

الإرهاق الأكاديمي لدى طلاب الجامعات الأكراد الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية  
كلغة أجنبية: دراسة المستويات والعوامل

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## An Investigation of the Kurdish EFL University Students' Academic Burnout: Levels and Factors

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### المخلص

تتناول الدراسة الحالية ظاهرة الإرهاق الأكاديمي بين طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) الكرديين في إحدى كليات جامعة صلاح الدين-أربيل. تهدف الدراسة إلى قياس مستوى الإرهاق الأكاديمي بين هؤلاء الطلاب، مع تحديد العوامل المسببة لهذه الظاهرة وتفسيرها، بالإضافة إلى استكشاف الأساليب التي استخدمها الطلاب لمواجهة هذا الإرهاق والتغلب عليه. شملت العينة 97 طالبًا وطالبة من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية الكرديين في الدوامين الصباحي والمسائي، حيث استكملوا استبيان ماسلاش للإرهاق الأكاديمي-نسخة الطلاب، الذي يغطي ثلاثة أبعاد رئيسية: الإجهاد، التشاؤم، وعدم الكفاءة. ولتعزيز البيانات الكمية، أجريت مقابلات منظمة وشبه منظمة مع عشرة طلاب للحصول على رؤى نوعية معمقة.

أظهرت النتائج أن طلاب الدوام الصباحي يعانون من مستوى متوسط من الإرهاق الأكاديمي، بينما يعاني طلاب الدوام المسائي من مستوى أعلى قليلاً. كما كشفت النتائج عن وجود عوامل داخلية وخارجية متعددة ساهمت في ظهور الإرهاق الأكاديمي بين الطلاب الجامعيين. ومع ذلك، أثبت الطلاب في كلا الدوامين قدرتهم على تبني استراتيجيات فعالة لمواجهة الإرهاق الأكاديمي والتغلب عليه، مما يعكس مرونتهم وقدرتهم على التكيف مع التحديات الأكاديمية.

### Abstract

The present study investigates academic burnout among Kurdish EFL students in a college at Salahaddin University-Erbil. The research aims to obtain the level of academic burnout among the students and determine and explain the factors behind the EFL learners' status and the ways students have encountered and overcome burnout. A sample of 97 Kurdish EFL university morning and evening students completed the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey sub-scales: exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. Structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten students to obtain qualitative data. Results discovered that morning students experienced a moderate level of burnout while evening students encountered a slightly higher level of burnout. Additionally, results show that different internal and external factors contributed to burnout among undergraduates. However, students from both classes could utilize effective coping strategies to overcome academic burnout.

The results showed that morning shift students experience a moderate level of academic burnout, while evening shift students experience a slightly higher level. The results also revealed multiple internal and external factors that contributed to the emergence of academic burnout among university students. However, students in both shifts demonstrated their ability to adopt effective strategies to confront and overcome academic burnout, reflecting their resilience and ability to adapt to academic challenges.

### 1. Introduction

In the past few years, academic burnout has gained considerable attention in research and the context of higher education, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Academic burnout among college students is defined as a three-dimensional scale that consists of "exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy" (Schaufeli et al., 2002b; Schaufeli and Taris, 2005:260; Zhang, Gan, and Cham, 2007). "Exhaustion" is a symptom that students feel exhausted due to academic demands. Students who experience burnout are also "cynical" and detached from schoolwork. "Inefficacy" is a syndrome of feeling incompetent by students (ibid).

Students encounter burnout because of overloaded work and academic demands during their studies at university. Because students are obliged to attend classes, complete assignments, pass exams, and attain a degree, they likely experience burnout due to persisting in this phenomenon



(Schaufeli and Salanova, 2007: 180). Concerning this phenomenon (academic burnout), Yang (2004:287) and D'Souza (2019) also state that "students in the learning process, because of course stress, course load or other psychological factors, display a state of emotional exhaustion, a tendency to depersonalisation, and a feeling of low personal accomplishment."

Feeling anxious and stressed excessively are other sources of burnout affecting students' learning, achievement, and well-being. Students who feel anxious at a high level achieve lower grades than their less anxious peers (Horwitz, 2001: 115). According to Lin & Huang (2014:77), stress is a significant problem for students when they deal with academic, social, and personal challenges. While they encounter stress excessively or perceive it negatively, it can negatively impact students' health and academic performance (learning) (ibid). If they feel anxious, frustrated, exhausted, and stressed and continue for a long time, these will affect their well-being and academic performance. As a result, it will be an issue for higher education (Salmela-Aro & Tynkkynen, 2012). Meanwhile, researchers claim students' feelings are essential for language learning and academic achievement (MacIntyre, 1995).

Researchers have studied academic burnout among students studying English as a foreign language (EFL). For example, Li, Zhang, and Jiang (2021) conducted research on burnout within an EFL context, Yu, Wang and Liu (2022) focused on burnout among undergraduate EFL students, Liu (2023) explored burnout among EFL students, Li, Zhang and Jiang (2021) conducted research on burnout among EFL students in China, Taheri, Kaboodi, and Nasr (2023) investigated burnout within an EFL context, Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2015) studied burnout among EFL students, Derakhshan et al. (2022) conducted research on burnout among EFL students in Iran, Tian, Mohsin, and Ashraf (2023) examined burnout among EFL students in Pakistan, and Erakman and Mede (2018) investigated burnout among EFL students in Turkey.

Despite the growing educational concern and research conducted on academic burnout among EFL students in various countries in recent years, studies need to focus on the academic burnout experienced by Kurdish EFL students. However, research was undertaken on the burnout levels of Kurdish EFL teachers (Salih, 2018; Qadir and Ahmed, 2019; Mohammad, 2019).

In the fourth stage at Salahaddin University-Erbil, EFL learners are expected to feel quite stressed and demotivated because of overloaded work and academic demands. They are required to complete assignments before the deadline, attend classes, and take exams and quizzes. At the

same time, they have to write Reflective Reports (undergraduate research reports) throughout the year. In addition, they practice teaching English in schools for thirty or forty days before they graduate. They should pass all exams and submit the reflective report successfully; after that, they receive a Bachelor's Degree certificate in the English Language field. Thus, to fill this gap, this research aims to highlight and investigate EFL university students' burnout levels during their academic life based on three dimensions: "exhaustion, cynicism, and academic inefficacy". It also aims to determine and explain factors behind the EFL learners' status. Additionally, researchers explore the ways students have experienced and overcome burnout. Thus, the research questions are formed based on the current research aims:

- What percentage of students experience burnout during their academic life?
- What are the burnout levels among Kurdish EFL university students?
- What factors cause academic burnout in Kurdish EFL university students?
- How did Kurdish EFL students experience burnout and overcome it

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Definition of Burnout and Dimensions**

There is no specific or universally accepted theoretical definition of burnout. According to Freudenberger (1974), burnout occurs when an employee experiences burnout; he/she becomes ineffective in all aspects of their work. This happens about a year after a staff member starts working in an institution. Maslach and Jackson (1981:99) state that burnout is a condition of feeling emotionally exhausted and, at the same time, cynical. It happens regularly with individuals who have jobs that involve working with others. Considerably, the definition of burnout has changed due to the development of this survey from MBI-HSS to MBI-GS. Schaufeli and Taris (2005:258) state that burnout is a "crisis in one's relationship with work, not necessarily as a crisis in one's relationships with people at work." Finally, Schaufeli and Enzmann formulate a definition of burnout after reviewing various conflicting definitions of burnout and burnout symptoms:

Burnout is a persistent, negative, work-related state of mind in 'normal' individuals that is primarily characterised by exhaustion, which is accompanied by distress, a sense of reduced effectiveness, decreased motivation, and the development of dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours at work. This psychological condition develops gradually but may remain unnoticed for a long time by the individual involved. It





results from a misfit between intentions and reality in the job. Often, burnout is self-perpetuating because of inadequate coping strategies that are associated with the syndrome.

(Schaufeli and Enzmann, 1998: 36)

Later, Maslach (2003:2) describes burnout as a condition of "emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment" that can affect individuals who do "people-work." It is an emotional reaction to the long-term stress of interacting with others on a large scale, especially when they feel distressed or experience difficulties. Therefore, it is qualified as a kind of workplace stress. It is essential to highlight that Maslach (2003:2) distinguishes between burnout and other stress reactions; burnout is the stress that occurs due to social communication between helper and recipient despite sharing some negative consequences.

Recently, Maslach and Leiter (2022:3) describe burnout as "a crushing *exhaustion*, *cynicism* and *alienation*, and a sense of *ineffectiveness*." They explain that burnout arises when individuals frequently encounter combined crises on all three dimensions. They have become emotional, socially, and mentally from their work. It implies they are chronically overwhelmed and do not believe they can make a positive difference in their work. It indicates they experience stress intensely, work in a hostile environment, and evaluate themselves negatively. (Maslach and Leiter, 2022:3)

## 2.2 Academic Burnout and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) Survey

Breso, Salanova, and Schaufeli (2007:462) (Morgan et al., 2014:218) state that from a psychological standpoint, students' primary activities can be viewed as "work" even though they are not officially employed or hold jobs. Therefore, they participate in organized, coercive activities (e.g., class attendance, competition of assignments) that are intended for a particular objective (i.e., passing exams) (Breso, Salanova, and Schaufeli, 2007:462). Thus, students expect to experience burnout as being a phenomenon related to work. Feeling exhausted due to study demands, having a cynical and detached attitude toward studying, and feeling incompetent as a student are three essential characteristics of burnout among students ((Breso et al., 2007:462) (Morgan et al., 2014:218).

Moreover, Li, Zhang, and Jiang (2021) indicate that burnout can be considered a domain-specific state. For instance, it is easy to find students feeling emotionally exhausted to a high level, lacking confidence, distancing attitudes towards the English language, or having no identity.

Meanwhile, they demonstrate high energy levels, feel confident, and are strongly dedicated to math. Also, burnout (Li, Zhang, and Jiang, 2021) is probably a context-specific feature. For example, a student sometimes might be wholly engaged in a subject; however, he or she faces burnout syndrome before a vital examination. In addition, the context-specific factors of burnout are perhaps when students prepare for the exam for a long time, receive high demands, and feel unconfident in the subject (Li, Zhang, and Jiang, 2021). Meanwhile, according to Yang (2004), as cited in Koropets, Fedorova, and Kacane (2019), academic burnout is a psychological condition of students. They typically experience chronic negative emotions and low motivation related to learning, research interests, and/or their work.

Thus, university students encounter academic burnout. Academic burnout among college students is a three-dimensional scale utilized to measure students' burnout. It consists of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Schaufeli et al., 2002a; Schaufeli and Taris, 2005:260; Zhang, Gan, and Cham, 2007). Exhaustion is a symptom that students feel exhausted due to academic demands. Students who experience burnout also have a cynical and detached attitude towards schoolwork. Inefficacy is a syndrome of feeling of incompetence by students (ibid).

Approximately three decades ago, Schaufeli et al. (1996:208) formulated the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS), which assesses (evaluates) three dimensions of burnout: "exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy". It was developed to measure burnout among individuals in occupational groups such as customer service, maintenance, manufacturing, management, and most other professions (Schaufeli et al., 1996:208) (Mind Garden, no date). This survey mainly deals with work performance. Schaufeli et al. (2002a, 2002b) highlight recent developments in burnout research. Traditionally, burnout was associated with the human services field (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, 2001: 401). However, it has now been applied to all types of occupations and professional groups (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2002a; Schaufeli et al., 2002b; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007).

Schaufeli et al. (2002b) adapted the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS) at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Like MBI-GS, MBI-SS consists of three constructs: "exhaustion, cynicism, and personal efficacy". This survey was adapted to measure burnout among students at colleges and universities (Mind Garden, no date). The first



sub-scale, exhaustion, contains five items, the second one, cynicism, has four items, and the third sub-scale, personal efficacy, involves six items. Exhaustion refers to exhaustion due to study demands; cynicism means students have a cynical and detached attitude toward studying, and personal efficacy deals with feeling incompetent as a student (Schaufeli et al., 2002b:465).

Subsequently, an inefficacy sub-scale was recommended instead of efficacy (Bresó, Salanova, and Schaufeli, 2007; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007; Morgan, 2014). Schaufeli and Salanova (2007:192) claim that efficacy likely plays a significant role in engagement, the opposite of burnout. Therefore, research supports the notion that the inclusion of the inefficacy sub-scale to measure burnout rather than the traditional (reversed) efficacy would be a good strategy to accurately represent the "real" meaning of burnout (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2007:192). Items of the inefficacy scale are modified versions of the efficacy scale items (Bresó, Salanova, and Schaufeli, 2007; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007; Morgan, 2014).

Recently, an adapted measurement has been designed to measure EFL students' burnout level, which is called MBI-EFL. Li, Zhang, and Jiang (2021) reformulated the items of MBI-SS to fit well into the EFL learning context (the Maslach Burnout Inventory-EFL Student Survey). They confirm that this survey could apply to the context of EFL learning. Much research has been done worldwide on EFL teachers' and students' academic burnout. It is mentioned earlier that some research has been conducted on Kurdish EFL teachers' burnout. However, due to the absence of validation of the MBI-EFL survey in the context of Kurdish EFL university students, the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS) is required.

## **2.3 Factors Contributing to Academic Burnout**

### **2.3.1 External Factors**

#### **2.3.1.1 Academic Demands and Workload**

Kember (2004) confirms that students perceive workload depending on "content, difficulty, type of assessment, teacher-student and student-student relationships." This implies that if students are unfamiliar with the content of academic subjects, they identify it as a workload. Also, they regard them as workload if they face challenges in carrying out academic tasks. Kember (2004) revealed that students who employ a "surface approach" by attending exams and taking regular tests perceive it as a high workload. He also found out that good teacher-student interactions



play a key role in increasing "morale in the class" and "quality and quantity of work" (Kember, 2004). This indicates that students feel confident and less stressed about managing their academic workload. Moreover, Kember (2004) discusses that students who have good and strong relationships among themselves accept workload because they cooperate in understanding complex tasks.

Meanwhile, Lin and Yang (2021) point out that study pressure is a source of study load, "which refers to the feeling when the learning task is too heavy to exceed one's ability". According to Lu (2004) (cited in Lin and Huang, 2014), academic stress means students feel stressed because of academic work, exams, grades, reports, teacher's requirements, etc. According to Shih (2015) (also cited in Lin and Yang: 2021), academic pressure significantly causes stress among students in Asian countries. However, Shih (2015) revealed that students who adopted coping strategies like "high level of classroom structure and peer support" experienced lower levels of academic burnout. As cited in Lin and Yang (2021), Asberg et al. (2010) define burnout as a disorder related to stress, which probably stems from extended periods of "chronic stress without recovery."

Students under academic pressure during their learning process likely feel emotionally exhausted, depersonalized, and minimal improvement (Maslach et al., 2001; also cited in Lin and Yang:2021). The findings of Fariborz, Hadi, and Ali (2019), Jung et al. (2015), Fares et al. (2016), and Lin and Huang (2014), as discussed by Lin and Yang (2021), reveal that there is a positive correlation between academic stress and academic burnout. Students under high stress experience academic burnout greatly (ibid). However, Fariborz, Hadi, and Ali (2019) and Jung et al. (2015) indicate that students with high self-efficacy probably alleviate the effect of stress on academic burnout.

#### **2.3.1.2 Teaching Environment**

As Lin and Yang (2021) state, the Pilkauskaite-Valickiene et al. (2011) study reveals that students' perceptions of the teaching environment were correlated with academic burnout. For instance, students who could express their views and teachers who considered their views in an "open classroom discussion climate" had lower levels of academic burnout (ibid).

However, students' degrees of academic burnout differed depending on their perceptions of the classroom evaluation environment (Lin and Yang,



2021; Pilkauskaite-Valickiene, Zukauskienė, and Raiziene (2011). This indicates that the classroom discussion climate is considerably correlated with academic burnout (Lin and Yang, 2021). According to Lin and Yang (2021), Ihsan and Cetin (2014) found that students' perception of learning was negatively correlated with academic burnout. To be more precise, students prioritized the process of effort over performance (Lin and Yang, 2021). Meanwhile, students' insight into performance was positively related to the level of academic burnout. In other words, students perceived the result was more vital than the process of effort or learning (ibid).

The results of Shi's study (2015), as discussed by Lin and Yang (2021), show that when a teacher set a well-structured classroom including "clear expectations and direction, with the guiding framework of learning activities", students were more likely to employ positive coping mechanisms. They had lower levels of academic burnout, too. It is essential to mention that Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2016) discuss how teaching style is correlated to academic burnout.

### 2.3.1.3 Interpersonal Relationships

The findings of Cho et al. (2018), Karimi and Fallah (2021), Li et al. (2019), and Romano et al. (2020), as discussed by Lin and Yang (2021), show that numerous studies justified the fact that teacher support was negatively associated with academic burnout. Also, teachers providing emotional support to students could mitigate the risk of academic burnout among students (ibid). A meta-analysis by Kim (2018), cited in Lin and Yang (2021), displayed that students who perceived emotional support from their teachers were more likely to cope with burnout than their classmates.

Similarly, there is a negative correlation between peer relationships and academic burnout (Lin and Yang, 2021). Lin and Yang (2021) cite Shi's study (2015), which showed that students received peer support and encountered less academic burnout. When students received considerable peer support, they had a markedly decreased level of emotional exhaustion and were likely motivated to manage their learning difficulties effectively (ibid). Teenagers' likelihood of academic burnout increased because of encountering "uncivilized behaviours" in school (Bai et al., 2020, cited in Lin and Yang, 2021).

### 2.3.1.4 Family Factors

Studies have revealed that students experienced reduced learning burnout because they had an upbeat parenting style; meanwhile, implementing a

negative punishment approach could considerably enhance students' learning burnout (Aunola et al., 2000, cited in Lin and Yang, 2021). Lin and Yang (2021) indicate Shin et al. (2012) study that two parenting styles, namely over-protective and lack of caring, would hasten learning burnout among students. Also, Lin and Yang (2021) point out that Zhu et al. (2021) research that authoritative parenting and parental involvement "(knowledge and skills)" expected a positive impact on decreasing burnout levels and increasing academic engagement among teenagers.

Paternal and maternal support has been a key factor in reducing or alleviating student academic burnout (Lin and Yang, 2021). Parental support had a negative association with emotional exhaustion among students (Rae and Sonja (2014) discussed in Lin and Yang, 2021). Also, family support for learning is negatively related to school burnout (Virtanen et al., 2018, discussed in Lin and Yang, 2021). Students perceived that family support for learning significantly contributed to coping with the environment (Ye et al., 2021, cited in Lin and Yang, 2021). Additionally, parental support likely impedes or combats academic burnout by stimulating a student's internal perception (ibid). Moreover, parental care could also directly mitigate academic burnout (Ye et al., 2021, cited in Lin and Yang, 2021).

Socioeconomic status also contributes to academic burnout (Lin and Yang, 2021). Students from low-socioeconomic families typically had a bad attitude toward education; however, students from high-socioeconomic families were more enthusiastic and passionate about their studies (Ackerman et al., 2003; Evans and Kim, 2007; and Randolph et al., 2006 discussed in Lin and Yang, 2021). Additionally, Mouza (2015) discovered that students from low-income families faced higher levels of stress. However, an exceptional sample of a study by Virtanen (2018) (cited in Lin and Yang, 2021) showed socioeconomic status was not correlated with academic burnout in Finland because students from varied socioeconomic families received equal educational opportunities.

### **2.3.1.5 Cultural Pressures**

AL-Muslimawi and Hamid (2019) found that other factors considerably contribute to EFL students' academic performance, such as family problems, work and financial problems, and social and other problems. Zolkapli et al. (2024:5) point out Kurnia and Supriatiningsih's (2023) claim, stating that three factors can contribute to students' burnout such as "family environment, school environment, and social environment." If a supportive environment is not provided in students' lives, they will be more likely to feel disinterested in the learning process (Wahyuni (2018),



cited in Zolkapli et al., 2024). As a result, feelings of burnout prevent students from noticing any progress in their learning (ibid).

### 2.3.1.6 External Factors Affecting Working Students

Koropets, Fedorova, and Kacane (2019:8231) found that students with long-term work experience are more worried about "combining work and studies, the workload in their job, their academic performance and relationships with teachers." However, they are least worried about "the relationships with colleagues and fellow students, the academic workload and the study schedule." (ibid).

### 2.3.2 Internal Factors

#### 2.3.2.1 Personality:

Generally, people with high burnout levels were described as being more introverted, sensitive, empathetic, humanistic, and anxious ( Naisberg-Fennig (1991) cited in Lin and Yang, 2021). Lin and Yang (2021) indicate that many researchers have explored the correlation between personality and burnout. For instance, Maslach and Jackson (1981) (cited in Lin and Yang, 2021) emphasized the significance of personality on burnout. Lin and Yang (2021: 1817) discuss the results of a study conducted by Jacobs and Dodd (2003), reporting that the best indicator of burnout among university students was personality, and they highlighted that "neuroticism has the strongest influence on burn-out; negative temperament related to neuroticism reflects feelings of prolonged stress and nervousness, and people experience negative emotions to cause emotional exhaustion."

#### 2.3.2.2 Self-esteem

As a predictor of burnout, the second personal factor is self-esteem (Finck et al. (2018) cited in Lin and Yang, 2021). McClure et al. (2010) cited in Lin and Yang (2021). Self-esteem is a general assessment of a person's self-worth and confidence ( McClure et al. (2010) cited in Lin and Yang, 2021). Students with lower self-esteem had a higher likelihood of mental and physical health problems, had more negative emotions, and had poor performance academically (ibid).

The findings of Lee et al. (2010), as discussed by Lin and Yang (2021), indicate that students with negative-oriented thinking about themselves experienced higher academic burnout. Lin and Yang (2021) present the findings of a cross-sectional study by Dahlin et al. (2007), reporting a strong relationship between performance-based self-esteem and the two



dimensions of burnout: exhaustion and disengagement. Students with low self-esteem were more likely to feel exhausted and develop burnout (ibid). According to Hallsten and Torgen (2005), as cited in Dahlin, Joneborg, and Runeson (2007:43), performance-based self-esteem is "conceptualized as a contingent self-esteem, based on the sense that you have to accomplish to be valued."

### 2.3.2.3 Attribution Style:

The third personal factor of burnout is attribution (Lin and Yang, 2021). Lee et al. (2018:286) report the definition of attributional style by Peterson et al. (1982); it refers to "patterns of cognition explaining how individuals appraise and react to events deemed positive or negative, and the causes they identify for these events." Lin and Yang (2021) point out that many studies have found a correlation between attribution and burnout. Thus, in the studies of Lee et al. (2018), McCormick & Barnett (2011), and Moore (2000) (cited in Lin and Yang, 2021:1818), three dimensions of the attributional style were evaluated to assess the association between attributions and academic burnout namely "locus of control, stability, and controllability."

It is worth mentioning that despite these advancements, only the first dimension, locus of control, has been considered in earlier studies on the association between attribution and academic burnout (Lin and Yang, 2021). Schmitz et al. (2000), as cited in Lin and Yang (2021:1818), define Locus of control as "the level to which an individual perceives that he was able to control over a given event (internal), or whether he perceived it based on the outside of his control (external)." From the results of studies on academic burnout among students, it has been found that locus of control is possibly a factor in academic burnout (Lin and Yang, 2021).

### 2.3.2.4 Students' English Language Skills and Academic Burnout

GKonou et al. (2017: 156, New Insights into Language Anxiety book) highlight that considerable research implicitly assumes that EFL learners with a lower level of language competence experience anxiety about a second language. Meanwhile, when students feel anxious at a high level, they achieve lower grades than their less anxious peers (Horwitz, 2001: 115). Therefore, it implies that EFL students with poor English language experience burnout. Also, Ghafar and Amin (2022) have found that insufficient education in schools significantly impacts the low English language proficiency of Kurdish EFL students at university.





Studies have revealed a significant, positive relationship between English language proficiency and academic performance and achievement (Feast, 2002; Maleki and Zangani, 2007; Sahragard et al., 2011; Hasan and Akhand, 2014; Devi, 2023). The findings of Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2016) study, as cited in Zolkapli et al. (2024), have revealed that there was a positive correlation between demotivation and burnout; students with higher degrees of demotivation encountered greater degrees of burnout. Two primary sources of students' burnout are the "lack of interest" in learning the English language and the lack of interest in "class materials." (Zolkapli et al., 2024:3). Thus, it was revealed that burnout negatively impacts students' language achievement (Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh, 2016). Zolkapli et al. (2024:3) discuss the study results of Xu (2017), reporting that three factors were identified, namely "having limited knowledge about their field of study, lack of practice, and lack of support from their seniors."

#### **2.3.2.5 "Rumination" as an Intermediate Factor of Academic Burnout**

Zuo et al. (2024) highlight a study by (Hao et al., 2022), stating that academic burnout is not a direct result of academic stress. Rather, individuals encounter academic burnout only when they perceive stress negatively or surpasses their ability to cope, leading to a damaging impact on their mental and physical well-being (Chang et al., 2017; McEown et al., 2023), cited in (Zuo et al., 2024). Therefore, Zuo et al. (2024) suggest that rumination, a negative cognitive pattern, tends to mediate between academic stress and academic burnout. Nolen-Hoeksema et al. (2008) (cited in Zuo et al., 2024:2) define rumination as "a negative thinking pattern, often involves repetitively and passively focusing on the causes and consequences of negative states, rather than actively addressing and resolving problems to alleviate those negative states." Zuo et al. (2024) found that rumination considerably mediates the correlation between English learning stress and academic burnout among university students. Zuo et al. (2024) revealed a positive association between English learning stress and academic burnout. In addition, they support the idea (Hurst et al., 2013, cited in Zuo et al., 2024) that university students experience not only academic burnout during their academic journey but also more causes of stress such as complicated interpersonal relationships, changes in life habits and extensive extracurricular activities. The significance of English language learning for university students is obvious and unquestionable (Zuo et al., 2024). However, if students encounter

excessive English learning stress, they perceive their coursework and teachers negatively, query the purpose and importance of learning English, and they will be demotivated to study. (Liu, 2015, cited in Zuo et al., 2024). Hence, Zuo et al. (2024:5) suggest that it is vital for university educators to "avoid overwhelming students with excessive academic pressure by appropriately assigning English learning tasks, fostering students' internal motivation for English learning, and helping them establish realistic learning goals."

### **2.3.2.6 Emotional and Psychological Factors**

It has been found that working students (Koropets, Fedorova, and Kacane, 2019) encounter specific emotions and arouse anxiety and depression symptoms. Also, students who have integrated long-term work and study also encounter post-traumatic circumstances, anxiety, and depression symptoms. Additionally, they mainly suffer from symptoms of a decrease in professional responsibilities and feelings of self-dissatisfaction. Koropets, Fedorova, and Kacane (2019:8230) discuss that working students face some difficulties and their effects, revealing that "students do not cope with academic and professional workload and try to ease the burden by all available means. However, this inevitably affects the quality of work and studies, and, as a result, leads to self-dissatisfaction."

### **2.4 Mechanisms for Overcoming Academic Burnout**

Different mechanisms have been discussed by researchers for coping with burnout among students. For example, a study by Neumann et al. (1990), as cited in Koropets, Fedorova, and Kacane (2019), confirms that social support is vital in preventing burnout among university students. Social support is considered a mechanism that helps people to manage their stress. For instance, social support helps students alleviate stressful events' impact and promotes positive emotions. It also plays a vital role in preserving students' health and protecting them from the negative impact of stressful factors when they receive social support from family, friends, and teachers (ibid). Meanwhile, Krypel and Henderson-King (2010) cite Miczo et al. (2006) study and indicate that parental support, considered a coping strategy, is adopted to reduce perceived stress among undergraduate students.

Koropets, Fedorova, and Kacane (2019) emphasize that it has been proved that high emotional intelligence is correlated with an improved process of adapting or academic success. Emotional intelligence is defined as the capability of effective management of feelings and





emotions and their use to control behaviour (Cazan and Nastasa (2015), cited in Koropets, Fedorova, and Kacane (2019). Students with high levels of emotional intelligence experience lower levels of anxiety, stress, burnout, and a higher level of life satisfaction. It has also been proved that emotional intelligence "affects the student's ability to successfully cope with the demands and pressures of the learning environment" (Cazan and Nastasa (2015), cited in Koropets, Fedorova, and Kacane, 2019:8229).

Lau et al. (2021) explain the two coping mechanisms Krypel and Henderson-King (2010) indicated. The first type is a problem-focused coping strategy that directly identifies the sources of stress. It primarily deals with ways to handle the issue and reduce stress levels. For instance, individuals who adopt this approach probably try to reduce distractions that keep them from focusing on the stressor or coming up with a particular solution to handle the problem (Krypel and Henderson-King, 2010). Also, a study by Carver et al. (1989) (cited in Krypel and Henderson-King, 2010) revealed that university students believed they could alter stressful situations. As a result, they were more likely to engage in problem-focused coping mechanisms such as active coping and planning.

Shih's experiment (cited in Lau et al., 2021:4) discovered that university students who employ problem-focused coping strategies actively control their stress and perceive the challenges they face as "opportunities for self-development and self-growth." Krypel and Henderson-King (2010) claim that students who adopt these coping strategies tend to be more goal-oriented commonly; as a result, they are more likely to perceive education concerning their future careers.

In contrast, an emotion-focused coping strategy consists of effective methods like "seeking support from significant others, self-soothing, venting or ranting and even attempting to escape from stressful situations to relieve their stress." (Lau et al., 2021:4). Krypel and Henderson-King (2010) found that students who employ venting, less adaptive coping strategy, tend to have more negative perspectives on education, compared to those students who do not adopt venting. Additionally, De La Fuente et al. (2015) found that (cited in Lau et al., 2021:4) undergraduates who adopted emotion-focused coping strategies were found to correlate with anxiety issues and result in experiencing academic burnout. Furthermore, Krypel and Henderson-King (2010) state that an emotion-focused coping strategy requires social support for instrumental and emotional purposes and venting emotions. Undergraduates who use this strategy tend to view education as an opportunity to interact socially.

In addition, coping can be determined by active coping or disengagement coping (avoidant) (Krypel and Henderson-King, 2010, cited in Lau et al., 2021:4-5 ). Active coping is often implemented with a problem-focused coping strategy; individuals who employ this strategy tend to be aware of the stressor and try to diminish the negative results, similar to a problem-solving coping strategy (ibid). In contrast, Krypel and Henderson-King (2010), as cited in (Lau et al., 2021:4-5 ), claim that individuals who use a disengagement coping strategy frequently deny or ignore problems and often participate in activities that help them deny the issue, such as drinking, sleeping and withdrawing themselves from other people.

Some university students are likely to employ disengagement strategies when they experience a problem out of control. For example, they experience academic burnout because they probably choose to fail their academic assessment by spending less time on them and falling into learned helplessness, which results in academic burnout. (Gustems-Carnicer et al., 2019, cited in Lau et al., 2021:5). However, students who employ active coping strategies are more driven to adopt a direct approach to handling their stress. As a result, they will experience less academic burnout during their academic journey. Active coping strategies suggest a constructive reinterpretation of stressful events. It is considered a fundamental skill to be possessed by undergraduates (Vizoso et al., 2019, cited in Lau et al., 2021:5).

### **3. Methods**

#### **a.Participants**

Fourth-year students (Morning and Evening Classes) at a college in Salahaddin University-Erbil participated in this research. The Maslach Burnout Inventory Student Survey (MBI-SS) was sent to all students of both classes as an electronic copy, and the hard copy was distributed to them. Ninety-seven of the students in both classes responded to the survey. The number of male students was 33%, and the number of female students was 67%, whose ages varied from 18 to 54. The morning class participants comprised 48.5% of Kurdish EFL learners studying at the college. However, the evening class students, including 51.5% of Kurdish EFL learners, studied in the same college.

Ten students from both classes participated in structured and semi-structured interviews to obtain detailed, factual information concerning factors behind students' academic burnout and how students experienced burnout and avoid it.





### **b.Measures**

MBI-SS was considered for this research because MBI-EFL has yet to be validated in the context of EFL Kurdish. Therefore, the Maslach Burnout Inventory Student Survey (MBI-SS), designed by Schaufeli and Salanova in 2007, was considered more appropriate for this current study because of its accepted validity and reliability in measuring burnout among university students. Therefore, researchers decided to utilize MBI-SS to obtain the quantitative data for this research.

Some research participants required translation of the original MBI-SS; consequently, the researchers translated it into Kurdish as they are experienced and specialised in TESOL and Translation Studies. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was tabulated. The result showed that the overall Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of the questionnaire is high (0.892), indicating a high degree of internal consistency in overall questions and, therefore, presenting a considerably reliable instrument.

A message/introduction was written and attached alongside the survey to inform the research participants clearly regarding the purpose and scope of the study. Also, the message reassured students of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Moreover, it was highlighted that the participants' contribution was vital so that future students could gain clearer perceptions of burnout.

Structured and semi-structured interviews were undertaken to gain qualitative data. According to Datko (2015:153), the semi-structured interview is defined as "a data collection method applicable in qualitatively-oriented language pedagogy research [...] the researcher has more control over the content; however, the informants are not limited in response." While the structured interview is not like a questionnaire (Gillham (2005), as cited in Elhami and Khoshnevisan, 2022). The interview questions are planned; they are pre-structured before the interview. They are written based on the objectives of the study. They are also asked during the interview (ibid).

Therefore, researchers communicated with university instructors regarding students' burnout syndrome. They were asked to select students for interviews based on teachers' experience and knowledge of teaching fourth-year students. The teachers in both classes selected some students who had already felt burnout syndrome and noticed it among them. After that, the researchers contacted the students. They were informed about the value of their participation in the research interview. Also, the researchers confirmed that providing thoughtful and honest responses to ensure accuracy and reliability in the research findings was necessary. Additionally, the confidentiality of responses was assured.



At the same time, researchers reassured to preserve the anonymity of all the research participants. Kang and Hwang (2023:6) state that confidentiality and anonymity are "research ethical principles that help in providing informed consent to participants assuring subjects of the privacy of their personal data." They also emphasise the significance of confidentiality and anonymity, which "positively impact in-depth research data collection as they enhance the establishment of trust and rapport between participants and researchers. When this aspect is developed, participants tend to engage more freely in studies generating more in-depth data." (ibid). Therefore, researchers determined to use MS for Morning students and ES for Evening Students throughout the research interview analysis.

Most importantly, participation in this study was voluntary, and even students were free to choose how they preferred to be interviewed: via phone, face-to-face, or non-verbal. They already had some structured interview questions before the interview.

The 'Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey/ MBISS' instrument consists of 15 statements assessing three sub-scales. The scale evaluates the three constructs using "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," and "strongly agree", which corresponds to a typical 1-5 Likert scale. The following are sample statements for the 'exhaustion' dimension: 1. I feel emotionally drained by my studies, and 2. I feel used up at the end of a day at the university. The examples of the 'cynicism' dimension are as follows: 1. I have become less interested in my studies since my enrolment at the university, and 2. I have become less enthusiastic about my studies. Examples of the 'academic inefficacy' dimension include: 1. I can't solve the problems that arise in my studies, and 2. I believe that I don't make an effective contribution to the classes.

### **c.Procedure**

The survey was sent to all Kurdish EFL fourth-year students between October 2023 and June 2024 at a college in Salahaddin University-Erbil to collect the quantitative data. More than half of the students responded to the survey in both Morning and Evening classes. The students were asked to refrain from writing their names. Interviews were conducted with some students to obtain qualitative data. The students were free the time and date to be interviewed in that academic year. They had already informed the researchers that they could not be interviewed during or before exams as they were so busy and stressed. Thus, some of them were interviewed after final exams.



## 4. Analysis and Discussion

### 4.1 Results of Survey

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics regarding student burnout among Kurdish EFL learners in morning and evening classes. The three dimensions of the Maslach Burnout Inventory - Student Survey (MBI-SS) are exhaustion, cynicism, and academic inefficacy. Also, the burnout level in each class is provided.

**Table 1**

<i>Descriptive of Student Burnout across Morning and Evening</i>				
	Please state your English Department	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Burnout</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>3.4508</b>	<b>.68996</b>
	<b>Evening</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>3.6288</b>	<b>.71522</b>
<b>Academic Inefficacy</b>	Morning	47	3.8146	.81027
	Evening	50	3.7971	.83902
<b>Cynicism</b>	Morning	47	3.4521	.82528
	Evening	50	3.5900	.92135
<b>Exhaustion</b>	Morning	47	2.9404	.85559
	Evening	50	3.4240	.84818

As shown in Table 1, exhaustion among students in morning and evening classes shows a more significant difference. Morning students demonstrate a mean score of 2.94 (SD = 0.85), whereas evening students report a higher mean score of 3.42 (SD = 0.84). These scores suggest that students in evening classes experience elevated levels of exhaustion compared to their morning counterparts.

Concerning cynicism, evening students demonstrate a mean score of 3.59 (SD = 0.92), which is marginally higher than the mean score of morning students, who report a score of 3.45 (SD = 0.82). This finding implies that evening students, as compared to their morning peers, record a greater degree of detachment and disengagement.

Regarding academic inefficacy, morning students achieve a mean of 3.81 (SD = 0.81), while evening students obtain a closely comparable mean score of 3.79 (SD = 0.83). This slight variation in the scores reveals that students in both class sessions experience similar levels of academic inefficacy.

Regarding the burnout level, it is evident that students in the morning class encounter a moderate level of burnout (Mean: 3.4508). However, for students in the evening class, the Mean is 3.6288, which implies that they experience a slightly higher level of burnout than the morning class. Meanwhile, the standard deviation in the morning class is 0.68996, but in the evening class is 0.71522, which means the variability in burnout levels in both classes is similar.

Table 2 displays the findings of an independent samples t-test to assess variations in student burnout in morning and evening classes, highlighting three constructs: exhaustion, cynicism, and academic inefficacy.

**Table 2**

<b>Independent Samples Test of Student Burnout Across Morning and Evening</b>					
	<b>t-test for Equality of Means</b>			Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>		
<b>Burnout</b>	-1.246	95	.216	-.17795	.14285
<b>Academic Inefficacy</b>	0.104	95	0.917	0.12213	1.17360
<b>Cynicism</b>	-0.775	95	0.441	.01745	.16766
<b>Exhaustion</b>	<b>-2.794</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>0.006**</b>	-.13787	.17800

As the table shows, the t-value for academic inefficacy is 0.104, accompanied by a p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.917, indicating negligible differences between the means of the morning and evening learners. The statistical significance of the difference in academic inefficacy between the two groups seems to be non-existent, as evidenced by the high p-value. To put it differently, the perceived levels of academic inefficacy are similar among morning and evening students.

The results of the t-test also reveal the mean difference for cynicism of -0.775 between the two groups of students, with a t-value of 0.441 and a p-value of 0.441. The p-value suggests that this difference is not statistically significant despite the mean difference suggesting that evening students exhibit a slightly higher cynicism. Consequently, the levels of cynicism between morning and evening students are considerably similar.

There is an obvious distinction in the exhaustion scores. The mean difference for exhaustion is -2.794, accompanied by a t-value of 0.006 and a p-value of 0.006. The results demonstrate a significant disparity in the levels of exhaustion among students in both classes, as the p-value is



less than 0.01. Specifically, evening students report noticeably higher exhaustion levels than their morning peers.

Thus, the findings show that students in both classes have experienced burnout at university. Notably, the different levels of burnout between them are relatively similar. Therefore, the findings support the study by Schaufeli and Salanova (2007) and other studies by researchers discussed in the literature regarding MBI-SS, which consists of three dimensions: 'exhaustion' 'cynicism' and 'academic inefficacy.'

#### 4.2 Analysis and Discussion of Interviews

##### 1. Students' Experiences (Question 1)

Kurdish EFL university students in both morning and evening classes reflected on their experiences, stating that they initially struggled with the English language because they were novices in the English language or it is their target language. For instance:

"As for my experience, I was struggling with English once I came to the college." (MS1) (Appendix 3.1)

"My experience in this department I first came to this department was very difficult for me [...] I wasn't good in English compared to other students' English language skills. Their English was very good, but I wasn't like that." (MS2) (Appendix 3.2)

"In the first year because I learned English at university I was a beginner in English and the curriculum was all in English." (MS3) (Appendix 3.3)

". My first and second years at university were very bad for me because my English was very poor." (MS4) (Appendix 3.4)

"They gave students seminars so they would not be afraid or ashamed to learn from each other. But I was very, very bad in English." (ES2) (Appendix 3.7)

"As a student from a university which English was the first language to use , I was struggling since my school was public and in village [...] So when I was enrolled I could speak a word in English so that it would make me feel uncomfortable in speaking. (ES5) (Appendix 3.10)

Therefore, the lack of proficiency in the English language hurts students' emotional health. For example:

"So, I felt upset about that. It was very unpleasant for me. The first time the teacher came in, I didn't understand what she/he meant. I mean, I didn't understand what he/she wanted. Out of 10 words, I understood one. Not understanding was hard for me." (MS2) (Appendix 3.2)

"We had to speak English. It was difficult for me. I was very anxious and afraid. If the teacher asked me a question, I didn't know what to do in front of the other students. It was like feeling embarrassed in front of them. It was an unpleasant experience." (MS3) (Appendix 3.3)

Similarly, ES2 had an encounter in his initial stage. Because English was a target language, he had to make plans for studying, read stories, and listen to music to enhance his language skills. As a result, he felt very stressed.

Being a novice in the English language in the first year made students not only feel upset, anxious, afraid and embarrassed but also stressed due to the teacher's request. For instance, it became clear from an interview with MS3 (Appendix 1) that she was a novice in English during her initial stage at university, and the curriculum was entirely conducted in English. At the same time, teachers prohibited using the Kurdish language or any other language except English inside the classroom. They insisted that students had to communicate solely in English. Therefore, these experiences were significant challenges for her.

The current study aimed to investigate the causes of academic burnout among Kurdish EFL university students. The finding of this interview question suggests that students' limited English language proficiency caused most students to have a challenging experience during their first year at university. At the same time, the lack of English language proficiency at the university level affected very few students' emotional well-being. Thus, this can be considered a potential contributor to burnout. This supports and adds to the findings of GKonou et al. (2017), who discovered that students with low English language levels feel anxious about the target language. Also, as mentioned in the literature review (Horwitz, 2001: 115), feeling nervous and stressed are other causes of burnout, and this condition affects students' health (Lin & Huang (2014:77).

However, whether all students encountered academic burnout is still not entirely evident. The other factors contributing to burnout among undergraduates will be discovered in the following interview questions.





## **2.Students' Challenges (question 2)**

Regarding students' challenges at university and fulfilling academic requirements, students in both classes met different challenges in different stages of their academic studies.

One of the notable examples of students' challenges was delivering seminars. A limited group of students had encountered presenting seminars in English because of their poor English language skills. For instance:

"there were challenges regarding seminars and unexpected changes that happened; throughout time everything became more complicated." (MS1) (Appendix 3.1)

"However, it was difficult for me to present seminars in the second stage. Because I didn't know about it, especially since it was one of the mistakes that we didn't have any seminars in schools and the teachers didn't teach us in schools. When we came to college, we immediately had seminars. There was an Academic Skills module; we had to give seminars and debate. It was very difficult for me." (MS4) (Appendix 3.4)

Some students had other challenges, like taking exams and quizzes. It was considered an academic pressure for them alongside their other academic responsibilities. For example, for ES1, it was very difficult for him to manage all the academic tasks and exams in the college semester system. MS3 also emphasized some obstacles during her academic studies, such as having mid-term exams and quizzes. However, MS2 had challenges in the third stage, but she faced fewer difficulties in the first semester of the fourth stage because she had fewer exams and quizzes.

Another difficulty faced by EFL students was writing and completing assignments on time. This is evident in the case of MS3, who had difficulty writing a final report and carrying out other things concurrently. She was not provided extra time to submit her assignments. Also, MS4 highlighted that her academic life, especially the first and second stages, was demanding; she was a novice in English and had many assignments. Additionally, ES4 had to spend more time writing a research report in the fourth year. Also, in the third year, she needed sufficient time to complete her assignments as she sometimes had two assignments in a day. Furthermore, ES5 experienced considerable stress in writing the research report because his daughter got sick, and he had to dedicate more time to her. Consequently, he felt anxious about not succeeding in the first attempt at the final exams.

Carrying out and completing academic tasks was another challenge for Kurdish EFL university students. MS3 did not have enough time to fulfil her academic tasks; consequently, she could not attain very good grades.

Also, MS5 believed the fourth stage was difficult because of having many academic tasks reporting "... is a great burden for the student because these many tasks require a lot of time to complete and take a lot of time because he has to work constantly...". Consequently, he believes that this significant burden caused obtaining bad exam results.

Some other students had difficulty balancing academic life with family responsibilities. For instance:

"since I became a mother, things became more difficult for me, and I was forced to be unprepared for some of the classes [...]. However, in the second semester, I felt a lot of stress because there were more modules" (MS2) (Appendix 3.2)

"Balancing student life and academic expectations was hard, especially with the added responsibility of caring for my family, which made managing time and focus even more challenging." (ES3) (Appendix 3.8)

"in the second term things went easier but life got harder since my daughter was sick and I was supposed to care about them more, also research paper was a big stress that I was thinking if I don't pass the first round I might fail in the second round too." (ES5) (Appendix 3.10)

Meanwhile, ES1's other challenge was that he already had a job alongside his education; therefore, balancing his academic commitments with his career during that period was difficult. Moreover, the substantial demands from his teachers put pressure on him to learn, requiring significant effort and energy. Furthermore, he mentioned some difficulties, like age differences between the students, as he was older than his classmates. He also claimed that teachers did not account for students' multiple English language levels and prior educational backgrounds in designing assignments and assessments.

One of the external factors of academic burnout, as discussed in the literature review, is academic demands (or workload). This research interview discovered that EFL students had an academic workload. They perceived presenting seminars and taking exams as well as quizzes as challenges, had difficulty in writing and completing assignments on time, had difficulties completing academic tasks, and struggled to balance academic life with family responsibilities, teachers' demands, and so on. These results reflect those of Kember (2004), who found that students identify academic tasks as workload if they cannot fulfil them. Also, if students adopt a "surface approach", they consider exams and tests a high workload. Moreover, the findings support what Lin and Yang (2021) discovered: students perceive study pressure as a cause of workload. Furthermore, this study's findings support evidence from previous



research (Lu, 2004) that when students feel stressed because of academic work, exams, grades, reports, teacher's requirements, etc., it implies they have academic stress.

A few of the students highlighted economic concerns. For example, ES1 stated that the four years of obtaining a bachelor's degree in English were particularly challenging. This was primarily due to the prevailing economic difficulties faced by the local population, which affected his concentration on studying and achievements. Besides, he highlighted that teachers were unpaid because of the financial crisis, which made them feel exhausted and affected their teaching. Also, ES2's academic life was difficult because of the instability of the economic situation in Iraq. At the same time, he had a career besides his studies. Therefore, it was challenging for him to study in this department. Thus, the findings suggest that students experienced stress due to the financial and economic crisis in the country. It supports the findings of Mouza (2015), who revealed that students from low-income backgrounds encounter higher levels of stress.

However, another finding that stands out from the results reported earlier is that some students have experienced difficulties different from each other. A possible explanation might be related to students' personal life or university environment. For instance, MS2 had difficulty comprehending one module due to the teacher's complex teaching style. This finding supports Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh. (2016) study that teaching style is related to academic burnout.

The findings demonstrate that students in both classes have encountered different challenges during their academic studies. The reasons or factors behind those challenges are different among the students. However, it is still not evident whether students have experienced academic burnout, although they have been stressed by the factors discussed earlier. In the following part, undergraduates were asked about their experiences with academic burnout.

### **3.Students' Academic Burnout and Its Symptoms (questions 3 and 4)**

Another interview question was used regarding whether EFL Kurdish university students encountered during their academic studies. They were asked to share and explain their experiences and indicate the symptoms of burnout (questions 3 and 4).



### **Morning Students (MS):**

In the students' response (MS1) to question (3) regarding their experience of burnout, the main factor emphasised is the pressure from exams and the teaching methods of the university teachers. The student points out that despite having the opportunity to simplify things, teachers occasionally opted for more difficult teaching methods, which led to burnout. Regarding the symptoms of experiencing burnout, MS1 describes them in detail (Appendix 3.1):

I always feel tired, have trouble sleeping, get sick often, and eat differently. Emotionally, I feel overwhelmed, detached, unmotivated, and negative. Mentally, it can be hard to concentrate, remember things, and get work done. I also avoid responsibilities, procrastinate, and rely on food or alcohol.

Meanwhile (MS2) highlights that because her English language level was poor, she was fatigued. Then, she was feeling bored and pessimistic about her choice of study. She notes that she was comparing the English program with other departments in the college, asking herself about the reason behind choosing this academic field. As a result, these feelings sometimes made her feel regretful. She emphasized that studying in the English department was difficult, especially in her first year. Therefore, these bad feelings and her struggles with the English language made her feel burnout. MS2 identified some main symptoms of burnout, such as losing interest in studying at the English department, persistent fear of failure, feeling very pessimistic, and memorizing information without understanding.

MS3 shared her experience of burnout; she emphasized that some assignments were difficult for her because she was less qualified in English language skills. This was because the difficult assignments required considerable time and effort. For example, to complete tasks such as writing reports and delivering academic presentations, she had to read sources, understand and collect data, and prepare herself for public speaking. Moreover, she prepared well to avoid mistakes in front of the teacher and her classmates. Therefore, these demanding tasks increased pressure and contributed to mental exhaustion. MS3 expressed that symptoms of burnout were having intense headaches and dizziness, being extremely tired, inability to focus and feeling unwell for some periods, feeling anxious and stressed, and having oversleeping or sleep disturbances.





Similarly, MS4 highlighted that she had difficulties completing assignments requiring strong English language skills because she had inadequate language skills. Therefore, because of her experience of stress, she believed that the subjects and assignments could have been designed and aligned with the student's language proficiency in the first and second stages. MS4 pointed out that the symptoms were feeling stressed because of the pressure of memorizing a considerable amount of information, feeling bored, tired, heartbroken, overwhelmed, and needing to escape from the difficult situation at university.

Meanwhile, MS5 stressed that he felt exhausted in all stages, particularly in the second stage. This was because he failed most of the modules in both semesters. Consequently, he put a lot of effort into completing that stage successfully. MS5 indicated that the physical symptoms were having "headaches," and the emotional symptoms were "anxiety, boredom, dislike of things you like, such as watching movies and playing games, and many other symptoms."

#### **Evening Students (ES):**

Concerning the students' responses (ES) to question (3), ES5 underlined that it intensified his stress of returning to university after a long period because of personal circumstances. As a result, the student felt disconnected and "backward," which increased his stress. In addition, he points out life pressures such as family responsibilities and household duties, and balancing these with studying made him mentally exhausted. ES5 identified the symptoms of burnout as follows: "Insomnia (sleeplessness), which means one cannot sleep well due to stress from studying."

ES1 emphasized that he felt more stressed in the second stage than in the first one because he received academic pressure from teachers. At the same time, he had a job in the morning. These were the main sources of stress for him. ES1 pointed out the symptoms were thinking about dropping out from university, feeling anxious and stressed due to the pressure of having three jobs, fear of failure, feeling regret about academic performance, and comparing myself to my classmates regarding age.

However, ES2 stressed that the main sources of stress stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic because he could not attend classes consistently. Hence, he had to make an effort to complete the modules successfully. Also, he was very stressed in the third stage because he had assignments such as acting as a teacher (teaching practice) in the microteaching



module. Following that year, he had an internship in schools when he felt stressed, too. He explained that the symptoms were feeling exhausted after returning from work, feeling mentally fatigued, avoiding participation in class discussions, and feeling completely frustrated.

ES3 stressed that she experienced burnout because of academic demands during her studies at university. That feeling of stress stemmed from the pressure to meet deadlines and manage coursework, which led to feeling exhausted and overwhelmed. ES3 highlighted that some symptoms of burnout were "chronic fatigue, decreased motivation, difficulty concentrating, and feelings of irritability or detachment from my studies."

Another finding that differs from the results reported earlier is that ES4 confirmed that she did not exhibit any symptoms of burnout.

The results of these two interview questions show that students in both classes, except ES4, have experienced burnout during their academic journey due to language barriers or unproficiency in the English language, academic pressure, personal circumstances, being unsuccessful in some modules, pressure from exams, and ineffective teaching methods of university teachers. As a result, these factors affected their emotional and physical well-being and academic performance. The findings support evidence from previous observations and investigations (Schaufeli et al., 2002a; Schaufeli and Taris, 2005:260; Zhang, Gan, and Cham, 2007; Yang, 2004). Also, the findings support the studies of Fariborz et al. (2019), Jung et al. (2015), Fares et al. (2016), and Lin and Huang (2014), as discussed by Lin and Yang (2021), discover that there is a positive relationship between academic stress and academic burnout. Also, the findings support the studies discussed in the literature review regarding internal factors.

#### **4.Students' Experiences of Feeling Overwhelmed (question 6)**

Researchers asked research participants (students) a question describing their experiences of feeling overwhelmed or tired due to external workload factors. The purpose was to obtain specific details of these feelings.

Some students in both classes described their feelings about their academic journey, especially in the fourth stage at university. For instance, MS1 was overwhelmed by overlapping academic tasks during his fourth stage (first semester) studies. He reported that he was physically and emotionally exhausted by mentioning "really tough" and "not easy." Also, MS2 noted that she felt overwhelmed and tired with an increased number of modules in the second semester of the fourth stage.



However, she was less stressed because she had fewer quizzes and exams. Additionally, she mentioned that a teacher's instruction method was complex and hard to understand, stating, "One of the teachers would explain the lessons in a way that honestly no student could understand." Meanwhile, her personal life intensified the stress of academic life as she was a mother. She had difficulty balancing her motherhood and educational tasks.

Moreover, MS3 described her feelings about her academic life. She expressed that she was overwhelmed and tired by the academic pressure, especially during her internship at school. She had to prepare and write lesson plans in detail by hand. This was more demanding compared to her tasks in previous years, as she was used to writing simple lesson plans. At the same time, she had to teach in schools and write reflective reports at university. She also stated that she had to attend an online "teaching for special needs" course. Moreover, she found the teaching process during the internship very stressful as she had no prior experience. Hence, all of these factors contributed to heightened her exhaustion. Meanwhile, MS4 reflected on her academic tasks, noting that she had two different assignments at the fourth stage, and the time difference allowed each task to be completed, which made her feel confused and exhausted. The first assignment was recording a video and preparing a PowerPoint presentation for two months. She found it easy and completed it successfully. At the same time, she had another difficult task, which was reading a 300-page long book, which was very difficult for her level, and recording a video for 15 days. She found this task stressful and challenging.

Furthermore, ES2 emphasised that the fourth stage was the most challenging phase of his studies at college. He had multiple tasks like writing a reflective report, meeting his teacher to discuss this assignment, undergoing an internship in a public school, and preparing and delivering seminars. All of this pressure made him feel exhausted and overwhelmed. ES5 noted that he had difficulty completing homework or research papers on time because he had two jobs alongside studying. Thus, he felt stressed and sad and could not manage multiple responsibilities because he had insufficient time.

The other students narrated their experiences of feeling overwhelmed and tired, not mentioning a specific stage. They generally described their feelings during their academic journey. For example, MS5 described his feeling overwhelmed and stressed. He points out that teachers assigned numerous assignments, quizzes, and assignments. Also, because he had a

job besides his studies, he could not go to university, participate in classroom activities, and carry out academic tasks, which made him feel bored. Besides, he felt very bored and tired during the exams. Also, ES1 provided an example of his experience when he was overwhelmed and stressed. During his academic studies, it was hard for him to manage studying for the final exams while preparing for the mid-term exams. Apart from these exams, he had two projects to complete and submit to the teacher three days before the final exams. These intensified his stress and led him to feel overwhelmed.

Moreover, ES3 highlighted feeling exhausted and stressed during "peak periods, like midterms and finals, when workloads and deadlines increase." Meanwhile, ES4 highlighted that she was under a lot of pressure during all stages at college, reporting, "Every year, I was very stressed and exhausted from final exams. Especially in the fourth year, I was very tired during the preparation and presentation of the research."

In these findings, it is evident that students in both classes experienced feeling overwhelmed, emotionally exhausted, and stressed because of academic pressure or responsibilities, the number and difficulty of assignments, having jobs while studying, family responsibilities, and so on. Even MS4 felt confused due to two assignments simultaneously, and ES5 felt sad because of insufficient time for completing assignments. Hence, these findings answer the fourth research question about ways of encountering burnout by EFL Kurdish university students.

Therefore, the findings support the studies discussed in the literature review by Lin and Yang (2021), Lu (2004), Maslach et al. (2001) also cited in (Lin and Yang:2021), Shih (2015) (also cited in Lin and Yang: 2021), Fariborz et al. (2019), Jung et al. (2015), Fares et al. (2016), and Lin and Huang (2014), as discussed by Lin and Yang (2021). However, the findings regarding working students do not support work by Koropets, Fedorova, and Kacane (2019:8231), who highlight that working students are least worried about academic pressure or demands. The Kurdish EFL working students have been overwhelmed and stressed due to their work and academic responsibilities.

### **5.Socioeconomic and Family Factors (Question 8)**

Getting information about any socioeconomic or family factors that may affect burnout among Kurdish EFL students, research participants showed agreement about it. They also provided specific examples and details about society's perceptions and expectations, cultural and contextual factors, gender differences, and family support or



expectations. Students in both classes have expressed their thoughts and ideas like the following:

MS1 has not provided any clue about that, reporting, "I am sorry, I do not have any idea regarding this topic."

MS2 highlighted that society's perceptions about education influence burnout among university students. She provided some examples of remarks made by people: "Do you have a future with all this studying?" or "Should girls study or not? What's the use? They should raise children and manage the household." These remarks can negatively affect students' feelings; consequently, students become stressed. Also, the remarks harm students' academic performance; they achieve lower grades. However, she expressed her gratitude for her family's support, reporting her family statement, "Don't listen to such talk, just keep studying."

MS3 stressed that some significant factors contribute to burnout among university students: cultural and contextual factors. Students are expected by family and social pressures to achieve high grades. Also, there is a strong cultural expectation that if a student doesn't achieve good grades in his/her studies at university, they will be regarded as "incomplete and unsuccessful". Furthermore, it is perceived by society that some departments at university have "no future".

MS4 shared her experience of wanting to participate in language courses during her leisure time. Still, she missed the opportunity to take part in the courses due to the distance of the courses to her home, difficulties of transportation, and her family's disinterest in supporting her for that purpose.

MS5 stressed that some students struggle to carry out academic tasks, and at the same time, people around them have high expectations of them. They expect the students to achieve good grades. Therefore, these students experience intense pressure from these people. Although these students try to fulfil these expectations, they feel increased stress.

### **Evening Students (ES):**

ES1 pointed out that differentiation exists between students based on gender in our society. He noticed that girls who studied in the evening classes were under increased stress and emotional distress due to financial pressures and social expectations. If they had achieved bad grades or had

failed, they would have cried. They were emotional because they were not able to pay to study for another year. Besides, society expects girls to get good results. However, because boys had second jobs, they did not care about failing. The boys used to say, "If we do not finish our studies this year, we will finish them next year." Therefore, they were less affected, and they did not rely on success at university.

ES2 mentioned that he has not noticed any cultural or contextual factors that probably negatively impact burnout among Kurdish EFL students.

ES3 pointed out that two fundamental factors that influence burnout among EFL university students are "cultural expectations" and "contextual factors". The first factor includes family and societal expectations, while the latter deals with limited resources and support for language learners. However, ES4 believed that only contextual factors like family size and work obligations could contribute to academic burnout among university students.

ES4 believed that family and socioeconomic factors affect burnout among EFL university students, stating, "Yes, there are some students who come from large families, meaning they have many siblings. For those students, studying is very difficult. Additionally, there are some students who work outside, and that makes it difficult for them as well."

ES5 emphasised that society's perceptions toward EFL university students can influence burnout among them. For example, when people in society say, "Don't be so proud", they think EFL students show off or act superior because of the target language.

Hence, findings reveal that socioeconomic and family factors affect burnout among Kurdish EFL university students, and they support the study findings by AL-Muslimawi and Hamid (2019), who discovered that family problems, work and financial problems, and social and other problems considerably contribute to burnout.

### **6. Balancing Academic and Personal Lives (Question 7)**

Researchers asked participants whether they could balance academic responsibilities and personal lives to get information about whether they had adopted any strategy for their well-being.







### **Morning Students (MS):**

MS1 emphasised that he prioritised his tasks and managed his time sensibly. Also, he arranged a strict schedule; all his educational and leisure activities were going according to his schedule. Additionally, he mentioned that incorporating relaxation time and self-care into his routine was significant. However, MS2 confirmed that she had no plans, especially for her activities. She pointed out that because she was afraid of studying and feared failure, she used to stay at home for a week without going out to prepare herself for an exam.

MS3 highlighted that she prepared her daily plans and weekly plans. She found that implementing her plans was effective because she could succeed. She organised her time according to her plans, for herself, her family, and even her leisure activities.

MS4 pointed out that because she effectively managed her time well, she could complete her tasks and enjoy her personal life. "I definitely managed my time well for daily life, social life, and family life, as well as watching movies to improve my English. So I believe that with good time management, you can do everything."

MS5 believed that creating a balance between personal life and household responsibilities was a very difficult task. He could not devote a lot of time to studying and working simultaneously. Therefore, he confirmed that to balance his work and family responsibilities, he decided to study enough to pass at university, although he wanted to achieve high grades.

### **Evening Students (MS):**

ES1 indicated that he prioritised his academic tasks over his well-being and leisure activities. According to his response, there was a lack of balance between academic studies and leisure activities. He devoted a lot of time to his studies and stayed up late at night to achieve success and avoid embarrassment in class.

ES2 followed a structured approach to balancing academic responsibilities with leisure activities. He used to do his academic assignments at his workplace during his relaxation (2 hours and 40 minutes). After returning from college, he dedicated specific hours to studying and reviewing the subjects daily. He watched English films for two hours per week to enhance his English language skills.

ES3 highlighted that she used effective strategies to manage her academic tasks and activities. She prioritised her responsibilities, formulated a schedule, and even allocated time for leisure activities. Moreover, she

incorporated relaxation time and performing self-care into her daily routine to maintain balance.

ES4 used a time management technique, and she dedicated the weekends and mornings to completing her assignments and taking care of her academic responsibilities.

ES5 confirmed that it was challenging for him to balance his academic responsibilities and family life. He prioritised time with his family when he was not studying, even though he sometimes neglected his activities or self-care. He highlighted that he neglected his family for weeks or months because of his exams and tasks.

Findings show that some students have employed good strategies for balancing their academic responsibilities and personal lives by prioritizing tasks, managing their time, allocating time for relaxation and self-care, and formulating a schedule. They were successful in keeping that balance. This implies that students, even if they experienced burnout at specific or all stages at university, could employ good strategies for their well-being and carrying out their academic responsibilities and tasks. Thus, the findings demonstrate that these students have used problem-based and emotion-focused coping strategies to manage their stress.

However, some other students could not create a balance between them. For instance, MS2 confirmed that she spent most of her time studying and preparing for exams and did not spend time on leisure activities. MS5 also claimed that balancing his personal life and family duties was challenging because he was a working student. He even could not devote enough time to studying. Moreover, ES1 prioritized his academic responsibilities over his well-being and leisure activities; he did not create a balance between them. This was due to being successful at university and avoiding embarrassment in the classroom. Furthermore, ES5 highlighted that he spent time with his family and studies and neglected his well-being or leisure activities. However, he sometimes neglected his family because of exams and tasks. This means that creating a balance was a difficult task for him.

## **7.Coping Strategies for Handling Stress and Academic Pressure (Question 5)**

To get responses to the second part of the fourth research question, researchers asked Kurdish EFL students whether they employed coping mechanisms to deal with stress and academic pressure and how they



handled them. The following are paraphrased interview responses of research participants:

#### **Morning Students (MS):**

MS1 attempts to cope with stress and academic pressure by using various mechanisms. He gets enough sleep, eats healthy food, and works out for his physical well-being. He applied relaxation techniques such as "deep breathing, meditation, or yoga for his mental health." He said he talked to his family or friends for emotional support. Importantly, he used a key time management technique, reporting, "Managing my time by setting small, realistic goals." Most importantly, he pointed out that if more help is required to deal with stress, he should seek assistance from a therapist or counsellor.

MS2 employed a good strategy to cope with stress and academic pressure. She was thinking positively while she was stressed during her academic life. She concentrates on the benefits of studying the English language for her future career and the importance of learning the English language alongside the Kurdish language.

MS3 set her daily plan when she felt anxious about taking an exam or delivering a seminar. Also, she tried to talk to her sister when she was disappointed. Her sister motivated her to overcome stress and anxiety. In addition, she received emotional support from her friends at university.

MS4 emphasised the importance of improving her English language in managing their stress and educational demands. Thus, she decided to enhance her English language proficiency by watching many videos, watching movies, and taking an English course.

MS5 organized his time to carry out his tasks, made efforts, ignored certain tasks to manage others effectively, and sought his friends to help complete the tasks.

#### **Evening Students (ES):**

ES1 highlighted the importance of receiving motivational support from family, friends and teachers. He stated that motivational support is a key strategy for coping with stress and academic pressure.

ES2 employed a unique mechanism for coping with stress and academic pressure. He used to draw a small flower on a desk and erase it to alleviate stress. He repeatedly drew flowers and erased them for ten to fifteen minutes until he could relieve his stress. Then, he participated in class discussions and engaged with his classmates.

ES3 used different strategies for managing stress and academic pressure; for example, she tried to set daily plans and timetables for her daily life and academic journey. She was also disciplined to complete her tasks on time to avoid procrastination. Furthermore, she changed her study

environment, used visual and study aids, and participated in extracurricular activities.

ES4 used a strategy of self-motivation when she was feeling so stressed, especially when speaking in English or presenting seminars. She did not desire these tasks but encouraged herself to complete them successfully. Also, her friends motivated her to overcome her stress during speaking and seminars. She confirmed that she was too shy, too. Therefore, she pretended to be alone in the class during class activities.

ES5 sought support from his wife since she graduated as a top student. He also tried to listen and learn from successful people around him.

Findings reveal that students in both classes have used different strategies for managing stress and academic pressure. The most significant finding is that some students have adopted the coping mechanisms discussed in the literature review. For instance, MS1, ES1, MS3, MS5, ES1, ES4, and ES5 have used social support to handle stress and academic pressure. By the present results, previous studies have shown that social support is crucial in preventing burnout among undergraduates, and it helps them to handle their stress (Neumann et al., 1990)

MS1, MS2, ES2, and ES4 have adopted emotional intelligence strategies to manage stress. This finding supports the studies by Koropets, Fedorova, and Kacane (2019) and Cazan and Nastasa (2015) that emotion is regarded as effective management of feelings and emotions, and it has a vital role in lowering levels of anxiety, stress, burnout, and a higher level of life satisfaction.

ES3 and MS3 have employed problem-focused coping mechanisms to manage their time well, make plans, and ask for support from family or friends. This finding supports the results of Carver et al. (1989) and Krypel and Henderson-King (2010) that this strategy is an effective tool for managing stress

MS1, MS2, and MS3 have adopted emotion-focused coping strategies to manage stress. This supports the studies by Krypel and Henderson-King (2010) that students view education as an opportunity, and it supports a study by Lau et al. (2021) that the self-soothing method is an effective method for handling stress

### **5. Conclusions**

This research was conducted to explore and achieve the Kurdish EFL university students' burnout levels in their academic journey based on three dimensions: "exhaustion, cynicism, and academic inefficacy" of MBI-SS. It also aimed to determine and explain the sources of burnout among Kurdish EFL undergraduates. Moreover, researchers explored the ways students have encountered and overcome burnout. By implementing





the MBI-SS, it was found that morning students encountered a moderate level of burnout while students in evening classes experienced a slightly higher level of burnout.

Through structured and semi-structured interviews, it has been discovered that most students had a challenging experience due to poor English language skills during their initial stage at university, which affected their emotional well-being. Various factors were behind burnout among students from both classes: academic workload, economic concerns, academic responsibilities, the number and difficulty of assignments, having jobs while studying, family responsibilities, insufficient time for completing assignments, and socioeconomic and family factors.

However, some students from both classes adopted good strategies for balancing their academic and personal responsibilities by prioritizing tasks, managing their time, assigning relaxation and self-care, and formulating a schedule. Additionally, they employed suitable coping mechanisms for overcoming stress and academic pressure, such as social support, emotional intelligence strategies, problem-focused coping mechanisms, and emotion-focused coping strategies.

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## An Investigation of the Kurdish EFL University Students' Academic Burnout: Levels and Factors



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## Appendices

### 1.Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS)

#### Exhaustion

1. I feel emotionally drained by my studies.
2. I feel used up at the end of a day at the university.



3. I feel tired when I get up in the morning and I have to face another day at the university.

4. Studying or attending a class is really a strain for me.

5. I Feel burned out from my studies.

#### *Cynicism*

1. I have become less interested in my studies since my enrolment at the university.

2. I have become less enthusiastic about my studies.

3. I've become more cynical about the potential usefulness of my studies.

4. I doubt the significance of my studies.

#### *Inefficacy*

1. I can't solve the problems that arise in my studies.

2. I believe that I don't make an effective contribution to the classes that I attend.

3. In my opinion, I am not a good student.

4. I don't feel stimulated when I reach my study goals.

5. I haven't learnt any interesting things during my studies.

6. During class I don't feel confident that I am effective in getting things done

### **2. Sample of Structured Interview Questions**

1. As an EFL student, can you share your experiences at university?

2. Can you give your opinion about the challenges you faced at university and the fulfilment of academic requirements?

3. Have you ever encountered burnout in your academic studies? If you have, can you narrate and explain your experiences?

4. If you have encountered burnout, can you indicate the symptoms of burnout?

5. Have you adopted coping strategies to handle stress and academic pressure? If so, how?

6. Can you describe your experiences of feeling overwhelmed or tired because of many academic tasks?

7. Can you balance your academic journey and personal life as a student? How?

8. Do you think socioeconomic or family factors affect burnout among Kurdish EFL students?

### **3. Interview Responses**

#### **3.1 Morning Student 1 (MS1)**

1. -As for my experience, I was struggling with English once I came to the college. After a while and long-term hard work, I could be able using English more and more.

2. Of course, there were challenges regarding seminars and unexpected changes that happened, through out time everything became more complicated

3. As for me, I felt burnt out from exams and the pressure that teachers put me under. Most of the time, they could make things even easier but they chose the hardest way and that was one of the reason to not be able learn from those experiences.



4. - I feel always tired, have trouble sleeping, get sick often, and eat differently. Emotionally, I feel overwhelmed, detached, unmotivated, and negative. Mentally, it can be hard to concentrate, remember things, and get work done. I also avoid responsibilities, procrastinate, and rely on food or alcohol. If I notice these signs, I might need help and changes to manage stress.

5. - To cope with burnout and pressure, I can try a few simple things. I need to get enough sleep, eat healthy food, and exercise. Taking breaks and setting limits on my work helps too. I can try deep breathing, meditation, or yoga to relax. Talking to friends or family can give me support. Managing my time by setting small, realistic goals is important. If I need more help, I can talk to a therapist or counsellor.

6. - As for me, the last semester was really tough, I had micro teaching and midterm exams on the same day. That was really hard and getting ready for all of them was not easy.

7. -I try to find a good balance. I prioritize my tasks and manage my time wisely. By creating a schedule and sticking to it, I can make time for studying and also enjoy activities I like. Taking breaks and looking after myself are important too. It's all about finding the right balance that works for me!

8. - I am sorry, I do have any idea regarding this topic.

### 3.2 Morning Student 2 (MS2)

1. My experience in this department I first came to this department was very difficult for me, but I liked the English department. At the same time, I wasn't good in English compared to other students' English language skills. Their English was very good, but I wasn't like that. So, I felt upset about that. It was very unpleasant for me. The first time the teacher came in, I didn't understand what she/he meant. I mean, I didn't understand what he/she wanted. Out of 10 words, I understood one. Not understanding was hard for me. But it would be different year by year, meaning I would be much better. Because we were trying with that language, I wanted to learn.

2. Compared to the third year of college, the first semester of the fourth year was better; even though the duration of the classes was long, it was better for me because we had fewer quizzes and exams. However, in the second semester, I felt a lot of stress because there were more modules, and one of the teachers taught in such a way that, honestly, no student could understand. This created a lot of stress for me and my friends. Also, since I became a mother, things became more difficult for me, and I was forced to be unprepared for some of the classes.

3. Of course I was very tired because my English was not good. At the same time, I liked that part too. I had to work very hard to achieve what I wanted to achieve. Initially, we set stories to read so that I could learn English. Every day we set aside an hour to read short stories with my sister. We encouraged each other to read on. This was great for me. And when I was bored, I would talk to my sister about the good English department and encourage each other to continue. It was very difficult,





really. We were often pessimistic about why we chose that department. We compared the English department with other departments in the college. We said the other parts were easier, why did we choose that part. And sometimes we regretted studying in that English department. It was really difficult for us, especially the first year.

4. I often felt like I had lost interest in that part. I was thinking about leaving that department. Or I wonder why I chose that part. Naturally, I was very afraid of studying. When I was in the sixth grade in school, I was very lazy in English. After that, in grades seven, eight and later (secondary school) I was very afraid of losing English, and even in college I graduated with fear. I was afraid of falling in the subject and I was very afraid of falling. I finished it all off in fear. And every year that my grades were generally bad in college, because I just memorised it without understanding. I relied solely on memorising subjects (modules). I was very afraid of falling so I still had that fear in college. Even in my last year of college, I was still afraid. So my classmates would tell me you looked like a collapsed person. I ask them: Why are you so afraid? Why are you so pessimistic? I would say what if I don't win? How many grades do I need to pass? I felt like I was just going to succeed in the subjects. My grades were very, very bad even though I studied a lot. My sister didn't study like me, but she got better grades than me. I was very pessimistic about not succeeding in college.

5. I faced more pressure by saying that the department I was studying was good. I thought that English was very important in Kurdistan. English graduates will get good job opportunities. And when you have a career as an English teacher it is very important. The person's efforts are not wasted finishing in the English department because of the language. At the same time, he learns another language alongside his mother tongue.

6. Some college professors discriminated against students. For example, if a student was bright or among the top students or had very good English, they would be very supportive. And if their daily class participation was not high, they would still give them good grades. While I would have raised my hand two or three times to participate they would not have seen me. One thing I saw very inappropriately about a teacher in third grade was that although he was a very smart teacher, when a student gave a very good seminar, he asked the teacher if he would give me 20 out of 20 marks. He said no, you are not such and such a student, I will give you. While that student gave a very good seminar he was not one of the top students. It was a really inappropriate comparison. These teachers give students high marks for daily participation if they score very well on monthly exams. I was very surprised that they discriminated against students in this way.

Compared to the third stage of college, the first semester of the fourth stage was better for me, although the duration of the lectures was shorter, it was better because we had fewer quizzes and exams. However, in the second semester, I felt much more stressed because the subjects were more numerous, and one of the teachers would explain the lessons in a

way that honestly no student could understand. This created a lot of stress for me and my classmates. Additionally, since I had become a mother, things became much more difficult, and I couldn't always prepare for some of the classes.

7. : I am very afraid of studying. I can say that I finished all my studies poorly because I studied a lot and I was afraid. So I finished it all with fear and anxiety and studied. When my family told me to go out somewhere, I would say I wouldn't because I had exams or studies. I attribute that to the fact that I had no plans. When we had one week to prepare for the exams, I didn't mind going out for even an hour that week. I would say let me stay at home and it would be better to study than to fall. I was too afraid of failure. Although when I came to college, one of the teachers said it was very easy to graduate, but try to learn. And the teachers helped me a lot to graduate, especially when I was a child. I still didn't trust myself and I kept saying I wouldn't succeed and I was afraid. To be honest, I'm a coward. All my studies made me like that because I failed a year in primary school

8. Undoubtedly, society plays a significant role in influencing students in many ways, as some students experience a lot of stress from the remarks made by those around them. For example, people say things like, "Do you have a future with all this studying?" or "Should girls study or not? What's the use? They should just raise children and manage the household." These kinds of thoughts create a lot of stress for students, causing them to get lower grades. However, fortunately, my family told me, "Don't listen to such talk, just keep studying," and I am very grateful for their support.

### 3.3 Morning Student 3 (MS3)

1. About my experience at the university: It was both easy and difficult. When I was in internship, teaching English in a school, it was easy for me because I was interested in teaching . There were some aspects that I should have considered and I should have improved myself in terms of linguistics, or some grammatical aspects that I should I have improved myself because sometimes I made very few mistakes. In the first year because I learned English at university I was a beginner in English and the curriculum was all in English. The teachers wanted us to speak only English. We could not speak any other language, Kurdish or any other language. We had to speak English. It was difficult for me. I was very anxious and afraid If the teacher asked me a question, I didn't know what to do in front of the other students. It was like feeling embarrassed in front of them. It was an unpleasant experience. But this happened during my initial stage at university. But after my language improved, I was able to overcome that fear.

2. I faced many obstacles at university; for example, when I had mid-term exams and other assignments, I had a final project, and I had to take quizzes and many other things at the same time. It would have been very, very difficult for me and the students. For example, sometimes, the time was very limited, and we were not given any extension for submitting



assignments, which made it more difficult for us to do things the way we wanted to do them. Because of the time, we didn't have it, or there was something else. I had to do all my duties. We couldn't do all my duties completely to achieve high grades.

3. Yes, I was very tired of some assignments that took a lot of time, reading and getting information, and writing style was very difficult for some students. For example, the one whose English was not good because of my English in First grade was not very good for the report and the seminar was very difficult for me because I had to find the information well and understand the information and prepare myself in a good way I would have to give a seminar in front of teachers and students or write a report If I had checked all the points without any mistakes, it would have made me very tired again.

4. The signs of failure and extreme fatigue were clear. For example, I experienced intense headaches or dizziness, and sometimes I felt like I was on the verge of fainting. At the same time, my brother struggled with weakness because, despite constantly seeking new knowledge, he was bettering himself in English by watching films, dramas, videos, podcasts, and other things. That means he watched a lot of videos, which had a positive impact on him, although he still had weak vision. From the beginning until now, his vision has been weak, which is why his goal of studying during the summer was delayed. He was trying to teach himself, but it was definitely difficult for him. I mean, his vision was the main reason for the delay. As for me, I often experienced headaches, or I couldn't focus my energy for a period of time. Sometimes for two weeks or so, I would feel unwell and extremely stressed. I would either sleep too much or become too anxious. All these were reasons that led me to feel a lot of failure. These were the signs that I struggled with greatly.

5. When I was very anxious, especially when I was giving a seminar or having an exam, I would make a solid daily plan on how to succeed in the seminar, debate or exam. That is, I would succeed with planning. Or if I was disappointed, for example, not doing well in a seminar or not passing an exam, I would definitely talk to a family member, who would encourage me to try harder and learn more. I talked to my sister at home and to my friends at university who helped me a lot by saying: We have learned, you will learn. And just as we did well, you will do well. Or they would say that you would be as good at the seminar as we were. So thanks to my planning and the help of my family and friends, I was able to overcome my anxiety and stress.

When you face the pressures at university, make a solid plan to complete all your courses, especially if your language is good If you are not good enough linguistically, it will be very difficult, but you can plan it again Develop a solid plan and look for information daily. Study the lessons thoroughly, which will help you even with the pressure during the finals But metrics and finals and also final projects that are given daily little by little determine each day some thoughts that go do and patience Patience to complete the project as before Flying or Gerflying is the best way to

cope with the pressure and to focus more on exercise You can also be religious and get up early in the morning to do your duties These are all good reasons. I can say that you can cope with these pressures and complete your studies better.

6. When I felt that the university had put a lot of pressure on my studies, I could say that this was the first semester of my fourth grade It would have taken me two hours to write my lesson plan, when I was in internship (teaching in schools) very seriously It took a lot of things. What we used to write lesson plans when we did the in the third stage (micro teaching module) was much less. What we did in the internship (teaching in schools) was much longer. I had to write the lesson plans in detail by hand not by typing. Because some lessons require more changes than others, I decided to draw all the lines on the notebook myself and re-write words in bold. It wasn't just my problem, it was the problem of most of the students. Sometimes they had problems even though they had printed out the lesson plans. Sometimes they made mistakes in writing lesson plans. So, they had to start again. When I was in internship, except teaching in schools, we had another task which was attending an online lesson about teaching for special needs. We would have studied two hours a week in the program. We studied with a teacher in the United States for two hours. Because it was a new lesson and we weren't familiar with, we became very tired. Because in the internship we had no experience. Besides, we had to write lesson plans. At the same time, we had to write a reflective report at university. Therefore, we were very tired because of increasing academic workload. Seriously, we became very, very tired. There were students who didn't attend the online lessons because they said they were too tired. Or, some other students ignored writing the reflective report because of the internship. Or they didn't go to school (for teaching/internship). They should have ignored one task or aspect in order to manage others. I didn't ignored anything; I would have done everything, but I would have been very, very tired. That was one of those examples .There are many examples from stage one to four, but this was one of the most common examples that happened to me this year.

7. How do you strike a balance between academics and other areas of life? A daily plan allows you to do all the tasks and make time for yourself and your family, as well as other things you can do for your outdoor activities And with that plan I was able to achieve my successes for my daily and weekly plans. That helped me a lot to succeed.

8. Of course, psychological and social pressures, especially social pressures, for example, at home, most families force students to get good grades while they are at university, for example the twelfth graders who take the national examination must get a good grade for a very, very good department of the university. They have to get a very, very good degree and be one of the families. The person wants to get a good grade for himself or herself mentally and wants to complete the task as soon as possible Whether it is a good way to do it completely or incompletely, but you still want to do it in time. Of course, they have an impact and you can





do it culturally In our culture, there are some successful departments that feel that they have no future. Some departments have this .Again, if you don't get a good grade in college, you will be considered incomplete and unsuccessful.

### 3.4 Morning Student 4 (MS4)

1. When I filled out the application form for university, I wrote the second choice English department. Although my English level was very poor, I liked the English department. I liked mathematics more. I always had very good grades in mathematics, but I wanted to do very well in the subject I was very bad at. So I filled out the English department to get admission to university. My first and second years at university were very bad for me because my English was very poor, but after that I got very good at reading books and recording videos. I mean, the teachers tried very hard and used very good strategies to improve our English.

I was very good. When we were in training (teaching English in schools), we were very good and we taught well. But something happened, as you mentioned in the second question, I was able to use very good strategies when teaching in school, I mean the teaching strategies that my teacher used in college and I learned from him. But when the supervising teacher came to see how I was teaching at school, and it was lunchtime, the lesson was 35 minutes long. At the beginning of the lesson, we tell the students the rules of the lesson and do a warm-up activity. Then we teach the rest of the lesson according to the lesson plan (presentation, practice, and production) and at the end of the lesson we assign them homework. But the teacher came for 10 minutes. He gave me 40 marks in 10 minutes. However, he did not take into account that he had come for 10 minutes. He squandered his chance on me and gave me a very bad grade. That's why I know he gave me a bad grade because another teacher came the other day and liked my teaching plan very much. So it was a very unpleasant experience for me.

2. My first and second years in college were very unpleasant because we were not very good at that department. It was very difficult. But it was very good this year. My training period in school for teaching was good. I only had the case I mentioned. However, it was difficult for me to present seminars in the second stage. Because I didn't know about it, especially since it was one of the mistakes that we didn't have any seminars in schools and the teachers didn't teach us in schools. When we came to college, we immediately had seminars. There was an Academic Skills module; we had to give seminars and debate. It was very difficult for me. But my studies were much better that year.

3. I was definitely stressed. As I mentioned, my first and second years of college were very stressful because our English was not good. We had many subjects. Teachers gave assignments that required very good English language skills. The assignments were But for some students these subjects were good, but not for us because I felt that these subjects should not be for the first grade of college but for the third and fourth grades.



Yes, I was wondering why I chose that part. I seemed to regret it or be annoyed.

4. Because my language was not good, we had to memorize the subjects/information and remember them. We had to memorize many words. Because, to say the least, all the things you read and memorise affected me. So I was very stressed, bored, tired, heartbroken, wanted to go out, felt like I was in one hell in the sixth grade of high school and came to another hell.

5. Because we were in that English major, we needed to improve our language so that we wouldn't be stressed and could participate in class. So I watched a lot of videos and movies. I could have answered the interview in English, but I am still stressed and afraid of making a mistake in speaking English. Student Sana opened an online English course. Because she was our friend, I wasn't stressed about her, I mean my English was good.

Yes, I'm afraid I'll make mistakes, but Sana said your English is very good. Why don't you speak it in class? But I would like to participate but I can't because I'm too stressed. So by attending language courses and watching movies my English improved and I was less stressed.

6. This year, a teacher gave us an assignment to record a video and prepare a PowerPoint presentation. He gave us two months to complete this task. But another teacher gave us an assignment to record a video, but he gave us 15 days to complete it. It was very difficult. The first assignment I was very good and prepared and delivered good things. But the other task was to read a book in addition to recording a video. It was a definite book, it was very difficult not to be at my level. The book was 300 pages long, and the words were very difficult to understand. I thought it was difficult for higher level of students to understand. I was confused, exhausted.

In my opinion, the teachers' teaching methods are not good. I suppose because we were an English department, those methods added some (they didn't have to). However, some teaching methods are also very good, especially there were some subjects that I felt would have been more useful for us if there had been more time. The duty they gave us, although the number was small, was very difficult for us. I mean, we couldn't control it, they put very little time, so it was very stressful for us.

7. definitely managed my time well for daily life, social life, and family life, as well as watching movies to improve my English. So I believe that with good time management, you can do everything.

8. Some courses and other things I have wanted to attend, but because it was far away and I had to take a taxi to get there and at the same time my family was not interested. So I feel like I missed out on these things. At the same time, I wanted to improve my English, so this was stressful. I had no one to commute with to go to language courses. My dad and brothers were too busy to drive me to the course. However, the course was very important to me and I wanted to participate. But it didn't work



out for me. But there are some students whose parents would let them. That was a good thing for them.

### 3.5 Morning Student 5 (MS5)

1. As a student, if I talk about my own experience, the beginning of university was very exciting and beneficial for me. After the first stage, the other stages became very difficult because I was often exhausted from my studies. Despite that, I was also working alongside my education.

2. In fact, there are many tasks in the final year of university, which is a great burden for the student because these many tasks require a lot of time to complete and take a lot of time because he has to work constantly And plan to get to everything Especially for those students who work with their studies, it becomes a huge burden for them, which affects their exam results and prevents them from getting good grades.

3. Yes, I felt very tired in all stages, especially in the second stage because I failed in most of modules in the first and second semesters. I tried very hard and didn't leave the house for a month to complete the second year successfully.

4. Headaches, anxiety, boredom, dislike of things you like, such as watching movies and playing games, and many other symptoms.

5. In my opinion, every student should set a study plan for himself and divide his time because he faces a lot of pressure and anxiety. If I talk about myself, I often get it I have been under pressure and anxiety. I have had to do many things at the same time. I have divided my time to do the tasks. I have often asked my friends for help when I was under pressure Help me with the tasks.

6. Of course, I have often felt very tired at university because of the many assignments, the number of quizzes or homework given by the teachers or the classroom activities. I couldn't go to university and that bothered me a lot I felt very bored and tired during the exams.

7. In reality, creating a balance between enjoying life, household responsibilities, and studying is a very challenging task for students, especially for those who have a family, house, and children. As someone who had a family and worked while studying, I had to find my own balance. For example, I wanted to get high grades, but to manage both work and my responsibilities at home, I decided to study just enough to pass because I couldn't dedicate a lot of time to both studying and working at the same time. Life requires happiness, and there are times when family and children want you to go out for fun or to take a trip, or you have other responsibilities like buying household necessities, food, and clothes. So, to maintain that balance, I decided to focus only on passing rather than aiming for high grades.

8. Yes, for example, there are some students who aren't doing well in their studies, but the people around them have high expectations and expect good grades from them. This puts a lot of pressure on the students, and they try hard to meet those expectations, which causes them a lot of stress.

### 3.6 Evening Student 1 (ES1)



1. The four years I continued to study for a bachelor's degree in English in the evenings were difficult for me due to the poor economic situation. Our country's economic issue has come and continues to this day. We have suffered a lot at this age because we had already another job. At the same time, our teachers put a lot of pressure on us to learn, but we spent too much energy. and we needed more energy that we had to be able to strike a better balance in seeing the last that our teaching with then we work atmosphere so with We really worked hard and we made good use of it. Thank you to the teachers, but we really worked hard. This is part of the four years we spent there.

2. Yes, we had a lot of difficulties. One of the reasons was that we were different from the sixth grade students We are isolated and the obstacle that I mentioned earlier is the reason why we cannot focus on what we want If we didn't have this problem, we could have done better and used more and benefited more from our studies Sometimes we felt annoyed with the doctors who taught us. We felt that they were not paid, although they were mostly very late They didn't really do that, but they had to make a distinction that we were better than most of them, but they gave us the same tasks. We graduated from college with some subjects like those who came from the sixth grade They didn't ask each other about their plans. We knew that a teacher had given us an assignment before. I mean, there had to be a plan to see the teachers. There were times when we had two seminars a day Of course, this was a reason why we were under a lot of pressure. He used to give two seminars a day because the courses are usually very difficult for us.

3. Yes, more mentally, more physically, because I don't think the student is so tired because the student is more mentally tired because of the pressure brain would be tired and it would affect my progress and I can say more than the stage Secondly, the first stage was easier because the teachers who came at the beginning did not put much pressure on us, but in the second stage, as I said, the teachers in general put a lot of pressure on us They put a lot of pressure on us to learn more But I thank them. They were there for us, for the level of the students, but we had little opportunity because we were in school from morning till evening We were under a lot of pressure. This was a big reason for us.

4. I sometimes said I would drop out of university because I couldn't afford three jobs. I told myself that my job was school, let's say another job I needed to do, and studying at university that I was sometimes mentally encouraged to postpone my studies for two years until I could make a better living. I mean, that was part of what made me think about dropping out. I was also anxious and stressed because I was older than other students. So I was afraid of not succeeding or getting low grades. I didn't like it when I, as a teacher, had low grades. Thankfully, in the end my results were not bad according to my level of education, but not according to my wishes. I could have been better if I hadn't had a second career.



5. Some of my friends and family were encouraging me. They said you can do it, you were clever, they encouraged me by saying that you were able to do all these things together at the same time you were a student. And you were successful. For example, you have passed the first stage successfully and with a good grade, so they encouraged me. This encouragement is very important for the students. Even the teachers encouraged us to do more than we could. We were encouraged so we were under a lot of pressure at the same time we said finally ..... Let's try to give more, but it created problems for us, for example, that we were not able to show more things. We wanted more practical than obligatory arrows given tell you these three because these definitions in It was very unpleasant for us. We didn't have time to discuss some things. It was practical, but it was obligatory.

6. I can give you an example. Three days before my finals, I had to study for my mid-term exam, which was really like three days before finals, I have to do mid-term exam, it was somehow, I didn't know whether to study for the final or for the mid-term. and at the same time, I had two projects to give it to the teacher. to finish it, just three days before the final, it was really stressful for me and it was very overwhelming me actually.

7. Seriously, these four years were a risk for me. I took it seriously. I gave more than I could. Even on my face, this was obvious Four years of age changed as much as ten years My appearance changed because I worked too hard because I couldn't give up anything like a teacher I couldn't do this as a company. I had to go to school because I had to continue I tried hard not to be embarrassed in class. There were nights when I studied until two o'clock at night because I was afraid I would offer much less than my level in class.

I had very little sleep. As I said, I risked my life, but I didn't give up.

8. emphasizes that this issue has been more common among girls because in our society boys are more arrogant and do not care/consider some aspects of life/studying. Some of the boys would say let's be unsuccessful (of studying)/not to pass for a year, a year, not a year. This means that boys have no stress about being successful or failed at university. But what I noticed from the girls who achieved bad grades, they were about to cry. I knew that most of them had financial problems. Or because they had to pay some money for their studies every year, the girls said: "we should succeed in our exams. If we don't succeed, it will be difficult for me and my family to pay for another year." In our society, girls feel more hurt than boys if they get bad grades, or if they fail in exams or fail in completing one year of study. The boys don't care because some of them worked and have the second jobs. The boys said: "if we do not finish our studies this year, we will finish them next year. This means that there was this difference between boys and girls.

1. Yes, thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion on your research questions It is really national for me. As a college student, when you go to college, we divide the colleges into departments, for example



The English department is a strange department. You use a foreign language. It is not your own language Construction and English department for examples of teachers .....really they The stressors we knew as the beginning of college, as doctors, as the beginning of college, as the beginning of college, had readings for students in general This is our second duty in the College of ..... Our reason was that they didn't make things too difficult during the exams He helped the students and the economy. Every time the economic situation in Kurdistan was unstable, they offered all the help and encouraged the students to work harder. They gave students seminars so they would not be afraid or ashamed to learn from each other. But I was very, very bad in English. this year, God willing, I graduated. We took the exam in the fourteenth month ....., is really useful as a foreign language he did it

2. Of course, as I expected at the beginning, he will start with a university degree and will take the English department according to the departments You don't have a non-language. You have to have a plan. You have to talk about history every day. You have to listen to music I was very stressed, but when I went to the first week, the second week and the third week, I saw that the teachers were helpful and the language was difficult for me Before, we made it easier for them to explain things in this way through scenarios, quizzes, class participation and respect With the support of the teachers of the evening department of College of ..... , I was able to achieve my goal I'll be able to get it, God willing.

Teachers have their own stories. In my opinion, they are really like a handful of students Have your own letter for your daily life, that is, you must have your own plan for your daily duties Because the college gives us daily assignments through the teachers, we had to prepare ourselves for quizzes or lessons You didn't have a responsibilities for the four years of college or all four stages of college that you successfully You must be confident and successful daily with teacher behavior and duties and adherence to working hours My chemistry wasn't very good, but because I went to class with the teachers every day, I didn't miss myself, especially during the Cubs exams I used it a lot. I used a lot of things that the teacher explained. With the little study I did, I was able to pass all four years. Good luck teacher ....

It was easy for me as a student to listen to the teachers. They had planned to use so many words in the introduction It was given to the students' intelligence and the teachers' attention and at the same time the teachers' stories were discussed They were open to students and gave daily background information to encourage students to succeed.

as a student I mentioned at the beginning, if you have a Wilson plan, you can overcome all the obstacles and control them You don't see you, but go on the day of the exam. You will lose control. You can't control things If you don't look around instead of looking at the car, you'll see something, but if you look do with mirrors you know if there control yourself or immediately not go eyes the exams and quizzes and seminars





and discussions all times before Rozman in before was the teacher a week before Friday information dudain dito that day exam until in was final exams meter exams examples gave list they said. ٤ The exams were divided into 10 points on quizzes, 10 points on daily practice and 5 points on daily absences The student had to follow the lesson plans that the teacher had set for him to succeed

3. I was very stressed in third grade because that year 2019-2020 because of the coronavirus I could not work hard because in that academic year me and my classmates went to college one day and we didn't go for another day because of the disease. There was a lot of stress on the students in the third and fourth stages, especially in the third stage. Teachers asked students to act out as a teacher every lecture and they practiced us for internship in schools. We had internship in the fourth stage. The first day I went to college and graduated, I learned a lot about the behavior of teachers I understood all the stress I had as a student. Like me and some of my classmates, they were with me in English We really didn't know any English, but now thanks to God and the teachers, I thank them very much. My English is better than before, especially in terms of understanding. My understanding is very, very good now.

I have my own experience in this subject I had another job in addition to my university job. It was a government job I wanted to go to college. For example, there were many things because of exams and seminars His parents served him and he had no responsibilities. It was much, much easier for him For me, as a head of household, raising children, college students, I had to do three things in one day.

I was really tired in my four years of college. I was very tired because my department was English As for God, blood ecstasy was very good. I learned his language, that is, many things I have learned that now my understanding is very, very good thank God and I can talk about it, but I am a little shy I thanked him, but the fatigue of those four years showed me that college is safe I was able to create a product for myself. I had to learn the foreign language there and use it to teach people

4. Very true, very beautiful teacher. Indeed, we were studying in the same class If it was four or twenty minutes in the evening, you would like to work Most of our teachers would like me at thirty o'clock. Ramadan started at thirty o'clock I walked for sixty-five minutes, that is, the teachers knew I was an employee and worked. They were spying on me, and so were some teachers When they were late, they were known to be late, tired, and especially tired because they could not study or take other exams Or there were construction teachers who had experience in this regard and knew who had work, who did not have work, who was deliberately late He will be delayed immediately.

When I return to class after work, I am honestly very tired and exhausted. I go straight to the class and sit in the last row. When the teacher comes near, they can tell whether I'm truly attending or just present physically without focusing. Sometimes, they ask questions for which we aren't

prepared, or I haven't prepared myself. For example, I don't participate in group discussions, I don't talk, and I don't know what's happening."

Yes, he knew the question immediately. Teacher, we came from work today We gave him the second task and did not fulfill the first task, which was the duty of the university

in both class and at home, I felt completely drained and exhausted, and I've become frustrated because all of my stress has been building up.

5. That's really nice, teacher, and it's a very interesting question. For example, as a reminder, when I would enter the classroom, I would feel stressed and, out of frustration, I would start drawing on my desk. I would draw a small flower, making drawings on it, and erase it. I would keep doing that. For instance, once, when Teacher ..... came and asked, "Hersh, are you drawing the flower on the desk and blackening it?" I told him, "Teacher, I feel stressed, and when I draw on this desk and blacken it, my stress decreases, and I feel more in control." For example for 10 to 15 minutes, I did that, I noticed that my stress went away. Then, I participated in class discussions, and I would engage with the students. Some other students were stressed and some were playing with their headphones and some were injuring their hands He attended his classes.

6. Your questions are very, very beautiful. it was very difficult for me during those four years of college when I had to write reflective report; at the same time, I was in internship (teaching in schools). Meanwhile, I had to visit my teacher to discuss my assignment (reflective report) with him/her. Furthermore, I had many seminars. I mean I felt very, very tired in college from February till March. I can say that the most difficult stage of my college year was the fourth stage.

7. , I was going to go to college after my duty. I had two hours and forty minutes of rest. I mean, if I had an exam, I would have controlled myself in those two hours and forty minutes. Or, I did my homework during my his free time. When I was back from college, I devoted an hour and a half for studying and reviewing subjects I studied during a day. I mean two hours a week, I had a program on my mobile phone, I used to watch English films to have more background on the English language.

really our weekends because of our last true this is the owner of the family we went to the in-laws house was the father's house was that was out of college in the third month and more We took our hotels, we lived far away with my family, for example, we did our jobs at our relatives' houses, we traveled and traveled like our lives Four years of my college.

I mentioned at the beginning that not only for college, for example, you must have a lesson plan for the lessons of the game You can't live your daily life. For example, you can't read, you can't play, you can't sleep But be aware that you have to divide the 24 hours you have over your work in an orderly manner that you have or created yourself as a teacher like us I can really say that Burke had a weight of blame in the eyes of the head of the family didn't and didn't really wound he gave more importance to times he more examples could learn without he more examples tourism



he had more examples output From someone like me who was the head of the family and had a job

8. Honestly, your questions are very interesting and very insightful. But as a teacher, I'll answer them like a general giving orders. Personally, I view this stage as a critical one, and I hope to become a disciplined officer in the future, guiding students with this discipline and a solid education. However, your questions, dear sir, should focus on encouraging children to achieve success, with the support of their parents. For example, a father might tell his son, "Study hard so you can pass your exams and become an engineer or a doctor." Honestly, this creates a lot of pressure on students, to the point where it becomes overwhelming. On exam day, they might feel so anxious that it affects their performance.

For example, my father never pressured me by saying, "If you don't do well, you'll bring shame to the family." Instead, he encouraged me without such burdens. In our country, sadly, teachers and parents often place unnecessary pressure on students, making it harder for them to thrive. In many other countries, from the very beginning, they guide students toward fields that suit their talents, preparing them for future careers. For instance, when I was in school, I spent six or seven years studying social sciences, yet I didn't use much of it. When I finished my English course, it was just another subject to me, with its own rules and systems. Honestly, your questions are very thoughtful, and I hope they will inspire others. For example, if we look at our leaders or respected ministers, like Minister Alan of Education, they all started from the basics and worked their way up. For instance, if there's a very bright student in architecture, they should be guided toward excelling in that field. Over time, with patience, they will become an expert. Similarly, if a student is talented in social sciences, they should be encouraged in that direction. It's essential not to pressure students after eight or nine years of Kurdish education to suddenly switch to studying in a foreign language like French or English. This creates unnecessary challenges for them. Instead, they should be nurtured step by step, so they can grow into successful professionals in their chosen fields.

### 3.8 Evening Student 3 (ES3)

1. As a Kurdish EFL university student, I enjoyed improving my English, but it was challenging at times, especially while balancing my studies with family responsibilities.

2. Balancing student life and academic expectations was hard, especially with the added responsibility of caring for my family, which made managing time and focus even more challenging.

3. Yes, I experienced burnout during my academic journey, particularly from the pressure of meeting deadlines and managing coursework, which left me feeling exhausted and overwhelmed.

4. Some signs of burnout for me included chronic fatigue, decreased motivation, difficulty concentrating, and feelings of irritability or detachment from my studies.

5. I cope with stress and academic pressure by prioritizing time management, taking regular breaks, engaging in physical activity, and practising mindfulness techniques to maintain balance and focus.

In my opinion, there are several ways to deal with the pressures that I have personally experienced. For example, creating a daily plan, organizing my time for sleep, study, and meals, completing my daily tasks on time without procrastination, studying in a different environment such as a garden or while walking, using visuals, engaging in activities outside of college, reading, and many other methods.

6. Yes, I often felt more tired and stressed during peak periods, like midterms and finals, when workloads and deadlines increase.

7. I make sure to do well at university by prioritizing my tasks, creating a schedule, and setting aside specific times for fun and hobbies. I also ensure I take breaks and practice self-care to stay balanced.

8. Yes, cultural factors like the emphasis on family and community expectations can add pressure, while contextual factors such as limited resources and support for language learners can also contribute to burnout among Kurdish EFL students.

### **3.9 Evening Student 4 (ES4)**

1. My four-year university experience was good, with each year gaining more experience. In my opinion, the third year of college was the most informative; where I learned a lot, such as how to write research papers and how to speak English skills. Overall, all four years of college were great experiences.

2. It wasn't too difficult for me to do all the work in college, but it took more time to write a research paper in fourth grade. And my teaching in school during the training was very good, it was a very good experience. I divided my time into quizzes and seminars, preparing all my assignments earlier. Sometimes, stage three took a long time to do the assignments because sometimes we had two seminars a day, so it was somewhat difficult for me.

3. The truth is, I haven't read many books, and I often feel tired and overwhelmed. I'd really like to enjoy reading and learning more.

4. I had no clue about this.

5. As a student, I was really stressed, especially speaking English and giving seminars. I didn't like those tasks. But I pushed myself all the time so that I could do them to the best of my ability. I had good friends who encouraged me to speak English and not to be stressed in the seminar. But even though I was stressed, I was very shy during the seminar. To overcome the situation and reduce my stress, I sometimes pretended to be alone in class giving seminars or talks.

6. Every year, I was very stressed and exhausted from final exams. Especially in the fourth year, I was very tired during the preparation and presentation of the research.

7. I divided my time, and I would do most of my tasks during the weekend, or sometimes in the mornings, because I was in evening classes. That's why I had time to complete my tasks.





8. Yes, there are some students who come from large families, meaning they have many siblings. For those students, studying is very difficult. Additionally, there are some students who work outside, and that makes it difficult for them as well.

### 3.10 Evening Student 5 (ES5)

1. student from a university which English was the first language to use , I was struggling since my school was public and in village which is clear that what's all cared is mother tongue and not care about studying and languages , also there wasn't any means of education as private schools. So when I was enrolled I could speak a word in English so that it would make me feel uncomfortable in speaking.

2. Personally at the beginning especially first term was somehow better since most of the knowledge switched to practically working at schools (teaching) and we weren't supposed to memorize stuff and only working theoretically which was really boring for me , and I learned things practically if I just studied things theatrically I would not have understood anything , in the second term things went easier but life got harder since my daughter was sick and I was supposed to care about them more , also research paper was a big stress that I was thinking if I don't pass the first round I might fail in the second round too.

3. I have faced so many difficulties since I separated from studying due to some special reasons , so when I got back I found myself strange , forgot the language and knew how much I am behind ! When life pressures are so much like having lots of responsibilities such as home, family , kids so studying make u be far from their environment even sometimes not playing and talking with the family due to mentally exhaustion.

4. Insomnia ( sleeplessness) which can not sleep well due to having stress about studying .

5. Asking my wife about her experiences as she graduated and was the top student and get advices from successful people around.

6. As I have two works beside studying it was so hard to do homework or research paper on time so when the time wasn't sufficient I was stressed and sad that couldn't manage of time.

7. Frankly saying , the time I have beside studying I devote for my family , my wife and daughter even if I neglect myself or my hobby , I try not let them feel they are lonely. Because sometimes I ignore them for months or weeks or days because of my examinations and tasks.

8. Yes , sometimes in society they say come on ! Don't be so proud as you know another language so it's one of the Barriers that not let you speak or use the knowledge in public places.