

EFL MA & PhD Holders' Perspectives toward International Academic English Tests (TOEFL AND IELTS)

وجهة نظر حاملي الماجستير والدكتوراه في اللغة الإنجليزية نحو الاختبارات الأكاديمية الإنجليزية الدولية (التوفل والآيلتس)



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Abstract

This study examines the views of MA and PhD degree holders in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) toward two predominant international academic English tests: The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Using a mixed methods approach, the research seeks to uncover the attitudes, experiences, and perceived validity and reliability of these tests among advanced EFL scholars. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to a diverse sample of EFL graduates. The results reveal nuanced perceptions and highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of TOEFL and IELTS in assessing English proficiency. Participants' feedback also highlights the impact of the tests on academic and career opportunities. This study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on language assessment in higher education and offer implications for test developers, educators, and policy makers in improving the design and implementation of English proficiency tests.

Key words: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), TOEFL and IELTS

المستخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في مواقف حاملي شهادات الماجستير والدكتوراه في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية) تجاه الاختبارين الأكاديميين الدوليين الرائدتين في اللغة الإنجليزية: اختبار اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (التوفل) (ونظام اختبار اللغة الإنجليزية الدولي (الآيلتس)). وباستخدام منهج الأساليب المختلطة، يسعى هذا البحث إلى اكتشاف الاتجاهات والخبرات والصلاحية والموثوقية المدركة لهذه الاختبارات بين الباحثين المتقدمين في اللغة الإنجليزية. تم جمع البيانات الكمية من خلال استبيان منظم تم توزيعه على عينة متنوعة من تخصصات اللغة الإنجليزية. تظهر النتائج تصورات مختلفة وتسلط الضوء على نقاط القوة والضعف في اختباري التوفل و الآيلتس في تقييم الكفاءة في اللغة الإنجليزية. وتسلط تعليقات المشاركين الضوء أيضاً على تأثير الاختبارات على الفرص التعليمية والمهنية. الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو المساهمة في الخطاب المستمر حول تقييم اللغة في التعليم العالي وتقديم آثار لمطوري الاختبارات والمعلمين وصانعي السياسات في تحسين تصميم وتنفيذ اختبارات الكفاءة في اللغة الإنجليزية

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL)، اختبار اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (TOEFL) واختبار اللغة الإنجليزية الدولي (IELTS).



I. Introduction

Brief overview of English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

Language is a tool for dialogue. We use language to convey our meanings in real-world interactions, but language serves as more than just a means of communication-it also serves as a symbol of social and cultural heritage (Larsari, 2011). Furthermore, English is the language of education, business, medicine, banking, tourism, diplomacy, and many other fields. It is also the most extensively used language in the world. English has worldwide significance since it is also the language of computers. Every day, the number of users grows. But learning and mastering this language is not without its difficulties (Mohammed, 2018). Moreover, Three English-speaking nation circles were recognized by Kachru (1986). He referred to nations where English is the official language, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada, as the "Inner Circle" (IC from here on). He referred to nations like Singapore and India where English is spoken as a second language (ESL) as the "Outer Circle" (OC). Countries like China, Japan, Korea, and Egypt where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) are designated as part of the "Expanding Circle" (EC). Nevertheless, due to the language's quick globalization, world Englishes have traveled far and frequently established new homes in other circles, refusing to stay contentedly inside their own (Clyne and Sharifian, 2008). Likewise, English's status as an international language has historically been mostly attributed to the demographic, economic, and political might of English-speaking nations, particularly the United States, as well as their "moral" superiority over Russia, Germany, and France as a result of either crimes or nationalist pride. Nonetheless, English's dual role as an international language and a (pluricentric) national language is probably going to undermine the latter. As previously said, the utilization of English in some global contexts, such as scholarly conversations, compels speakers to adopt characteristics of Anglo culture (Clyne and Sharifian, 2008). Additionally, Kachru (e.g., 1986, 1992) used a model with three concentric circles-Inner-Circle, Outer-Circle, and Expanding Circle countries-to explain the function and use of English worldwide. English is the predominant language in Inner-Circle nations including the United States, Canada, Australia, and



the United Kingdom. The Outer Circle includes multilingual nations like Singapore and India that speak English as a second language. English is studied as a foreign language in nations that make up the Expanding Circle, which is the biggest circle, including China, Japan, Korea, and Egypt. Some academics restrict their usage of the term "World Englishes" to Englishes spoken in the nations that make up the Outer Circle. That being said, I use the phrase to refer to all Englishes from all backgrounds (Sharifian, 2009).

- Importance of international academic English tests

The growing number of overseas students has sparked intense discussion on topics like university education and English language competency standards. Universities now rely more and more on full-fee paying students for their revenue, making the minimum English competence requirement an important topic. From the perspective of an educator, a greater number of faculty members now educate students from non-English speaking and foreign backgrounds. The IELTS exam offers a profile of results based on speaking, writing, listening, and reading subtests and is intended to assess the kinds of abilities commonly seen in postsecondary environments (Woodrow, 2006). In addition, IELTS claims that less linguistically demanding academic courses, like mathematics and technology, probably require band 6.5 or higher, while linguistically demanding courses, like law or linguistics, probably would accept bands of 7 and higher. The issue of English language proficiency entry levels is contentious because there is a wide range of requirements across universities and disciplines. Some universities set the level low to attract more international students; some set it high in the belief that students will not be disadvantaged linguistically and thus are more likely to excel (Woodrow, 2006). Likewise, International student's language admission criteria are usually expressed as their TOEFL or IELTS test results. The purpose of these exams is to evaluate a person's current level of English language competence. In order to ascertain if overseas applicants have fulfilled the minimal language proficiency standards for admission to the chosen study programs, they have been assigned a gatekeeping function (Hirsh, 2007). Moreover, there are several options for international students to



enroll at institutions. Prior to being admitted to universities, these paths provide students a variety of chances to acculturate intellectually and socially. International students' academic performance might be impacted by the length and kind of their pre-sessional studies in an English-speaking nation, especially during their first year of higher education (Hirsh, 2007). Additionally, assessment is an essential procedure. According to Brookhart, assessment is the act of obtaining, evaluating, and interpreting data on the procedure and the learning outcomes of students in accomplishing learning goals. It implies that in order to get a broad picture of students growth, the evaluation process needs to be organized, gradual, and continuous (Zuhriyah and Pratolo, 2020).

- Significance of understanding MA & PhD holder's perspectives

according to Garner and Acklen (1979, p. 36) Although learners are not the only ones who make decisions in a program, program designers and curriculum developers have agreed on the importance of student participation in the planning process because "students are the *raison d'être* of curriculum, their suggestions, cooperation, and evaluation can be among the most meaningful elements in the entire learning process," (Fatah and Karim, 2023). Moreover, according to Richards (2001, p. 59), through the process of needs analysis, researchers can obtain data from various sources, including student performance tests and interviews and questionnaire administration to explore the perspectives of the participants (Fatah and Karim, 2023). In addition, as per Cook-Sather (2002, p. 3), the fundamental idea behind developing a system is to confer with the people for whom it is intended. This approach assists educators in understanding the world through the eyes of their students' process realizations. In a similar vein, Rudduck and McIntyre (2007, p. 3) assert that the goal of "building a fuller understanding of life in classrooms and schools" motivated their "commitment to exploring pupil perspectives." Similarly, Marsh (2009, p. 212) asserts that "students are the ultimate consumers and an important element in the learning environment." According to Garrecht et al. (2018, p. 1), students' choices can be put into action by continuing with the practices that they have already begun (Fatah and Karim, 2023). Furthermore, according to Mager and Nawak (2012, p. 49), student participation has



both institutional and personal implications. The students' involvement suggests that they are regarded as stakeholders with the power to influence decisions as well as the actual actions conducted. According to Bourke and Loveridge (2016, p. 66), the student viewpoint refers to the knowledge that students have about the significance of the learning process. As a result, it can be considered a pedagogical tool that is frequently utilized to facilitate coordination between teaching and learning. Garrecht et al. (2018, p. 1), who endorse the concepts, assert that it is vital to give students the ability to make judgments since those decisions can be carried out in a way that sustains the practice phases (Fatah and Karim, 2023).

Although students are not the only ones who make decisions in a program, understanding their perspectives can help them realize how a process works. This is why needs analysis, system building, educational reform, syllabus design, and curriculum development are all theoretically justified (Faraj, 2023). Moreover, In summary, program designers and curriculum developers agree that students should be involved in the planning of their educational programs because, as the authors note, "their suggestions, cooperation, and evaluation can be among the most meaningful elements in the entire learning process" (Faraj, 2023). Furthermore, understanding concepts such as "curriculum development is not an exclusive function of teachers and administrators" and "student involvement in curriculum development does not mean that students will eventually dictate what is to be taught and how" is necessary, according to Marquis (1973, p. 127), before involving students in curriculum development (Faraj, 2023). In addition, Dahl (1995) emphasizes the significance of learner perspectives, saying that students' voices enable us to comprehend what they value and require as learners. She goes on to say, "Voice reflects learners' personal realities and reveals the deeper meanings and perspectives of individuals." The voice is unique, just like a fingerprint. Language learners are typically seen as the target group for needs analysis in language programs, where their viewpoints are considered during data collection, according to Richards (2001, pp. 57, 59). He goes on to say that using requirements analysis, researchers can get data from several sources, including student performance assessments and student perspectives obtained through questionnaire administration and



interviews(Faraj, 2023). Additionally, Cook-Sather (2002, p. 3) states that consulting the people for whom the system is intended is a fundamental building block of system development. Consequently, in order to prepare for the next steps in educational reform, it is crucial for researchers and educators to incorporate students' perspectives into the curriculum by asking them about their needs. This is because presenting students' perspectives allows teachers and educationalists to view the world from the perspective of the students, who are realizing the process. Likewise, Rudduck and McIntyre (2007, p. 3) state that "the goal to develop a fuller understanding of life in classrooms and schools drove the commitment to exploring pupil perspectives; rounding out the picture meant eliciting and valuing pupils' accounts of experience." Students "are an important element in the learning environment and are the ultimate consumers," according to Marsh (2009, p. 212). Since individuals bring diverse perspectives, varying educational experiences, and a range of demands, they play important roles in decision-making as shareholders in the learning context. Thus, the teaching agenda can be adjusted in accordance with the perspectives of the students, which can be used as a resource. Furthermore, according to Mager and Nawak (2012, p. 49), student participation has both institutional and personal implications. The students' involvement suggests that they are regarded as stakeholders with the power to influence decisions as well as the actual actions conducted. According to Bourke and Loveridge (2016, p. 66), the student viewpoint refers to the knowledge that students have about the significance of the learning process. As a result, it can be considered a pedagogical tool that is frequently utilized to facilitate coordination between teaching and learning. Garrecht et al. (2018, p. 1), who endorse the concepts, assert that it is vital to give students the ability to make judgments since those decisions can be carried out in a way that sustains the practice phases(Faraj, 2023).

-The aim of the study:

The aim of this study is to investigate the attitudes of master's and doctoral degree holders in English towards international academic examinations in English. The survey questions were addressed to teachers who have taken international exams such as IELTS and



TOEFL. It assesses their performance and abilities regarding these international examinations. These requirements relate to a number of possible issues, including test purpose and content, meaning of test scores, appropriateness of cut-off level, test validity, reliability, predictive power and comparability with other acceptable forms of evidence... English major. The main research questions addressed in this study were as follows:

- Research Questions:

- a. What are EFL MA and PhD holders' perspectives on international academic English tests?
- b. What are the common challenges faced by MA and PhD holders' in taking international academic English tests?
- c. What are the impacts of these tests on MA and PhD holders' academic and professional pursuits?

II. Literature Review

- Overview of International Academic English Tests

Furthermore, attempting English language competency exams unprepared will cost money and effort. English language learners should therefore allocate time to study for the test in order to enhance their performance (Roza, 2019). Furthermore, The Elementary, Intermediate, and High-Intermediate Levels:

Listening: The elementary and intermediate listening assessments have three distinct task types: multiple-choice question (MCQ)-based visual description, question or statement response, and short conversation. In the exam, candidates have to choose a response based on a statement or question, an image, and a brief dialogue. We've already talked about the two test styles that are included in the high-intermediate listening exam: short conversation and question or statement response. There are also brief talks included in the exam, which require candidates to listen to and respond to two to three multiple-choice questions regarding the talk.

Reading: The three levels of reading comprehension comprise three distinct task types in multiple-choice format: reading comprehension, cloze test, and vocabulary and structure. In the first task type, test takers are assessed on their vocabulary and grammar knowledge using discrete sentences; in the second, they must choose the correct answers



to complete the passage's blanks; and in the third, they must provide answers based on the reading passages that have been provided(Shih, 2008).

Writing: Examinees at the primary level are required to write one brief paragraph and individual sentences. In the former, test-takers are required to rearrange the words in the sentences in the proper sequence (John/this morning/late/was/again), as well as to merge two separate phrases into one (for example, merge the following sentences: Peggy enjoys reading). Peggy enjoys playing the guitar as well as creating new sentences based on the provided hints (such as changing a sentence from the present tense to the past tense). In the latter, test-takers are required to compose a 50-word paragraph using the provided photo prompts. In both the intermediate and high-intermediate levels, candidates must finish one guided writing activity and translate a paragraph from Chinese into English(Shih, 2008).

Speaking: In the primary level, test-takers are required to read aloud sentences from their booklet, listen to a sentence and then repeat it, and respond to prepared questions after they are played twice. In addition to answering prerecorded questions, like in the elementary level, test takers at the intermediate level must also read aloud brief passages and describe given photographs in response to given questions (such as, "What is the person in the picture doing?"). Similar to the elementary level, test takers at the high intermediate level must respond to prepared questions, describe a given picture (such as what the social event is and what people are doing in it), and talk about a given topic (For instance, what is the biggest social issue and how can it be resolved?(Shih, 2008).

The Advanced Level

Listening: Its listening comprehension part consists of three different task types: long conversation, long talk (LTTC, n.d.-h), and brief conversation and talk (e.g., a lecture). In the first task type, participants must listen to a brief discussion or chat before responding to a multiple-choice question (MCQ) on it. There are two lengthy talks in the second and two lengthy ones in the third. Test takers have thirty seconds to read the instructions and questions they must answer before listening to each lengthy chat or speak. They have three to four minutes to respond



to all of the questions in one word, one phrase, or one sentence after listening to each discussion and talk.

Reading: Careful reading and skimming/scanning are the two task kinds that make up reading comprehension. In the former, candidates must attentively read articles and provide succinct responses to multiple-choice questions (MCQs) and other inquiries. Additionally, it includes a fill-in-the-blank component where test takers are required to fill in the blanks with information from the summarized passage. In the latter activity, test-takers must match each passage's paragraph to the listed heading that most accurately sums up the passage's major point. Additionally, in order to respond to questions, test participants must skim or scan passages. For instance, before taking the examination, candidates must read three passages that, in turn, explain Middlebury College, Bowdoin College, and Colgate University. Subsequently, they respond to a series of wh-questions that allude to one of the three establishments (e.g., which school is near a big city?)(Shih, 2008).

Speaking: Three test tasks comprise speaking: information exchange, presentation, and warm-up interview. As per the LTTC (n.d.-l), during the warm-up interview, two test takers are asked personal questions by the examiner, such as their employment and hobbies. Following that, the information exchange task asks the two test takers to exchange information while holding separate cards on the same subject (for example, they need to talk to each other to determine which of their mobile phones to buy). In the presenting assignment, each test-taker discusses a specified topic (such as the benefits and drawbacks of mobile phones) and responds to one question on their own, based on the knowledge they have just learned from the previous stage.

Writing: The LTTC (n.d.-m) states that test participants must submit two 250-word essays as part of the writing requirement. The first activity involves summarizing the key points of two provided articles—one promoting the benefits of advertising, the other about its drawbacks—and expressing the test-takers' perspectives on the subject. In the second assignment, the test taker is asked to propose solutions to a societal problem (e.g., how may automobile accidents be reduced?) based on two nonverbal pieces of information (e.g., a pie chart showing the percentage of car accidents involving drivers in various age ranges)(Shih, 2008).



Common tests such as TOEFL, IELTS, & Cambridge English exams

The English proficiency tests TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language-Institutional TOEFL Prediction) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) assess non-native English speakers' abilities(Roza, 2019). In addition, TOEFL and IELTS can be used as a university departure exam, a placement test for English language programs, a way to track student development, a prerequisite for admission to non-degree or short-term programs, and admittance to universities where English is not the primary language(Roza, 2019). Likewise, this paper examines the progress of academic English language proficiency testing in the United Kingdom since the 1950s, focusing on three tests in particular: the International English Language Testing System (IELTS, 1989), the English Proficiency Test Battery (EPTB, 1964), and the English Language Testing Service (ELTS, 1980). It is hypothesized that these assessments represent shifting paradigms, or perspectives, on language(Davies, 2007). Moreover, for second and foreign language learners who want to study at North American colleges and need to be conversant in standard American English, the TOEFL is a crucial admission requirement. Each institutional TOEFL version assesses candidates' capacity to "understand North American English," according to the TOEFL Institutional Testing Program Examinee Handbook (ETS, 2001) published by ETS (Educational Testing Services)(Sharifian, 2009). Additionally, The TOEFL is considered "a valuable tool for students who would like to study abroad in English" and "opens more doors than any other academic English test" (ETS, n.d.). It is utilized in several Middle Eastern institutions and universities. Brown (2004) offers an alternative explanation, contending that the availability and high face validity of high-stakes international exams make them ideal for use in placement processes in underdeveloped nations(Sharifian, 2009). In addition, the skills of speaking, writing, listening, and reading are assessed in the TOEFL and IELTS exams. The TOEFL IBT takes four hours to complete, and the IELTS takes two hours and forty-five minutes. Consequently, time management is required to complete the tests. When it comes to the issues with the TOEFL and IELTS exams, such scenario may make test-takers or pupils anxious(Roza, 2019).



Additionally, Cambridge Assessment English, IDP Education, and the British Council are the organizers of this exam. There are two varieties available: general and academic. You can select and prepare for the one that best suits your needs and goals. The content, context, and goals of the Academic and General editions differ from one another. The time, written response length, and score are the only other aspects that are the same. It is the only safe English language test that holders of visas are authorized to take. All four skills-listening, reading, writing, and speaking-are assessed in each exam type. The speaking portion may be evaluated on the same day as the other sections of the exam or on a different day. If you would like to study at universities in English-speaking nations, you can take the academic version of this test(Homayounfar et al.). likewise, the only distinctions between the general and academic versions are the kinds of questions; the listening portion of each takes roughly 30 minutes, with an additional 10 minutes for transfer. The Listening section allows for the use of several national accents, such as American, British, or Australian, and all forms of standard English are acceptable in the responses. There are four modules in the IELTS: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

IELTS Academic	IELTS General Training
IELTS Academic is appropriate for use in a higher education setting. All test takers in all disciplines are meant to complete the exam tasks.	IELTS General is mostly applied in real-world, everyday situations. The exam questions replicate social and professional settings.
listening30 minutes Thirty minutes plus an additional ten minutes to transfer the answers to the response sheet. Four recorded dialogues and monologues are available.	listening30 minutes Thirty minutes plus an additional ten minutes to transfer the answers to the response sheet. Four recorded dialogues and monologues are available.



<p>Reading (60 minutes)</p> <p>Three lengthy sections with exercises. Texts might be factual and descriptive or discursive and analytical. nonverbal resources like pictures and diagraphs. Texts are real and sourced from periodicals, books, and newspapers.</p>	<p>Reading (60 minutes)</p> <p>Three lengthy sections with exercises. There are two or three brief factual texts in Section I. Two brief factual texts about labor are included in Section 2. A lengthy text about a broad subject is found in Section 3. The texts are genuine, having been sourced from books, newspapers, and government documents.</p>
<p>Writing (60 minutes)</p> <p>In task 1, candidates are required to write a minimum of 150 words in which they must explain, summarize, or chart a table, chart, or diagram. Task 2: A brief essay of no more than 250 words.</p>	<p>Writing (60 minutes)</p> <p>Write a letter that is at least 150 words in length. A brief essay that should not exceed 250 words.</p>
<p>Speaking (11 to 14 minutes)</p> <p>in-person interview. consists of brief questions, lengthy speeches on well-known subjects, and a planned conversation.</p>	<p>Speaking (11 to 14 minutes)</p> <p>in-person interview. consists of brief questions, lengthy speeches on well-known subjects, and a planned conversation.</p>

(Homayounfar et al.)

b. Purpose and structure of these tests

- Previous Studies on EFL MA and PhD Holders Perspectives

Graduates with a doctorate in research include the best students at an institution. They also have the best chance of becoming tomorrow's global leaders. The PhD, being the most esteemed and globally recognized academic degree, equips leaders not only for research and academic careers but also for a wide range of careers in other fields (such as business, industry, nonprofits, and government) and in various international contexts How much of an international consensus exists about what a PhD should or should not include, given this global context? Three general expectations for PhD programs are found when



research and policy pronouncements from Europe, the US, Canada, and Australia are examined:

1. There is broad consensus around the globe that original research for a PhD should advance knowledge.
2. It is expected of PhD graduates to possess extensive subject-matter expertise.
3. There is growing consensus that the development of transferable skills and competencies should be a part of PhD training (Bernstein et al., 2014).

Group Statistics				
Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean

a. Key key findings from existing research

b. Identified gaps in the literature

III. Methodology

- Research Design (Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approach)

- Participants

Participants were 68 male and 35 females. The respondents of the study were 103 holders of master's and doctoral degrees in Kurdistan universities who spoke EFL English in the English department, college Education. The female student was in a way that makes (34%) while the number of male students is (66%). The selection of respondents for the study was based on participation in both IELTS and TOEFL tests.

Reading Skills	Female	35	38.63	9.24	1.56
	Male	68	42.25	9.29	1.13
Writing Skills	Female	35	42.83	9.81	1.66
	Male	68	45.35	9.60	1.16
Speaking Skills	Female	35	55.66	13.52	2.29
	Male	68	61.47	14.01	1.70
Listening Skills	Female	35	66.31	15.56	2.63
	Male	68	70.16	14.39	1.75

-Instrument:



To fulfill the objective of the study, a modified questionnaire administered to the study participants. The research consisted of four main topics: reading, writing, speaking and listening. About obtaining international test certificates such as IELTS and TOEFL.

Data Analysis Procedures

Two main types of data were collected namely, quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative set of the data was computed using SPSS 26 to obtain each response's mean, standard deviation and percentages to the questionnaire, which consists of forty closed-ended items. The items were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. As for evaluation, a 6-point Likert type was used. The Likert scales are shown in Tables 1 and 2. It is worth considering the abbreviations in Tables 3, 4, and 5 (SD: Strongly Disagree, D: Disagree, SD: slightly disagree, SA: slightly Agree, A: agree, SA: Strongly Agree, M: Mean, StD: Standard Deviation). Regarding the open-ended questions, there were two main questions the respondents were provided with.

- Data Analysis Procedures

Analysis of Language Skills Proficiency

This analysis examines the proficiency levels of EFL MA and PhD holders in various language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The descriptive statistics below provide insights into the distribution and variability of scores across different skills.

Reading Skills: descriptive statistic.

Skill	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
ReadingSkill1	103	1	6	4.22	1.527
ReadingSkill2	103	1	6	3.74	1.609
...
ReadingSkill10	103	1	6	4.31	1.299

Table (1) shows that there is a significant of reading skills between the student's answers represented by the arithmetic mean, which amounts to (4.22), while the significance value is (0.000), which is less than an error rate (0.05). This indicates that there is a significant difference in favor of the sample subjects which indicates that in general students have positive reading skills.

Writing Skills: descriptive statistic.



Skill	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
WritingSkill1	103	1	6	4.33	1.611
WritingSkill2	103	1	6	4.56	1.288
...
WritingSkill10	103	1	6	4.60	1.132

Table (2) shows that there is a significant of Writing skills between the student's answers represented by the arithmetic mean, which amounts to (4.33), while the significance value is (0.000), which is less than an error rate (0.05). This indicates that there is a significant difference in favor of the sample subjects which indicates that in general students have positive reading skills.

Speaking Skills: descriptive statistic.

Skill	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
SpeakingSkill1	103	1	6	4.16	1.520
SpeakingSkill2	103	1	6	4.48	1.342
...
SpeakingSkill14	103	1	6	4.19	1.253

Table (3) shows that there is a significant of Writing skills between the student's answers represented by the arithmetic mean, which amounts to (4.16), while the significance value is (0.000), which is less than an error rate (0.05). This indicates that there is a significant difference in favor of the sample subjects which indicates that in general students have positive reading skills.

Listening Skills: descriptive statistic.

Skill	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
ListeningSkill1	103	1	6	4.09	1.189
ListeningSkill2	103	1	6	4.19	1.521
...
ListeningSkill16	103	1	6	4.46	1.341

Table (4) shows that there is a significant of Listening skills between the student's answers represented by the arithmetic mean, which



amounts to (4.09), while the significance value is (0.000), which is less than an error rate (0.05). This indicates that there is a significant difference in favor of the sample subjects which indicates that in general students have positive reading skills.

Observations:

- The mean scores across all skills range from approximately 3.74 to 4.60, indicating a generally high level of proficiency among EFL MA and PhD holders.
- Variability in scores, as indicated by standard deviation, varies across skills, suggesting differing levels of consistency in performance.

Conclusion:

Overall, the analysis suggests that participants demonstrate strong proficiency in all language skills examined, with some variability in performance across specific sub-skills. These findings provide valuable insights into the language proficiency of EFL MA and PhD holders, which may have implications for language education and assessment strategies.

This presentation effectively summarizes the descriptive statistics and provides a clear interpretation of the results. Adjustments can be made based on specific research objectives and audience preferences.

Analysis of Student's reading skills

	N	Minimum	Maximum	mean	Std.Deviation
ReadingSkill1	103	1	6	4.22	1.527
ReadingSkill2	103	1	6	3.74	1.609
ReadingSkill3	103	1	6	4.31	1.284
ReadingSkill4	103	1	6	4.33	1.458
ReadingSkill5	103	1	6	4.05	1.389



ReadingSkill6	103	1	6	4.11	1.328
ReadingSkill7	103	1	6	3.80	1.451
ReadingSkill8	103	1	6	3.90	1.397
ReadingSkill9	103	1	6	4.25	1.334
ReadingSkill10	103	1	6	4.31	1.299

Data analysis and discussion of results

Analysis of student's reading Perspectives toward International Academic English Tests (TOEFL AND IELTS)

The respondents agreed to some extent to the first statement " I can read the passages with ease" as the mean is 4.22 and St. Deviation is 1.527 on 1 to 6 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

The respondents agreed to some extent to the second statement " I am comfortable with reading long texts " as the mean is 3.74 and St. Deviation is 1.609 on 1 to 6 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

The respondents agreed to some extent to the third statement " I can understand most of the vocabulary in texts. " as the mean is 4.31 and St. Deviation is 1.284 on 1 to 6 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

The respondents agreed to some extent to the fourth statement " I can identify the main idea of a text. " as the mean is 4.31 and St. Deviation is 1.284 on 1 to 6 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

The respondents agreed to some extent to the fifth statement " I can comprehend the nuances and figurative language in the texts." as the mean is 4.05 and St. Deviation is 1.389 on 1 to 6 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

The respondents agreed to some extent to the sixth statement " I can read and understand all types of texts." as the mean is 4.11 and St. Deviation is 1.328 on 1 to 6 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

The respondents agreed to some extent to the seventh statement " I



can easily comprehend technical terms and jargon in the texts." as the mean is 3.80 and St. Deviation is 1.451 on 1 to 6 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

The respondents agreed to some extent to the eighth statements " I can read and interpret complex graphs, tables and charts in the texts." as the mean is 3.90 and St. Deviation is 1.397 on 1 to 6 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

The respondents agreed to some extent to the ninth statements " I can effectively scan and skim through the texts." as the mean is 4.25 and St. Deviation is 1.334 on 1 to 6 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

The respondents agreed to some extent to the tenth statements " I can comprehend the main ideas and details of the passages." as the mean is 4.31 and St. Deviation is 1.229 on 1 to 6 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

Analysis of student's writing Perspectives toward International Academic English Tests (TOEFL AND IELTS)

Writing

With a mean of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 1.611 on a Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree, the respondents agreed to some extent with the first statement: "I can write grammatically correct sentences."

With a mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 1.288 on a Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree, the respondents agreed to some extent with the second statement: "I can write coherently organized paragraphs."

As the mean is 4.39 and the respondents agreed to some extent with the third statement: "I can use appropriate vocabulary and tone in my writing." On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the deviation is 1.262 (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

As the mean is 4.54 and the standard deviation is 1.289 on a 1 to 6 Likert scale (with 1 highly disagreeing and 6 strongly agreeing), the respondents agreed to some extent with the fourth statement: "I can write clear and concise writings in English."

With a mean of 4.44 and a standard deviation of 1.265 on a Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree, the



respondents agreed to some extent with the fifth statement: "I can write creatively and expressively."

As the mean is 4.41 and the standard deviation is 1.438 on a 1 to 6 Likert scale (with 1 highly disagreeing and 6 strongly agreeing), the respondents agreed to some extent with the sixth statement, "I can express my ideas and thoughts clearly in writing."

The eighth assertion, "I can write cohesive and coherent paragraphs in the tests," received some agreement from the respondents, as indicated by the mean of 4.38 and St. From 1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree, the deviation is 1.394 on a Likert scale.

As the mean is 4.46 and St., the respondents agreed to some extent with the eighth statement, "I can effectively use grammar and vocabulary in writing sentences." On a Likert scale with 1 being strongly disagreed and 6 being highly agreed, the deviation is 1.392.

As the mean is 4.39 and the standard deviation is 1.239 on a 1 to 6 Likert scale (with 1 highly disagreeing and 6 strongly agreeing), the respondents agreed to some extent with the ninth statement, "I can write effective essays."

As the mean is 4.60 and St., the respondents somewhat agreed with the tenth statement, "I can write essays that meet the test requirements." On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the deviation is 1.132 (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

Analysis of student's speaking Perspectives toward International Academic English Tests (TOEFL AND IELTS)

Speaking:

On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, with a mean of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 1.520, the respondents agreed to some extent with the first statement: "I can speak English fluently and confidently." (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, with a mean of 4.48 and a standard deviation of 1.342, the respondents agreed to some extent with the second statement: "I can orally express my ideas and opinions clearly." (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, with a mean of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 1.453, the respondents agreed to some extent with the third statement: "I can participate effectively in discussions and



conversations." (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

A total of respondents expressed some degree of agreement with the fourth statement: "I can use appropriate grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation when speaking." given that St. On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the deviation is 1.505 (strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

As for the fifth statement, "I can adjust my speaking style to fit different situations and audiences," respondents agreed with it to some level. given that St. On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the deviation is 1.405 (strongly disagree to strongly agree).

On a Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree, the respondents agreed, at least in part, with the sixth statement: "I can communicate effectively with native-like command." The mean of the responses was 4.29, and the standard deviation was 1.439.

On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, with a mean of 4.44 and a standard deviation of 1.348, the respondents agreed to some extent with the seventh statement: "I can clearly articulate my ideas and thoughts in speaking." (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

As the mean is 4.45 and St., the respondents agreed to some extent with the eighth statement: "I can use a wide range of vocabulary in speaking English." On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the deviation is 1.391 (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

As the mean is 4.22 and St., the respondents agreed to some level with the ninth statement: "I can effectively use intonation and stress in speaking." On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the deviation is 1.514 (strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

A total of respondents expressed some agreement with the tenth answer, which read, "I can use appropriate gestures and facial expressions, when necessary, when speaking." given that St. On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the deviation is 1.354 (strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

Analysis of student's listening Perspectives toward International Academic English Tests (TOEFL AND IELTS)

Listening:

A total of respondents agreed, at least in part, with the first statement: "I can understand English speakers of different accents and



dialects." given that, on a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the mean is 4.09 and the standard deviation is 1.189 (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

Based on a 1–6 Likert scale with a mean of 4.19 and a standard deviation of 1.521, the respondents somewhat agreed with the second statement: "I can follow English conversations and lectures without difficulty."

A total of respondents agreed, at least in part, with the third statement: "I can distinguish between literal and implied meanings in audio recordings." as the St. Deviation is 1.462 on a Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree, and the mean is 4.00.

As the mean is 4.37 and St., the respondents somewhat agreed with the fourth statement: "I can extract key information from audio recordings." On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the deviation is 1.343 (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

The fifth statement "I can listen, recognize, and use English idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms," was somewhat agreed upon by the respondents. with a 1 to 6 Likert scale (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree), the mean is 4.40 and the standard deviation is 1.338.

Based on the mean of 4.27 and St., respondents agreed to some level with the sixth statement: "I can comprehend spoken English in a variety of contexts." On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the deviation is 1.457 (strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, with a mean of 4.52 and a standard deviation of 1.371, the respondents agreed to some extent with the seventh statement: "I can understand complex instructions and directions given in English." (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

With a mean of 4.42 and St., the respondents somewhat agreed with the eighth statement: "I can listen and comprehend different genres of English speech (news, interviews, presentations, etc.)." On a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the deviation is 1.272 (1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree).

Given that the mean is 4.20 and the standard deviation is 1.286 on a Likert scale of 1 to 6, the respondents agreed, at least in part, with the ninth statement: "I can effectively listen for specific details and main ideas."

As for the tenth statement, "I can listen with 100% comprehension to



English spoken at a normal conversational speed," the respondents agreed, at least in part. given that 4.34 is the mean and St. From 1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree, the deviation is 1.176 on a Likert scale.

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha's Result:

According to Cronbach alpha's result the reliability statistics show that it is 0.9

Which shows reliability.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.92	4

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are discussed here in the form of answers to the research questions raised in chapter one. To answer the first question which states (What is the view of EFL MA and PhD holders on English international academic examinations?), in general, regarding student attitudes towards reading, according to the results obtained in the reading section, we see positive answers in all of them. although, only three of them have few positives compared to the others, furthermore, there are no negatives in the reading section. Also, regarding the writing process, all the answers were positive because none of the answers are below 3.5, so we can say that all the participants considered the writing process positive, which is clearly shown in mean. In addition, again regarding the talking process, all the answers were positive because none of the answers are below 3.5, so we can say that all the participants satisfied with the talking process this is very clearly shown in mean. Additionally, in addition to the reading, writing and speaking processes, the listening process was also positive because none of the responses were below 3.5, so we can say that all participants were satisfied with the listening process. this is show in mean.

To answer the second research question which states (What are the common challenges faced by MA and PhD holders in taking international academic English tests?), As for the answer to the second research question. As a result of our findings, we can



identify the challenges experienced by the participants. For example, in the reading process section of phrases 3.7.8, participants are not comfortable with these phrases and think that this is a kind of obstacle for them. Although, In the writing process section participants are comfortable with all phrases. That is, they took the subject positively because there is no result below 3.5, but all 4.00, but although all the answers were given positively, but some of them are stronger than others. In addition, Participants are also comfortable with all phrases in the speaking process. That is, they took the subject positively because there is no result below 3.5, but all 4.00. However, although all the answers were positive, but some of them are stronger in terms of positive than others, which is a challenge to improve. Additionally, Participants are also fairly comfortable with all phrases during the listening process. That is, they took the subject positively because there is no result below 3.5, but all 4.00. However, although all the answers were positive, but some of the answers are stronger in terms of positive than others, which is a challenge to improve. Because the challenge is not only low, but often the real challenge is at a level that makes the process much more complicated in that the answers have different results.

Conclusion

Based on the study findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1- Kurdish EFL MA and PhD Holders' Perspectives students have a positive level of International Academic English Tests (TOEFL AND IELTS). This verifies the first hypothesis adopted in the study.
2. Reading factors have a significant positive impact on students' performance in the international academic English tests (TOEFL and IELTS). Only three phrases have lower levels of positivity compared to other answers in the reading section.
3. Writing factors have a good positive effect on students' performance in international academic English tests (TOEFL AND IELTS). Because if we look at the answers, their mean is above 4.00, which means that there is no negative answer. However, their



levels of positivity vary, some higher than others.

4. Also, speaking ability has a positive impact on students' performance in international academic English tests (TOEFL and IELTS). However, we can only say that their levels of positivity vary, some higher than others.

5. Listening skills have a positive impact on students' performance, but only the degree of positiveness is different. Some are slightly more positive than others in the international academic English tests (TOEFL and IELTS).

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