



RESEARCH PAPER

**Overcoming Cultural and Linguistic Barriers: Exploring the Challenge Faced by Pakistani Test-Takers in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)**

<sup>1</sup>Rafia Bilal\*, <sup>2</sup>Amna Ahmad, and <sup>3</sup> Dr. Muhammad Arfan Lodhi

1. M. Phil Scholar, Department of English, NCBA&E University Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan
2. M.Phil Scholar, Department of English, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad
3. Higher Education Department (Collegiate Wing) Punjab, Pakistan

**Corresponding Author**

samaritan\_as@hotmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is an important exam for non-native English speakers who want to study in English-speaking countries. In Pakistan, students face several challenges when preparing for the TOEFL. This study examines these challenges, focusing on language skills, cultural differences, and educational systems. Many learners struggle with academic English, particularly in vocabulary, grammar, and listening skills. Culturally, limited interaction with native speakers makes it hard for them to practice speaking and listening. Furthermore, the education system often prioritizes memorization over critical thinking, which affects their ability to handle the exam's interactive parts. The study was descriptive and quantitative in its nature and scope. Researchers used questionnaire and observation checklist to collect feedback from students and teachers, highlighting the need for better teaching methods that cater to these issues. The instruments were administered after the process of validation through pilot testing. The data was obtained electronically through using Google forms. The findings indicated multi-dimensional challenges confronted by test takers including academic, linguistic, cultural, psychological, pedagogical, assessment, and motivational issues. The results further indicate that improving language-training programs to the English instructors and providing more resources for real-life English practice to the candidates can help Pakistani learners get better grades in the TOEFL exam.

**Keywords:** Academic & Cultural Barriers, ESL Language Proficiency, Remedial Strategies, TOEFL Test

**Introduction**

Pakistani students who are interested in pursuing educational possibilities in other countries must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The fact remains, however, that this entrance is not devoid of obstacles. When it comes to preparing for the TOEFL, students of Pakistani languages confront a completely different set of obstacles than students of other countries. This investigation provides an in-depth examination of the complexity associated with this experience. Socioeconomic factors, such as limited access to high-quality educational materials and options for English language immersion, may hinder a Pakistani student's preparation. Enrollment in preparatory classes or the purchase of necessary study materials may be restricted due to financial restrictions. Additionally, in comparison to other places, the prevalence of Urdu in everyday life results in a scarcity of possibilities for exposure to the English language in its natural setting (Bhutto et al., 2024).

Pakistani students who are interested in pursuing educational possibilities in other countries must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The fact remains, however, that this entrance is not devoid of obstacles. When it comes to preparing for the TOEFL, students of Pakistani languages confront a completely different set of obstacles than

students of other countries. This investigation provides an in-depth examination of the complexity associated with this experience. Socioeconomic factors, such as limited access to high-quality educational materials and options for English language immersion, may hinder a Pakistani student's preparation. Enrollment in preparatory classes or the purchase of necessary study materials may be restricted due to financial restrictions. Additionally, in comparison to other places, the prevalence of Urdu in everyday life results in a scarcity of possibilities for exposure to the English language in its natural setting (Bhutto et al., 2024).

**Psychological Pressure:** The pressure to earn a high score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in order to gain admission to universities located in other countries can result in anxiety and test fatigue. Students who have limited access to appropriate ways for managing stress may experience further difficulties in their academic performance (Permangil, 2024). The introduction lays the groundwork for a deeper exploration of these challenges beyond the scope of previous discussions. This research may investigate potential solutions and set the road for future generations to have a more successful journey with the TOEFL if learners start by gaining knowledge of the specific challenges that Pakistani students confront (Khan et al., 2024).

English language learning is an important phenomenon in the context of Pakistan. It serves as the medium of instruction in academics in Pakistan, and it is the official language of Pakistan. The people in Pakistan believed that English was the language of power and prosperity. Therefore, it has been believed that a person who is fluent in English communication may get better job opportunities in Pakistan and all over the world. Pakistani students have to pass specific tests to go abroad and get admission to English-speaking universities. The TOEFL is one of them (Harpiansi, 2024).

Lack of focus on Pakistan's unique socio-economic and educational context limits research on TOEFL preparation challenges and test anxiety. Current studies often offer generic test-taking tips without addressing the specific needs of Pakistani students. Additionally, there is a lack of data on the impact of teaching methods, stress management, and mental health considerations on success. The potential of technology-based solutions and the effectiveness of existing solutions in the Pakistani context are also unclear. Although the process of being successful in the TOEFL test is often challenging and difficult for Pakistani students, this is the age of technology, and Pakistan is facing hurdles to becoming a developed country. Pakistan is an underdeveloped country, and increasing inflation has spoiled the economic conditions of the poor. That is why every third person in the country intends to make his livelihood better, but it is difficult to do so. It is a condition to pass the TOEFL test for Pakistani students (Curle et al., 2024).

The purpose of the thesis is to highlight the problems faced by Pakistani students in achieving desired scores in TOEFL because students encounter language barriers, limited access to high-quality preparation resources, and cultural factors that influence language learning. Moreover, it includes test anxiety and self-confidence, which can significantly influence performance (Afifah, 2024). In response to these identified challenges, the research tries to develop innovative and better preparation materials and techniques designed to address the specific needs of Pakistani students. This investigation tries to create a comprehensive and effective framework for TOEFL preparations. It is time to address the issue, as it can smooth the way to success, education, and a better future. Therefore, after passing the test successfully, students will be able to perform a good job in European countries where they want to go for their studies, jobs, or businesses. Nevertheless, the first step is to pass the test successfully, and to achieve success, students must know the techniques and guidance. By understanding and addressing the challenges faced by Pakistani students, it aims to pave the way for a more effective approach to TOEFL preparation that enables individuals to open the door to their dreams and aspirations on a global scale (De Cooman, 2023).

There is a close connection between the history of Pakistani students taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the changing educational landscape and socio-economic realities of the country. The following is a brief overview of the historical context of the difficulties encountered by individuals who are learning the Pakistani language: The English language was not as widely taught as it is today; therefore, there was less exposure to the language available. Public schools were the primary source of education for students, and the methods of teaching English frequently centered on grammar translation, resulting in the underdevelopment of communication skills. There was a limited availability of high-quality preparatory materials and resources, which were specialized for the TOEFL. It was less common to have the possibility to travel and study abroad, which resulted in the TOEFL becoming less of an urgent worry (Tao & Aryadoust, 2024). Increasing knowledge of global educational prospects has led to an increase in the number of students who are interested in studying abroad. This has led to an increase in the demand for international education services. For Pakistani students, this resulted in a rise in the significance of the TOEFL to them. Teaching methods that are always evolving include several educational innovations that aim to incorporate communicative approaches into the teaching of English as a second language. However, the pace of change was slow, leaving a gap between classroom English and the TOEFL requirements (Indah et al., 2023). The cost of private education and excellent TOEFL preparation courses has become a barrier for many students, particularly those who come from disadvantaged homes. This has led to a widening of socioeconomic inequality (Khammee et al., 2024).

The internet has made it possible to access online information and has the potential to change preparation. On the other hand, the distribution of reliable internet access and the capacity to explore these resources continued to be uneven, further marginalizing many kids. The number of private coaching institutes dedicated to TOEFL preparation has increased. Despite the fact that these centers provide individualized coaching, the fact that they are very affordable became another element that contributed to educational inequality. Even with the advancements, many Pakistani students still encounter challenges in their TOEFL preparation. These obstacles include the use of rote learning approaches in certain schools, restricted access to resources of high quality, and the pressure to attain high result.

This historical perspective sheds light on the fact that the difficulties that Pakistani students have while preparing for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) are not static but have altered throughout time in tandem with the development of the country's educational system, socio-economic milieu, and technological advancements. It is essential to have a thorough understanding of this historical backdrop in order to devise solutions that cater to the particular requirements of future generations of Pakistani individuals who take the TOEFL exam. (Khan et al., 2023). The desire to pursue educational opportunities in other countries has become a motivating factor for a significant number of students in Pakistan. However, the most important gateway exam, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), provides a different set of problems for these students. This study investigates the experiences of Pakistani students who are preparing for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), with the objective of shedding light on the special challenges that these students face (Mehran et al., 2024). The educational environment of Pakistan is characterized by a sophisticated interaction of several influences. There is a specific set of challenges that arise because of the prevalence of Urdu language in everyday life regarding the limitations of resources, and the prevailing teaching approaches that may not translate well to the format of the TOEFL. The use of narrative reviews is a helpful method for investigating this area of context (Suganob & Bacus, 2023). By analyzing personal narratives, anecdotes, and shared experiences, Pakistani students conduct narrative reviews that present a rich tapestry of the issues they confront. Using these narratives, we are able to go beyond numbers and investigate the emotional impact of TOEFL preparation, thereby revealing issues such as insufficient resources that may lead to a feeling of helplessness and impede progress. This is because there is limited access to high-

quality study materials and opportunities for English-language immersion (Feng & Kim, 2023).

Pakistani students who are striving to achieve success on the TOEFL face a challenging environment because of these problems. Their trip is frequently characterized by feelings of dissatisfaction, a scarcity of resources, and a substantial gap between the educational base they have previously acquired and the requirements of the examination. It is not only that this circumstance makes it more difficult for individual students to achieve their goals, but it also creates an unequal playing field in which socioeconomic background can have a substantial impact on instructional chances. We are able to work toward creating a more fair and supportive environment for Pakistani students who are studying for the TOEFL exam if we acknowledge and solve the problems that they face. Through the implementation of focused interventions, the enhancement of resource accessibility, and the concentration on successful teaching approaches, we have the ability to pave the way for a future in which Pakistani students will be able to confidently navigate the TOEFL challenges and realize their goals of grabbing better academic or professional opportunities abroad. The current study has highlighted the difficulties confronted by test takers while highlighting academic, linguistic, and cultural problems. Furthermore, the study has highlighted different strategies for the test takers in order to improve preparation and excute better performance in TOEFL examination.

## **Literature Review**

### **Language Proficiency Challenges**

For many students studying for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), language competency issues pose a serious obstacle, especially for those from non-native English-speaking nations like Pakistan. The TOEFL evaluates competency in four main domains: writing, speaking, listening, and reading. To meet the objectives of academic and professional institutions and obtain a competitive score, mastery in these areas is essential (Educational Testing Service, 2023). Students in Pakistan sometimes struggle with multiple language competency issues for a variety of reasons. First of all, there can be a significant difference between the academic English needed for the TOEFL and the English used in everyday situations. Even though many Pakistani students speak English fluently, they have trouble with the academic terminology and intricate structures needed for the test (Rahman & Ali, 2023). This disparity may affect how well they score in the reading and writing portions, where it is crucial that they comprehend and use complex academic language. Furthermore, many students have insufficient exposure to English-language media and interactions. Poor speaking and listening abilities might result from the predominance of regional languages and from a lack of immersion in English-speaking contexts. According to research, it can be challenging to get good marks on the speaking and listening portions of the TOEFL due to a lack of preparation in authentic settings and little engagement with native English speakers (Khan, 2024). Moreover, tension and anxiety are common among Pakistani test-takers, which can make language competence issues worse. Performance is impacted by test anxiety, especially in the speaking portion when effective communication is essential (Shah & Qureshi, 2023). Improving language proficiency and addressing these psychological obstacles are crucial for raising TOEFL scores overall.

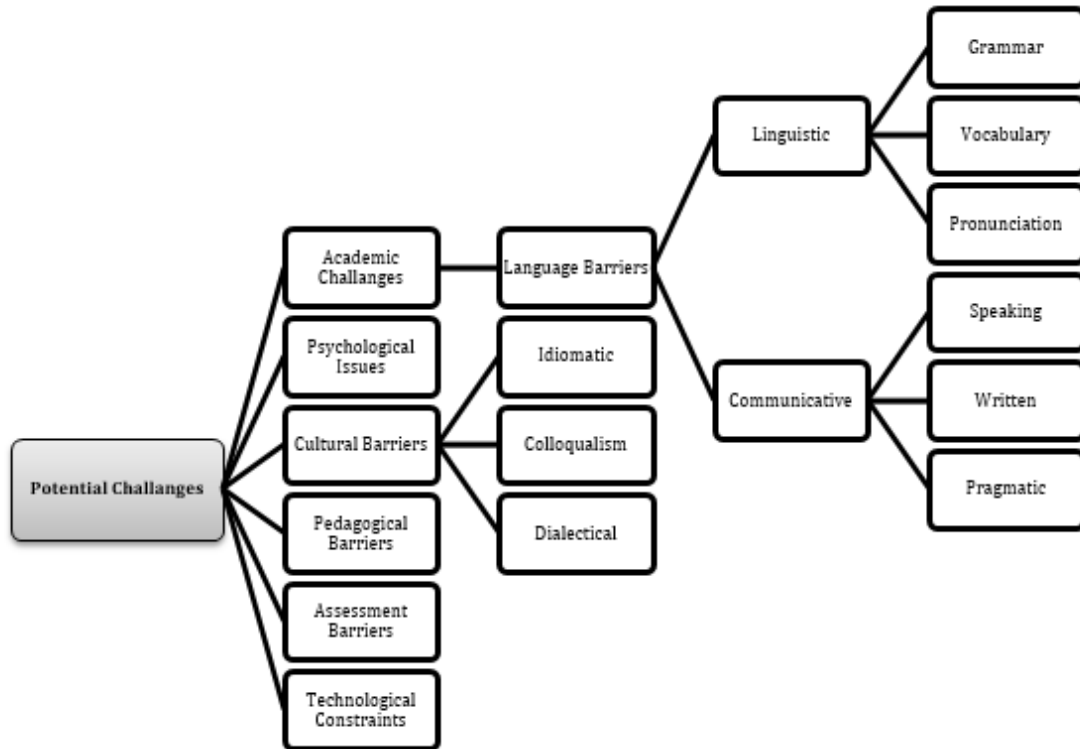


Figure 1. Potential challenges of TOEFL Test takers

**English Language Proficiency Tests**

The English language competency of non-native speakers can be assessed using a variety of standardized tests. There are several reasons why English language competency tests are required. In order to ensure that students can comprehend and engage with the course material, they are often required for enrollment at universities in English-speaking countries. These tests assess the candidates' ability to communicate and integrate successfully in a new country with regard to immigration. Employers, particularly those in multinational businesses, use these tests in the workplace to evaluate a candidate's readiness for working in a global environment. In addition, many professional certifications require proof of English language proficiency to ensure candidates can understand and benefit from training materials. Beyond these practical applications, passing an English proficiency exam can boost confidence, open doors to opportunities abroad, enhance communication, and encourage cross-cultural interaction.

- IELTS
- TOEFL
- Duolingo English

**Table 1**  
**Description of English Language Proficiency Test**

Test	Bands or scores	Course fee in dollars	Course fee in pkr	Validity	Time (hrs)
IELTS	0 to 9 bands	USD 215	57,400	2 years	2:15
TOEFL	0 to 120 score	USA 245	16,900	2 years	2:45
PTE	Scale from 10 to 90	USD 205	57,400	2 years	2 :15
CERT	101 to 150	USD 120	39000	No expiry	1 :20
<b>DOLINGO</b>	10 to 160scores	USD 49	4018	2 years	1:00

**Table 2**  
**Description of TOEFL Test**

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Score Range</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Reading	0-30	54-72 minutes
Listening	0-30	41-57 minutes
Speaking	0-4 points converted to 0-30 scale	17 minutes
Writing	0-5 points converted to 0-30 scale	50 minutes
<b>Total score</b>	<b>0-120</b>	

For Pakistani students hoping to pursue higher education or career prospects overseas, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is an essential evaluation instrument. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) administers the TOEFL, an assessment tool that measures a student's comprehension and proficiency in English in a classroom environment. It covers essential language abilities such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing (ETS, 2023a). The TOEFL provides a doorway to international education and job progress for Pakistani students, who frequently want to study in English-speaking nations. The TOEFL examination is very important in Pakistan, where English is widely used in higher education institutions and is highly respected in the workplace. More than 11,000 institutions worldwide acknowledge the standardized test of English competence it offers. This recognition is crucial for Pakistani students seeking admission to universities in countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, where English proficiency is a prerequisite for academic success.

The importance of TOEFL extends beyond academic admissions. For Pakistani students aiming for scholarships, research opportunities, and internships in international contexts, a high TOEFL score can be a decisive factor (Hassan, 2023). Additionally, as English proficiency becomes increasingly vital in the global job market, demonstrating strong language skills through TOEFL can enhance employability and career prospects (Khan & Ali, 2024). Thus, achieving a competitive TOEFL score is not only an academic milestone but also a strategic advantage for Pakistani students in their pursuit of global opportunities. TOEFL is very important to Pakistani students particularly those who wish to study in foreign universities more so in English speaking countries. English is not the native language in Pakistan and it is only taught in schools and colleges; thus, a good command over English is required to succeed in International Universities, as English is the medium of instruction. As for now the TOEFL exam is accepted by most universities and schools in the world especially in countries where English is spoken, for example USA, Canada, Great Britain and others. As with the Pakistani students, better TOEFL score means the way to scholarship, and to attend the finest universities, which can offer the opportunity for education in two completely different academic climates.

In Pakistan, second language teaching as an education policy focuses on the English language but the extent of mastery by the students differ. TOEFL is an independent assessment of a student's proficiency in academic English as a foreign language, which is being administered as a test of English as a foreign language. This is especially important for students who come from the rural areas or those schools with poor language in teaching as English. Not only does the student get a TOEFL score which shows how well versed he or she is in the English language but also increases the student's confidence in tackling academic work in countries where the medium of instruction is English. Besides, the TOEFL is a requirement for visas and other immigration procedures for the students who are planning to study in foreign countries for more information. Only those Pakistani students who obtain good TOEFL scores have a greater chance of being issued student visas that is needed to fulfill their aspiration of studying abroad. Another reason to take TOEFL is the fact that a majority of the scholarships demand this score as one of the requirements. Therefore, the TOEFL exam is not only the measure of the language proficiency but at the same time a door to the numerous academic and professional opportunities for Pakistani students.

In addition to that, the preparation process for the TOEFL exam also helps in improving the overall language proficiency of the students hailing from Pakistan. By enhancing efforts and dedication, the learner is able to enhance his/her reading, writing, listening and speaking skills that are important for success not only in the class work but also in the working environment especially in the globalized world today. The TOEFL exam is thus very useful for the Pakistani students in order to meet their educational and professional aspirations globally. Keeping in mind the TOEFL test the researcher wants to highlight the problems faced by student and the reasons of failure in TOEFL test. Pakistani students, like many international test-takers, may face several challenges when taking the TOEFL test. Some common issues include:

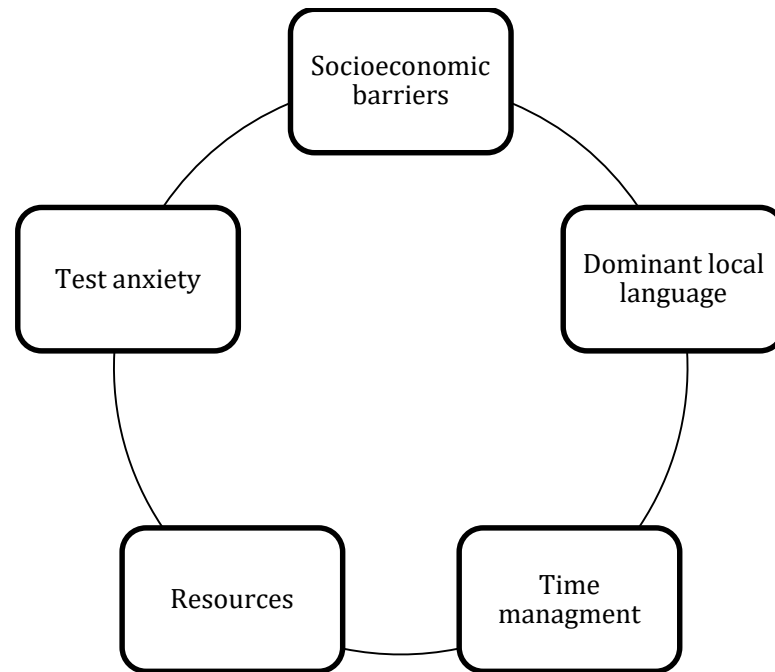


Figure 2: Common issues of TOEFL examination

### Material and Methods

This study is descriptive research strategy. It utilized a mixed method approach to acquire a full understanding of the challenges encountered by Pakistani students who are getting ready for the TOEFL examination. This method involve both quantitative and qualitative to collect data from the sample of TOEFL students in district Bahawalpur. A self-developed questionnaire was distributed to 100 TOEFL students from five educational institutions in Bahawalpur focusing on their challenges and perception during preparation time of this test. Data has been gathered through questionnaire from 10 TOEFL instructors and classroom observation. The tools were developed and administered after the rigorous procedure of validation. It effectively covered various perspectives by including both teachers and students views and classroom observation added practical dimension in the study. This approach helped to identify common language challenges and preparation issues to understand broader context of TOEFL preparation in Pakistan. Questionnaires were used to gather data for quantitative analysis; class observation was used to gather data for qualitative analysis. Questionnaire was developed by the researcher to collect the information related to the students of TOEFL .Participants response was taken on 5 point likers' scale. Questionnaire consisted on 50 questions under 10 major categories. The description of questionnaire is given as under:

**Table 3**  
**Description of Questionnaire**

No	Categories	Items
1	Access to Resources	5
2	Language Proficiency	5
3	Study habits and Environment	5
4	Reading and Comprehension	5
5	Speaking skills	5
6	Writing skills	5
7	Listening skills	5
8	Test Preparation Materials	5
9	Test Anxiety and Stress	5
10	Cultural and Linguistic Barriers	5
	Total	50

Teachers' questionnaire consisted 20 questions to find out the problems during preparation of TOEFL test. Teachers response were taken on 5 point likers scale i.e. strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. Language proficiency level, exam section problems, resource availability, socioeconomic circumstances, cultural setting, and psychological aspects are important variables. For quantitative data, data analysis included descriptive and inferential statistics; for qualitative data, it involves thematic coding. The framework places a strong emphasis on cross-validating results to guarantee a thorough comprehension and contextual interpretation in the context of Pakistan. The researcher first set study goals and then collected data, the descriptive research design was chosen which included qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The research classified the population and established sample size, which include students and teachers from TOEFL institutes in Bahawalpur.

### Data Analysis

Data gathered through both questionnaires consisted of two parts. Questionnaire's first part was related to the demographic and the second part was related to challenges faced by language learner during preparation of TOEFL exam. Second part was further categories into 10 parts each having five statements and total statements are 50 in numbers. Teacher's questionnaire consisted of 20 statements. The respondents were given choices in the close ended questionnaire under the liker scale and ranging from numeric value 5 strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 neutral, 2 disagree, 1strongly disagree. Participants are distributed evenly among the different age categories (18 to 25, 26 to 35, 36 to 45 +) education level (high school, bachelors, masters or higher). The responses examined through different graphical representations and patterns in participant's feedback. This study intended to discover and analyze the principal challenges that a Pakistani learner goes through in preparing for the TOEFL exam. Based on the data collected from various sources, the following key findings were identified.

- A majority of students in Pakistan seem to struggle greatly with language, as their interaction with English is somewhat strictly limited to classrooms. Especially in rural areas students' exposure and ability to acquire quality English education is limited, and hampers overall comprehension, building of word bank and understanding of grammatical rules that enhanced TOEFL performance.
- It was found that the most frequently mentioned issue was the absence of suitable learning sources. It was noted that many students used no TOEFL-specific preparatory books or guides at all. Those who accessed online materials described those materials as either too brush-up or organized in a way that was considered inappropriate for students who have English as their second language.
- Data reveals that people, especially students, struggled to cover costs for preparatory classes or the exam fee, let alone books. TOEFL is relatively costly to Pakistani students,



let alone those from middle or lower income families. The absence of low-cost training programs was also mentioned as an important problem.

- It was further found that the lack of properly qualified individuals with adequate teaching experience and the ability to know what is expected from the TOEFL structure was another common thread running through the participants' submissions. Students described the reason for this by saying that due to the large group setting they were not able to receive individual attention hence they did not know how to prepare adequately. This was particularly apparent in speaking and writing sections for which they had no feedback whatsoever.
- Data explicates that a variety of students said they felt anxious and stressed while getting ready for the TOEFL exam. This worry, in part, was because of the high demands of the exam, since a favorable score is often a necessity for admission to overseas universities or scholarship applications. The strange format of the test and the apprehension of failure worsened these difficulties.
- Data shows that students facing technical problems with computer-based testing often find the TOEFL examination to be internet-based. Rural or underprivileged students, in particular, were having trouble getting a grasp on computers and platforms that use the internet. Regularly cited were the problems of unreliable internet connections and low computer literacy.
- Findings reveal that students commonly had a hard time adjusting to the cultural context of the TOEFL test. The sections devoted to listening and speaking particularly expect knowledge of Western accents, idiomatic terms, and cultural aspects, which Pakistani students may not generally encounter. When it comes to real-time speaking and listening tasks, a lack of familiarity can weaken their performance.

## **Results and Discussions**

The obstacles that students specifically face when preparing for TOEFL exam are numerous. Students may find it difficult to understand the test because they are not proficient in second language. For non-native speakers who might not have had enough exposure to the kinds of texts used in the exam, this is especially difficult. Another important challenge is time management, since candidates have to respond. Many students struggle to finish the exam in time, which increases pressure and distract from their performance in test. Confusion can also result from the variety of question formats, including multiple-choice, matching headings, and True/False/Not G Some students find it difficult to discern between options that are similar to one another or to grasp the subtleties of the questions. The significance of recognizing and resolving these particular issues justifies the research question. English-speaking environments, educators and trainers can create more effective preparation plans by being aware of these obstacles. Instructors can design customized practice plans that concentrate on enhancing vocabulary, time management, and test-taking strategies by pinpointing the precise areas in which candidates find difficulty. This approach can ultimately help students in achieving better scores in the TOEFL exam.

English teachers encounter many difficulties when teaching TOEFL classrooms, it include the diversity of their students, test-specific teaching methods, and limited resources. Teachers in various TOEFL classrooms try to control students with different learning styles, educational backgrounds, and English proficiency levels. Because of this diversity, teachers should modify their lessons according to the needs of students, which can be a challenging and time-consuming task. Moreover, certain teaching techniques that are important for success vocabulary building, efficient time management are needed for the TOEFL. Teaching these strategies in a way that connects with all students, especially those who have difficulty with basic comprehension skills, can be difficult for many teachers. Examining this matter is necessary in order to understanding how well equipped teachers are to deliver these test-

specific techniques and what additional support or resources they may need. Another significant challenge is the limitation of resources, such as teaching materials, classroom time, and access to authentic TOEFL for practice.

The constraints discussed above can hinder teachers' ability to provide comprehensive and effective instruction. By identifying these problems, the research seeks to identify ways to improve curriculum design, access to resources, and teacher training, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of TOEFL preparation courses and improving student outcomes in the TOEFL test.

The causes of student failure in tests can be attributed to several interconnected factors. Inadequate preparation is often a result of students not engaging deeply with the material, due to either ineffective learning strategies or failure to thoroughly review key concepts, which in turn affects their understanding and retention. Poor time management, often stemming from procrastination or the absence of a structured study schedule, forces students to cram information at the last minute, a method that proves ineffective for long-term recall. Additionally, ineffective study techniques, such as passive reading or insufficient problem-solving practice, can prevent students from applying their knowledge effectively during exams. Test anxiety plays a major role in hindering performance, as the pressure to succeed overwhelms students, impairing their cognitive function and leading to poor focus or blanking out, regardless of how well prepared they may be. Stress, often related to the pressure of exams, disrupts sleep and mental well-being, further impacting performance. Language barriers, especially in standardized tests like the TOEFL, can lead students to misinterpret questions or struggle to express responses effectively, even if they understand the content. Lastly, external factors such as lack of support from teachers or family, financial hardships, and personal challenges, like health problems or difficult home environments, can also distract or demotivate students, preventing them from putting their best effort into test preparation and performance.

Students should adopt a comprehensive strategy that addresses common challenges faced in language proficiency to effectively prepare for the TOEFL exam from a Pakistani perspective. First, enrolling in quality language training centers or online platforms offering TOEFL-specific coaching can provide targeted preparation and help familiarize students with the test format.

Emphasizing consistent practice in all four skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—is crucial, particularly focusing on speaking fluency and writing coherence, which are often challenging for non-native speakers. Time management and developing test-taking strategies, such as skimming techniques for reading and note taking for listening sections, are vital for maximizing scores. Access to practice tests simulating real exam conditions can also help reduce anxiety and improve performance. Additionally, leveraging resources like TOEFL preparation books, mobile apps, and online tutorials will strengthen language skills. Given the importance of English in academic and professional settings, building a language-rich environment through regular exposure to English media, conversations, and writing practice will further support readiness. Lastly, creating a study plan that accommodates personal learning pace and getting proper feedback from teachers or language experts can significantly boost confidence and performance.

Effective Strategies to prepare TOEFL exams	<p><b>Preparation Strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Familiarize with the test format and content.</li> <li>2. Improve your English skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing.</li> <li>3. Develop a study plan and schedule.</li> <li>4. Practice with authentic materials (official study guides, online resources).</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Reading Strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read academic texts, journals, and articles.</li> <li>2. Improve vocabulary (flashcards, word lists).</li> <li>3. Practice reading comprehension (identify main ideas, supporting details).</li> <li>4. Enhance reading speed and endurance.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Listening Strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listen to academic lectures, podcasts, and audiobooks.</li> <li>2. Improve note-taking skills.</li> <li>3. Focus on speaker's tone, purpose, and main ideas.</li> <li>4. Practice listening comprehension (main ideas, supporting details).</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Writing Strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practice writing essays (compare/contrast, cause/effect).</li> <li>2. Improve writing structure, organization, and coherence.</li> <li>3. Focus on grammar, vocabulary, and sentence variety.</li> <li>4. Use transition words and phrases.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Speaking Strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practice speaking with native speakers or language exchange partners.</li> <li>2. Record yourself and analyze your speech.</li> <li>3. Focus on pronunciation, intonation, and fluency.</li> <li>4. Prepare common speaking topics (e.g., campus life, technology).</li> </ol>

Figure 3. TOEFL Test Preparation Strategies

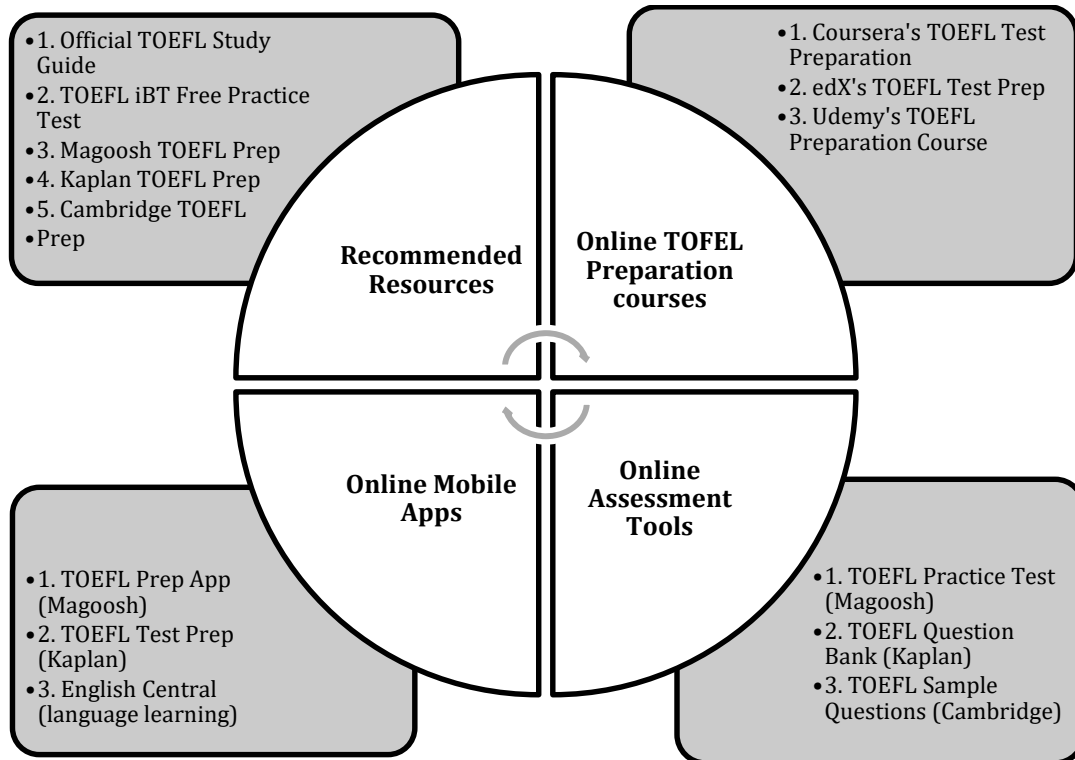


Figure 4. Online TOEFL Preparation Tools

## Conclusion

Pakistani language learners face a multitude of challenges while preparing for the TOEFL exam, including inadequate resources, limited institutional support, cultural and linguistic barriers, test anxiety, and self-confidence issues. To overcome these hurdles, a comprehensive approach is necessary, incorporating tailored instruction, accessible study materials, technological integration, and supportive learning environments. This entails developing context-specific study materials and online resources, enhancing instructor training and expertise, leveraging technology for accessible practice and feedback, and addressing test anxiety. By acknowledging these challenges and implementing targeted solutions, educators, policymakers, and stakeholders can empower Pakistani language learners to succeed in TOEFL, unlocking global opportunities for education, career advancement, and cultural exchange. This, in turn, contributes to Pakistan's socio-economic growth, language proficiency, cultural exchange, academic excellence, and economic development. Effective strategies to bridge the gap include fostering a supportive learning environment, building self-confidence, and addressing test anxiety, as these are crucial elements in achieving success in TOEFL. Moreover, recognizing the importance of listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills in TOEFL, educators should focus on developing these skills through contextualized instruction and practice. By adopting a holistic approach, Pakistani language learners can overcome the challenges posed by TOEFL and unlock their full potential, ultimately contributing to the country's growth and development.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusion above, the students need skill to comprehend TOEFL test or strategies that be achieved by the students, such as be familiar among many types of the TOEFL test questions. It helps the students to make the students understand in TOEFL text questions and can solve their problem in TOEFL exam. Based on the students' questionnaire the most of the students faced these difficulties because limitations of their resources and

time management. It is believed that if the students have adequate reliable resources, good teachers, enough time and practice, command on four skills, they will not let down. In addition, the students need to prepare themselves before taking the TOEFL test. This situation is caused by the less practice of test. The researcher also suggests for other researchers to study on other aspects of TOEFL to develop this research better. By knowing the problems faced by the students, the researcher hopes that, the students of English Department especially in TOEFL test do not face the difficulties in answering TOEFL test, in order make them to be able to pass the test greatly in the future.

**References**

- Afifah, U. Z. (2024). *Non-English Department Students' Attitudes towards English Learning*. UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.
- Alsawayhiri, M. M. (2024). *The use of translation in English for specific academic purposes classes in Saudi Arabia*. University of Glasgow.
- Bhutto, A. A., Lakhan, R. A., & Khan, A. A. (2024). IELTS in Pakistan: Preparation Practices, Activities & Test-Taking Strategies. *The Dialogue*, 19(1), 46–59.
- Curle, S., Rose, H., & Yuksel, D. (2024). English medium instruction in emerging contexts: An editorial introduction to the special issue. *System*, 122, 103262.
- De Cooman, J. (2023). Whose Bias Is It, Anyway? The Need for a Four-Eyes Principle in AI-Driven Competition Law Proceedings. *EULEN Conference On Artificial Intelligence Systems and EU Law Enforcement–Between Effectiveness and the Rule of Law*.
- Feng, M., & Kim, H. K. (2023). The role of teacher knowledge and practice in shaping EFL teachers' glocal identity. *Language Teaching Research*, 13621688231170440.
- Harpiansi, H. (2024). The Effectiveness of Practice Genre Based Approach (PGBA) in Enhancing Students' English Essay Writing Proficiency to College Classroom Contexts. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Proficiency*, 6(1), 150–167.
- Indah, N. N., Yunita, W., & Maisarah, I. (2023). Language Learning Strategies: A Case of Indonesian Students Studying in the United Kingdom. *Journal of English Education and Teaching*, 7(4), 1135–1155.
- Khammee, K., Liang-itsara, A., Nomnian, S., & Rhee, S. (2024). The Effects of Using Scientific Genre to Promote Undergraduate Students' English Academic Writing in an ESP Course. *World*, 14(3).
- Khan, A. N., Yasmin, A., & Majid, A. (2024). Role Of Environment & Instructional Strategies In Promoting English Language Skills Of High School Students. *Journal Of Social Sciences Development*, 3(1), 100–111.
- Khan, M., Rahat, L., & Rafiq, M. (2023). An Analysis of the Problems in the Use of English Participles by Undergraduate Students in Hazara University Mansehra. *Global Educational Studies Review*, VIII, 8, 318–329.
- Mehran, A. L. I., Naeem, A., Rasool, A., & Umer, M. (2024). Reliability Issues in Standardized Assessment: A Study of the SSC English Examinations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. *Voyage Journal of Educational Studies*, 4(1), 1–23.
- Permangil, J. F. (2024). Demystifying the Indigenous College Students' Learning of English as Determined by Their Language Learning Motivation: A Convergent Parallel Approach. *International Journal of Asian Education*, 5(1), 1–20.
- Rahnuma, N. (2023). Exploring ESL students' experiences of academic writing in higher education-a cultural historical activity theory perspective. *Education Inquiry*, 1–23.
- Rogers, J. M. (2024). *On Second Language Learner Acquisition of English Collocations*. Vernon Press.

Suganob, J. M., & Bacus, R. C. (2023). Teaching English to Learners of Different Cultural Minority Groups. *World Journal of English Language*, 13(7).

Tao, X., & Aryadoust, V. (2024). A Multidimensional Analysis of a High-Stakes English Listening Test: A Corpus-Based Approach. *Education Sciences*, 14(2), 137.