

## Book Review

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### English Language Proficiency Testing in Asia: A New Paradigm Bridging Global and Local Contexts

**Lily I-Wen Su, Cyril J. Weir, and Jessica R. W. Wu**

*English Language Proficiency Testing in Asia: A New Paradigm Bridging Global and Local Contexts* is a byproduct of the English assessors and scholars' endeavor to ameliorate the localizing tests in EFL scenarios as a consequence of the borderless workforce shifting. With a collaboration of the language testing professionals in Asia and in Europe, the authors of the book accomplished in representing how English large-scale tests are locally generated. It comprises three major areas: 1. introduction of localization in the language examination; 2. the series of EFL localized test constructions; and 3. the synopsis of the EFL-based tests.

Primarily, the foreword of localization and the first chapter are exploited to illustrate to the readers the background of language testing history from 1914 to the 21<sup>st</sup> century together with the other relevant information which focuses on the following factors: specifications of tests, the societal impacts of tests, the contribution of related research reports

toward the tests, the cohesion of the standardized supports, and further considerations for the test constructions delivered in the following chapters. A great strength of the book is the author and editor teams' final remarks in terms of the localized materials enrichment and the approval given that should empower the experts the field of second language acquisition.

Secondly, Chapters 1-7 present the localized test typicality in Asia starting with '*LTTC*' or '*the General English Proficiency Test*' from Taiwan. It classifies five levels of students' proficiency with a consistent criterion of the following CEFR levels: Elementary level, intermediate level, high-Intermediate level, and advanced level as well as the Superior which is equivalent to a native speaker standard. Taking a great account, Rachel Yifan Wu, the author intriguingly elucidates the test history and construction of the local features. The quality control and test fairness, *a posteriori* validation of the GEPT are expressed in details with the selected GEPT validation studies that help readers formally settle the relevance of local variables of the test quality. Moreover, the final remarks impart an excellent summary to connect the local educators to global standards.

The third chapter addresses '*TEPS*' or '*Test of English Proficiency developed by Seoul University*' by Yong-Won Lee, Heesung Jun, and Ja Young Kim. A brief history and clarification of the TEPS and other subsequent tests: i-TEPS, TEPS-Speaking and Writing, and TSW-MOFA have developed into the distinguished English proficiency local-based tests of Korea since 1999. The explanation of the test localized nature, the test quality, the use and impact, the associated researches, and the critical contemplation are consequently noted and released TEPS's ideologically formations in the American standard and the localized-variable schemes. Based on the explicit view of the authors, the finale of the chapter specifies how the TEPS test revisions and refinements are particularly in terms of the TEPS score washback effect which is an impact of test score use and the English language proficiency level determined by TEPS.

The fourth chapter, the '*VSTEP*' or '*Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency*', is described by Nguyen Thi Ngoc Quynh. The Vietnamese workforce reformation on English proficiency plays a pivotal role on VSTEP development. The English Benchmark or the CEFR-VN particularly indicates most of the Vietnamese's English capacity. The discussion of the localization impacts of VSTEP is crucially trailed with a pinpoint of how the tests served the national and international standards.

The author systematically explains processes of English assessment studies to support VSTEP's qualification in validity, transparency, practicality, equity, and sustainability. The chapter ends with research contributions which do not merely establish VSTEP, but also truly create an essential English glocalizing test.

The fifth chapter illuminates '*CET*' or '*the College English Test*' from China. The author, Yan Jin, started the test purpose and the test development as a tool of language skill measurement. She repeatedly grabs the readers' attention on the latest version of the CET and the localizing features, which are systematized in several topics that bring a clear linkage among EFL teaching, learning and assessing. Moreover, a comparison of CET, TOEFL iBT and IELTS in spoken English test features make CET-SET domains be more explicated for readers. The author concludes the chapter with the continuity of localizing test development for the ethical use which helps CET be more outstanding.

The sixth chapter, '*EIKEN*' and '*TEAP*' from Japan, is declared by Jamie Dunlea, Todd Fouts, Dan Joyce, and Keita Nakamura. They aimed to bring the locally produced tests to reach the global standard trends. The test building process is validated in context, cognitive, scoring, consequential, and criterion-related elements which readers can simply reach the structure of the localizing test development at ease. The authors significantly show the distinctness between both case-study tests through a merit of international researches promoted and corresponded for the tests validation and quality assurance to refine readers' ideas of a localizing feature and concept. The topic ending the chapter also polishes the local and global testing harmonies.

The seventh chapter discusses "*The English Language Proficiency Assessment for the Malaysian Public Service*" or ELPA. Kadeessa Abdul-Kadir announces the ELPA's origination under the responsibility taken by the Public Service Department of Malaysia (PSD). The test objectives are in 'job-specific' language proficiency and the early test development starting by the test need analysis, the test specification and the test reports respectively. Abdul-Kadir walk the readers through the localizing-test processing via several ELPA models and the content localization which explains the test development in skills, tasks and test rating, aligning with CEFR, and localizing test precision. The chapter ends by a critical analysis which underlines the ELPA improvements in several dimensions.

The final chapter, '*Global, Local, or Glocal*', is notably important since the author, Cyril J. Weir, helps the readers to explicitly digest the three significant approaches; global, local and glocal. The author insightfully points out the crucial impacts of those tests toward the variety of Asian local circumstances which takes an account of the rise of glocalized tests evolution. It is obviously noted that linguistic features and quality management basing CEFR including the research maintenance are keys in localizing test productions. The glocalizing type I and type II, which is a paradigm of glocal variety phenomena for both global and local encounters, is finally discussed and turned as the significant solidity of the book toward the cultural affinity in effective EFL test conceptualization.

After reading, the readers' comprehension in English assessing frameworks can be clarified in several dimensions. It is not only practical for the EFL test developers or the researchers in fields of the EFL/ELT assessment but also the ELT practitioners in language assessment due to the delicate test qualification processing. If the publishers were considering a reprint of this book, three issues can be added up. First, the explanation of cognitive and textual features particularly in linguistic and non-linguistic parts should be more remarked to assist readers' final teasing out the previous chapters. Second, as noted by Ross (2008, p. 5), the language assessment in Asia is firmly involved in education policy, as it calls for more research support in the macro-level of the test impact and washback to explain how educational and national policy influenced or attuned according to the implementation of the localized-based tests. Third, the micro-level impact of the tests towards the EFL test takers, their language development, and the test reliability examination can be more highlighted greater as a concrete affirmation of the test effectiveness and evidence to support the necessity and replacement of locally produced tests in EFL countries.

Considering Thailand, where the standardized test results gain considerable effects on students' proficiency and the dilemma of the native-like standards turns as a problem for Thai students owing to their limitation of real-life English communication. Is it time for a national assessment to be established and aligned with international standards? As noted by Noom-ura (2013, p.142), the problems involving assessment and appropriateness of tests are a part of the English teaching in Thailand. Therefore a new way for language assessment is called for (Prapphal, 2008). Developing the national standardized tests based on the CEFR and

the international test alignment will consequently be a possible option for Thai students' language improvement. Besides, the sustainable English language proficiency benchmark for all levels of learners' capacity will be beneficial as a platform where Thai students can achieve the real-world communication using and developing both the linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge intercultural encounters. Chiefly, the local tests of English attainment and difficulty have been spelt out in this book as a useful reference and inspiration for the locally-produced test constructions in order "to bridge test localization and global standards" (Wu, 2020, p.7).

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