

Title:	Are English Language Proficiency Tests valid indicators of one's language skills, and can these tests improve one's English spoken and written skills.
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Abstract

Many people claim that language proficiency tests can accurately measure and determine one's ability in the language, where a satisfactory language proficiency test result serves as one of compulsory requirements for many university and job applications. That said, there is a certain level of expectation that, by preparing for and completing these tests, one's language ability not only can be measured, but also improved to a certain extent. Existing research claimed that IELTS, a world recognized English proficiency test, serves as a valid indicator of one's academic success. However, there has not been in-depth studies on the relationships between preparing for language proficiency tests and any significant improvements in one's proficiency in the language. Thus, this research aims to investigate if English Language Proficiency Tests can be valid indicators of one's language skills, and further to examine if these tests can improve one's English spoken and written skills. The result of this research showed that, regardless of the intentions and language background of the test-takers, they saw limited impact from taking IELTS to benefitting their academic studies, based on the different testing natures between language proficiency tests and academic examinations. Consequently, this posed questions regarding the purpose for academic institutions and corporations to require applicants to take language proficiency tests, and the applicability of these language tests. One implication from this study is the possible reexamination of the essence of language proficiency tests amongst universities for their requirement of obtaining satisfactory language proficiency test scores to apply to their academic programmes.

Reflection

Working on the capstone project provided me with numerous opportunities to understand deeply about language proficiency tests and their validity and credibility. Being one of the candidates who took IELTS test in 2019, I was always interested to learn more about how these tests potentially reflect one's language ability, and I was pleased to have obtained this chance to explore in this area of study. Throughout my time spent working on this project, I understood how learners of different cultural and language backgrounds looked at language proficiency tests, and how, by preparing and taking these tests, facilitated their English-language learning progress. Lastly, to sum up my undergraduate study, I was grateful to have met like-minded peers and inspiring professors, and acquired necessary academic knowledge and social skills, which hopefully I will be able to utilize in my future career.