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From local flavor to global fandom: an exploration of the cultural presentation and attitudes towards using English by Thai content creators on the TikTok platform

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This study explores the cultural presentation and attitudes towards using English among Thai TikTokers, focusing on how they create and present cultural content. Utilizing detailed content analysis of video titles, descriptions, and comments, alongside semi-structured interviews with 20 selected TikTokers, the research reveals the diverse motivations and challenges faced by these creators. The findings highlight a wide range of cultural content, including ethnic, lifestyle, national, subcultures, and youth cultures, which serve to engage audiences and promote cultural exchange. The study also identifies the overlapping nature of cultural presentation strategies, such as visual storytelling, educational content, user engagement, and the strategic use of hashtags and multilingual content. These strategies are designed to increase the visibility and impact of their content, enhancing a sense of global community and cultural understanding. The study categorizes attitudes towards using English into positive, negative, and mixed. While some TikTokers embrace English to broaden their international reach and facilitate intercultural communication, others express concerns about language proficiency, such as accents and grammatical accuracy, which may lead to negative feedback. This complexity underscores the challenges of multilingual content creation, balancing cultural authenticity with global engagement. By linking these findings with existing theories and studies, the research offers a comprehensive understanding of digital cultural representation on social media platforms. The insights contribute to the broader field of social media studies, providing implications for future research on content strategies, cultural communication, and the role of language in digital media.

KEYWORDS

TikTok, content creators, cultural content, cultural presentation strategy, attitude towards English

1 Introduction

In recent years, social media platforms have revolutionized global communication, providing spaces for interaction and information sharing that transcend geographical, cultural, and economic barriers. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have become essential in shaping how individuals and communities connect and share cultural narratives. TikTok, in particular, has emerged as a significant platform for creative expression

and community building, distinct from its predecessors due to its emphasis on short, engaging video content. This format not only makes content creation accessible but also allows for the rapid dissemination of diverse cultural narratives. Users from various backgrounds utilize TikTok to share personal and cultural stories, promoting an inclusive digital environment (Tufekci, 2017). The platform's role extends beyond entertainment, serving as a critical medium for information dissemination during crises and a catalyst for social activism (Basch et al., 2022). Thus, TikTok significantly shapes public discourse and cultural norms, providing a dynamic space for dialogue and collaboration (Papacharissi, 2015).

TikTok's algorithm-driven platform is distinct in its ability to surface diverse content and amplify voices from underrepresented communities. Unlike other social media networks, TikTok promotes equitable exposure for user-generated content, thereby democratizing cultural discourse and offering a level playing field for creators globally (Hjorth and Richardson, 2021). The platform's emphasis on short, highly engaging videos has led to new forms of cultural expression and community-building practices, facilitating cross-cultural exchanges. The platform's features, such as duets and challenges, encourage collaborative content creation, further enhancing its role as a hub for cultural interaction. These unique characteristics position TikTok as a powerful tool for global communication and cultural exchange, allowing individuals to share their cultural narratives and engage with diverse global audiences.

This study focuses on Thailand, a country with a rich cultural heritage and a vibrant digital content creation scene. Thai TikTokers, who are often bilingual in Thai and English, play a pivotal role in showcasing and preserving Thai culture while engaging with a global audience. This bilingual capability is not merely a tool for communication but a strategic asset that allows these creators to bridge local traditions with global trends. The unique blend of traditional and modern elements in Thai TikTok content offers a rich area for academic exploration, especially concerning how these creators navigate cultural representation and engage with diverse audiences (Dancharoenpol, 2022).

Despite the increasing prominence of Thai TikTokers, there remains a significant gap in the academic literature concerning their use of English and visual storytelling to present Thai culture. Previous studies, such as those by Lee et al. (2023), have highlighted the importance of linguistic skills in intercultural communication. However, there is limited research on the specific strategies Thai TikTokers use to integrate Thai cultural elements into their content, particularly in a bilingual context. Recent work by Sanmee (2024) has explored how Southeast Asian creators, including those from Thailand, navigate the complexities of merging traditional and modern elements in their content. While Sanmee focuses on the broader cultural implications of this blend, the specific methodologies and strategies employed by Thai creators on platforms like TikTok remain underexplored. The overlapping nature of cultural presentation strategies, where educational content often intersects with visual and multimedia elements, further complicates the landscape, making it challenging to categorize content into single, distinct strategies. This phenomenon suggests a fluid and dynamic approach to content creation, where multiple strategies converge to create rich, layered narratives (Anderson, 2021). This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the content creation strategies of Thai TikTokers, focusing on both their use of language and visual elements.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the methodologies used by Thai TikTokers to manage multilingualism and cultural representation. Specifically, it examines the intersection of language use and visual storytelling in their content creation. Understanding these strategies is crucial for appreciating the nuances of intercultural communication and the role of digital platforms in facilitating cross-cultural dialogue. By investigating these innovative approaches, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on digital communication and cultural exchange. This study is centered around the following research questions:

- What types of culture are presented and what strategies are employed for cultural presentation by Thai TikTokers?
- What are the attitudes of Thai TikTokers towards using English in creating TikTok contents?

2 Cultural presentation on traditional social media and TikTok

Since the digital revolution's beginning in the early 2000s, various social media platforms have emerged to facilitate online communication. However, research indicates that only a few platforms have achieved significant global popularity. Among such platforms, Facebook, launched in 2004, has had a significant impact on how cultural content is shared and consumed. With features such as groups, pages, and events, Facebook allows users to create communities and share cultural narratives, thereby enhancing a sense of belonging and providing a space for the exchange of cultural practices and ideas. In addition, through this platform, users can join groups related to their ethnic, national, or religious backgrounds, participate in discussions, and share content that reflects their cultural identity. Consequently, Facebook has become an important tool for building social capital and facilitating intercultural interaction (Ellison and Boyd, 2013).

Following the success of Facebook, YouTube was launched in 2005 as a video-sharing platform that allows individuals to freely upload and share video content. This platform has transformed how cultural practices and narratives are presented, enabling creators to reach a global audience with diverse content, including educational videos, religious ceremonies, lifestyle vlogs, and national celebrations. This, in turn, promotes understanding and appreciation of different cultures (Kavoori, 2015). After that, in 2006, Twitter was released, establishing itself as a key platform for concise, real-time communication. Twitter enables users to engage in rapid cultural discourse and collective storytelling through hashtags and trending topics, which facilitate the creation and dissemination of digital dance cultures and youth identity formation on social media platforms (Boffone, 2021). More recently, in 2010, Instagram introduced a new dimension to social media with its emphasis on visual storytelling. By using this platform, users can share photos and short videos, often accompanied by captions and hashtags highlighting their daily lives, fashion, art, and significant cultural moments. Instagram's features, such as stories and IGTV, provide dynamic ways to engage with audiences and share cultural narratives in a visually appealing format. Particularly popular among younger

users, Instagram is used for documenting and influencing cultural trends and for showcasing individual and community identities through curated visual content (Abidin, 2016).

Following the establishment of platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram, TikTok made its debut in 2016, quickly distinguishing itself by emphasizing short-form user-generated video content that typically ranges from 15 s to 3 min. This platform has become exceedingly popular, particularly among younger audiences, as it provides a dynamic, fast-paced platform for expression and engagement. It is argued that one of TikTok's standout features is its algorithm, which excels at presenting new content to users by breaking down barriers that typically prevent new creators from gaining visibility. Unlike platforms like YouTube, which depend heavily on subscriber counts and established viewerships, or Instagram and Facebook, which prioritize content from existing networks, TikTok's algorithm provides unprecedented opportunities for new voices to gain popularity rapidly, regardless of their previous social media presence or follower count. This approach not only decentralizes content creation but also highlights the performative aspects of engagement, renovating TikTok from merely a platform for viewing content into an exciting space for performance and transformation (Anderson, 2021).

More importantly, TikTok synthesizes elements from other platforms, such as Twitter's real-time communication and Instagram's visual storytelling, with the immersive power of video. This combination allows for a more detailed and rich portrayal of personal and cultural narratives, effectively bridging the textual engagement of Twitter with the visual appeal of Instagram. This synthesis often leads to overlapping presentation strategies, where visual storytelling merges with other forms of content creation, such as educational and community-building strategies. This convergence is indicative of the platform's unique capacity to facilitate complex, multilayered cultural expressions that resonate with diverse audiences (Hjorth and Richardson, 2021). As a result, TikTok has not only filled the voids left by its predecessors but has also introduced new dynamics to digital exchange. Its success stems from its ability to blend visual, textual, and auditory elements into cohesive, compelling narratives that connect with a global audience, thereby redefining the consumption and production of culture in the digital age. Moreover, TikTok's structure allows for the overlapping of various cultural elements, creating a hybrid space where different cultural types and presentation strategies converge. This overlap is evident in how creators use the platform's features to combine educational content with entertainment, advocacy with personal stories, and local traditions with global trends, making it a unique space for cultural negotiation and representation (Highfield and Leaver, 2016).

In summary, platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have each played distinctive roles in shaping the domain of digital culture and social interaction. Facebook has evolved to promote community engagement and exchange through its diverse set of features. YouTube has become a key medium for detailed education and the broad distribution of information, empowering underrepresented voices. Twitter, with its fast-paced and hashtag-driven environment, excels at facilitating real-time discussions and advocacy on social issues. Instagram, emphasizing visual communication, has advanced the way visual culture is consumed and understood, enhancing visual literacy and dialogue. TikTok, with its short-form user-generated video content, has redefined expression

and engagement by creating content and encouraging active participation through trends and challenges. Collectively, these platforms contribute to a richer and more inclusive exchange of expressions in this era of digital technology.

2.1 Types of cultural presentation on traditional social media and TikTok

As previously discussed, traditional social media platforms and TikTok serve as active spaces where diverse cultural content is presented and explored. These platforms allow users to share and consume content that reflects various cultural dimensions, thus playing a crucial role in shaping and expressing cultural narratives. According to previous research, one of the most common types of cultures presented on social media is national culture. It encompasses the collective cultural characteristics unique to a specific nation, including holidays, traditional clothing, festivals, cuisine, and historical narratives. For example, social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram play a crucial role in sustaining and promoting cultural heritage. During national holidays, these platforms are often used to share and celebrate cultural symbols and practices, helping to reinforce national identity and maintain cultural continuity. This use of social media not only celebrates national culture but also contributes to the ongoing preservation and sustainability of cultural heritage (Liang et al., 2021).

In addition to national cultures, ethnic cultures are prominently featured on social media. This kind of culture refers to the unique cultural practices and traditions specific to particular ethnic groups within a nation. These include distinct languages, traditions, rituals, and social practices that differentiate them from the broader national culture. For example, platforms like TikTok play a significant role in shaping youth identities, where dance challenges and multimedia content allow diverse cultural expressions and contribute to the formation of digital communities (Boffone, 2021).

Youth cultures are another active facet of cultural expression on social media. Youth cultures encompass the behaviors, styles, and interests widespread among the younger generation, which are continually evolving and often influenced by global trends in music, fashion, and slang. On platforms like TikTok, youth culture is vividly expressed through viral dance trends, challenges, and fashion statements. To illustrate, in early 2020, the "Renegade" dance challenge became a global phenomenon, helping young people to express and engage with their culture in an ever-changing digital landscape (Abidin, 2016; Boffone, 2021).

Adding to this are subcultures. These smaller groups within the larger culture have distinct values, norms, and practices, often forming around shared interests such as gaming, music genres, or specific lifestyle choices. Subcultures create tight-knit communities of enthusiasts who share content related to their interests on platforms like YouTube. For instance, the gaming community uses YouTube to share gameplay, strategies, and reviews, enhancing a sense of subcultural cohesion and belonging (Abidin, 2016).

Finally, lifestyle cultures revolve around specific ways of living and daily practices, including fitness routines, beauty tips, travel vlogs, and cooking tutorials. Lifestyle content is particularly popular on platforms like Instagram, where influencers share their daily routines and tips on topics such as vegan cooking, minimalist living, or sustainable fashion. This type of content allows individuals to express their

lifestyle preferences, creating communities based on shared interests and values (Boffone, 2021).

Moreover, TikTok's unique format and algorithm have led to a significant overlap in these cultural types, as content often integrates multiple cultural dimensions. For instance, a single video can simultaneously highlight aspects of ethnic culture, youth culture, and lifestyle, offering a rich, multifaceted perspective on cultural identity (Anderson, 2021; Sanmee, 2024). This blending of cultural elements reflects the broader dynamics of cultural identity in Southeast Asia, where tradition and modernity intersect and influence each other (Sanmee, 2024).

2.2 Cultural presentation strategies on traditional social media and TikTok

Building on an understanding of various types of cultures, this section explores the strategies content creators employ to present cultural content effectively. These strategies are categorized into visual and multimedia strategies, linguistic strategies, content creation strategies, engagement strategies, community building strategies, advocacy and representation strategies, collaboration strategies, and authentic interaction strategies.

The first type among the frequently used strategies is the visual and multimedia strategy. This strategy plays a crucial role in presenting cultural content. Key components include visual storytelling, educational content, user engagement, hashtags, and collaborations. For example, Instagram creators use filters and editing tools to enhance their posts, while YouTube creators employ cinematographic techniques for high-quality videos (Rose, 2016). Additionally, on Twitter, creators use polls and threads to spark discussions, while TikTok challenges invite users to participate and share their experiences, promoting a sense of belonging and interaction (Brodie et al., 2013; Cunningham and Craig, 2019).

In addition to visual and multimedia strategies, linguistic strategies are crucial for reaching broader audiences and conveying cultural heritage. Multilingual content and code-switching enable creators to connect with diverse linguistic communities, making the content more inclusive and accessible. For instance, creators might use English and Spanish in their videos to engage both English-speaking and Hispanic viewers (Androutsopoulos, 2015). Furthermore, incorporating culturally specific terms and expressions enhances the richness and authenticity of the content. To illustrate, using traditional greetings, names of cultural artifacts, or specific idioms can convey deeper cultural meanings and context, allowing creators to communicate more effectively with their audience (Crystal, 2003).

Content creation strategies involve using narrative techniques, cultural symbols and motifs, humor and relatability, and integrating multimedia elements. Sharing personal stories or employing humor in content makes it more engaging and relatable. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter improve this content and enhance emotional connections, while symbols and multimedia elements add richness and engagement (Polletta et al., 2011; Geertz, 1973; Marwick and Boyd, 2011). Similarly, community building strategies are fundamental for strengthening group cohesion and support. Creating and nurturing online communities around specific cultural themes through Facebook groups, subreddit communities, or dedicated Discord servers allows members to share experiences, discuss cultural topics, and provide mutual support, raising a sense of belonging (Bull, 2015).

Advocacy and representation strategies also play a vital role in highlighting cultural issues and promoting social change. It is argued that content creators often use their platforms to raise awareness about issues affecting their communities and campaign for more diverse representation in the media, helping to promote understanding and inclusivity (Daniels, 2013). Additionally, collaborative project strategies highlight shared cultural experiences and promote intercultural understanding. Working with other creators on joint videos, podcasts, or blog posts that explore cultural themes or issues helps promote cultural exchange and mutual understanding (Jenkins, 2006). Lastly, authentic interaction strategies involve engaging in genuine interactions with followers by sharing personal stories and experiences related to cultural themes. This strategy builds trust and a deeper connection with the audience, making the content more relatable and impactful (Ellison et al., 2007).

The overlapping nature of these strategies is particularly evident on TikTok, where creators often blend multiple techniques within a single video. For instance, a TikTok video may employ visual storytelling, incorporate multilingual elements, and use engaging narratives, all while fostering community interaction through comments and duets. This integrative approach not only enriches the content but also reflects the complex, hybrid nature of digital culture in the modern age (Dhaninee, 2021).

In summary, social media platforms and TikTok commonly present diverse types of cultural content, including national cultures, ethnic cultures, youth cultures, subcultures, and lifestyle cultures. To present these cultures effectively, they use various strategies, including visual and multimedia strategies, linguistic strategies, content creation strategies, engagement strategies, community building strategies, advocacy and representation strategies, collaboration strategies, and authentic interaction strategies. These strategies ensure the richness and engagement of their cultural narratives. Table 1 summarizes the common types of cultures presented and cultural presentation strategies used in social media, which were used to guide the analysis of cultural presentation in this study.

2.3 Attitudes towards using English on traditional social media and TikTok

At the same time, it is acknowledged that the digital revolution has significantly changed global communication, with English playing a central role across social media platforms. That is, while these platforms facilitate various forms of cultural expression and interaction, English often serves as a bridge among distinct communities. For example, on platforms like Instagram and YouTube, English captions and hashtags help users reach international audiences, making cultural content more accessible. YouTube creators often produce videos in English or include subtitles, broadening their reach and inclusivity (Abidin, 2016; Burgess and Green, 2018). Furthermore, Twitter's real-time communication and hashtag-driven environment excel at facilitating discussions on cultural trends and social issues, often using English to engage a global audience (Boffone, 2021). Facebook, with its diverse set of features, allows users to create groups, pages, and events that often use English to connect with a

TABLE 1 Types of cultures and cultural presentation strategies.

Types of cultures	Descriptions	Examples of cultural topics
National cultures	Collective cultural characteristics unique to a specific nation, fostering national unity.	Holidays, traditional clothing, festivals, cuisine, and historical narratives
Ethnic cultures	Unique cultural practices and traditions specific to particular ethnic groups within a nation.	Distinct languages, traditions, rituals, and social practices
Youth cultures	Behaviors, styles, and interests prevalent among the younger generation, often influenced by global trends.	Global trends in music, fashion, and slang
Subcultures cultures	Smaller groups within the larger culture with distinct values, norms, and practices around shared interests.	Gaming, music genres, or lifestyle choices.
Lifestyle cultures	Specific ways of living and daily practices, often shared on social media platforms.	Fitness routines, beauty tips, travel vlogs, and cooking tutorials

Cultural presentation strategies	Descriptions	Examples of strategies
Visual and multimedia strategies	Using visual elements and multimedia to enhance engagement and richness of content.	Visual storytelling, multimedia integration, filters, and editing tools
Linguistic strategies	Incorporating multiple languages and culturally specific expressions to reach diverse audiences.	Multilingual content, code-switching, using culturally specific terms and expressions
Content creation strategies	Crafting narratives and using cultural symbols to create compelling content.	Narrative techniques, cultural symbols and motifs, authenticity, humor and relatability
Engagement strategies	Promoting interaction and participation from the audience.	User engagement, live Q&A sessions, polls, challenges, and threads
Community building strategies	Creating and maintaining online communities around cultural themes.	Online forums, social media groups, dedicated community pages
Advocacy and representation strategies	Highlighting and promoting cultural issues and diversity	Campaigns, awareness posts, advocacy collaborations
Collaborative strategies	Working with other creators to promote cultural exchange and understanding.	Joint videos, podcasts, blogs, cross-platform collaborations
Authentic interaction strategies	Engaging in genuine interactions by sharing personal stories and experiences.	Personal anecdotes, live Q&A sessions, community discussions

broader audience, raising community engagement and the exchange of cultural narratives (Ellison and Boyd, 2013).

Overall, attitudes towards using English on social media platforms vary significantly among users, influenced by factors such as cultural background, language proficiency, and the desire to reach a broader audience. Many users view English as a practical tool for global communication, appreciating its ability to transcend local linguistic barriers and connect people from different parts of the world. This positive attitude is often reflected in the willingness of users to adopt English for creating and sharing content, especially when the goal is to engage with an international audience (Crystal, 2003). However, there are also concerns and criticisms regarding the dominance of English on social media platforms. Some users feel that the prevalence of English may overshadow local languages and cultures, potentially leading to cultural homogenization and the erosion of linguistic diversity. This perspective underscores the importance of balancing the use of English with the promotion and preservation of native languages and cultural expressions (Pennycook, 2010).

Additionally, attitudes towards using English on social media platforms like TikTok can also be shaped by the perceived benefits of language learning and practice. Many users, especially non-native speakers, see social media as an opportunity to improve their English skills in an informal, engaging environment. This educational aspect adds another layer of value to the use of English in digital communication, promoting a positive attitude toward its adoption (Kirkpatrick, 2007). To support this point, a study by Li (2017) examined the attitudes of young people in Southeast Asia towards using English on social media. The findings indicated that English is perceived as a valuable tool for accessing global content and participating in international dialogues. Similarly, a survey conducted by Alim and Pennycook (2007) revealed that social media users in multilingual societies often adopt English to facilitate broader communication and to position themselves within a global community.

In Thailand, social media has also become an integral part of daily life, with platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok playing significant roles in cultural expression. The widespread use of these platforms has highlighted the importance of English in reaching broader audiences and engaging in global conversations. Research in the Thai context has shown that English is often used on social media to engage with international audiences and participate in global trends.

For instance, a study by Chiewchan (2019) revealed that social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram significantly influence Thai undergraduate students' language usage, including their adoption of English to broaden their audience. Thai influencers leverage this linguistic shift to enhance their content's appeal to both local and international viewers, reflecting a strategic use of language for greater engagement.

Similarly, Thai TikTokers frequently create content in English to participate in global challenges and trends, enhancing their visibility and interaction with users worldwide. This strategy allows them to maintain a balance between local cultural identity and global appeal, making their content more accessible and relatable to a broader audience (Dhaninee, 2021). This highlights the need for a balanced approach that promotes the use of both English and Thai to ensure that local languages and cultural identities are preserved. To address these concerns, a balanced approach is needed that promotes the use of both English and Thai on social media. Platforms like Facebook and TikTok can play a crucial role by offering tools that support multilingual content creation, encouraging users to incorporate both local languages and English. This strategy helps preserve Thai language and cultural identities while allowing users to engage in global conversations (Chiewchan, 2019).

2.4 Previous studies on cultural presentation, cultural presentation strategies, and attitudes towards using English on social media and TikTok

Research on cultural presentation on social media has been extensive and varied across different cultural contexts. For example, Abidin (2016) explored how influencers on Instagram blend personal and cultural elements to connect with their audiences. This work highlighted the use of visual storytelling and personal anecdotes to present cultural narratives, showing how influencers compile their posts to reflect both individual and cultural themes. In addition, Ellison and Boyd (2013) examined how social media platforms like Facebook facilitate the sharing of cultural content. They found that features such as groups, pages, and events allow users to create communities around shared cultural interests, thus enhancing a sense of belonging. Their research emphasized the importance of user engagement and the use of culturally specific terms and expressions in building and maintaining these online communities.

In the context of YouTube, Burgess and Green (2018) investigated how content creators use the platform to promote national identity. Their findings indicated that YouTube creators often produce content that celebrates national holidays, discusses national history, and promotes cultural heritage, thereby reinforcing a sense of national identity among viewers. Similarly, Boffone (2021) focused on youth cultures on platforms like TikTok, particularly through the lens of digital dance challenges. He discovered that these challenges, along with other multimedia content, are critical to expressing youth culture. His study highlighted how these elements, often shaped by global trends, help young people navigate their cultural identities in digital spaces, emphasizing the dynamic and interactive nature of social media in youth culture formation.

Turning to the Thai context, several studies have shown similar trends in the presentation of cultural content on social media platforms. Chanvised (2022) explored the role of social media in presenting gender identity among young Thai women. It was found

that young women use platforms like TikTok and Instagram to express their gender identities, often incorporating elements of both Thai and global cultures. This highlights the intersection of traditional gender norms and modern digital expressions. Additionally, Tuengtin (2020) analyzed how Thai social media influencers engage in international social practices and how their audiences perceive their credibility during the COVID-19 outbreak. This research revealed that influencers use social media to balance local cultural elements with a broader, international appeal, shaping perceptions of credibility and cultural identity in a global context. Furthermore, Ulla et al. (2024) examined the construction of teacher identity on TikTok. Their findings indicated that Thai teachers use the platform to blend their professional roles with personal and cultural narratives by incorporating educational content with cultural elements.

Research on attitudes towards using English on social media in Thailand reveals both positive and negative perspectives. A significant concern is that the dominance of English may contribute to the erosion of the Thai language and culture. This underscores the need for a balanced approach that supports both English and Thai, ensuring that local cultural identities are preserved while still enabling participation in global conversations (Chiewchan, 2019). On the positive side, Thai EFL (English as a Foreign Language) speakers generally view the use of English favorably, seeing it as a means to improve language proficiency and access global content. As an illustration, Lee et al. (2023) found that many Thai content creators recognize English as a tool for reaching a global audience and facilitating intercultural communication. Gulatee et al. (2021) found that Thai students' use of social media is closely tied to aspects of narcissism, self-identity, and empowerment. While students view social media as a platform for self-expression and personal growth, the study also highlights concerns about its impact on self-perception and the potential for enhancing narcissistic tendencies. Supporting these positive attitudes, Dewi and Arifani (2021) examined the use of Line video calls and TikTok videos for teaching pronunciation in Thailand, highlighting their effectiveness in enhancing English language learning. Finally, Akpan (2021) explored the impact of social media on motivation towards learning English as a global language, revealing that these platforms significantly boost learners' confidence, competence, and autonomous learning.

In conclusion, while English serves as a vital tool for global communication on social media, it is essential to recognize and address concerns regarding its impact on local languages and cultures. By promoting a balanced use of English and native languages, social media platforms can help preserve cultural diversity and ensure that local identities are not overshadowed. This study aimed to deepen the understanding of Thai users' attitudes towards using English on social media, particularly on platforms like TikTok, and to explore their motivations, challenges, and perceptions. By examining these factors, the research contributes to a better understanding of how global communication intersects with local cultural expressions, highlighting the importance of maintaining linguistic and cultural diversity in the digital age.

3 Methodology

3.1 Qualitative research approach

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology to explore the strategies and experiences of Thai TikTokers as they engaged with cultural

diversity and multilingualism in their English content on TikTok. The preference for a qualitative approach stemmed from its strength in facilitating a thorough examination of complex phenomena, which is crucial for understanding the detailed strategies and experiences of Thai TikTokers amidst cultural diversity and language subtleties.

Qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and content analysis, were central to generating rich, detailed data. Such depth is indispensable for accurately portraying the complex nature of cultural representation and intercultural communication prevalent on TikTok, providing insights that quantitative methods might overlook (Saldaña, 2021). Furthermore, this approach allowed for an exploration of the social and cultural contexts surrounding the participants, shedding light on how they perceived and managed the challenges and opportunities presented by cultural diversity and multilingualism in a digital context (Maxwell, 2012).

In addition, the inherent flexibility of qualitative research was particularly beneficial. It enabled the researcher to remain responsive to emerging themes and pursue in-depth inquiries during interviews. This adaptability is essential for investigating the dynamic and fluid nature of content creation on TikTok, where cultural trends and dialogues evolve rapidly (Flick, 2018). Ultimately, the study sought to contribute to the development of theoretical frameworks that capture the lived experiences and strategic insights of Thai TikTokers, utilizing qualitative data to enrich our understanding of digital intercultural communication and cultural representation (Charmaz, 2014). This methodological choice underscored the study's commitment to capturing the complex aspects of cultural exchange on TikTok, aiming to build a grounded theory that reflects the complexities of managing cultural and linguistic identities in the age of social media.

3.2 Participants and sampling procedures

This study focused on purposively sampling 20 Thai TikTokers recognized for their adept integration of cultural diversity and multilingualism into their content. Participants were selected based on specific criteria, including the use of English as a foreign language and the nature of their TikTok accounts (personal or business). This distinction was crucial, as business accounts, often aimed at marketing and product promotion, might exhibit different language strategies and attitudes compared to personal TikTokers, who may focus more on personal expression and cultural representation. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the bilingual content creation landscape, the study included TikTokers who used English in varying capacities, from those fluent in English to those using it as a partial foreign language. This range provided insights into how language proficiency and cultural identity are navigated in content creation.

The selection methodology involved a detailed review of TikTok content by Thai users, emphasizing trends, user recommendations, and engagement metrics to identify creators who prominently feature cultural diversity in their content (Ming, 2022). The criteria included a minimum follower count of 10,000, significant engagement with their content, and a demonstrated commitment to showcasing cultural diversity. Upon identifying potential participants, they were approached with details about the study's objectives, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the procedures for conducting

interviews (Kim et al., 2011). Those expressing interest provided informed consent, agreeing to participate in interviews and allowing their TikTok content to be analyzed.

Table 2 presents a summary of the background information of the selected participants, highlighting their demographics, type of account, follower count, and the languages used in their content.

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Research instruments

To investigate the multifaceted dimensions of cultural presentations and cultural presentation strategies of Thai TikTokers, the study utilized two primary research methods: online semi-structured interviews and content analysis. Each method was carefully selected for its ability to yield rich insights into the detailed practices of cultural expression and communication on TikTok.

3.3.1.1 Online semi-structured interviews

Online semi-structured interviews were conducted using TikTok's chat channels, Facebook audio and video chat, and Microsoft Teams, ensuring accessibility for Thai TikTokers. The interviews covered participants' backgrounds, cultural content, and presentation strategies, with a focus on exploring their motivations and attitudes towards using English and other languages in their content. Each interview lasted approximately 20–30 min, providing ample time for in-depth discussion. A total of 20 interviews were conducted, allowing for a strong qualitative dataset. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis to uncover recurring themes and strategies in cultural expression (Saldaña, 2021). This approach provided in-depth insights into the creative practices and challenges of cultural presentation on TikTok. The flexibility of the semi-structured format allowed for the exploration of new themes as they emerged, making the data collection process active and responsive to the participants' unique experiences (Charmaz, 2014).

3.3.1.2 Content analysis of TikTok videos' titles, descriptions, and comments

Content analysis focused on the three most-viewed videos of each selected TikToker, totalling 60 videos. The analysis examined language use, cultural symbols, attire, music, and specific cultural narratives. A structured coding framework was developed to identify recurring patterns and themes, highlighting effective strategies for cultural presentation and audience engagement. The study aimed to balance showcasing Thai culture and appealing to a global audience through elements like bilingual captions and local adaptations of global trends. Comments on these videos were also analyzed to gain insights into audience reception and interaction with the content, providing a comprehensive view of the cultural dynamics at play (Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2017). Together with online semi-structured interviews, these methods constituted a holistic research approach, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the cultural presentations and strategies Thai TikTokers employ to manage cultural diversity and multilingualism. This triangulation of methods ensured a thorough analysis, capturing the complex interplay of language and culture in the digital sphere of TikTok.

TABLE 2 Background information of selected Thai TikTokers for the study.

TikToker ID	Gender	Types of users	Followers (Approx.)	Languages used
TT1	Unspecified	Business	662.8 K	Thai, English
TT2	Female	Personal	440.2 K	Thai, English, Norwegian
TT3	Male	Personal	389 K	Thai, English, Korean
TT4	Unspecified	Business	313 K	Thai, English
TT5	Female	Personal	310 K	Thai, English
TT6	Female	Personal	221.2 K	Thai, English, Korean
TT7	Female	Personal	157 K	Thai, English
TT8	Female	Personal	144.7 K	Thai, English
TT9	Unspecified	Business	107.4 K	Thai, English
TT10	Male	Personal	104 K	Thai, English, Chinese
TT11	Unspecified	Business	102.6 K	Thai, English
TT12	Female	Personal	101.7 K	Thai, English
TT13	Female	Personal	49.4 K	Thai, English
TT14	Female	Personal	23.9 K	Thai, English, French
TT15	Unspecified	Business	23.7 K	Thai, English
TT16	Unspecified	Business	21.6 K	Thai, English, Chinese
TT17	Female	Business	20.2 K	Thai, English
TT18	Female	Personal	11.3 K	Thai, English
TT19	Unspecified	Business	10.3 K	Thai, English
TT20	Male	Personal	10.1 K	Thai, English

3.3.1.3 Validation and ethical consideration

To ensure accuracy, data validation was pursued through member checking, where participants reviewed synthesized findings to confirm accurate representation of their experiences (Saldaña, 2021; Tracy, 2020). Triangulation was also applied by integrating multiple data sources, including online semi-structured interviews and TikTok content analysis, providing a comprehensive view and thorough validation through cross-examination (Flick, 2018; Patton, 2015). Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent, ensuring participant awareness, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw, aligning with ethical guidelines (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). These approaches enhanced the credibility and reliability of the findings while respecting participants' rights and well-being.

4 Results

4.1 Types of cultures and cultural presentation strategies of Thai TikTokers

4.1.1 Cultural contents presented by Thai TikTokers

As shown in Table 3, the diverse online presence of Thai TikTokers reaches a broad audience by presenting a rich mix of cultural content. This result highlights distinct trends and preferences among creators and their followers as the combination of various cultural expressions reveals the complex and multifaceted nature of Thai identity.

For instance, ethnic and national cultures emerged as the predominant types presented by Thai TikTokers, accounting for 27 videos or 45% of the total content. This content often blends traditional practices with national pride, reflecting a deep connection to cultural heritage. It serves to both celebrate and critique aspects of Thai identity, offering a platform for creators to engage with their heritage. For example, videos like "How my Asian mom communicates" and "I love them so much" explore familial and cultural dynamics, highlighting the intersection of ethnicity and national identity. Additionally, content such as "How Thai destinations get mispronounced" not only provides linguistic education but also challenges global misconceptions, subtly critiquing cultural stereotyping. The focus on language in videos like "3 basic Thai words you pronounce wrong" emphasizes the importance of linguistic precision, asserting the value and complexity of the Thai language against a backdrop of global linguistic dominance.

Besides, lifestyle and national cultures, represented in 13 videos or 21.7% of the total content, offer an insight into the everyday lives of Thai people, linked with national identity. This category covers a range of topics from culinary experiences to fashion and daily routines, illustrating a blend of modern and traditional Thai lifestyles. For instance, "Being dark-skinned in Thailand" addresses societal perceptions and beauty standards, challenging prevailing stereotypes and advocating for a more inclusive understanding of Thai identity. Culinary-themed videos like "Famous grandma porridge in Bangkok" and "Michelin-awarded Tom Yam Mama noodles in Bangkok" not only celebrate Thai cuisine but also serve as cultural connectors, resonating with both local and global audiences. Moreover, lifestyle content such as "Everyday makeup – What I use" integrates

TABLE 3 Types of cultural content presented by Thai TikTokers.

No. of videos (N = 60 or 100%)	Overlaps in cultural types (N = 6)	Main cultural topics (N = 60)	TikToker IDs (N = 20)
N = 27 (45.0%)	1. Ethnic and national cultures	- How my Asian mom communicates - I love them so much - When the seller in Thailand finds out you are half Thai	TT2
		- How Thai destinations get mispronounced - Thai people are pretty open about their age. How about you—would you share your age? - Do not do these things in Thailand	TT5
		- Fill in the blank: ข้างนอกฝนตก ฉันขอยืมร่ม____นี้ได้ไหม? - 3 basic Thai words you pronounce wrong - How to use the word เออ (uh) in Thai	TT7
		- How much? in Thai basic words - Cost of living in Thailand - Reverse parking or forward parking?	TT8
		- What's your Thai level? - How Thai people actually greet in real life? - Thai vs. Cantonese Numbers	TT10
		- Learn from Thai song - Northern vs. Central Thai - 4 places that foreigners always say wrong	TT12
		- Thai love phrases: "I love you" - Learning 5 Thai vocabulary about Family members with my sweetest little niece - Textbook vs. Real Life Thai	TT13
		- What are you doing in Thai - How to say "Raining" in Thai - Where to go out in Thailand?	TT14
		- How to say "large" in Thai - How to say "lemon" in Thai - How to say "day after tomorrow" in Thai	TT20
N = 13 (21.7%)	2. Lifestyle and national cultures	- Famous grandma porridge in Bangkok - Michelin-awarded Tom Yam Mama noodles in Bangkok - Unique Durian Cutting Skills in Bangkok	TT1
		- Being dark-skinned in Thailand - Furniture Shopping in Thailand - Best Cheap Eats Spot in Thailand	TT3
		- How to get better selfies from iPhone - Everyday makeup—What I use - Summer & beach lookbook	TT6
		- Haggling is somewhat a national sport is not it - Where to go out in Thailand?	TT11
		- The rainy season and cool powder - How do you think about Bangkok's new sign	TT15

(Continued)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

No. of videos (N = 60 or 100%)	Overlaps in cultural types (N = 6)	Main cultural topics (N = 60)	TikToker IDs (N = 20)
N = 9 (15.0%)	3. National and subcultures	- Bangkok's Erawan Shrine Dance in Gratitude—News - Thai Meditation Practice Stirs Controversy—News - Renowned Thai singer Rudklao Amaradit delights fans—News	TT4
		- Learn from "How to make millions before grandma dies" Movie	TT11
		- Wasn't it Thailand where the police were fighting against monkeys? - When Thais sing live	TT18
		- Ignite Thailand Bulletin: April 2024 - Get to Know Thai Dance - Your Radio Thailand: Get Closer, Forever Connect	TT19
N = 9 (15.0%)	4. Youth and national cultures	- Things foreigners dislike about Thai food - Essential items when traveling in Thailand - Educational Freedom in Thailand	TT9
		- If not Bangkok, where else would you (teenagers) like to live in Thailand?	TT11
		- Fire at Chatuchak Market's Pet Zone - Palestine Supporters in Thailand Gathered in Bangkok - New Rule for LGBTQ+ Students in Thailand	TT16
N = 3 (5%)	5. Lifestyle and ethnic cultures	- Making Laab with My Thai Mom - Everything I Ate at the LA Thai Night Market - How to Make Spicy Thai Raw Shrimp	TT17
N = 2 (3.3%)	6. Lifestyle and subcultures	- The guy invented Hong Thai inhaler	TT15
		- How I feel when I hit shuffle/random play on my Thai playlist	TT18

contemporary beauty trends with traditional aesthetics, reflecting the ongoing negotiation between global and local influences in Thai society.

Next, national and subcultures, which accounted for 9 videos or 15% of the total content, showcase the diversity within Thai society by highlighting niche interests and specific cultural dynamics. This category includes explorations of traditional arts, societal issues, and entertainment, providing a platform for lesser-known aspects of Thai culture. For example, "Bangkok's Erawan Shrine Dance in Gratitude – News" serves as an educational resource, preserving cultural heritage through the documentation of traditional performances. Similarly, "Learn from 'How to make millions before grandma dies' Movie" blends modern subcultural trends with national narratives, reflecting the integration of contemporary popular culture into the broader national context. Videos like "Renowned Thai singer Rudklao Amaradit delights fans – News" and "Ignite Thailand Bulletin: April 2024" offer critical commentary on current events, engaging viewers in societal discourse and reflection.

At the same time, youth and national cultures, explored in 9 videos or 15% of the total content, provide insight into the evolving values and aspirations of Thai youth. These videos often address issues related to education, social change, and global influences, reflecting the perspectives of younger generations. For example, "New Rule for LGBTQ+ Students in Thailand" highlights a progressive shift in attitudes towards gender and sexuality, showcasing the youth's role in advocating for inclusivity. Videos like "Educational Freedom in Thailand" capture the youth's engagement with educational reform, while "If not Bangkok, where else would you like to live in Thailand?"

explores urbanization and the desire for regional identity, reflecting the youth's complex relationship with modernity and tradition.

On the other hand, lifestyle and ethnic cultures, represented in 3 videos or 5% of the total content, focus on the integration of traditional ethnic elements into daily life. This content often features culinary traditions and personal narratives, emphasizing the preservation of ethnic customs within a modern context. For example, "Making Laab with My Thai Mom" not only preserves traditional recipes but also highlights the familial aspect of ethnic traditions, emphasizing the importance of community and cultural continuity.

Lastly, the categories of lifestyle and subcultures, as well as subcultures and lifestyle, were represented in 2 videos or 3.3% of the total content each. These videos highlight the unique lifestyle elements within specific subcultural groups, often focusing on specialized interests and innovations. For instance, "The guy invented Hong Thai inhaler" showcases local ingenuity and creativity, celebrating the unique contributions of Thai subcultures to the broader societal landscape. Similarly, "How I feel when I hit shuffle/random play on my Thai playlist" delves into musical subcultures, offering a personal glimpse into the creator's tastes while also reflecting broader trends in music and entertainment. These videos bridge the gap between individual preferences and collective cultural identity, demonstrating how personal and subcultural narratives contribute to the national conversation.
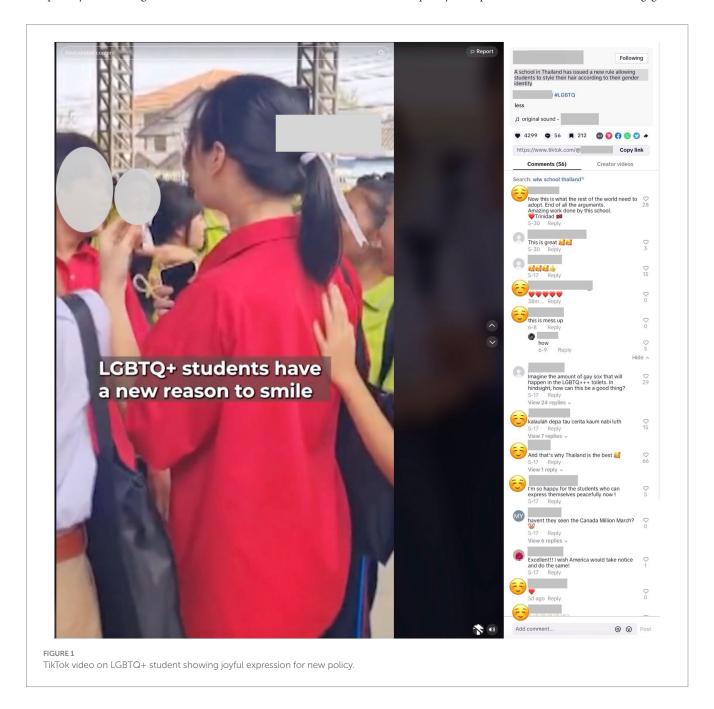
In summary, the varied cultural content presented by Thai TikTokers not only reflects the rich and multifaceted nature of Thai culture but also serves as a dynamic platform for cultural negotiation and identity formation. The overlap in cultural types,
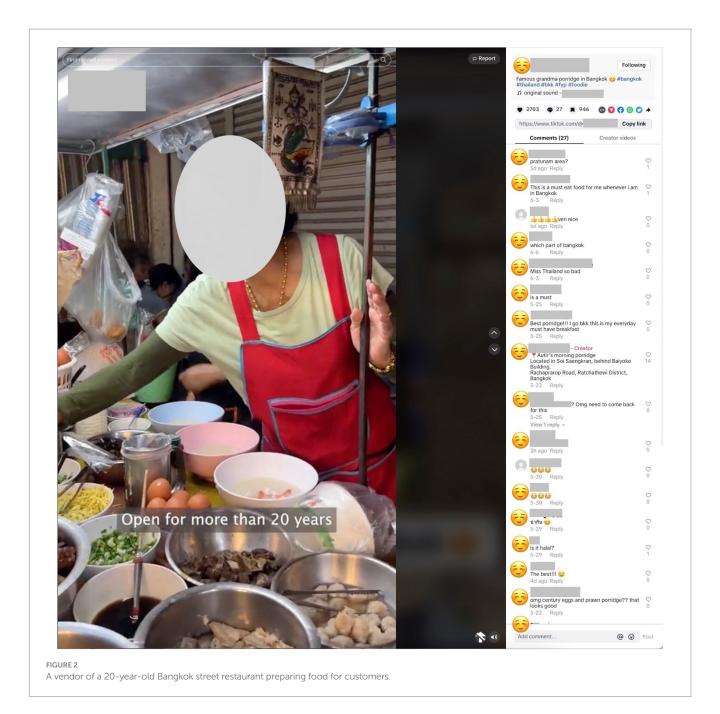
such as the intersection of ethnic, lifestyle, national, subculture, and youth elements, highlights the complexity of Thai cultural identity and the fluidity with which these creators manage between different cultural dimensions. The emphasis on language instruction, daily practices, traditional celebrations, niche interests, and contemporary issues underscores the dynamic and evolving nature of Thai cultural identity in the digital age. This comprehensive analysis illustrates that Thai TikTokers utilize the platform not merely for entertainment but also as a means of cultural expression, societal commentary, and identity exploration. Figures 1, 2 attached at the end of the paper provide further visual representation of how these creators manifest their content through overlapping cultural expressions, offering a deeper understanding of the rich blend of Thai culture as experienced and portrayed in the digital realm.

4.1.2 Cultural presentation strategies of Thai TikTokers

The presentation strategies utilized by Thai TikTokers, as shown in Table 4, illustrate a sophisticated interplay of various elements that go beyond simple categorization. These strategies, which include visual storytelling, educational content, user engagement, hashtags and campaigns, and multilingual content, among others, often overlap, reflecting a complex and dynamic approach to content creation. This overlapping nature underscores the complicated ways in which these creators engage with their audiences, enhancing the unique affordances of the TikTok platform to convey their messages.

Similar to the overlapping nature of cultural content types, the strategies used by Thai TikTokers are rarely isolated. For instance, visual storytelling is not only a prevalent strategy (13.79% of instances) but also frequently overlaps with educational content, user engagement,

FIGURE 1
TikTok video on LGBTQ+ student showing joyful expression for new policy.

FIGURE 2
A vendor of a 20-year-old Bangkok street restaurant preparing food for customers.

and hashtags and campaigns. This convergence is evident in TT1's "Unique Durian Cutting Skills in Bangkok," where visual storytelling is employed to present a traditional practice, combined with educational elements to inform viewers about the intricacies of durian cutting. The use of hashtags further amplifies the video's reach, encouraging user interaction and raising a sense of community around shared cultural experiences. This layered approach enhances the viewer's experience by providing multiple entry points for engagement-visual appeal, educational value, and interactive participation.

In addition, the linguistic strategies employed, such as multilingual content and code-switching, serve not only to broaden the audience base but also to navigate the complex linguistic landscape of a multilingual society. TT2's video "How my Asian mom communicates" exemplifies this strategy, using both Thai and English to describe familial communication styles. This not only makes the content

accessible to a wider audience but also highlights the bilingual nature of the creator's identity, reflecting broader societal dynamics. The strategic use of code-switching (6.03% of instances), as seen in TT12's "Learn from Thai song," underscores the detailed negotiations of identity that occur when creators alternate between languages. This practice can serve to reinforce cultural pride while simultaneously catering to a global audience, representing the dual identity that many creators embody.

Furthermore, content creation strategies such as narrative techniques, cultural symbols and motifs, and authenticity further demonstrate the creators' adeptness at weaving cultural narratives into their content. TT11's video "Learn from 'How to Make Millions Before Grandma Dies'" employs narrative techniques and humor to deliver a culturally resonant message. This approach not only entertains but also educates, using storytelling as a means to explore cultural values and norms. Similarly, the use of cultural

TABLE 4 Cultural presentation strategies used by Thai TikTokers and their percentages.

Strategies	Sub-strategies	Instances (N = 116 or 100%)	Common overlaps with other strategies	TikToker IDs	Examples of contents
Social media strategies	Visual storytelling	16 (13.79%)	Educational content, user engagement, hashtags and campaigns	All TikTokers	- Unique Durian Cutting Skills in Bangkok (TT1) - How my Asian mom communicates (TT2)
	Educational content	11 (9.48%)	Visual storytelling, user engagement	TT1, TT2, TT3, TT9, TT10, TT13, TT14, TT17, TT19	- Textbook vs. Real Life Thai (TT13) - What are you doing in Thai (TT14)
	User engagement	6 (5.17%)	Hashtags and campaigns, visual storytelling	TT5, TT7, TT18, TT19	- Fill in the blank: ข้างนอกฝนตก ฉันขอยืมร่ม____นี้ได้ไหม? (TT7)
	Hashtags and campaigns	7 (6.03%)	User engagement, visual storytelling	TT1, TT2, TT10, TT11, TT14, TT18, TT19	- Haggling is somewhat a national sport is not it (TT11) - Where to go out in Thailand? (TT14)
	Collaborations and challenges	5 (4.32%)	User engagement, cross-platform collaborations	TT3, TT6, TT11, TT19	- Furniture Shopping in Thailand (TT3) - Summer & beach lookbook (TT6)
Linguistic strategies	Multilingual content	9 (7.76%)	Code-switching, educational content	TT2, TT3, TT6, TT10, TT14, TT16	- How my Asian mom communicates (TT2) - What's your Thai level? (TT10)
	Code-switching	7 (6.03%)	Multilingual content, educational content	TT4, TT6, TT11, TT12, TT13, TT19	- Learn from Thai song (TT12) - Learning 5 Thai vocabulary about Family members with my sweetest little niece (TT13)
	Using culturally specific terms and expressions	6 (5.17%)	Narrative techniques, authenticity	TT6, TT9, TT11, TT17	- Making Laab with My Thai Mom (TT17)
Content creation strategies	Narrative techniques	6 (5.17%)	Narrative techniques, authenticity	TT4, TT5, TT6, TT18, TT20	- Renowned Thai singer Rudklao Amaradit delights fans – News (TT4)
	Cultural symbols and motifs	6 (5.17%)	Narrative techniques, authenticity	TT1, TT3, TT12, TT14, TT15	- Northern vs. Central Thai (TT12) - The guy invented Hong Thai inhaler (TT15)
	Authenticity	6 (5.17%)	Narrative techniques, cultural symbols	TT1, TT3, TT12, TT14, TT15	- Unique Durian Cutting Skills in Bangkok (TT1) - The rainy season and cool powder (TT15)
	Multimedia integration	7 (6.03%)	Visual storytelling, educational content	TT3, TT6, TT7, TT10, TT13	- Everyday makeup—What I use (TT6) - Textbook vs. Real Life Thai (TT13)
	Online forums	4 (3.45%)	Authentic interaction, user engagement	TT9, TT17, TT20	- Everything I Ate at the LA Thai Night Market (TT17)
Community building strategies	Social media groups	2 (1.72%)	Awareness posts, campaigns	TT19	- Your Radio Thailand: Get Closer, Forever Connect (TT19)
	Campaigns	3 (2.59%)	Hashtags, community building	TT12, TT19	- Get to Know Thai Dance (TT19)
	Awareness posts	3 (2.59%)	Community building, authentic interaction	TT19	- Ignite Thailand Bulletin: April 2024 (TT19)
Collaborative project strategies	Cross-platform collaborations	5 (4.32%)	Collaborations and challenges, user engagement	TT3, TT6, TT11, TT19	- Learn from 'How to make millions before grandma dies' Movie (TT11)
Authentic interaction strategies	Personal anecdotes,	3 (2.59%)	Narrative techniques, authenticity	TT5, TT16	- How Thai destinations get mispronounced (TT5)
	Live Q&A sessions	4 (3.45%)	User engagement, online forums	TT5, TT16	- Do not do these things in Thailand (TT5)

symbols and motifs, as seen in TT1's "Famous Grandma Porridge in Bangkok," serves to anchor the content in a specific cultural context, providing viewers with a sense of place and tradition.

Apart from this, the platform's technological affordances, such as its algorithm-driven content discovery and user-friendly video editing tools, play a significant role in shaping these strategies. The integration of multimedia elements (6.03% of instances), such as text overlays and dynamic editing, is not merely a stylistic choice but a necessity to capture and retain viewers' attention in a highly competitive digital space. TT3's "Furniture Shopping in Thailand" increases these tools to create an engaging shopping experience, blending practical advice with aesthetically pleasing visuals. This not only enhances the content's appeal but also aligns with TikTok's fast-paced, visually driven nature.

Moreover, beyond content creation, community-building strategies are crucial for raising a sense of belonging and engagement among viewers. TT19's "Your Radio Thailand: Get Closer, Forever Connect" exemplifies the use of social media groups and campaigns to create interactive spaces for cultural exchange. These strategies, while accounting for a smaller portion of the overall strategies (2.59% each for social media groups and campaigns), are essential for maintaining a loyal and engaged viewer base.

On the other hand, the use of collaborative project strategies, such as cross-platform collaborations, further extends the reach and impact of the content. TT6's "How to get better selfies from iPhone" demonstrates the value of collaboration, not only in diversifying content but also in leveraging different platforms to reach a broader audience. This strategy, used in 4.31% of instances, underscores the interconnected nature of social media platforms and the importance of cross-platform engagement in building a comprehensive online presence.

Lastly, authentic interaction strategies, including personal anecdotes and live Q&A sessions, play a vital role in humanizing the creators and enhancing a deeper connection with the audience. TT16's "Fire at Chatuchak Market's Pet Zone" provides real-time updates and engages with viewers' questions, showcasing the creator's responsiveness and commitment to transparency. This approach not only builds trust but also enhances the viewer's sense of involvement in the content.

To summarize, the overlapping strategies employed by Thai TikTokers reveal a comprehensive and sophisticated approach to content creation, reflecting the complex interplay of cultural, linguistic, and technological factors. These strategies are not merely tools for content dissemination but are deeply intertwined with the creators' identities and the platform's affordances. The analysis demonstrates that content creation on TikTok is not a monolithic process but a dynamic and evolving practice that requires a multifaceted approach. This comprehensive examination highlights the importance of understanding the interdependence of various strategies and the role of TikTok as a platform that facilitates diverse forms of cultural expression and engagement. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of the digital cultural landscape in Thailand and underscore the critical role of social media in shaping contemporary cultural identities.

4.2 Thai TikTokers' attitudes towards using English in creating TikTok contents

The exploration of RQ2 examines the complex attitudes of Thai TikTokers towards using English in their content. The analysis,

supported by online semi-structured interviews and content review, reveals a variety of perspectives that underscore the thorough role of language in cultural expression on digital platforms. The attitudes are categorized into positive, negative, and mixed/neutral, each intricately linked to the types of cultural content and presentation strategies outlined in Tables 3, 4. This result provides a deeper analysis of these attitudes, connecting them to the overarching themes of identity, audience engagement, and the affordances of the TikTok platform.

4.2.1 Positive attitudes

Positive attitudes towards using English in TikTok content often stem from the desire to reach a wider audience and facilitate cultural exchange. This perspective is closely associated with TikTokers who focus on ethnic and national cultures and employ strategies like visual storytelling and educational content. For example, TT5 highlighted the practical benefits of English, noting, "*Using English helps me connect with a broader audience, especially those who are interested in Thai culture but do not speak Thai.*" This statement reflects her strategic use of language to bridge cultural gaps, as seen in her video "Thai people are pretty open about their age. How about you – would you share your age?" Here, TT5 integrates English and Thai, making cultural content accessible and engaging for a global audience. This approach exemplifies the overlap of visual storytelling and user engagement, enhancing the content's appeal and reach.

TT13 also emphasized the importance of English in broadening cultural understanding. She stated, "*I believe using English in my videos helps to break down cultural barriers and allows me to share Thai culture with a global audience.*" Her video "Learning 5 Thai vocabulary about Family members with my sweetest little niece" uses bilingual narration to cater to both Thai and non-Thai speakers, thereby facilitating a comprehensive educational experience. This strategic use of multilingual content and educational content underscores the role of language as a tool for cultural dissemination and inclusivity, highlighting the dual function of educating and entertaining.

Moreover, TT17 spoke about the enhanced engagement and feedback received due to using English. In her interview, she remarked, "*Using English in my content helps me engage with a more diverse audience and receive feedback from people all over the world.*" This is demonstrated in her video "Everything I Ate at the LA Thai Night Market," where she blends English and Thai to describe Thai dishes, thus making the content accessible to a global audience. This use of multilingual content not only enhances cross-cultural dialogue but also reflects the TikToker's adaptability in engaging a diverse viewer base, showcasing the utility of English in reaching a broader demographic.

4.2.2 Negative attitudes

On the flip side, some TikTokers expressed reservations about using English, revealing underlying challenges and tensions. These negative attitudes are often linked to the perceived pressures and limitations associated with linguistic performance and cultural representation. TT20, for instance, expressed anxiety about language accuracy, stating, "*Sometimes I worry about my English accent and grammar mistakes because they can attract negative comments.*" This concern reflects the broader issue of linguistic insecurity, which can impact content creators' confidence and their ability to engage with a global audience. In his video "How to say 'large' in Thai," TT20 manages the intricacies of English pronunciation, showcasing the dual

challenge of maintaining linguistic authenticity while catering to an international audience.

Similarly, TT7 highlighted the difficulties of balancing multiple languages in content creation. She stated, "*I find it challenging to switch between Thai and English smoothly, especially when explaining complex cultural concepts.*" This challenge is particularly evident in her video "3 basic Thai words you pronounce wrong," where the complexity of linguistic explanations sometimes leads to viewer confusion. The use of code-switching here underscores the delicate balance TikTokers must maintain to effectively communicate across language barriers, reflecting the details of bilingual content creation.

TT12 also voiced concerns about the potential overshadowing of the Thai language by English. She shared, "*There's a lot of pressure to use English because it's seen as more prestigious, but I worry it might overshadow the beauty of the Thai language.*" This response is evident in her video "Learn from Thai song," where she emphasizes the cultural and linguistic significance of Thai songs while using English to reach a broader audience. This highlights the tension between global visibility and cultural preservation, a common theme among TikTokers managing the digital context.

4.2.3 Other attitudes

In addition to clear positive and negative attitudes, some TikTokers exhibited neutral or mixed feelings towards using English. These attitudes often reflect a pragmatic approach to language use, balancing practical considerations with cultural authenticity. TT2, for example, uses English pragmatically alongside Thai and Norwegian, stating, "*I use English because it's practical, but I do not feel strongly about it one way or the other.*" This practical attitude is mirrored in her video "How my Asian mom communicates," where English is used for accessibility without overshadowing the cultural content.

TT10 highlighted the strategic advantages of using multiple languages. He noted, "*Using multiple languages helps me connect with different audience groups, but it can be challenging to keep the content balanced.*" His video "How Thai people actually greet in real life?" incorporates Thai, English, and Chinese, exemplifying a multilingual content strategy that engages a diverse audience. This approach reflects the TikToker's efforts to cater to multiple linguistic communities, demonstrating the complex planning involved in multilingual content creation.

TT14 emphasized English's role in facilitating intercultural dialogue. She remarked, "*English is a useful tool for engaging with viewers from different cultural backgrounds, but it's important to also highlight Thai culture authentically.*" Her video "Where to go out in Thailand" uses English to discuss regional differences, showcasing the balance between global engagement and cultural specificity. This reflects a nuanced understanding of language as both a tool for broad communication and a means of preserving cultural integrity.

In summary, the attitudes towards using English among Thai TikTokers are deeply intertwined with the cultural content types and presentation strategies they employ. The positive attitudes are often linked to the ethnic and national cultures and educational content strategies, as these provide a platform for broader cultural exchange and engagement. The use of English enhances the accessibility and inclusivity of such content, allowing creators to reach a global audience while maintaining cultural authenticity. Conversely, the negative attitudes highlight the challenges of balancing linguistic accuracy and cultural representation, often reflecting concerns over the potential

marginalization of Thai language and culture. On the other hand, the mixed attitudes underscore the pragmatic considerations involved in content creation, where the strategic use of multiple languages provides to diverse audiences. This reflects the multilingual content, and code-switching strategies employed by TikTokers, illustrating the complexity of navigating a multilingual and multicultural digital landscape. The triangulation of these attitudes with the cultural content types and strategies offers a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted role of language in digital cultural expression. It underscores the importance of a nuanced analysis that considers the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and platform affordances, highlighting the rich and evolving nature of Thai cultural identity in the digital age.

5 Discussion

The analysis of Thai TikTokers' cultural content, presentation strategies, and attitudes towards using English in creating TikTok content highlights a sophisticated interaction of local heritage and global communication. This study aligns with existing theories on social media's role in cultural exchange and extends them by offering new insights into multilingualism and digital identity on TikTok.

In terms of types of cultures, Thai TikTokers produced a diverse collection of cultural content, encompassing ethnic, lifestyle, national, subcultures, and youth cultures. This diversity echoes Ellison and Boyd's (2013) assertion that social media promotes communities around shared cultural interests. By showcasing various aspects of Thai culture, from traditional customs to modern lifestyles, these creators engaged a wide audience, promoting cultural exchange. This supports Abidin's (2016) findings on influencers using their platforms to highlight unique cultural elements and connect with followers personally.

More importantly, a notable aspect of this study is the overlapping nature of cultural content types and presentation strategies. The content presented by Thai TikTokers often blends multiple cultural dimensions, creating a rich complex of ethnic, lifestyle, and national elements. For instance, ethnic and national cultures emerged as the predominant types, reflecting traditional practices intertwined with national pride and identity. This blend serves to celebrate and critique aspects of Thai culture, providing a platform for creators to engage deeply with their heritage while addressing global misconceptions and promoting linguistic precision. Such blending of cultural types aligns with the concept of "transculturality" discussed by Welsch (1999), where cultural boundaries are fluid, and hybrid cultural forms emerge. As an additional support, lifestyle and national cultures, which also formed a significant portion of the content, offer insights into the everyday lives of Thai people, linked with national identity. This category showcases a blend of modern and traditional Thai lifestyles, echoing the findings of Miller et al. (2016), who discussed how social media platforms allow users to navigate and display their cultural identities dynamically. The intersection of lifestyle content with national identity underscores the complex negotiation between global and local influences, a theme also explored by Appadurai (1996) in his discussion of global cultural flows and disjunctures.

For cultural presentation strategies, the study identified several key strategies, including visual storytelling, multilingual content, educational content, and user engagement. These strategies often

overlap, reflecting a complex and dynamic approach to content creation. Visual storytelling, the most prevalent strategy, allies with Highfield and Leaver's (2016) emphasis on the importance of visual content in social media communication. The integration of educational elements and user engagement strategies within visual storytelling reflects Abidin's (2016) work on visual narratives in social media, highlighting how creators capture viewers' attention and convey cultural messages effectively. This overlap is particularly evident in the use of multilingual content, where creators seamlessly switch between languages to broaden communication and provide to diverse audiences. The strategic use of multiple languages and code-switching, as noted by Androutsopoulos (2015), not only enhances the accessibility of the content but also reflects the creators' complex identities and the multilingual site of their audience.

Finally, the positive attitudes towards using English in content creation, as demonstrated by many TikTokers, highlight the language's role as a tool for global outreach and cultural exchange. This perspective supports Lee et al. (2023) findings, which emphasize English's dual function in achieving global reach while maintaining cultural authenticity. The willingness to use English to engage a wider audience and facilitate cultural exchange is a testament to the creators' adaptability and recognition of the platform's global nature. However, this study also reveals the challenges associated with this linguistic choice, as some creators expressed concerns about potential negative feedback due to linguistic inaccuracies or the overshadowing of the Thai language. These concerns resonate with Pennycook's (2010) discussion on the dominance of English and its impact on local languages and cultural expressions. Moreover, the mixed or neutral attitudes towards using English reflect a pragmatic approach to language use, where creators balance the practical benefits of using a widely understood language with the desire to maintain cultural authenticity. This comprehensive view underscores the complexity of language use in digital media, as creators overcome the pressures of appealing to a global audience while staying true to their cultural roots. This finding is consistent with Blommaert (2010), who discusses the adaptive use of language in different social contexts and the strategic choices made by individuals in multilingual settings.

Overall, this study provides an inclusive analysis of the cultural content, presentation strategies, and attitudes towards English use among Thai TikTokers. The findings highlight the platform's role in facilitating a multifaceted representation of Thai cultural identity. By cross-referencing these results with existing literature, the study situates itself within the broader academic discourse on digital media, multilingualism, and cultural expression. It contributes to a deeper understanding of how social media platforms like TikTok serve as spaces for cultural negotiation, identity exploration, and global communication. This research underscores the importance of considering the overlapping and intersecting strategies employed by digital content creators, as these strategies are integral to their ability to engage diverse audiences and navigate the complex cultural landscape of the digital age.

6 Limitations of the study and implications for further research

While this study provides significant insights into the cultural presentations and attitudes towards using English among Thai TikTokers, certain limitations remain. Firstly, the sample size of 20 TikTokers, selected for their prominence and diversity, may not comprehensively represent the entire range of Thai TikTok content creators. A broader and more varied sample could potentially offer a more generalizable understanding of the diverse strategies and attitudes present across the platform. Additionally, the methodology, which includes content analysis and semi-structured interviews, may be influenced by potential biases such as social desirability, where participants may portray their use of English and cultural presentation strategies more favorably. Furthermore, the analysis focused on the three most-viewed videos per TikToker, which may not fully capture the creators' entire content range and evolution. A more extensive analysis covering a greater number of videos and a longer period could provide a richer, more detailed understanding.

Another limitation involves the study's focus on the use of English and multilingual content, potentially overlooking the representation and impact of regional dialects and minority languages. Exploring these linguistic aspects could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity and complexity of linguistic practices in digital cultural presentation. At the same time, the study also did not deeply examine the specific linguistic strategies employed by TikTokers in their content, such as how they direct identity negotiations when using multiple languages. This aspect could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and strategies involved in balancing global communication with local identity preservation. Moreover, the study did not distinguish between business and personal TikTok accounts, which may exhibit different language strategies and attitudes towards English usage. Differentiating these could offer insights into how content creation strategies vary based on account type and the intended audience.

Furthermore, the research did not extensively address the influence of TikTok's algorithms and platform policies on content visibility and engagement. Understanding how these structural factors shape content dissemination and the prioritization of certain types of content could offer valuable insights into the digital cultural context's dynamics. Finally, while the study provides an overview of the attitudes towards English usage, it does not deeply explore the lived experiences and detailed perspectives of TikTokers regarding the broader implications of their language choices. Future research could benefit from more in-depth qualitative methods, such as extended interviews or ethnographic approaches, to capture the complexities of these experiences more fully.

7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the cultural presentations and attitudes towards using English among Thai TikTokers, revealing a complex interplay between local heritage and global communication. The findings highlight the significance of bilingual and multilingual content in reaching diverse audiences and facilitating intercultural dialogue. While many TikTokers embrace the use of English to enhance their global reach, the study also uncovers challenges related to linguistic performance and the potential overshadowing of local languages and cultural expressions. Despite the limitations, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of digital cultural presentation and the role

of social media platforms like TikTok in shaping cultural narratives and identities. The insights gained from this study provide a foundation for further exploration into the evolving dynamics of language, culture, and identity in digital media, particularly in the context of global and local cultural exchanges.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the University of Phayao Human Ethics Committee (UP-HEC), Phayao Province, Thailand. Written informed consent to participate in this study was provided by the participants. The social media data was accessed and analyzed in accordance with the platform's terms of use and all relevant institutional/national regulations. Written informed consent was obtained from the individual(s) for the publication of any identifiable images or data included in this article.

Author contributions

RH: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Conflict of interest

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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