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The Effect of a Basic Thai Language Instructional Model Based on the Communicative Language Teaching Approach Combined with the Role-Play Method to Enhance Thai Listening and Speaking Skills for First-Year Undergraduate Chinese Students at Honghe University

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Abstract

Background and Aims: Thai as a foreign language teaching for Chinese undergraduates at Honghe University currently struggles with fostering listening and speaking skills. Dominated by translation and memorization over authentic communication, instruction leaves most students unconfident, reluctant to interact, and unable to use Thai fluently, resulting in subpar academic performance. This study thus aims to 1) compare the Thai listening and speaking skills of students after learning through a basic Thai language instructional model based on the communicative language teaching approach, combined with the role-play method to enhance Thai listening and speaking skills for First-Year undergraduate Chinese students at Honghe University, and 2) study the students' satisfaction with the basic Thai language instructional model.

Methodology: Thirty first-year undergraduate students enrolled in Basic Thai participated in an eight-week intervention featuring role-play activities embedded within the instruction. Data collection included a validated Thai listening-speaking proficiency test (comprising three components: multiple-choice listening comprehension, oral production, and integrated listening-speaking tasks) and a satisfaction questionnaire. Statistical analysis employed one-sample t-tests and descriptive statistics.

Results: (1) The comparison of students' Thai listening-speaking skills after learning revealed that the post-learning scores averaged 84.90 (84.90%), which was higher than the specified criterion of 80% with statistical significance at the .05 level (M = 84.90, out of 100, SD = 5.31, t_{29} = 5.05, p = .000). (2) The students' satisfaction with the overall learning management was at the highest level (M = 4.77, SD =0.51).

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Conclusion: The CLT-role-play model effectively enhances Chinese students' Thai listening and speaking skills, meeting proficiency standards and earning top student satisfaction, proving ideal for practical communication training.

Keywords: Instructional Model; Communicative Language Teaching Approach; Role-play; Thai Listening and Speaking Skills

Introduction

Thai language education for Chinese undergraduates has gained strategic importance within evolving ASEAN-China partnerships. Thailand represents China's third-largest trading partner in Southeast Asia, with bilateral trade exceeding $131 billion USD in 2024. Yunnan Province, sharing a border with Laos and Myanmar and serving as a gateway to Thailand, has positioned itself as a hub for Mekong Subregion cooperation. Consequently, universities in Yunnan increasingly offer Thai language programs to prepare graduates for careers in cross-border trade, tourism management, logistics, and diplomatic service. Honghe University's Basic Thai Language course responds to these workforce demands, aiming to develop students' practical communication skills for professional contexts. However, traditional instruction models emphasizing vocabulary memorization and sentence translation inadequately prepare learners for the spontaneous, interactive communication required in workplace settings.

According to Sathiansukon (2011), most Chinese students reported that Thai language instructors primarily used lecture-based teaching, asking questions, or assigning exercises as the main teaching methods. The next most common approach was teaching directly from manuals, textbooks, or instructional handouts, with the occasional use of body language, visual, and audio media. Furthermore, students expressed that they preferred teachers who make lessons fun and stress-free, maintain a friendly relationship with students, and avoid teaching too fast.

In addition, Lyu (2022) emphasized that basic Thai communication skills are essential, as communication is the main factor in human life that connects individuals and societies. It plays an important role in the development and promotion of personal and societal progress. Basic communication, as Lyu noted, consists of listening and speaking skills, which are fundamental components of human interaction and mutual understanding.

Based on the researcher’s experience in teaching Basic Thai Language to Chinese students at Honghe University, and from past instructional outcomes, it was found that most Chinese students achieved low learning performance in this subject. According to data from Honghe University’s academic information system in the 2023 academic year, the average score of students in the Basic Thai Language course was 74.24, which was lower than the university’s standard criterion of 80%. This demonstrates that students have not yet achieved the expected

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learning outcomes specified by the curriculum, particularly in listening and speaking skills, which form the foundation of daily communication.

Despite the growing recognition of Thai language education's strategic importance for Chinese undergraduates in the context of ASEAN-China partnerships, existing research leaves critical gaps unaddressed. Sathiansukon (2011) identified Chinese students' preferences for engaging teaching methods, but did not explore how these preferences can be translated into evidence-based instructional strategies tailored to Thai language learning in Chinese higher education. Lyu (2022) emphasized the significance of listening and speaking skills, yet failed to provide specific pedagogical approaches to develop these skills in Thai language learners, lacking practical guidance for educators. While Yamprayoon (2020) supported CLT effectiveness and Khammani (2022) highlighted role-play value, no studies have integrated these approaches to address Chinese learners' unique challenges—tonal differences and exam-oriented education impacts. Honghe University data (2023) shows persistent listening-speaking underperformance, yet context-adapted solutions remain underexplored. This study addresses these gaps by designing and evaluating an integrated CLT-Role-Play model to enhance Thai communicative competence among Chinese undergraduates. The Communicative Language Teaching approach focuses on helping learners achieve actual communication ability by emphasizing interaction and meaningful language use rather than concentrating solely on language structure. It aims to enable learners to exchange meaning and information appropriately according to social contexts and situations. The approach familiarizes students with real-life language use so that they can apply the target language effectively in everyday communication (Yamprayoon, 2020).

At the same time, the role-play method is a teaching method that uses simulated roles to help learners achieve learning objectives. It allows learners to assume roles in situations that closely resemble real-life contexts and to express themselves based on their own thoughts and feelings. Learners' performance, including their knowledge, ideas, emotions, and observable behaviors, is then used as a basis for discussion to promote meaningful learning (Khammani, 2022).

Therefore, integrating the Communicative Language Teaching approach with the Role-Play Method is a potential strategy to enhance Chinese students' Thai listening and speaking skills by allowing them to practice these skills in meaningful communicative contexts. This integration aligns with the concept proposed by Segura (2012), who stated that listening and speaking are natural interactive processes in which both the listener and the speaker must employ linguistic and phonological knowledge to achieve mutual understanding. Learning through communicative and role-playing activities helps learners connect language to real-life situations, reduce classroom anxiety, and increase their motivation to continuously develop Thai language proficiency.

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From the above reasons, the researcher was motivated to investigate the effects of using a Basic Thai Language Instructional Model based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach combined with the Role-Play Method to enhance the listening and speaking skills of First-Year undergraduate Chinese students at Honghe University. It is expected that the findings of this study will provide guidelines for improving Thai language instruction to better fit the context of Chinese learners and serve as a prototype for the future development of foreign language instructional models.

Objectives

1. To compare Thai listening and speaking skills of students after learning through a Basic Thai Language Instructional Model based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach combined with the Role-Play Method, against the 80% performance criterion, which represents an “excellent” level of achievement as defined by Honghe University.

2. To examine the students’ satisfaction with the Basic Thai Language Instructional Model based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach combined with the Role-Play Method in enhancing Thai listening and speaking skills among First-Year undergraduate Chinese students at Honghe University.

Literature Review

1. Concepts Related to the Components of Instructional Models Based on a synthesis of theories proposed by leading educational scholars, Joyce & Weil (1986), Kemp (1985), Anderson (1997), Arends (1997), and Khammani (2022). The fundamental components of an instructional model can be summarized as follows:

1.1 Principles of the Model. The theoretical and philosophical foundations that guide the structure and implementation of instruction.

1.2 Objectives of the Model. The intended learning outcomes that determine the direction of instruction.

1.3 Content. The subject matter and learning materials that align with the model’s objectives.

1.4 Teaching–Learning Process. The instructional procedures, activities, and interaction patterns are designed to achieve learning objectives.

1.5 Assessment and Evaluation. The methods used to measure learners’ performance and to assess the effectiveness of the instructional process.

1.6 Social System. The roles, relationships, and communication patterns between teachers and students within the learning environment.

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1.7 Support System. The learning resources, materials, and instructional aids that enhance teaching and learning effectiveness.

According to Khammani (2022), an effective instructional model should clearly define these seven components to establish a systematic, coherent, and practical framework for learning management that promotes meaningful and sustainable learning outcomes.

In the context of this research, this 7-component framework serves as a diagnostic tool to analyze gaps in current Basic Thai Language instruction at Honghe University. By evaluating existing practices against each component—such as assessing whether teaching principles prioritize rote memorization over communicative competence, or if assessment methods adequately measure real-world speaking skills—the framework identifies specific areas for improvement. This analysis directly informs the design of the integrated CLT-Role-Play model, ensuring all critical dimensions of effective instruction are addressed to enhance students' listening and speaking abilities.

2. The Basic Thai Language Instructional Model Based on the Communicative Language Teaching Approach combined with the Role-Play Method From a synthesis of the key stages in Communicative Language Teaching and Role-Play Methodology, as discussed by various educational theorists and supported by the researcher’s conceptual framework, the Basic Thai Language Instructional Model based on Communicative Language Teaching combined with Role-Play is defined as a language teaching model focused on developing learners’ communicative competence in authentic situations. This model utilizes role-play activities to simulate real-life communication contexts, enabling learners to practice using Thai naturally and meaningfully. By assuming specific roles, students can express thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that help them understand the perspectives and reactions of individuals in diverse social situations. The model consists of five major stages, each with clearly defined sub-steps:

2.1 Warm-Up Stage. Introducing the lesson topic stimulates learners’ interest and activates prior knowledge through engaging and interactive activities.

2.2 Presentation Stage. Presents new language content, including vocabulary, expressions, and grammatical structures, in meaningful communicative contexts that illustrate their usage.

2.3 Practice Stage. Provides guided practice through structured exercises that reinforce language accuracy and fluency before moving to more open-ended activities.

2.4 Production Stage (Role-Play Integration Stage). Emphasizes real communicative use of language through the integration of role-play activities. This stage includes four sub-steps:

2.4.1 Preparation for Role-Play. Students prepare and plan their dialogue or scenario, including assigning roles and understanding the communicative situation.

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2.4.2 Role-Play Performance. Students perform the assigned roles using Thai in simulated real-life contexts.

2.4.3 Analysis and Discussion. The class and instructor analyze communication strategies, language accuracy, and the effectiveness of interaction.

2.4.4 Experience Sharing. Students share reflections on their experience, challenges, and cultural insights gained from the activity.

2.5 Wrap-Up Stage. Summarizes the key points of the lesson, reviews linguistic and communicative objectives, and evaluates learners' performance to consolidate understanding and skills. This structured sequence aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, emphasizing learner participation, interaction, and meaning-focused communication. It enables students to use Thai in authentic contexts, develop confidence, and enhance fluency through experiential learning.

For this research, this 5-stage model serves as the core intervention to address identified instructional gaps. By operationalizing CLT principles through role-play activities, the model provides a practical framework to answer critical research questions: (1) How does integrating role-play into CLT impact Chinese undergraduates' Thai listening and speaking proficiency? (2) What specific stages or components of the model are most effective for reducing classroom anxiety and improving communicative confidence? (3) To what extent does the model prepare students for real-world Thai communication scenarios in professional contexts? The model's systematic structure also allows for rigorous evaluation of its effectiveness compared to traditional teaching methods.

Conceptual Framework

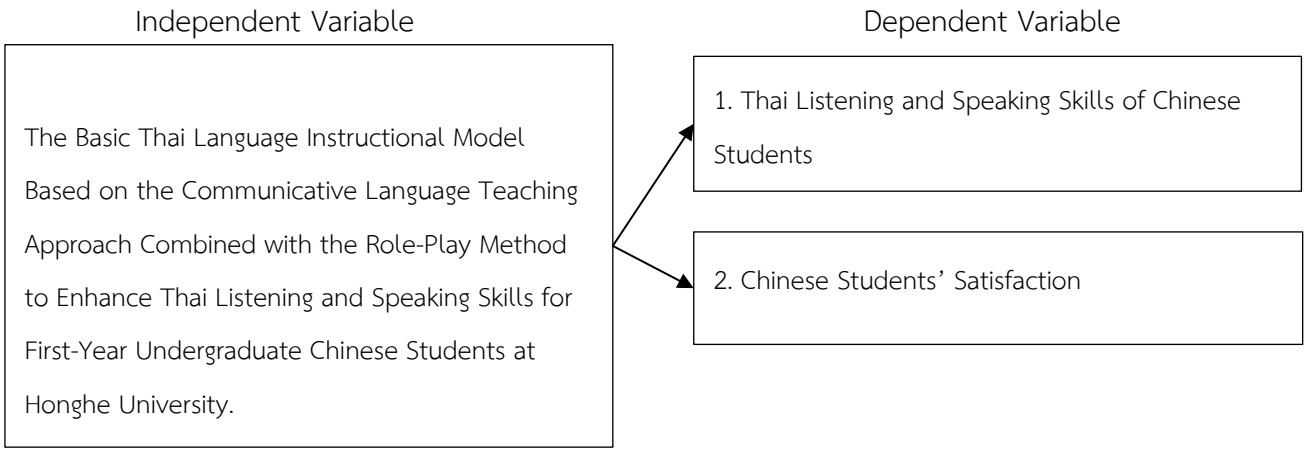


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

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Methodology

1. Research Design

This study was an experimental research project employing the Basic Thai Language Instructional Model based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach combined with the Role-Play Method to enhance Thai listening and speaking skills among First-Year undergraduate Chinese students at Honghe University, People's Republic of China.

The model was developed by the researcher and implemented using a single-group experimental design (The Single Group, Posttest-Only Design), as described by Klangphahol (2018). The experimental design is illustrated below:

Group	Treatment (X)	Post-Test (O_2)
Experimental Group	X	O_2

Symbols used in the design:

X = Learning management using the Basic Thai Language Instructional Model based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach, combined with the Role-Play Method to enhance Thai listening and speaking skills among First-Year Chinese undergraduate students at Honghe University.

O_2= Posttest measuring (1) Thai listening and speaking skills of Chinese students, and (2) students' satisfaction with the Basic Thai Language Instructional Model based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach combined with the Role-Play Method.

This experimental design focused on examining the effects of the treatment on dependent variables without a control group, as it was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the newly developed instructional model.

2. Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised First-Year undergraduate students at Honghe University who enrolled in the Basic Thai Language course during the first semester of the 2025 academic year, totaling 60 students across two classrooms.

The sample group consisted of 30 First-Year undergraduate students from one classroom, selected through cluster random sampling. These students participated in the instructional intervention and subsequent data collection procedures.

3. Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study included:

3.1 The Basic Thai Language Instructional Model based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach combined with the Role-Play Method to enhance Thai listening and speaking

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skills for First-Year undergraduate Chinese students at Honghe University, with high appropriateness from 5 experts' evaluation (M = 4.73, SD = 0.45).

3.2 8 Lesson Plans developed under the model to promote Thai listening and speaking competence among First-Year Chinese undergraduate students, with the overall high appropriateness from 5 experts' evaluation (M = 4.59, SD = 0.49).

3.3 Thai Listening and Speaking Skills Situational Test, designed to assess students' communicative ability in Thai following the learning intervention. The test has 3 items: 1) a listening multiple-choice test with an IOC equal to 1.00; Difficulty equal 0.40–0.77; Discrimination equal 0.30–0.65, and KR-20 equal 0.861; 2) a speaking test with an Intraclass Correlation Coefficient ICC) equal 0.79, and 3) a listening–speaking test with an Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) equal 0.92.

3.4 Student Satisfaction Questionnaire, used to evaluate the learners' satisfaction toward the instructional model and its implementation, with IOC equal to 1.00 and Cronbach's α equal to 0.78.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

This study systematically collected and analyzed data to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional model, following standardized procedures:

4.1 Data Collection

4.1.1 Pre-experiment Orientation: Students received guidance on learning objectives and activities of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach integrated with Role-Play before the intervention.

4.1.2 Instruction Implementation: Teaching sessions were delivered per designed lesson plans, combining CLT principles and role-play activities to enhance Thai listening and speaking skills.

4.1.3 Post-intervention Assessment: Students completed a Thai Listening and Speaking Skills Test to measure communicative competence, followed by a Satisfaction Questionnaire to provide feedback on the instructional model.

4.2 Statistical Analysis

4.2.1 Skill Proficiency Evaluation: A one-sample t-test compared students' post-intervention Thai language performance against the university's 80% excellence criterion.

4.2.2 Satisfaction Measurement: Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to analyze student feedback on the CLT-Role-Play integrated instructional model.

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Results

1. Comparison of Students' Thai Listening and Speaking Skills After Learning Through the Communicative Language Teaching Approach Combined with the Role-Play Method Against the 80% Criterion Set by Honghe University

Table 1 Comparison of Students' Thai Listening and Speaking Skills After Learning Through the Communicative Language Teaching Approach Combined with the Role-Play Method Against the 80% Criterion (Excellent Level) Set by Honghe University

Posttest Scores	N	Full Score	Criterion (%)	M	SD	t	p
	30	100	80	84.90	5.31	5.05**	0.000

Note: $p < 0.01$

As shown in Table 2, the posttest scores of First-Year Chinese undergraduate students at Honghe University who received instruction through the Basic Thai Language Instructional Model based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach combined with the Role-Play Method indicate a mean score of 84.90 out of 100 (M = 84.90, SD = 5.31), representing 84.90%. This result is higher than the university's established criterion of 80%, and the difference was statistically significant (t_{29} = 5.05, p = .000, p < .01). These findings demonstrate that the instructional model effectively improved students' Thai listening and speaking performance beyond the institutional standard for excellence.

2. Students' Satisfaction Toward the Basic Thai Language Instructional Model Based on the Communicative Language Teaching Approach Combined with the Role-Play Method

Table 2: Students' Satisfaction Toward the Basic Thai Language Instructional Model Based on the Communicative Language Teaching Approach Combined with the Role-Play Method

Satisfaction Items	M	SD	Level
Learning Objectives			
1. The learning objectives were clearly stated and easy to understand.	4.73	0.58	Highest
2. The objectives were consistent with the targeted listening and speaking skills.	4.63	0.61	Highest
Content			
3. The content was appropriate for the students' Thai language level.	4.70	0.53	Highest
4. The content helped students understand Thai in real-life situations.	4.63	0.72	Highest

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Satisfaction Items	M	SD	Level
5. The content provided opportunities to practice Thai in simulated daily-life contexts.	4.87	0.35	Highest
Learning Process			
6. The learning activities encouraged students to speak Thai more confidently.	4.90	0.31	Highest
7. The learning activities promoted group work and collaborative learning.	4.77	0.43	Highest
8. The activities provided practice in listening and speaking through various situations.	4.93	0.25	Highest
Instructional Media and Learning Resources			
9. The instructor used to teach media and learning resources that facilitated comprehension.	4.97	0.18	Highest
10. The instructor used a variety of engaging and motivating teaching materials.	4.90	0.31	Highest
Assessment and Evaluation			
11. The instructor used diverse assessment methods consistent with lesson content.	4.97	0.18	Highest
12. The assessment methods reflected students' true Thai listening and speaking ability.	4.70	0.60	Highest
Social System			
13. The classroom atmosphere encouraged cooperative learning.	4.90	0.40	Highest
14. The classroom promoted positive relationships among classmates.	4.73	0.45	Highest
15. Students could express their ideas freely without pressure.	4.63	0.61	Highest
Support System			
16. The instructor provided sufficient learning support through instructional tools and materials.	4.63	0.61	Highest
17. The instructor offered advice or assistance at appropriate times.	4.67	0.61	Highest
18. The instructor organized supplementary activities or learning resources to enhance basic Thai communication.	4.60	0.67	Highest
19. I feel that this learning model helped improve my Thai listening and speaking skills.	4.63	0.67	Highest

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Satisfaction Items	M	SD	Level
20. Overall, I am satisfied with this instructional model.	4.80	0.48	Highest
Overall Satisfaction	**4.77**	**0.51**	**Highest**

As shown in Table 3, the overall satisfaction level of the students toward the Basic Thai Language Instructional Model based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach integrated with the Role-Play Method was rated at the highest level (M = 4.77, SD = 0.51).

When ranking the top satisfaction items by mean score, the three highest-rated aspects were as follows: (1) The instructor used to teach media and learning resources that made lesson comprehension easier (M = 4.97, SD = 0.18). (2) The instructor used diverse assessment methods consistent with the lesson content (M = 4.97, SD = 0.18). (3) The learning activities provided practice in listening and speaking through various situations (M = 4.93, SD = 0.25). Other highly rated items included: The learning activities encouraged students to speak Thai more confidently (M = 4.90, SD = 0.31), the instructor used a variety of engaging and motivating teaching materials (M = 4.90, SD = 0.31), and the classroom atmosphere encouraged cooperative learning (M = 4.90, SD = 0.40).

Discussion

1. Discussion on the Students' Thai Listening and Speaking Skills

The results showed that the participants earned the average posttest score of 84.90 out of 100 on the Thai listening and speaking skills (M = 84.90, SD = 5.31, t(29) = 5.05, p < .001), higher than the university performance criterion of 80%, which means that the Basic Thai Language Instructional Model derived from the CLT approach and supplemented with the Role-Play Method worked well to improve the students' communicative ability.

This finding might have come from the well-planned constituents of the model, which were constructed in a systematic and learner needs-based way for the Chinese learners. This finding is in line with Kemp (1985), who postulated that good instruction is the result of a systematic process of coordinating the objectives, content, instruction, assessment, and support systems. This is also in agreement with Joyce and Weil (1996) and Khammani (2022), who believed that well-defined principles, objectives, and social systems have led to the learning-centered settings.

In addition, both Anderson (1997) and Arends (1997) stated that the consistency between learning aims and learning activities and a thorough assessment were important, as this study's new instructional model was synthesized on the principle. In addition, this finding agrees with Richards and Rodgers (2006), who believed that successful learning of a foreign language should

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be about meaningful communication by performing meaningful and authentic interactive activities.

Corroborating evidence can be seen from Khattikroot (2020), who found that students' listening and speaking skills of English were improved through English classes with the role-play technique at the .05 level of significance. Yamprayoon (2020) also found that Chinese-speaking skills of high school students were improved with the method of the integration of CLT with group-based techniques. All of the findings indicated that the communication-based and role-play-related instruction could lead to learners' actual speaking ability.

2. Discussion on Students' Satisfaction

The mean value of learners perceived overall satisfaction with the model was recorded at the highest level (M = 4.77, SD = 0.51). This finding shows that the learning experience was meaningful with opportunities to take part in Thai learning through enjoyable and communicative-based tasks. Learners could practice the target language in authentic situations, which helped to eliminate the target language anxiety and promoted Thai speaking confidence.

Role-play activities created a relaxed and interactive learning environment for the students, enabling them to view Thai as a functional and useful language for daily situations. Moreover, consistent engagement in listening, speaking, and responding to peers increased participation and improved positive rapport between the students and between students and teacher. Positive rapport and group-related factors have been identified as additional motivational factors that could contribute to the learners' development of positive attitudes towards Thai learning.

This finding is in line with Khattikroot (2020), who showed that the students' attitudes towards learning English became more positive with the use of the role-play technique. In addition, the integration of the CLT and cooperative learning with the Student Teams–Achievement Divisions (STAD) technique, as found by Chaweewonchon (2022), resulted in very positive learner attitudes towards classroom activities and Thai learning.

Recommendation

1. Recommendations for This Study

1.1 Implementation of the CLT-Role-Play Model: The developed instructional model can be directly applied to first-year Chinese undergraduates at Honghe University, emphasizing communicative language production through a structured 5-step role-play process: preparation, performance, analysis, experience sharing, and wrap-up.

1.2 Broader Application and Institutional Support: This model is adaptable to teaching other Southeast Asian languages. Universities should provide policy and infrastructure support, including optimized class time for practical activities, multimedia resources for listening-speaking

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practice, and teacher training in CLT methodologies. Assessment criteria should be revised to prioritize real communicative competence.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

2.1 Comparative Studies: Expand research scope to compare this model with technology-integrated approaches (e.g., online platforms) or Sino-Thai cultural integration methods, analyzing differences in speaking-listening proficiency and student engagement.

2.2 Longitudinal Implementation Research: Use case studies or participatory action research to investigate long-term implementation, focusing on stakeholder involvement, contextual factors, facilitators, barriers, and adaptation strategies to ensure sustainable model application.

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