

Language ideology, Global Englishes, and intercultural competence in Thailand's O-NET English exams (2015–2024)

Rutthaphak Huttayavilaiphan

Department of English, School of Liberal Arts, University of Phayao, Thailand

ABSTRACT

This study critically examines Thailand's national English proficiency assessment, the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET), administered at primary (P6), lower secondary (M3), and upper secondary (M6) levels from 2015 to 2024. Drawing on World Englishes (WEs), Global Englishes (GE), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), and Intercultural Communication (IC), the study conducts a qualitative content analysis of thirty O-NET English exams. The analysis focuses on four dimensions: native-norm orientation, cultural representation, communicative functionality, and ELF/IC alignment. Findings indicate that the exams predominantly privilege standardized native-speaker grammar, vocabulary, idioms, and Western cultural references. Thai, ASEAN, and other global cultural content appears only sporadically, and localized topics are usually framed through standardized Inner Circle English rather than recognized as legitimate local or Global Englishes practices. Although some items simulate functional communication, few assess meaning negotiation, multilingual accommodation, cultural mediation, or intercultural reflection. These patterns indicate a mismatch between current assessment design and Thailand's policy goals of communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and global citizenship. The study suggests that national English assessment design should be reconsidered to better reflect Global Englishes-informed communication, regional multilingual realities, and context-sensitive language education.

Keywords: English language assessment; Global Englishes; language ideology; O-NET; intercultural communication; Thai education

Received:

5 August 2025

Accepted:

9 September 2026

Revised:

6 May 2026

Published:

22 September 2026

How to cite (in APA style):

Huttayavilaiphan, R. (2026). Language ideology, Global Englishes, and intercultural competence in Thailand's O-NET English exams (2015–2024). *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 16(2), 343-359. <https://doi.org/10.17509/yspmj413>

INTRODUCTION

Currently, English has become a major global lingua franca that facilitates international communication, regional cooperation, academic mobility, and intercultural exchange across linguistic and cultural boundaries. In Southeast Asia, this role is particularly significant because English functions as the working language of ASEAN and is widely used among multilingual speakers whose first languages are not English. Across the region, national education systems have therefore promoted English for communicative competence, intercultural awareness, employability, and global citizenship. Thailand is no exception: the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2008) identifies English as an essential tool for communication with speakers

from ASEAN and the wider world and calls for instruction that develops linguistic ability together with cultural understanding.

Despite these policy ambitions, the implementation of English education in Thailand remains uneven. Previous studies have shown that many classrooms continue to rely on grammar-translation practices, rote memorization, and test-driven instruction (Noom-Ura, 2013). A central factor in this misalignment is the Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET), Thailand's high-stakes standardized examination. Administered at the end of Grades 6 (P6), 9 (M3), and 12 (M6) by the National Institute of Educational Testing Service (NIETS), the O-NET has functioned not only as a measure of student achievement but also as an institutional mechanism that shapes curricula,

pedagogy, school evaluation, and teacher accountability. Consequently, the exam serves as both a reflection of dominant language ideologies and a tool through which such ideologies are reproduced in classrooms.

Recent work in World Englishes (WEs), Global Englishes (GE), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), and Intercultural Communication (IC) has challenged traditional native-speaker models of English by emphasizing plurality, intelligibility, pragmatic adaptability, multilingual resources, and cultural reflexivity (Baker, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2018; Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose et al., 2021; Seidlhofer, 2011). These perspectives are especially relevant for ASEAN, where English is often used among speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds rather than primarily between Thai learners and native speakers. However, such perspectives remain difficult to operationalize in high-stakes assessment systems, particularly where tests rely on multiple-choice formats, single correct answers, and centrally standardized norms (Fulcher, 2010; Shohamy, 2001; Suansri & Tangkiengsirisin, 2024).

To date, limited research has examined how English proficiency is ideologically constructed in Thai national assessments. Although recent studies have examined English assessment practices and test-related classroom concerns in Thailand (Imsaard, 2020; Watson Todd, 2019; Watson Todd et al., 2021), few have systematically analyzed exam content itself through the combined lenses of GE, WEs, ELF, and IC. This gap also has broader ASEAN relevance because national and school-based English assessments in other regional contexts, such as Vietnam and Malaysia, have similarly been shaped by tensions between policy ideals, classroom realities, standardization, and washback (Mohd Salleh et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023). This study addresses these gaps by qualitatively analyzing the content of 30 English O-NET exams administered at the primary (P6), lower-secondary (M3), and upper-secondary (M6) levels between 2015 and 2024. Specifically, it is guided by three central research questions:

1. To what extent do O-NET English exams reflect native-speaker norms versus localized or Global Englishes-informed orientations?
2. How are cultural identities and representations distributed in the exams across time and educational levels?
3. To what extent do the exams include tasks aligned with communicative use, ELF-informed interaction, or intercultural competence?

By answering these questions, the study seeks to clarify the ideological underpinnings of English language assessment in Thailand while contributing to wider ASEAN and Global Englishes debates on

how high-stakes examinations can better reflect multilingual, intercultural, and communicatively relevant English use.

English in Thai Education: Policy Ambition vs. Assessment Reality

Over the past three decades, English language education in Thailand has undergone substantial policy development, reflecting national recognition of English as a resource for the global economy, ASEAN integration, and cross-border communication (Baker, 2015; Noom-Ura, 2013). Successive governments have positioned English proficiency as a strategic priority linked to modernization, international competitiveness, and regional mobility. This commitment is exemplified by the Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2008), which defines English as a tool for communication with speakers from ASEAN and the world and aims to produce learners who can participate confidently in global society.

Thailand's national curriculum guidelines advocate learner-centered pedagogy, integration of the four macro skills, and development of cross-cultural awareness, principles that broadly align with communicative language teaching and competency-based education (Kaur et al., 2016; Noom-Ura, 2013). These aims are also reflected in more recent reform discourses, including Thailand 4.0 and CEFR-aligned initiatives. Similar policy ambitions can be observed in other ASEAN contexts where English education is linked to regional integration and internationalization, but assessment systems often struggle to capture communicative, plurilingual, and intercultural competence (Mohd Salleh et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023).

Significant implementation challenges persist. In practice, many public and rural schools continue to rely on teacher-fronted instruction, grammar translation, vocabulary memorization, and textbook-based learning (Kaur et al., 2016; Noom-Ura, 2013). Oral interaction and intercultural tasks are often constrained by large class sizes, limited instructional time, and teachers' varying confidence in spoken English. In this context, the O-NET's high-stakes role strengthens washback: teachers may feel compelled to prioritize multiple-choice, form-focused preparation over communicative or intercultural classroom activities (Imsaard, 2020; Watson Todd, 2019; Watson Todd et al., 2021).

The O-NET's limited sampling of productive and interactive skills creates a clear misalignment between curricular goals and test construct. While policy documents promote communicative competence and cultural understanding, the exam largely prioritizes receptive comprehension, discrete grammar, vocabulary knowledge, and fixed-response interpretation. This reinforces a view of English as a set of correct forms rather than as a

dynamic tool for interaction, negotiation, and expression (Shohamy, 2001).

The resulting misalignment reflects a deeper ideological tension in Thai English education: a conflict between an internationalization discourse, which positions English as a bridge to ASEAN and global engagement, and a domestic testing culture, which often frames English as standardized knowledge to be mastered through memorization and correctness. Without corresponding assessment reform, CLT-, CEFR-, and GE-oriented policy goals risk remaining symbolic. The O-NET therefore continues to shape not only what is taught but also how English proficiency is imagined, performed, and evaluated across the education system.

Global Englishes, World Englishes, English as a Lingua Franca, and Intercultural Communication

As English expands globally, conventional language education models that privilege native-speaker norms have increasingly been questioned. This study draws on four related but distinct perspectives: World Englishes (WEs), Global Englishes (GE), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), and Intercultural Communication (IC). WEs foregrounds the plurality and sociolinguistic legitimacy of localized English varieties (Kachru, 1985). ELF focuses on English as interaction among speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, emphasizing intelligibility, negotiation, and accommodation (Jenkins et al., 2018; Seidlhofer, 2011). GE is used here as a broader umbrella that includes insights from WEs, ELF, English as an International Language, multilingualism, and critical approaches to native-speakerism (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose et al., 2021). IC adds a cultural dimension by emphasizing interpretation, mediation, reflexivity, and awareness of cultural difference (Baker, 2015; Byram, 1997).

The WEs paradigm, introduced by Kachru (1985), reconceptualizes English as a pluricentric and context-sensitive language comprising diverse localized varieties. Kachru's Three Circles model challenged the centrality of Inner Circle norms and reframed non-native varieties as legitimate in their own right. Within this framework, English in Thailand and other Expanding Circle contexts should not be evaluated solely against British or American standards. However, reviewers of GE scholarship have also noted that WEs and GE should not be treated as interchangeable. Whereas WEs is closely associated with the recognition of named varieties and Kachruvian classifications, GE is often used more inclusively to address mobility, fluid language practices, ELF interaction, multilingual resources, and pedagogy beyond fixed national varieties (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose et al., 2021).

The ELF approach complements this discussion by shifting attention from ownership of

English to communicative effectiveness. ELF research emphasizes intelligibility, pragmatic flexibility, accommodation, and negotiation of meaning over strict conformity to native grammatical or pronunciation norms (Jenkins et al., 2018; Seidlhofer, 2011). This is especially relevant in ASEAN contexts, where English commonly mediates interaction among multilingual speakers. In such contexts, successful communication may depend less on native-like idiomatic precision and more on strategies such as paraphrasing, clarification, confirmation checks, tolerance of variation, and sensitivity to interlocutors' linguistic repertoires. These principles have implications for assessment because tests that reward only fixed native-speaker forms may fail to capture abilities that are central to regional and global communication.

Recent Thai and ASEAN-related scholarship also shows the importance and difficulty of translating GE and ELF ideas into practice. In Thailand, Ambele and Boonsuk (2021) found that learners' voices support a stronger ELF orientation in classrooms, while Montakantiwong (2024) identified conceptual and institutional challenges in implementing Global Englishes Language Teaching. Suansri and Tangkiengsirisin (2024) further found that Thai secondary teachers expressed positive views toward GE-informed assessment, particularly for listening, speaking, and the inclusion of non-native English-speaking teachers, yet GE principles were only weakly reflected in actual assessment practices. These findings suggest that the challenge is not simply theoretical acceptance but practical integration into teaching and testing systems.

The IC dimension extends this critique into the cultural domain. Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence argues that learners need not only linguistic proficiency but also attitudes, knowledge, and skills to interpret unfamiliar practices, reflect on their own values, and mediate between perspectives. Later work on intercultural and transcultural communication emphasizes identity negotiation, reflexivity, and the ability to engage with cultural complexity rather than merely recognize cultural facts (Baker, 2015; Holliday, 2013). In Thailand, although curriculum documents emphasize global citizenship and cross-cultural understanding, such goals are difficult to achieve if assessment tasks present culture as isolated information or Western trivia rather than as material for comparison, interpretation, and mediation.

To synthesize these theoretical perspectives, Table 1 provides a comparative summary of WEs, GE, ELF, and IC. The frameworks are treated as complementary but not identical: WEs emphasizes the legitimacy of localized varieties, GE provides a broader umbrella for multilingual and pluralistic English use, ELF prioritizes communicative

effectiveness and pragmatic adaptation, and IC highlights intercultural awareness, reflection, and mediation. Together, these frameworks inform the

coding scheme for this study and underpin its critique of the normative ideologies embedded in national assessments like the O-NET.

Table 1

Summary of Key Frameworks and Relevance to Assessment

Framework	Core Concepts	Focus in English Use	Implications for Assessment	Relevance to this study
World Englishes (WEs)	Plurality of Englishes; localized varieties; legitimacy of contextually situated norms	Englishes as socially and culturally embedded varieties	Recognize local/regional varieties and move beyond native-speaker models	Evaluates whether Thai English or ASEAN English are acknowledged in O-NET
Global Englishes (GE)	Umbrella paradigm including WEs, ELF, EIL, multilingualism, and critiques of native-speakerism	English as a fluid, mobile, and plurilingual resource across contexts	Assess communicative effectiveness, diversity of users, multilingual strategies, and cultural plurality	Frames the broader critique of native-speaker norms and limited pluralistic assessment design
English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)	Communication among speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds; intelligibility; accommodation; strategic use	English as a flexible, adaptive contact language	Assess intelligibility, clarification, paraphrasing, accommodation, and negotiation of meaning	Investigates whether mutual understanding and variation tolerance are valued
Intercultural Communication (IC)	Intercultural awareness; critical reflection; cultural mediation	English as a bridge across cultures	Include tasks involving cultural interpretation, comparison, mediation, and critical cultural awareness	Analyzes cultural content and communicative situations in test design

Language Testing and Ideology

Language tests are not neutral instruments of measurement; rather, they are powerful social tools that construct and legitimize particular views of language, learning, and identity. In high-stakes educational contexts, tests shape not only what is taught and learned, but also who is recognized as a “successful” language user. Indeed, scholars in critical language testing (McNamara, 2001; Shohamy, 2001) argue that assessments are ideological artifacts, embedded within political, institutional, and historical structures that determine whose language norms are privileged and whose language practices are marginalized.

Globally, standardized English tests often reflect monolingual and native-speaker models of competence, even in multilingual societies where English is used mainly as a lingua franca. The test construct, or the underlying model of proficiency an exam claims to measure, may privilege Inner Circle grammar, vocabulary, idioms, and academic reading conventions. From a GE/ELF perspective, this narrow construct excludes strategic, adaptive, and intercultural communication skills such as accommodation, clarification, multilingual mediation, and tolerance of variation (Jenkins et al., 2018; Rose et al., 2021).

Shohamy (2001) describes this dynamic as part of the “power of tests,” through which institutions define what counts as legitimate language knowledge. Fulcher (2010) similarly notes that

many assessments adopt a deficit model, treating learner variation as error rather than as potential adaptation. In multiple-choice tests, this ideology is reinforced through single correct answers, decontextualized grammar, and discrete vocabulary items. Such formats can suppress opportunities to demonstrate negotiation of meaning, cultural reflection, or strategic language use.

This dynamic is visible in Thailand’s O-NET English exam, which functions as both an evaluative tool and a gatekeeping mechanism. The exam’s influence extends beyond students to teachers, administrators, curriculum planners, and textbook selection (Imsa-ard, 2020; Watson Todd, 2019; Watson Todd et al., 2021). Despite policy rhetoric emphasizing communicative goals, the O-NET often treats English proficiency as fixed, standardized knowledge, rewarding formal correctness over communicative effectiveness or intercultural competence.

As noted earlier, the limited inclusion of productive and interactive skills constrains the exam’s ability to capture holistic language use. Kunnan (2004) argues that a test failing to sample the full range of communicative behaviors raises questions of construct validity. For O-NET, the problem is not simply that multiple-choice items are used, but that many items do not sample the kinds of interactional and intercultural abilities highlighted in curriculum policy and GE/ELF scholarship.

Adding to this critique, Tupas and Rubdy (2015) describe a “regime of standardness” in which only certain forms of English are institutionalized as acceptable. In this regime, learners from periphery contexts (like Thailand) are implicitly framed as deficient users of someone else’s language. Tests that uphold such a regime contribute to linguistic insecurity and reinforce linguistic hierarchies, even when those learners may be highly effective communicators in regional or ELF contexts.

This ideological bias affects not only students but also teachers’ assessment literacy. Here, assessment literacy entails more than knowing how to administer tests or interpret scores; it also involves recognizing the assumptions, values, and consequences embedded in assessment design (Scarino, 2013). In Thailand, where O-NET scores carry high-stakes consequences, many teachers may feel constrained by the exam’s limited construct. Without institutional support for more inclusive assessment approaches, teachers are likely to continue teaching to the test, thereby reinforcing the very ideologies that communicative and intercultural curricular policies aim to challenge.

In sum, standardized assessments like O-NET act as powerful ideological mechanisms. They frame English in ways that privilege certain forms, users, and cultures while marginalizing others. By examining O-NET through a language-ideology lens, this study seeks to uncover the implicit messages the test conveys about what English is, who it is for, and how it should be used. This analysis highlights the gap between Thailand’s curricular goals, such as communicative competence, global citizenship, and cultural understanding, and the reality of what is actually measured by its national English assessments.

ASEAN and Thai-Based Studies on Testing, Textbooks, and Ideology

Empirical studies in Thailand and the wider ASEAN region confirm a persistent tension between policy aspirations, classroom realities, and assessment ideologies. In Thailand, this tension is visible in O-NET washback, textbook content, and learner/teacher attitudes toward English. In neighboring contexts, recent studies of Vietnamese language assessment and Malaysian school-based assessment likewise show that macro-level assessment policy can interact unevenly with local classroom practice, learner perceptions, and teacher implementation (Mohd Salleh et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023). These studies reinforce the need to examine not only whether tests are technically reliable but also what views of English, culture, and communication they legitimize.

In relation to learner and teacher experiences, national English tests are often perceived as disconnected from communicative needs. Imsa-ard (2020) reported that Thai EFL teachers viewed

national English examinations as strongly influencing classroom practice and preparation. Similarly, Watson Todd (2019) and Watson Todd et al. (2021) show that English assessment practices in Thai schools often emphasize testable language knowledge and classroom feasibility over broader communicative ability. Ambele and Boonsuk (2021) also reported learner voices calling for greater recognition of English as a lingua franca in Thai classrooms. These findings suggest a gap between the English needed for communication and the English rewarded by formal assessment.

More recently, Suansri and Tangkiengsirisin (2024) found that although Thai secondary teachers expressed positive perceptions toward GE-informed assessment, their practices continued to reflect traditional assessment norms. The high-stakes nature of O-NET thus helps normalize a culture of compliance in which grammar drills, vocabulary memorization, and exam-oriented tasks displace more communicative and intercultural work.

The ideological framing of English extends beyond testing to learning materials, where textbook content is often closely tied to assessment standards and dominated by native-speaker cultural models. Suejam and Walkinshaw (2025) identified Western cultural dominance in government-approved secondary English textbooks in Thailand, with names, holidays, and everyday scenarios frequently drawn from Anglo-American contexts. Foley (2005) similarly argued that English education in Thailand often reflects an Inner Circle orientation. More recent Thai research also suggests that while teachers and material designers may express support for Global Englishes principles, teaching materials can continue to center target cultures such as the UK and the USA (Huttayavilaiphan, 2024; Suejam & Walkinshaw, 2025). These patterns reinforce an implicit ideology that equates English proficiency with cultural alignment to the West.

This framing has implications for learner identity and confidence. Methitham and Chamcharatsri (2011) showed that students and teachers often internalize native-speaker norms, leading to linguistic insecurity and reduced confidence in using English for authentic communication. From a GE perspective, such insecurity is problematic because learners in Thailand and other ASEAN contexts are not merely approximators of native-speaker English; they are legitimate users of English in regional, international, and multilingual settings.

Other studies highlight the gap between communicative policy goals and actual testing constructs. Noom-Ura (2013) observed that while the national curriculum promotes speaking and listening skills, these are frequently neglected due to test-driven priorities. Darasawang and Watson Todd (2012) found that CEFR alignment in Thailand has been more symbolic than substantive. Recent work

on local and online English proficiency test development in Thailand also indicates that test design must balance standardization with local relevance and construct clarity (Wudthayagorn et al., 2022).

Taken together, recent scholarship points to the need for assessment practices that are not only psychometrically manageable but also communicatively and intercultural meaningful. GE- and ELF-informed assessment would not simply replace one standard with another; rather, it would broaden the construct of proficiency to include intelligibility, accommodation, cultural interpretation, and local/regional relevance. Such a shift is especially important in ASEAN, where English is often used for communication among multilingual users who bring different cultural assumptions, accents, and pragmatic norms to interaction.

In summary, while previous studies have examined O-NET-related assessment practices, cultural bias in textbooks, and teacher/student attitudes toward communicative or GE-oriented approaches (e.g., Ambele & Boonsuk, 2021; Imsard, 2020; Noom-Ura, 2013; Suansri & Tangkiengsirisin, 2024; Watson Todd, 2019; Watson Todd et al., 2021), few have systematically analyzed O-NET English exam content itself through the combined lenses of GE, WEs, ELF, and IC. Even less attention has been paid to how linguistic and cultural ideologies are encoded across educational levels and over time. This study addresses these gaps by conducting a longitudinal, theory-informed content analysis of 30 O-NET English exams from 2015 to 2024.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative content analysis of Thailand's O-NET English exams administered at the end of primary (P6), lower secondary (M3), and upper secondary (M6) levels over a ten-year period (2015–2024). The aim was to investigate how these high-stakes assessments reflected or reproduced dominant linguistic and cultural ideologies, particularly in relation to GE, WEs, ELF, and IC.

Research Design and Approach

The study followed an interpretive and theory-driven content analysis approach (Krippendorff, 2004), which allowed for the systematic examination of textual artifacts, in this case, English test items, through the lens of sociolinguistic and ideological theory. The goal was not only to identify recurring patterns in language and culture representation but also to uncover underlying assumptions and exclusions in how English competence was constructed and assessed.

Data Collection

The data set consisted of 30 official O-NET English exams administered by the National Institute of Educational Testing Service (NIETS) across three educational levels (See Table 2):

- P6 (Primary Grade 6): 2015–2024 (10 tests)
- M3 (Lower Secondary Grade 9): 2015–2024 (10 tests)
- M6 (Upper Secondary Grade 12): 2015–2024 (10 tests)

Table 2

Test Papers Included in the Study and Item-Count Status

Level	Test papers	Item-count status	Analyzable items	Reporting
P6	10	Item counts varied by year and release format; P6 papers generally had fewer items than M3/M6.	Available written/visual items; audio-dependent listening items excluded where audio was unavailable.	Feature-bearing coded items; counts and percentages.
M3	10	Item counts varied by year and release format.	Available written/visual items; audio-dependent listening items excluded where audio was unavailable.	Feature-bearing coded items; counts and percentages.
M6	10	Item counts varied by year and release format.	Available written/visual items; audio-dependent listening items excluded where audio was unavailable.	Feature-bearing coded items; counts and percentages.
Total	30	No single full-paper item total is claimed.	Analysis focused on available written content relevant to GE, WEs, ELF, and IC coding.	Frequencies do not equal total exam items.

Exams were sourced from publicly available NIETS archives, government portals, and authorized educational repositories. Because item numbers and release formats varied across years and levels, and because standardized audio files were not consistently available, this study distinguishes between full released test papers and items available

for close written-text analysis. Listening-only items whose interpretation depended on unavailable audio input were not included in close qualitative analysis. The analysis therefore focused on available written, reading-based, language-use, dialogue-completion, and visual/textual prompt items. To avoid conflating full-paper item counts with analyzable written items,

Table 2 reports the number of test papers included and the item-count status rather than a single total item count. The Findings and Discussion section reports coded feature-bearing items and percentages within each analytical dimension.

It is important to note that this table records the scope of the released test papers included in the study. Because item numbers and release formats varied, and because standardized audio files were not consistently available, the study does not report the full-paper item count as the number of analyzable items. The frequency charts in the findings report feature-bearing coded items within each coding dimension, and percentages are calculated within those coded categories. Also, the exams varied in structural organization and section sequencing across levels and years. To address these disparities, the analysis reported proportional

patterns (percentages) alongside raw counts for feature-bearing items in each coding dimension. Qualitative interpretations focused on cross-level thematic patterns to mitigate the potential influence of structural inconsistencies on the findings.

Analytical Framework and Coding Scheme

A custom coding scheme was developed to guide the analysis of exam content, drawing on GE, WEs, ELF, and IC. These frameworks informed the analytical lens through which each test item was examined, with particular attention to the presence or absence of alternative language norms, cultural diversity, communicative authenticity, and intercultural awareness. As shown in Table 3, four core coding dimensions were established to operationalize this framework.

Table 3
Coding Dimensions and Descriptions

Dimension	Description
Native Norm Orientation	Degree to which the item enforced Inner Circle grammar, vocabulary, or usage norms.
Cultural Representation	Whose culture was represented—Western, Thai, ASEAN, or global/multicultural.
Communicative Functionality	Whether the task simulated real-life communication or assessed decontextualized language forms.
ELF/IC Alignment	Presence of strategic language use, intercultural tasks, or ELF-informed interaction.

Each item was rated on a 1–5 ordinal scale (see Appendix), where a score of 1 represented a minimal or absent trait (e.g., no intercultural awareness), and a score of 5 represented a strong presence (e.g., an authentic, culturally embedded dialogue or context-sensitive English usage). This coding scheme allowed for both quantitative pattern detection and qualitative interpretation, providing a structured yet flexible framework for analyzing ideological trends in the O-NET English exams over time.

Coding Process and Reliability

A pilot coding round was conducted on three sample exams (one from each level and year) to refine the coding scheme and ensure category clarity. Following this, all exams were coded by the primary researcher. A second rater with expertise in English language education and sociolinguistics independently coded a random subset of nine exams (30% of the total data set). Inter-coder agreement exceeded 85%, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion. Coding decisions were documented in a shared codebook to ensure transparency and replicability.

Data Analysis

Quantitative summaries of coded frequencies and percentages were generated to identify patterns across years and educational levels. These patterns were visualized using proportional bar charts and example excerpts of test items to illustrate key

ideological trends in linguistic norms, cultural representation, and communicative functionality. However, the primary mode of analysis remained qualitative and interpretive, focusing on representative test items and how they reflected, or failed to reflect, competencies promoted by GE, WEs, ELF, and IC. Test excerpts were selected based on their ideological salience, such as items with cultural content, dialogues, formulaic idioms, or implicit normative judgments.

Ethical Considerations

This study analyzed publicly available exam materials and did not involve human participants. Any reproduced exam excerpts are attributed to NIETS and used solely for scholarly analysis and critique.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Extent to Which O-NET English Exams Reflect Native-Speaker Norms versus Localized or Global Englishes-Informed Orientations

The analysis confirms a consistent and dominant reliance on native-speaker norms across P6, M3, and M6 levels, with a marked emphasis on British and American English forms. Among items coded as norm-orientation relevant in Figure 1, P6 contained 18 native-aligned items (85.7%) and 3 localized/global-topic items (14.3%); M3 contained 22 native-aligned items (95.7%) and 1 localized/global-topic item (4.3%); and M6 contained 25 native-aligned items (96.2%) and 1 localized/global-topic item (3.8%). Importantly, the

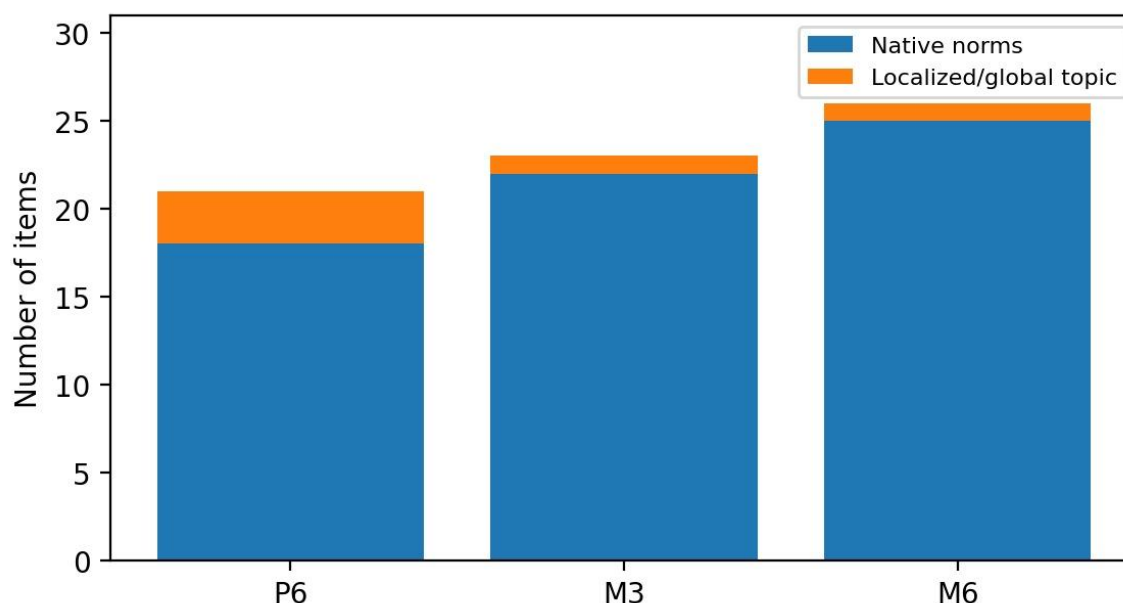
localized/global category refers mainly to topic choice or cultural reference rather than explicit acceptance of localized English forms.

This pattern was consistent across the ten-year span (2015–2024), indicating an entrenched preference for standardized Inner Circle English despite regional and international educational discourses advocating pluralistic and GE-informed approaches (Jenkins et al., 2018; Rose et al., 2021).

In other words, the exams occasionally include Thai, ASEAN, or international topics, but these topics are normally expressed through standard British/American-oriented grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatic conventions. The data therefore show limited topical localization but almost no recognition of localized English or ASEAN English as legitimate linguistic forms.

Figure 1

Distribution of Native-Speaker Norms and Localized/Global Topic Orientation in O-NET English Exams (NIETS, 2015–2024)



Qualitatively, this trend is reinforced by the exam content itself. Examples of native-norm orientation include M3 (2024, Item 3), which asks students to interpret idioms such as “Time is on my side,” “Lost time is never found,” and “The clock has wings,” and M3 (2023, Item 9), which includes idiomatic expressions such as “Break a leg,” “Keep an eye out,” and “Keep my fingers crossed.” These examples assess familiarity with conventional Inner Circle idioms rather than the ability to negotiate meaning or interpret language flexibly in multilingual settings.

At the M6 level, formal and institutional discourse is emphasized through grammatical and stylistic constructions associated with standardized academic, media, and public-service English. For instance, M6 (2024, Nutrition Label Passage) includes the sentence “You will exceed the recommended daily value for sugars,” while the Missing Child Report passage uses formulaic expressions such as “There has been no sign of him yet” and “The police are urging anyone with information to come forward.” These texts are not inappropriate as English input; rather, the issue is that they represent a narrow model of proficiency when they are not balanced by tasks accepting

variation, accommodation, or regional communicative practices.

At the P6 level, several items emphasize native-like pronunciation or formulaic structural correctness. For example, P6 (2015, Item 1, “king-kind”) tests vowel sound discrimination aligned with standard phonological expectations, while politeness formulas such as “Can I have some water, please?” (P6 2019, Item 25) reward conventional textbook responses. Such items are useful for assessing basic accuracy, but they provide little evidence of how learners might use English to negotiate understanding with ASEAN or other multilingual interlocutors.

Examples of localized or global topics include a visit to Chatuchak Market (M3 2015), an exchange-program passage about making krathongs (M3 2018, Items 41–44), a clarification of Loy Krathong by a Thai student (P6 2019, Item 15), and a Pad Thai restaurant coupon (P6 2024, Item 29). However, these examples do not demonstrate localized English forms. Sentences such as “We’ll show them how to make krathongs” follow canonical standard English grammar, and the tasks do not allow contextually meaningful Thai English features, ASEAN English pragmatic patterns, or multilingual mediation to be evaluated. Thus, the exams include

occasional local content without legitimizing local or Global Englishes-oriented language practices.

Selected screenshots of these patterns are provided in Figure 2 as supporting visual evidence.

Figure 2

Selected Examples of Native-Norm Orientation and Limited Localized/Global Englishes in O-NET English Exams (NIETS, 2015–2024)

M3 2024 time idioms

รหัสวิชา 93 ภาษาอังกฤษ หน้า 2
วันที่ 2 กุมภาพันธ์ 2568

Part One: Listening and Speaking (Items 1-9)
Directions: Choose the best answer for each situation.

Conversation 1: Items 1-3
Situation: Emma has been waiting impatiently for Claire at the bus stop.

Emma: I'm glad you finally got here. What time is it now?
Claire: Ten thirty.
Emma: And ____ (1) ____?
Claire: Ten.
Emma: Don't you know ____ (2) ____ in Western culture? Being on time shows respect to others.
Claire: Please, don't get mad ____ (3) ____, right? I'll do better next time. I promise.

1. why are you so late
2. which one do you prefer
3. how are you going to explain
4. when were we supposed to meet

2. 1. silence is golden
2. waiting is so boring
3. sincerity is unquestionable
4. punctuality is very important

3. 1. Time is on my side
2. It's better late than never
3. Lost time is never found
4. The clock has wings

M3 2023 idioms

รหัสวิชา 93 ภาษาอังกฤษ หน้า 4
วันที่ 11 กุมภาพันธ์ 2567

Conversation 3: Items 7-9
Situation: One friend is giving encouragement to another.

Carol: ____ (7) ____
Rob: Are you nervous?
Carol: No, I think I have all the information I need.
Rob: But ____ (8) ____ if it doesn't go as planned.
Carol: Thanks for your concern. I think I can deal with anything that comes up.
Rob: I'll ____ (9) ____ that everything will turn out well.

7. 1. My talk has been cancelled
2. My product has been awarded
3. My project is here for your approval
4. My presentation is tomorrow morning

8. 1. put it down
2. be prepared
3. don't talk too much
4. say something important

9. 1. break a leg
2. keep an eye out
3. knock three times
4. keep my fingers crossed

M6 2024 nutrition

รหัสวิชา 93 ภาษาอังกฤษ หน้า 6
วันที่ 2 กุมภาพันธ์ 2567

Figure 4 A nutrition label (For 3 questions)

Nutrition Facts			
Serving size 12 fl oz (360 mL)			
Calories		160 440	
Total Fat	10g	20%	10%
Sodium	200mg	40%	4%
Total Carb.	40g	80%	48%
Total Protein	10g	20%	20%

Ex1 What will happen if you finish a whole container of this product in one day?
1. You will exceed the recommended daily value for sugars.
2. You will meet the recommended daily value for vitamins.
3. You will be able to take in 85% more carbohydrates.
4. You will be healthy because of the nutrients.
5. You will benefit from essential minerals.

Ex2 Based on this nutrition label, what might this product be?
1. Ice cream
2. Milk
3. Cola
4. Cheese
5. Mineral water

M6 2024 missing-child

รหัสวิชา 93 ภาษาอังกฤษ หน้า 4
วันที่ 27 กุมภาพันธ์ 2568

Directions: Read the passages and choose the BEST answer to each question. (For 6 questions)

A 10-year-old boy, Alex Carter, has been reported missing from his home in Greenfield. Alex was last seen on Sunday afternoon near the park close to his house. His parents said he went out to play with his friends but did not come home in the evening. The local police have asked for help from the community in finding Alex. He was wearing a blue jacket, black pants, and red sneakers when he was last seen. The police have been searching the nearby areas, including the park and surrounding streets, but there has been no sign of him yet. The police are urging anyone with information to come forward. His family is very worried and hopes he will return safely soon. If anyone knows anything about Alex, they are asked to contact the local police station immediately.

Ex1 What was Alex wearing when he was last seen?
1. A blue jacket and red sneakers
2. A black sweater and blue shorts
3. A red jacket and black shoes
4. A blue hat and black shoes
5. A red shirt and blue jeans
6. A blue jacket and red sneakers

Ex2 What is the meaning of the clause "there has been no sign of him yet"?
1. They did not put up a "missing child" sign.
2. There was no picture of Alex on a sign.
3. Alex was not able to walk very far.
4. The sign could not be seen.
5. Alex has not been found.

Ex3 What information is NOT provided in the text?
1. When Alex went missing
2. What Alex went out to do
3. Whom Alex went out to see
4. The name of Alex's school
5. The name of Alex's hometown

M3 2015 Chatuchak

รหัสวิชา 93 ภาษาอังกฤษ หน้า 4
วันที่ 27 กุมภาพันธ์ 2559

Directions: Read the situations and choose the best answer. (Questions 6-10)

Situation: Daughter: Mom, I'm going shopping with my friends at Chatuchak Weekend Market.
Mother: Beware of pickpockets. There are a lot of people there.
Daughter: Thank you, mom.

6. The mother says that because ____
1. she doesn't want her daughter to go there
2. she wants her daughter to take good care of her purse
3. she doesn't want to let her daughter go there alone
4. she wants her daughter to be careful when buying things

Situation: Your friend asks your advice about how to lose weight.
7. What will you say?
1. Your problem is that you weigh too much.
2. You need some good food for a happy life.
3. The best way to do is to exercise more.
4. If I were you, I'd gain some more weight.

P6 2020 dialogue

รหัสวิชา 63 ภาษาอังกฤษ หน้า 18
วันที่ 4 กุมภาพันธ์ 2560

Directions: Items 29-40 Choose the correct answer to complete the conversations and the passage.

ข้อ 29-40 จงเลือกคำตอบที่ถูกต้องที่สุดมาเติมลงในบทสนทนา และข้อความ

29. Mia: I'm very thirsty. ____
Jacob: Yes, sure!
1. Would I get you some soup?
2. Would you like some snacks?
3. Can I have some water, please?
4. Can you give me some fried rice?

30. Liam: I failed the math test.
Noah: ____
1. I'm good at it.
2. Congratulations!
3. You're welcome!
4. I'm sorry to hear that.

This strong alignment with native norms raises concerns about construct validity in a globalized linguistic environment. From GE and ELF perspectives, communicative competence includes intelligibility, strategic adaptation, and the capacity to manage variation, not only conformity to native-speaker norms (Jenkins et al., 2018; Rose et al., 2021; Seidlhofer, 2011). Assessments rooted narrowly in native-speaker ideology risk misrepresenting the multilingual reality of Thai learners and may contribute to linguistic insecurity by positioning learners as deficient approximators of external norms rather than legitimate users of English.

This trend is also in tension with national education policy. Thailand's Basic Education Core Curriculum (OBEC, 2008, revised 2017) promotes communicative English use, cultural sensitivity, and global citizenship. Yet the O-NET operationalizes English largely through standardized norms and fixed-answer formats. While some communicative tasks exist, as discussed in RQ3, the language model remains largely monolithic. A more context-sensitive assessment framework would not abandon accuracy, but would balance it with intelligibility, strategic communication, regional relevance, and intercultural awareness.

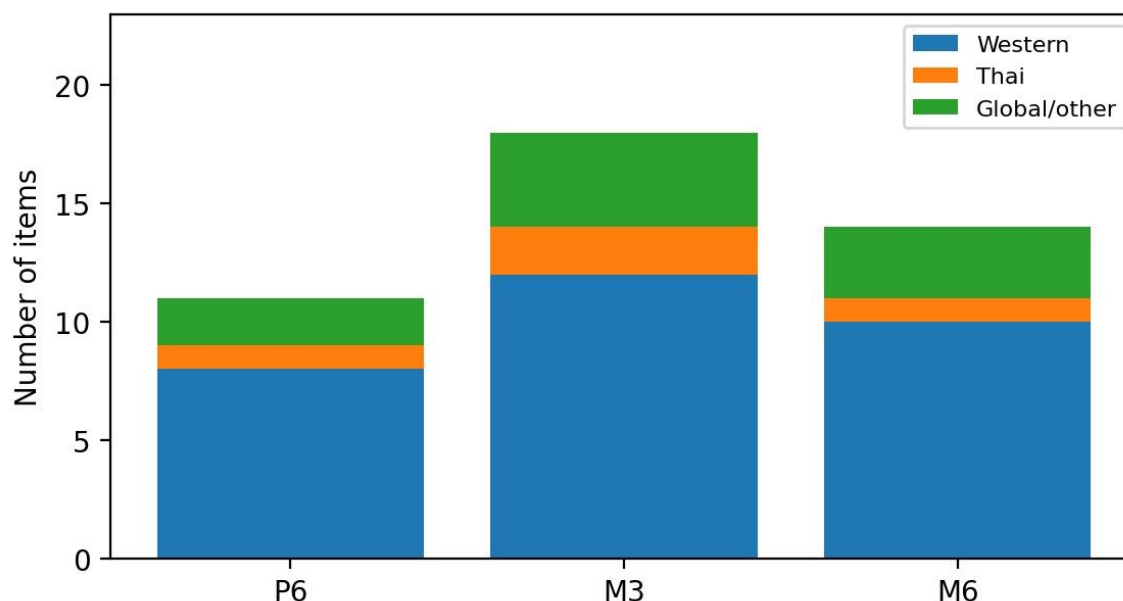
Cultural Identities and Representations Distributed in the Exams Across Time and Educational Levels

The O-NET English exams from 2015 to 2024 display a consistent trend favoring Western cultural representations across P6, M3, and M6 levels. As Figure 3 shows, Western cultural content accounted for 8 of 11 culturally coded P6 items (72.7%), 12 of

18 M3 items (66.7%), and 10 of 14 M6 items (71.4%). In contrast, Thai cultural content appeared in only 1 P6 item (9.1%), 2 M3 items (11.1%), and 1 M6 item (7.1%). Global or non-Western cultural content appeared in 2 P6 items (18.2%), 4 M3 items (22.2%), and 3 M6 items (21.4%). This imbalance suggests that cultural pluralism remains limited in the exams.

Figure 3

Distribution of Cultural Representation (Western, Thai, and Global/Other) in O-NET English Exams Across P6, M3, and M6 Levels (NIETS, 2015–2024)



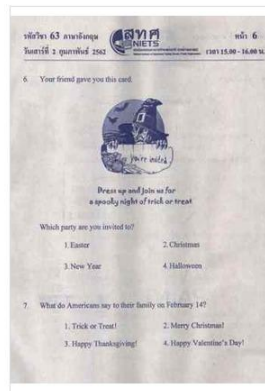
Qualitatively, this pattern is evident in the specific content selections across levels. At the P6 level, Western cultural themes frequently appear through recognizable holidays and greetings. For example, P6 (2019, Item 8) uses Halloween imagery in a scene description task; P6 (2018, Item 7) asks learners to identify a Valentine's Day card message; and P6 (2020) includes Christmas-related visual prompts. Although P6 (2019, Item 13) briefly mentions Teacher Appreciation Day, this Thai reference is not developed through explanation, comparison, or reflection. The issue, therefore, is not the inclusion of Western holidays in itself, but the limited balancing of such content with Thai, ASEAN, or intercultural perspectives. Selected screenshots of these P6 examples are provided in Figure 4 as supporting visual evidence.

At the M3 level, the exams adopt a more descriptive and expository style but continue to emphasize Euro-American cultural content. For example, M3 (2018, Items 23–26) recounts Guy Fawkes Day, M3 (2019, Items 25–27) focuses on April Fools' Day traditions, and M3 (2024, Items 20–23) elaborates on Boxing Day shopping customs. Other seemingly diverse topics, such as Japanese hearses (M3 2021), Roman superstitions about umbrellas (M3 2022), and Victorian beliefs about broken mirrors (M3 2023), are presented largely as isolated cultural facts. They do not ask students to compare perspectives, interpret cultural meanings, or connect the content to Thai or ASEAN communicative contexts.

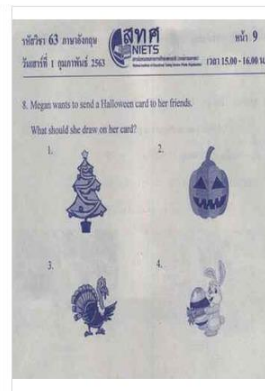
Figure 4

Selected Examples of Western Cultural Representation and Limited Thai/Global Cultural Presence in P6 O-NET English Exams (NIETS, 2015–2024)

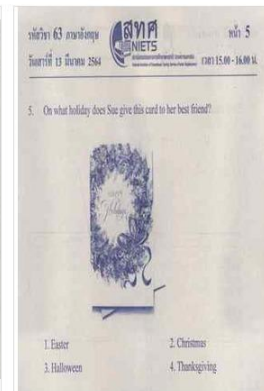
P6 2019 Halloween



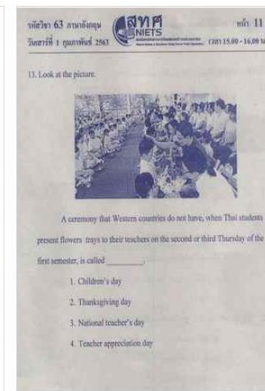
P6 2020 Christmas



P6 2018 Valentine



P6 2019 Teacher Day

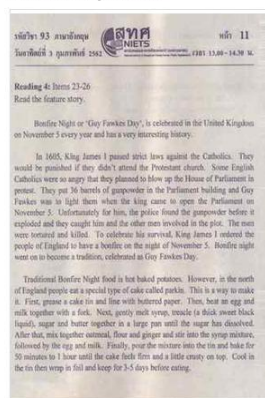


At the M6 level, Western academic, media, and institutional discourses become even more dominant. For instance, M6 (2021, Set 3) includes an American-style product advertisement for a children's wagon, using phrases such as "America's most popular wagon!" and "Graphite bearings that never require oiling." A comic strip in the same paper concludes with the proverb "Where there's a will, there's a way," while another passage describes

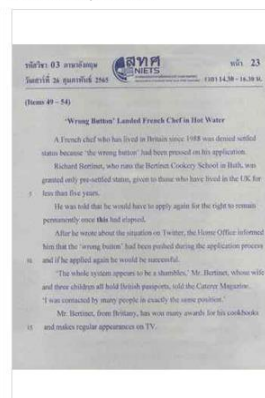
a UK immigration case involving a French chef in Britain. Scientific and informational passages also tend to follow Western academic register. These texts expose learners to useful genres, but they rarely include Thai social issues, ASEAN mobility, regional scientific contexts, or prompts requiring intercultural interpretation. Selected examples of these M3 and M6 texts are provided in Figure 5 as supporting visual evidence.

Figure 5
Selected examples of Western discourse conventions and limited local cultural integration in M3 and M6 O-NET English exams (NIETS, 2015–2024)

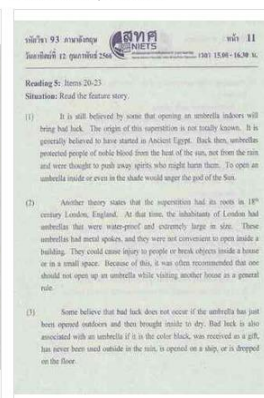
M3 2018 Guy Fawkes



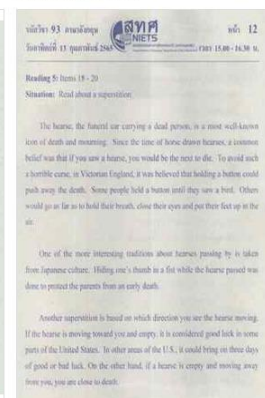
M3 2019 April Fools



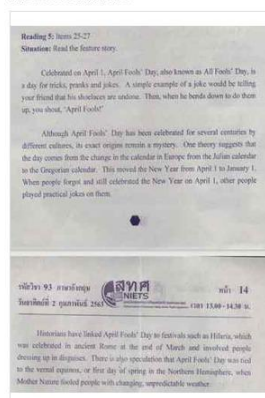
M3 2022 superstition



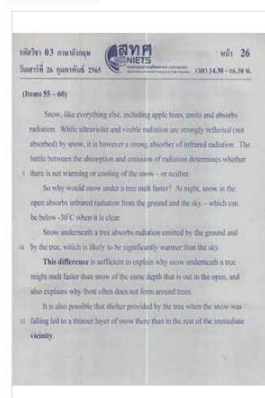
M3 2021 hearse



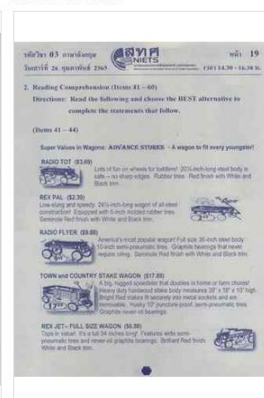
M3 2023 mirrors



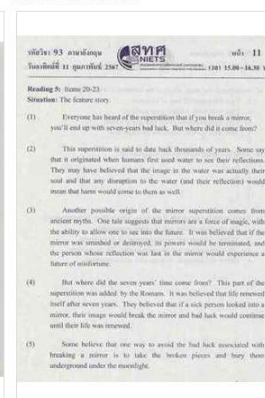
M6 2021 ad



M6 2021 comic



M6 2021 UK case



The textual examples above demonstrate the key pattern: cultural content is not merely Western-dominant; it is also monologic. That is, cultural

references are usually treated as information to be recognized rather than perspectives to be interpreted, compared, or mediated. This limits the

development of intercultural competence because learners are not asked to reflect on how cultural meanings vary across contexts or how they might explain Thai or ASEAN cultural practices through English.

The consistent marginalization of Thai and ASEAN cultural content is problematic given Thailand's educational objectives. The Basic Education Core Curriculum emphasizes cultural sensitivity, communicative competence, and global citizenship, yet the O-NET English exams largely privilege Western cultural knowledge while giving limited space to local and regional voices. This imbalance may lead learners to associate cultural fluency in English mainly with familiarity with Western customs, rather than with the ability to express Thai identities, interpret ASEAN perspectives, or mediate across cultures. A more balanced cultural framework would incorporate

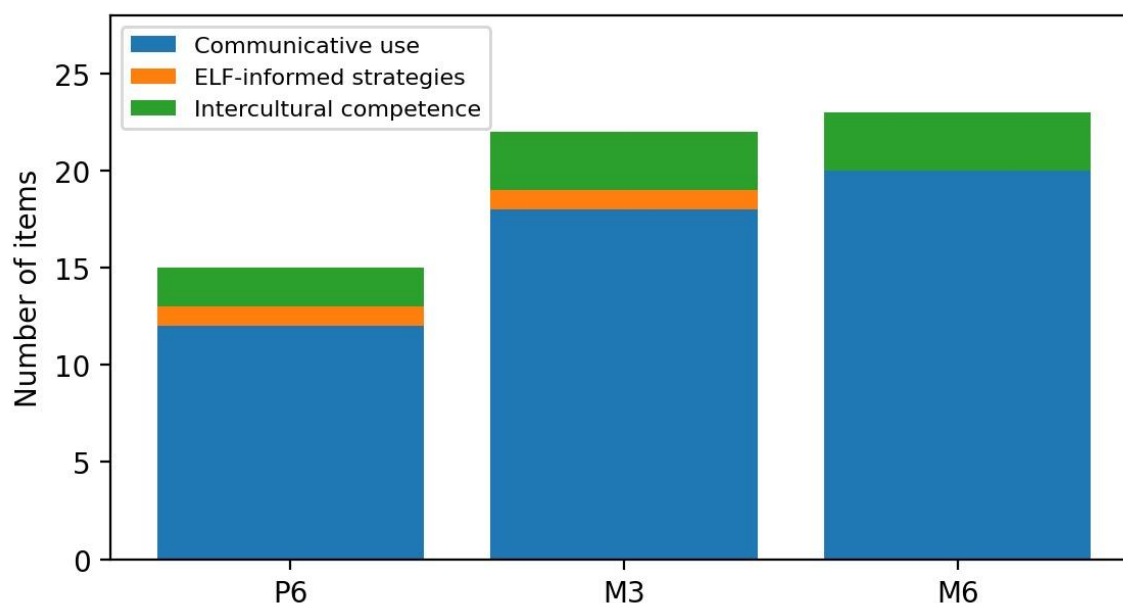
Thai, ASEAN, and broader global themes in reflexive, contextually relevant ways.

The Extent to Which the Exams Include Tasks Aligned with Communicative Use, ELF-Informed Interaction, or Intercultural Competence

The O-NET English exams from 2015 to 2024 show moderate inclusion of functional communicative tasks but limited evidence of ELF-informed interaction or intercultural competence. Among items coded as communication/ELF/IC relevant in Figure 6, functional communicative use accounted for 12 of 15 P6 items (80.0%), 18 of 22 M3 items (81.8%), and 20 of 23 M6 items (87.0%). However, ELF-informed strategies were rare: 1 P6 item (6.7%), 1 M3 item (4.5%), and no M6 item (0.0%) showed meaningful evidence of accommodation, clarification, or negotiation of meaning. Intercultural elements appeared in 2 P6 items (13.3%), 3 M3 items (13.6%), and 3 M6 items (13.0%), but these were usually limited in depth.

Figure 6

Quantitative Comparison of Communicative Use, ELF-Informed Strategies, and Intercultural Competence in O-NET English Exams (NIETS, 2015–2024)



At the P6 level, functional dialogues dominate the communicative tasks. Examples include service and classroom exchanges such as “Can I help you?” – “Thank you. Here’s a brush,” “What are you doing?”, and “Can I have some water, please?” These expressions are recognizable and can be authentic in everyday interaction. The limitation is not that they are unrealistic, but that the tasks usually require learners to select one conventional response rather than demonstrate deeper communicative abilities such as asking for clarification, repairing misunderstanding, adapting to a non-native interlocutor, or explaining a cultural meaning. A rare culturally embedded example is P6 (2019, Item 15), where Trisha, an exchange student,

mistakenly identifies a Thai holiday as New Year and Mali clarifies that it is Loy Krathong. However, the item still stops at recognition and correction; it does not ask learners to explain the festival, compare cultural interpretations, or mediate between perspectives.

At the M3 level, the exams include more varied communicative genres and task types, including situational dialogues, announcements, film reviews, diary entries, and short functional texts. For example, M3 (2024, Items 1–3) features a bus-stop dialogue in which Emma waits for Claire and comments on punctuality through idioms about time. M3 (2024, Items 24–27) includes club announcements, and Items 28–32 involve film-

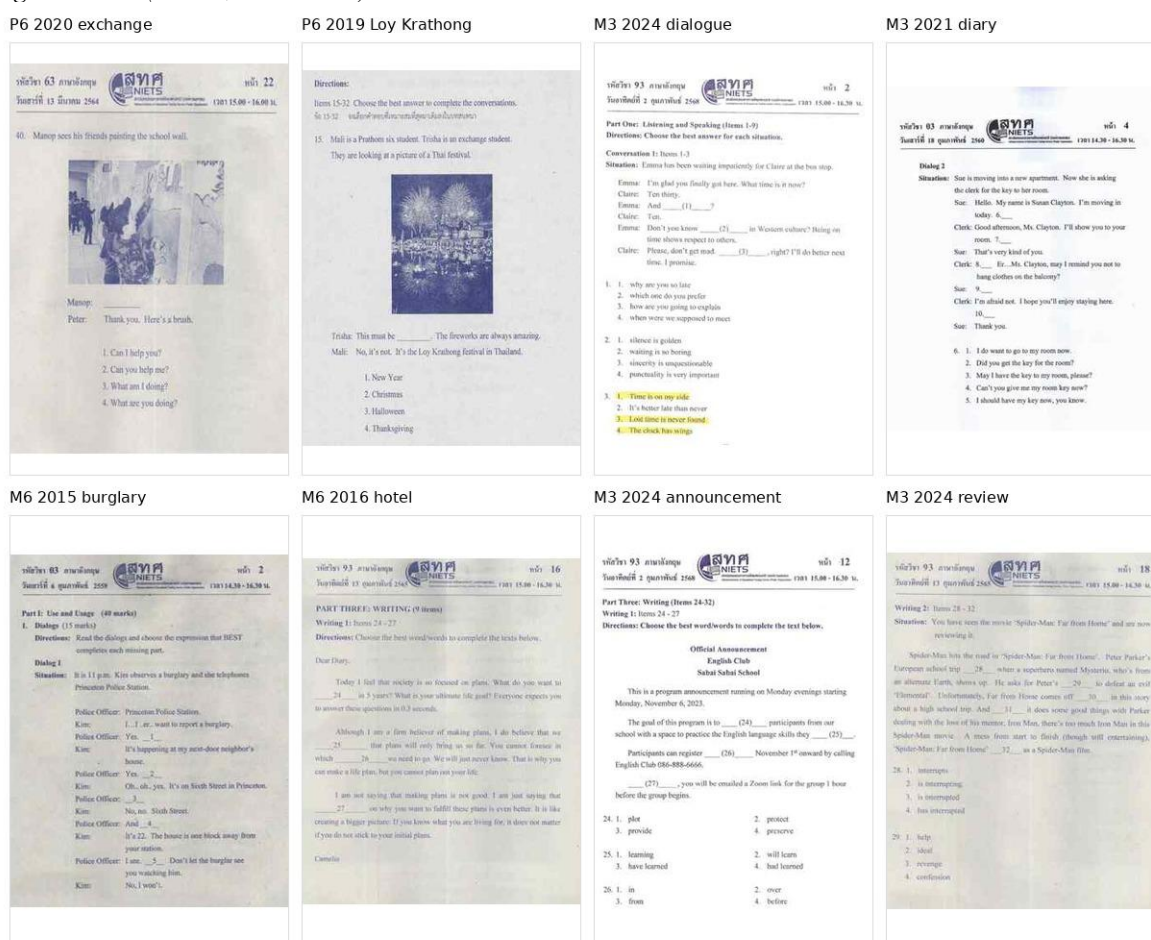
review writing conventions. These tasks demonstrate some genre awareness and functional communication. Nevertheless, they largely prioritize selecting accurate, conventional, or native-like responses. They rarely assess ELF-oriented strategies such as paraphrasing an unclear expression, checking comprehension, tolerating linguistic variation, or adapting language to interlocutors from different ASEAN backgrounds.

At the M6 level, communicative tasks become more advanced and often involve workplace, travel, service, or problem-solving contexts. For example, M6 (2015, Items 1–10) includes dialogues about

reporting a burglary and complaining about a faulty notebook, while M6 (2016, Dialog 2) presents an interaction between a hotel guest and a clerk about room access and accommodation rules. These scenarios are relevant to real-world communication, but the multiple-choice format channels students toward fixed pragmatic formulas. There is little space for negotiation strategies, multilingual mediation, code-switching, clarification requests, or culturally situated explanations, all of which are central to ELF and IC perspectives. Selected screenshots of these communicative tasks are provided in Figure 7 as supporting visual evidence.

Figure 7

Selected examples of communicative tasks and limited ELF/intercultural features in P6, M3, and M6 O-NET English exams (NIETS, 2015–2024)



Some culturally embedded tasks could have served as meaningful entry points for intercultural competence, but they fall short. M3 (2017), for example, describes a birthday celebration in Russia and asks about gift-giving customs, yet it does not prompt comparison with Thai traditions or reflection on cultural variation. M3 (2024, Items 16–20) includes a reading about a natural disaster in Morocco, but the task is confined to factual comprehension and vocabulary. This misses an opportunity to connect language assessment with

empathy, global citizenship, or cross-cultural dialogue.

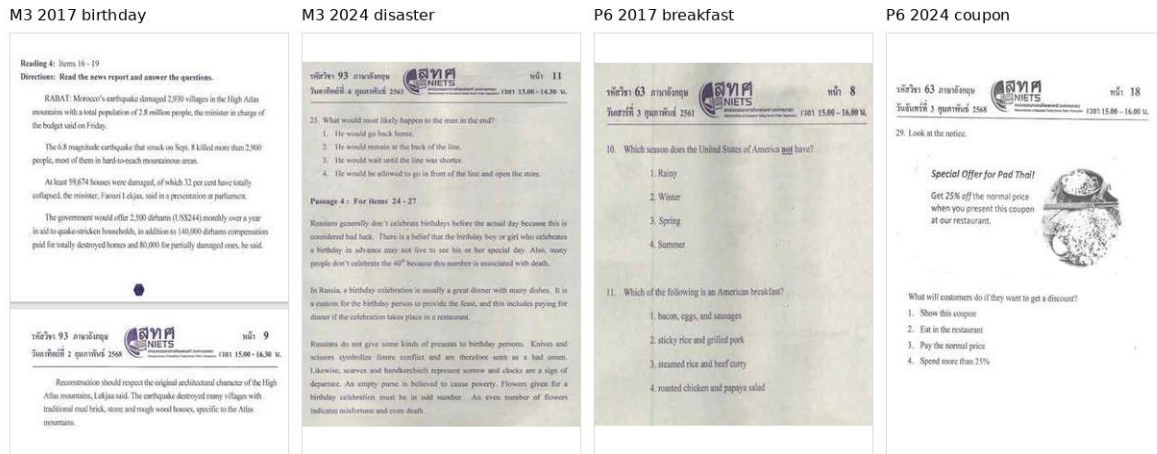
A few P6 items indirectly incorporate cultural content. P6 (2017, Item 11), for example, asks “Which of the following is an American breakfast?” with distractors such as “sticky rice and grilled pork,” thereby acknowledging Thai food practices but ultimately rewarding Western cultural knowledge. P6 (2024, Item 29) presents a Pad Thai restaurant coupon, a rare instance of Thai cultural content, but the task focuses on numerical

comprehension rather than cultural explanation or intercultural literacy. These examples show that local content is present but underused as a basis for

deeper IC assessment. Selected culturally embedded examples are provided in Figure 8 as supporting visual evidence.

Figure 8

Selected examples of culturally embedded tasks with limited intercultural engagement in P6 and M3 O-NET English exams (NIETS, 2015–2024)



Across levels, the exams consistently reflect a narrow view of communicative competence. They include many functional communicative exchanges, but these generally assess appropriate formulaic responses rather than learners' ability to negotiate meaning, manage misunderstanding, compare cultural perspectives, or mediate across cultural contexts. In a GE/ELF-informed assessment, students might be asked to choose or produce clarification strategies, explain Thai cultural practices to international visitors, interpret multiple cultural perspectives, or evaluate whether a communicative response is intelligible and contextually appropriate. The absence of such tasks limits the exam's ability to assess the communicative and intercultural capacities required for ASEAN and global communication.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

This study provides valuable insights into the ideological construction of English language assessment through an analysis of Thailand's national O-NET exams, but several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study focused on written test materials. Although some O-NET versions included listening components, standardized audio files were not consistently available for analysis. As a result, the study could not examine accent variation, pronunciation input, prosody, listening authenticity, or spoken interactional features that are highly relevant to ELF and Global Englishes-oriented assessment. Second, although proportional coding and cross-level thematic analysis were used to address disparities in item numbers and exam structures, differences in

section sequencing and task type may still influence the interpretation of cross-level patterns.

Future research should complement exam content analysis with audio files, classroom observations, teacher interviews, learner response data, and classroom-based performance assessments. Such work would provide a fuller account of how national testing shapes teaching practices and learner outcomes, especially regarding communicative and intercultural objectives. Comparative studies across ASEAN contexts would also be valuable because many countries in the region face similar tensions between English as a regional lingua franca and assessment systems that continue to privilege standardized native-speaker norms. These studies could inform more inclusive, context-sensitive, and communicatively relevant assessment practices for Thailand and the wider ASEAN region.

CONCLUSION

This study critically examined Thailand's O-NET English exams from 2015 to 2024, highlighting how these assessments embed and reproduce linguistic and cultural ideologies aligned predominantly with native-speaker norms. The analysis revealed that, despite isolated instances of Thai or international topics and some functional communicative scenarios, the overall assessment approach remains heavily reliant on standardized Inner Circle English and Western cultural paradigms. This reliance is particularly pronounced at the M3 and M6 levels, where the exams consistently prioritize grammatical accuracy, idiomatic recognition, and Western-centric knowledge over pragmatic adaptability,

strategic communication, and intercultural reflection.

The study therefore suggests the need to reconsider Thailand's English assessment framework in light of GE, WEs, ELF, and IC perspectives. Such reconsideration does not mean abandoning accuracy or standardization altogether; rather, it means broadening the test construct so that learners can demonstrate intelligibility, strategic accommodation, cultural mediation, and the ability to use English in Thai, ASEAN, and global contexts. By aligning assessment more closely with communicative competence, cultural sensitivity, and global citizenship, national testing can better support learners' confidence and legitimacy as users of English in multilingual and intercultural settings.

AI USE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OpenAI Codex was used for proofreading and language review at the production stage. The author reviewed all suggestions and takes full responsibility for the final content.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the School of Liberal Arts, University of Phayao, for funding this research project. The author also thanks the experts and inter-raters for their invaluable assistance and insightful feedback throughout the research process.

REFERENCES

- Ambele, E. A., & Boonsuk, Y. (2021). Voices of learners in Thai ELT classrooms: A wake-up call towards teaching English as a lingua franca. *Asian Englishes*, 23(2), 201–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2020.1759248>
- Baker, W. (2015). *Culture and identity through English as a lingua franca: Rethinking concepts and goals in intercultural communication*. De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501502149>
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Darasawang, P., & Watson Todd, R. (2012). The effect of policy on English language teaching at secondary schools in Thailand. In E.-L. Low & A. Hashim (Eds.), *English in Southeast Asia: Features, policy and language in use* (pp. 207–220). John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/veaw.g42.17dar>
- Foley, J. A. (2005). English in... Thailand. *RELC Journal*, 36(2), 223–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688205055578>
- Fulcher, G. (2010). *Practical language testing*. Hodder Education.
- Holliday, A. (2013). *Understanding intercultural communication: Negotiating a grammar of culture*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203492635>
- Huttayavilaiphan, R. (2024). Embracing global voices: An exploration of Thai teachers' attitudes and practices on culturally diverse ELT materials in a northern Thai university. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 24(3), 11–23. <https://doi.org/10.36923/jicc.v24i3.813>
- Imsa-ard, P. (2020). Voices from Thai EFL teachers: Perceptions and beliefs towards the English test in the national examination in Thailand. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 13(2), 269–287. <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/article/view/243713>
- Jenkins, J., Baker, W., & Dewey, M. (Eds.). (2018). *The Routledge handbook of English as a lingua franca*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315717173>
- Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures* (pp. 11–30). Cambridge University Press.
- Kaur, A., Young, D., & Kirkpatrick, R. (2016). English education policy in Thailand: Why the poor results? In R. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *English language education policy in Asia* (pp. 345–361). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-22464-0_16
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Kunnan, A. J. (2004). Test fairness. In M. Milanovic & C. Weir (Eds.), *European language testing in a global context* (pp. 27–48). Cambridge University Press.
- McNamara, T. (2001). Language assessment as social practice: Challenges for research. *Language Testing*, 18(4), 333–349. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553220101800402>
- Methitham, P., & Chamcharatsri, P. B. (2011). Critiquing ELT in Thailand: A reflection from history to practice. *Journal of Humanities, Naresuan University*, 8(2), 57–68. <https://www.academia.edu/2352913>
- Mohd Salleh, N. F. A., Nimehchisalem, V., Jalaluddin, I., & Mukundan, J. (2023). Washback effects of school-based assessment (SBA) on Malaysian secondary school students' English language learning. *PASAA*, 66, 168–201.

- <https://doi.org/10.58837/CHULA.PASAA.66.1.5>
- Montakantiwong, A. (2024). Bridging conceptual gaps in Global Englishes language teaching: Ethnographic insights from Thai higher education. *Asian Englishes*, 26(2), 391–409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2023.2251736>
- National Institute of Educational Testing Service. (2015–2024). *Ordinary National Educational Test (O-NET) English examination papers for Grade 6, Grade 9, and Grade 12*.
- Nguyen, Q. T. N., Sheehan, S., Nguyen, C. T., Nguyen, H. Q., Nguyen, T. T. P., Thai, T., Nguyen, Y. T. Q., Tran, H. T. T., & Bui, S. (2023). English language assessment practice in Vietnam: Interplay between macro and micro context. *PASAA*, 66, 127–167. <https://doi.org/10.58837/CHULA.PASAA.66.1.4>
- Noom-Ura, S. (2013). English-teaching problems in Thailand and Thai teachers' professional development needs. *English Language Teaching*, 6(11), 139–147. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n11p139>
- Office of the Basic Education Commission. (2008). *Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008)*. Ministry of Education.
- Rose, H., & Galloway, N. (2019). *Global Englishes for language teaching*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316678343>
- Rose, H., McKinley, J., & Galloway, N. (2021). Global Englishes and language teaching: A review of pedagogical research. *Language Teaching*, 54(2), 157–189. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444820000518>
- Scarino, A. (2013). Language assessment literacy as self-awareness: Understanding the role of interpretation in assessment and in teacher learning. *Language Testing*, 30(3), 309–327. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480128>
- Seidlhofer, B. (2011). *Understanding English as a lingua franca*. Oxford University Press.
- Shohamy, E. (2001). *The power of tests: A critical perspective on the uses of language tests*. Longman.
- Suansri, P., & Tangkiengsirisin, S. (2024). An investigation of Global Englishes-informed assessment perceptions and practices among secondary school teachers in Thailand. *PASAA*, 69, 232–276. <https://doi.org/10.58837/CHULA.PASAA.69.8>
- Suejam, N., & Walkinshaw, I. (2025). Global Englishes language teaching: Beliefs and practices of materials designers at an English language school in Thailand. *REFlections*, 32(2), 882–902. <https://doi.org/10.61508/refl.v32i2.282436>
- Tupas, R., & Rubdy, R. (2015). Introduction: From World Englishes to unequal Englishes. In R. Tupas (Ed.), *Unequal Englishes: The politics of Englishes today* (pp. 1–17). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137461223_1
- Watson Todd, R. (2019). How is English assessed at Thai schools? *THAITESOL Journal*, 32(1), 1–15. <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/thaitesoljournal/article/view/193942>
- Watson Todd, R., Pansa, D., Jaturapitakkul, N., Chanchula, N., Pojanapunya, P., Tepsuriwong, S., Towns, S. G., & Trakulkasemsuk, W. (2021). Assessment in Thai ELT: What do teachers do, why, and how can practices be improved? *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 14(2), 627–649. <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/article/view/253377>
- Wudthayagorn, J., Piamsai, C., & Thanompongchart, P. (2022). The development of a local online English proficiency test for young learners: Key considerations and challenges. *PASAA*, 64, 126–137. <https://doi.org/10.58837/CHULA.PASAA.64.1.6>

APPENDIX
Coding rubric

Score	Native Norm Orientation	Cultural Representation	Communicative Functionality	ELF/IC Alignment
5	Fully localized or non-standard norm legitimized	Predominantly Thai, ASEAN, or mixed/global cultural scenarios	Highly authentic, real-world communication task	Strong presence of intercultural comparison or strategic communication
4	Some variation from native norms with contextual acceptance	Local/regional cultures clearly represented but not the main focus	Contextually meaningful communication with minor standard test features	Some intercultural/cross-cultural content or negotiation
3	Balanced or neutral (native and non-native blend)	Mix of Western and non-Western cultures with limited depth	Partially communicative but includes form-focused items	Vague or implicit cultural references
2	Dominantly native norms with no flexibility	Predominantly Western with token local content	Mostly decontextualized or artificial context	Minimal strategic/intercultural features
1	Strict enforcement of native grammar/vocab rules	Entirely Western culture or culturally neutral	No real-world use simulated; abstract or rote-form item	No intercultural or ELF-relevant content