










# Impact of English Language Proficiency, Multilingualism and Perceived Language Difficulties on International Student's Academic Performance in Iraq

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## Abstract

The ability of international graduates to grasp a foreign language has become increasingly important as the demand for English-speaking workers has grown worldwide. To this end, several strategies for encouraging the use of English in academic settings have been implemented. International students' academic success may suffer if colleges refuse to recognize English as their first language. As a result, the current study's purpose is to assess the impact of English language ability, multilingualism, and perceived linguistic challenges on international students' academic achievement (GPA). Data was gathered for this purpose from three foreign colleges in Iraq. The results of the multiple regression show that multilingualism and English language proficiency significantly impact students' academic performance (GPA) while speaking, reading, and listening skills, as well as writing difficulty, are unimportant factors. Speaking, reading, and listening difficulties are among the four perceived language difficulties (GPA). According to the study's results, most respondents valued English fluency while managing a university's academic atmosphere. The research may also assist the researchers in developing their current study to raise the significance of their work.

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**Keywords:** English proficiency, multilingualism, academic performance, Iraq

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## Introduction

Academic performance (GPA) measures how well educational institutions, teachers, and students have accomplished their immediate and long-term educational objectives (Lavin, 1965). Academic success is essential for young people's successful social integration (Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998). Students who do well in school are better prepared to transition to adulthood and achieve economic and career success (Ganyaupfu, 2013). Low academic accomplishment in school is caused by several problems, including language ability, multilingualism, and difficulty speaking, reading, writing, and listening (Martirosyan, Hwang, & Wanjohi, 2015). These problems must be resolved for these pupils to continue swimming poorly (Martirosyan et al., 2015). Many students struggle in class due to these limitations; they feel more comfortable enrolling in classes remotely (Martirosyan et al., 2015). Numerous scholars have also contended that multilingualism, language competency, and difficulties with speaking, writing, reading, and listening substantially impact the academic success (Alrasheed, Alnashwan, & Alshowiman, 2021; Martirosyan et al., 2015).

Countries prioritizing removing barriers to multilingualism and English competence have seen increased student enrollment and academic achievement (Aizawa, Rose, Thompson, & Curle, 2020). Due to this, the number of international students attending American universities and colleges has dramatically expanded over the past ten years (Aizawa et al., 2020). International enrollment in US higher education institutions has recently increased significantly (Esagoff, Cohen, Chang, Equils, & Van Orman, 2022). According to Esagoff et al. (2022), there were an increasing number of international students from China, India, and South Korea studying in post-graduate institutions in the US. The increased focus on US nations with non-native English speakers is helping to boost the number of international students by offering dual degree programs (Esagoff et al., 2022; Wang, Zhu, & Ke, 2022). The academic challenge of language proficiency is one of the numerous issues with delivering a dual degree program in which students acquire degrees from both the United States and a foreign partner university (Fass-Holmes, 2022). This is true even though universities require proof of English proficiency before admitting international students for academic study, typically by imposing a minimum score on a standardized language test like the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (Ortega, Shin, & Martínez, 2022). Surprisingly, academic performance and English proficiency skills have received significant attention. Still, little attention has been paid to developing countries, given the large number of international students enrolled in various programs throughout the United States and other English-speaking countries (Mackenzie, 2022).

The main cause of developing nations' declining academic performance is their multilingualism, English proficiency, and difficulty with the language (Li, Teng, Tsai, & Lin, 2022; Malik, Malek, Saidin, & Afip, 2021). Because they lack speaking proficiency in English and don't have any English proficiency courses, international students from nations where English isn't their native tongue may have trouble understanding lectures and have a tough time interacting with professors (Malik et al., 2021). Because of this, immigrant students need more time to fully grasp the second language and look for academic standards in the English language (Cummins, 1983). It takes roughly two years to acquire "interpersonal communication abilities" for everyday discussion. International students from "non-English speaking backgrounds" (NESB) spend several years in their host country studying to earn a degree, but it may take longer to acquire academic language skills. As a result, limited language abilities may directly or indirectly affect the academic success (Chen & Li, 2022). According to Daller and Phelan (2013), a person's academic achievement might be impacted by language skills. Authors of several studies have discovered that reading ability significantly affects pupils' academic success (Geide-Stevenson, 2018).

Similarly, another study found a strong impact of linguistic ability on academic success (Chen & Li, 2022). Another study discovered that multilingualism significantly improved academic achievement (Andrade, 2006; Martirosyan et al., 2015). Another found that their academic performance is also impacted by their trouble with speaking, writing, listening, and reading (Martirosyan et al., 2015). This debate has demonstrated the significance of these indicators for educational institutions. Still, it also indicates that, in this relationship, developed countries receive more attention than developing ones, particularly in Iraq (Alrasheed et al., 2021). It is suggested that increasing English competence and multilingualism and removing obstacles or difficulties in speaking, writing, reading, and listening would enhance student enrollment in Iraq (Nachatar Singh, Schapper, & Jack, 2014). Furthermore, previous studies (Berman & Cheng, 2001; Geide-Stevenson, 2018; Ghenghesh, 2015; Light, Xu, & Mossop, 1987; Racca & Lasaten, 2016; Stephen, Welman, & Jordaan, 2004) have largely concentrated on the individual effect of English language proficiency on academic performance while paying little attention to the impact of multilingualism and perceived language difficulties on academic performance, particularly in Iraq. In light of the previous debate, the current study's goal is to determine the effect of language ability, multilingualism, and perceived linguistic challenges on the academic performance of international students in Iraq.

## Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Numerous characteristics were revealed by earlier research investigations on the factors that influence students' academic success in post-graduation education. There are four types of these dimensions: 1. Intellectual 2. Cognitive 3 and 4 are demographic and psychological (McKenzie & Schweitzer, 2001). These aspects, including academic accomplishment (Li, Chen, & Duanmu, 2010; McKenzie & Schweitzer, 2001), learning habits, and skills, have been thoroughly investigated in previous studies (Abbott-Chapman, Hughes, & Wyld, 1992). Learning approaches, subject-specific learning techniques, and "generic learning strategies" Duff, Boyle, Dunleavy, and Ferguson (2004); Pokay and Blumenfeld (1990) are all aspects that significantly impact students' academic success. Motivation, emotional support, anxiety, social support, social integration in college, and psychological wellness are among the psychological dimensions (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1978). In previous studies, "individual's attribution style" and self-efficacy have been studied about cognitive dimension Terenzini and Pascarella (1978); Three players—China and Robertson (2007) demographic elements like age and gender (Li et al., 2010). All of these variables were examined about academic achievement in higher education.

Both domestic and international students enrolled in higher education should consider the abovementioned criteria, which were all studied in earlier literature. As a result, several additional characteristics, such as language ability, are considered when studying overseas students and their performance in post-graduate education. Domestic and international students differ in several ways, with international students having particular traits (Martirosyan et al., 2015). Numerous previous studies (Martirosyan et al., 2015; Wardlow, 1999) have shown that English proficiency is crucial for academic achievement in English-medium universities, particularly for students who are not native English speakers. Additionally, various cross-cultural and culturally specific factors like lecture style, interactions between lecturers and students, and relationships between lecturers and students are linked to the academic achievement of international students in addition to English proficiency (Li et al., 2010).

The psychological and sociocultural adaptations may have a significant impact on overseas students' English ability, which has a further impact on academic achievement. The relationship between English self-confidence, psychological adjustments, and sociocultural adaptations, as well as their effects on the "English-speaking academic environment," was explored in Yang, Noels, and Saumure's (2006) study. Additionally, poor English language proficiency is the primary cause of the isolation of international students from instructors and local students. Earlier studies showed that English competence indirectly affects academic performance but also psychological and sociocultural aspects.

Because the number of international students attending foreign universities is growing, research is still being done to determine the characteristics contributing to their academic achievement. The literature review from earlier studies that explains the impact of "self-perceived English language competency" on the "GPA of overseas students" will be covered in the subsequent phase. The relationship between multilingualism and academic achievement was also discussed in this study. This study's independent variables are "Self-perceived English language proficiency" and multilingualism.

However, many earlier academics looked into how linguistic ability affected academic performance (Krausz, Schiff, Schiff, & Hise, 2005; Light et al., 1987; Stoyhoff, 1997). The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the TOEFL were used in these studies to compare test results to examine how well international students performed (IELTS). The State University of New York at Albany demonstrated in a study by Martirosyan et al. (2015) that there is a favorable relationship between TOEFL scores and students' GPAs (grade point averages). The data was gathered from 376 international students enrolled in graduate programs. The research of Johnson (1988) revealed similar findings. He indicated that a confirmatory investigation was carried out at "the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay" and that there was a weaker correlation between the TOEFL and GPAs of overseas students (Wongtrirat, 2010). Less-than-500 TOEFL score pupils received lower grades.

Other research that examined the association between language ability and GPA (Light & Teh-Yuan, 1991; Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006) also came to the same conclusions. 77 first-semester students' data were used in the study by Stoyhoff (1997), which studied the factors that influence the academic performance of overseas students. The findings showed a substantial correlation between overseas students' TOEFL scores and GPAs. It shows that students with higher TOEFL scores also had higher GPAs than students with lower TOEFL scores and lower GPAs (Andrade, 2006).

Numerous studies have stressed that TOEFL results can be used to predict academic progress and language proficiency using GPA. However, other researchers concluded that using TOEFL scores as a measure of the academic progress of international students may not be a reliable indicator (Krausz et al., 2005; Xu, 1991). According to research by Nasirudeen and Xiao (2020), there is no favorable correlation between TOEFL scores and academic success for international students, particularly in

accounting. Data was gathered from 450 international students accepted into 3 US universities for a study by [Berman and Cheng \(2001\)](#) examining the association between academic success of post-graduate international students and English proficiency and background characteristics. The findings of this study demonstrated that, while TOEFL scores did not accurately reflect students' real academic achievement, "self-reported English competence" was a useful indicator of the perceived academic difficulties of international students ([Xu, 1991](#)).

The impact of "English language competency" on students' academic success in US higher education institutions was examined in a meta-analysis of 22 research ([Wongtrirat, 2010](#)). This investigation, which covered 1987 through 2009, used TOEFL scores to quantify the connection between English proficiency, course completion, and GPA. The findings of this meta-analysis demonstrated that the TOEFL has no bearing on the academic success of overseas students when measured by course completion or GPA ([Wongtrirat, 2010](#)).

The analysis of IELTS scores and academic achievement of students attending foreign colleges in the prior literature revealed inconsistent findings, much to the TOEFL instance. Studies ([Hill, Storch, & Lynch, 1999](#); [Woodrow, 2006](#)) showed a weak but favorable correlation between IELTS scores and academic success, particularly for those overseas students from non-English-speaking nations. According to Kerstjens and Nery's (2000) study, IELTS results have no bearing on students' GPAs.

According to a prior literature review, most studies gauge academic performance (GPA) purely based on English ability (IELTS or TOEFL scores). IELTS or TOEFL scores alone are insufficient indicators of English competence when assessing the academic performance of international students. According to [Fox \(2004\)](#), language exams fail to account for other aspects of international students' academic achievement, such as their financial stability, ability to acclimate to their new academic environment, and ability to manage their time well enough to study and social support. Additional studies have revealed several additional variables that affect how well international students perform academically, including ESL assistance, a lack of background knowledge, challenging course material, a lack of study skills, language requirements for various courses, prior experience, and motivation ([Daller & Yixin, 2017](#); [Drennan & Rohde, 2002](#)). There is also a need for more research in this area to identify additional influencing factors in the evaluation of English competence and other elements that may impact the academic success of international students.

In other words, little research has been done in the past on multilingual students (those who speak more than one language) and their academic performance, analyzing the cognitive benefits and drawbacks of multilingualism in American higher education. In his study, [Kovalik \(2012\)](#) looked at the relationship between 305 undergrad students' academic performance and multilingualism. The researcher looked at pupils' total GPA and how many languages they could speak proficiently. According to the study's findings, there was no correlation between these characteristics. Surprisingly, students who were fluent communicators in multiple languages had low GPAs. The study only had a very small number of participants.

Additionally, the pupils' languages were not given much thought. Therefore, it is challenging to explain why multilingual students who do not speak English as their first language have advantages or disadvantages in institutions where English is spoken. This study will look at "self-perceived English language competency" and how it affects the academic achievement of overseas students. Additionally, this study investigates the relationship between academic achievement (GPA), and the number of languages students in international educational institutions speak.

Multilingualism and linguistic difficulties in speaking, listening, writing, and reading can also impact pupils' academic achievement and English language competency ([Berman & Cheng, 2001](#); [Daniel & King, 1997](#)). According to a study, students' academic performance suffers when they perceive more challenges with reading, writing, speaking and listening ([Berman & Cheng, 2001](#); [Getachew, 2018](#)). Other research has discovered a negligible impact of perceived language barriers on academic achievement ([Martirosyan et al., 2015](#)). Previous discussions have demonstrated that multilingualism and perceived language difficulties, in addition to English language proficiency, significantly impact academic achievement. However, these linkages have received less attention in earlier studies. Therefore, based on these gaps, the research hypothesis listed below is formed:

**H1:** English proficiency significantly affects the academic performance of Iraq international university students.

**H2:** Perceived language difficulties significantly affect the academic performance of Iraq international university students.

**H3:** Multilingualism significantly affects the academic performance of Iraq's international university students.

## Data Collection Procedures

The study's primary goal is to examine the effects of English competency, the number of languages spoken and perceived language barriers on international students' GPAs at Iraqi universities. It was conducted using a quantitative, non-experimental study design. We created and employed a self-reported, standardized questionnaire to collect data. We added demographic questions on "English language proficiency" to this questionnaire. The data on these items were gathered using a 4-point Likert scale (1 to 4), with 1 denoting poor and 4 denoting good. This construct also included questions about perceived language difficulties, such as: Is there ever a problem understanding English reading, writing, listening, and speaking? These questions were measured on a four-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting always, 2 denoting frequently, 3 denoting occasionally, and 4 denoting never. The third variable, multilingualism, was assessed using a Likert scale. It was introduced to ask participants how many languages they knew and whether English was their second, third, or fourth language. Using GPA scores, we evaluated the individuals' academic performance. The information was gathered from three universities in Iraq: the Universities of Babylon, Bagdad, and Diyala. The researcher obtains consent from the respondents and university administration before data collection. 150 international students were given the questionnaires, but only 105 returned them, leaving 100 students who could be utilized in the study.

## Data Analysis

The information was examined from both descriptive and inferential angles. The mean, standard deviation, lowest and maximum values, etc. are described in the descriptive analysis. The significance level of the results was then also checked using the multiple regression analysis. A descriptive study was conducted in the first portion, and multiple regression analysis was conducted using SPSS software in the next section.

### *Descriptive statistics*

We employed the "statistical software package" SPSS 2008 to analyze the data. To evaluate the performance of international students, we used the dependent variable (students' GPA). Questions about self-rated language difficulty, number of languages spoken, and language proficiency were considered independent variables. "Descriptive statistics" were employed to analyze the data. Multiple regression models were used to determine which independent variable was the strongest predictor of academic performance.

Descriptive statistics' findings highlight the qualities of the data. There were 150 questionnaires issued, and 100 of them were returned. There were 46 women and 54 men. There were 60 senior semester students among the responses, and 40 of them were from senior semesters. English was either the first, second, third, or fourth language mentioned by the participants when asked about the multilingualism of the language. 15 of those students said that English was their first language because it was the official language in their native nations. Participants who spoke a second language were (65), and those who expressed a third language were (20). 40 students disagreed with the statement that English is a language of instruction, and 60 pupils agreed.

However, roughly half of the children who reported having issues with reading, hearing, writing, and speaking English had issues across all four categories. Nearly 50% of pupils in each of the four categories reported occasionally having trouble with reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Twenty percent of the kids indicated they had no trouble with reading, writing, speaking, or listening. The results stated previously are projected in [Table.1](#) below.

According to descriptive statistics, the average mean and standard deviation are represented. This study aimed to identify the elements that contributed to the disparate levels of academic performance among pupils. [Table.2](#) anticipated results show that 3.57 is the highest mean score among the students, indicating that the majority of students have outstanding English scores. Interestingly, the multilingualism category's highest mean score of 3.76 shows that most students regarded English as their third-most preferred language for speaking. The students who considered their English proficiency exceptional also seemed to have it, as seen by the highest mean, 3.69, of perceived challenges. The accompanying [Table.2](#) below predicts these descriptive outcomes.

**Table.1:** *Sample Demographic Characteristics*

| <b>Sample characteristics</b>                 | <b>Observation</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---|--------------------|----------|-------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                                 |                    |          |                   |
| Male  | 100                | 54       | 54%               |
| Female  | 100                | 46       | 46%               |
| <b>Semester</b>                               |                    |          |                   |
| Juniors                                       | 100                | 60       | 60%               |
| Senior  | 100                | 40       | 40%               |
| <b>Multilingualism</b>                        | 100                |          |                   |
| First   | 100                | 15       | 15%               |
| Second  | 100                | 65       | 65%               |
| Third   | 100                | 20       | 20%               |
| <b>English as the language of instruction</b> |                    |          | 0%                |
| Yes   | 100                | 60       | 60%               |
| No  | 100                | 40       | 40%               |
| <b>Difficulties in writing</b>                |                    |          |                   |
| Always  | 100                | 15       | 10%               |
| Often   | 100                | 10       | 50%               |
| Sometimes                                     | 100                | 50       | 25%               |
| Never   | 100                | 25       | 25%               |
| <b>Difficulties in reading</b>                |                    |          |                   |
| Always  | 100                | 12       | 12%               |
| Often   | 100                | 10       | 10%               |
| Sometimes                                     | 100                | 52       | 52%               |
| Never   | 100                | 26       | 26%               |
| <b>Difficulties in listening</b>              |                    |          |                   |
| Always  | 100                | 17       | 17%               |
| Often   | 100                | 20       | 20%               |
| Sometimes                                     | 100                | 45       | 45%               |
| Never   | 100                | 18       | 18%               |
| <b>Difficulties in speaking</b>               |                    |          |                   |
| Always  | 100                | 20       | 20%               |
| Often   | 100                | 21       | 21%               |
| Sometimes                                     | 100                | 49       | 49%               |
| Never   | 100                | 10       | 10%               |

**Table 2:** *Descriptive Statistics*

| <b>English Proficiency</b>       | <b>Observation</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Standard Deviation</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Average                          | 100                | 3.09        | 0.831                     |
| Good                             | 100                | 2.97        | 0.68                      |
| Excellent                        | 100                | 3.57        | 0.514                     |
| Total                            | 100                | 3.15        | 0.711                     |
| <b>English is your</b>           |                    |             |                           |
| First                            | 100                | 3.44        | 0.726                     |
| Second                           | 100                | 2.68        | 0.476                     |
| Third                            | 100                | 3.76        | 0.437                     |
| <b>Difficulties in languages</b> |                    |             |                           |
| Difficulty in Reading            | 100                | 3.120       | 0.782                     |
| Difficulty in Writing            | 100                | 3.341       | 0.732                     |
| Difficulty in Listening          | 100                | 3.127       | 0.672                     |
| Difficulty in speaking           | 100                | 3.451       | 0.821                     |
| Academic performance             | 100                | 3.69        | 0.783                     |

### **Multiple regressions**

Multiple regression analysis was utilized to verify the study's further findings. The multiple regression analysis findings show that their English proficiency level positively and significantly impacts the student's GPA. The results of the multiple regression analysis also indicated that language proficiency had a favorable and significant impact on students' GPAs in Iraq. However, among the challenges, writing difficulty has a negative and considerable impact on students' GPAs. This demonstrates that when a student's writing is more challenging, their academic performance

suffers, although other obstacles have no bearing on their GPA. According to the respondent's observation, these characteristics are not significant for academic performance. The required R square is 23 to 29 percent when the sample size is less than 100 and the study contains five to ten variables. The findings of multiple regressions are then considered significant at 0.05 significant levels. Cooper and Cooper (Phillips & Hempstead, 2017).

Given that there are six independent factors and a sample size of 100, this impact is considered significant because the R square value of 35% indicates that the exogenous variables are changing the dependent variable by 35%. Multiple regressions may apply to this study, as language competency, the number of languages spoken and writing difficulties significantly affect students' GPAs in Iraq. The following Table forecasts these outcomes.3.

**Table.3:** Regression Results

|                                  | Beta   | Std. Error | Beta  | T values | P Values |
|----------------------------------|--------|------------|-------|----------|----------|
| <b>(Constant)</b>                | 0.952  | 0.379      |       | 2.513    | 0.013    |
| <b>Difficulty in reading</b>     | 0.046  | 0.109      | 0.042 | -0.425   | 0.672    |
| <b>Difficulty in writing</b>     | -0.285 | -0.111     | 0.242 | -2.561   | 0.011    |
| 1 <b>Difficulty in listening</b> | 0.067  | 0.093      | 0.071 | 0.724    | 0.47     |
| <b>Difficulty in speaking</b>    | 0.102  | 0.109      | 0.091 | 0.943    | 0.347    |
| <b>Language Proficiency</b>      | 0.211  | 0.099      | 0.208 | 2.129    | 0.035    |
| <b>Multilingualism</b>           | 0.941  | 0.378      | 0.245 | 2.524    | 0.012    |

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

## Discussion

Academic performance, determined by continuous assessment or cumulative grade point average, relates to how well a student, teacher, or institution has reached their short- or long-term educational goals (Martirosyan et al., 2015). The ability of international graduates to grasp a foreign language has become increasingly important as the demand for English-speaking workers has grown worldwide. To this end, several strategies for encouraging the use of English in academic settings have been implemented. International students' academic success may suffer if colleges refuse to recognize English as their first language. This suggests that students' motivation levels may be declining. This study adds to the body of knowledge by examining the substantial effects of English language competency, multilingualism, and perceived linguistic challenges in speaking, writing, listening, and reading on the academic achievement of international students in Iraq. Data was gathered from the overseas students enrolled in three Iraqi universities. According to the study's findings, a student's GPA, determined by their GPA, is positively and significantly impacted by their language ability. The results of our investigation were consistent with those of earlier research. According to Xu (1991), "self-perceived English language competency" was favorably correlated with the academic achievement of international students, which was evaluated using GPA. Additionally, there is a strong and favorable correlation between multilingualism and academic achievement.

The students with the highest GPA mean were those who listed English as their third language. The GPA mean was lowest for students who listed English as a second language. The findings suggested that more research is necessary to determine how many speaking languages affect academic performance. This claim was further corroborated by Martirosyan et al. (2015), who utilized GPA as a proxy for academic achievement and discovered third languages' beneficial and significant effects on academic performance. According to these results, many overseas students who do not speak English as their first language may speak it as a second or third language. Language limitations may put the students in danger. The multiple regression analysis results also show that multilingualism has a positive and significant impact on pupils' academic achievement. This outcome is more consistent with earlier investigations that came to the same conclusion (Alrasheed et al., 2021; Martirosyan et al., 2015; Rooy, 2010; Stoffelsma & Spooren, 2019).

Writing difficulty negatively and significantly impacts overseas students' academic achievement among the four indices of perceived English language difficulty in speaking, writing, reading, and listening. While other variables have a negligible impact on students' academic success, this proves that these indicators are not crucial for students' academic performance. These findings were in line with those of other studies (Artemeva & Fox, 2010; Müller & Daller, 2019), which also came to the same conclusions. Based on the facts mentioned above, it was determined that, in comparison to other industrialized nations, Iraq places more emphasis on improving student English proficiency, multilingualism, and speaking difficulties than it does on lowering student obstacles. To boost the retention rate of students, which can only be increased through their academic achievement, the Iraqi government and the regulating authorities for universities should pay adequate attention to these aspects.

## Contributions of Study

The results of the current study suggest that there are many features and recommendations for US higher education institutions that could be useful for developing policies and supporting initiatives that cater to the demands of international students. Applying these suggestions will help resolve student issues and increase student retention. According to research findings, non-immigrant students' "self-perceived English proficiency" appears to be related to their academic success. It is necessary to develop support programs specifically for international students in accordance with institutional study criteria at the international level to promote international students' success. [Andrade \(2006\)](#) proposed that these programs should include tutoring, supplemental instruction, and English language classes. These courses will help the kids enhance their talents and succeed academically. Additionally, experts in various academic fields consider international students' needs and attempt to help them by using various educational techniques ([Andrade, 2006; Shapiro, Farrelly, & Tomaš, 2014](#)).

In educational institutions, social involvement is crucial for academic achievement, according to [Lee's \(2013\)](#) study. For pupils to succeed, student activations must be implemented. Students' participation helps foster relationships between foreign and domestic students and also has a good effect on the language abilities of the latter group. Students' learning and achievement are hampered by a lack of listening and communicating skills and literacy and writing proficiency in English. Students should have strong communication and listening abilities in particular. To encourage continued communication, this study also offers recommendations for academics, advisers, and advisors of overseas students. The pupils will benefit from ongoing contact as it will foster cooperation between all parties and mutual understanding between the students. Continuous communication is advantageous to international students and supports intercultural integration.

IELTS and TOEFL scores alone are not effective indicators of academic performance, according to a study by [Fox \(2004\)](#). This is because it may disregard other elements that affect students' performance. Other studies evaluated the performance using linguistic skills and "self-perceived language proficiency" ([Berman & Cheng, 2001; Takahashi, 2009](#)). According to research by [Takahashi \(2009\)](#), "self-perceived language proficiency" is positively correlated with IELTS and TOEFL test scores and negatively correlated with anxiety. According to [Fox \(2004\)](#), language exams fail to account for other aspects of international students' academic achievement, such as their financial stability, ability to acclimate to their new academic environment, ability to manage their time well enough to study, and social support. Additional studies have revealed several other variables that affect how well international students succeed academically, including language barriers and multilingualism ([Daller & Yixin, 2017; Huong, 2001](#)).

Additionally, prior studies examined the impact of self-perceived English proficiency on overseas students' academic achievement. Still, they paid little attention to the effects of multilingualism and language issues on those students' academic performance. More research is therefore required to better understand these two factors, together with English language proficiency, which can influence the academic success of overseas students. Because of these connections, the current study is regarded as a pioneering study that could contribute to the body of knowledge in the field and aid other researchers in their future work.

## Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

There were several limitations in this study that could be addressed in follow-up research to close this gap. The research was first carried out in three universities in Iraq, indicating a small sample size. To extend the sample size and improve the generalizability of the investigation, future studies could be conducted at other colleges. Second, the review of prior studies revealed that the impact of English competence, multilingualism, and perceived language barriers on academic performance among international students varied depending on the language ability needed to complete study programs at foreign institutions ([Graham, 1987; Johnson, 1988](#)). Therefore, results can be cautiously extrapolated. Additional elements, such as learning techniques, individual traits, background circumstances, and motivation, may also influence students' academic achievement ([Stoyloff, 1997](#)). Other elements, particularly those with a cross-cultural component, may impact the pupils' academic achievement. The findings of this study on multilingualism showed that students who listed English as their third or fourth language and were from non-English speaking nations had the highest GPA means. Although it's feasible that after learning one foreign language if they get through the challenges and issues with knowing one language, they'll be able to find another quickly. It is an assumption because there is no research on the subject now. Additional study in this area is required and should use a sizable sample size. Thirdly, future research may combine qualitative and quantitative data analysis with the current study's usage of quantitative data.

Further research is required in this field to investigate the relationship between multilingualism and academic achievement among overseas students. The researchers should use a high sample size for future studies to allow for more in-depth analysis. Future studies might focus on mediating variables ([Li et al., 2010](#)).



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