

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) Among Students in Thai Language Instruction at Vocational Colleges

Xu LingRui¹

Nadda Angsuwotai²

Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep,
Krungthep, Thailand

nadda.a@mail.rmuth.ac.th

ABSTRACT

This study is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of social constructivism theory and language acquisition theory, focusing on Thai grammar teaching in higher vocational colleges. It aims to explore the effectiveness of the task-based language teaching (TBLT) method and its impact on students' learning interests and Thai language skills, providing theoretical support and practical guidance for applying this teaching approach in Thai language teaching. The research conducted a questionnaire survey and test assessments. The sample consists of 223 students from four classes of Thai language majors in their second year at Yunnan Z College. The data analysis showed good reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The intrinsic connections among the acceptance of the task-based language teaching method, learning interest, and Thai language skills were revealed through difference, correlation, and factor analysis. The research results indicate that students with a high acceptance of the task-based language teaching method have significantly higher learning interest and Thai language skill levels. Moreover, the acceptance of the task-based language teaching method is significantly positively correlated with learning interest and Thai language skills, and it has a significant positive predictive effect on both. Based on this, the study suggests that schools should incorporate the task-based language teaching method into the design of Thai language courses, stimulating students' learning interest and language application ability by enhancing their understanding of it.

Keywords: Task-Based Teaching Method, Learning Interest, Thai Skill

INTRODUCTION

As the Thai language curriculum continues to evolve, the ability of students to master Thai has become increasingly important. Teachers gradually enhance students' practical abilities in identifying, understanding, reading, and writing. The importance of grammar instruction and its methodologies in foreign language education has always been a hot topic among educators and researchers. Many scholars agree that grammar must be taught, but teaching it effectively remains the key challenge. With the rapid development of foreign language teaching methods, various teaching strategies have emerged, including the Grammar-Translation Method, Direct Method, Inductive Approach, Deductive Approach, and Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT). These grammatical teaching strategies in China are particularly significant for Thai language learners. Although the TBLT is not a new theory, its application in Thai grammar teaching is still in its early stages. There is limited research on task-based approaches to Thai grammar instruction in higher vocational colleges, particularly in advanced vocational institutions. This study aims to apply the Task-Based Teaching Method to Thai grammar courses while providing specific teaching processes. Through this endeavor, it is hoped that new insights and methodologies for Thai grammar instruction can be offered.

This study aims to implement the TBLT approach in Thai grammar teaching and to examine its practical application within a structured teaching process. A key consideration in this research is the role of students' recognition and acceptance of the TBLT method. Differences in students' levels of recognition toward TBLT may influence not only their engagement and learning motivation but also their actual improvement in Thai language proficiency. When students recognize and understand the task-based approach, they are more likely to participate actively, find learning more relevant to their needs, and sustain interest over time. In contrast, limited recognition or misunderstandings about the method may lead to reduced motivation and weaker learning outcomes (Hu, Ho, & Nguyen, 2025).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of TBLT in improving both learning interest and language skills is likely to be influenced by how well the tasks align with students' existing knowledge and real-life communication contexts. If tasks are appropriately designed, students can experience language as a tool for achieving meaningful goals rather than as a set of abstract rules. This shift in perception may lead to deeper engagement and more robust language acquisition. Therefore, exploring how students' recognition of TBLT affects their

interest and performance is crucial for optimizing grammar instruction in Thai language courses.

This study introduces task-based strategies into Thai grammar instruction at the vocational level, and students' recognition of the TBLT method correlates with their learning interests and language proficiency. The findings are insights for language educators seeking to enhance the effectiveness and appeal of grammar teaching in Thai language programs.

Social Constructionism Theory

The introduction of task-based teaching methods is based on the linguistic and learning theories of the former Soviet psycholinguist Vygotsky, thus having a psycholinguistic foundation. According to Vygotsky's theory of social constructionism, knowledge is constructed by the individual rather than transmitted by others; this construction occurs within social interactions (Ellis 2006). In the learning process, there are four main factors: the student, the teacher, the task, and the peripheral factors—the environment. Social constructionism confirms the student's central role in knowledge construction. Constructivism advocates for learner-centered education under teachers' guidance, emphasizing the learner's cognitive role without neglecting the teacher's directive role. Teachers are facilitators and navigators of meaning construction, not mere transmitters or indoctrinators of knowledge (Khin, 2025).

Language Acquisition Theory

Krashen posits that language acquisition is primarily achieved through language input and that educational efforts should focus on providing optimal language input to students (Hu 2002). Comprehensible input is fundamental to successful language acquisition. In teaching, input can be made richer and more authentic, contextualized with linguistic backgrounds rather than being limited to written language, and should also include spoken communicative language. Building on Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Tan and Dong (2007) introduced the "Output Hypothesis," asserting that language acquisition cannot be successful without output. Therefore, proponents of task-based language teaching believe that the best way to master a language is by having students engage in activities, i.e., completing various tasks. It can be said that task-based teaching methods create favorable opportunities for both input and output, which are crucial in the language learning process.

Task-Based Language Teaching Research

Since 1985, Long has defined a task as "a piece of work undertaken freely by an individual or for someone else, often for some reward." In short, a task is an action people engage in as part of their daily lives. Prabhu (1987) suggested that a task involves learners achieving a specific outcome or conclusion based on given information and a certain thinking process, emphasizing the "thinking process" and "clear outcomes or conclusions." A task is not merely a simple language exercise; it is an activity that requires learners to think, such as through judging, analyzing, or comparing.

Since the late 1980s, task-based language teaching methods, which emphasize authentic language and student autonomy, have increasingly gained acclaim. This approach is considered an advanced development of communicative language teaching. The main feature of task-based language teaching is "learning by doing." Specifically, students acquire real and meaningful language usage skills by completing various communicative tasks. Consequently, tasks have become the focal point of classroom planning and instruction. In recent years, this "task accomplishment through language use" teaching model has gradually transformed the Thai language classroom instruction landscape.

Since the 1980s, many scholars have focused on TBLT, conducting extensive theoretical and experimental research, thus advancing the field. Tomlinson (2008) reviewed related literature, noting that these works focus on developing task-based approaches and how learners learn through language use. Rad and Jafari (2013) assessed the impact of task-based learning on the writing and reading performance of Iranian EFL students through different frameworks, showing that task-based strategies significantly improved students' writing and reading skills. Lai (2010) provided the origins, theoretical background, teaching principles, and implementation steps of TBLT, emphasizing the need for further standardized and systematic research on TBLT. Yan (2013) described the definition, types, procedures, and teaching principles of task-based language teaching, discussed its advantages and disadvantages, and emphasized the importance of teacher role transformation for further development of task-based teaching.

Although research on task-based language teaching started later in China, the method has garnered widespread attention in Thai language teaching. A notable feature of task-based teaching is its emphasis on the practical significance of language. During the execution of tasks, students have more opportunities to use language, thus effectively integrating language knowledge and skills. Therefore,

task-based language teaching has attracted significant scholarly interest. Theoretically, this will deepen the understanding of task-based teaching; practically, it is an effective way to develop students' comprehensive Thai language application abilities.

Thai Grammar Teaching Research

This study focuses on Thai grammar teaching in higher vocational colleges. In foreign language teaching, we commonly adopt the concept of "normative grammar," thus, the Thai grammar discussed in this study refers to the basic grammatical rules presented in the textbook "Thai Spoken Language Course." Through Thai grammar teaching, students' grammatical awareness can be effectively stimulated. Students first need to learn and memorize these grammar rules; after fully understanding this knowledge, they can correctly apply it in communicative activities.

Although grammar teaching in second language education has a history of at least 2,500 years, the controversy surrounding grammar instruction has never ceased in foreign language education. Whether to teach grammar and how to teach it has always been a hotly debated topic (Cheng, 2013). Currently, many scholars agree that grammar instruction is necessary. In 1987, linguists and educators, including Halliday, Widdowson, Wilkins, and Leech, convened a seminar in Lancaster to discuss the importance of grammar teaching, unanimously agreeing that it is essential (Hu, 2002).

Research by Fotos and Ellis (1991) demonstrated that communication-based grammar tasks significantly enhanced the language abilities of Japanese students. These tasks provided opportunities for foreign language interaction. They encouraged learners to expand their understanding of complex rules in a second language (L2). From these results, they proposed that grammar tasks effectively motivate learners to use grammar in communication, thereby deepening their mastery of complex grammatical structures in Thai as a Foreign Language (EFL). Cheng (2005) conducted an empirical study that detailed the evolution of English grammar teaching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of task-based approaches. Through a three-week experiment, the study found that task-based teaching significantly improved the English grammar abilities of high school students, with the key lying in how teachers integrate grammatical knowledge with actual communication needs. Di (2012) explored the definition and development of foreign language grammar teaching in high schools from the perspective of constructivist learning theory.

Overall, task-based language teaching has brought new vitality to Thai language instruction. Nonetheless, existing studies also have some issues, such as short experiment durations, research focused only on specific grammatical points, and the lack of a clear teaching model. Although Zhang (2006) provided some teaching demonstrations, details on task implementation and classroom summarization still need improvement.

METHOD

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in enhancing interest and proficiency in Thai language learning among vocational college students. To this end, a mixed-methods research approach was adopted, integrating qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of TBLT. The target population comprises sophomore students majoring in Thai at Z Vocational College in Yunnan Province. These students had already undergone one year of TBLT during their freshman year, providing a consistent and comparable learning experience.

A sample of 229 students was randomly selected from four different Thai language classes to ensure that the sample represented different demographic characteristics (gender, age, and place of origin). Each class had approximately 57-58 students, and the sample size was sufficient to represent the overall student population of the Thai language major at the college.

Initially, 80 students were randomly selected for a preliminary survey. A total of 80 questionnaires and test papers were distributed, and 78 valid data samples were collected after excluding invalid responses. These preliminary data were used for sample statistics and reliability/validity testing. Two weeks later, a second round of data collection was conducted with all 229 students. Two hundred twenty-nine questionnaires and test papers were distributed, and 223 valid data samples were collected after excluding invalid responses. This approach ensured the consistency and reliability of the two datasets, thereby enabling a more accurate assessment of the impact of TBLT on students' interest in learning and their Thai language skills.

The primary quantitative tool used in this study was a questionnaire divided into three main sections. The first section collected demographic information, including participants' names, gender, age, and place of origin. The second section focused on perceptions of TBLT and learning interest, comprising eight items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Items 1-4 assessed perceptions of TBLT tasks, while items 5-8

evaluated learning interest. The third section was a Thai language skills assessment, consisting of four subsections on recognition, comprehension, reading, and writing skills, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

The research hypothesis of this study:

1. Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a significant difference in learning interest based on the level of recognition of the Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT).
2. Hypothesis 2 (H2): There is a significant difference in Thai language Skills based on the level of recognition of the Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT).
3. Hypothesis 3 (H3): Recognizing the Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT) significantly impacts learning interest.
4. Hypothesis 4 (H4): Recognizing the Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT) significantly impacts Thai language Skills.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

Difference Analysis of Learning Interest Based on TBLT Recognition

Table 1

Difference Analysis of Learning Interest

Dimension	Recognition of Task-Based Teaching Method (M±SD)		T-value	P-value
	Low (N=31)	High (N=192)		
Learning Interest	2.81±0.565	3.90±0.546	-10.343	<0.001

As shown in Table 1, the comparison analysis of learning interest based on recognizing the Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT) shows that students with low recognition of TBLT scored 2.81 ± 0.565 . In contrast, students with high recognition of TBLT scored 3.90 ± 0.546 . Students with high recognition of TBLT have significantly higher scores in learning interest than those with low recognition, with $P < 0.001$ indicating a significant difference in learning interest based on TBLT recognition. Therefore, H1 is supported.

Difference Analysis of Thai Language Skill Based on TBLT Recognition

Table 2

Difference Analysis of Thai Language Skill

Dimension	Recognition of Task-Based Teaching Method (M±SD)		T-value	P-value
	Low (N=31)	High (N=192)		
Thai Language Skill	2.79±0.933	3.87±0.634	-6.219	<0.001

As shown in Table 2, the comparison analysis of Thai language Skills based on the recognition of the Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT) indicates that students with low recognition of TBLT scored 2.79 ± 0.933 . In contrast, students with high recognition of TBLT scored 3.87 ± 0.634 . Students with high recognition of TBLT have significantly higher scores in Thai language Skills than those with low recognition. $P < 0.001$ indicates a significant difference in Thai language Skills based on TBLT recognition. Therefore, H2 is supported.

Factor Analysis of the Impact of Recognition of TBLT on Learning Interest

Table 3

Factor Analysis of the Impact of Recognition of TBLT on Learning Interest

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.742	.176		9.906	<.001
Recognition of Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT)	.519	.045	.617	11.663	<.001
R ²				0.381	

F	136.023
P	<0.001

Dependent Variable: Learning Interest

The values are evenly distributed on both diagonal sides, indicating that the data follows an approximately normal distribution. The goodness of fit for the linear regression model is appropriate, with $R^2 = 0.381$, which accurately reflects the impact of recognizing the Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT) on learning interest. The regression equation is significant, with $\beta = 0.519 > 0$, $P < 0.01$, $F = 136.023$, $P < 0.001$, meaning that the independent variable (recognition of TBLT) has a significant positive impact on the dependent variable (learning interest). Therefore, H3 is supported.

Factor Analysis of the Impact of Recognition of TBLT on Thai Language Skill

Table 4

Factor Analysis of the Impact of Recognition of TBLT on Learning Interest

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Significance
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.266	.199		6.370	<.001
Recognition of Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT)	.634	.050	.647	12.603	<.001
R²				0.418	
F				158.835	
P				<0.001	

Dependent Variable: Thai Language Skill

The values are evenly distributed on both diagonal sides, indicating that the data follows an approximately normal distribution. The goodness of fit for the linear regression model is appropriate, with

$R^2 = 0.418$, which accurately reflects the impact of recognition of the Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT) on Thai language Skills. The regression equation is significant, with $\beta = 0.634 > 0$, $P < 0.01$, $F = 158.835$, $P < 0.001$, meaning that the independent variable (recognition of TBLT) has a significant positive impact on the dependent variable (Thai language Skill). Therefore, H4 is supported.

Correlation Analysis

Table 5
Correlation Analysis

	Recognition of Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT)	Learning Interest	Thai Language Skill
Recognition of Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT)	1		
Learning Interest	.617**	1	
Thai Language Skill	.647**	.493**	1

The recognition of the Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT) has a significant correlation with learning interest (correlation coefficient 0.617**, $P < 0.01$). TBLT recognition significantly correlates with Thai language Skills (correlation coefficient 0.647**, $P < 0.01$). Learning interest significantly correlates with Thai language Skills (correlation coefficient 0.493**, $P < 0.01$).

DISCUSSION

Enhanced Learning Interest through TBLT: The study confirms that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) significantly boosts learning interest among vocational college students, aligning with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory. Students who recognize TBLT's principles demonstrate greater proactivity and enthusiasm, as task completion fosters authentic language input and output, enhancing motivation. This supports prior research by Nunan (1989) and Willis (1996), emphasizing TBLT's role in activating students as central classroom participants, improving engagement and interest.

Balanced Skill Development via TBLT: TBLT promotes Thai language skills by integrating authentic contexts and language output,

reinforcing grammar and vocabulary understanding through internal cognition and external expression. This aligns with Krashen's Input-Output Hypothesis, which posits that real-life language scenarios enhance meaningful input and output, improving spoken and written expression. Task activities, situational dialogues, and interactive elements in vocational college Thai language teaching help students master and apply grammatical knowledge through hands-on learning, as supported by relevant literature.

Addressing Individual Differences and Task Design: Statistical analysis reveals that approximately 13.90% of students exhibit low TBLT recognition, resulting in lower scores in learning interest and language skills. This highlights the need to address individual learning preferences, attitudes, adaptability, and task design considerations for students' baseline abilities. Teachers should set reasonable task difficulty levels and provide supportive strategies (e.g., differentiated tasks and timely guidance) to reduce frustration and anxiety, gradually increasing students' acceptance and confidence in TBLT.

Integration with Traditional Grammar Teaching and Alignment with Student Needs: TBLT emphasizes language application but does not negate explicit grammar instruction. Studies by Ellis (2003), Hao (2004), and Cui (2007) note the importance of timely feedback and explicit grammar guidance during task execution to prevent fossilized errors. Teachers should adopt periodic group discussions, timely feedback, and error correction when evaluating students' language output, combining explicit and implicit grammar instruction to consolidate grammatical understanding. Additionally, aligning teaching goals with students' future work environments or practical contexts, such as simulating real-world scenarios, enhances relevance and recognition of learning content, increasing learning interest and comprehensive language application skills.

CONCLUSION

This study targeted second-year Thai major students from Yunnan Z College, employing methods such as literature review, questionnaire surveys, measurement, and statistical, empirical analysis to explore the relationship between the recognition of the Task-Based Teaching Method (TBLT) and students' interest in learning Thai as well as their Thai language skills. Research hypotheses were verified through difference analysis and regression analysis.

Differences in Learning Interest: There is a significant disparity in learning interest between students with high and low recognition of TBLT. Students with high recognition scored significantly higher in

learning interest, indicating that the greater their approval of TBLT, the higher their classroom engagement and learning enthusiasm.

Differences in Thai Language Skills: Students with varying levels of TBLT recognition also exhibit significant differences in Thai language skills. Those with high recognition scored notably higher than those with low recognition, suggesting that a higher level of TBLT recognition is associated with stronger comprehensive language abilities, including Thai language recognition, comprehension, reading, and writing.

Positive Impact: Regression analysis reveals that TBLT recognition positively predicts learning interest and Thai language skills, with the predictive effects reaching a highly significant level ($p < 0.001$). This implies that as students' recognition and acceptance of TBLT increase, their learning interests and language skills improve substantially.

Overall, this study confirms the effectiveness of implementing TBLT in Thai language teaching at Yunnan Z College. Students generally demonstrate a high level of recognition for TBLT, and those with higher recognition perform better in learning interest and Thai language skills. These findings provide valuable insights for reforming Thai language teaching in vocational colleges and offer empirical support for the further optimization and promotion of TBLT.

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