

*PTE Academic Score Profile and Student Performance at University

1. Aims

To investigate the nature of the relationship between the PTEA Score Profile and students' linguistic experience and academic performance in their particular discipline in their first year at university.

To investigate language support needs in specific case studies

To explore other non-linguistic factors perceived to influence academic performance such as intercultural issues

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* Full name: Pearson Test of English Academic (referred to as PTEA in my study)

Funding

- Economic and Social Research Council
- Pearson Education Ltd
- University of Warwick

Stakeholders

- EAP Tutors/BALEAP
- International Students
- University Admissions
- University Subject Tutors
- Testing Organisations

2. Research Questions

What is the relationship between the language skills profiles reported by the PTEA and students' subsequent academic performance as perceived by the students, their EAP tutors and their academic lecturers?

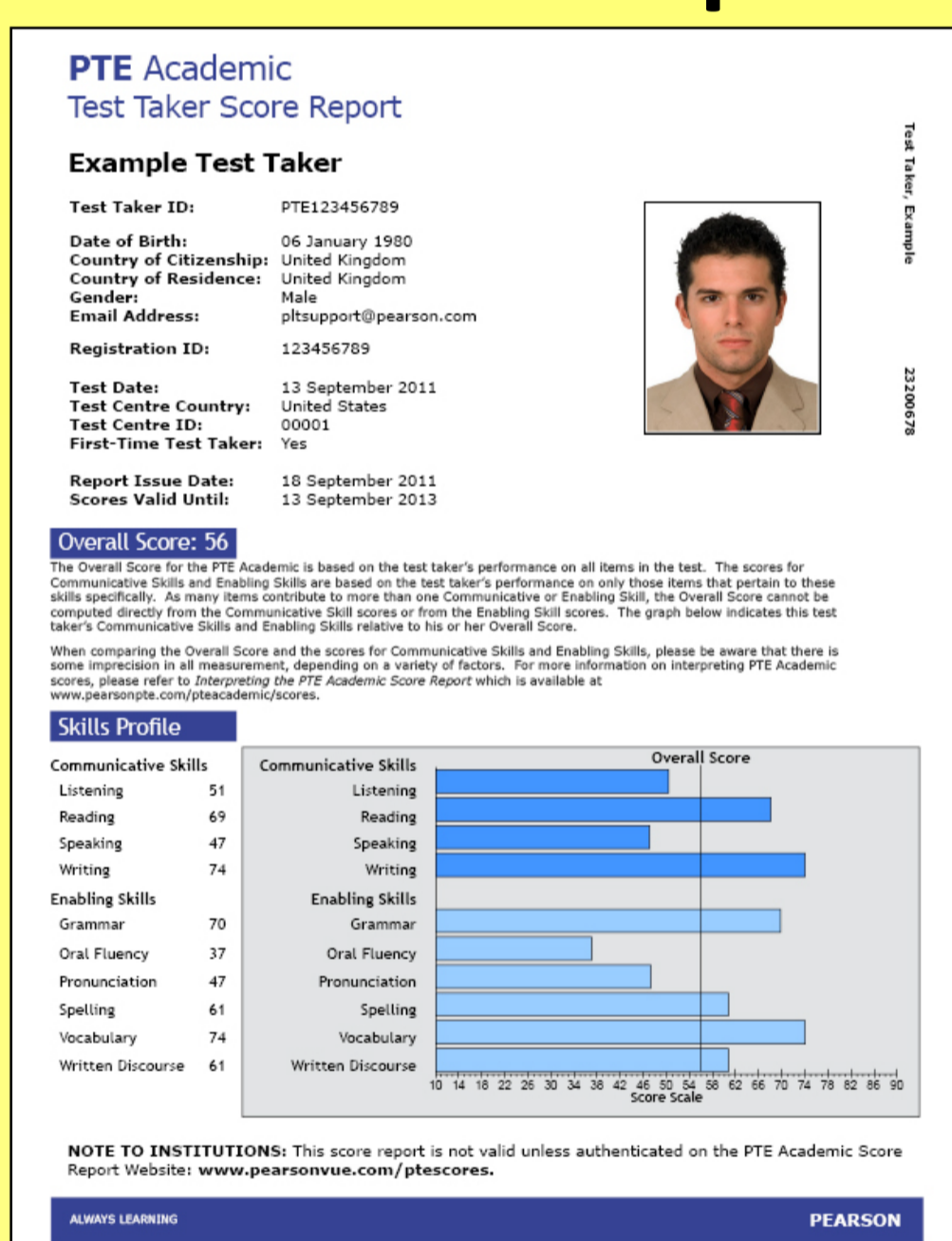
What roles do language skills play in academic assignments as perceived by students and academic lecturers?

What do the first two research questions imply about the required entry scores in the context of the particular case studies?

What are the specific non-linguistic aspects and experiences of students, that are perceived to influence academic performance at UG and PG level?



PTEA Score Report



Source: Interpreting the PTE Academic Score Report

Pearson Education Ltd (2012b:1)

3. Concepts

*Reported scores versus actual language behaviour at university

*“rating own language behaviour” (Ingram & Bayliss, 2007)

*Linguistic preparedness for, and transition to, academia

* Shortfall in linguistic level: The “Cost” of being admitted with a certain score profile (Banerjee, 2003)

* Non-linguistic factors, e.g. differences in academic culture or previous professional/academic experience which may affect performance

*Readiness (proficiency) for the linguistic demands of academia as articulated in the CEFR descriptors linked to PTEA score ranges

Score Range	CEFR Level	Descriptor
59 - 75	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of oral fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
51 - 58	B1	Has sufficient command of the language to deal with most familiar situations, but will often require repetition and make many mistakes. Can deal with standard spoken language, but will have problems in noisy circumstances. Can exchange factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field of interest reliably. Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard speech.
43 - 58	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

‘Estimates of concordance between PTE Academic and the descriptive scale of the CEF’

Source: PTE Academic Score Guide, (2012a:47)
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4. Methodology & Data Collection

Case Study approach

Student Tutorials with 4 cases over 3 terms in 4 different institutions

Documentary evidence from progress reports, written work & other genre assignments

Tutor perspectives from interviews/questionnaires

5. Participants - 4 Individuals with PTEA Overall Scores at B2 or B1+

2 UG:
BA Business Integrated Management
BA Human Resource Management

2 PG:
MSc International Business
MSc Petroleum Engineering

Wider Context

- Tests in the marketplace of international education
- UKBA/Home Office Requirements
- Internationalisation/commercialisation of universities and the debate on entry scores

Outcomes of study

- To inform pre-and in-session support
- To inform international students' preparation for university.
- To help students to reflect on their test-taking experience and how it relates to their studies
- To shed light on the effect of linguistic factors on academic success at university
- To provide qualitative research on a new entry to the language testing arena (PTE Academic)

“Enhancing international students' experience, informing pedagogical interventions, and recommending appropriate language support”