

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IELTS AND TOEFL: SIMILARITIES,
DIFFERENCES, AND ACADEMIC RELEVANCE****Dilbar Karamatova**

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Abstract. International English language proficiency tests play a crucial role in global education and migration. Among the most widely recognized assessments are the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). This article provides a comparative analysis of IELTS and TOEFL in terms of structure, assessment criteria, scoring systems, test formats, and academic relevance. The study aims to assist students, educators, and institutions in understanding which test better suits specific academic and professional needs.

Keywords: IELTS, TOEFL, English proficiency, language assessment, international education

1. Introduction

With the globalization of education and labor markets, English proficiency has become a fundamental requirement for non-native speakers. IELTS and TOEFL are internationally standardized tests designed to measure English language skills for academic, professional, and immigration purposes. Although both tests assess similar language competencies, they differ significantly in format, evaluation methods, and regional acceptance.

2. Overview of IELTS

IELTS is jointly managed by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia, and Cambridge Assessment English. It is offered in two versions: Academic and General Training.

2.1 Test Structure

2.2 IELTS evaluates four language skills:

Listening

Reading

Writing

Speaking

The speaking test is conducted face-to-face with a certified examiner, which allows for real-time interaction and assessment.

2.3 Scoring System

2.4 IELTS uses a band score system ranging from 0 to 9, with half-band increments. Each skill is scored separately, and an overall band score is calculated.

3. Overview of TOEFL

TOEFL is administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and is primarily designed for academic purposes, especially for admission to universities in English-speaking countries.

3.1 Test Structure

3.2 The most common format is TOEFL IBT (Internet-Based Test), which assesses

Reading

Listening

Speaking

Writing

Unlike IELTS, TOEFL speaking tasks are recorded and evaluated electronically by trained rWritin

3.3 Scoring System

TOEFL IBT scores range from 0 to 120, with each section scored on a scale of 0 to 30.

4. Academic and Practical Relevance

Both IELTS and TOEFL are accepted by thousands of institutions worldwide.

IELTS is often preferred for immigration and work visas, while TOEFL is commonly required by American universities. Research indicates that candidates' performance may vary depending on test familiarity, learning styles, and comfort with technology.

5. Advantages and Limitations

5.1 IELTS

5.2. Advantages:

Natural speaking interaction

Multiple test formats.

Limitations:

Speaking test anxiety due to direct interaction

5.3 TOEFL

5.4 Advantages:

Integrated skills assessment

Standardized computer-based format

Limitations:

No real-time speaking interaction

Longer test duration

6. Conclusion

IELTS and TOEFL are both reliable and valid measures of English language proficiency. The choice between them should depend on the candidate's goals, preferred test format, target country, and institutional requirements. Educators and policymakers should guide learners in selecting the assessment that aligns best with their academic and professional aspirations.

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