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Standard Used in Assessing Students' Competence

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The main criteria used for entry into tertiary level education in Thailand has been the 'O'Net and 'A' Net examinations at the end of secondary schooling. Such examinations involve a variety of subjects including : Thai , Foreign languages (English), Mathematics. Science, and Social Studies. In addition the average accumulated results during high school (GPAX) are included in the assessment. This paper will focus on the role of English in these examinations as it is becoming a major factor in terms of success or failure for the students. In particular, the question of what it can mean today to say that any broadly applied instrument can test the English of speakers of other languages. English is become institutionalized in the Thai cultural context and adaptations of English are inevitable. The reason for this is that it is impossible to have English-as-first-language modelers in every classroom. Most models available in the Thai classroom are local; and the media reflects the English as a Lingua Franca (EFL) rather than British, American or Australian forms of English. However, the norms of 'correctness' as used in these formal examinations do not include the features of English as ELF but use criteria from the Inner Circle models of English.