and the sharing of our responses may be an even greater means of overcoming our limitations of personality and experience.

### **3.3.6 Socio-cultural learning theory**

Another theory of teaching literature is based on Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural learning theory. According to Vygotsky (1978), knowledge construction is a sociocultural mediated process that is co-constructed in the social interaction within social groups and communities (Lantolf, 2004; Lantolf and Poehner, 2008).

Hence, within socio-cultural learning, teaching literature can take the shape of a literary book club where the responsibility of the literature teacher is to socialise students into a literary community of practice (Edelsky et al., 2002). As such, the students are given the platform and opportunity to become careful readers who learn several practices to interpret and produce literature (Beach et al., 2011). The role of the teacher is to help the students to become members of this literary community of practice.

Another central idea within the socio-cultural learning theory is what Vygotsky calls Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD refers to a metaphorical area that is between what the students are capable of accomplishing on their own and what they can complete with the aid of a more experienced person. Beach et al. (2011) explain that to help students in learning literature, the teacher has to model/scaffold the use of practices with the aim of doing a hand-over afterwards. The teacher is expected to take an 'I do; you watch; you try, I watch' approach (Beach et al., 2011). However, it is also essential to consider the level of the students or their ZPD when using modelling/scaffolding in order to help the students challenge themselves and grow beyond their current ZPD. The ZPD also influences text selection; for instance, Beach and al. (2011) state that early adolescents might be more interested in story-driven adventure, fantasy, mystery or science fiction rather than complex psychological character motivations.

Another central tenet of sociocultural learning theory is the importance of engagement in learning. According to Beech and al (2011), people are more likely to engage in an activity when they have some sense of ownership or partake in the planning or participation in that activity.

Beach et al. (2011) state:

In the socio-cultural theory of teaching, the primary focus is not simply on the teacher or on the student; the focus is on creating social activities or communities in which students acquire various practices and tools constituting learning literature. Student motivation and engagement with learning is no longer an individual matter, but now is a function of the quality of the activity of community created in the classroom. (p.10)

This model of teaching literature recognizes the knowledge of the teacher, which makes them experienced readers of the literary text, but instead of merely imparting this knowledge to the students like within the transmission model of teaching, the teacher is encouraged to provide the students with the necessary tools and ways to acquire this knowledge in order to become part of this literary community. The tools here may consist of literary jargon or language such as plot device, characterisation, a thematic overview, the narrator, the antagonist, protagonist that is necessary to analyse a text. The teacher, with his expertise and knowledge, is in a position to guide and lead relevant discussions within the classroom, which will help the learners to develop the relevant skills to read, understand and analyse literary texts. Additionally, this theory introduces the aspect that all learners of literature might not be at the same level of proficiency, the ZPD of the learners might differ, thereby requiring a varied level of teaching to help the different learners to develop the required skills and to become part of the literary community. The use of such a model of teaching indicates a format of teaching where the focus is less on teaching the 'correct' answers or the correct analysis of the text to succeed in the exams (like in the transmission model). On the contrary, it focuses on helping the

students to develop the relevant skills to be able to read, understand and analyse literary texts. Thus, the use of such a model of teaching English literature within the classroom that aligns itself with the learning objectives of the syllabus could potentially indicate positive washback effects.

The socio-cultural learning theory also informs the investigation of the sub research question: What are the washback effects of the English literature (A level) HSC exams on the students' learning and exam preparation practices? The out of classroom learning practices as learning is seen as a social process that goes beyond the boundaries of the classroom where that the students engage in learning practices of English literature in their home contexts, online, during recess or in other contexts to become part of a broader literary community.

### **3.4 SUMMARY**

In the first part of this chapter, the theoretical background which includes a working definition of washback, fundamental theories around washback and relevant research literature in the washback research revolving on the five axes, namely washback on teachers, learners, washback-mediated factors, test factors, micro context factors and macro context factors have been reviewed. These will subsequently help to analyse and interpret the different findings of this study.

In the second part of this chapter, a brief overview of the origins of the subject and the type of research that has been conducted on the teaching and learning of English literature in the post-colonial contexts, as well as theories on the teaching and learning of English literature have been reviewed. These theories, especially the three main models, namely the transmission model, the transactional model and the socio-cultural learning theory, will subsequently help us to better understand the type of teaching and learning of English literature that is happening within the Mauritian classrooms.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study uses an ethnographic approach to explore the effects of washback on the teaching and learning of English literature at the HSC level. The usage of an ethnographic approach as a methodology to investigate washback has been deemed as suitable for this study because it complements the exploratory nature of the leading research question: ***What are the washback effects of the high stakes HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature on a group of teachers and learners in the Mauritian context?*** The extant research literature and the theoretical stance taken within this study considers washback as a complex, multi-layered and multidimensional phenomenon rather than a monolithic phenomenon which necessitates a qualitative approach; hence ethnography, to uncover such complexities (Watanabe, 1996a). The need for an ethnographic approach is further needed because of the limitations of some other washback studies that have been unable to capture the dynamic processes behind the washback phenomenon because of their preference for quantitative methods of investigations (Hall, 1995).

Within the first section of this chapter, I intend to explain the different components of an ethnographic approach, its relevance and its suitability for this study. In the second section of the chapter, I describe the research settings and the participants of the study. Afterwards, in the third section, how the data was collected and analysed during the three phases of the study, namely in classroom observation, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, are elaborated upon. Finally, the limitations of a qualitative lens, most notably an ethnographic approach, is discussed in the last section of the chapter.

### 4.2 ETHNOGRAPHY

#### 4.2.1 Ethnography in washback studies

An ethnographic approach within an interpretivist perspective was used in this study to investigate the washback effects of HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature. An ethnographic approach involves 'the close-up, on-the-observation of people and institutions in real-time and space' (Wacquant, 2003, p.5); 'watching what happens, collecting documents and artefacts-

in fact, gathering whatever data are available' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007); '...in a systematic manner' (Brewer, 2000).

One of the main reasons to use such an approach was due to the fact that the washback phenomenon has gradually been seen as a complex rather than a monolithic phenomenon (Watanabe, 2004a). As reviewed in the theoretical framework chapter, this complexity can be seen through the findings of various studies that have revealed the influence of exams on various aspects of learning and teaching (Bailey, 1996; Cheng, 1997; Watanabe, 1996b), and the process of washback being generated is mediated by numerous factors (Brown, 1997; Shohamy, Donitsa- Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996; Wall, 1996b; Wall & Alderson, 1993). Also, it has been noted that most of the washback research literature in SLA has focused mainly on using quantitative methods in researching washback or single methods; hence, such studies have failed to capture the interactive processes that involve individuals within groups which are also part of communities (Hall, 1995).

As such, taking account of the complexity of the washback phenomenon as revealed by the findings of extant washback studies and through the theories and models theorised by scholars, and recognising the limitations of quantitative methods in uncovering this complexity, scholars such as Watanabe (2004a) and Cheng and al (2015) have recommended the usage of qualitative methods as essential for the future of washback research. Watanabe (1996a) argues that an ethnographic approach will be able to uncover this complexity as washback effects can be observed on various aspects of teaching and learning, and several factors mediate this process of washback. Also, inevitably, 'the methodology that attempts to disentangle this complexity [of washback] needs to be multifarious in nature' (Watanabe, 2004a, p.20), and ethnography as an approach offers this multipronged way to gather and analyse data to illuminate the washback phenomenon. The complexity of the washback phenomenon has been seen as far from being a simplistic cause and effect model of testing influencing teaching and learning of a particular subject. On the contrary, Watanabe (2004a) states that washback is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon embedded in a broader social context, where the effects of exams on teaching and learning within the classroom is mediated by other washback-mediated factors and other educational stakeholders such as parents, principals, policymakers and others.

Moreover, a vital feature of an ethnographic approach is the interpretivist worldview, which is used within this study to investigate the washback phenomena. To understand the interpretivist worldview, it is vital to first grasp the positivist worldview as the former was developed as a critique of the latter. Within the positivist paradigm, the researcher is concerned with taking a 'scientific' perspective to gain factual knowledge through objective observation and measurement (Travers, 2001). The role of the



researcher is to collect observable and quantifiable data, often through statistical analysis in an objective way. Creswell and Poth (2018) argue that the perspective of the researcher is detached from the study, and the study focuses on 'facts' to ensure that there is no 'human interest'. Hence, within such an approach, it is believed that it is possible to measure and understand social behaviour in an autonomous way without considering the context, and social phenomena can be understood in an objective way (Hughes and Sharrock, 2016).

On the other hand, the interpretivist worldview was developed as a critique of positivism and as a tool to understand the social world. In this worldview, the researcher does not see the world as orderly and quantifiable. On the contrary, the researcher seeks to capture and interpret the multiple understandings and multiple perspectives of a phenomenon that is "lived, felt and undergone" by different individuals (Robson, 2011, p.24). Hence, the aim of interpretivist research is to capture a rich understanding of the reality of the participants' views of the world by obtaining and interpreting the participants' social constructions of that reality (Creswell, 2014). The reality of the participant's views of the world which can be seen as their social constructions of reality, is often expressed through the participants' views, activities, beliefs and behaviour (ibid), and interpretivism offers a variety of methods to investigate these constructions. Several interpretivist methods have been developed to investigate the multiple and subjective social constructions. For instance, unstructured observation, open interviewing, idiographic descriptions and qualitative data analysis are all presented as possible ways to capture "insider" or "emic knowledge" (Creswell, 2014) within the study.

Hence, within this study, equipped with an ethnographic approach within an interpretivist worldview, allows me to use various methods of data collection such as observations, interviews and questionnaires to capture and understand the washback phenomena as experienced by the various participants, namely the teachers, the headteachers and the students.

#### **4.2.2 Reflexivity In ethnography**

During the 1980s, there was a rise in the interest in critically looking at the ways fieldwork was produced and written, which even led to the emergence of a sub-genre of ethnographic writing: the self-reflexive fieldwork account (Clifford and Marcus, 1986, cited in O'Reilly 2009). And in this investigation, the role of the ethnographer as a participant in the situation he is studying through the narratives that he produces was of interest. The self of the ethnographer can be seen as intruding in the life of the individuals being studied, but one should resist the attempt to generalize and simplify the individuals' lives (O'Reilly, 2009). However, the possible invasive nature of the self does not mean the

text produced by the ethnographer becomes about the ethnographer (O'Reilly, 2009). What is required is for the ethnographer to locate himself 'honestly and openly, in an admission that observations are filtered through his own experience, rather than seeking to provide the detached voice of authority (O'Reilly 2009: 191).' It means the ethnographer must confront and reveal the relationship with the people, problematising the context and his place in it. 'That is, an awareness that ethnographies are constructed by human beings who make choices about what to research, interpret what they see and hear, decide what to write and how, that they do all this in the context of their own biographies and often ensconced in scientific and disciplinary environments (Spencer, 2001, cited in O'Reilly 2009: 193). Participant observation is a spontaneous and embodied activity that involves more than being present in the thick of the action, but it also involves doing or participating with the others (O'Reilly, 2012). The field is conceptualized as sensory in nature with noises, sights and smells that will be processed by our ears, eyes and even legs creating feelings of delight or repulsion (Madden, 2010; Pink, 2015). Madden (2010) describes fieldwork as a 'whole-of-body-experience'. Kusenbah (2003) proposes the 'go-along' method, which entails accompanying the participants in their daily lives. Embodied knowledge is constructed over time as the ethnographer learns to do the activities that the research participants can do, start doing the things with them, and the ethnographer gradually becomes embedded within the situation, culture and group of people (O'Reilly, 2012).

Similarly, in this study, I acknowledged that the very inspiration to research the washback effects of the HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature stems from my own personal experiences. My experience as a student in the Mauritian education system, my upbringing in a middle-class family and the dialogue on education with my father, my career as an English language teacher at secondary level and as a teacher trainer at tertiary level. Additionally, I also worked in one of the state secondary schools. As an insider and as a researcher, I acknowledge that these experiences, as well as my readings of the research literature and having myself experienced the competition and pressure of HSC exams, undoubtedly impinged upon my interpretations and analyses of the data. Even, Wanatabe (2004a) points towards the inherent bias that all researchers will have as they also have taken some exams at some point in their lives. Similarly, I actually took part in the English literature exams twelve years back, and I even studied some of the texts that the students were studying. Watanabe (2004a) recommends asking two crucial questions proposed by LeCompte et al. (1993) that can help in negotiating this issue. The first question is: Is there anything going on out there? Moreover, the second question is: What is going on out there? (LeCompte et al., 1993). By asking these two questions, can help the researcher to lessen their personal experiences onto the research process. Additionally, I have to reiterate, though I accept and acknowledge the possible and inevitable impingement of my personal experiences in this study, the latter is far from an auto-

ethnography, and this was achieved mainly through a balance of the emic and etic perspectives and the usage of triangulation.

When doing ethnography, there is this constant negotiation and navigation between the participants' interpretation of their world (emic perspective) and the researcher's own views (etic perspective). Ethnography, therefore, provides a theoretical framework for the complete analysis and interpretation of collected data. However, this does not mean that the researcher's own voice should completely disappear. For instance, Fetterman (2019) states that both perspectives need to be included if the researcher wants to engage with the data fully. Hence to lessen researcher bias in this study, multiple views of the different participants experiencing the exam pressure have been presented and also the perspective of the researcher has been included when analysing the data.

### **4.2.3 Triangulation**

Watanabe (2004a) states that exploring washback effects from a single method like the studies of Hughes (1989), who used test scores and Hamp-Lyons (1997), who used document analysis, can lead to an incomplete picture of the phenomenon. Relying solely on the views of participants without classroom observation might lead to collecting perceptions rather than what is happening in the teaching and learning context. As such, several washback researchers have argued for the inclusion of several methods of data collection in investigating the washback phenomenon. Alderson and Wall (1993) have suggested that in any washback study, the focus should be on classroom observation and triangulation. Moreover, for Bailey (1996), triangulation would at least include both teachers' and students' perceptions. On the other hand, Messik (1996) suggests that researching washback should include both observing classes and asking the participants about their views and experiences to ascertain whether teaching and learning are linked to the introduction and use of the test. Similarly, Green (2007b) encourages the use of triangulation 'a popular approach to investigating washback has been through questionnaire and observation-based case studies of participants and processes' (p.78). As such, in order to understand the nature and scope of such a complex phenomenon like washback, not only observations of teaching and learning but follow-up interviews are necessary.

According to Bailey (1999), anthropologists and applied linguistics have borrowed the concept of triangulation from the field of navigation and land surveying. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.12) use a navigation analogy to explain the concept of triangulation:

...a single landmark can only provide the information that they are situated along a line in a particular direction from the landmark. With two landmarks, however, their exact position can be pinpointed by taking bearings on both landmarks...

When this concept is applied in social sciences, it means that the findings of a study can be seen as more convincing and credible, especially if the data have been collected from different sources.

Denzin (1970) identified four types of triangulation. (1) Data triangulation involves the usage of data from more than one source to answer the research question; (2) Investigator triangulation involves more than one researcher collecting or analysing the data; (3) Theory triangulation entails the usage of more than one theory to analyse and interpret findings; (4) Methodological triangulation involves using two or more instruments to collect data. In the methodology of washback studies chapter, the section on verification of research, Watanabe (2004) points towards the importance of using the triangulation concept in washback research by summarising the different types of triangulation that have been employed by different washback researchers to establish credibility and dependability. Some examples that he foregrounds where other washback researchers have used triangulation are Qi (2004), Saville and Hawkey (2004), Watanabe (2004b) and Burrows (2004). In her study, Qi (2004), interviewed test constructors, teachers and inspectors to understand their perceptions on the examination (data triangulation). Saville and Hawkey (2004), used investigator triangulation within their study by incorporating multiple views of experts as well as a large number of test users. Watanabe (2004b) used data triangulation as he gathered data from both the observation and interviews of teachers and incorporated the attribution theories of motivation in his analysis (theory triangulation) to better understand the teachers' intentions behind their teaching practices. Further, Burrows (2004), showed the importance of including both quantitative and qualitative data by incorporating interviews, questionnaires and observations, thereby also achieving methodological triangulation. Subsequently, the author also examined the feedback from each stage, and proposed a new conceptualisation of washback based on Woods' (1996) theory (theory triangulation).

In this study, three types of triangulation, namely data triangulation, have been used to increase the credibility of the study.

Firstly, in this study, data triangulation has been used where more than one source of data has been used to answer the research questions. The different sources of data that were used within this study involved three different settings, namely a private state secondary school, a state secondary school and private tuition set up. There were seven different teachers, two heads of departments and five students; all participants teaching and learning practices, as well as views on the washback phenomenon, were recorded. Data triangulation also aids in getting richer and more complex data to understand the washback phenomenon as previous studies have shown that washback effects differ from teacher to teacher, from student to student and from setting and setting (Spratt, 2005).

Secondly, theory triangulation has been used within the study, which entails the usage of more than one theory to analyse and interpret data. Instead of relying solely on washback theories to make sense of the washback phenomenon, other relevant theories such as the learning theories of literature, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation theories, theories of identity or positioning theory have been used within this study. Theory triangulation is equally in line with the recommendation of Cheng and al. (2015), who has stated that it is desirable to use insights and theories from other related fields of study to enhance the understanding of the washback phenomenon.

Lastly, I collected data using classroom observations, interviews and questionnaires (methodological triangulation).

### **Transferability**

Transferability or generalisability refers to the extent to which a study's conclusions can be applied to another context. Holliday (2003) states that the primary aim of interpretative research is to examine multiple realities and to understand their uniqueness, while transferability is not usually intended. However, if there are many similarities between the two contexts, the readers may infer the results from a study to the second context. Hence it is crucial for a researcher to describe the research context, research situation and methods thoroughly so the reader can determine whether it is similar to their own (Gray, 2018).

Another essential concept in ethnographic research is what Geertz (1973) terms as 'thick description'. Geertz defines the ethnographic process as a thick description [...] taking into account all relevant and micro and macro contextual influences that stand in a systematic relationship to the behaviour or events one is attempting to explain.' (Watson-Gegeo, 1992, p.54). As such, according to Wanatabe (2004a), Geertz (1973) concept of thick description should also be applied in describing the context of study as explicitly as possible. This should be done to help readers understand the role of the test in the context and also to determine the possible transferability of findings from one context to another (Brown, 2001, cited in Watanabe 2004a). In this study, I tried to achieve transferability by capturing the details of the classroom, the teachers and students, the materials used, and the teaching methods employed in the classroom so that I could provide thick description' to my readers (Geertz, 1973 cited in Heigham and Croker, 2009). Additionally, I also provided a detailed contextual background of the history of the country, the demographics, and the evolution of the system of education. Furthermore, transferability is also achieved because I provided a detailed description of the research methods: strategy of inquiry used; sampling; data collection; procedures for recording, storing, and managing information; data analysis steps, including coding, interpretations and validation. I also believe that

transferability can work on a local basis as I took three different settings, namely, a private state secondary school, a state secondary school and a private tuition context. By trying to take three diverse settings in the Mauritian context, the findings and the conclusions of this study may be relatable to a broader local audience and can be generalised to other local institutions.

### **4.3 ACCESS TO THE FIELD OF STUDY**

#### **4.3.1 Ethical considerations**

Before conducting the research, I had to go through the procedures set by the Ethics committee of Goldsmiths University of London, which granted me approval for this study (see appendix 1). With the help of my supervisors, I submitted an ethical approval form, consent forms for teachers, under-age students and students. I followed the BERA 2011 ethical guidelines that helped me to design an ethically sound study. (Find Attached Ethics Approval form in Appendix 1; also find attached the various consent forms for teachers, adult students, underage students and information letter for students in the appendix)

#### **4.3.2 Informed and voluntary consent**

In my study, the teachers, the head teachers and the students were the main research participants. In a hierarchical system of education, I had to negotiate with the gatekeepers of the institutions, namely, the managers and the rectors, before accessing the research participants. During the negotiation process, both the managers of the state secondary school and the private secondary school clearly stated that they do not have any issues with my study, but it will depend on the approval of the rectors. Similarly, after explaining my study to the rectors of both institutions, both rectors stated that they do not have any issues; however, if the teachers disapproved of my presence in their classrooms, I would not be allowed to conduct the study. As such, even though the system in place is highly hierarchical in nature, the gatekeepers did not directly coerce the research participants of the study. However, I have to acknowledge that the research participants, namely the teachers had to accept my presence in their classrooms because of the existing power structure between them being employees and the gatekeepers as being the employers. This has also been noted by Biklen and Bogdan (2007), who states that due to the hierarchical nature of school systems, there is always an imbalance of power. Despite all this, my aim was to establish a relationship of mutual respect and trust with all the partners in my research for the proper execution of my study. As such, all my research participants, namely,

teachers, headteachers and students, could freely withdraw from the study at any point in time as stated in the last paragraph of the consent form they signed: 'I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my treatment in any way/my relationship with the Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.'

#### **4.3.3 Potential risk and value of the study**

Several steps were taken to ensure that there was no risk of harm to the participants of the study, which included the teachers, headteachers and students. Concerning the teachers, they had the opportunity to reflect upon their teaching practices and to work on their pedagogical choices. The management, which included the rectors and the managers, benefited from an initial written report about the teaching and learning of English literature at their respective institutions. This study also involved working with a vulnerable group because it included underaged (less than 18 years old) secondary school students. And to protect them, the students had to seek the approval of their parents, who also had to sign their consent forms, which permitted the students to participate in the study. However, that it is very difficult to foresee whether the risks outweigh the benefits clearly for participants. Hence, the researcher should acknowledge that even an interview can potentially be harmful for the participants and cause some kind of distress. As such, the researcher should consider the possibility of ceasing an interview, where it may seem that the participant is showing signs of discomfort or distress. Hence, I decided I would gradually create a rapport with my participants then interview them lengthily. Thereby, I decided to add a monetary reward of five hundred rupees for each student participant, and I also offered to help them in applying for scholarships and foreign universities. Further, another potential adverse consequence is that they may find my presence stressful as they are busy preparing for the high stakes HSC exams which is an essential step in their education career. I proposed several steps to lessen this stress. One of the steps I proposed was to build a good rapport with the students through jokes, shared interests and experiences, especially I myself have been a former HSC English literature student. I also stated that as a researcher, I was considering taking the students for a treat at the school canteen or bring them some chocolate at one point in the study. Lastly, I was also going to give them the option to opt out for one day or more days, rather than opting from the study entirely.

#### **4.3.4 Transparency**

In this study, to ensure transparency, all the different gatekeepers, namely the school managers and rectors, were given ample information and duly informed about the potential risks and burdens associated with the study verbally as well as in a letter. Further, in the consent forms used, the research participants were also given the opportunity to ask further questions to the researcher through email or over the phone and even to reach the primary supervisor in the UK if they had any complaints or concerns regarding the way the research is or has been conducted. Lastly, in order to clarify the details of the data collection process, three checkboxes were used at the end of the consent form that stated: I agree to 'Having audio recordings of interviews'; 'Having copies and photos of my work taken for work samples demonstrating revision/learning for the HSC exams. (The photographs will only be of my work and not of me).'; 'Being observed in the classroom in relation to the HSC exams'.

#### **4.3.5 Anonymity and confidentiality**

In qualitative studies, maintaining the ethical standards to ensure the anonymity, confidentiality and safety of the institutions and the participants involved is an essential part of the study (Creswell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014). In this study, I ensured that the data collected was treated in confidentiality as pseudonyms were used instead of the actual names of the secondary schools, the teachers, the headteachers, and the students. The confidentiality and the safety of the participants were further protected as details that I deemed might be problematic to share were removed or toned down. Additionally, specific events that could potentially identify the students were altogether omitted. Lastly, it was also decided that the data in terms of audio recordings of interviews will be stored for a period of ten years on my laptop.

#### **4.3.6 Conflict of Interest**

This study was funded by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC), and there was no conflict of interest or partiality involved. Though I have worked beforehand in one of the branches of the state secondary school, this study was not commissioned by the director of that institution or the teacher training institution, namely MIE. Hence, there was not any kind of conflict interest for this study.



#### **4.3.7 Gatekeepers and participants**

Laurila (1997) states that institutions can be very sceptical about the role of academics and the value of academic studies. As such, many institutions can block access to academics due to the inability of the academic to provide satisfactory answers about what, how and why they are carrying their study and, above all, how the study would provide value to the institution (Coleman, 1996). Thereby, researchers will usually spend much time on planning their access to the field of study, especially where the research takes the format of an ethnographic study that requires an in-depth, ongoing, and lengthy study of the research field (Patton, 2002; Shenton and Hayter, 2004). Similarly, in this study, I had to go through several levels of negotiation before collecting data; all levels had to be successfully negotiated to activate the study.

According to Creswell (2013), gatekeeping is the access point to the cultural community that the researcher has to negotiate to work with the participants that are part of this community with the aim to uncover information that will aid in answering the research questions. And to gain entry into a particular community, there are gatekeepers that hold the power to grant or deny access, often by ensuring that the confidentiality of the members of the culture is protected (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). In this study, the gatekeepers were the school managers, the rectors, the teachers that also held access to the students and the parents.

At the start, I wanted to conduct the study in state secondary schools coming directly under the aegis of the Ministry of Education of Mauritius. Hence, I wrote a detailed letter to the Ministry of Education seeking access to a number of schools for my study. (Find the letter in Appendix 2). I included the consent form for teachers and students alongside the letter. I was granted approval after an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Education, who showed much interest in my study. After receiving the letter of approval, I was tasked to contact the rector of the secondary schools to make an appointment with them. I went to meet the rectors of two star-secondary schools, and I was told that they would speak with the teachers who were going to recruit students for me. Unfortunately, I was not being given access to the classrooms for me to pitch my study to the students directly. Two students accepted to participate in the study, one boy and one girl, from the two secondary schools. The girl was a science student, and the boy was an English literature student. Gradually I understood that I would not be able to understand the teaching and learning practices of the girl as I was not a science student, and for the boy, he gradually dropped out of the study. I took some steps back and decided to approach other secondary schools. I gathered valuable insights through these experiences. I believed

that I was not able to recruit participants successfully because I was not given the access that I wanted, and I decided to search for only English language/English literature students.

With these valuable insights, I decided to approach private state secondary schools and my former employer's state secondary school. I wanted access to one private secondary school and one state secondary school to gain a more comprehensible and varied insight into the washback phenomenon in the local context. Additionally, I expected my participants to take private tuition; thus, gaining access to their private tuition was going to become a subsequent level of negotiation after the participants were confirmed. I also wanted to get approval from secondary institutions that were close to my house to avoid travelling for long hours, mainly because there is much traffic in the morning. Instead of sending letters by post or email, I preferred a hands-on approach where I went directly to the institutions to seek an appointment with the managers of the institutions. One manager of a private secondary school refused me access to his institution, citing ongoing renovation as a problem. Afterwards, I was able to identify another private secondary school where they were doing English literature, and I went to meet the manager. The manager welcomed me, and during that meeting, alongside all my documents which included my letters of consent, ethics approval by the university and the explanation about my study, I was able to explain and convince the manager to grant me access to the institution. Concerning the state secondary school, I contacted the Director on the phone and sent him an email about my study and also attached the consent forms. Afterwards, he called me for a meeting, in which I further explained the study. Generally, I had to convince the managers on two fronts, how my presence will not disturb the day to day running of their institutions and how they will benefit from my study as I will share my preliminary findings with them. After the approval of the managers, I spoke with the rectors of the respective institutions; both rectors seemed keen to accept granting me access; however, they stated that access to the classrooms for observation purposes would depend solely on the approval of the teachers. Subsequently, I was presented to the heads of the English department in the respective institutions. There were two teachers in the private state secondary school and four teachers in the state secondary school. None of the teachers refused me access to the classrooms, and I believe that they naturally had to grant me access because I already had the approval of the higher management of the institutions.

Then came the point when I had to negotiate through a sensitive phase of the study, which was to recruit an underage and vulnerable group of participants, which consisted of students who were less than 18 years old. I prepared two consent forms, one for underaged students that would require the signature of their parents and another one in case there were older students who wanted to participate in the study. I was given an opportunity to pitch my project in front of the English literature classroom of the two institutions. I explained the purpose of my research in Mauritian Kreol. Gaining access also means the researcher trying to convince people who could be potential informants to participate in this

study and to gradually develop a rapport with them in order to learn from them (Feldman et al., 2003). Hence, in the pitch, I emphasised all the possible advantages that the students would be getting by becoming participants in my study. I highlighted the five hundred rupees that I was offering at the end of the project, as well as my help to guide the students in applying for scholarships and foreign universities in the future. I also emphasised the fact that the study will not disrupt their day-to-day activities as interviews would be organised at their convenience. Above all else, they had the option to drop out of the study whenever they wanted without any adverse consequences. As a researcher, I personally did not like this one clause in the consent form, but I was forced to include it to gain ethical approval. This clause caused a constant fear in me that the participants might drop out of the study after three or four weeks. This would put me in a problematic situation as I would not be able to collect much data, and it might be too late to recruit new participants because I had only six months to collect data in Mauritius. Even Maanen and Kolb (1985) states that the data collection process requires some strategic planning, hard work and luck. And I had some bad luck with recruiting students as my fear of participants dropping out materialised.

The state secondary school has several branches in Mauritius; the Director insisted that I should go to the branch where I worked as a teacher because I already knew the rector of that branch. I went to the institution I worked before; I gave my pitch to the English literature classroom, and even the English language teacher encouraged the students to participate. I gave the students the consent forms, and after a few days, I managed to recruit three students. However, after one week, the three participants decided to drop from the study, citing that their parents, especially their dads, did not like that they were speaking to a man/boy on the phone. According to Warren (1988, p.7), 'gender is a focal and organizing category in social science'. Hackney (2000) points out that gender is likely to play a vital role in providing access or limiting access to a setting or to participants. In other words, researchers need to develop a sensitivity to gender issues both during fieldwork and when it is written up. Hence, after these incidents with the girls, I decided to be extra-cautious when dealing with recruiting participants and when dealing with the participants in my study (who were all girls). After this incident, I went back to the director and explained that I was unable to recruit participants at that particular institution. Hence, the director told me to try in other branches. I chose to try recruiting students in the main branch.

In the main branch of the state secondary school, I was able to recruit three participants, namely Amirah, Riya and Dhanvi. There was another girl who was very keen to participate but coming from conservative family background, and it seemed highly unlikely that her family would accept. This was even reiterated by my other participants. In the private state secondary school, I was able to recruit one participant, namely Kavisha and then, the latter convinced another of her friends, Monisha, to participate in the study. I would have liked some boys to participate in the study, and thus, I tried to

convince the boys; however, they were unwilling to participate in the study. Armed with the previous experience of participants dropping out and having become self-conscious as my identity as a young male researcher, this time, I made several efforts to make my participants comfortable. For instance, I would ask them at what time it was ok for them to call them or message them, and I would also each time ask them if they were comfortable with answering questions or if they were uncomfortable with anything, they could voice out. Additionally, I also made sure to query whether my participants had explained to their parents about the study and how their parents felt about it to make sure that they were participating in the study with the formal consent of their parents.

Another setting that I wanted to access was the private tuition set-up. Though I felt optimistic about gaining access quickly to this setting, yet I was wrong. Private tuition in Mauritius is a common and pervasive phenomenon after school hours and during school holidays. Teachers usually give private tuition at their houses or in classes of private schools that they rent. Amongst my participants who agreed to participate in the study, Amirah, Dhanvi, and Riya took English literature tuition. I went to speak in person with the private tuition teacher of Dhanvi; however, she explained that she was unwilling to let me observe the class because there were other students present, and I should, in fact, give a consent form to all the other students. In the case of Riya, her private tuition teacher was one of my former lecturers at the University of Mauritius, and I was optimistic that she would give me access to observe her classroom. However, when negotiating on the telephone, she was equally reluctant to give me access. I believe the teachers were reluctant to give me access because of my status as a stranger and also because they might not be necessarily declaring that they are generating revenue from tuition to the Mauritian tax authorities. Fortunately, at least, the private tuition teacher of Amirah, Ms Mansood, gave me access to her tuition set up, and that became my sole private tuition setting for this study.

#### **4.4 RESEARCH SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS**

As foregrounded by Watanabe (2004a), washback may be experienced differently by a different group of teachers and learners in different contexts. Hence, it was decided in order to capture the complexity and diversity of the washback effects of the HSC exams; data needed to be collected from three different settings, namely, one high-achieving secondary school (School A), one low-achieving secondary school (School B) and a private tuition setting. Subsequently, this helped to recruit participants (teachers and learners) with diverse experiences and views on the teaching and learning of English literature in Mauritius.

#### 4.4.1 Description of secondary schools (colleges)

Secondary school A is a co-ed state secondary school that was set up in the 1970s. It is situated in a well-developed village near the centre of the Island, and College B, which was founded in the 1980s, is a co-ed private state-aided secondary school that is located in a village on the east side of the Island.

Secondary school A has the reputation of being a star or national college as it produces laureates (Students that come first in a field of study on a national basis) on a regular basis; thus, it enjoys the status of a high-achieving secondary school and is highly sought after, both by parents and students. It has around 700 students and has classes from Form 1 to Upper 6 (Grade 1-Grade 13). The college is on a land of around 7 to 10 acres and consists of several buildings, which include critical features like a gymnasium, library, volleyball pitch, basketball pitch, Science labs, Art labs, parking space, auditorium, and a football pitch. The secondary school is a consortium of five schools, and the first one was established in the 1970s with a focus on providing a centre of studies for Indian culture and traditions. Hence arts-related subjects such as English literature, French literature, Hindi, Hinduism have always been offered in this school as options at SC and HSC levels.

Secondary school B is less prestigious in nature, and it usually admits students that are low achievers that have not been able to get a seat in other secondary schools at Form 1 level, SC level and HSC level. It has around 400 students and has classes from Form 1 to Upper 6 (Grade 1-Grade 13). It consists of two separate buildings at two locations in the same village, where one building is known as Department A, and the other Department B. Department B where my observations took place was on a land of 2-3 acres, and it did not have a gymnasium or other facilities like the state secondary school. I had to park my car on the road like the other teachers and staff as there were few parking spaces available inside the school compound. They were also constructing a basketball pitch near the school. There are two branches of this school which is owned and managed by the same person.

#### 4.4.2 Participants

##### 4.4.2.1 Profile of teachers

Table 5: Profile of teachers

	Teachers	Books Taught	Description
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<b>School A</b>	Ms Rashmi	Measure for Measure and Twelfth Night	She is a young teacher around thirty years old. She was my former batchmate; we graduated from the BA English course at the University of Mauritius in 2011. Afterwards, she also completed her teacher training course at the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE). She has been teaching at the school for four years; before, she worked as a supply teacher in some state secondary schools. As a former batchmate, I remember her as a disciplined and studious student who used to sit in front of the class. This was also reflected in her teaching style, where she focused on teaching the students, talking about exams, and there were no jokes.
	Ms Kamla	Road to Mecca and White Tiger	She was in her early forties. She did not really specify her qualifications in the interview. She has worked as a Prevocational teacher for the past 15 years at the institution. Prevocational classes have students that have failed in Grade 6 but then get admitted to secondary schools. They are usually students with socioeconomic and family issues. A teacher teaching in such a class has to teach the students all the subjects rather than just one subject. She was very reluctant to give an interview, and she would reply in Mauritian Kreol, and I understood her reluctance might have stemmed from the fact that she was teaching English literature as a subject at the HSC level for the first time.
	Ms Sooraya		The head of the department of this secondary school was also in her forties. She has done her undergraduate degree at the University of Mauritius and her PGCE at MIE. She has been working at the school for the past ten years. She was very willing to help with my project, and she gave very detailed answers that helped me a lot. She insisted that she does not instruct her colleagues how to conduct their classes, but she will give general guidelines.
	Ms Chaya	White Tiger	She has worked at the school for twenty years, and she has done her English Master's degree in the UK. She was very participative in the interviews, and she gave the impression of an experienced teacher who knows what she is doing. She had a relaxed attitude in the classroom. She was going to be the next head of department when Mr Adheen retires in two years.
	Ms Asha	Franklin's Prologue	She has worked for 15 years as an English language teacher. She has done her BA English in India and Masters in English degree in the UK and afterwards her PGCE at the MIE. Afterwards,

<b>School B</b>			she even got the opportunity to go for training courses in the UK that were sponsored by the Ministry of Education. As a teacher, she seemed very knowledgeable about the text that she was teaching and the era, the context when the text was written. Afterwards, it will be revealed that she has been teaching this text for years. She was very participative in the interview, and her class was one where students actually seemed to show more interest and tried to participate.
	Ms Boyroo	Twelfth Night	She has worked for 12 years as an English language teacher, and she has even worked four years in Rodrigues. She has done her BA in English and Masters in English at the University of Mauritius. She has also completed her PGCE at the MIE. She seemed to be very friendly with the students, willing to help them in their learning process, and she was one of the teachers that actually tried to make the students participate in the classroom. Again, she seemed to know a lot about the text she was teaching, and it will later be revealed that she has been teaching the exact text for three consecutive years.
	Ms Neha	Namesake	She is a woman in her forties. She has done her BA English degree at the University of Mauritius and then a Masters in Cultural studies at the same institution. She has been working as an English language teacher for fifteen years, eight years at the current institution and seven years in a private state secondary school. She had a similar teaching style as Ms Chaya, laid back and relaxed within the classroom.
	Mr Adheen		He is in his late fifties; he is going to retire in the next two years. He has been teaching English at the school for over twenty years, and he has been the head of the department for the past five years.
<b>Private tuition</b>	Ms Mansood		She is a woman in her forties. She has done a BA Humanities degree at the University of Mauritius and a master's degree in marketing at the Open University of Mauritius. She has worked as an English language teacher in secondary schools for eight years, but now she has only been giving private tuition at home.

#### 4.4.2.2 Profile of students

The following section introduces the learners and provides some biographical information on them.

Kavisha is 17 years old, her mother is a housewife, and her father is a house builder. She has an elder sister who is doing a course as a Primary teacher at MIE. She explains to me that there are parental pressure and expectation on her to succeed in the exams, especially from her father. *'wi, ena presion pou pas sa lexamin-la sirtou avek mo papa ki finn anv mo gagn 1 bon rezilta.'* [Yes, there is pressure to pass the exams, especially from my dad who wants me to get a good result] She does not take English literature tuition as she was not able to find a teacher near her location, but she takes tuition for her other subjects namely General Paper, French, Computer and Maths. She has done GCE at Form 5 level at another secondary school and is doing HSC for the first time at the private state secondary school. She is doing English literature for the first time.

Monisha is 18 years old; her mother is a housewife, and her father is an office attendant. She has a younger brother in Form 2 and an elder sister who works at a laboratory. Her sister does try to help her from time to time. She explains to me that there is some pressure to succeed at home, especially from her mother, who constantly tells her to stop using her mobile phone but acknowledges that if she does not succeed, she intends to continue working as a salesgirl or do some course in the hospitality sector: *'mo ti anv fer 1 kour apre dan lotelri kiksoz... Ena debouse ladan...'* [I want to do some course related with hotels...something. There is prospect in this...] She has taken the SC exams twice, and she is taking part in the HSC exams for the first time. She has done her secondary studies at a girls-only State Secondary school, but she had to swap to the private state secondary school because of poor results. She is doing English literature for the first time.

Riya is 17 years old; her mother is an accountant, and her dad works at the Ministry of education. There is an expectation from her parents for her to become laureate, especially when she got seven aggregate at SC level: *'My parents do have the dream that I become laureate especially because I worked very well for my SC exams.'* She states she handles the pressure as she is confident in herself and she will give her best in the final exams: *'I will try my best for the final exams. It is difficult to know for sure.'* She is the head girl of the school, Modal United Nations representative (national intercollege debates) and active in social work. She takes one tuition for all her subjects. She has done English literature at the SC level and got a distinction in it.

Amirah is 18 years old, her family owns a food restaurant, and both of her parents work in the restaurant. She has a twin sister, and they used to go to the same secondary school. She helps her parents in restaurants during weekends and the holidays. She states that her parents expect her to get good results, particularly her father, who wants her to perform as well as her sister: *'wi, ena 1 'expectation' sirtou akoz mo ser ti gagn bon rezilta ek mo bizin travay bien.'* [Yes, there is an expectation, mainly because my sister got good results and I need to work well.] She takes one tuition



for all of her subjects, including English literature, and she was the participant in Ms Mansood's tuition class.

Dhanvi is 17 years old, her mother is a Hindi teacher, and her father works as an IT administrator at a local bank. She is an only child, and she explains that her parents want her to perform well in the HSC exams, mainly because there is the possibility of going abroad for further studies: *'I need to do well in the exams because there is the possibility that I will go to Australia for university studies, I have family over there.'* She is doing HSC for the first time, and she has transferred to the state secondary school from another state school because she wanted to have a change of atmosphere and learn from new teachers.

## **4.5 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

The data for this study were collected in three phases, the first phase consisted of classroom observations, and the second phase consisted of semi-structured interviews with the teachers, headteachers and students. A third phase consisted of administering questionnaires to the teachers and the students. The following sections elaborate on the phases of data collection procedures. The questionnaires were not pre-planned; however, during the course of data analysis, I believed that I should explore the text-selection process that could potentially shed more light on the effects of the exams on the teaching and learning of English literature.

### **4.5.1 First phase: Classroom observation**

The first phase of the study consisted of observing the teaching and learning of English literature that was taking place in the classrooms across the three different settings. Albright and Bailey (1991) state that classroom research is becoming more common in educational research, as direct information can be obtained on the teaching and learning activities, the physical set up and the interactions occurring in classrooms. Wanatabe (2004a) explains the importance of observation in washback research by emphasising that it is vital to collect first-hand data from the classroom context. Otherwise, the researcher would have to accept the claims of teachers and students at face value, and such views may not reflect the reality of what they are doing in the classroom (Hopkins, 1985, p48, cited in Wanatabe 2004a). Also, Wanatabe (2004a) stresses the necessity of collecting data in non-experimental settings, that is, in real-life situations, which is a criterion satisfied by ethnography, in order to understand the impact of a test on the teaching and learning context.

While it is true, as an ethnographer, I kept my eyes open for everything that was happening within the classrooms; however, my main focus was guided by my research question: **What teaching strategies are being used by the teachers to teach English literature across the three different settings? And to what extent can these teaching strategies be seen as exam-oriented or non-exam oriented in nature?**

I was guided in my observation mainly by the extant washback literature that has documented the usage of exam-oriented teaching strategies and the theories of teaching and learning of literature as reviewed in the literature review section.

#### **4.5.1.1 From non-participant observation to moderate participation**

Observation remains a key component of ethnographic studies as the researcher is required to 'embeds herself near (or within) the phenomenon (Wacqaunt 2003:5)' that is being studied. Here, as a researcher, I was faced with the choice to decide my degree of participation in the classrooms. According to Spradley (2016), there are five types of participation on a continuum: non-participation, passive participation, moderate participation, active participation, and complete participation from which the ethnographer can choose to position himself within the field.

##### 1. Non-participation

According to Spradley (2016), it is possible to have a research where only observation is used to collect data. Such a research design may be used by an ethnographer who is very shy and who prefers not to get involved with strangers or a distinct social situation that would prevent the ethnographer from participating in the setting (Spradley, 2016).

##### 2. Passive participation

Spradley (2016) states that in passive participation, the ethnographer is physically present in the setting, but they do not participate or even interact with the people. He describes the role of the passive participant as that of a 'bystander', 'spectator' or 'loiterer' that occupies a position from which they can observe what is happening within the field (Spradley, 2016).

##### 3. Moderate participation

Within Moderate participation, the ethnographer seeks a balance between being an insider and an outsider. Spradley (2016) gives the example of Sanders' (1973) study of pinball players, in which the researcher started with being a casual observer or loiterer at the games. However, afterwards, he does play the machines and develop preferences as the players.

#### 4. Active participation

Here, the participant seeks to actively engage in what the other people are doing not only to be accepted but also to learn the people's way of living and culture (Spradley 2016). Within this format of research, the ethnographer begins with observations but gradually tries to learn the behaviour of the participants.

#### 5. Complete participation

In this format, the ethnographer is wholly involved within the situation that they are studying, and they are from the beginning itself, ordinary participants. For instance, in his study of bus riders, Nash (1975) was already considered as a participant as he had been using the bus daily to go to University. He already knew the rules around bus riding and focused mainly on making detailed observations. In an article by Riemer (1977), he reviews a variety of studies that could be based where ethnographers would turn settings/situations in which they are already a participant into a research site (cited in Spradley 2016). Such places could include hometowns bars, tracks, carnivals and others (Spradley 2016).

My position within the field fluctuated from non-participation to moderate participation. In the beginning, I entered the class quietly with the teachers and sat at the back of the class and wrote down my observations. However, some of the teachers, especially the tuition teacher, would engage in discussion with me at the end of the classes or in the middle of the classes. I also remember speaking lengthily with a teacher while waiting for all the students to come into the classroom. One notable incident remains when Ms Boyroo, one of the teachers at the state secondary school, suggested that my presence affected the participation amongst students in the classroom. However, as the study went along, I associated myself more with what Spradley (2016) described as moderate participation. As a former student of English literature, I developed preferences for the teachers, and I saw myself as one of the students, taking notes (fieldnotes) while the teachers were dictating.

Thereby, while collecting data, especially during classroom observations, field notes, photographs of copy books were taken to showcase a detailed description of the field of study which related to the teaching and learning strategies used by the teachers and the learners in the teaching and learning of English literature.

#### 4.5.2 Second phase: Interviews and Questionnaires

The second phase of the study consisted of conducting semi-structured interviews with the teachers, head-teachers, and the learners. An interview is defined by Kvale as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Dornyei (2007) states that several studies opt for the 'semi-structured interview' format as it represents a balance between the two extremes, namely the structured interview and the open-ended interview. Semi-structured interviews are aligned with interpretivism, and it allows the researcher to be prepared beforehand with the relevant topics and questions. LaForest (2009) states that in semi-structured interviews, the interviewer can change the order of the questions that he intended to ask or even the way they were scripted on paper. Additionally, the interviewer can even cross out questions that may seem irrelevant or redundant based on the answers given by the interviewee. Further, the semi-structured interview does allow the researcher to create new questions within the interview, thereby providing a possibility of digging any salient information that can be coming up in the interview. Thus, in this type of interview, as a researcher, I came with a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts based on my observations of the classrooms, but I also encouraged the interviewees to explain the issues in detail. Wanatabe (2004a) also recommends that after the completion of the observation phase, interviews have to be organised with the teachers to gather information to interpret the observation data. Hence, the questions asked will depend and vary based on what has been observed in the classrooms (Wanatabe 2004a). Wanatabe (2004a) further emphasises the importance of post-observation interviews in washback studies as many studies have shown that teachers play a crucial role in mediating the process of washback (Cheng, 1999; Wall, 1999; Alderson and Wall, 1993; Watanabe, 1996b). With the consent of the participants, I audio-recorded the interviews that I subsequently transcribed. The recording allowed me to better focus on asking and answering questions rather than struggling with taking notes. The interviews were conducted in several languages like Mauritian Kreol, English and French, depending on the ease of the interviewee. Parts of the interviews from languages other than English were translated afterwards.

Data for the teacher-related chapter was generated from the interviews of the teachers and head-teachers where; the main over-arching research question that guided the interviews was: What teacher-related factors influenced the teaching practices observed in the three settings? The focus was to uncover the beliefs, perceptions, and ideologies of the teachers behind their teaching practices. In a nutshell, why did they teach English literature the way they were teaching it? Further, when interviewing the head of departments, the aim was also to understand the system in place from a more

experienced teacher (the head of the department is usually the most senior teacher) and to understand their influence on the teaching and learning of English literature.

Data for the learner chapter was generated from the interviews of the learners. The learners were interviewed multiple times. The first interview was to get information about their biodata and background and to break the ice so as to create a rapport. The second interview was focused mainly on uncovering their beliefs, perceptions and ideologies about the teaching and learning of English happening in the classes and probe further into their learning practices. I have to admit; I was also in a privileged position with some of my learner participants because they were readily available to clarify their statements or even to explain what was happening in the classrooms via Facebook messenger.

During the write up phase of the thesis, I wanted to explore further a crucial aspect of the research that focused on understanding the text-selection process from both the teacher perspective and the learner perspective. As, I no longer had access to my participants for interviews, I sent them questionnaires over emails and even WhatsApp to gather the data. Questionnaires have often been used as the main data collection instruments in washback studies (For instance, Cheng (1999), Xie and Andrews (2013) or even alongside other methods (e.g. Tsagari (2009)– teacher interviews, student diaries, and document analysis). A questionnaire is defined as a set of questions on a topic or group of topics designed to be answered by a respondent. Hence even the use of questionnaires remained more a choice out of convenience. A questionnaire was designed for the students and one for the teachers. According to Wilson and Mclean (1994), questionnaires have many advantages, such as providing structured numerical data which are usually straight-forward to analyse. Bailey (2014) also stated that questionnaires are also quicker to code and analyse. (Find the questionnaires attached in appendix ).

*Table 6: Interview log*

Students	First Interview- Creating	Second a	Third interview-	Questionnaire on the text

	rapport and gathering biodata on the students	interview- Questions on the teaching and learning of English literature observed in the classroom	Questions on other teaching and learning practices, including revision of the subject.	selection process.
Teachers	Interviews on the teaching and learning of English literature as observed in the classrooms	Questionnaires on the text selection process		

#### 4.5.3 Data Analysis Procedures

According to Cresswell and Poth (2016), the process of analysing ethnographic data involves the following steps, (1) preparing and organising data (text data in the form of transcripts or image data in photographs) for analysis, (2) reducing the data into themes through a coding process and (3) finally presenting the data in figures and tables or a discussion.

##### **Preparing and Organising data**

The data collected in this study consisted of field notes that I took when observing the classrooms, interview recordings and questionnaires of the headteachers, teachers and students.

After each observation day, I would look again at my fieldnotes and identify recurring themes and patterns between the different classes and the different settings. Moreover, I would make sure that I

clearly understood what was happening in the classrooms through my fieldnotes. The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, and some parts that were in Mauritian Kreol were translated into English.

## **Translation**

According to Duranti (2011), translation is not simply a process where the words of one language are translated into another. The translation process involves a long series of decision-making about translation, contextualization, considering the subtle and often varied meanings of the original language into the targeted language and even the issues surrounding the hiring of a translator.

Nes et al (2010) foreground that translating from the original language to the target language can involve interpretation. Duranti (2011) explains that the context where the words are spoken and the perspectives of the participants. Translation itself is seen as an ethnographic activity that can be associated with the contextualization of words within the activity and the larger sociopolitical and cultural systems in which their speaker participates (Duranti, 2011). Hence, even during the interviews, I asked for clarifications on specific terms used by the participants, and the translations from KM, especially for my participants from the private secondary school were weaved and contextualized in the emerging narrative from the school context and the system. Hereby, the researcher is expected to interpret the words of the participants to render their meanings comprehensible in the target language so that target language readers can understand what the participants said more easily. It is crucial to this process that the researcher is aware of meanings and their potential subtleties in order to avoid translation problems.

In the translation process, Temple and Young (2004) suggest that fluency in the participants' language provides the researcher with more this study, coming from the same multilingual context, I am a native speaker of Mauritian Kreol, and I learnt French at school. Hence, this helped me to understand my participants better. For Temple and Young (2004), being fluent in the participants' language also enables the researcher to be aware of specific terminologies or jargon used by participants in that particular language. Hence, during the translation process, the researcher will be able to pay closer attention to these meanings. Moreover, the researcher does not have to rely on a translator who has their own set of negotiations and disadvantages.

Another undesirable layer of knowledge of production can be added when the translator and the researcher are two different people (Temple, 1997). I experienced the same thing as Temple when I hired a translator to translate my recordings; I found that some of the statements of the participants did not seem right. I had to go again to the recordings to understand what was happening exactly. Hence, as stated by Temple (1997), I preferred translating my own data in order to avoid the impingement of another person's perspectives or interpretation of the data I collected. Further, Temple (1997) also points that the translator is more likely to miss the subtleties of the data as the person will not be a subject expert compared to the researcher, and the person has not observed the participants or experienced their culture firsthand like the researcher. Hence to present an accurate view of my participants' worldview, it was important that I handle the translation process myself. I translated Mauritian Kreol and French into English. I provided the verbatim. I am a native speaker of MK, and I also learnt French at school. Pauses, hesitations were not translated, pointed at. However, after each interview, I would record my observations, trying to capture the way they stated what they stated.

### **Reducing the data into themes through a coding process**

There are various ways data can be analysed in a qualitative study. In this study, a thematic analysis was adopted. Thematic analysis is used for identifying, analysing and reporting (themes) within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is stated that the method of analysis is driven by theoretical assumptions and the research questions. Bazley (2009) also states that thematic analysis can rely on the presentation and discussion of themes based on the participant quotes as the primary form of analysis. The thematic analysis involves the creation of codes which are labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study (Miles et al., 2014)

In this study, I began with an 'open coding' to understand the data's complexity and to decide which aspects of it was meaningful for my study. Subsequently, the aim was to use the different pieces of data to build together a story/narrative that will help to give a meaningful insight into the social reality of the different settings in the study. The themes were identified and formulated based on the extant washback research, the theoretical framework, the research questions, and with the aim to build together a story/narrative that would help the reader understand the complexity of the washback phenomenon and its effects on the teaching and learning of English literature in the Mauritian context.

*Table 7: Themes*

<b>Chapters</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<b>Classroom Observation</b>	<b>What teaching</b>	The transmission model of



	<b>strategies are being used by the teachers to teach English literature across the three different settings? And to what extent can these teaching strategies be seen as exam oriented in nature?</b>	teaching literature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher-centred approach</li> <li>• Correct knowledge deposited</li> <li>• Mirrors raw image of learners as empty receptacles</li> </ul>
		Attempt towards the sociocultural model of teaching literature
<b>Teacher related factors</b>	<b>What teacher related factors influenced the teaching practices observed in the three settings?</b>	Teacher beliefs and perceptions about their learner's ability to learn the subject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First time English literature learners</li> <li>• Low proficient English literature learners</li> <li>• Low proficient English language learners</li> <li>• Passivity leads to spoon-feeding (note dictation)</li> </ul>
		Teachers' teaching philosophy and perception of effective teaching methods to teach the subject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note dictation, note taking and memorisation</li> <li>• Using Mauritian Kreol as a support language</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms Boyroo-teaching philosophy of IRF</li> </ul>
		<p>Teachers' perception of the relationship between the test (syllabus) and the textbooks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of texts to be covered in the syllabus</li> <li>The choice of texts from the CIE list</li> <li>Format of the test</li> <li>Choice of the English literature 9695 syllabus</li> <li>Notes' preparation</li> </ul>
<b>Learner-related factors</b>	<b>How learner-related factors influenced the washback effects observed in the teaching and learning of English literature?</b>	<p>Washback effects on learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject-choice, motivation and reading culture</li> <li>Relationship between subject choice at HSC level and SC results</li> <li>Why they chose English literature, do they like their subject and is it related to their career ambition?</li> </ul>
		<p>Students' perceptions and attitude towards teachers and teaching methods and participation and texts and texts selection process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers and teaching methods</li> </ul>

		<p>Students' other learning practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note collection</li> <li>• Group work-sharing</li> <li>• Rivalry, sharing or not sharing</li> </ul>
		<p>Micro and Macro context factors</p> <p>Micro context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School policy decisions</li> <li>• Choice of subjects</li> <li>• Number of staff and workload distribution</li> <li>• School holidays, events and extracurricular activities</li> </ul>
		<p>Macro context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National policy decisions</li> <li>• Flash flood, public holidays and cyclones</li> </ul>

#### 4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter sketched the methodology used to investigate the washback effects on the teaching and learning of English literature. In the first section, the suitability and rationale behind using an ethnographic approach in uncovering the washback effects are explained. It has been argued that several scholars most notably Watanabe (2004a), have argued about the necessity of exploring washback effects from an ethnographic approach which is seen as a multi-prong method that can help uncover the multifaceted nature of washback as it has come to be theorised. Additionally, the concept of reflexivity in ethnography and the perceived bias in the study has been discussed, especially considering that the researcher has been part of the system of education as a student, a teacher, and a teacher trainer. Subsequently, it has been argued washback scholars have recommended the usage of triangulation in investigating washback. This can help to gain a better and more comprehensive

view of the washback effects, rather than impressionistic views based on single-method studies, altogether increasing the reliability of the study.

Secondly, owing to the ethnographic nature of the study, the next section explained the access to the field of study, the ethical concerns and the negotiations with the gatekeepers as well as recruiting the participants. The salient point is the issues that arose when I, as a male researcher tried to recruit female underage participants for the study.

Thirdly, a comprehensive description of the three different settings, namely, the private secondary school, the state secondary school and the private tuition context are given. Moreover, some background information about the participants of the study is given. This will help the reader to better connect with the participants. Lastly, the methods of data collection which comprised of a first phase that included classroom observation and a second phase that included semi-structured interviews and questionnaires are elaborated upon at length. Subsequently, the data analysis procedures are presented which comprised of three stages namely, preparing and organising data (text data in the form of transcripts or image data in photographs) for analysis, (2) reducing the data into themes through a coding process and (3) finally presenting the data in figures and tables or a discussion.

## 5 CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

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In this chapter, I present and discuss the findings of the washback effects of the HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature that was observed across the three settings namely the private state-aided college, the state college and the private tuition setting. Empirical studies are seen as essential in any washback study because direct classroom observation can help to relate survey data with teacher behaviour in classrooms (Green, 2007a). As such as explained in the methodology chapter, an ethnographic approach was adopted in this study to explore the teaching strategies used by the different teachers across the three different settings with the overarching research question: **What teaching strategies are being used by the teachers to teach English literature across the three different settings? And to what extent can these teaching strategies be seen as exam oriented in nature?**

This is an essential first stage in the study, which will help to identify key areas for further investigation that will be probed through interviews and questionnaires with the participants namely the teachers, head teachers and learners. Hence, this will subsequently help further to understand the choice of pedagogy of the teachers and thereby, unpick the complexity and multifactorial nature of the washback phenomenon as theorised by scholars like Watanabe (2004).

### 5.1 BACKGROUND

### 5.2 WASHBACK IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

As stated in the review of the washback research literature, most of the washback research have focused on researching the effects of exams on English language courses such as TOEFL and IELTS rather than English literature. This section serves as a preamble to set the background in understanding how washback could manifest itself on the teaching strategies that are being used by the teachers to teach English literature across the three different settings.

In the washback research literature, it has been reported that under the pressure of exams, several teachers narrow down the curriculum by teaching only what will be assessed and they are aided in this task by drilling exam questions through a selection of past-exam papers that are readily available on the market (Shohamy et al., 1996; Hamp-Lyons, 1997; Watanabe, 1996a). However, in the case of English literature, it was found that the teachers could not narrow down the curriculum by teaching only what will be assessed or by focusing on drilling past exam papers because of the different curriculum and test format. IELTS and TOEFL have curriculum components like reading, writing, listening, and speaking that are tested by a variety of test questions that are readily available in past exam papers. In contrast, the English literature curriculum consists of a variety of literary texts of different genres, and the students are tested by two types of questions namely essay questions and passage-based questions in the test papers set by Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). Since the essay questions can focus on any topic on a given text and the passage-based questions can include any extract from that text, it will seemingly be difficult for the teachers to narrow the curriculum by teaching only selected parts of a text or to focus on drilling essay questions.

Added, to this, it was also observed that there was not much time given to practicing exam questions in class or even at home as over one term, the students had only one class test and one end of semester exam for English literature. This reemphasises the difficulty of drilling and practicing for exam-questions for English literature in a conventional way.

The degree of unpredictability of the test questions and the nature of the curriculum of the English literature HSC exam should have probably made it more difficult for the teachers to teach towards the exams and thus, minimised the possible adverse effects of exams pressure on the teaching and learning process. However, a closer analysis of the teaching lessons of the different teachers which includes the teaching strategies, the teaching content, and the teaching curriculum, reveals that many of the teaching lessons were still aligned to a great extent towards preparing the students for the high stakes' English literature HSC exams.

The follow section using excerpts, theories of teaching and learning English literature and the washback research literature answers the two research questions:

**What teaching strategies are being used by the teachers to teach English literature across the three different settings?**

**And to what extent can these teaching strategies be seen as exam-oriented or not exam-oriented in nature?**

It was found that across the three settings, namely the private-state aided college, the state college and the tuition setting, there was the dominant use of teaching strategies such as teacher-centred pedagogy and the transmission of notes through dictation, photocopies and email, which seems to reflect the philosophical and structural underpinnings of the transmission model of teaching literature. However, there were two teachers namely Ms Asha and Ms Boyroo, that seemingly employed Information Response and Feedback as a teaching strategy within their teaching lessons. The IRF teaching strategy can be seen as being both contrived and communicative in nature as the teaching strategy seems to possess the philosophical and structural underpinnings of both the transmission model of teaching literature and to a lesser extent the sociocultural model of teaching literature. By considering the usage of IRF as perhaps a mitigated attempt towards sociocultural model of teaching literature, I also want to highlight the effort and the merit of the two teachers in trying to teach literature using an alternative pedagogy.

### **5.3 TRANSMISSION MODEL OF TEACHING LITERATURE**

#### **5.3.1 Teacher-centred approach and students on the periphery**

All the teachers across the three settings, primarily adopted a teacher-centred pedagogy when teaching English literature. The teacher-centred approach which is a key component of the transmission model of teaching, consists of the teacher taking an active role in the classroom and altogether relegating the students into a more passive and peripheral role (Beach et al., 2011) . All the classes were set up with the students sitting in rows and facing the teacher and the whiteboard/blackboard.

The following presents three excerpts to showcase the teacher-centred pedagogy and the type of interaction that happened in three classes: Ms Rashmi's class from the private secondary school, Ms Neha's class from the state secondary school and Ms Asha's class from the state secondary school.

### **5.3.1.1 Ms Rashmi teaching *Measure for Measure* from the private-state aided school**

[14th July 2017]

The first day I went into Ms Rashmi's classroom, I followed her and let her enter first, she introduced me to the students as a researcher and someone who will be observing the classroom for some days. The students greeted me 'Bonjour Monsieur' and of course my participants Kovila and Monisha already knew me and actually the others also because I tried to recruit them, but they disagreed. I took a seat at the back of the classroom, tried to make myself as small as possible, removed my copybook and started writing my observations.

Over the course of the 4,5 classes of 80 minutes, I observed that Ms Rashmi used mainly the dictating/giving notes strategy to teach English literature. This is the start of the second term, Ms Rashmi is starting a new book *Measure for Measure* by Shakespeare. She asked the students whether they have read the book during the holidays and goes on exclaiming: 'You should have at least read the introduction, zot lir paz 11 a 18, at least you get to know the text in general...the setting...the timeline.' The students are quiet and flip the pages of their books. Coming to the main event that will take place for the next 60-70 minutes in the class: Ms Rashmi removes a copybook from her pocket file and starts dictating.

#### **Excerpt 1: Ms Rashmi dictating notes on *Measure for Measure*.**

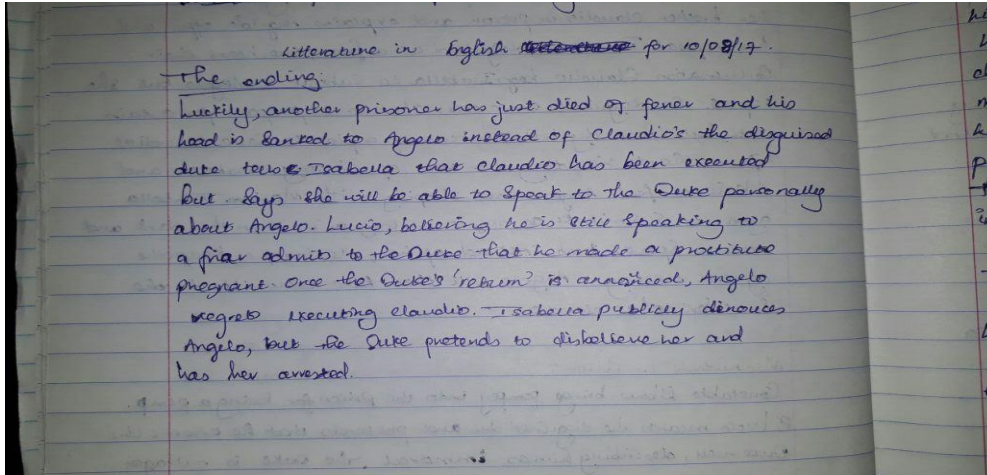
Ms Rashmi: Luckily, (luckily), another prisoner has just died (another prisoner has just died) of fever (of fever) full stop. The disguised Duke tells Isabella that Claudio has been (that Claudio has been) executed (has been) but says (but says) she will be able to speak to the Duke personally about (personally about) Antonio (about Antonio) full stop...

In excerpt 1, Ms Rashmi is dictating some notes to the students and the students were writing quietly. It is noticeable that she was dictating at a slow pace, repeating many of the words two times and even spells some words for the students like when saying Claudio's, she says 'Claudio and apostrophe s.' Again, the slow pace, constant repetition of words and spelling of tricky words indicate that the teacher is aware that she is teaching low achieving learners and she needs to pay attention that they can write the notes correctly. Ms Rashmi is dictating notes on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, a new text that the learners started at the beginning of the second school term. The corresponding notes that were copied in Kavisha's copybook is shown in picture 1. The atmosphere in the classroom is quiet



and continuous note taking seems to be a strenuous activity. Bolah has her head on her desk and is writing, I could also see a few yawns from the other students.

Picture 1: Kavisha's written notes on Measure for Measure



This note dictating activity, which is teacher led and monitored, thereby confirming in the teacher-centered pedagogy will be replicated across all the different contexts in varying degrees. While Ms Rashmi's note dictation, session is at one stretch, the following example from Ms Neha's class, includes teacher-centered explanations that is summarizing and recapping the events in the story to the students.

### 5.3.1.2 Ms Neha's class from the state secondary school (Namesake)

Before entering her class, Ms Neha gives me an explanation about what she is going to do in the class: 'Mo pa p fer tex. Mo p donn nots plis parski mo bizin fini tex la...mo pa pou refer clas ek banla next year...pou ena kestyon lexamin lorsa.' [ I am not doing the text. I am giving notes more because I need to finish the text and I will not do classes with them next year ...there will be exam questions on it also.

#### Excerpt 2: Ms Neha dictating notes and providing explanations to the students

She starts the class by saying: 'For the third term, the third term exams, please read the book, the whole book. Those who have not read the book, please discover the book for the first time.' Some students laugh...

Ms Neha starts dictating: 'Alors, Ashima looks out for activities to fill her time as she is left alone in the absence of Ashok and the children (full stop).'

Ms Neha explains: 'So you know, because Ashok is a lecturer, so each time he goes to different university to give courses. So when he is moving, what happens is that she is already alone. Now Goggle is living with Maxine and even Sonia is at a University. She is alone. Ok?'

Ms Neha continues dictating: ' In the absence of Ashoke and her children, she does not have any responsibilities vis a vis her children as both are away. (she does not have any responsibilities as her children are both away)'

A boy says: Both?

Ms Neha shouts: 'away'

She continues dictating: 'Therefore, so as not to be depressed (comma) she thinks of ways to make her life more interesting. '

Page 161, second paragraph, she starts reading from the text and makes the students underline these lines in the text: 'Everyone should live on their own at some point." But Ashima feels too old to learn such a skill. She hates returning in the evenings to a dark, empty house, going to sleep on one side of the bed and waking up on another.'

Got it?

She continues dictating: 'The theme of alienation is tied to loneliness in this chapter with regard to Ashima. She does not like to live alone in the house...'

In excerpt 2, Ms Neha is dictating notes and providing explanations on the succession of events in the book, *The Namesake*. She dictates one sentence: 'Alors, Ashima looks out for activities to fill her time as she is left alone in the absence of Ashok and the children (full stop).'

And then, she provides an explanation on why Ashima, a character in the text, is alone and why she is looking for activities to fill in her time: 'So you know, because Ashok is a lecturer, so each time he goes to different university to give courses. So, when he is moving, what happens is that she is already alone. Now Goggle is living with Maxine and even Sonia is at a university. She is alone. Ok?'

Afterwards, she will continue dictating and the dictation will further provide explanations on the loneliness of the character of Ashima: 'The theme of alienation is tied to loneliness in this chapter with regard to Ashima. She does not like to live alone in the house...'

When the teacher dictates, she looks at her book and changes her tone and when she gives the explanations, she makes eye-contact with the students, then she swaps back to her former tone and continues dictating.

### **5.3.1.3 Ms Mansood explaining *Twelfth Night* to the students**

*I attended one of the explanations classes of Ms Mansood, the private tuition teacher. After the students have copied her notes, she holds these 'explanations classes' with the students.*

*The session will last around two hours where Ms Mansood will explain the story act by act and scene by scene. She will hold the floor and engage in a rather monologue-like delivery using mostly Mauritian Kreol to explain, summarise the happenings of the story to the students. In parallel, the students, including Amirah will also take notes. It should be pointed that Ms Mansood does not tell the students to note down as she is not dictating notes, but the students seem to feel the need to write down bits and pieces of her explanations.*

### **Excerpt 3: Ms Mansood ‘explaining’ Act 3 Scene 1 of Twelfth Night to the students in Mauritian Kreol**

Ms Mansood: Alor Akt 3, Senn 1. Bon, nou ena enn konversasion ant Viola ek Feste natirelman, ek li koumans par lefe ki nou trouv Feste pe pran plezir avek Olivia ek Orsino, ok ? Setadir lor zot lamour, ek kouma sa deroule, etc.. Ek kouma nou kone Feste se enn klounn, limem li kritike ein, li fer so bann kritik parski li pa amenn rol « le bon » ; dan tou pies Shakespeare bizin ena enn ki amenn sa bann rol-la, ok ? Tou permi pou li, dakor ? Li kapav koz ninport seki li anvi. Limem o debi nou trouv li pe dir Olivia tou seki pe pas par so latet : ki li panse lor Olivia, so fason koze, so fason azir, etc, e li koz avek Orsino, e la nou trouv li pe gagn enn konversasion avek Viola, ek nou trouve ki li pe boufonn Olivia ek Orsino. Alor, ki bi sa konversasion-la, ki Shakespeare pe esey montre nou ? Seki Shakespeare pe esey montre nou, ofe kouma nou kone, dan boukou bann pies Shakespeare ena bann diferans ki existe ant bann *low class*, *middle class*, *high class*, ek bann nob. Ek la, li pe esey montre nou kouma sa bann amoure ki appartenir a klas bann nob, kouma zot kapav osi ridikil ki bann amoure ki appartenir a enn *low class*. Nou ti pe gete taler-la bann amoure dan ba esel (*low class*), ek nou pou gete ankor plitar, nou pou ena Malvolio, nou pou ena Maria, nou pou ena Sir Toby, etc, ek uhh, pou kisann-la, sa ?

[Ms Mansood: Then Act 3, Scene 1. So, we have a conversation between Viola and Feste naturally, and it begins with the fact that we find Feste, he is making fun of Olivia and Orsino, ok? That is saying about their love and how it unfolds etc and how we know Feste is a euh clown, he even criticizes hein, he is criticising because that uh he not so good but in all parts of Shakespeare’s play, we have one like him, ok? Everything is allowed to him, ok? He can talk about anything. At the beginning, we found out that he told Olivia what he wants, what he thinks of her, about the way she acts, and he talked to Orsino and there we find that he is having a conversation with Viola and that he is making fun of Olivia and Orsino. Then what is the purpose of his conversation, what is Shakespeare trying to show us? Shakespeare is trying

to show us that the fact as we know in many of Shakespeare's plays, there is a difference between low class, middle class, high class, noble etc and bane low class huh. And here he is showing us noble lovers, that is to say Olivia, Orsino etc, they are noble lovers and, but they are as ridiculous as the low class lovers. We saw earlier the low-class lovers and we will see later that we have Malvolio, we will have Maria, we will have Sir Toby, etc. euh who's phone is it.]

Miss Mansood : Huh... alor nou pou trouve ki koumadir relasion ki Shakespeare prezant nou lor tem 'Lamour', an seki konsern sa bann personaz-la, se ki koumadir pena gran diferans isi. Si sa bann-la ena seki nou apel enn kote ridikil kouma taler-la nou finn trouve, sa osi prezan parmi bann amoure nob kouma Orsino ek Olivia. Seki vedir ki Lamour regroup tou dimounn parey ein, pena okenn diferans. Osi, nou ena tem Lamour ki nou pou trouve dan depoziyon Maria pou Orsino, ok ? Ek la li dir, ki koumadir li finn vinn servant, anfin li travay, li oule vinn servant Olivia parski li servant Orsino, ek Orsino kontan Olivia. Alor savedir ki si inikman li vinn la pou li, li pou koz avek Olivia, se inikman par amour pou Orsino. Alor, dernie fwa mo ti explike ki dan tem Lamour, natirelman ek anmentan nou pou get bann tre karakter Viola, parski nou trouve ki se enn tifi ki Shakespeare finn dote avek tou bann kalite ki natirelman rann li adorab, ok, euh, Viola. Alor, li ena enn sertenn kalite, nou pou trouve ki li pa egois dan so lamour, ek ki li kontan Orsino, ek ki se enn lamour ki finn aparet apre so rankont avek Orsino, dan trwa zour ki finn swiv, li'nn fini koumadir ena enn latansion pou Orsino, me sa pa vedir ki li pou afekte so travay ou ki sa pou vinn enn baryer ant lamour Orsino ek Olivia.

[So, the last time, I explained that the theme of love naturally and we also see the character trait of Viola because she is a girl that we see Shakespeare gives her, gives her characteristics that naturally makes her adorable. So she has a certain quality, so we see that she is not selfish in her love and she loves Orsino and this is the love that appeared after her meeting with Orsino after the three days that followed, she said that in a way like she cares for Orsino but that does not mean that it will affect her work or this will become a barrier between Orsino and Olivia.]

Alor li dir la, li pe dir avek Feste ki efektivman li finn vinn la, li'nn vinn dir Olivia, se parski antan ki enn dimounn ki anplwaye par Orsino, e ki Orsino kontan Olivia, li fer so travay, li enn profesyonel, li'nn asim enn responsabilite ; li'nn pran enn responsabilite ek li pou onor sa ziska dan bout. Alor sa montre ki sa, se so lamour pou Orsino an premie, ek sa rant dan tem Lamour, ek dezieman, sa pou rant dan so tre karakter, li ena enn karakter nob, ein. Depi

koumansman ziska lafin, se Viola ki pou prezant sa karakter nob la. Ek dan preske tou bann premie pies Shakespeare, dan tou so bann pies, nou gagn sa karakter femininn ki anglob tou bann kalite enn fam ideal, « *the perfect lady* », kouma nou dir ein.

[So, he says, he says to Feste that he effectively came here, he came to tell Olivia because as a person who is employed by Orsino and Orsino loves Olivia, she does her job, she is a professional, she assumes her responsibility till the end. So, this shows her love for Orsino, and this will also reflect the theme of love.]

In excerpt 3, it can be seen that Ms Mansood explanation class session on *Twelfth Night*, consists of her taking her book and then explaining or rather paraphrasing the narration of the scenes in Mauritian Kreol. In her explaining the events of the story in Mauritian Kreol, she makes use of rhetorical questions like: ‘...li komans par le fe que nou trouv Feste li p make fun of Olivia e Orsino, ok?’ and ‘Tou e permi a lwi, ok?’ The teacher does not seek any real answers from the students or give the students the opportunity to nod or to express doubts about the narration. Ms Mansood continues the explanations in MK in a relatively fast pace at one go. At the end of the class, she asks the students whether they have understood well. There are some nods and a few comments, but the focus of the whole session was the teacher-centred explanations of Ms Mansood.

#### **5.3.1.4 Ms Boyroo discussing an extract in *Twelfth Night***

I entered the class of Ms Boyroo, one of the teachers teaching *Twelfth Night* at the state secondary school. The class is an art lab class and the students sat in a rather cramped way because of two long vertical tables and stools at the far right of the classroom. After greeting the students, Ms Boyroo starts her class immediately. She reads from the book and then starts her explanation:

#### **Excerpt 4: Ms Boyroo discussing an extract in *Twelfth Night***

Ms Boyroo: Consider the letter now. Do you find the letter like really challenging someone? Or does it sound like a letter of you know, someone who is already afraid, with the hope of trying, euh writing with the hope that someone would refuse his challenge? How do you find the letter

here? Do you perceive a person like Sir Andrew to come with such a letter? No reading between the lines, look at the letter properly and tell me. Read again the letter.

(Silence)

Ms Boyroo: C'est bon?

(Silence)

Ms Boyroo: Allez tell me, what is it about this letter? Yes, what is the letter about first thing?

Students: Mumbling

Ms Boyroo: He's calling for a duel definitely. Why? He gives the reason also. Why? It is because of Olivia, right? It's as if not Olivia is after Cesario in the way the letter , it's as if Cesario is after Olivia. What else?

(Silence)

What does the letter tell us?

Students: mumbling

Ms Boyroo: He seems to be unsure of you know of the challenge himself, unsure if he'll win it or not. How do you know that?

One student: " From mercy of my soul"

Ms Boyroo: Yes and what else? There's one more sentence in that you see?

Students: mumbling

Ms Boyroo: Yes, definitely. What does it tell you about Sir Andrew? He's insecure, isn't he? He's insecure and he's not really a man who we'll call a valiant man. He isn't a man who is very good at his sword. But then we should not forgot why Sir Andrew is writing the letter. Why is Sir Andrew writing this letter? Because he has been instigated. Instigated by whom? Again, Sir Toby. You analyse the character of Sir Toby probably and you can tell from the others who's the meanest person in this play. Yes, what else the letter tells us? It reflects again the stupidity of Sir Andrew. When you read the letter, it doesn't seem as a letter coming from people of high class. It looks like those letters that Malvolio himself can write, isn't it? What else do you find in this letter?

(Silence)

Students: mumbling

Ms Boyroo: {Reading}

Yes, we came across this word before and I explained it. What does "scurvy" mean?

Students: A disease

Ms Boyroo: Yes, it is a disease. You've done that in-Home Economics, right? I've explained last time. A disease yes but in which sense?

(Silence)

Students: mumbling

Ms Boyroo: No, too strong. I don't think Sir Andrew is intelligent enough to think of these things. Scurvy is like a plague euh non pas allergie euh infection, voila.

He's calling someone by this name but he's not going to tell the person why he's calling him by this name, why he's accusing him. When you accuse someone of something, you need to explain, isn't it? You need to tell the person why you're behaving in such a way. You need to tell the person why you are behaving in such a way. But he's saying he doesn't find it necessary to tell him....

In excerpt 4, we can see that Ms Boyroo, is explaining, discussing a letter extract from Twelfth Night, altogether, trying to have some answers from the students through the Information Response Feedback strategy (IRF). Ms Boyroo states that : 'Consider the letter now. Do you find the letter like really challenging someone? Or does it sound like a letter of you know, someone who is already afraid, with the hope of trying, euh writing with the hope that someone would refuse his challenge?..' In her question she is already giving, guiding the students towards the answers that she is seeking. During the whole session, the teacher will have difficulty to make the students respond to her questions as the class will be primarily dominated by her questions and her prompts to encourage the students to answer the questions. It will remain a reasonably teacher-centred activity with the seemingly reluctant nature of the students to participate in the classroom.

The type of interaction observed between the teachers and the learners in these three excerpts resemble the narrative and one-way dimension interaction that the transmission model of teaching literature recounts taking place within literature classrooms (Beach et al., 2011; Freire, 2000; Showalter, 2003). In the excerpts, it has been seen that the narrative and one-dimensional interaction took the form of teacher-centred explanations, note dictation of the analysis of the text and teacher-driven discussions in the format of Information Response and Feedback (IRF). In the first excerpt, Ms Rashmi is seen dictating notes on Measure for Measure to the students who were diligently writing in their copybooks, in the second one, Ms Neha is seen as dictating notes- explaining the notes and making the students underline passages in their texts as the students are seen as listening and writing

in their copybooks. In the third one that was presented, Ms Mansood using mostly Mauritian Kreol, explains the text to the students where all the students are listening and writing in their copybooks. And in the last excerpt, at first look, it seems to have a different pattern of interaction, however, it is in fact equally teacher-centred in nature as Ms Boyroo directs the discussion by asking precise questions about the letter, and in return expecting specific answers. Thus, it can be seen that in all these excerpts, a teacher-centred pedagogy prevailed where teacher talk dominated, teachers had longer turns and students had a more peripheral role which consisted mainly of listening and taking notes.

This narrative and one-dimensional interaction that has been observed is also reinforced with the marginal role the students seems to voluntarily endorse within the classes (Beach et al., 2011; Freire, 2000; Showalter, 2003). This marginal role of the students was further highlighted by the observations of their behaviour in the classroom. When Ms Rashmi is dictating notes, some of the students had their heads on the table and they were writing. I could notice yawns from some of the other students and the students were more interested in writing/taking down the notes when the teacher is speaking/discussing the answer. Additionally, no questions were asked at the end of the classes and even in Ms Boyroo's class the students were reluctant to answer her questions. It seemed that the students were moulded in a culture of passivity where their main concern remained noting down the explanations of the teachers. A general lack of participation was noted in most of the classes.

Other washback studies have observed similar patterns of interaction between teachers and learners, that were possible effects of testing on teaching and learning. Alderson and Hamps-Lyon (1996) in their investigation of effects of testing on TOEFL teaching, note that the teachers talked more, and students talked less and there is less turn taking and the teachers take longer turns. Cheng (1998) also points out that although teachers talked less to the whole class as a result of a newly introduced exam, the teacher talking to the whole class was still the preferred mode of interaction. Watanabe (2000) also notes that students rarely questioned the teachers even during the exam preparation lessons. Thus, it can be argued that the teacher-centred pedagogy that resulted in the narrative and one-dimensional way of teaching English literature can be seen as part of the teachers' pedagogical choice aimed towards preparing the students for the exams. However, it is essential to note that silence have different meanings in different cultures and not necessarily signifying passivity. Perhaps, it might have been instinctive for me as a researcher basing myself on the extant research of washback and my own experience as a teacher and learner of English literature to interpret the silence of the students as passivity. However, I also made it my duty to make a note to investigate further and understand the silence of the students when I will interview my student participants.



### **5.3.2 Correct knowledge deposited**

Another vital aspect of the transmission model of teaching literature is that the teacher deposits necessary or 'correct' knowledge to the students who are described as waiting passively like empty receptacles (Beach et al., 2011; Freire, 2000; Showalter, 2003). A closer look at the notes that was dictated by the different teachers across the three different settings revealed that the notes consisted of summaries of the texts, information about the setting and the background, themes, characterisation, plot and model answers.

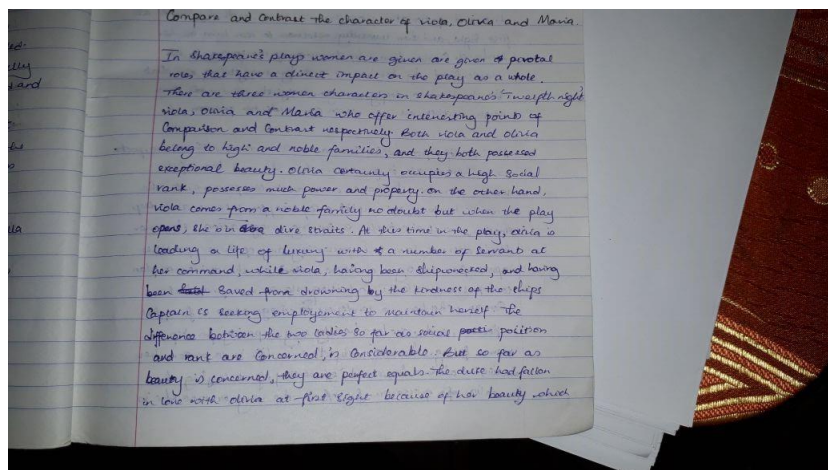
The following presents excerpts to showcase the content of the notes that was transmitted by some of the teachers in the different settings:

#### **Excerpt 5: Rashmi giving model answer for Twelfth Night**

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> August: There are four students in the class, three girls and one boy. Ms Rashmi asks the student about a previous homework where she had asked the students to search for the meaning of some words such as 'friar' to prepare for the text measure for measure. The students get reprimanded by the teachers because they did not do the homework. She tells them that she will give them a model answer for the second term exam question namely: Compare and contrast the characters of Viola, Olivia and Maria.

Ms Rashmi starts dictating and the students write quietly other than the boy who was communicating with another student outside the classroom. And the teacher finally decides to intervene as she goes outside and tell the other boy not to disturb her class. Afterwards Ms Rashmi will dictate at one go. There is a sleepy atmosphere in the classroom especially it is after lunchtime (12.30) and it is quite hot. Kavisha is yawning and even Monisha is bending her head on the table and writing. Towards the end of the class, Ms Rashmi says: 'I think I stop here, we complete the remaining part afterwards... just relax for some minutes.'

Picture 2 Twelfth Night model answer (Ms Rashmi)



In this class session, it has been seen that Ms Rashmi is dictating a model answer on the question: 'Compare and contrast the character of Viola, Olivia and Maria.' The answer that she dictates to the students appear to be a model answer taken from a critics' book. The model answer symbolises the correct knowledge that the teacher feels that she has the duty to impart to the students under the transmission model of teaching literature.

### 5.3.2.1 **Kamla giving background information about the author Road to Mecca**

*This is one of the first classes that I observed for Ms Kamla who works at the private secondary school. She is teaching White Tiger this semester but on this particular day, she decides to give some notes on Road to Mecca to the students, a text that the students completed last term.*

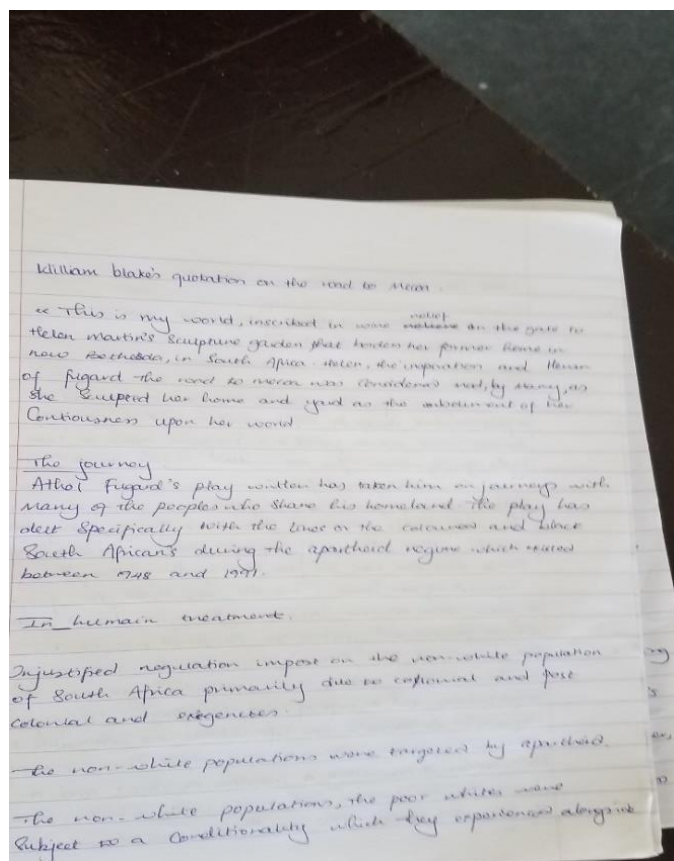
*Ms Kamla dictating notes on Athol Fugard's play Road to Mecca [13th June 2017]: Ms Kamla tells the students to take some notes on Athol Fugard. She starts dictating notes and the students start writing down. When dictating notes, she will state where there is a full stop, change of paragraph and the use of single quotes: 'Entre guiment' [French for within quotes], she will pronounce difficult words clearly and spell some difficult words for the students.*

### **Excerpt 6: Kamla giving notes on Road to Mecca**

Kamla: 'The play has dealt specifically with the colonised and black South Africans during the apartheid regime which existing between 1940 and 1941. It was an inhumane treatment.'

Inhumane- She spells it: I, n, h, u, m, a, n, e...

Picture 3: Monisha's notes on Athol Fugard's *Road to Mecca*



In this class session, the teacher will continue dictating notes on Athol Fugard's *Road to Mecca*, the purpose of the class was to provide some notes for revision purposes. The corresponding notes that were copied in is shown in picture 2. From the notes and picture, one can understand that these are general facts or knowledge on the author of the text and the context in which the text took place. Again, these notes could have potentially been taken from some websites on the internet.

The type of content that was seen in the notes in these excerpts matches to much extent the 'correct' knowledge which is identified as another essential component of the transmission model of teaching literature (Beach et al., 2011; Freire, 2000; Showalter, 2003). To further comprehend, the correct

nature of the knowledge transmitted by the teachers, it is necessary to refer back to the two types of questions that are set in the final exams. The final exams consist of two types of questions namely, the essay question and the context-based questions which requires the students to write a continuous prose of one to two pages as answers. Hence, much of the notes as seen in the excerpts presented especially the model answers given by Ms Rashmi and Ms Asha, can be viewed as comprehensive analyses of the texts which in turn can be used as answers in the exams.

The same phenomenon has been reported within the washback research where it has been pointed that under the pressure of exams, teachers make heavy use of exam materials. The materials can take the form of past exam papers or textbooks that mimics exam questions. Several washback studies such as Read and Hayes (2003), Cheng (1997) have reported the usage of exam-oriented materials to varying degree amongst teachers. Similarly, in this study, it was found that the teachers mostly gave comprehensive analyses of the texts as notes to the students which the latter can use in answering exam questions. However, a difference could also be observed between giving ideas in point form by Ms Asha and Ms Boyroo compared to the giving of complete fledged sentences as notes by the other teachers. It can be argued that the students would still have the task to develop the point form ideas into full-fledged sentences and arguments before using them as answers in the exams whereas, on the other hand, the readily available full sentences provided the students with ready-made analyses of the text that they can use in the exams. Yet, in both cases, the focus of the teachers remained the transmission of the correct knowledge to the students in view of helping the students to use that knowledge for their exams. Additionally, in excerpt 4, though Ms Boyroo is using a more communicative approach in teaching *Twelfth Night*, she still expects the correct answer to her questions from the students by refusing the different answers that was said by the students.

### **5.3.3 Mirrors raw image of learners as empty receptacles argument**

In the description of the transmission model of teaching literature, the students have been described as banks (Freire, 2000), receptacles (ibid) and empty vessels (Beach et al., 2011), highlighting their passive role within the classroom. As it has already been showcased in the first section of the chapter, the teacher-centred pedagogy altogether encourages the students to take a more peripheral role within the classroom. However, there were two teaching activities that perhaps captured a more extreme version of the transmission model of teaching English literature. The description of the two activities are presented in the two excerpts below: one consists of Ms Rashmi telling the students to copy some notes on *Twelfth Night* for two class periods (around sixty minutes) and the other consists of Amirah copying notes from the copybook of Ms Mansood's , the private tuition teacher for more than one hour.

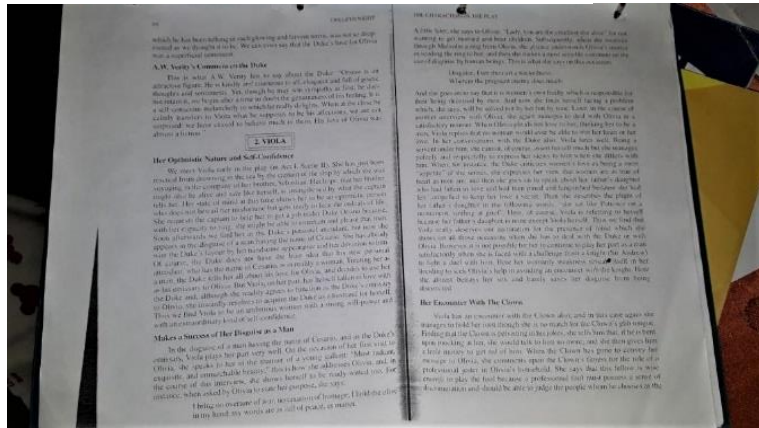
### 5.3.3.1 Ms Rashmi giving the students photocopies to copy from in the classroom

21<sup>st</sup> August 2017: *I come into the classroom a bit late, the students are settled, and Ms Rashmi hand the students (four students are present today) two sets of photocopies and for the next sixty, sixty-five minutes (the majority of the two periods) the students sat quietly and copied from the photocopy. The teacher tries to make some conversations with the students.*

*Ms Rashmi: 'Who has watched the T-Night movie?'*

*Students continue copying the notes and reply: 'Penkor miss' (Not yet Miss) and another replies: 'Monn geter' ( I have watched). Picture 4 shows the photocopy that the students were writing on that particular day. It seemed that the notes were photocopies from a critic book and covered character analysis for Viola, one of the main characters in Twelfth Night.*

Picture 4: Photocopy given by Ms Rashmi in class



On a previous session, Ms Rashmi stops dictating notes towards the end of the period and stated:

And she continues : 'Mo pou donn zot de la linn plis lezot mo fer fotocopi mo donn zot, zot stapel li dan zot kaye.'

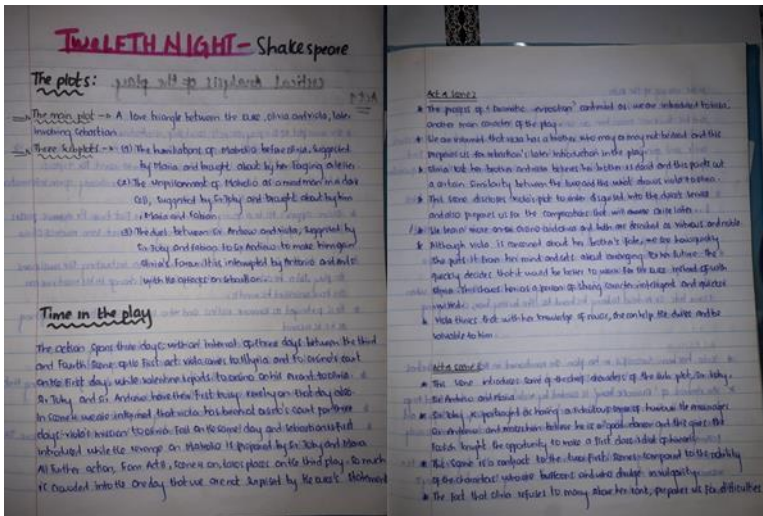
[I will give you two more lines, the rest I will make photocopies and give you, you staple it in your copybooks.]

My two participants, Kavisha and Monisha keep these photocopies in a flip file.

### 5.3.3.2 Ms Mansood makes Amirah copy notes at tuition for one hour...

Amirah goes to tuition class early and writes notes from the teachers' prepared notebooks in an adjacent classroom. Afterwards, she has explanation classrooms where Ms Mansood explains the text in Mauritian Kreol or French and she takes notes in English. Also, she may rewrite her notes to make it more legible and in parallel, Ms Mansood will give Amirah questions to work at home. And as per the teacher, next year, it will be more 'intense' as they will focus mainly on answering questions/practicing for the exams.

Picture 5: Amirah's notes on Twelfth Night



The above picture shows notes from Amirah's copybook that she was taking at Tuition from Mansood's prepared notes. It should be pointed out that it is a summary/analysis of the plot in the play Twelfth Night.

The teacher also does not allow them to take her notes but gives them the notes to write in the class. Amirah will copy notes for one and half hour, she may have a proper class afterwards or she goes home. As such I will ask her to tell me when she will have 'proper' classes where Ms Mansood is explaining, then I will come to observe the class. In a week, Amirah can go up to two or three times to tuition to copy notes and receive explanation on one particular day.

As seen in the two excerpts, the two activities are not followed by any explanation or discussion and it remains difficult to gauge whether the students understood what they wrote in their copybooks.

However, both teachers, namely Ms Rashmi and Ms Mansood emphasised the importance of taking these notes, which are seen as essential knowledge for the students. Thus, this activity of copying notes directly from photocopies or copybooks to some extent mirrored the raw image of the learner as empty receptacles waiting passively to be filled with 'correct' knowledge as described by scholars like Freire (2000), Beach et al. (2011), Showalter (2003). Furthermore, one can argue that these two activities capture a higher intensity of the effects of the HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature happening in the classrooms of Ms Rashmi and Ms Mansood. The purpose of dedicating the majority of the teaching time in making the students copy notes that contains the analysis of the texts which can be used as answers for the exams, shows the importance of transmitting notes for these two teachers.

#### **5.4 AN ATTEMPT TOWARDS THE SOCIOCULTURAL MODEL OF TEACHING LITERATURE**

A closer look at the IRF teaching strategy used by Ms Asha and Ms Boyroo reveals that though the teaching strategy may be seen as contrived and driven within the transmission model of teaching literature, it still possesses some characteristics of the sociocultural model of teaching. The following excerpts showcases two examples where both teachers are using IRF within their classrooms.

#### **Excerpt 7: Ms Boyroo trying to recap what she taught in a previous session with the students.**

**Teacher:** Do you remember this scene?

Do you still remember this scene?

Aler Personne? No one?

What happens in this scene?

There is a conversation between Antonia and Sebastian here.

What would the conversation be about?

What was the conversation about?

Remember we were pointing out that Sebastian was behaving in a selfish way here. Why?

He knew that Antonio was facing...

**A student replies in a mumbled way:** danger.

He knew that he was in danger there, yet he insisted going around, is that it?

You did not open up your book at all during holidays?

And what else apart from that? What else was said in the scene?

Aller? What else?

Yes

**A student replies:** The love that Antonio has for Sebastian

Teacher: yes, we did point out the love that we have for him.

In this extract, the teacher is trying her best to get responses from the students about a scene in the text, but the classroom is silent, where the students are looking at the teacher with blank faces and silence and some looking at their texts as if searching for the answers. One two students do try to give an answer in a mumbled way, lone tone where actually I had to strain to catch what they were saying. As the class progresses, more students will try to respond to the teachers' questions. Responses will be random, from the same students, and where the teacher will even have to use the name of a specific student to encourage them to participate.

#### **5.4.1.1 Ms Asha discusses a model answer and dictates main points...**

14<sup>th</sup> August: This class session is happening at the state secondary school where Ms Asha is teaching Chaucer's Franklin Prologue Tale. After greeting the students, 'Good afternoon'. *Ms Asha returns scripts of a class test she administers; she asks students to have a look at their papers and if they have any problem come and see her. She simultaneously dictates, explains and discuss a model answer for the question: Discuss some of the effects created by Chaucer's presentation of truth and marriage in the Franklin's Prologue Tale.*

*She will make a point about the question and probe with the students about their understanding of that particular point, basically she will explain each and every argument in the model answer that she will dictate and interestingly the answer itself is not full-length sentences but more of main points, ideas. The extract below shows how she introduces one argument and tries to discuss/explain it further with the students.*

#### **Excerpt 8: Ms Asha explaining Chaucer's Prologue**

Ms Asha dictates: Truth is a dramatic to the tale in the promises which are formal and legally binding contracts.

**The students** write.

Ms Asha starts explaining this point: So truth adds a dramatic effect to the tale is reflected in the promises which are formal, which are formal and legally binding contracts , legally binding contracts.



Ms Asha: And why they are legally binding contracts? Because?

How are the promises made? Are they written? Are they oral? How are they?

We are studying an oral literature is not it? Ok, why?

Because the people were on a pilgrimage to Canterbury.

This was an oral literature, it was not meant like Austin for example, to sit down and to read.

Alright?

It remains an oral literature, so what happens to the promises, it was legally binding and it was formal.

Because promises are so important, you have to fulfil your promise when you make a promise.

You were expected in those days, in the medieval times to fulfil your promise once you make it.

You could not go against, not achieve or forget your promise, you have to fulfil.

And this is exactly what is expected from Dornegin and Aurelius

She starts dictating again: So here, Avergus releases Dornegin. and from what does he release Dornegin?

From what does he release Dornegin?

This is a very important question.

From what does Avergus release Dornegin?

From the ?

**A student tries to answer:** From the promises...

Teacher: From the promises they made to each other... ok

We take back this point again in the marriage part.

They both made a promise, but he is the one who releases Dornegin.

And how would you call that? When he tells Dornegin, no you have to go and fulfil your promise.

What is he doing to his wife?

**Students trying to guess:** Quietly, mumbled answers...

Teacher says no.

**One student:** He is ending his marriage...

Teacher: Indeed, Yes he is ending his marriage but what is he doing to his wife?

**One student:** Ordering...

Teacher: good but what is a more appropriate word here? For Chaucer?

He is expressing autho? He is expressing authority!

In this extract, it can be seen that the teacher dictates an analysis or argument: 'Truth is a dramatic to the tale in the promises which are formal and legally binding contracts.' Afterwards, the teacher starts questioning the students about their understanding of this analysis by asking questions to the students: ' And why they are legally binding contracts? Because? How are the promises made? Are they written? Are they oral? How are they?

We are studying an oral literature is not it? Ok, why?' Again, the teacher does not pause too much and gives the answer herself. Afterwards when the teacher does pause, the students try to give half-hearted answers and only one or two tries to answer: 'quietly mumbling answers', one students: He is ending his marriage...'; one student: 'ordering.' The teacher even tries to give the students the start of a specific word that she was searching to describe what Chaucer was trying to represent through that particular scene: He is expressing autho... (the teacher pauses) waiting for answer and then states He is expressing authority.

According to the socio-cultural learning theory, teaching literature can take the form of a literary book club where the role of the literature teacher is to socialise into a literary community of practice (Edelsky et al., 2002). Thereby, the students are given the necessary platform and opportunity to become the students are given the platform and opportunity to become careful readers who learn several practices to interpret and produce literature (Beach et al., 2011). In the two excerpts presented, both teachers, namely Ms Boyroo and Ms Asha, provide an opportunity and platform to the students so that they can voice out their views and analysis of parts of the text. Though the platform is limited in nature as it is teacher-directed where the teachers are asking specific questions, thereby wanting specific answers, however, the mere existence of this opportunity and platform to participate can be seen as a step towards using the sociocultural model of teaching literature.

Further, another aspect of the socio-cultural learning theory is engagement in learning where people are seen as more likely to engage in a learning activity if they have some sense of ownership or partake in the planning or participation in that activity (Beach et al., 2011). Though, there was a degree of passivity and reluctance to participate from the students in the classes of both of the teachers. Generally, both teachers had to make many efforts to make the students speak. In a side conversation, Ms Boyroo even points that it might be because of my presence, and I agreed not to come in the next session, and in the following session the teacher concluded it was not really because of my presence, even my participants told me that the participation has always been the same. In

another session she will use the reading aloud technique and discussion. However, as seen in the two excerpts there were many students that took the opportunity presented to themselves to participate in the classroom. On a comparative basis, I noticed that there seems to be more engagement and interest in the classes of Ms Asha and Ms Boyroo compared to the other teachers. Thereby it seems the availability of a platform for participation seemed to create a livelier atmosphere in these two teachers' classes compared to the yawning of students, head on desks of the students and silent copying that was observed in the classes of the other teachers.

## **5.5 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, it has been seen that all the teachers across the three settings namely the state secondary school, the private state-aided secondary school and the private tuition, favoured teaching strategies that focused on the transmission of notes that mainly contained the summary and the analysis of the texts through different mediums such as dictation, photocopies and classroom discussions. Thus, the teachers were operating within the transmission model of teaching literature. Subsequently, it has been argued that such teaching strategies that resembles those reported in other washback studies, which potentially indicate the adverse effects of testing on the teaching and learning of English literature. As such it has been seen that through the usage of such teaching strategies within the transmission model paradigm, most of the teachers are focused on providing the correct analysis of the text to the students that they can use in the exams rather than teaching them how to analyse the texts.

However, it has also been seen two teachers namely Ms Asha and Ms Boyroo, through the use of IRF, attempted to use a more communicative approach to teach English literature, though it remained contrived and shared some of the structure of the transmission paradigm. In a way, it shows, even these two teachers that tried to demarcate themselves by choosing an alternative pedagogy compared to their colleagues, they are unable to ignore the exam pressure completely.

Lastly, it has also been seen that some of the teachers, mainly Ms Mansood, the private tuition teacher, used Mauritian Kreol extensively to explain the happenings of the story. This remains an interesting point as English remains a foreign language in Mauritius and there is a dominant school policy to use English only.

Overall, this observation chapter, provides the essential backdrop to investigate further the reasons behind the pedagogical choices of the teachers which will be discussed in the next chapter. Why most of the teachers are focused on providing notes to the students rather than using a more communicative pedagogy when CLT has been advised and even promoted in the local curriculum

(NCF)? What washback mediated factors influence this pedagogical choice? Why made Ms Asha and Ms Boyroo use a more communicative pedagogy in the form of IRF? Why Ms Mansood used Mauritian Kreol extensively to explain English literature?

Moreover, this chapter also foregrounded a seemingly inherent reluctance from the students to participate, a willingness to take notes and a passivity culture that warrants further investigation especially from the students themselves as they are a group of key informants within this study. Additionally, the student's perspective on the teaching pedagogy employed by the various teachers and their own stories to understand their behaviour and choices within the English literature classroom.

As such, the subsequent chapters are going to probe deeper in these observations through the beliefs/perceptions of teachers, head teachers and students. This unpacking will reveal the complex interplay of factors that mediates the exam-oriented teaching and learning of English literature that was observed within the classes.

## 6 TEACHER RELATED FACTORS

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In the previous chapter, it was argued that across the three settings, the English literature teachers engaged in several teaching practices that can be seen as modelled around the transmission model of teaching literature. These teaching practices primarily took the form of the transmission of notes, teacher-centred explanations, and even teacher-centred discussions in the form of IRF. It was also argued that though IRF shared some of the structure and the philosophical underpinnings of the transmission model of literature, it was tentatively reasoned that it does possess some other aspects of the sociocultural model of teaching literature as the two teachers employing IRF tried to provide the students with a platform to encourage participation and develop analytical skills. Thus, it was argued that under the pressure of the high stakes HSC exams and other washback mediated factors, the teaching practices that the English literature teachers employed resembled the exam-oriented teaching practices reported in the washback research literature.

As foregrounded in the research literature, washback remains a complex phenomenon. Amongst the many washback mediating factors reported within the research literature, washback studies in the language testing field have shown that teacher-related factors are crucial in mediating washback. Teachers' roles as agents for promoting washback may be reliant upon factors such as teachers' beliefs, perceptions and attitudes, their teaching experience, academic qualifications, and teacher training (Watanabe 1996b, Spratt 2005, Cheng 2008). Several washback studies have reported that teachers' perceptions and attitudes to the following aspects of teaching, learning and testing are critical mediating factors in washback: The perception and attitudes of the teachers towards the exams' stakes and usefulness; the status of the language and skill tested (Shohamy et al., 1996); the effective teaching methods that can be used to teach the subject (Watanabe, 1996a); the awareness of the existence and design of the exam (Spratt, 2005); the relationship between the test and the textbook ( Wall and Alderson 1993, Wall 2005); the teachers perceptions of their students' perceptions (Alderson and Hamps-Lyon, 1996), the teachers teaching philosophy (Lam, 1993).

In this chapter, the aim is to uncover the teacher-related factors that mediated the washback effects on the teaching and learning of English literature. The research question that this chapter investigate is: What teacher related factors influenced the teaching practices observed in the three settings?

The findings revealed several teacher-related factors as mediating the washback effects observed across the different settings. The teacher-related factors are:

- Teacher beliefs and perceptions about their learner's ability to learn the subject

- Teachers teaching philosophy and perception of effective teaching methods to teach the subject
- Teachers' perception of the relationship between the test (syllabus) and the textbooks
- Teachers teaching experience in teaching a text

## **6.1 TEACHER BELIEFS AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THEIR LEARNERS' ABILITY TO LEARN THE SUBJECT**

Drawing from a sociocultural framework of identity construction, the relationship between the teacher self and the student self is explored in this section. The study draws from positioning theory (Harré and Van Langenhove, 1991, 1999) and the principle of positionality Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) to explain how the teachers of this study negotiate, assert and take identity positions with respect to the students. Positioning and positionality refer to the manner in which temporary roles (identity positions) are strategically claimed (and abandoned) by the self as well as the ways in which a person (or discourse) assigns identity positions to others. An identity position is "a loose set of rights and duties that limit the possibilities of action" (Harré and Moghaddam, 2003, p.5). To make sense of how the teachers experience the teaching and learning of English literature from their position, the teachers use self-narratives and interactive positioning as identity construction tools (Harré and Van Langenhove, 1999; Harré and Moghaddam, 2003; Yoon, 2008). Interactive positioning is ascribing an identity position to another (other positioning), and this kind of positioning is akin to the principle of indexical inversion described by Bucholtz and Hall (2005). An index is a linguistic form loaded with social meaning and invoked to assert particular, strategic identity positions. In indexical inversion, the indexical associations are "imposed from the top by cultural authorities such as intellectuals or the media," (p. 596) or, in the teacher-student relationship, indexes are imposed from the most to least powerful (i.e. from teacher to student). Consequently, in this section, we will explore the self-narratives and the indexes that the teachers ascribed on their students to construct and affirm their own identities as authoritarian, exam-oriented, result-oriented, and all-knowing teachers. These identity positioning that most of the teachers affirmed through their choice of teaching strategies are also defining features of the transmission model of teaching literature.

According to the teachers, they endorsed the identity of authoritarian, exam-oriented, result-oriented and all-knowing teachers because they indexed and ascribed some of their students with identities that seemingly categorised them as lacking the necessary skillset, experience and motivation to learn and succeed English literature. The three major indexes associated with the students that came through the data were first time English literature learners, low proficient English literature learners and low proficient English language learners. Secondly, the teachers also positioned and indexed the

learners as passive, and this passiveness of the students emerged because of a myriad of other factors, which prevented the teachers to use more communicative teaching methods. However, some of the teachers like Ms Boyroo positioned the learners in a more favourable light as she viewed the passive culture of the learners as part of a learning and transitory phase. Yet, Ms Chaya seems to have contradictory views about the learners as she does not only tag them as passive but also believes that this passivity is transitory in nature.

### **6.1.1 First time English literature learners, the low proficient English literature learners, and low proficient English language learners.**

Many of the teachers positioned three categories of students as not possessing the necessary skill set and experience to learn English literature at HSC level, and this situation pushed the teachers towards using the transmission model in the teaching and learning of English literature. The first category is the group of students who are doing the English literature for the first time at HSC level, and they have not done the subject at SC level. The second category is the low proficiency English literature learners-learners who have done the subject at SC level but performed poorly at the exams but still chose the subject at HSC level. Moreover, the last category of students are the ones who have a low proficiency in the English language, which is seen as a vital precursor to learn and answer questions in the subject at HSC level.

### **6.1.2 First time English literature learners**

The teachers and the headteachers at both institutions pointed towards the presence of first time English literature learners who have not done the subject at SC level as one of the main reasons for their usage of teaching practices modelled around the transmission model of teaching literature.

Mr Adheen, the head of the English department in the state secondary school, goes a bit further in his explanations: He indexes and positions the first time English literature learners as 'having a handicap' for not having done the subject at SC level.

Ms Sooraya, the head of English department in the private state-aided secondary school, points to the lack of choice for these students as they are forced to opt for English literature only to be able to sit for the HSC exams: ' They want to be promoted in Lower Six...that's why they choose English literature.'

Upon, further enquiry about the importance of doing English literature at SC level to succeed at HSC level, the two heads believed that it was essential. However, Mr Adheen was also keen to indicate the existence of exception cases:

Over the years we have got students who have not done literature who seemed hopeless, but we managed to help them not only pass but get good grades. It is a case-to-case basis because for example, in the past, we had students who had done science in Lower but did literature in Upper and they did very well....they brought a scientific perspective towards literature.

Here, Mr Adheen shifts from his initial indexing of the first-time literature learners as having a handicap to do the subject as he points to several types of exception cases where students with no formal experience in English literature have gone to perform very well in the final HSC exams. There are some students who had not done English literature at SC level and seemed to be of low proficiency level, but they performed well in the HSC exams. There are other students who had done Science subjects in Lower six such as Biology, Chemistry and Physics and swapped for English literature in Upper six, but they also were able to perform very well in the final exams. Hence, for a science student to do eight texts in one year where the latter has not done English literature at SC level and achieve good grades seems quite exceptional. Perhaps, the existence of such cases in a way validates the efficiency of the teaching methods adopted by the teachers to teach subject at HSC level. Mr Adheen stated that only one student failed in English literature at HSC level at the state secondary school for the past ten years. Consequently, it has been seen that though having done English literature at SC level seems a desirable criterion to perform well at HSC level, yet it is not indispensable as exceptions do exist. However, the ascribed indexical position that the first time English literature learners may lack the ability to learn the subject still seems to drive some of the teachers towards positioning themselves as the exam-oriented and authoritarian figure in the classroom.

The creation of first time English literature learners at HSC level is intertwined with school policy and national policy decisions, and this issue will be explored further in the micro and macro context factors sections of this chapter.

### **6.1.3 Low proficient English literature learners**

Other than first time English literature learners, some of the teachers indexed and positioned some of the learners as mix-ability students in their classrooms which includes low proficiency learners. Hence, the teachers presumably positioned themselves as . This is succinctly pointed out by Ms Neha: 'We have mixed level students, we have both. We cannot say that everybody is on the same level. We have both.'

Moreover, Ms Chaya and Ms Neha adopted a gender-bias position where they tentatively seemed to index boys as being less proficient in English literature compared to the girls. Ms Neha states:



'Because the boys, they don't really know about literature. Now, to make them understand the real essence behind literature is very tough.' Ms Chaya similarly indexes the boys in the classroom as mostly being first time English literature learners and unmotivated to learn the subject. This belief seems to emerge from long standing educational gender biases where it is perceived that boys are better at STEM subjects and girls are better at languages and art. A closer look at the population of boys and girls in the three settings does reveal that there were more girls than boys doing English literature.

Ms Chaya takes the case of a boy to explain her positioning further:

And then the thing concerning the boys. Some of them, I have one specially in mind in this class, he just simply is not interested. And he has said he did not want to do literature...and he does not have any other choice. And the way we have discussed his case...he is going to fail the subject.

Then she continues explaining how she believes that the boy lacks the necessary proficiency to do English literature at HSC level even if he has done the subject at SC level:

I think he got a borderline pass because again he was not coming to class. Maybe he finds... and the other things is maybe they have done it in Form 5, they got a borderline pass and then they think Form Six is the same. But Upper Six you have got 8 texts and the way you answer questions is completely different.

Thereby, through the example of this boy, Ms Chaya points to the perceived lack of interest of boys in English literature as well as low proficient English literature learners who end up choosing the subject at HSC level despite having performed poorly at SC level. Again here, the system of education is being pointed at where there seems to be micro and macro context factors at play that creates both a pool of first time English literature learners at HSC level and allows low proficiency learners to be promoted in Lower six to have the opportunity to sit for the high stakes HSC exams.

However, Ms Chaya also took the alternative identity position as an understanding and compassionate teacher who acknowledged the efforts of some of the less proficient student like K and Amirah:

Maybe you will somebody who is less good will do better. You know there is K as well. You know she does well because she is taking down notes, she is listening. And yet she is less bright than the others. You see I think it's the attitude. How receptive you want to be. Amirah she is repeating Lower six. Last year she missed so many classes. When she came she did not take down any note, and then when she failed, now she takes down absolutely everything.

#### **6.1.4 Low proficient English Language learners**

Additionally, Ms Asha, points to the dropping levels of English at HSC level as one of the causes, that the students in English literature do not perform well:

Unfortunately, I should say that the last two years, we had brilliant students when it comes to language, it will reflect in literature as well because you need language to express, to develop ideas, structure and all...

Unfortunately, it is we have noticed that over the last, I would not say even two years, it has been a phenomenal chute.

In the Private state secondary school, I observed the teachers dictating slower and spelling words from time to time and even students asking the teachers how to spell a word. Though it did not come clearly across in the interviews of the teachers in the Private state secondary school, it can be seen that the level of English is an essential factor to learn English literature. Also, as noted in the observation chapter, Ms Kamla would paraphrase and explain some words in Mauritian Kreol as well as Ms Mansood, the private tuition teacher, who believes the usage of Kreol as a better medium of instruction rather than English for her explanation sessions.

Consequently, it has been seen that the teacher's perception of some of their learners' ability to do the subject which includes first time English literature learners, low-proficient English literature learners and low-proficient English language learners pushed them towards a more practical, straightforward and exam-oriented pedagogy in the teaching and learning of English literature. In the case of the private state-aided secondary school, seven out of eight students did not do English literature at SC level, however, in the case of the state secondary school, there were many students who have actually done the subject at SC level. However, it seems that despite having a more varied and mixed ability group of students in the English literature classroom of the state secondary school, the low proficient and first time English literature learners drove the decisions of the teachers in choosing the transmission model of teaching. This points to the challenge of teaching a group of mix ability students.

#### **6.1.5 Passivity leads to spoon-feeding (note dictation)**

The teachers take the identity position of the all-knowing and authoritarian teacher because of the indexed passivity that they assign to the students. Before discussing the different reasons forwarded by the teachers to explain the lack of participation that they index the students, this section will first situate how the teachers viewed this phenomenon.

Ms Asha, one of the teachers in the state secondary school describes the lack of discussion within her classroom by indexing the students as passive: 'I would say the problem is we've a passive, we've passive students nowadays. There is no interaction unfortunately, alright...'

Ms Chaya explains this passive nature of the students by comparing GP classes with English literature classes and identify the lack of participation specific to English literature classes and as a characteristic of the Mauritian education system:

For GP depending on the class you have they are all keen to participate. You ask a question, and they are fighting to talk. But literature is always different. We always have that problem in literature. They are more passive. But then you know I think it is because of our Mauritian system.

Ms Asha acknowledges that she knows about alternative teaching methods, but she is unable to use them because of the students' passive nature and the priority remains the students' success in the exams:

We know student-centred, we care for them but the fact remains they are passive, you have to spoon feed them and at the level of the department...we want them to succeed and get good results.

Similarly, Ms Rashmi, one of the teachers in the Private state secondary school, also admits understanding that there should be the usage of a more communicative pedagogy, however, she ends up choosing a more exam-oriented pedagogy because of the passive nature of the students at that institution:

But for us teachers it is in our mind the class should be discussion. There should be discussion about themes and all. But we can't do that... the efforts should come two ways.

Even Ms Chaya admits that the students expect to be given notes or 'spoon-fed' and her pedagogical choice is based on that perceived expectations of the students:

To tell you frankly, the students they expect to be spoon fed, they will not think, they will not comment anything new. But maybe when they are writing you might find that. But hardly...

The different teachers indexed the students with several unfavourable identities and often these are interconnected in nature, to explain the emergence of this passive culture that encouraged them to 'spoon-feed' the students. The reasons foregrounded were: the students not reading their texts which limits their input in the class; the students have inhibitions and lack the skills to interact in the class; the students have an exam-oriented mindset; the students as first time English literature learners lack the motivation and interest to learn the subject; the students are undergoing an adaptation and transition phase. As a researcher, during the interviews, I felt that the tone and the descriptions used

by some of the teachers to describe the learners seemed condemning in nature where it seemed that the teachers were putting the full responsibility of using the less appealing and more exam-oriented transmission model on the type of learners that were present in their classes.

#### **6.1.5.1 The students not reading their texts which limits the students' input in the class**

One prominent homework and preparation work that is given by all the teachers to their students is to read sections of the texts at home, and the teachers indexed many of their students as lazy and unmotivated as they do not do their assigned readings at home. According to Ms Rashmi, the teacher in the private state secondary school, she explains that she cannot conduct classroom discussions in the class because the students 'do not read the text' and thus they do not give an input when they are questioned:

But these students you know, the problem is that these students you give them something to read at home so that you brainstorm, you can do interaction in class. They don't do... I think it is just because they don't read enough, or they don't read at all.

This can be corroborated with what was observed in the classroom of Ms Rashmi, more specifically to the instance when Ms Rashmi was asking about whether the students had done the homework that she had assigned and read the introductory part of Measure for Measure, to which the students kept quiet. As observed and recorded in the observation chapter, the students were not participative and did not do the reading as well as one of the homework that she had assigned in a previous session. Thus, this seemingly discouraged the teacher from adopting a more transactional/sociocultural pedagogy of teaching and learning English literature. However, it should also be pointed out the teacher also had entire sessions dedicated to dictating notes, it seemed she did not try enough to use a different pedagogy and she was quick to incline towards the preferred usage of note dictation to teach the subject.

Similarly, Ms Chaya refers to her students slacking in their reading responsibilities which according to her is reflected in the students' lack of participation within the classroom:

And then you find that the students have not brought their texts. They have not got a clue about what happens because they have not got their texts. There are only one or two who have read. Or when you ask them what happened before, they really don't even know what happened before. And yet they were in the class...

She also points to some students not having their textbooks or not bring their texts in the classroom. This issue was also raised by the head of the Private Secondary school, Ms Sooraya, who pointed out that many of the students do not even buy the textbooks. During my observations, I noticed only two

students in the State Secondary school sharing books while the majority of the students did have their textbooks including my participants. This might have been more of an issue with the previous batch of students.

#### **6.1.5.2 *The students have inhibitions and lack the skills to interact in the class***

Additionally, Ms Rashmi, tries to provide other reasons to explain this passive culture of the students by indexing the students as lacking the necessary communication skills and having inhibitions which act as barriers to implement a communicative pedagogy within the classroom: the students ‘...either they will feel shy....or they don’t know what to say or they don’t have the skills for interaction...’

However, Ms Chaya, points to the fact that the students take time to get used to the teacher and by the second year they are more used to the teacher and this may help the students’ inhibitions to dissipate:

...In Upper Six I suppose as well they are more used to you if you have never worked with them. You know when you have worked with them for two years, they are more confident. They feel they are closer to you and they feel they might as well ask questions; they might ask question as fun. Maybe have another interpretation of the same event ...but very very very few.

#### **6.1.5.3 *The students as first time English literature learners lack the motivation and interest to learn the subject***

In the Private state secondary school, the head of department, Ms Sooraya and Ms Rashmi, one of the teachers, again put emphasis on the status of the students as first time English literature students which according to them affects the level of interest and motivation of the learners to learn the subject and thus leads the emergence of the passive culture of the students.

Ms Sooraya: ... the students they are just there in the class. They don’t show any interest...they show no interest, they are just there in the class only to have fun...

Ms Rashmi: ... at times you have students that chooses literature because of options. It’s a problem then. They don’t want to do the text, so they are obliged to do it and they don’t want to put in the required efforts but sometimes we are able to convince the students most of the time they do their best and they try to do their best.

Ms Asha points towards another aspect related to first time English literature learners who choose the subject on a trial basis or who are unaware about the content of the subject:

Then, the students come to English, believing that English language main which we call literature in English is not even English language is the same as the same components as for French. They believe we have a comprehension, which should be easy for them and they do not necessarily know what the subject holds, whereas literature in English may...it is only literature and when they get to know the fact, some of them drop the subject.

She points out that some students confuse English main with French main as they think that English main will have the same components as French main, but it is only literature texts. She also stated that some years back she started with forty-six students in Lower Six, first term and by second term, there was only fifteen students and by next year, there were fewer students. According to her, the students 'took up new subjects, other subjects, alright...irrespective of the religion, taking up Hinduism', thereby pointing to competing subjects at HSC level.

Upon further enquiring about what does she think are the reasons behind the students dropping English literature for other subjects like Hinduism, Ms Asha stated that:

Because it is more appealing to them, I don't know, maybe in English literature you need English language, like I said earlier, you need, many could not master the language. So, obviously, they could not understand literature, they could not write anything, they could not do it.

Hence, she again points to the importance that the mastery of English language is for performing well in English literature. However, it should be noted that even in Hinduism, the students are expected to answer essay-type questions in English. Hence, it may be inferred that the teacher is also pointing towards the analytical style of writing which is vital in English literature.

#### **6.1.5.4 *The students have an exam-oriented mindset***

Further, according to Ms Asha, this passivity can be seen as the product of an exam-oriented mindset from the learners: '...Because they know they have an exam at the end of the day they have an exam to do and the most important thing, their priority is to succeed in exam.' According to her, the passive nature of the students is a result of the students' exam-oriented mindset. Thus, it seems that the teacher highlights that the students know that participation is not rewarded by the exams directly, thereby, the students are seen as more interested in copying the notes that they will use in the exams rather than participate in the classroom.

#### **6.1.5.5 *The students have a competitive mindset***

According to Ms Asha, some of the students do not participate in the class because they do not want to share their ideas in front of their friends. Ms Asha states that some students prefer to 'come to see you during lunch time and then ask [her] questions but it is very often...not in the class, not in front of everyone.'

She continues explaining that this is because of ‘the competitive mind they got as well...so they would not ask something in front of their friends so that it does not trigger in their friends’ mind.’ Hence for her, that’s why she ‘work so hard for them and at the end of the day it does become spoon-feeding and then, fortunately it is like that because they don’t share their ideas with you.’

Hence, Ms Asha explains the passive culture of the students by pointing towards a competitive mindset that is predominant in the classroom where the students seemingly refuse to participate and share their ideas for fear that they might be giving their friends new ideas. In the next chapter, when the students will be interviewed, more will be revealed about the sharing or lack of sharing and rivalry between them in the classroom.

#### **6.1.5.6 *The students take tuition more seriously than school classes***

According to Ms Chaya, another reason the students are passive in the class is because they take private tuition, and they value what is taught in the tuitions more than what is taught at school.

Ms Chaya states:

This class, what I find is they are a few who can do really really well, who can do much better than they are doing, but they are doing for the simple reason they are over-confident or maybe they are taking tuitions, so they would prefer to listen to their tuition teacher and come to class and listen passively just to be present in class.

Ms Chaya relates the issue that some of the students are underperforming because of their over-confidence and because of their preference to listen to their tuition teacher rather than their teacher at school.

Afterwards she refers to some students who do not take notes in the class such as Diviskha:

She doesn’t take down notes. Very very very rarely. Ok, like I have told them, they might be taking tuitions but then this is literature. Literature is very subjective.

Ms Chaya goes on to compare tuition teachers and schoolteachers:

Because I have also told them. The teacher from whom you are taking tuition who says is a good teacher? Who says that the teacher knows it all? Because I have told them if your teacher knew so much, your results should have been excellent.

Hence, here it can be seen that according to Ms Chaya, passivity is created in the class because the students seemingly take their tuition classes and tuition teachers more seriously rather than the schoolteachers. In a way, by extension, one can assume that perhaps the students might be participating and be more engaging at tuition compared to at school.

In her interview, Ms Mansood sheds more light on the issues surrounding the teaching and learning of English Literature at school and at tuition. She foregrounds the issue surrounding private tuition in

Mauritius where different stakeholders have been trying to ban private tuition in the country. According to Ms Mansood, 'it is quite difficult...' to ban private tuition as 'the work is done here.'

Ms Mansood reiterates the role of tuition in the teaching and learning of English literature. She states that 'schools have difficulties to finish the textbooks and by the end of the year questions will be set on them...thus, they do believe that whatever is happening in the class in a way is in sync with the tuitions. So, every student is preparing for English literature with whatever is happening in class plus tuition...'

Further, Ms Mansood also points to some schoolteachers who rely entirely on the premise that their students take tuitions. She explains that she has worked in many schools and she has seen that the schools 'do not explain poetry because the schoolteachers know that the students take tuition.' And according to her, these schoolteachers will make some of the students who take tuition to go in front of the classroom and explain the poems to the whole class. Moreover, she adds that, 'there are some teachers who work in tuition but those who don't take tuition, they don't know these explanations.'

#### **6.1.5.7 *The students are undergoing an adaptation and transition phase***

However, Ms Boyroo, the teacher at the state secondary school that tried using a sociocultural model of teaching literature harboured more positive views on the students. She explains the reluctance of the learners to participate in her class despite her efforts as part of an adaptation and transition period and she firmly believed that there would be a change of attitude when the students' progress in Upper six:

They are still trying to adapt and understand. I am sure next year the students; they will respond differently. We had such batches in the past also especially Shakespeare. It is not easy.... I think you were there when they read. They can read this at ease now compared to when they started when they could not even read one line... Forget about understanding. But now it is coming to them, it is easy now, Shakespeare is not difficult, so I think next year the response also will be different.

Thus, Ms Boyroo, highlighted the difficulty of teaching Shakespeare but also foregrounded that the students will improve with time, and they are adapting to the subject so far. Interestingly, she is the only teacher that did not point to the negative attributes of the students unlike the other teachers. At one point, after one of the sessions, I observed, Ms Boyroo stated that the students were perhaps not participating because of my presence in the classroom, and I offered not to come in the next session. And in the session afterwards, I asked her whether there was a difference when I did not attend the session, she conceded that 'not really but the students will improve with time...'



Interestingly, Ms Chaya, the teacher who did have many opposing views on the students, also expressed about this change of attitude that she has observed over the years with a different batch of students:

Usually, the difference between Lower Six and Upper Six students, it's a really really big difference... I know there will be a change of attitude because I have seen this before...not only this group but every single year we have had the same experience because they know the exams are coming...

Ms Chaya explains this difference in attitude by pointing out that the students who 'have never done literature before...take a whole year to grasp the text...', to answer questions as well as to 'start loving the subject...' *and also*, because when the exams are nearer, they become more serious. Thus, for this teacher, it seems that the students are not ready to learn the subject through a more participatory pedagogy in Lower Six because of their lack of maturity and experience which she points out develops gradually when the students get to Upper Six. Thus, she might be pointing that she might be using a more participative pedagogy in Upper Six rather than traditional pedagogy because of the change of attitude and maturity of the students. However, it should also be noted that it remains difficult to assess her claims because I did not observe her Upper Six classes.

Ms Chaya, also elaborates on the pressure of exams that changes the attitude of the students between Lower Six and Upper Six:

In my Upper Six, I have got students who are very keen, and you must have noticed...that I have got students coming to this class to revise. They do extra work for me but then again it is at the need of second term and third term when they feel they really need to get serious...because when they are in Lower Six, they think oh I have got two years to do the exams, they are not serious...

Thereby, it can be reasoned that as per this teacher, the nearer the exams are, the intensity of washback becomes more significant as the students show more tremendous enthusiasm to practice exam questions and to attend Lower Six classes for revision purposes.

Consequently, in this section it has been seen that some teachers believed that the passive nature of the students as a static culture that emanated because of the students' not reading their texts, having inhibitions and lacking the skills to interact, possessing an exam-oriented mindset, lacking the motivation and interest to learn the subject as first time English literature learners. Thus, this perceived passive nature of the students forced the teachers to use an exam-oriented pedagogy as they are unable to apply a more communicative and student-centred pedagogical approach. However, two teachers namely Ms Boyroo and Ms Chaya viewed the passive nature of the students as part of an

adaptation and transition phase where the students will gradually adapt to the subject and the teachers, hence there will be a change in this passive culture.

### **6.1.6 Reflections**

In this section it has been seen that most of the teachers claimed that the students in the classroom drove their choice of using the transmission model of teaching literature methodology. Firstly, it has been seen in the first part, some of the teachers pointed towards the unsuitability of some of their students to study English literature at HSC level which included first time English literature learners, low proficiency English literature learners, low proficiency English language learners. Secondly, in the second part of the section, the dominant passive culture of the students has been highlighted by the teachers as the catalyst factor that pushed the teachers towards the transmission model of teaching English literature. That is in the words of Ms Chaya, by adopting the passive culture and resisting to participate in the classroom, 'the students want to be spoon fed' the analysis of the texts through note dictation. A comparison can be drawn with Alderson and Hams-Lyon (1996) who investigated TOEFL exams in the USA, the researchers reported that the teachers in their study claimed that the students drove the methodology as the students seemingly wanted to practice TOEFL papers and practice exam-like exercises. However, after interviewing the students, the researchers also reported that the students believed in alternative methods of learning English such as making American friends, reading a lot, speaking English outside the classroom, and watching movies. Thereby, this shows a discrepancy between teachers' claims about their students' preferred teaching methods and the students own accounts about their preferences. Such discrepancies have also been foregrounded in other studies such as Hawkey (2006) and Lumley and Stoneman (2000), where differences between teachers' and students' preferences of teaching methods and teaching materials were found. Hence, in light of this pattern of differences revealed in the literature, this warrants further investigation of the teachers' beliefs and perception of their students' ability from the students' perspective. It becomes vital to investigate whether the pedagogical choice of using the transmission model of teaching English literature is a consequence of the passive culture of the students or is it the usage of the transmission model of teaching literature that is the cause of the passive culture of the students in the classrooms?

Further, the diverging views should also be foregrounded, where the teachers admitted there were exceptions where even first time English literature learners, low proficiency English literature learners and low proficiency English language learners managed to achieve good grades in the HSC exams. However, this does not seem to deter the teachers to use the transmission model of teaching as I

believe this in a way this validates the efficiency of this teaching approach if this is making such students succeed in the high-stakes exams. Moreover, it should also be highlighted there was a stark difference between how some of the teachers viewed the students' passive culture as a definitive barrier to implement an alternative pedagogy and two of the teachers, viewed this passive culture as part of a transition phase. As noted in the observation chapter, Ms Boyroo and Ms Asha employed IRF as an additional pedagogy to teach English literature with the same group of students in the state secondary school. Here, Ms Boyroo expressed visibly diverging views about the passive culture of the students.

## **6.2 TEACHERS TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND PERCEPTION OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING METHODS TO TEACH THE SUBJECT**

Often, teachers teaching philosophy and their perception of what consists of effective teaching methods to teach a particular subject can become driving factors that mediate washback (Lam, 1994). Teaching philosophy can be seen as the beliefs of the teachers about how a particular subject should be taught and this is related to their own perceptions of what they consider to be effective teaching methods to teach English literature. So far, we have seen that the beliefs and perceptions of the teachers around their students' ability to learn the subject and their students' role in the classroom played a vital role in constructing their broader teaching philosophy. A teaching philosophy that consisted mainly of teaching strategies modelled primarily around the transmission model of teaching literature and to some extent the sociocultural model of teaching. In this section, we are going to explore how the teachers' inherent beliefs about the effectiveness of their teaching strategies also contributed towards their usage of such strategies in the teaching and learning of English literature.

### **6.2.1 Note dictation, note taking and memorisation**

In the observation chapter, it was reported that much of the teaching that was observed across the three settings consisted of the usage of several teaching strategies modelled around the transmission model of teaching literature which entailed the transmission of notes consisting of summaries and analyses of texts through different mediums such as dictation, photocopies and email. This was seemingly done with the aim to provide the students with the analyses of the texts which they can subsequently use to answer exam questions. In the previous sections, it has been seen that most of the teachers justified their choice and usage of such teaching strategies based on several contextual factors such as learners' ability and role in the classroom which are seemingly beyond their control.

However, in the interviews, there were some teachers who also indicated that they used such teaching strategies because they believed upon the merits and effectiveness of such strategies in the successful teaching and learning of English literature.

Ms Mansood, the private tuition tutor, explained in detail her position on the usefulness of dictating and copying notes. I think she was able to express herself more freely compared to the other teachers because as a private tuition teacher, she was not governed by any institutional rules compared to the other teachers who were perhaps forced to give politically correct answers as employees that are part of an institution.

When I questioned Ms Mansood about the note taking sessions that I observed Amirah taking, where she sat for one or two hours and took notes, I also asked her why she did not consider photocopying the notes and giving them to the students which would be less time-consuming.

Ms Mansood explained that 'when we do photocopy it is not the same thing that we are copying' and 'copying it stays here (pointing to the head). She further adds :

Alors quand tu ecris ca reste la, ok? [when you write, this stays here] But when you read, sometimes it is not something you do on purpose and your attention flies away....When you copy, you remember...

Similarly, Ms Chaya connects taking notes with remembering:

For me somebody cannot come to literature class and just listen. It does not make sense. Because they will never remember what I have been saying. And I can't keep repeating the same things throughout the year

For Ms Chaya, practical teaching and learning of English literature entails the students taking notes when she is explaining in the class. She expresses her displeasure at students not taking notes in her class.

Using the example of Riya, one of my participants, she states that:

... Now, in class Riya does not take down notes. She does not.... Like I tell them, I might not say things to them but I find it boring. You know just like a parent scolding his children every time, and my children tell me when I scold them too much they don't hear me. So, it's the same thing happening with those students. So how often like I have said, can I tell them to take down notes. She doesn't take down notes. Very very very rarely.

She further compares Riya who is seen as a bright student with K and Amirah whereby the latter two students whom Ms Chaya sees as less bright but more hardworking only because they listen attentively, and they take notes.

You know there is K as well. You know she does well because she is taking down notes, she is listening. And yet she is less bright than the others. You see I think it is the attitude. How receptive you want to be. Amirah she is repeating Lower Six. Last year she missed so many classes. When she came, she did not take down any note, and then when she failed, now she takes down absolutely everything.'

Here, the two teachers actually reveal their rationale behind using the transmission of notes through dictation or making them copy the notes. As discussed in the observation chapter, the underlying philosophy behind their usage of teaching practices such as note dictation, teacher-centredness and the bank deposit style of teaching English literature stems from the transmission model of teaching literature (Beach et al., 2011). As such the transmission model of teaching literature seems more conducive for exam preparation and thus its usage by teachers can be seen as part of the adverse washback effects of the HSC exams. Both teachers highlight the importance of memorising and remembering the notes which the students will subsequently use to answer exam questions. For Mansood, writing down the notes in a copybook, helps in this essential memorisation process compared to only reading notes. Similarly, Ms Chaya insists that students have to take down the vital notes which she is giving in the class as this will help them for the final exams.

Moreover, it should be noted that in the transmission model of teaching literature, the teacher takes centre stage, and the students sit on the periphery, dutifully assimilating the correct knowledge given by the teacher. However, in the case of Ms Chaya, she seemed unable to use the transmission model of teaching effectively as some of her students like Riya resisted taking down notes in her class. The other teachers, though they give notes and admit using the transmission model of teaching, they seem reluctant to acknowledge the merit of such a teaching method clearly or to acknowledge that such a method is part of their teaching philosophy. Instead, the other teachers preferred justifying their usage of the exam-oriented transmission pedagogy by pointing to several external factors outside their control. In a way, they are aware that the transmission model of teaching is seen as exam-oriented, old, and much maligned like the 'chalk and talk' method of teaching English that was prominent during the old days in Mauritius. In contemporary times, the prominence has been on using and promoting Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the English language/literature classroom. As such, as it will be seen afterwards, these teachers such as Ms Asha and Ms Rashmi would acknowledge the knowledge of more communicative and discussion-oriented pedagogies, but they are unable to employ these because of the passive culture of the students.

Ms Asha offers a totally different perspective as she believes that:

...outstanding students they would take the information you are giving them, they will interpret it, understanding is already there, they analyse what you are saying and low achieving students, they will just vomit whatever you say.

Additionally, Ms Neha actually acknowledged that she was teaching literature the way she was taught during her days. She states that *'I don't know maybe what I've learned, the way I've learned also was kind of spoon-feeding babies this is what I'm doing also, ok?'* Hence her teaching philosophy emerged through the way she was taught during her student days. Often teachers are impressioned for life with the way their teachers taught them and having been part of the system, having been successful with such type of teaching and learning, the teachers are encouraged to continue using the same pedagogy with their students.

### **6.2.2 Using Mauritian Kreol as support language**

As in has been seen in the observation chapter, two teachers used Mauritian Kreol in their respective classrooms, namely Ms Kamla, one of the teachers in the private state-aided secondary school and Ms Mansood, the private tuition teacher. Ms Kamla did not use Mauritian Kreol excessively as she used it only to explicate some English words and terms. On the other hand, as seen in excerpt 3 in the observation chapter, Ms Mansood used Mauritian Kreol to explain what is happening in the Twelfth Night. Hence, I enquired further into her choice of Mauritian Kreol for explaining the text to the students.

For Ms Mansood:

The mother-tongue is the best way to make the children understand literature as it is mostly in English. They can't understand certain things. If we teach in the same language, they are not really going to understand what I am saying. Most students are going to stare at me in the same way. But if I speak in Kreol and I don't speak in French really but in Kreol mostly.

Hence, for Ms Mansood, using Mauritian Kreol which is the mother tongue of the students is an effective way to make these students understand the story and analyses of the texts.

Ms Mansood goes further and points to the memorisation value of using Mauritian Kreol. She states that she has 'noticed when [she uses] the mother tongue, [the students remember it, even after five years. When [she] teaches it in Form 1 , the children still remember it.' Moreover, she states that the students 'assimilate quite deeply' when she uses Mauritian Kreol and she 'made the experience when [she] was in college' as there was a teacher who used to teach her in Mauritian Kreol.

The role of the Mauritian Kreol within the Mauritian Kreol has been an ongoing debate owing to the dual status of the language as being perceived both as the language of a specific community and the mother tongue. Language teachers namely English, French and ancestral language teachers (Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Tamil, Telugu and Mandarin), usually view Mauritian Kreol as a language detrimental for their students. Here, Ms Mansood raises valid questions on the status of English as a foreign language for Mauritians and the necessity of explaining English literature in Mauritian Kreol to Mauritian students. Perhaps one of the reasons, the teaching and learning of English is heavily influenced by the high stakes' exams, is the fact that the students are learning English literature in a foreign language. The exploration of this facet is beyond the scope of the current study. However, it should also be noted that the Mauritian students have been learning English from Grade 1/ Standard one and they have to go through the School Certificate exams which includes English language to be promoted in Lower six. However, as noted in the previous section namely, teacher beliefs and perceptions about their learners' ability to learn the subject, low proficient English language learners can potentially face difficulties in learning English literature and thus, Mauritian Kreol can act as a desirable support language for such type of learners.

### **6.2.3 Ms Boyroo's teaching philosophy**

When I asked Ms Boyroo about her teaching philosophy, she stated that:

I think that's the basis of literature, where you have each one must have their own opinion, they think differently. I want to see how they see things and how they respond to certain things.

That's the purpose actually to make them more analytical and critical, develop that in them.

At first level of analysis, one could say that she gave a diplomatic answer aligned with the recommended ways of teaching English literature at school. However, this philosophy of encouraging participation and developing analytical skills could be seen in her teaching practices as discussed in the classroom observation chapter. She did try to give the students a platform to express their opinions and to discuss the text that they were studying. Though her attempts were not that successful considering she did end up answering most of her questions, however, the teaching philosophy she espoused was backed by her teaching practices.

### **6.2.4 Reflections**

In this section, it has been seen that some of the teachers' choice of pedagogy emanated from their inherent philosophy and beliefs on the effective teaching methodology required to teach English literature. It has been seen how some of the teachers, especially Ms Mansood, who were able to express their views on the central use of note dictation, note taking in the teaching and learning of English literature. It should be noted that no where in our data collection process, teachers clearly explained and admitted that the notes were being given for memorisation and for exam purposes. However, here when queried, Ms Mastan and Ms Chaya were able to express their views clearly on the use of these notes for succeeding in exams. This in a way revealed the underpinnings of the transmission model of teaching literature as tied to the note-dictation and taking exercise. Further, the outlier, Ms Boyroo, again had a different teaching philosophy compared to the others that actually expressed theirs. The findings of this section do reinforce the idea that teachers would use teaching methods that were deemed as effective for succeeding in the exams rather than for learning. It should be noted that the teaching philosophy and perception of effective teaching of English literature stemmed from the notion of success in the exams rather than making the subject interesting and the developing analytical skills to analyse texts.

### **6.3 TEACHERS PERCEPTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TEST (SYLLABUS) AND THE TEXTBOOKS**

Washback Studies have found that different aspects of the test itself can influence the characteristics of washback. For instance, the format of the test (Shohamy et al., 1996), the weighting of individual papers (Lam, 1994) and when the test was introduced and how well acquainted are the teachers to it (Andrews et al., 2002). In this study, the teachers' choice of pedagogy seemed to have been influenced by several aspects of the test: the number of texts to be covered in the syllabus, the choice of texts from the list given by CIE, the format of the test and the choice of the English literature syllabus 9695 provided by CIE.

#### **6.3.1 Number of texts to be covered in the syllabus**

Different teachers expressed varied views on the 'bulkiness' of the English literature syllabus.

The teachers and the head teacher in the private state-aided secondary school believed that the syllabus is bulky especially for their students who are seen as first time English literature learners and low proficiency English literature learners. Ms Rashmi reported that she believes the syllabus is bulky especially for her low-achieving students based on 'their reactions' and after they get their 'term



marks'. She also points to Paper 3 which has 30 poems and 10 short stories. Ms Sooraya, the head of the department also reports about the syllabus being bulky mainly because their learners have not done English literature before. Alternatively, Ms Kamla perceives the syllabus as bulky because she has 'a lot to prepare' for her classes.

In the state secondary school, Mr Adheen, the head of the department offers an exciting perspective where he sees the way of teaching literature as bulky but necessary because of the presence of first time English literature learners. Mr Adheen explained that he thinks the syllabus is bulky mainly because of the 'minute' and 'page by page' approach adopted by the teachers to teach the text. He further justifies this by pointing out to the group of students that 'do not have prior English literature knowledge' and according to him, the teachers cannot take 'much for granted'.

On the other hand, some teachers such as Ms Mansood, the private tuition teacher, Ms Neha and Ms Boyroo believed that the syllabus was not bulky for different reasons. Ms Mansood, explained that she 'cannot say the syllabus is bulky because [she] has to do all the texts as she is giving tuition.' She believes that Cambridge has given the students a lot of choices. Ms Neha stated that she does not think the syllabus is bulky because, at the university level, the students learn more than eight texts. And lastly, Ms Boyroo also believed that the syllabus was not bulky because she thought that they had a lot of time to cover the texts.

Thus, it has been seen that the English literature syllabus 9695 offered by CIE is perceived as bulky and challenging mainly by the teachers and the head teacher of the private state-aided secondary school because of the profile of their students. It seems that this perceived bulkiness of the syllabus also played an important contributing role in pushing Ms Kamla and Ms Rashmi towards the usage of the transmission model of teaching. Conversely, Mr Adheen, pointed that the teaching approach adopted by the teachers is cumbersome and lengthy rather than the syllabus and he also points to the presence of first time English literature learners. However, this 'minute detail' approach adopted by the teachers is not entirely to the type of learners present in the classroom but also because of the format of the exam questions set in the test. This will be explored further in the following sub-section. On the other hand, some teachers pointed towards university courses like the BA English programme which usually includes the learning of more than eight texts across various genres. Hence these teachers emphasised the role of the English literature HSC exams as a requirement to opt for the BA English Degree or other language related courses at university level.

### **6.3.2 The choice of texts from the list given by CIE**

In the washback research literature, researchers have noted that under the pressure of exams, teachers use past exam papers, coursebooks with exam-like exercises and they are aware of all the available publishing materials which are exam tailored available on the market. Like it has been noted in the observation chapter, the nature of the English literature subject makes it difficult to drill and practice like other English language exams. It has been also seen in the observation chapter that the notes mostly consisted of analyses of the texts and model answers that can be used directly to answer exam questions. However, the choice of texts and the process involved interests me as a researcher because the final exams might potentially be influencing the choice of texts to be studied at HSC level. Hence, this washback effect may be seen as specific to the English literature subject, and it warrants further investigation.

The head of department at the state secondary school, Mr Adheen revealed that the texts at the institution are chosen through a 'democratic' process where all teachers try to reach a 'consensus' and 'agreement'. Only one of the teachers revealed, namely, Ms Neha revealed that she was unwilling to teach *The Namesake* because she prefers teaching Shakespeare's texts, but she agreed upon the insistence of Mr Adheen, however, she ended up liking the text a lot. On the other hand, Ms Sooraya, the head of department at the private state-aided secondary school did not really elaborate on the decision-making process. However, Ms Kamla revealed that it was the head of department who decided which texts will be taught to the students. Ms Rashmi revealed that she does give her input to the head of department. It seems that the decision-making process at the Private state-aided secondary school is not so democratic. Contrast, even if the decision-making seems collective in nature in the other institution, there is the visible influence from the head of departments who are also the most senior and experienced teachers at the respective decisions.

The teachers used various descriptors to describe the texts that they would choose. The heads teachers and teachers stated that they choose 'easy texts', 'accessible texts', 'broad spectrum', 'non-bulky', 'interesting', 'not boring' for the students. In a way, the teachers chose texts according to the perceived preferences and convenience of the students.

Mr Adheen explains that choosing texts from a broad spectrum relates to choosing texts from 'different genres while covering different periods in history ...including the writings of both native and non-native English speakers.' Further, he states that they choose 'accessible texts' which are 'texts that the students can relate to their everyday life and own experience'. On the same line, Ms Sooraya believes that Shakespearean texts are easy to relate to because 'these texts contain common themes like marriage, love, jealousy, friendship.' Which the students can relate to their lives. Contrastly, Ms Chaya believed that 'for me personally, if Cambridge who has chosen those texts...the level of accessibility, the level of understanding has to be more or less the same...'

For Mr Adheen, they 'avoid bulky texts which are usually five hundred pages long because of time constraints in completing the bulky syllabus.' Ms Neha gives the example of Jane Austen's texts which are usually lengthy and thus deemed bulky to study. Moreover, Ms Neha believes that Austen texts are seen as 'uninteresting' and 'boring' by the students because they find it difficult to relate to the bourgeois environment.

Upon enquiring about the reluctance of choosing additional poetry text in paper Six, Mr Adheen stated that 'teachers seem to be reluctant to teach poetry and are more at ease with prose and drama. Maybe they are not at ease with teaching form as opposed to content.' Similarly, Ms Sooraya, the head of the private state-aided school state that 'poetry remains a very difficult genre for students especially our students who have not done English literature before and they are already doing poetry in paper, so it is preferable to opt for a novel which will be easier for them'. Even Ms Mansood states that the students do like poetry so much as they prefer to do prose or drama.

I also wanted to know why new texts on the list were not considered. I took the example of two new texts namely *The Rehearsal* by Elanor Catton and *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie that were introduced by CIE in paper six. I asked the head teachers and the other teachers whether they specifically considered these two texts for paper Six and why they did not choose these two texts. Mr Adheen, the head of department, stated that they chose *White Tiger* and *Death of a Salesman* because:

we've found over the years that students relate well to texts by Indian and American writers. Also, our teachers are not familiar with the two texts you've mentioned. However, depending on choices offered, we may consider these texts in future.

Ms Neha stated that they were considered but they 'were considered to be 'bulky ones and being new also made them appear difficult as we cannot risk the students' future. There are also no past papers which might have helped in structuring our study...so I think that was unanimous decision of the department.' While Ms Chaya explained that she has never done African texts and she prefers American texts that's why she prefers to teach *Death of a salesman* rather than the new texts.

Furthermore, texts are chosen based on the personal preferences and teaching experience of the teachers. Ms Sooraya states that 'if the educator himself is at ease with the text...then definitely the teaching and learning process of the learners would be much easier...' Mr Adheen elaborates on this aspect by stating that some texts are given to teachers who 'have done the text at university level or in their dissertation, they will have less to prepare'. In the case of Ms Chaya, she explained that when she first joined MGI, 'they never used to do American texts at all, and you know they were all senior teachers. After I got the opportunity to teach literature, I said let us choose American texts, because I felt comfortable and the first results, we had been excellent results, they got distinctions...' She goes

to explain that she realised that 'the British are more severe in their assessment of British authors' compared to American authors. She adds that 'over the years, she has specialised in American literature with authors like Tennessee Williams, Miller and so on.'

Further, Ms Sooraya pointed to the necessity of choosing texts that have 'study guides, online materials and critics' readily available as this will help the teachers to prepare for the text and to teach the students. She also points to some texts that have movies which becomes equally interesting for students even if the movies are not necessarily in English. Ms Sooraya gives the example of Othello that was adapted as a Bollywood movie namely, Omkara which supposedly helped the students to understand the text better.

On the other hand, Ms Mansood states that she has to 'work on all the texts because [she] gives only tuitions.' She further acknowledges that colleges in Mauritius have the tendency to work on particular texts. However, she advises her students 'there is no point in working on a text they don't like' and she foregrounds that they have a choice to choose a different text. She explains that 'Cambridge gives the choice, so choose the one which is easy', even in Cambridge exam reports it mentions that 'some centres give students books to work, but the students can't really find themselves, they don't understand the characters itself.' Thus, Ms Mansood states that she encourages her tuition students to change the texts that they are studying at school if they find it difficult and uninteresting but only after Lower Six as the students still have to sit for exams set on these texts. In the same line, she states that some girls prefer romantic texts and texts with good stories even if it is difficult, then they often come towards her and tell her 'madam we want to change, so we change it...'

Consequently, in this sub-section it has been seen that the teachers choose 'easy', 'accessible', 'non-bulky' texts based on their personal preferences, teaching experiences and perceived preferences of the students. It has also been seen that there seems to be an apprehension in choosing new texts and authors that features on the list of CIE. Further, the poetry genre present on the list for other papers other than Paper 3 is avoided as it is seen as a challenging genre for the students. Thus, it can be inferred that under the pressure of the exams and to help the students score good marks in the exams, the teachers do seem to choose scoring texts for the students. However, I need to emphasise that though it has been argued that the exams do weigh on the text selection process, nevertheless, it should be emphasised that the format of the exams and the list of texts provided by CIE helps to reduce the exam effects on the process. The list provided by CIE is specific to papers and sections, which focuses on different genres such as Paper 3: Prose and poetry, Paper 4: Drama, Paper 5: Shakespeare and other pre-20<sup>th</sup> century texts and Paper Six: 1900 to the present. Hence, the format of the test with specific lists of text for each paper helps the students to study a broad spectrum of

texts altogether discouraging the selection of only 'easy' texts and authors. Additionally, the list of texts provided by CIE is updated every two to three years, thereby pushing both teachers and students to learn new texts altogether deterring the drilling of the exact text on a yearly basis.

### **6.3.3 Format of the test**

Ms Chaya, the teacher in the state secondary school stated that though she does not believe that the syllabus is bulky as they have four texts in one year and another four texts next year but then she comments on the format of the paper. She states that:

*Maybe to tell you frankly, I would have preferred the English component to be a bit more like French where you have a language component and then a literature component...*

The teacher compares English literature main with French main, where the latter consists of more diverse components like translation, comprehension, essay, literature and listening whereas in English literature main, it is only literature texts. It might be inferred that more diverse components would have perhaps deterred the excessive usage of the transmission model of teaching literature difficult across all components, and thereby, lessening the adverse washback effects of the English literature HSC exams.

### **6.3.4 Choice of the English literature syllabus 9695**

The head teachers were asked about their views on choosing an alternative version of the English literature 9695 where one of the papers has a question based on an unseen text. Mr Adheen finds it challenging and states that

...I would prefer to do the literature text and I think that the students would find it difficult actually because we have to think in terms of them having to do an exam in other words making sure that they have got the chance to do well.

Similarly, Ms Sooraya stated that:

The students are already struggling with the texts, now without texts, I think the results will go down. And this will affect the school results. So no, I don't think this is a good idea.

Yet, the responses of the two of head of departments show that the current format of the test brings a degree of predictability where both teachers and students can prepare for the final exams. Thereby, an unseen question would make it more problematic for both parties to prepare for the high-stakes exams.

Similarly, Ms Mansood, the private tuition teacher commenting on the alternative syllabus, stated that though 'the variation is good but there are students who don't like it.' She reiterated that students 'usually want what is easy, easy to understand, easy to work on, but very few really choose challenging...' Hence, she believes that such a proposition would not be welcomed by students as the latter would prefer the easy, predictable questions over the challenging unseen text questions.

Another aspect that relates to the format of the test is the type of questions that are set in the exam papers. Like it has been mentioned in the observation chapter, there two types of questions, namely essay questions and passage-based questions in the test papers set by Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). Though it is true that the teachers did not relate the type of questions with their teaching methods, it can be inferred that the page-by-page approach adopted by various teachers where they also make the students underline passages in the book and the provision of notes including model answers are done to prepare for these two type of questions. Hence, I want to argue that the two types of questions set by CIE also contributes towards the usage of the transmission model of teaching literature which also includes the 'minute detail' approach that Mr Adheen refers to.

### **6.3.5 Reflections**

In this section, it has been seen that several perceptions of the teachers that relate to the relationship between the English literature test (syllabus) and the texts pushed them towards the transmission model of teaching literature. The perception that the syllabus is bulky and will necessitate much time for completing, seemingly pushes some of the teachers towards using the transmission model of teaching literature which is seen as less time consuming compared to the sociocultural approach or communicative approach. However, like Mr Adheen, perhaps the teaching approach which is the transmission model is cumbersome and time-consuming rather than the syllabus itself. The perception that some texts might be more convenient to teach to the students based on several criteria such accessibility of the text and non-bulky texts, teachers' teaching experience and their perceived preferences of the students, revealed the washback effects of the English literature exams on the text selection process. It has also been seen that the format of the test that includes mainly literature-based components with essay questions and passage-based questions seems to encourage the massive usage of the transmission model of teaching literature. Lastly, the head teachers expressed their views that they prefer choosing Paper 3, 4, 5, 6 in the 9695-syllabus proposed by CIE instead of paper 1 or 2 which consists of creative writing and a question on an unseen text which would make it less predictable to teach the students and in a way render the usage of the transmission model difficult.

#### 6.4 TEACHER'S TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Studies investigating the relationship between effects of testing on teaching and learning activities reported that teachers' experience in teaching may also mediate the effects of testing on teaching and learning (Lam, 1994; Alderson and Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Watanabe, 2000; Pan, 2009; Onaiba and Mustafa, 2014). As a young researcher and former English language teacher at the state secondary school, I felt it was problematic to raise issues around qualifications and training directly in the interviews as it may end up being perceived as judgemental in nature. However, as it has been seen in methodology chapter, most the teachers are exceptionally qualified as they possess at least a BA English degree. The findings revealed that the most experienced teachers did not necessarily handle the exam pressure better compared to the other teachers. The findings also revealed that perhaps one of the reasons, Ms Boyroo and Ms Asha used alternative teaching practices modelled around IRF was because they have been teaching the same texts for several years.

In relation to the different choice of pedagogy observed in the classroom of Ms Asha and Ms Boyroo, there was the teaching experience element that differed from the other teachers. Similarly, in the case of Ms Asha and Ms Boyroo, it seemed that their experience in teaching the same texts for years and their appreciation for the authors of the texts they taught influenced their choice of pedagogy. Ms Boyroo explained that: ' I have been teaching Twelfth Night for third year now...' and next year she will be teaching Measure for Measure. She further explains that:

It's not that I chose them but since I came here Mr. Adheen gave me Shakespeare and I have always liked Shakespeare and teaching it. So, I never really asked him to give me something else.

Similarly, Ms Asha has been teaching Franklin for the third year. And she explains that she has developed a liking for Chaucer over the years as she has been doing mainly Chaucer texts.

Furthermore, by teaching the same texts for several times, the teachers claimed that it helped them to add new ideas in the discussion in the classroom: Ms Asha states:

I build up over ideas because each year I do something, I find something additional. It's to the detriment of the first batch because they're not getting the same stuff, but they did get very good notes.

In the same vein, Ms Boyroo explained:

And you know I have been teaching Twelfth Night for third year now, and every time I have something new to say to the students..' Thus, this also helped the teachers to choose a more transactional/sociocultural model of teaching English literature.

However, it should also be noted that years of teaching experience, in general, seems to have little impact on the choice of teaching pedagogy. Ms Chaya had twenty-five years of experience in teaching English which is lesser than the sixteen years of Ms Asha and the eighteen years of Ms Boyroo, however, Ms Chaya still used conventional teaching practices such as note dictation and teacher-centred explanations. In the same line, Ms Kamla, who has been a prevocational teacher for fifteen years and she was teaching English literature for the first time, chose similar conventional practices to teach English literature.

Hence, in this section, it has been seen that teaching experience and personal liking of the text, as well as the authors, was a washback-mediating factor that helped in generating some positive washback effects that was observed in the teaching and learning of English literature in the high achieving secondary school.

## **6.5 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, it has been seen that four distinct teacher-related factors affected the teaching and learning of English literature in the different settings. Foremost, it has been seen that the teacher beliefs and perceptions about their learner's ability to learn the subject encouraged them to position and index their learners into categories where the latter were seen as less competent students. Secondly, the chapter explored the teaching philosophy and perception of effective teaching methods to teach the subject. It was seen that the teachers' teaching practices were also heavily influenced by their own personal beliefs on how English literature should be taught at school and their own personal experiences on how they learnt the subject when they were a student.

Moreover, it has been seen that there is a close relation between the teachers' perception of the relationship between the test (syllabus) and the textbooks. The perceived bulkiness of the syllabus amongst other test factors, influenced most of the teachers to adopt teaching practices closer to the transmission model of teaching literature. Lastly, when exploring the relationship between the teacher's teaching qualifications and experience with their choice of pedagogy, it was seen that what demarcated Ms Boyroo from the others, was the fact she had been teaching Twelfth Night for several years and she loved Shakespearean plays.

This chapter revealed to us the underlying thinking pattern behind the teaching practices that were discussed in the classroom observation chapter. However, the next chapter, will enrich our understanding of the teaching and learning in the Mauritian context by further exploring these teaching



practices and these teacher-related factors from the learners' perspective. It would be especially interesting to explore the thinking pattern of the learners behind their lack of participation and their contribution in continuing the 'passive culture' in the classroom. Further, the next chapter will also explore the micro and macro context factors that weight heavily on the teaching and learning of English literature and the teachers' choice of pedagogy.

## **7 LEARNER-RELATED FACTORS**

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As reviewed in the washback research literature, washback remains a complex and multifaceted phenomenon (Wanatabe 2004a). In the spirit of trying to unpack this complexity and to understand the underlying washback-mediating factors behind the teaching and learning of English literature in the Mauritian context, in the first chapter, classroom observations were discussed through the washback theoretical lens and additional theories of teaching literature. In the subsequent chapter, teacher-related factors were investigated to understand the perceptions, beliefs, values of the teachers behind their pedagogical choices observed in the teaching and learning of English literature. In this chapter, using a group of learners as informants, this chapter further investigates the attitudes and perceptions of the teachers from the learners' perspective and, secondly, probes into the learners' other learning practices happening within their personal learning environment. The overarching research question of this chapter is: **How learner-related factors influenced the washback effects observed in the teaching and learning of English literature?**

### **7.1 WASHBACK EFFECTS ON LEARNERS**

As examined in the literature review section, researching washback on learners was primarily concerned with differentiating between washback effects on teachers and learners to establish researching washback on learners as a field on its own. Empirical research focused on investigating Alderson and Wall's (1993) hypotheses effects of testing on learners' learning which included "how learners learn" (p120), "the rate and sequence of learning" (p120), "the degree and depth of learning" (p120), and the assertion of the value of studying learners' learning. Some effects of testing on learners that are recorded in the research literature: explicit ways of practising the target skills such as 'drilling on practice materials' (Mickan and Motteram, 2008; Tsagari, 2009), 'enrollment in test-focused tutorial classes' (Chik and Besser, 2011), and 'employment of personal tutors' (Stoneman, 2006), and

implicit ways of practising the target skills such as 'reading extensively', 'going to the movies', and 'speaking English with friends and family' (Alderson and Hamp-Lyons, 1996).

Further, it has also been established within the literature that the effects of testing on learning and learners go beyond the classroom, which includes the learners' personal space and test preparation happening in their personal learning environment. Self-learning (Ferman, 2004), employment of tutor (Ferman, 2004) and the intensive practice on mock exam tasks (Gosa, 2004), ought to be placed amid the repertoire of observable washback effects on learning as identified in previous studies. Additionally, some strands of research on washback effects on learners have tried to draw upon theories of motivation such as self-determination theory to understand the relationship between motivation and learners and testing.

Afterwards, in view of going beyond the observable effects of washback on learners and learning and through the conceptualisation of washback as a more complex phenomenon that involves several facets and differs from learner to learner, studies started investigating the underlying washback mediating factors that shape the washback effects on the learners'. Many washback studies have tried to uncover the processes behind the observable washback effects on learners by investigating the learners' perceptions and attitudes towards teaching, learning and testing (Cheng, 1998; Read and Hayes, 2003; Shohamy et al., 1996; Gosa, 2004; Xie, 2015). The research identified several underlying mediating factors that shape the observable washback effects. In very general terms, these mediating factors fall roughly under two broad categories: 1) intrinsic factors – factors that are internal to the individual learner such as the self-perceived language proficiency (Fox and Cheng, 2007), intended test use (Xie and Andrews, 2013), and past experiences (Stoneman, 2006), and 2) extrinsic factors – factors that are external to the individual learner such as the learning environment (Zhan and Andrews, 2014), parental expectations (Cheng et al., 2011), and societal influences (Chik and Besser, 2011).

In this study, as stated in the introduction, the aim was to uncover the complex washback phenomenon behind the teaching and learning of English literature by conceptualising washback as consisting of several interrelating and interplaying factors such as test factors, prestige factors, personal factors, micro context factors and macro context factors. Further, washback researchers started to gain better insight and understanding by including the views and perspectives of several educational stakeholders which includes teachers, learners, head teachers, test constructors and even parents. Hence, this chapter further explores the attitudes, and perceptions of the teachers from the learners' perspective and secondly, to probe into the learners' other learning practices happening within their personal learning environment.

### 7.1.1 Subject-choice, motivation and reading culture

In the teacher-related factors chapter, it was argued that the teacher's beliefs and perceptions about their learner's ability to learn the subject influenced their pedagogical choices.

One of the beliefs and perceptions that impacted over the teachers' usage of an exam-oriented pedagogy was because they perceived that some of their learners who are first time English literature learners, may lack the skillset and experience to learn the subject at HSC level. This perception was further investigated through the micro-context and macro-context factors which revealed that school-policy decisions contributed significantly to creating a system that allowed first time English literature learners in choosing English literature as a main subject at HSC level. On the other hand, in the pool of participants, there were also students who did English literature at SC level and have subsequently chosen the subject at HSC level.

In the teacher-related factors, it was also argued that there is a 'passive' culture of the students which was seen as a hindrance to adopt a more communicative pedagogy in the teaching of English literature and thus encouraging them to adopt a more exam-oriented pedagogy. The teachers foregrounded several reasons to explain this passive culture of the students in the classroom, such as the students not reading their texts which limits the students' input in the class; the students have inhibitions and lack the skills to interact in the class; the students as first time English literature learners lack the motivation and interest to learn these subject.

Thus, in line, to further understand the reasons behind the choice of the students opting English literature as a main subject at the HSC level and to further understand the 'passive' culture of the students, this section investigates and discusses the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the students in choosing English literature as a main subject at HSC level.

### 7.1.2 The relationship between subject choice at HSC level and SC results

*Table 8: Subject choice of the students at the HSC level*

Name of students	Main subjects	Subsidiary subject
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Kavisha	English literature	French	Computer	Maths	General Paper
Monisha		French	Hinduism	Computer	
Amirah		(1 <sup>st</sup> year) French	Maths	Biology	
		(2 <sup>nd</sup> year) French	Sociology	Islamic	
Dhanvi		Hindi	French	Hinduism	
Divksha		Art	French	Sociology	

Table 9: SC exams and GCE exams results

Name of students	Subjects	Result	
Kavisha	Maths	C	Does GCE at Form 5 level
	English	B	
	French	B	
	Biology	Ungraded	
	Computer	Ungraded	
Monisha	Maths	7	Does Form 5 twice and manages to get 3 credit in the second attempt in English, Add Maths and French. She does not do English literature.
	English	6	
	French	4	
	Add Maths	6	
	Physics	8	
	Biology	9	
	Chemistry	9	
Computer	8		

Amirah	Maths	6	Does Form 5 twice and gets 6 credit in the second attempt and does not do English literature.
	English	3	
	French	4	
	Add Maths	6	
	Physics	7	
	Biology	4	
	Chemistry	5	
Dhanvi	Maths	3	
	English	4	
	French	2	
	English literature	2	
	French literature	4	
	Hindi	1	
	Hinduism	3	
	Sociology	4	
Riya	Maths	1	
	English	2	
	French	1	
	English literature	1	
	French literature	1	
	Arts	1	
	Sociology	1	
	Design and Communication	2	

As discussed in the teacher-related factors chapter, the creation of a first time English literature students at the HSC level encouraged many of the teachers to adopt an exam-oriented pedagogy in the teaching and learning of English literature. Additionally, it has been discussed in the micro-context and macro-context factors sections that this situation arises because of school policy and national-

policy decisions. This section tries to get the students' side of the story on the issue. As it has already been mentioned, six students out of the seven students in the Private State Secondary School and in the state secondary school, four students did not do English literature. Moreover, it has also already been mentioned that my participants, Kavisha, Monisha and Amirah have not done English at SC level but are doing it as one of their main subjects at HSC level. On the other hand, Dhanvi and Riya have done English literature at SC level.

Referring to Table A and Table B, Kavisha is doing Maths as a main subject without having done Add Maths at SC level, and the same goes for French main as she has not done French literature at SC level. She is doing Computer as a subsidiary subject despite having got an ungraded grade in Computer at GCE level. Similarly, Monisha has not done French literature and Hinduism at the SC level, but she is doing both as main subjects at the HSC level. She is also doing Computer as a subsidiary subject despite having got an 8 at SC level. Kavisha did not succeed at GCE exams, and she would not have been allowed to attempt the HSC exams as one has to get a passing grade in all five subjects. Monisha has got only 3 credits at her second attempt at SC level, and though it is the minimum required to do HSC in the Mauritian education system, however, she would not have been able to choose Hinduism as one of her main subjects. More crucially, she did not even get a credit in English which is the minimum requirement as per the national policy to do English literature as a main subject at HSC level, but in this case, the school policy decisions are applied. Basically, one can argue that both the students do not meet current requirements to seat for the HSC exams where one needs to get at least 4 credits in the first attempt and choose three of the subjects that they have got credit as their main subjects. However, the institution being a private state secondary school that caters for low achieving students gives students such as Kavisha and Monisha the opportunity to sit for HSC exams. On the other hand, in the state secondary school, Amirah is able to do English literature as one of her main subjects because she has a credit in English at HSC level. And she has done all her other main subjects at SC level. The same goes for Dhanvi and Riya, as seen in table A and table B, they have done the subject that they have opted at HSC level at SC level, and they have succeeded in all the subjects. It was important to investigate why the students who have not done English literature at SC level have chosen the subject at HSC level and why the other two students who have done the subject at SC level, chose to do it at HSC level.

Consequently, a look at the subject choices of the students at SC level and HSC level reveals that for the case of Kavisha and Monisha, they were allowed to opt for subjects like French, Maths and English literature as principle/main subject at HSC level despite not having done these subjects at SC level. Contrastly, Dhanvi, Riya and Amirah chose subjects that they opted and succeeded in at SC level.

### 7.1.3 Why they chose English literature, do they like their subject and is it related to their career ambition?

In the washback research literature, one strand of research has focused on investigating learners' motivation towards learning (Cheng, 1998; Lumley and Stoneman, 2000; Yildirim, 2010; ÖZMEN, 2011; Pan and Newfields, 2013; Pan, 2014). Several motivation theories most notably the self-determination theory of motivation (Deci and Ryan 1985) was used by the various studies to investigate the interrelation between washback and language learning motivation. As a researcher, investigating the motivation of the students towards learning was not a primary objective of this study. However, the data warranted the investigation of the students' motivation in choosing English literature to understand further the circumstances behind some of them choosing the subject despite not doing the subject at SC level. This remained a prominent reason behind the choice of a more transmission model of teaching of English literature. Hence, relying upon the theoretical understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985), I try to understand the motivations of the learners of learning English literature at HSC level.

Intrinsic motivation means that learners find interest and satisfaction in what they learn and in the learning process itself, which leads to self-motivated and continued learning (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Learners who are 'motivated from within' recognise their own role in learning and so take responsibility for it. Extrinsic motivation describes the behaviour of learners who engage in learning because it is a means to an end that has little to do with the content of what is learned (Deci and Ryan, 1985). The incentive for learning is found in rewards such as certification, merit marks, prizes or in avoiding the consequences of failure. Not only does this mean that learning may stop, or at least that effort is decreased, in the absence of such external incentives, it also means that what is learned is closely targeted at behaviour which is rewarded.

In the private state secondary school, both Kavisha and Monisha reveal: 'Pa ti ena swa' [There was no choice.] Kavisha explains that this was the only plausible combination available for her at the institution and the head teacher advised that: 'Mo pou kapav fer angle literatir, li abordab.' [I will be able to do English literature]. Monisha on the other hand, reveals that : 'mo ti pou prefer fer Sians, mo ti kontan bioloji me isi pena sa size-la...finn bizin swazir literatir.' [I would have preferred to do Science, I loved Biology but her (in this school), there is not this subject...had to choose English literature]. Similarly, Monisha talks about the availability of subject combinations at the institution and the restrained choice they had when choosing the subjects, they are doing and by extension English

literature. As low achievers, they have a restrained choice of subjects, and it should be pointed out that Science subjects at HSC level require the use of labs and the private state secondary school did not have science labs. Students transfer to other schools because of subjects, and sometimes subjects are not offered because of the number of students choosing to do it at a school. When asked whether they liked the subject, Kavisha stated that: 'mo pas trop kontan [English literature]' [I do not like English literature], 'li difisil' [it is difficult] whereas Monisha states: 'dousma dousma mo pe kontan li' [Gradually, I like it] and she compares it to subjects like Hinduism where she has to write a lot. Kavisha aspires to become a teacher in the future, and she works as a hairdresser during school holidays. Kavisha explains that she wants to pursue the hair-dresser pathway as she is pretty proficient in it, but her mother does not like this, and she states: 'mo espere kapav pas HSC-la pou kapav alefaire 1 kour apre.' [I hope to succeed in the HSC exams so that I can go to do a course afterwards.] Monisha is not sure about the job she wants to do in the future, and she states that:

Mo espere kapav gagn 1 bon travay apre HSC-la, mo deza travay 'salesgirl' magazin dan vakans lekol.' [I hope, I can get a good job after the HSC exams, I am already working as salesgirl in a clothing store.]

In contrast, the students in the State secondary school namely Dhanvi and Riya as well as Amirah (Even if she did not do the subject at SC level) chose English literature as a conscious choice and they like doing the subject. When asked why she chose literature, Riya replies: 'because I like language since young, I have been doing this. Language. I mean the art side. Not like Science and Economics side.' She is interested in becoming a journalist or teacher afterwards. Similarly, Dhanvi states that:

I have always loved language and English literature, language side, that's why I chose English literature. I am doing Hindi and French as my other main subjects, and it works well.

She is interested in becoming a lecturer afterwards and wants to go for the BA English course at the University of Mauritius.

Additionally, Amirah, though she has not done English literature at Form 5 level, she states that she 'loves English literature, reading the stories.' And she further explains that she feels at ease with the subject and is motivated to learn it:

Mo fini kapte zistwar-la avek li enn size kot mo santi mwa pli alez kot mo mem mo al ouvert mo kaye volonterman ek mo al lir ou bien al fer mo prop not.

[I am able to grasp the story well; it is a subject where I feel more at ease and where I voluntarily go to open my copybook to read or prepare my notes.]

Moreover, she states that:



Mo finn realize literatir li enn size kot gagn perspectiv dimounn lor tou zafer. Mo finn pli konpran bann sitiasion ki fnn pas avek mwa ek mo ser. Bann tem ki Shakespeare dekrir zalouzi tousa. Mo pas dir narien me mo konpran seki pe arive...Li help moi on a personal basis.

[...I realised literature is a subject where one gets perspectives of people of everything. It helped me to better understand the situation that I experienced with my sister. Themes of jealousy, the way Shakespeare describes it. I stay quiet but I understand what is happening. It helps me on a personal basis.]

Further, when I questioned her why she did not choose English literature at SC level if she likes doing the subject. She reveals the influence of her father and the comparison/rivalry with her twin sister in the choice of her subjects both at SC and HSC level. She explains that her father wanted her and her sister to do Science at SC level and they were both at the same secondary school in the same class: 'Vi ki li kontan fer sians mwa ousi mo finn bizin fer sians.' [ She likes doing Science and I also had to do Science...]

Afterwards, she elaborates that since her sister is brighter than her, there were constant comparisons made by the teachers and she also suffered a stress problem over there which contributed to her doing the SC exams twice:

Mo ti gagne severe stress problem, ...vu ki mo ena mo jumelle, bann professeur ti p comparer.

[ I was having severe stress problems, as the (teachers were comparing me with my twin sister)]

She further explains her subject choices in her first year of lower six as heavily influenced by her father:

Premier lanee lower mo bizin prend Maths la ek Biology akoz mo papa ek li ti dire moi ek li ti envi mo gagne A dans maths main.

[The first year of lower six, I opted for Maths and Biology because of my father and he wanted me to score an A in Maths main.]

However, in her second year of lower six, she dropped maths and biology and took Sociology and Islamic Studies as her other two Principal subjects. She states that she got D in the English literature lower six exams in her first year because she could not devote enough attention to the subject, and she sees the subject change as something positive for her and feels is more suited to English literature:

li pena sa pression ki ena kan mo ti p faire sciences. Ti couma dire ene poids ki mo pas ti p capave porter lor moi ET LI PLI ADAPTER AR MOI.

[ There is not the pressure that there was when I was doing Science. It was like a burden that I could not withstand and [English literature] is more adapted to me.]

Again, she points to the influence of her parents in her career choice and how her own future career ambition is different:

Mo dream se help people et by that monn trouv psikolog... Ek ousi mo ena mo mama ki anvi mo vinn profeser ek mo papa anvi mo vinn 'lecturer'. Teacher e lecturer li pa enn travay kot mo trouv mwa.. Mo pa kontan koumadir asiz anplann... Mo kontan kominike ek bann dimounn , mo finn partisip dan boukou kozri avek mo lekol ...

[My dream is to help people and by that I thought about becoming a psychiatrist... and there is also my mother who wants me to become a teacher and my dad wishes that I become a lecturer. Teacher and lecturer are not a work where I see myself. I do not like to sit at one place...I prefer to communicate with people, I have participated in many talks through my school.]

#### **7.1.4 Reflections**

Consequently, in this section, we have seen that the students namely Dhanvi and Riya who have chosen English literature at both SC level and at HSC level are intrinsically motivated to learn the subject as they relate the subject with their career ambition, personal liking and even their SC results. On the other hand, the choice of doing English literature as a main subject for Kavisha and Monisha seems to be more extrinsically driven. For both of these students, the HSC exams is seen as a gateway for them to have a certificate which will make them more marketable on the job market and make them eligible for further education that will result in a better job. In the case of Amirah, we have seen the influence of her father on her subject choices and career choices. However, we can also argue that gradually Amirah seems to have developed intrinsic motivation to learn English literature because of her liking for the subject which she sees as more suited to her compared to science subjects.

Referring back to the teachers' perception of the passive culture of the students in the classroom and lack of motivation to learn the subject, one may argue that in the case of Kavisha and Monisha, the

lack of intrinsic motivation in choosing English literature as one of their main subjects at HSC level and lack of a reading culture , contributes towards constructing the passive culture atmosphere in the private state-aided secondary school as well as to this perceived lack of motivation in learning the subject. However, in the case of Dhanvi, Riya and Amirah, it was seen that despite being mostly intrinsically motivated in choosing English literature as one of their main subjects at HSC level and possessing a rich reading culture, there still was a perceived 'passive' culture atmosphere in the state secondary school as well as a perceived lack of motivation in learning the subject. This may be explained by the fact there were other students that have not done English literature at SC level in that classroom and there might be other more prominent factors at play to explain the students' passive culture within the classroom and their resistance in participating in the classroom. The next section will explore the perceptions and beliefs of the students towards their teachers' teaching methods and their reluctance to participate in the classroom which was perceived as crucial obstacle to implement a more sociocultural and less-exam oriented pedagogy in the teaching and learning of English literature.

## **7.2 STUDENTS' PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS TEACHERS AND TEACHING METHODS AND PARTICIPATION AND TEXTS AND TEXTS SELECTION PROCESS**

Some washback studies namely Gosa (2004), Hawkey (2006) and (Green, 2006) have brought in the perspectives of learners on teaching, learning and exams as a comparison point with that of teachers. For example, by bringing students' perspectives on the IELTS test, Hawkey (2006) found discrepancies between the perspectives of teachers and learners. Thus, raising the question whether washback to teachers can be assumed to be the same as washback to learners. Additionally, as highlighted in the introduction, the perspectives of learners serve as additional voice and perspective to understand the complexity of the washback effect.

In the current section, the perspectives of the students on their teachers' teaching methods, participation in the classroom, use of Mauritian Kreol, the texts and the text selection process are discussed.

### **7.2.1 Teachers and teaching methods**

From the responses of the students on their teachers' teaching methods, it can be deduced that that Kavisha and Monisha accept and view the teaching methods used by both Ms Rashmi and Ms Kamla as positive and helpful. Kavisha states that

Miss Rashmi explains well. I understand every explanation of hers. But it gets better when she explains the whole text detail by detail. This seems difficult but she manages to explain everything fully with details for us in order to help us understand our texts. The fact that she gives us surprise assessment helps us more. She does her assessment open book almost all the time... Which helps us to write better essay... She does her best to help us.'

It should be noted that during my observations, the time in the classes of Ms Rashmi was used more on dictating notes and few lines of explanations were used. It seems that Kavisha equates the notes that she gets as explanations, and she sees this as helpful in learning the text. Even for Monisha, Miss Rashmi 'makes the texts more understandable' for them and 'is a good teacher'.

In the case of Ms Kamla, for Kavisha:

Her explanation is a bit tough to understand but we manage to work by all the notes she gives us...we get many notes from her...

Besides, she explains well also. We just need to focus on what she is explaining and note down every note.' Monisha is a bit more critical of Ms Kamla as she states that sometimes she feels the notes that she gives are from the internet and overall stories like the white tiger and measure for measure is understandable .. we get the critics line by line ...as for now I like the way teachings by the teachers .. if it changes, we will have to adjust new ways of learning...

However, this observation of Monisha which may be true can also be applicable to the notes that Ms Rashmi dictates that seem to be analysis from critic books and even the internet. The students seem very positive towards and welcoming of the exam-oriented teaching methods used by both teachers which indicates a two-way acceptance of the teaching methods used by the teachers to teach them.

In the state secondary school, the students had more varied and elaborate views on their teachers and teaching methods. Firstly, Amirah, Dhanvi and Riya hold favourable views towards Ms Boyroo and her classes, most notably Amirah who states that:

Chakenn donn so point of view, nou ena plusieurs perspectives. Li pas dire ress lor 1 sel point de vue. Meme si pou lexamin nou pas necessairement focus lor text-base et nou pou koner kouman decortik li ek nou pou manage gagne 18-19 dans so papier.

[Ms Boyroo interacts with us, everyone gives their own point of view, we have several viewpoints. She does not stay on one perspective. Even if for the exams, we do not focus on text-based questions, we know how to analyse it and we can manage to get 18-19 in that paper.]

whereas Riya states that: ' I like Ms Boyroo classes because she does the analysis in detail.'

On the other hand, Amirah and Dhanvi held negative attitudes towards the teaching methods of Ms Chaya, Amirah states that:

Ms Chaya li plito narrate, li boring, and the whole class sleeps. Kouma dire li pa ase interactive, pou mwa kan pena interaksion, li fini vinn boring...

[The others, Ms Chaya, she narrates, she is boring and the whole class sleeps. As if she does not interact and for me when there is no interaction, it becomes boring...]

For Dhanvi, she thinks that 'there is something wrong with White Tiger' as it is 'a difficult text not like the others' and for her Ms Chaya 'is not helpful and blame us for not taking notes', and 'my friends think she is lazy...'

Riya prefers her tuition teacher compared to her teachers at school because for her 'the teachers such as Chaya, Neha at school paraphrase a lot, they do not give the analyses and her tuition teacher focuses on analysing the text.' And she points out that the other day even Ms Asha made a mistake in class and the students had to correct her, she thus stated 'we don't have competent teachers.'

#### **7.2.1.1 Lack of participation**

Concerning the lack of participation, when I highlighted to the students the lack of participation and the focus on taking notes, they had different views. For Amirah, participation in class is essential because Enn ti interaksion li koumadir anpes drift your thoughts, pa kone kot sa li ale...' [A little bit of interaction, it helps to prevent your thoughts to drift away...] When I pointed out the lack of participation in even Ms Boyroo's class she stated that:

Because firstly, there are many students in our class who have chosen literature because they did not have other options, they do not show much interest in the class, they do just the minimum so that they can pass in literature, even the boys like Vikesh etc, they did not have a choice.

And she believes that [In lower 6, the teachers used to push me to work well, literature was not a subject that one needed to take less seriously but this time, the teachers seems to be tired encouraging/pushing the students.] Dhanvi stated that

I think that this is the only option. I don't think that by ourselves we can think. We cannot do what they are doing, like giving us everything. They are as thinking for us. We cannot do what they are doing but based on their thinking, by what they gave us, it's as if we need a type of play or push, then they start, our brain starts working. It's good the way it is going.

And as far as Riya is concerned, she stated that 'I prefer listening and taking notes rather than participating but from time to time, I do voice out.'

In this section, it has been seen that though the students held diverse views on their teachers' teaching methodology, and they all seemingly believed that participation is helpful and exciting especially to break the monotony of the class, they still seemingly accepted and preferred the usage of the transmission model of teaching literature that was being employed by their teachers. Hence, the findings here, reinforces the perceptions and claims of the teachers about their students' perceived preference for the 'spoon-feeding' and exam-oriented pedagogy rather than a more communicative and sociocultural style of teaching English literature.

### **7.2.1.2 Use of Kreol by Mansood and Kamla**

After having observed Ms Mansood teaching *Twelfth Night* in Mauritian Kreol and exploring her beliefs behind using such a teaching strategy, it was imperative to further understand the perceived value of using KM from the learners' perspectives.

Foremost, it was interesting to note that Amirah notes down the Mauritian Kreol explanations of Ms Mastan in English:

Li pe explike li pe ale mem an kreol me mwa mo ekri li an angle kouma ou trouve. Mo bann kamarad ekri an kreol me mwa non.

[She goes on explaining in Kreol but I write in English as you can see. But I have friends who writes in kreol but I don't do it.]

And when queried, whether she finds this useful, Amirah explains that:

Dapre li, li panse an angle ena mot nou pa pou konn so meaning ek dans ki context inn servi... li ena rezon enn kote parski kouma dir pou sir ki nou finn konpran ki pe arive ek sa ed nou...

[According to her, she thinks that in English there are words that we don't know the meaning of and in what context it is being used...she is right in a way because it is like to be sure that we understand what is happening (in the text) and this helps...]

Here we can see that Amirah who of course I would not categorise as low performing student compared to Kavisha and Monisha, is able to see the value and importance of receiving explanations in Mauritian Kreol. There does not seem to be any visible resistance against the use of Mauritian Kreol within the tuition setting. However, it should be highlighted that Amirah does not write in MK in her copybook in contrast with some of her friends who do end up writing a few words in MK. One can argue that perhaps by using this paraphrastic approach, this would have better helped the students to develop their analytical skills rather than sticking with only English within the English literature

classroom. Subsequently, this could potentially help in decreasing the undesirable washback effects of the HSC exams.

### **7.2.1.3 Attitude towards Text selection process**

It was also essential to gather the perspectives of the students on the text-selection process. In the previous chapter, it was seen that the text selection process was primarily decided by the teachers and the head teacher where easy and short texts were primarily picked to help the students succeed in the final exams. Here, the rationale was to understand the students' perspective on the text-selection process and whether they would have liked to take part in the selection process.

The students gave two types of views, some of them preferred that this decision remained with the teachers while some others believed that it should be a collaborative decision between students and teachers.

For Kavisha, Monisha and Amirah, the decision of choosing texts should remain with the teachers. According to them, the teachers are 'more experienced', 'know best', 'know more than us' to choose 'the more easy texts', 'the less difficult texts. Dhanvi, for her part, she agrees partly about the vital role of teachers in choosing texts as she highlights the role to teachers in making the students learn texts that the latter might not like:

The teachers are awesome, and they make the class interesting that's how I've grown a liking for the texts even the one I dislike the most. That's why I think teachers know best.

However, Dhanvi also expressed counter views, similarly like Riya to argue that students should perhaps have a more active role in the text selection process. Riya states that:

In my opinion, it should be a collective decision of both students and teachers...I feel yes, students should have had a say in the text selection because after all, it is us who will be taking the exam. Teachers might be more experienced, but their opinion is not objective. They might think that this text will be easy for us when we might think otherwise.

In the same vein Dhanvi elaborates and believes that the students should have the option to swap for another text after the first term if they are not adapting:

However, some texts are interesting like White Tiger and Chaucer but either answering questions or reading is difficult. That's why I think that students should be given a chance to choose texts with teachers or during the first term itself be given the option of choosing another text with which they are at ease and the teachers should understand and accept the choice of the student...

### 7.3 STUDENTS' OTHER LEARNING PRACTICES

Apart from the classroom context, previous studies (Alderson and Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Ferman, 2004; Gosa, 2004; Mickan and Motteram, 2008; Tsagari, 2009) also indicate that such washback effects often extend beyond language classrooms to learners' personal space. Hence, I wanted to investigate what other learning practices that the students were engaged into outside the classroom and the school. Since notetaking was a dominant learning strategy that they were exposed to in the classroom, I wanted to know whether they collected notes outside the classroom context from other sources. I also wanted to know whether they were engaging in any groupwork or sharing activity outside the classroom, that will indicate a more sociocultural way of learning literature.

#### 7.3.1 Note collection

The findings revealed that the students collected notes from various other sources other than what was given to them at school. The students mentioned various online websites such as Sparkles, Spark Notes, Enotes and York notes. They did not access paid websites. They will either write the notes in their revision copybooks or they will make printouts. Some of the students like Kavisha and Monisha will also borrow or buy study guides from their friends, books that are sold in the local libraries such as Spark notes, Ramjilal and others. Upon their request, I also lend them a study guide for Twelfth Night which they photocopied and returned to me. The students who went to tuition like Amirah, Dhanvi and Riya, also had their tuition notes to refer to. The students also shared copy of movies for the texts.

I asked the students the usefulness of these notes for them. According to Amirah, who did lower six twice and is doing English literature a second time, she explains that

Mo premie lane literatir mo ti p get boukou lor internet. Me kan mo ti pe fer test, mo pa ti pe gagn bon pwin ditou. Li pa ti pe vraiman help mwa. Mo rapel Twelfth Night mem mo ti pe gagn 7 lor 20.. 9 lor 25..10 lor 25.

[In my first year of literature, I was using the internet a lot but when I was doing tests, I was not getting good marks at all. It was not really helping me. I remember in Twelfth Night, I was getting 7 over 20, 10 over 25.]

When I asked her, what was the issue according to her teachers, she answered that from her teacher's comments, she understood that when she was using the internet notes, she was narrating more in her answers.

For Riya, she states that:

I prefer my tuition notes, but I also look for notes on the internet as something additional. But my tuition teacher always says that it is preferable to use our own views and not read on the internet.



In the same vein, Dhanvi explains that:

I look up notes on the internet for something additional, but I prefer to use the notes that I get at school or at tuition. I think they are good enough for me.

In the case of Kavisha and Monisha, they shared internet links and notes amongst friends especially as they did not take tuition for literature. Kavisha states :

Nou gagn boukou not lekol sirtou ek Ms Rashmi ki donn nou bann fotokopi ousi me nou ousi nou ti pe rod lor internet ek nou partaz ek nou bann kamarad. [ We get a lot of notes at school especially with Ms Rashmi who also gives us photocopies but we also search (notes) on the internet and share with our friends.]

### **7.3.2 Group-work sharing v/s in class competition and not sharing**

So far, we have seen two main models of teaching literature namely, the transmission model of teaching literature and the sociocultural theory of teaching literature. In the previous chapter, we have seen various teacher factors and so far learner factors, as well as other contextual factors and test factors interplaying together to encourage the type of teaching and learning we have been observing across the different settings. The prominence has been towards the usage of teaching strategies modelled around the transmission model of teaching literature. According, to the definition and theory of sociocultural theory of teaching literature, the theory mimicks the socialisation process of a real-life society. As stated by Vygotsky (1978), knowledge construction is a sociocultural mediated process that is co-constructed in the social interaction within social groups and communities (Lantolf, 2004; Lantolf and Poehner, 2008). Hence, according to Edelsky et al. (2002), within socio-cultural learning, teaching literature can take the shape of a literary book club where the responsibility of the literature teacher is to socialise students into a literary community of practice. Thus, I wanted to investigate the social dynamics amongst the students, the possible presence of a non-official learning community where perhaps, literature texts were read, studied and analysed in a non-exam-oriented manner.

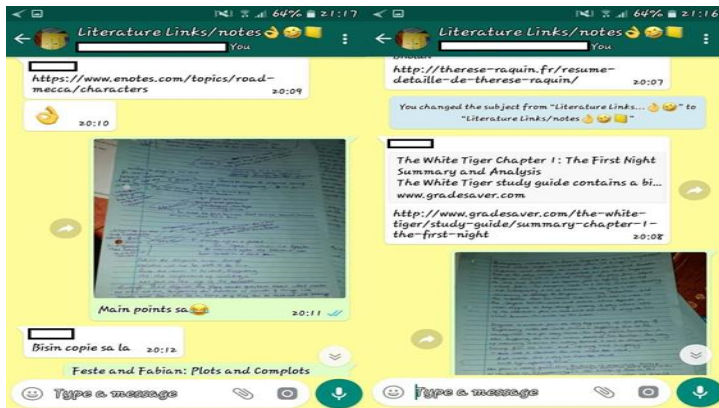
#### ***7.3.2.1 WhatsApp sharing in the private secondary school***

The findings in the private secondary school revealed that the students had a WhatsApp group where they shared notes. Kavisha, who is a student at the private state secondary school, explained that the students in the class have a WhatsApp group. WhatsApp is used to share the link of notes, pictures of notes taken in class, but there is no discussion happening on the platform. I asked Kavisha if I could

join the group when she first mentioned the existence of that group, but she declined. Instead, she proposed to give me a few screen shots of the group, which will help me to understand better the type of exchanges happening in that particular group.

In the picture, it can be seen there is a sharing of internet links as well as notes given in the classroom amongst the students. It should be noted that the group is used primarily to share links and notes but not as a discussion platform where the students discuss the literature texts, which would have indicated a tendency towards the sociocultural model of teaching literature.

Picture 6: Links and notes sharing between students on WhasApp



### 7.3.2.2 *Rivalry, sharing, not sharing*

According to Amirah, there is a rivalry between tuition and school. The students learn at their private tuitions and do not follow the classes at school:

Parski ena zot pa swiv dan klas parski zot pran lesan , zot trouv zot bann lesan pli interesan.

[because some do not follow the class because they take tuition, and they find the tuition more interesting]

She further adds:

me zamw ou pou trouv zot poz kestion, zot pou plegn-plegne apre kan pou donn devwar zot pou gagn 22 lor 25, 23 lor 25.zot rivalite zis dan class zot pou fer koumadir zot pa montre lintere, zot pou montre zot kamarad ki zot pa pe follow me zot travay dir lakaz, zot fer zot bann

devwar, zot rande, zot gagn bon pwin me zame dan lekòl. zot pou tir tou defo, ayo zot pa kontan al dan sa klas-la, ayo mo pa konpran narien dan sa liv-la me ofe zot kompran, zot ena zot prop not me zot pa show.

[But they will never ask questions, they will complain complain complain but when they give their homework, they get 22 over 25, 23 over 25. The rivalry is just, in the class they will make as if they have no interest, they will show their friends that they do not follow [the class] but they are working hard at home, they do their homework and they return their homework and they will get good points. But at school, they will complain and say they do not like going to the class, I do not understand this text but in fact they understand, they have their own notes but they do not show.]

However, she is able to give us an example of B, a close friend of hers who used to to help her with English literature:

Non, dan lekòl B ti mo meyer kamarad, koumansman lane nou ti korek, nou ti pe diskite bann tem tousa me apre li ti ena beaucoup problem personel, nou ti inpe tro pri ladan psikologikman, sa ti pe fatig mwa. Nou finn distanse inpe, li partaz bann devwar , li ti pe donn mwa bann 'tips' ki li ti pe servi parski li ekri angle bien akòz li pa finn ne dan Australi. So, so angle super bon. Li finn bien help mwa, kouma pou koumans mo bann tex , kouma pou follow ideas pou analysis tousa.

[At school, I was best friend with B, at the start of the year, we were discussing themes, but she has a lot of personal problems, psychological and we were getting too much involved in this and this was tiring me. We distanced ourselves, she used to share homework and she used to give me tips she was using as she writes good English and she was born in Australia. Thus, her English was very good. She helped me a lot, how to start my paragraphs, how to follow ideas, how to analyse]

For Dhanvi as she is new to this school, she states that

The students rather keep to themselves, there is no group work or sharing happening and also I am new to this school.

For Riya,

We do it in between our friends for French literature. We help each other. we just finished the book. We made a group of two people and each one prepares on a theme so that it is easier, and we share it. But not for English literature.

## **7.4 MICRO AND MACRO CONTEXT FACTORS**

### **7.4.1 School policy decisions**

As discussed in the contextual review, school policy decisions and national policy decisions have a direct influence on the teaching and learning of English literature in the Mauritian context. These influences on the teaching and learning of English literature are further highlighted by Ms Sooraya who explains that 'And these students they have never done literature before in Form 4, Form 5. So here my seniors, management they say ok, give them English literature.' She points to the school policy decision that governs the private state secondary school which remains a secondary school that provides opportunities for low achievers to take part in the HSC exams and it seems that English literature is construed as being a practical subject choice by the management of this particular school. It should also be highlighted that there were no repeaters in Lower 6 at the Private Secondary school, however, there were lower six repeaters at the state secondary school. However, this does not seem to have much bearing on the teaching strategies adopted by the different teachers across the two secondary schools. Yet, it should be highlighted that in the state secondary school, the washback effects of the HSC exams are accentuated. Thereby by making the Lower six final exams as high stakes as the results will depend on whether the students will be promoted in Upper six, accentuates the washback effects of the HSC exams that the students will be taking in two years' time.

### **7.4.2 Choice of subjects**

The two head of departments further pointed to the availability of a subject at HSC level and the eligibility of a student to do a subject at HSC level to show that because of lack of choices or no choices, some students are compelled to choose English literature at HSC level. As discussed in the contextual review, different secondary schools offer different subject combinations and in the case of the private secondary school, English literature was being offered as the main subject. Using the example of Monisha, in her interview, she explained she would have wanted to do science subjects, but it was not available at the school: 'Pas ti ena choix' [there was no choice]. On the other hand, in the state secondary school, Mr Adheen explains:

They were allowed to choose English main only because they have got a credit in language and perhaps because they had no other subjects.

There might have been students who have not got a credit in their other subjects but since they got a credit in English at Form 5 level, they can use the subject as a main subject and partake in the HSC exams. Thus, in both cases, whether it is for Kavisha or the other students at the state secondary school, English literature becomes a filler subject to allow them to partake in the HSC exams. It should not be forgotten that HSC exams are high stakes exams that have practical value for these students. It

is a higher qualification that can help the students to get a better job on the job market and it is also a prerequisite to pursue a diploma or degree at the university.

### **7.4.3 Number of staff and workload distribution**

The teachers' choice of teaching methodology seemed to have also been influenced because of their workload which in turn depends upon the number of staff available in the English department as well as on the workload distribution. In the private state secondary school, there were four teachers in the English department and in the state secondary school, there were six teachers. Ms Rashmi and Ms Kamla had to teach 35 periods per week whereas the other four teachers in the state secondary school had to teach 27 to 30 periods per week. This workload included English, English literature and General Paper from Form 1 to HSC. In the case of Ms Kamla, she was so busy that I had to interview her in my car while driving her to Department B of the low-achieving secondary school. Moreover, in the private state secondary school, the two teachers were teaching four texts each over the two years. In comparison, four teachers were teaching four different texts in the first year of HSC in the state secondary school and three new teachers were going to teach the remaining three texts and Ms Chaya taught a second text. To be more explicit, Ms Rashmi had to teach *Measure for Measure*, *Twelfth Night*, *Songs of Ourselves* and *Chaucer* which consists of four different texts and three different genres namely Drama, Poetry and 19<sup>th</sup> century literature. In contrast, each of the teachers in the state secondary school had to prepare only one text and this workload distribution seem to have aided the two teachers namely Ms Boyroo and Ms Asha to specialise in teaching one particular genre and author over the years. To reiterate, Ms Boyroo has been teaching only Shakespeare texts for the last five years and *Twelfth Night* for the past three years whereas Ms Asha has been teaching Chaucer for the past seven years and Franklin for the past three years. Incidentally, these were the only two teachers that tried to use an alternative pedagogy in teaching English literature. Thus, it can be seen that micro context factors such as number of staff and workload in the different institution do seem to influence the teaching methodology choices of the different teachers. Therefore, it can be seen that a more significant workload on the teachers seems to have a negative washback effect as these teachers are more inclined towards using transmission pedagogy to teach literature which is exam oriented. On the other hand, the two teachers who had to prepare only one text and stick to the same genre were able to specialise and try a more communicative oriented pedagogy to teach the students.

#### **7.4.4 School holidays, events, extracurricular activities**

Many of the teachers stated that their priority remains the completion of the text and syllabus, and often their day-to-day activities are disrupted by school events such as music day, sports day, prize giving day and other school related events. Ms Asha brings this issue more prominently in her interview:

The problem is we are short of time very often. When we take first term, we have a lot of holidays, we have a lot of extracurricular activities. Second term goes same and third term is kept for exams. At the back of our mind, we have a book to finish and that's it.

On the day of these events, the students participate and often students participating in these events prepare during school hours. Moreover, the school usually gives a holiday one day after the events. One such example is one of my participants, namely Riya who had to participate in the MUN debates, and she was absent from the English literature classes for two sessions. Additionally, she is the head girl of the school, and she did not turn up to one of our scheduled meetings as she had to go with a group of students to a nearby orphanage.

On the same line, Ms Chaya when talking about Riya, she states that

I have worked with her in Form 4 and Form 5. She is a very bright student. But then in Form 5, she was missing so many classes because of her extra-curricular activities.'

Hence even Ms Chaya believed that the students, including Riya are not able to perform well in English literature because of extra-curricular activities.

Another factor that affects the teaching and learning of English literature is the students' choice of subjects. According to Ms Sooraya:

Here I believe the major weakness is the students they take arts, they take designs, they take other subjects, they have to do their projects...they devote much of their time doing art, travel and tourism, they have project work, I believe like design. So they won't have time to read their texts...it is like this..

Lastly, Ms Asha points to the number of periods that is allocated to English literature and points to the limited time which is seen as a constraint to do an interactive class.

Ms Asha states: Also, because the time-table does not allow you, you have limited time, you have only two periods you wonder if you are going to do an interactive class or you are going to proceed with the traditional way of teaching and learning.

#### **7.4.5 Macro context factors**

#### **7.4.6 National policy decisions**

On the other hand, Mr Adheen, the head explains that the governmental policy decisions have a direct influence on subject choice at HSC level:

These rules keep alternating, it keeps changing. There were years where you needed to have done literature to be allowed to do English main. They changed it. If you got a credit in English language, you can do English literature.

As a public and high achieving state secondary school, the institution has to keep the standard by allowing only students who have done English literature at Form 5 level and who have passed in the subject to do it at HSC level. However, as pointed by Mr Adheen, the rules keep changing depending on the government in place. It seems that both head teachers perceive the school system and the broader educational system as the precursors of allowing first time English literature learners at HSC level and in a way, pushing them towards using a traditional note dictating/note taking pedagogy to cater for the needs of these particular learners.

#### **7.4.7 Flash flood, public holiday, cyclones.**

Additionally, on a macro context level, Mauritius being a multicultural and multireligious society grants twelve public holidays yearly and many of these public holidays can be on a school day. For instance, in the second term when the data was collected, there were two public holidays that was on a school day. Another factor that affects the day to day running of the school is most notably cyclones and more recently the occurrences of flash floods. In the second term, there was one warning of heavy rainfall that could potentially lead to flash flood and in these circumstances, the Ministry of Education decided to close all schooling institutions which includes primary, secondary and universities to assure the safety of students.

Consequently, micro context factors such as school activities and events alongside macro context factors such as public holidays and weather conditions affect the day to day running of the English literature classes. This limits the time available for the teachers who are inclined towards a transmission method of teaching literature which seems to be less time-consuming and straightforward whereby they can always give photocopies of notes that they need to dictate to the students. Hence, it can be seen that that the perceived limited time available which is supported by the myriad of holidays, school events and weather conditions amplifies the negative washback effect of the English literature exams on the teaching and learning of English literature within both institutions.

## 7.5 SUMMARY

This chapter set to investigate: How learner-related factors influenced the washback effects observed in the teaching and learning of English literature?

The findings revealed additional information from the learners on the creation of first time English literature learners at HSC level by exposing the personal choices and circumstances that led to Kavisha and Monisha to choose the subject as main subject. It has also been seen that motivation to choose and learn the subject did not seem to be a weighing factor in determining the behaviour of the students in the classroom. despite the difference in motivation between the students in the private state aided school and the state school, there was the prevalence of the passive culture, as pointed by the teachers. Hence, in a way providing more credence to the perception of the teachers about their learners' lack of motivation to learn the subject which subsequently leads to the teachers' usage of the transmission model of teaching English literature.

Further, the exploration of the students' perception towards the teachers' teaching method, lack of participation and the text selection process revealed both diverging views and complimentary ones with that expressed by the teachers. The students of both the private-state aided school and the state school seem to accept and appreciate the usage of the transmission model as their preferred way of learning English literature and expressed reluctance towards participating in the classroom, though altogether seeing participation as more of an aesthetic feature.

Lastly, it has been seen that there seems to be an ongoing practice of note gathering from other sources by all of the students, which shows that the students endorse the teacher-centred pedagogy that they replicate in their personal learning/revision spaces by searching for more notes. It was also seen that group work and sharing was less practised by the students for competitive reasons, and in a way, the lack of participation and discussion in the classrooms is again replicated in their personal learning practices as there seems to be a lack of discussion on texts. On the other hand, the usage of technology in the case of the students in the private state- secondary school.



As discussed in section 1.2, the conception of this study emerged through inspiration from different events in my life that propelled me to investigate the workings of the competitive system of education in Mauritius. Of course, it was too broad for a PhD investigation as I had to focus the investigation on investigating the influence of this competitive system on the teaching and learning of English literature at the HSC level. Thereby, in this study, I have investigated the washback effects ***of the high stakes HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature on a group of teachers and learners in the Mauritian context.***

In chapter 2, the contextual background has been described and discussed as it is vital to understand the context a test is used to understand better the washback effects of the test on the teaching and learning process. I narrated the discovery and history of occupation of the Island of Mauritius, which also serves as an essential backdrop to understanding the historical evolution of the education system of the country from colonial times to post-colonial times. It has also been seen that this historical evolution is intricately linked with the emergence of a competitive mindset between the different communities on the Island and the growing association of equating success with education, white-collar jobs, government jobs rather than blue-collar jobs or working in the sugarcane fields. The chapter also summarised recent critical policy decisions and reforms in the Mauritian education system. Most importantly, the chapter also discusses the structure and value of the HSC exams in the Mauritian context and the structure, the syllabus, and the content of the English literature subject.

In chapter 3, I presented the theoretical framework, which consisted of mainly the washback related models and theories, theories of teaching and learning of literature and some selected research literature on washback research as well as the teaching and learning of English literature, which subsequently helped in understanding the findings of the study.

In chapter 4, the methodology chapter, I discussed and foregrounded the rationale behind using an ethnographic approach in investigating the washback phenomenon, altogether emphasising the strengths and perceived weaknesses of such an approach as well as remedial solutions such as triangulation and finding a balance between the emic and etic perspectives. In this chapter, I also presented the research setting and participants as well as

the two main phases of data collection, where I used several tools to collect data, such as observation, interviews, and questionnaires.

## **8.1 THE KEY FINDINGS**

I have presented and analysed classroom observations, interviews, and questionnaire data in chapters 5 and 6 and 7. I used the washback theoretical lens, theories of teaching and learning literature and theories of positionality to analyse the data in the three chapters. The research questions were:

Main Research Question: What are the washback effects of the high stakes HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature on a group of teachers and learners in the Mauritian context?

Q1) What teaching strategies are being used by the teachers to teach English literature across the three different settings? And to what extent can these teaching strategies be seen as exam-oriented in nature?

Q2) What teacher-related factors influenced the teaching practices observed in the three settings?

Q3) How learner-related factors influenced the washback effects observed in the teaching and learning of English literature?

Q4) How micro and macro context factors influenced the washback effects observed in the teaching and learning of English literature?

The first research question was addressed by looking at the teaching strategies used by the various teachers in the classroom across the three different settings (Chapter 5). The second research question was addressed by analysing the interviews and questionnaires of the teachers and headteachers (Chapter 6). The third research question was addressed by analysing the interviews and questionnaires of the learners (Chapter 7). This chapter also included the findings and discussions for research question 4 that mainly derived from the interviews of the teachers and headteachers; however, since the micro and macro context factors affect both the teachers and learners, I decided to include them in the learners'-related factors chapter.

The findings for chapter 5 (classroom observations) emerged by observing the teaching strategies used by the different teachers across the three different settings, namely the private secondary school, the state secondary school and the private tuition setting. The key finding of this chapter revealed that the teachers across the three settings adopted teaching strategies that seemed to reflect the philosophical and structural underpinnings of the transmission model of teaching literature (Beach et al., 2011). It was seen and discussed that the classes of the teachers were teacher-centred as classes were teacher-driven, the pattern of interactions between teachers and students were usually one-sided, and there was less turn-taking; the teachers focused on providing the correct knowledge by providing model answers and analysis taken from critics books; and lastly, the teachers employed some teaching strategies that could be seen as extreme and radical as the classes consisted of only the students copying notes from a set of photocopies or a copybook, thereby mirroring the raw of the image of learners as empty receptacles.

Subsequently, it was discussed how similar patterns of interaction between teachers and learners that was construed as possible effects of testing on teaching and learning were revealed in other washback studies like Alderson and Hamps-Lyon (1996), Cheng (1998) and Watanabe (2000). Additionally, a parallel was also drawn between the English literature teachers' usage of notes consisting of the correct analysis of the text and model answers with English language teachers' usage of exam-related materials in studies conducted by Read and Hayes (2003) and Cheng (1997). Hence, this comparison shows that the usage of such materials for the teaching and learning of English literature can potentially be seen as the washback effects of the high stakes HSC exams.

Alternatively, it was also argued that two of the teachers, namely Ms Asha and Ms Boyroo from the state secondary school, attempted to use IRF as a teaching strategy to present a less-exam oriented approach in teaching English literature and which to some extent could be seen has sharing some features of the sociocultural learning theory. It was argued that the teachers tried to offer the students a platform and the opportunity to participate and interpret literature, and by extension, to become part of a literary community of practice (Edelsky et al., 2002). However, in practice, the reluctance of students to participate presented another form of challenge for the teachers.

This chapter was concluded with some key insights that helped to debunk some of my preliminary assumptions. For instance, I assumed that there would be significant differences between the teaching and learning of English literature happening in the private state secondary school and the state secondary school as the former can be seen as low achieving and the latter as high achieving. However, the findings revealed that the teaching strategies that dominated across the three contexts

followed primarily the transmission model of teaching literature. Hence, it became integral to understand what factors other than the test itself, propelled the teachers to teach the way they were teaching. This was further explored in the teacher-related factors chapter. Another critical finding remains the passive culture of the students and their reluctance to participate in the classroom which was further explored in the learner-related factors chapter.

The findings of chapter 6 emerged from the semi-structured interviews of the teachers and questionnaires on the text selection process. The key findings of the chapter were that there were four key teacher-related factors that influenced the teachers' choice of pedagogy in the teaching and learning of English literature. The four-key teacher-related factors were:

1. Teacher beliefs and perceptions about their learner's ability to learn the subject.

For this factor, it was seen that the teachers harboured several beliefs and perceptions about their students' ability to learn the subject that affected their choice of pedagogy, which seemingly was biased towards the transmission model of teaching of English literature. Hence the teachers indexed and positioned their students with specific categorisations to justify their usage of teaching strategies that resembled mostly the transmission model of teaching. The teachers indexed and positioned first time English literature learners, low proficiency English literature learners and low proficiency English language learners as lacking the necessary skill set, experience, and motivation to learn the subject. Further, the teachers also emphasised that their usage of extensive note dictation in teaching the subject and a visible lack of participation and discussions was due to the direct consequence of the students' reluctance to participate and their passive culture.

2. Teachers teaching philosophy and perception of effective teaching methods to teach the subject.

For this factor, it was seen that the teachers seemed to espouse some core teaching philosophy and held some perceptions of what consists of the effective teaching methods that drove them towards using specific teaching strategies in the teaching and learning of English literature. Thereby, it was discussed that Ms Mansood and Ms Chaya believed that note-taking was an integral part of teaching and learning of English literature as this will help their students to memorise important notes for the exams. Moreover, it was seen that Ms Mansood believed that the students would better understand English literature if it is explained to them in their mother tongue as, according to her, English remains a foreign language for them. Lastly, it was seen that Ms Boyroo, one of the teachers whose class was

structured towards using IRF and less on note dictation and lengthy teacher-led explanations, believed that she had to develop the student's analytical skills and provide them with the opportunity to express their varied opinions on a text.

### 3. Teachers' perception of the relationship between the test (syllabus) and the textbooks

Here, it has been discussed that the teachers' choice of pedagogy seemed to have been influenced by several aspects of the test, namely, the number of texts to be covered in the syllabus, the choice of texts from the list given by CIE, the format of the test and the choice of the English literature syllabus 9695 provided by CIE. It was seen that different teachers shared varied views on the bulkiness of the syllabus, the appropriate text to select for the students and even how the format of the English literature test influences their choice of pedagogy. Lastly, the teachers affirmed that the current syllabus 9695 suited the Mauritian students as the other variations of the syllabus would be seen as more challenging in nature for them.

### 4. Teachers teaching experience in teaching a text.

Here, I highlighted that it was a bit problematic for me to investigate teacher experience and training properly as I was a former teacher at that institution and I was a young researcher, in a way, it could have been perceived as questioning the ability of the teachers, which would have been tricky. However, I also discussed how the findings revealed that the teachers who seemingly tried to teach using IRF and in a less exam-oriented way, namely, Ms Asha and Ms Boyroo, they had been teaching the same texts for several years. Hence, it can be assumed that there seems to be a relation between the choice of pedagogy of a teacher and the number of years that teachers have been teaching a text as perhaps she may feel more confident to initiate and engage in a discussion on a text that she has taught for several years compared to one that she has started teaching recently.

The findings of chapter 7 were taken from the semi-structured interviews of the learners and questionnaires on the text selection process. The findings revealed that there were two groups of students learning the subject. One group of students, which consisted of Kavisha and Monisha, from the private secondary school, were externally driven to choose to study English literature at the HSC level based on the available choices they had to make to get an opportunity to take part at the HSC exams. Further, it was revealed that the students did not seem to have any passion for reading novels prior to choosing the subject. On the other hand, there was another group of students, which consisted of Riya and Dhanvi, that were intrinsically motivated to choose to study English literature at the HSC

level based on their personal ambitions and future career plans. Additionally, it was revealed that they had an avid culture of reading novels prior to choosing the subject. In the case of Amirah, it was revealed that her choices were heavily influenced by her father's decisions, but she was able to rectify her choices and affirm her love for English literature by opting for the subject in her second attempt at Lower 6. However, though a clear difference was emerging between the two groups of students; there was not much of a difference between the classes at the private state secondary school, and at the state secondary school as both groups of students were generally reluctant to participate, and the teachers resorted to using teacher-centred teaching strategies.

I also confronted the students on their silence and reluctance to participate in the classroom, and there were varied responses. Some questioned the rationale behind participation as the notes will be used for the exams; others put the onus on some of the teachers whom they believed did not provide them with the opportunity to participate in the classroom. Some of the students had their favourite teachers and their less-favourite teachers; interestingly, the teachers that used IRF, namely Ms Boyroo and Ms Asha, were the most favourite teachers of the students in the State secondary school. On the other hand, the students in the private secondary school hardly expressed any preference as they valued the notes that were given to them by their teachers.

The learners' other learning practices that were potentially happening outside the classroom were also investigated. It was revealed that all the students engaged in notes collection activities by buying, lending, or downloading English literature notes on their own. In the private state secondary school, the students had a WhatsApp group where they shared links and pictures of their notes. In the state secondary school, note-taking remained primarily a personal affair as the students revealed that there was an ongoing competition and rivalry amongst the students that was seen as the main barrier behind sharing and exchanges of notes.

In the last section of the chapter, the main findings that were presented and discussed came from the teachers' interviews primarily, and they were arranged thematically around micro context factors and macro context factors. Micro context factors refer to the school setting where the test is conducted, and macro context factors refer to the society where the test is used (Watanabe, 2004a). In micro context factors that influenced the teaching and learning of English literature, it was found that in the private state secondary school, it was more flexible to opt for English literature in Lower 6 and to sit for the final HSC exams in Upper 6 compared to the state secondary school. The private state secondary school adopted such a flexible policy as it was an institution that gave low proficiency students a seat and the chance to take part in the high stakes HSC exams. On the other hand, subject choices in the

state secondary school were stricter as it was recommended that the students had succeeded in their SC exams to gain promotion in HSC. Further, only if they succeed in Lower 6, then the students would be allowed to sit for the HSC exams in Upper 6. Additionally, it was also discussed how the number of staff and workload distribution most probably impacted the teachers' teaching and learning. There were more English language teachers in the English department of the State secondary school compared to the department in the private state secondary school. In the state secondary school, four teachers were teaching four different texts in Lower 6 and in the private state secondary school, two teachers were teaching two texts each in Lower 6. Further, another key finding categorised as part of micro context factors that affected the teaching and learning of English literature at both institutions were the school holidays, events, and extra-curricular activities. According to the teachers, these school-related events affected their day to day running of their classes.

The macro context factors included national governmental policy decisions that often overrides existing institutional rules and affects the subject choice at the HSC level. This also keeps fluctuating based on the government's current vision of education in the country. Other prominent macro context factors that were discussed include climate change and the status of Mauritius as a tropical island that is prone to cyclones and flash floods. Added to this, we have 12 public holidays yearly in Mauritius. Thereby, these events happening at a macro context level also disrupts and affects the teaching and learning of English literature.

### **8.1.1 Theoretical and literature contribution**

This current study contributes to the research on washback by aligning itself as far as possible with the future directions in washback research. Cheng et al. (2015) identified three aspects that future washback studies need to take into account in order to contribute to and expand the current research literature.

The first aspect suggests that washback studies should include more educational stakeholders such as parents, learners, school principals, policymakers and test constructors when investigating the washback phenomenon to gain a comprehensive and in-depth perspective on the phenomenon (Cheng et al., 2015). Indeed, early washback studies have focused primarily on washback effects on teachers and teaching as it was seen as challenging to get learners as participants. However, some recent washback studies such as Chik and Besser (2011), Cheng and Deluca (2011) and Green (2007b) have tried to address this lack of research on learners by focusing on the direct influence of testing on students and their learning. Likewise, even if this study is not able to include all the

educational stakeholders as participants, it still intends to investigate the washback effects on both learners and teachers.

The second point raised by Cheng et al. (2015) is that considering that various washback studies have revealed the complexity of the phenomenon, future research should continue focusing on unpacking this complexity by exploring the interplaying factors behind the phenomenon. This is achieved in this study as it aligns itself with Watanabe's complex model of washback, which will enable to uncover the factors that induce washback effects of the HSC exams on the teaching and learning of English literature (A level) on a group of learners.

Lastly, Cheng et al. (2015, p.464) recommend the use of insights and collaborations from related fields of study and theories. Likewise, in this study, the proposed theoretical framework will be further developed in the thesis by including theories and insights from other fields of research such as theories of motivation (theory of the motivational selves), theories of learning (sociocultural learning theory) and other theories of teaching and learning literature.

In all, this proposed study tries to address two crucial research gaps. The extant research in the washback research literature in the language testing area has focused on investigating the washback phenomenon in high stakes English language courses. Thus, in investigating the washback phenomenon in English literature rather than the English language, this study can potentially reveal novel aspects of the washback phenomenon. Secondly, there is little research on the teaching and learning of English literature as a subject, as most of the research has focused on the usage of English literature as a resource to teach English rather than as a subject. Thus, in investigating the washback effects on the teaching and learning of English literature, this contributes to understanding the issues surrounding the teaching and learning of English literature in postcolonial contexts.

### **8.1.2 Some insights gained from the study**

The research literature has reported that teacher factors are more crucial in influencing the teachers' choice of pedagogy and their teaching practices rather than the test itself (Alderson and Wall, 1993; Cheng, 1997; Andrews et al., 1995; Turner, 2006; Wang, 2011; Cheng, 2002). This is reiterated by Cheng (2008) who states that personal beliefs, past education, and academic background seemed to be more critical in determining the teaching methodology a teacher employ. In the same vein, within this study we have seen that different teacher related factors such as teacher beliefs and perceptions about their learner's ability to learn the subject, teachers teaching philosophy and perception of effective teaching methods to teach the subject, teachers teaching experience in teaching a text, teachers perception of the relationship between the test (syllabus) and the textbooks have seemingly been more influential on the choice of pedagogy of the different teachers rather than the test itself.



Secondly, the washback research literature has pointed to the variability of the washback phenomenon depending on the test, the teacher and the context. Washback studies indicate that teachers not only perceive and interpret examination change differently but also react differently to it (Alderson and Wall, 1993). As the latter has pinpointed, different teachers teach to the same test in very different ways, or some teachers teach to very different tests in very similar ways. In this section, it has been seen that the different views expressed by the teachers in the different teacher-related factors show the varied nature of the perceptions and interpretations of the teachers towards the English literature exams. Though the teachers namely Ms Kamla, Ms Rashmi, Ms Neha, Ms Asha, Ms Chaya and the two head teachers Ms Sooraya and Mr Adheen provided some similar and some different reasons for their choice of the exam-oriented pedagogy; they all seem to advocate towards the usage of the exam-oriented pedagogy in the teaching and learning of English literature. In contrast, Ms Boyroo expressed more positive views and seemed to advocate towards the usage of a learning-oriented pedagogy in the teaching and learning of English literature. For instance, while most of the teachers viewed the passive nature of the students as a hindrance and static culture that emerged because of various other reasons, the exact passive nature was viewed as part of an adaptation and transition phase by Ms Boyroo.

Further, the difference of how Ms Boyroo at the State secondary school taught the same group of students differently compared to the other teachers at the same institution; this emphasises the role of the teacher in controlling the washback effects in the teaching and learning context. Spratt (2005) highlighted this role that teachers can have in becoming 'agents for promoting positive washback', but Spratt (2005) also argued that this might be contingent on factors such as teachers' beliefs, perceptions and attitudes, their teaching experience, academic qualifications, and teacher training (Watanabe, 1996b, Spratt, 2005, Cheng, 2008). As such, it has been seen that Ms Boyroo possessed certain teacher factors that encouraged her towards exercising her teacher agency and use a learning-oriented pedagogy in the teaching of English literature. It was seen that she held complimentary views towards the students, and she did not actually talk about them negatively. She viewed the passivity in her classroom as a challenge and part of a transition process where the students will improve. She has taught the exact text for four years and likes the author, thereby specialising in the text. Her teaching philosophy was believing in classroom participation and developing the analytical skills in her students. And she even held neutral views on the 'bulkiness' of the syllabus, a test related factor that weigh a lot on the other teachers as their priority remained to complete the text. All these teacher factors helped her exercise her teacher agency and lessen the direct effects of the HSC exams in the teaching and learning of English literature. Indeed, teachers can exercise control on the washback effects of an exam on the teaching and learning process.

### 8.1.3 Final reflections

My primary purpose behind this study was to unravel the competition in the Mauritian system of education. By focusing on the teaching and learning of English literature, the findings of the study revealed the intricacies of this competitive system that generated washback effects that were propelled by several factors, including the test itself, the teacher-related factors, the learner related factors, the micro context factors and the macro context factors.

By the end of 2020, when these students sat for the HSC exams, Kavisha got grade 6; Monisha got grade 5; Dhanvi got grade 3; Riya got grade 2, and Amirah got grade 4. All the students succeeded in their English literature HSC exams. There was even a laureate in the same batch of my participants in the state secondary school. I have to admit that teaching strategies associated with the transmission model of teaching seem to be a successful formula in churning out good results with the students. On the other hand, the premise of researching washback has always been to lessen the 'negative' effects of exams that consists of mechanic teaching and learning involving drilling, memorisation and practising exam papers and encouraging learning and the development of targeted skills. It remains difficult to gauge to what extent the students have developed the necessary analytical skills that they were supposed to develop by learning English literature. Perhaps the answer lies when Dhanvi, Riya and Amirah will enrol for BA English at the local universities and where they will be put in a position where they will have to show their analytical skills. However, from my own experience at the university level, even note dictation, note-taking, and memorisation is not something foreign at the university level.

I also need to acknowledge that the majority of the research on washback is based on English language courses, and often, in such courses, the aim is to develop communicative skills rather than only the reading and writing part. It leads me to question the rationale and vision for teaching English literature in Mauritius. It should be highlighted that there does not seem to be a clear vision behind teaching English literature in the lower grades, and in the higher grades, the students follow a syllabus designed by CIE. English literature as a subject emerged as a colonial vestige in the British colony in India. It was a subject introduced in various British colonies as a way to educate the people about the culture and language of Britain. Perhaps, the country is in a way still tied to a colonial past by continuing the teaching and learning of English literature. There should be a debate on the role and vision behind the teaching and learning of English literature in the local context. In some part of the world, there has been debates on whether English literature should instead be called World literature, and it should open up to include authors that are non-British or even local authors which are often discarded. Moreover, with the coming of the digital age and multimodal text, there is a gradual shift

into what can be considered as literature. Thus, books written for young adults are also being studied for their literary value. However, like it was seen in this study, there is a tendency to stick to old classical literature rather than new texts that have been prescribed by CIE. Again, at university level, the English literature department is usually together with cultural studies department. In the USA, there is a call to use English literature as a premise to explore culture, identity and politics in contemporary times. Likewise, maybe it is time to think of encouraging the knowledge gained from English literature beyond the classroom and beyond the high stakes HSC exams. By inscribing a social dimension to the subject, this would certainly help to reduce the washback effects on the teaching and learning of English literature. It was astonishing that both schools did not have a book club or a literature club which would have provided the students with the opportunity to further engage with books and literature.

Additionally, only Ms Mansood pointed towards the language issue in Mauritius, where she affirmed that mother tongue is the best language for Mauritian students to learn English literature. Mauritius is a multicultural, multiracial and multilingual country with a rich history of colonisation both by the British and the French. The status of Mauritian Kreol in the Mauritian education system has been an ongoing debate in the country. While MK was introduced as a subject in 2012, yet the view on the subject locally remains very much negative in nature as most Mauritians seemingly value other subjects like English, French and even other ancestral subjects like Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, Urdu and Arabic rather than MK. The other teachers, especially at the state secondary school, conducted their classes in English from start to finish with some instructions in French or MK. Even at an institutional level, the English language teacher is not expected to use MK in class. In the case of Chaucer and Shakespeare, which are written in Old English, it might be perhaps problematic to conduct a class in English from start to finish. However, this might depend on many variables, but perhaps Mauritian Kreol, which remains a support language at the primary level, could be used as a support language to teach low proficiency English literature learners. It has been also argued that one of the causes of washback in the teaching and learning is the fact that English is a foreign language in Mauritius. Hence, this accentuates and encourages the usage of exam-oriented teaching strategies, and from such a perspective, the usage of MK as a support language could potentially decrease the washback effects of the HSC exam. However, exploring this strand was beyond the scope of the current study and this would require further research.

#### **8.1.4 Recommended further research and limitations of the study.**

One of the limitations of the study is that I observed the Lower 6 phase, many of the teachers, especially Ms Chaya, explained that they do the discussions and explanations in Upper 6 and the Upper 6 classes are more vibrant and participative as the students gain maturity at that point in time. Hence, perhaps, the lack of participation and the silence of the Lower 6 students that were observed and analysed in the findings was only temporary as the same students could potentially be participating and engaging with the subject in Upper 6.

I believe more insights can be derived from the data collected by including other theories other than washback in analysing the data as it should not be forgotten that washback scholars have recommended the usage of another set of research literature to understand the washback phenomenon better.

Ultimately, this study has shown that washback remains inherently a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, and its effects vary from teacher to teacher and from learner to learner as each individual reacts and processes tests differently.

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## 10 APPENDICES

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### 10.1 APPENDIX 1- ETHICS APPROVAL FORM

Ethical Approval Form (EAF1)

**CONFIDENTIAL**

GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE University of London

Research Ethics Committee

NAME OF APPLICANT: Sanju Unjore

DEPARTMENT: Education

This form should be completed in typescript and returned to the Secretary of the Research Ethics Committee, for any research project, teaching procedure or routine investigation involving human participants or animals to be undertaken in the College or by or upon Goldsmiths College staff outside the College.

1. **Title of proposed project:** An investigation of the perception and practices of a group of Mauritian learners preparing for the high stakes HSC (Higher School Certificate) exams.

2. **Brief outline of the project, including its purpose:** The project intends to investigate the perception and practices of a group of learners going to take the Higher School Certificate (HSC) exams in Mauritius. It will also include interviews of parents, headmasters and teachers to understand the social fabric within which these students are preparing for these exams. Additionally, it will include participant-observation of classroom settings and private tuition settings. It will also include the collection of tangible artefacts or materials such as photocopies of books, textbooks, revision notes or pictures of time tables or places of revision to bring more in depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The purpose of the investigation is for the completion of an Mphil/PhD in Education.

3. **Proposed starting date:** April 24<sup>th</sup> 2017

4. **If external grant funding is being secured, does the research need ethical approval prior to the initiation of that funding?**

No

5. **Has the project been approved by an Ethics Committee external to the College? If so please specify.**

*(NB for projects so approved, applicants may if they wish submit a copy of that application, but should sign the back of the form and return it as specified above)*

No

**6. Please provide an ethical self-evaluation of the proposed research.**

Reference should be made to the ESRC Research Ethics Framework, to professional guidelines (such as provided by the BPS, the BSA or the SRA) or to guidelines by government (e.g. GSR) on ethical practice and research. You may wish to provide your response on a separate sheet.

(Refer to separate sheet)

**7. State the variables to be studied, topics to be investigated, procedures to be used and/or the measurements to be made. (Please attach a separate sheet if necessary)**

Topics to be investigated: Perception and practices or preparations undertaken by a group of children preparing for the HSC exams

Variables to be studied: Perception and practices

Participants: Students, parents, headmasters, teachers

Procedures to be used: Interviews, participant-observation, collection of materials and photographs

**8. Specify the number of and type of participant(s) likely to be involved.**

Students (both male and female): 6-10

Teachers (both male and female): 4-5

Parents (both mothers and fathers): 12-15

Headmasters (both male and female): 2-5

**9. State the likely duration of the project and where it will be undertaken.**

5-6 months in Mauritius.

There can be a second phase of data collection in February 2018 via email/skype after the results of these exams.

10. **State the potential adverse consequences to the participant(s), or particular groups of people, if any, and what precautions are to be taken.**

I cannot see any potential adverse consequences to the participants other than perhaps they are preparing for their exams so they will be busy but care will be taken that they would not have to spend excessive time with the researcher.

11. **State any procedures which may cause discomfort, distress or harm to the participant(s), or particular groups of people, and the degree of discomfort or distress likely to be entailed.**

No such procedures are going to be used.

12. **State how the participant(s) will be recruited. (Please attach copies of any recruiting materials if used).**

They will be selected on the basis on accessibility depending on the approval of the Mauritian Ministry of Education and the cooperation of the headmasters of the institutions and the willingness of the students to participant within the study. However, the researcher is aiming towards having some

students from high achieving Mauritian colleges also known as Star colleges and some from non-high achieving Mauritian colleges or non-star colleges.

13. **State if the participant(s) will be paid, and if so, provide details and state reasons for payment.**

The participants will not be paid but if the situation warrants a payment to encourage/motivate them to cooperate with the researcher, they might be paid.

14. **State the manner in which the participant(s) consent will be obtained (if written, please include a copy of the intended consent form).**

Through a written consent form. (refer to attached consent forms)

- 14a. Will the participant(s) be fully informed about the nature of the project and of what they will be required to do?

Yes, they will be fully informed.

- 14b. Is there any deception involved?

No.

- 14c. Will the participant(s) be told they can withdraw from participation at any time, if they wish?

At an early stage, yes but not at a later stage as this will affect the study adversely.

- 14d. Will data be treated confidentially regarding personal information, and what will the participant(s) be told about this?



Yes, data will be treated confidentially, their real names, college names, their parents' names will not appear in the thesis, pseudonyms will be used.

14e. If the participant(s) are young persons under the age \_\_\_\_\_ of 18 years or 'vulnerable persons' (e.g. with learning difficulties \_\_\_\_\_ or with severe cognitive disability), how will consent be given (i.e. \_\_\_\_\_ from the participant themselves or from a third party such as a \_\_\_\_\_ parent or guardian) and how will assent to the research be asked for?

(Refer to attached consent forms)

15. **Will the data be confidential?**

15a. Will the data be anonymous?

Yes

15b. How will the data remain confidential?

The use of pseudonyms.

15c. How long will the data be stored? And how will it be eventually destroyed?

The data will be stored for 5 years, it will be destroyed by deleting the recordings of the interviews.

16. **Will the research involve the investigation of illegal conduct? If yes, give details and say how you will be protected from harm or suspicion of illegal \_\_\_\_\_ conduct?**

No.

**17. Is it possible that the research might disclose information regarding child sexual abuse or neglect? If yes, indicate how such information will be passed to the relevant authorities (e.g. social workers, police), but also indicate how participants will be informed about the handling of such information were disclosure of this kind to occur. A warning to this effect must be included in the consent form if such disclosure is likely to occur.**

Highly unlikely.

**18. State what kind of feedback, if any, will be offered to participants.**

No feedback unless they want some feedback.

**19. State the expertise of the applicant for conducting the research proposed.**

Masters in Applied Linguistics and ELT, experience in teaching at Secondary and Tertiary level in Mauritius.

**20. In cases of research with young persons under the age of 18 years or 'vulnerable persons' (e.g. with learning difficulties or with severe cognitive disability), or with those in legal custody, will face-to-face interviews or observations or experiments be overseen by a third party (such as a teacher, care worker or prison officer)?**

Classroom observations in school and tuition settings will be under the supervision of the teachers. Individual interviews will be conducted face to face without the presence of the parents.

**21. If data is collected from an institutional location (such as a school, prison, hospital), has agreement been obtained by the relevant authority (e.g. Head Teacher, Local Education Authority, Home Office)?**

Not yet.

22. **For those conducting research with young persons under the age of 18 years or ‘vulnerable persons’ (e.g. with learning difficulties or with severe cognitive disability), do the investigators have Criminal Records Bureau clearance? (Ordinarily unsupervised research with minors would require such clearance. Please see *College Code of Practice on Research Ethics*, 2005).**

I have been working as Lecturer in SEN department at the Mauritius Institute of Education and I have a morality certificate that states that I do not have any criminal records.

23. **Will research place the investigators in situations of harm, injury or criminality?**

No

24. **Will the research cause harm or damage to bystanders or the immediate environment?**

No

25. **Are there any conflicts of interest regarding the investigation and dissemination of the research (e.g. with regard to compromising independence or objectivity due to financial gain)?**

No

26. **Is the research likely to have any negative impact on the academic status or reputation of the College?**

No.

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ALL APPLICANTS

**Please note that the Committee should be notified of any adverse or unforeseen circumstances arising out of this study.**

**Signature of Applicant**      S. Unjore

**Date** 20.03.2017

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**TO BE COMPLETED BY HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

**Please note that the College Research Ethics Committee should be notified of any adverse or unforeseen circumstances arising out of this study or of any emerging ethical concerns that the Head of Department may have about the research once it has commenced.**

**Has there been appropriate peer review and discussion of the ethical implications of the research in the department (i.e. with yourself as Head of Department or the Departmental Research Ethics Committee or Research Committee)?**

**Yes/No (Please circle)**

**Are the ethical implications of the proposed research adequately described in this application?**

**Yes/No (Please circle)**

**Signature of Head of Department**

**Date**

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## **10.2 APPENDIX 2- LETTER TO RECTORS TO EXPLAIN STUDY**

Dear Sir

Following our meeting, I wish to provide some more explanation on my proposed research in secondary Mauritian schools or colleges.

A working title of my research is: “*Perception/Beliefs and Practices of a group of Mauritian Students on the HSC exams*”. It will broadly involve the observations of the exam preparation practices and the interviews of a group of Mauritian students in Lower 6.

I would like to highlight that the data collected will be kept anonymous and the confidentiality of the participants will be respected. The research has been designed in a way to minimize the psychological stress on the participants as they are allowed to withdraw from the research at any point they want. Please refer to the attached consent forms for further details.

The day-to-day proceedings in the colleges will not be disrupted. Observation sessions will be held with the consent of the rector, teachers and even students. The observations will be non-participant observations and questions on what has been observed will be asked afterwards preferably outside school hours in order not to disturb the normal proceedings of the school. The question will revolve around on how they are preparing for the exams, the difficulties they are finding, the support they are getting, how they perceive their future and the importance of these exams for them.

I would also like to highlight the potential benefits of my research to the Ministry of Education and to the colleges. As far as I know there are not many researchers that have been interested in investigating the impact of the high stakes HSC exams in Mauritius and this study intends to fill in this gap. Understanding the beliefs/perceptions and preparations of this group of students may help to understand how these colleges contribute to their preparation and the subsequent success they receive in these exams. The study intends to go one notch further to explore other out-of-school practices such

as tuition taking and the role of other educational stakeholders such as parents' and even the role of personal motivation in helping the students to get through these high stakes exams. After the data collection phase, a preliminary report will be sent to the Ministry of Education and after the acceptance of thesis; a final report will be submitted to the Ministry of Education.

Data collection can only take place if the Ministry of Education approves then if the rectors are willing to let me access their institutions to collect data and at a third phase it will depend on whether the teachers are willing to let me attend their classes and give interviews as well as whether the students and their parents' consent to participate in the study. Taking into account that at all the stages, the participants are given the opportunity to participate or not to participate, it may take visit to a number of colleges before settling in one where all the relevant participants agree to partake in the study. Hence please find below a list of colleges in order of preference.

Yours Sincerely

Sanju Unjore

### **10.3 APPENDIX 3- LETTER TO STUDENTS**

*Sanju Unjore*

*s.unjo002@gold.ac.uk*

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**4<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

Dear Student

My name is Sanju Unjore, I am currently doing my Mphil/PhD at Goldsmiths University of London. My research is on the impact of HSC exams on a group of Mauritian learners in Lower 6. I am interested in exploring the beliefs/perceptions and practices of the students when they prepare for their HSC exams as well as the beliefs/perceptions of their parents, teachers and headmasters. I am interested in conducting the study with one student in Lower 6 from your college. The research will involve interviews of the students, classroom observations, observations in some tuition session. It will not be a daily observation but around 10 to 15 sessions depending on the consent of all participants and the circumstances. Your anonymity and that of your school will be respected.

In return, for participating in the study, I am willing to share my knowledge and even help in the application for funding and for further studies. I was ranked after the laureates in 2011 and got two successive scholarship, one from the Mauritian Government for my masters in UK and one from the UK Government under the Commonwealth Scholarship scheme for my Mphil/PhD. Additionally, the selected students will be paid a sum of 500rs at the start of the study and another 500rs or more after the end of the studies which is at the end of the second School term 2017.

If you are interested in participating in this study or if you want to attend the first session to get more information, please fill in the details on the next page and return the form to your teacher by tomorrow. For any specific information, please feel free to call on 59460423.

Yours Sincerely

Sanju Unjore

**Information form**

College: .....

Student Name: .....

Class: .....

Main Subjects: .....

Subsidiary Subjects: .....

In which subjects you take tuition? .....

Number of subjects taken in SC: .....

Total number of Units for best 6 subjects in SC: .....

## 10.4 APPENDIX 4-CONSENT FORM TO ADULT STUDENTS

### Consent Form for Students over 18 years old

**Research Title: Perception and Practices of a group of Mauritian students on the HSC exams.**

**Researcher: Sanju Unjore**

I have been given information about “*Perception/Beliefs and Practices of a group of Mauritian Students on the HSC exams*” and discussed the research project with Mr. Sanju Unjore who is conducting this research as part of an Mphil/PhD in Education supervised by Dr. Anna Traianou and Dr. Vally Lytra, Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research and have had an opportunity to ask Mr. Sanju Unjore any questions I may have about the research and my participation. Information gathered will be treated confidentially; real names of participants and college names will not appear in the thesis, pseudonyms will be used.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my treatment in any way/my relationship with the Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Mr Sanju Unjore on 4166304 or [sunjo002@gold.ac.uk](mailto:sunjo002@gold.ac.uk) or if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact Dr. Anna Traianou at [a.traianou.@gold.ac.uk](mailto:a.traianou.@gold.ac.uk)

By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

Having audio recordings of interviews.



Having copies and photos of my work taken for work samples demonstrating revision/learning for the HSC exams. (The photographs will only be of my work and not of me)

Being observed in classroom and tuition settings in relation to the HSC exams.

By signing below, I am indicating my consent to participate in the research. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used primarily for a PhD thesis, and will also be used in journal and book publications and conference presentations, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

**Signed**

**Date**

.....

...../...../.....

**Name**.....

## 10.5 APPENDIX 5- CONSENT FORM TO UNDERAGE STUDENTS

### Consent Form for Students under 18 years old

**Research Title: Perception and Practices of a group of Mauritian students on the HSC exams.**

**Researcher: Sanju Unjore**

I have been given information about “*Perception/Beliefs and Practices of a group of Mauritian Students on the HSC exams*” and discussed the research project with Mr. Sanju Unjore who is conducting this research as part of an Mphil/PhD in Education supervised by Dr. Anna Traianou and Dr. Vally Lytra, Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research and have had an opportunity to ask Mr. Sanju Unjore any questions I may have about the research and my participation. Information gathered will be treated confidentially; real names of participants and college names will not appear in the thesis, pseudonyms will be used.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my treatment in any way/my relationship with the Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Mr Sanju Unjore on 4166304 or [sunjo002@gold.ac.uk](mailto:sunjo002@gold.ac.uk) or if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact Dr. Anna Traianou at [a.traianou.@gold.ac.uk](mailto:a.traianou.@gold.ac.uk)

By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

Having audio recordings of interviews.

Having copies and photos of my work taken for work samples demonstrating revision/learning for the HSC exams. (The photographs will only be of my work and not of me)

Being observed in classroom and tuition settings in relation to the HSC exams.

By signing below, I am indicating my consent to participate in the research. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used primarily for a PhD thesis, and will also be used in summary form for journal publication, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

I give permission for my child ..... to participate in this research.

Parent/Guardian.....  
Date.....

Signature.....

Name.....  
Child's signature.....

### 10.6 APPENDIX 6- CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

#### Consent Form for Teachers

**Research Title: Perception and Practices of a group of Mauritian students on the HSC exams.**

**Researcher: Sanju Unjore**

I have been given information about “*Perception/Beliefs and Practices of a group of Mauritian Students on the HSC exams*” and discussed the research project with Mr. Sanju Unjore who is conducting this research as part of an Mphil/PhD in Education supervised by Dr. Anna Traianou and Dr. Vally Lytra, Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research and have had an opportunity to ask Mr. Sanju Unjore any questions I may have about the research and my participation. Information gathered will be treated confidentially; real names of participants and college names will not appear in the thesis, pseudonyms will be used.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my treatment in any way/my relationship with the Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Mr Sanju Unjore on 4166304 or [sunjo002@gold.ac.uk](mailto:sunjo002@gold.ac.uk) or if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact Dr. Anna Traianou at [a.traianou.@gold.ac.uk](mailto:a.traianou.@gold.ac.uk)

By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

- Having audio recordings of interviews.
- Having copies and photos of my work taken for work samples demonstrating revision/learning for the HSC exams. (The photographs will only be of my work and not of me)
- Being observed in classroom in relation to the HSC exams.

By signing below, I am indicating my consent to participate in the research. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used primarily for a PhD thesis, and will also be used in journal and book publications and conference presentations, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

**Signed**  
**Date**

.....

...../...../.....

**Name**.....

## 10.7 APPENDIX 7- CONSENT FORM FOR RECTORS

### Consent Form for Rectors/Deputy Rectors

**Research Title: Perception and Practices of a group of Mauritian students on the HSC exams.**

**Researcher: Sanju Unjore**

I have been given information about “*Perception/Beliefs and Practices of a group of Mauritian Students on the HSC exams*” and discussed the research project with Mr. Sanju Unjore who is conducting this research as part of an Mphil/PhD in Education supervised by Dr. Anna Traianou and Dr. Vally Lytra, Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research and have had an opportunity to ask Mr. Sanju Unjore any questions I may have about the research and my participation. Information gathered will be treated confidentially; real names of participants and college names will not appear in the thesis, pseudonyms will be used.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, I am free to refuse to participate and I am free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my treatment in any way/my relationship with the Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

If I have any enquiries about the research, I can contact Mr Sanju Unjore on 4166304 or [sunjo002@gold.ac.uk](mailto:sunjo002@gold.ac.uk) or if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact Dr. Anna Traianou at [a.traianou.@gold.ac.uk](mailto:a.traianou.@gold.ac.uk)

By signing below I am indicating my consent to (please tick):

Having audio recordings of interviews.

By signing below, I am indicating my consent to participate in the research. I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used primarily for a PhD thesis, and will also be used in journal and book publications and conference presentations, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

**Signed**

**Date**

.....

...../...../.....

**Name**.....

## 10.8 APPENDIX 8-QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

1. Can you please shed some light on how the English literature texts that are being taught have been selected?
  
2. Can you elaborate on how you would assess if a text is 'easy', 'accessible', 'interesting' or 'difficult', 'boring' and 'uninteresting' or using any other descriptors that you would wish to categorise a particular text within the selection process?
  
3. There is only one poetry text that has been selected, both Paper 5 Section B and Paper 6 offer two other poetry texts.

Can you please shed some light on why poetry does not seem to be a popular genre with the teachers?

4. Texts like *The Rehearsal* by Eleanor Catton and *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie were not chosen in Paper 6.

The Rehearsal is a new text and it is a story that have female lead characters that are students in a college. It seems to be a book that would have appealed to the majority of the students who are mainly teenage girls.

Americanah is another new text on the list and the story takes place within Africa and is part of post-colonial literature. This text seems to be the only book that is part of African and postcolonial literature within the syllabus. This text might have given the students an exposure to this genre of literature and perhaps help them relate to their own post-colonial context.

What do you think about these two texts? Why were they not chosen? Are there any specific reasons? Do you think that these two texts could be chosen in the future?

5. Do you think students' preferences and interests should have been considered when choosing texts? For instance, using a survey or having a class discussion on the various texts available with the students before choosing the texts. What could potentially be the challenges or benefits with such an approach?
6. Do you think Mauritian English literature should or could have been included within the syllabus? Do we have enough texts that have been written by local authors? Please elaborate.
7. How many periods (for all the classes) are you teaching on a weekly basis?
8. Do you have anything else to add on text selection?

Thank you.

## **10.9 APPENDIX 9- QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS**

### **Questionnaire on text selection process**

1. Do you enjoy reading?
2. What do you read?
3. Which books do you read?
4. Which text(s) you enjoy the most and which texts(s) you dislike the most? Why?
5. Do you believe that the students should have been involved in choosing the literature texts that are studied at school or the teachers know best? Please elaborate.

6. Do you plan to prepare for other texts other than the ones that have been prescribed at school?  
How? At tuition? On your own? Please elaborate.