

Exploring the Most Challenging Academic IELTS Tested Skills for Indonesian Test Takers

Awaluddin Syamsu¹, Muhammad Yunus¹, Astri Arsi Ismail¹, Dewi Pratiwi Oktavia Bahtiar¹

¹ Universitas Muslim Indonesia, Indonesia

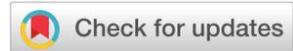
*Correspondence: awaluddin.syamsu@umi.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Academic IELTS test has been widely used by Indonesia people to indicate their academic English proficiency. According to the IELTS official website report 2022, Indonesian people found that writing test as the lowest average score. This study aimed to examine the most difficult test according to the Indonesian test taker's perception and score result. The study also explored the reasons why they performed lowest in a particular skill. There were 17 Indonesian people who have taken academic IELTS responded our survey. They were from Sulawesi, Java, Sumatra, and Kalimantan with different academic background from fresh graduates of senior high schools and master's graduates. The open-ended question responses were analyzed thematically to find out the challenges the test takers encountered. The result showed that according to the student's perception and score in each band, some students found listening, reading and speaking as the most difficult skill however majority experienced writing as the most challenging skill. There were five reasons for their poor performance in writing test, they are less writing practice, lack of vocabulary, poor understanding on academic writing structure, time constrain, and unfamiliar topics. The findings of the research should be considered and become a topic of development for Indonesian people who plan to take academic IELTS test.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Published June 13rd 2024



KEYWORDS

Academic IELTS; Difficulties; Indonesian People; Writing Skill.

ARTICLE LICENCE

© 2024 Universitas Hasanuddin
Under the license CC BY-SA
4.0



1. Introduction

IELTS (International English Language Testing System) has been widely used to examine English proficiency. It has two types of test, general and academic IELTS. For educational purposes academic IELTS is highly recommended if not required for certain reasons, for working purposes general IELTS is widely accepted. According to the demographic reports of the IELTS' test takers, there are 40 first language users use sit in the IETLS test for Academic IELTS (IELTS, 2024). Indonesian as one of the listed people who use IELTS test to show their English proficiency.

There are two types of IELTS test, general and academic IELTS. General IELTS test is testing test taker's general English or the ability of the test takers to use English in daily interaction. Whereas the Academic English is testing the English ability of the test takers to use English in academic context such as education. For entry requirement in English speaking countries' higher education, the academic IELTS is required.

The test takers are coming from diverse backgrounds, different English levels, and different understanding on the test. These differences can affect their psychological aspects such confidence level, worry, and confusion (Aswad et al., 2019; Youngsun et al., 2024.). These psychological aspects could possibly influence their performance. However, the influence to the test takers are varied (Suryaningsih, 2014).

In IELTS test, there are four tested major skills. Each skills have different nature so test takers could experience different difficulty in each skill. Some could take Speaking as the most difficult skill while others would say writing. Therefore, it is important to identify the challenges in each skill and conclude the most difficult skill by identifying the average performance.

1.1. Listening and its challenges

Listening as one of the tested skills in IELTS can be very daunting for non-native speaking people. It is reported that the Bangladeshi identified listening as the most challenging skills in contrast reading is considered as the easiest

one followed by writing and speaking (Kaisar & Khanam, 2008). In general, the difficulties can be caused by listened speakers, the given tasks, the test situations, and the test takers themselves (Rost, 2016).

More specific challenges have been reported by previous studies. there are many difficulties that could possibly tackle the test takers to achieve high score in IELTS Listening; they are accent, speaking rate, unfamiliar topics, and vocabulary mastery (Kabir & Cunningham, 2023; Renandya & Hu, 2018; Stepanovienė, 2012). Research by Kabir and Cunningham (2023) found that accents are most challenging. The test takers found it difficult to understand Australian and British accents whereas the other previous studies identified vocabulary mastery as the test takers' weakness. However, the other two studies identify vocabulary mastery as the main difficulties.

The test taker differences in the difficulties of listening skill is not only influenced by their personal background but also their country. The difference result in the previous studies were probably due to the object of the research. In Bangladesh, the test takers believe that the speakers' accent are the most challenging whereas the object of the other two studies were Chinese and Lithuanian.

1.2. Reading and its challenges

Reading comprehension in Academic IELTS test is challenging for those who do not have enough lexical and syntactical knowledge. The vocabulary and grammatical rules used in the given texts are not simple as in the daily readings. Without having a good vocabulary mastery and grammatical understanding the test takers will find it difficult to interact with the text and make sense of them. Without these two, the readers cannot answer the questions in the test correctly. Reading comprehension skills such as skimming, reading for the major ideas, reading for details, reading for the gist, comprehending logical reasoning, and identifying the objectives, attitudes, and points of view of writers are all evaluated in the reading section of the IELTS exam (Holi et al., 2020).

During the exam, the test takers experiencing different challenges however according many research there are two main difficulties, vocabulary and time limit (Chowdhury, 2009; Chalmers & Walkinshaw, 2014; Alghail & Mahfood, 2016; and My et al., 2023). The finding indicates that vocabulary mastery as a key to understand the academic reading. Especially when they have to comprehend readings where they do not have background knowledge and less ESP vocabulary. Another issue is time constrain, it is different with the vocabulary issue where students can improve themselves by improving their vocabulary range whereas in the time constrain they have no ability to extend the time. All the participants can do is to increase their speed readings and find good strategies.

1.3. Writing and its challenges

Writing skill is one the tested skills academic IELTS. The nature and challenges of this skill is different from the others. Writing test for most people is considerably the most challenging skill compared to the other 3 skills. According to the IELTS official website report (IELTS, 2024), it indicates that the writing average score of 40 countries was the lowest compared to the other skills. This indicates that majority of the test takers around the globe find it difficult to score higher in the writing test. Müller (2015) reported that about 90 percent of the IELTS test takers scored lowest in the tested skills.

Table 1. First Language IELTS Academic Average performance 2022

| First Language | Listening | Reading | Writing | Speaking |
|----------------|-----------|---------|---------|----------|
| Filipino | 7,2 | 6,7 | 6,2* | 6,8 |
| French | 6,9 | 7 | 6,1* | 6,7 |
| Indonesian | 6,9 | 6,9 | 6,1* | 6,4 |
| Kannada | 7,1 | 6,5 | 6,2* | 6,7 |
| Korean | 6,5 | 6,4 | 5,9* | 5,9* |
| Nepali | 6,5 | 5,9* | 5,9* | 5,9* |
| Russian | 6,9 | 6,8 | 6* | 6,6 |
| Thai | 6,3 | 6,1 | 5,7* | 5,8 |
| Vietnamese | 6,4 | 6,4 | 6,3 | 5,8* |

| | | | | |
|------|-----|------|-----|-----|
| Akan | 6,8 | 6,1* | 6,3 | 7,1 |
|------|-----|------|-----|-----|

IELTS, 2024*the lowest score

There are some reasons why writing test has become the most difficult one. Majority previous studies consider the test takers should be the one who responsible for their score, however, the nature of the test could also play an important role on the poor performance of the test takers (Arefsadr & Babaii, 2023). Discussing on the most responsible faculty, generally it can be divided into 2 faculties, the nature of the test and the test takers. There are 2 types of tests in the IELTS writing, task 1 and task 2. In both tasks, the test takers could get many types of tasks. In the task 1, for example, the score of the test takers can be highly influenced by the task type they encounter during the test (Alavi & Masjedlo, 2017; Hamid at et., 2019). Their difficulty level is inconsistent. In the writing task 2, the time limit can be the major cause of the low score. The writing task with an impromptu concept can lead to insufficient enough time to write (Weigle, 2002). Overall, the provided time is 60 minutes with 20 minutes for task 1 and 40 minutes for task 2.

Despite the nature of the test, the test takers' issues may lead to the poor score. Some of the possible issues are insufficient linguistic resources, and inability to generate ideas (Maharani & Setyarini, 2019) poor skills on coherence, and cohesion (Yao, 2014). These could be tackled through practice and fruitful feedback by the competence persons. That is way less practice and unfruitful feedback (Pearson, 2018) can also be the cause of the poor score. Another important thing during the practice that they could improve is their horizon as it could improve the writing performance (Ata, 2015). Personal issues mainly can be solved by the test takers strategies to practice and find someone that could provide them feedback to improve their performance.

1.4. Speaking and its challenges

Speaking test can be conducted before or after the 3 other tests. The speaking test is to measure the test taker's ability to communicate. In speaking, opinions, ideas, information, and emotions are being exchanged (Howarth, 2001). In the process of conveying the 4 messages, there are two main skills that are necessary to be mastered by the speaker, accuracy, and fluency (Derakhshan & Khalili, 2016). Accuracy refers to the use of correct vocabulary in the right context (Thornbury, 2005) whereas fluency means the use of conveying message coherently by using correct pronunciation, stressing words, and using intonation correctly, and linking words and sentences correctly (Hedge, 2000).

In relation to speaking, the test takers face some major issues, they are grammatical, vocabulary, connectors, and conjunction issues. Pronunciation could be one of the major problems however, it is not as big as the previously mentioned. In grammatical issues, the lower performers used a very limited grammatical range and often used incorrect grammar (Seedhouse et al., 2014; Roothoof & Breeze, 2019). Similar issues in the vocabulary, vocabulary use by the performers are limited. It is reported by Read and Nation (2006) that the higher performers use wide lexical items and a number of formulaic expressions.

Other major issues that are potentially encounter by the test takers are the use of connectors and conjunctions. Both are major issues for test takers to improve their coherence (Dashti & Razmjoo, 2020). Besides the absent of connectors and conjunctions, they are also often use inappropriately. This is the result of the memorization without having a good understanding on their use.

1.5. The most challenging skill

The apparent difficulty of any talent may vary depending on individual preferences, skill levels, and strengths. EFL students can confidently and competently navigate the intricacies of the Academic IELTS by identifying the issues related to each skill and putting specific preparation strategies into practice. According to IELTS report, the most difficult skill for Indonesian was writing because their average score was the lowest (6.1) while listening and reading indicated the highest score (6.9) (IELTS, 2024). This data should be explored more. Therefore the present study was researching on the Indonesian perception on the most difficult academic IELTS tests and their lowest scores. After that, it went further on reasons of their lowest performance of a certain skill.

2. Methodology

The participants of the current study were 17 respondents who have taken academic IELTS. They were consisted of 11 female and 5 males. They have taken IELTS in the different years, 1 in 2012, 1 in 2015, 2 in 2016, 5 in 2019, 3 in 2020, and 5 in 2021. 3 respondents were first year university students, 3 graduated from undergraduate, and 11 graduated of master's degree. They were also from Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi Islands.

The respondents were selected purposively. They were Indonesian people who have taken IELTS Academic test and wanted to tell their scores. Some people did not want to respond because they believed that their score was privacy, and they did not want to share it. Online questionnaire was sent to them. The questionnaire consisted of three parts, perception on what they believed as the most challenging, IELTS detail scores, and reasons why they score lowest in a particular skill.

The first question was to understand either student's perception on the most difficult skill was in line with their results. If they believed writing as the most difficult tested skill, then their performance in writing should be poor. After that, their each band score was identified. The scores showed the lowest score was obtained by the test takers. Then, they were asked to ponder upon the reasons why they scored lowest in a particular skill.

The responses of the last questions were analyzed thematically. The thematic analysis would result in common challenges/difficulties experienced by the Indonesian test takers. The responses that have been gathered were coded and group them if they were similar. Majority was in writing, but some respondents mentioned speaking, listening, and reading as most difficult skills. Then they mentioned their difficulties. Therefore, some difficulties experienced by the test takers were also reported even though the skill was not the most difficult for Indonesian in general but it was considered as the most difficult by test takers because they performed lowest in that skill.

3. Results and Discussion

The official IELTS results update in 2022 their first language of the test takers as shown in table 1 indicated that Indonesian was in the common trend where writing was the most challenging task for test takers from different countries. Out of 40 countries, there were only six countries who found other skills as most challenging skill whereas Indonesian people experienced writing as most challenging skill. The data indicated that some countries performed poorly not only in one skill but could be in two or three skills such as Nepali and Korean.

Table 2. Test takers' score distribution

| Respondent | Listening | Reading | Writing | Speaking |
|------------|-----------|---------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 8.5 | 8 | 5.5* | 6.5 |
| 2 | 8 | 6* | 6.5 | 6* |
| 3 | 8 | 8.5 | 6.5 | 6* |
| 4 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 6* | 6* |
| 5 | 7.5 | 7 | 6* | 6.5 |
| 6 | 8,5 | 8 | 7,5 | 7* |
| 7 | 8 | 6.5 | 5.5* | 6.5 |
| 8 | 6.5 | 8 | 6* | 6.5 |
| 9 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2* |
| 10 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 6* | 6* |
| 11 | 7 | 8.5 | 6.5 | 6* |
| 12 | 7 | 7 | 6,5* | 7.5 |
| 13 | 4* | 5 | 4.5 | 5.5 |
| 14 | 5.5 | 7 | 6 | 5.5* |
| 15 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| 16 | 8.5 | 6* | 7 | 6.5 |

| | | | | |
|----------------|------|------|-----|------|
| 17 | 8 | 8.5 | 6* | 6.5 |
| Average | 6.91 | 6.94 | 5.8 | 6.03 |

*the lowest score

The data above indicated that the most challenging skill for Indonesian is writing skill with average score 5,8 whereas the easiest skill was reading comprehension with average score 6,94. Speaking was also more challenging for Indonesian with average score 6.03 compared to reading comprehension with average 6.91.

Comparing data from 2022 official report of IELTS scores based on the test taker's first language and the collected data indicated that writing skill is consistent to be the most challenging skill for Indonesian it can be seen from the average score. As for the highest score, both data indicated the same results where highest average score of test takers is in reading comprehension. This shows that for Indonesian reading comprehension can be maximized to earn more score. Second skill where Indonesian can perform better is in the listening comprehension. In the IELTS report reading and listening has the same average score 6.9 whereas in the current study they are slightly different, 6.94 for reading and 6.91 for listening. It is different 0.03.

The major cause of the slight difference are the limited data presented by the current study. Also, the most important thing is that the highest scores of Indonesians were in reading and listening while the lowest score was the same writing comprehension and followed up with speaking. This indicated that Indonesian people find it difficult to perform well in productive skills, writing and speaking.

3.1. Listening test

Listening test can be also very difficult for the Indonesian test takers. Some reasons are difficulties in understanding the pronunciation of the speakers and not listening to English conversation every day, as mentioned by the test takers "I found it difficult to understand the pronunciation of the speakers" and "Listening is most challenging for because I do not listen English conversation everyday".

The difficulties mentioned by the test takers of Indonesians are due to the speakers (pronunciation). This is challenging because of the used accent (Kabir & Cunningham, 2023). Another reason is the test taker's personal issues (inability to deal with the conversation because English speaking is not practiced every day). The first reason focuses on the pronunciation while the second reason focuses on the personal insufficient skills to comprehend the speakers. The first reason examines specific difficulties while the second one focuses on what the test takers can do to solve his/her own issues.

3.2. Reading test

Some test takers found reading could be challenging. Some reasons test takers found out reading test difficult were not used to reading English text, cannot manage time, educational background. The test takers said that "I do not get used to reading English text", "it was difficult for me to manage my time during the test", and "It was difficult for me to read scientific text as a fresh high school graduate".

Vocabulary and time limit as main problems (Chowdhury, 2009; Chalmers & Walkinshaw, 2014; Alghail & Mahfood, 2016; and My et al., 2023). For Indonesian, time was mentioned specifically as the main issue whereas vocabulary was not mentioned. This could be an indication that time constrain is a more challenging than vocabulary. Even though vocabulary was not mentioned but it could be included in the other reasons mentioned by Indonesian, not get used to read English text and educational background. If they are reading English text every day and pursuing higher education, their vocabulary mastery should be better.

3.3. Writing test

Most of the Indonesian test takers mentioned writing as the most challenging skills. Unsurprisingly their lowest score performance was in writing test. There were 5 reasons mentioned by Indonesian why writing was most difficult, less writing practice, insufficient vocabulary, not understand the IELTS academic writing structure, not enough time to finish their writing, unfamiliar with the given topics. The test takers said that "I performed poor because I do not write in English everyday", "I have limited vocabulary to write", "I cannot finish writing, I need more time to finish conclusion in part 2", "it was difficult for me since I do not know the academic writing structure", and "I found it confusing because I do not have much idea about the given topics".

Of the five reasons mentioned, it could be classified into test takers and the test nature issues as Arefsadr and Babaii (2023) highlighted both issues could play an important role in the test takers performance. The test taker's issues are less practice, insufficient vocabulary, and lack of academic writing structure's understanding, whereas for nature of the tests are time constrain and the topics of the tests.

3.4. Speaking test

Speaking skill was the second most challenging skill for Indonesian. There were 4 main reasons for Indonesian why the skill was difficult, not speaking English in their daily conversation, repetition, confidence, and online test inconvenience. As it was articulated by test takers "Speaking was difficult because I do not speak English everyday", "I always mention the same words", "I am not confidence to speak English" and " I felt inconvenient talking in front of the computer".

According to the result of study, Indonesian issues in speaking is not accuracy and fluency as it is mentioned that major issues of speaking are accuracy and fluency (Derakhshan & Khalili, 2016). The first two reasons, not actively using English as a medium of communication and repetition can be included in fluency but the last two reasons are personal state, speaking confidence and inconvenience of online test. This indicates that personal states should be considered during the test. The test takers should prepare well their accuracy, fluency, and their psychological aspects.

3.5. Perception on the most difficult skill

There are four tested skills in academic IELTS. Test takers could say a particular skill is difficult, but they perform good in the skill. Therefore, it is important to identify their perception and then compared with their real IELTS score. The following is the test takers perception on which skill is most difficult for them.

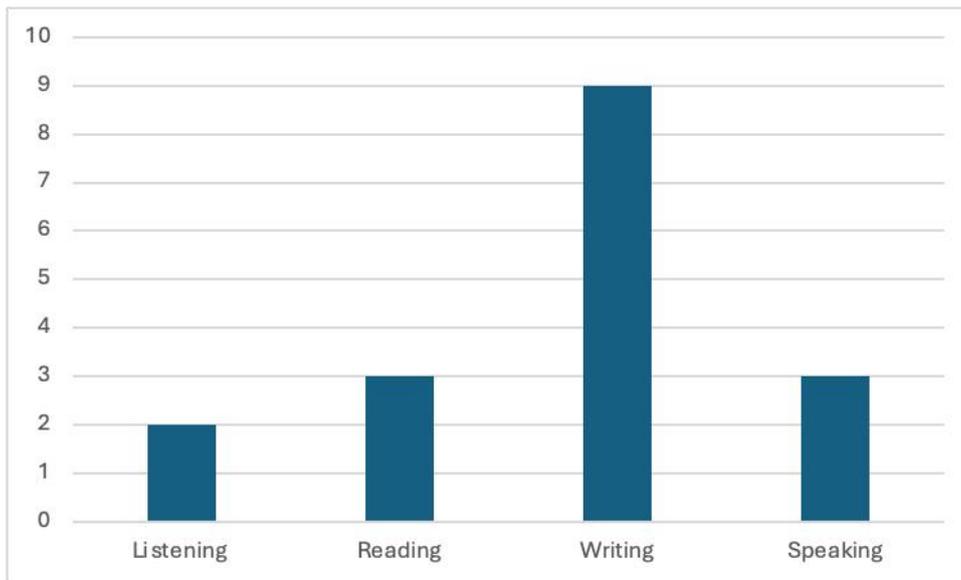


Figure 1. Test Taker's Perception on the Most Difficult Skills

The data above indicated that Indonesian test takers perceived that writing test was the most difficult skill. There were 9 respondents believed that writing as the most difficult skills followed by speaking, reading, and listening. In contrast to writing, listening was considered as the least difficult skill. Only 2 respondents perceived listening skill most difficult. This indicated that what the test takers perceived as the least challenging skill will not guarantee to perform best because the average score of reading is higher than listening. It was slightly difference, only 0.03. According to the data students performed better in reading than in listening even though they say listening as the least difficult skill.

Finding writing as the most difficult skill in IELTS academic is not only Indonesian issues, but it was also a major issue in majority of non-English speaking countries (IELTS, 2024). Müller (2015) reported that 90% of the test takers performed lowest in writing. More effort should be taken for Indonesian IELTS test takers if they plan to take IELTS academic test.

Writing skill does not only need language resources, but it also needs to generate ideas (Maharani & Setyarini, 2019) and finish the two tasks within 60 minutes. Then, write the idea in coherence, and cohesion (Yao, 2014). Some

people find it difficult to generate ideas, one of the reasons is because of it is an impromptu topic (Weigle, 2002). Some people are familiar while others are not. Other possible reasons are the unfamiliar topics and inability to organize their writing academically. Thus, these reasons can cause many people possibly perform well in listening, reading, or speaking but they struggle hard to write well.

4. Conclusion

IELTS academic test has been used widely for international English proficiency recognition including in Indonesia. There are four major skills tested in IELTS, listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Each skill has their own challenges however for Indonesian in general writing is the most difficult skill. 9 out of 17 respondents believed that writing as the most challenging while the rest chose speaking, listening, and reading. There are five reasons writing has become the most challenging skill. They are because less writing practice, poor vocabulary mastery, less understanding on academic writing structure, time constrain, and unfamiliar writing task topics. These five reasons should be considered for Indonesian people if they plan to take academic IELTS. They must spend more time to study writing skill. Having good grammar understanding and vocabulary mastery do not guarantee the writing quality. It involves many other things such as generating ideas and writing coherently, cohesively, and academically. Further research should be on the best ways of assisting Indonesian's learning methods on academic IELTS writing skills

References

- Alavi, S. M., & Masjedlou, A. P. (2017). Construct under-representation and construct irrelevant variances on IELTS Academic Writing Task 1: Is there any threat to validity? *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 7(11), 1097–1107. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0711.19>
- Alghail, A. A., & Mahfoodh, O. H. (2016). Academic reading difficulties encountered by international graduate students in a Malaysian university. *Issues in Educational Research*, 26(3), 369-386.
- Arefsadr, S., & Babaii, E. (2023). Let Their Voices be Heard: IELTS Candidates' Problems with the IELTS Academic Writing Test. *TESL-EJ*, 26(4), n4.
- Aswad, M., Rahman, F., Said, I. M., Hamuddin, B., & Nurchalis, N. F. (2019). A software to increase English learning outcomes: An acceleration model of English as the second language. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 26(6.2), 157.
- Ata, A. W. (2015). Knowledge, education, and attitudes of international students to IELTS: A case of Australia. *Journal of International Students*, 5(4), 488–500. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v5i4.410>
- Chalmers, J., & Walkinshaw, I. (2014). Reading strategies in IELTS tests: Prevalence and impact on outcomes. *English Australia Journal*, 30(1), 24-39.
- Chowdhury, S. (2009). Gaining proficiency in the reading module in IELTS: A study on the efforts of Bangladeshi students. *The Dhaka University Journal of Linguistics*, 2(3), 125-140. DOI: 10.3329/dujl.v2i3.4148
- Dashti, L., & Razmjoo, S. A. (2020). An examination of IELTS candidates' performances at different band scores of the speaking test: A quantitative and qualitative analysis. *Cogent Education*, 7(1), 1770936.
- Derakhshan, A., & Nadi Khalili, A. (2016). Developing EFL learner's speaking ability, accuracy and fluency. *English Language and Literature Studies*, 6(2), 177–186. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ells.v6n2p177>
- IELTS. (2024). Retrieved on 13 April <https://ielts.org/researchers/our-research/test-statistics#Demographic>
- Hamid, M. O., Hardy, I., & Reyes, V. (2019). Test-takers' perspectives on a global test of English: Questions of fairness, justice and validity. *Language Testing in Asia*, 9(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-019-0092-9>
- Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford University Press.
- Holi, A. I., Al Washahi, Q., & Alhassan, A. (2020). Unpacking the challenges and accommodation strategies of Omani English-Major students on IELTS academic reading tests. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 16(3), 1621-1636. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17263/jlls.803922>
- Howarth, P. (2001). Process speaking: Preparing to repeat yourself. *MET*, 10(1), 39–44.
- Kabir, S. A., & Cunningham, U. (2023). Prioritizing and addressing perceived listening challenges of IELTS test takers in Bangladesh. *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 6(2), 130-150.

- Kaisar, M. T., & Khanam, M. S. (2008). Listening practice in English language learning: Bangladesh context. *Prime University Journal*, 2(2), 125–136. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344439003_Listening_Practice_in_English_Language_Learning_Bangladesh_Context
- Kaisar, M. T., & Khanam, M. S. (2008). Listening practice in English language learning: Bangladesh context. *Prime University Journal*, 2(2), 125-136.
- Maharani, T. C., & Setyarini, S. (2019). Hear them out: Constraints encountered by IELTS students in the writing class. *Edusertris*, 6(3), 116–129.
- Müller, A. (2015). The differences in error rate and type between IELTS writing bands and their impact on academic workload. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34(6), 1207–1219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2015.1024627>
- My, V. T. D., Nhi, N. T. B., Lam, D. P., & Tuan, L. C. (2023). IELTS Reading: Perceived Challenges and Strategies by Vietnamese University English Majors. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 14(28), 18-28.
- Pearson, W. S. (2018). Written corrective feedback in IELTS writing task 2: Teachers' priorities, practices, and beliefs. *TESL-EJ*, 21(4).
- Read, J., & Nation, P. (2006). An investigation of the lexical dimension of the IELTS speaking test. *IELTS Research Reports*, 1-25.
- Renandya, W. A., & Hu, G. (2018). L2 listening in China: An examination of current practice. In A. Burns & J. Siegel (Eds.). *International perspectives on teaching the four skills in ELT* (pp. 37–50). Palgrave Macmillan
- Roothoof, H., & Breeze, R. (2019). IELTS: Investigating the development of 'grammatical range and accuracy' at different proficiency levels in the IELTS speaking test. *IELTS Research Reports Online Series*, No. 1, 2-36. <https://www.ielts.org/teaching-and-research/research-reports>
- Rost, M. (2016). *Teaching and researching listening*. Routledge
- Seedhouse, P., Harris, A., Naeb, R., & Ustunel, E. (2014). The relationship between speaking features and band descriptors: A mixed methods study. *IELTS Research Reports*, 1-30. www.ielts.org/researchers
- Stepanovienė, A. (2012). Barriers to academic listening: Research perspectives. *Darnioji Daugiakalbyste*, 1, 134–141. <https://dx.doi.org/10.33508/bw.v6i1.1671>
- Suryaningsih, H. (2014). *Students' perceptions of international English language testing system (IELTS) and test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) tests*. Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Longman.
- Yao, S. (2014). An analysis of Chinese students' performance in IELTS Academic Writing. *The New English Teacher*, 8(2), 104–138.
- Weigle, S. C. (2002). *Assessing writing*. Cambridge University Press
- Youngsun, K., Sosrohadi, S., Andini, C., Jung, S., Yookyung, K., & Jae, P. K. (2024). Cultivating Gratitude: Essential Korean Thankfulness Phrases for Indonesian Learners. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 7(2), 248-253.