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*Myth, Metaphor and Reality of Washback in Greek ELT: Findings from an Empirical Research Study*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Language Testing & Evaluation Forum, Hellenic American Union, Athens, Greece.

### **'Myth, Metaphor and Reality of Washback in Greek ELT: Findings from an Empirical Research Study'**

It has long been noted that high-stakes language exams exert a powerful influence on language learners and teachers, a phenomenon known within the language testing literature as the '*washback effect*' (Alderson and Wall, 1993). However, despite the plethora of assertions that the introduction of high-stakes language examinations into the Greek educational system created a shift towards exam-oriented syllabuses and methodologies, little empirical research has been carried out in the present context that can show what is actually happening under their influence.

The study that I am going to present aimed at investigating the washback effect of a high-stakes language test (the First Certificate in English - Cambridge ESOL) on the teaching and learning that takes place in Greek private language schools (also known as 'frontistiria') based on the analysis of teachers' interviews, exam-based textbooks and students' diaries.

During the presentation I will report the results of each of round of data and demonstrate how the mechanism of washback of high-stakes language tests operates in the present context. The discussion will round off with recommendations on how to promote positive washback and suggestions for future researchers in the area.