

The Need for Organizing Activities to Promote the Teaching of Thai as a Foreign Language for Chinese Students at North Bangkok University

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Abstract

Organizing activities to support the teaching and learning of Thai as a foreign language is crucial, as it enhances opportunities for learners to practice Thai in authentic contexts and real-life situations, develops communication skills, and promotes a deeper understanding of Thai culture. These factors play a significant role in enabling Chinese students to learn Thai more effectively. This research aimed to (1) study the needs for organizing activities to promote the teaching of Thai as a foreign language for Chinese students at North Bangkok University; (2) explore the preferred types of activities and challenges in learning Thai among these students. The sample group consisted of 40 Chinese students enrolled in the Thai Language for Communication program for the academic year 2023 at North Bangkok University's Rangsit Campus. They were selected through cluster sampling. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. The research findings are as follows: 1. There is a significant need for organizing activities to promote the teaching of Thai as a foreign language. 2. Most students prefer learning through activities outside the classroom rather than inside the classroom. 3. The major challenge faced by students is speaking Thai, and they desire more activities that help them use the language in daily life situations. The most popular activities among the students include learning Thai through songs and cooking Thai food. 4. The main problem encountered by students during these activities is the difficulty in understanding spoken Thai. This research presents guidelines for designing learning activities to promote Thai language acquisition among foreign learners, with a learner-centered approach. The findings can be applied to instructional practices through interactive language training activities, conversation workshops, language partner programs with Thai students, and role-playing in real-life situations. Additionally, cultural learning activities, Thai festival events, cultural site visits, and learning through Thai drama and media contribute to enhancing students' learning efficiency and improving their academic achievement.

Keywords: Organizing activities; Promoting teaching and learning; Thai as a foreign language; Chinese students

Introduction

In recent years, the teaching and learning of Thai language as a foreign language have gained significant attention, particularly among international students who travel to Thailand

for their studies or enroll in Thai language programs at universities abroad. North Bangkok University, in Thailand, is one of the institutions that offer Thai language courses to international students, including Chinese learners who seek to enhance their Thai language proficiency for communication and higher education purposes.

Despite the growing interest in Thai language learning, numerous studies have highlighted persistent challenges faced by Chinese students in acquiring Thai language skills. These difficulties span listening, speaking, reading, and writing due to structural differences between Thai and Chinese, the complexity of the Thai tonal system, and cultural factors that influence language use (Wang, 2021). Furthermore, traditional classroom instruction alone may not be sufficient to enable learners to achieve fluency and natural communication in Thai (Sriwilai, 2020).

Given these challenges, it is imperative to implement supplementary activities that enhance Thai language learning. Such activities provide learners with opportunities to practice Thai in authentic contexts, develop communicative competence, and gain deeper cultural insights, all of which are crucial for effective language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Various approaches, including Thai language workshops, recreational activities related to Thai language and culture, language exchange programs with native Thai speakers, and the integration of modern learning resources, can significantly contribute to the improvement of students' language proficiency. Additionally, support from instructors and educational staff in designing activities that align with learners' needs plays a pivotal role in fostering successful language learning experiences (Nation, 2007).

Therefore, developing and refining instructional activities that support Thai language acquisition for Chinese students at North Bangkok University is essential. Enhancing these activities will not only boost learners' confidence in using Thai but also enable them to apply their language skills effectively in daily life, academic pursuits, and future professional settings.

This research investigates the needs and challenges faced by Chinese exchange students in learning the Thai language at North Bangkok University's Rangsit campus and aims to develop strategies to support their language and cultural learning. This research paper outlines a structured plan for organizing activities that foster Thai language learning, aiming to reduce language and cultural barriers and enhance academic and social integration for Chinese students. The findings will help university administrators and educators plan activities that align with the university's mission to prepare students academically and personally for success.

Research Objectives

1. To study the need for organizing activities that enhance the teaching and learning of Thai as a foreign language for Chinese students at North Bangkok University's Rangsit Campus

Literature Review

This study investigates The Need for Organizing Activities to Promote the Teaching of Thai as a Foreign Language for Chinese Students at North Bangkok University. The researcher has examined relevant documents, theoretical concepts, and related research to establish a framework for this study, as outlined below:

Studies on the Use of Literature in Activity Design

Chaichana et al. (2024) investigated English-speaking anxiety among upper primary school students at Wichutit School, Din Daeng District, under the Bangkok Metropolitan

Administration. The study had two main objectives: first, to examine the English-speaking anxiety levels of these students, and second, to compare the anxiety levels between students in the traditional study plan and those in the English study plan. Using a stratified sampling technique, the researchers selected 186 students enrolled in the 2023 academic year. Data collection involved a questionnaire measuring English-speaking anxiety through a 30-item five-point rating scale. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used for analysis, while an independent t-test was applied to compare the two groups. The findings revealed that students following the traditional study plan exhibited a moderate level of English-speaking anxiety, whereas those in the English study plan reported significantly lower anxiety levels. The statistically significant difference in anxiety levels was observed between the two groups, indicating that the study plan influences students' confidence in speaking English.

Yamo et al. (2024) examined the initial phase of developing the CEFR-Based Uttaradit Rajabhat University Test of English Proficiency (URU-TEP), highlighting key insights gained during the process. The study emphasized the importance of aligning the URU-TEP with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to ensure that test results are accurately interpreted within CEFR proficiency levels, a widely recognized standard in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Employing a document analysis approach, the researchers conducted thematic analysis to present descriptive findings. The results were categorized into four key areas: the current state of English proficiency testing at URU, the step-by-step development of the five-skill URU-TEP in accordance with CEFR standards, the validation and reliability process, and the opportunities and challenges encountered during the test's development. These findings provide valuable insights for institutions aiming to create standardized language proficiency assessments aligned with international benchmarks.

Jaengsaengthong & Tawanna (2024) conducted a study to enhance learning achievement in the English Present Simple Tense among sixth-grade primary school students using a task-based learning (TBL) model. The research had two main objectives: first, to develop TBL lesson plans focused on the Present Simple Tense, and second, to compare students' academic performance before and after implementing the TBL approach. Utilizing a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design, the study targeted six students from Anubanthachang School, Sing Buri Province, during the second semester of the 2023 academic year. The instructional materials consisted of nine TBL lesson plans, each lasting two hours, for a total of 18 hours, along with a 30-item multiple-choice achievement test. Statistical analysis, including mean and standard deviation, revealed that the students' post-test scores ($M=24.04$, $SD=1.20$) significantly surpassed their pre-test scores ($M=16.30$, $SD=3.26$), indicating notable improvement in learning outcomes. These findings suggest that task-based learning is an effective instructional strategy for improving students' mastery of the Present Simple Tense.

Jingjing et al. (2024) investigated the impact of a College English Course, designed with a production-oriented approach and integrated critical thinking process, on the writing proficiency of non-English major students at Xi'an University. The study aimed to compare students' writing performance before and after the course and evaluate their satisfaction against a benchmark score of 3.51. Using an experimental design with 40 first-year students selected through cluster random sampling, the researchers employed three key instruments: the course itself with six lesson plans, an English writing ability test (reliability = 0.931), and a satisfaction questionnaire (reliability = 0.792). Statistical analysis, including mean, standard deviation, and t-tests, revealed a significant improvement in students' post-test scores ($M=41.08$, $SD=4.41$) compared to pre-test scores ($M=37.08$, $SD=4.46$) at the 0.05 significance level ($t=45.61$, $p<.05$). Additionally, students reported high satisfaction with the course ($M=4.44$, $SD=0.63$),

exceeding the set criterion. These findings highlight the effectiveness of combining a production-oriented approach with critical thinking strategies in enhancing students' English writing skills and overall learning experience.

The reviewed literature indicates that teaching strategies are depend on the student group. Incorporating activities beyond the classroom into Thai language teaching can lead to more effective outcomes. Factors such as gender, age, and social background should be considered to maximize the benefits for learners. Since the Chinese exchange students at North Bangkok University are at a beginner level in Thai, it is essential to use activities that promote Thai language skills. These activities will not only improve their language abilities but also help to share and appreciate Thai culture. Successful activity implementation requires considering students' prior knowledge, age, interests, and preferences. Activities should focus on developing all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. When students actively engage in enjoyable and hands-on activities, the effectiveness of language learning increases. Therefore, the researcher aims to incorporate activity-based strategies to enhance Thai language proficiency among Chinese exchange students at North Bangkok University.

Conceptual Framework

This study is a research investigation. Based on a review of the literature and previous studies, the researcher has defined the conceptual framework for the research, as illustrated in the following details.

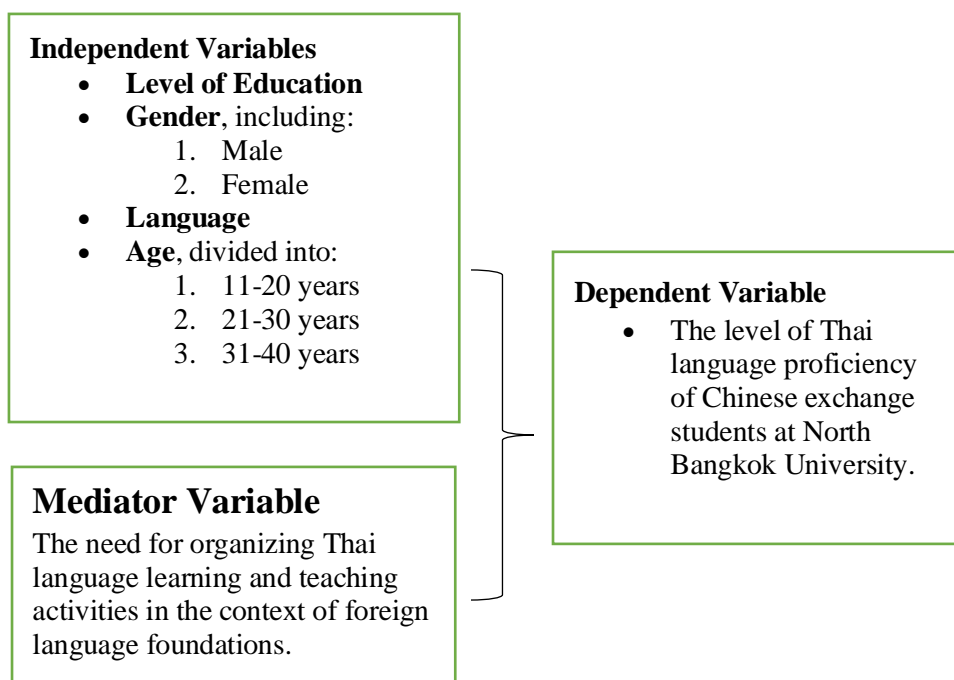


Fig.1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This study investigates the needs for Thai language teaching activities among Chinese exchange students at North Bangkok University, Rangsit Campus. The research employs a qualitative research approach, detailed as follows:

Qualitative Research

Population of the Study

The population for this qualitative research consists of 77 Chinese exchange students enrolled at North Bangkok University, Rangsit Campus, for the academic year 2023. The sample includes 67 female students and 10 male students who are studying Thai for Communication. Consequently, a total of 77 students will serve as key informants for this research.

Selection of Key Informants

In this study, the selection of key informants was conducted through cluster sampling, categorized by classroom groups. The criteria for selection included: 1) being a student enrolled in the Thai for Communication program for the academic year 2023, regardless of gender; and 2) having previously responded to a survey regarding their needs for Thai language teaching activities.

Research Questions for Qualitative Study

The qualitative study utilized research questions focusing on the needs for Thai language teaching activities, encompassing the following key issues:

1. Challenges faced by Chinese students in learning Thai that they wish to address.
2. Various experiences related to learning Thai or participating in Thai language activities.
3. Suggestions for Thai language teaching activities that they would like to see implemented in or out of the classroom.

Data Collection Methods for Qualitative Research

The data collection for this qualitative research employed a needs assessment questionnaire for Thai language teaching activities, specifically designed for Chinese exchange students at North Bangkok University. The questionnaire was created as an online survey distributed via Google Forms to the Chinese students. The collected data were subsequently analyzed.

Research Instruments

The needs assessment questionnaire for Thai language teaching activities was designed for Chinese exchange students at North Bangkok University. The content of the questionnaire is divided into two sections: 1) Basic demographic information about the Chinese exchange students, and 2) Their needs regarding Thai language teaching activities. The questionnaire was provided in both Thai and Chinese languages.

Data Analysis

The study aims to assess the needs for Thai language teaching activities as a foreign language for Chinese exchange students at North Bangkok University. The analysis will categorize the responses based on the needs identified for promoting Thai language learning, synthesizing key issues through content analysis. The results will be ranked from the most to the least significant needs, allowing respondents to select multiple options in their responses.

Research Results

The study titled "The Needs for Organizing Thai Language Learning Activities as a Foreign Language for Chinese Students at North Bangkok University" aimed to investigate the activity preferences of Chinese exchange students in promoting Thai language learning. The

research employed a qualitative approach, with data collected from 40 Chinese exchange students at North Bangkok University, Rangsit Campus. The sample consisted of 34 females (85%) and 6 males (15%). The research findings are divided into three sections:

Section 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Table 1: Percentage Distribution by Gender, Educational Qualification, Fields of study, Year of study, Thai language proficiency, English language proficiency and other languages proficiency.

(n = 40)

Demographic Characteristics	Percentage
Gender	
Male	15
Female	85
Educational Qualification	
Bachelor's degree	85
Qualifications equivalent to a bachelor's degree	5
Completed high school	5
Master's degree	2.5
Vocational certificates	2.5
Fields of study	
Thai Communication program	90
Chinese International program	7.5
Business English	2.5
Year of study	
fourth year	62.5
third year	37.5
Thai language proficiency	
Very good	5
Good	15
Average	25
Fair	30
Needing improvement	7.5
Chinese language proficiency	
Very good	55
Good	12.5
Average	10
Fair	2.5
Needing improvement	5
English language proficiency	
Very good	2.5
Good	5
Average	27.5
Fair	35
Needing improvement	12.5
Other languages proficiency	

Very good	2.5
Good	5
Average	10
Fair	5
Needing improvement	22.5

The majority of the participants were female, accounting for 85%, while males made up 15%. Regarding educational levels, 85% of the sample held bachelor's degrees, 5% had qualifications equivalent to a bachelor's degree, 5% had completed high school, 2.5% held a master's degree, and 2.5% had vocational certificates. In terms of fields of study, 90% were enrolled in the Thai Communication program, 7.5% in the Chinese International program, and 2.5% in Business English. Most participants were in their fourth year of study (62.5%), with the remainder in their third year (37.5%). Regarding language proficiency, 5% rated their Thai language skills as very good, 15% as good, 25% as average, 30% as fair, and 7.5% as needing improvement. For Chinese, 55% rated their skills as very good, 12.5% as good, 10% as average, 2.5% as fair, and 5% as needing improvement. For English, 2.5% rated their skills as very good, 5% as good, 27.5% as average, 35% as fair, and 12.5% as needing improvement. In other languages, 2.5% rated their skills as very good, 5% as good, 10% as average, 5% as fair, and 22.5% as needing improvement.

Section 2: Problems in Learning Thai that Students would like to Address

Table 2: Problems in Learning Thai that Students Would Like to Address

Problems in Learning Thai	Percentage
Speaking skills	70
Listening skills	12.5
Reading skills	10
Writing skills	7.5

The majority of students 70% expressed a desire to improve their speaking skills, followed by 12.5% who wished to improve listening, 10% who wanted to improve reading, and 7.5% who wanted to focus on writing.

Section 3: Needs for Organizing Thai Language Learning Activities for Chinese Students at North Bangkok University

Table 3: Preferred Teaching Methods, Activities, and Interests in Learning Thai from Chinese Students at North Bangkok University

Needs for Organizing Thai Language Learning Activities	Percentage
Preferred Teaching Methods	
Grammar-translation method	30
Direct method	17.5
Audio-lingual method	37.5
Cognitive theory-based method	32.5
Silent method	17.5
Total physical response method	40
Natural method	60
Suggestopedia	65

Community language learning	17.5
Communicative language teaching	32.5
Activities Conducted	
Activities conducted outside the classroom	90
Open to classroom-based activities	50
Popular In-Class Activities	
Short Thai dramas or listening to Thai songs	67.5
Hands-on practice	67.5
Pronunciation drills	62.5
Video-based learning	60
Dictation	52.5
Content-Focused Activities	
Activities related to daily life	80
Focused on Thai culture	77.5
Business communication,	50
Formal communication	42.5
Enjoyed Activities	
Field trips	72.5
Loy Krathong	70
Chinese New Year	70
Cultural exchange events	42.5
Activities That Students Found Most Interesting.	
Learning Thai through songs	85
Sentence arrangement and word-fill activities	55
Vocabulary bingo	52.5
Thai whisper games	50
Drawing relay	45
Role-playing	15

Participants were allowed to select more than one response for activity preferences. The majority preferred the following teaching methods: grammar-translation method (30%), direct method (17.5%), audio-lingual method (37.5%), cognitive theory-based method (32.5%), silent method (17.5%), total physical response method (40%), natural method (60%), suggestopedia (65%), community language learning (17.5%), and communicative language teaching (32.5%).

Most participants (90%) preferred activities conducted outside the classroom, while 50% were open to classroom-based activities. Popular in-class activities included watching short Thai dramas or listening to Thai songs (67.5%), hands-on practice (67.5%), pronunciation drills (62.5%), video-based learning (60%), and dictation (52.5%).

In terms of content-focused activities, 80% preferred activities related to daily life, 77.5% focused on Thai culture, 50% on business communication, and 42.5% on formal communication. Students had also participated in and enjoyed activities such as field trips (72.5%), Loy Krathong (70%), Chinese New Year (70%), Thai song performances (52.5%), and cultural exchange events (42.5%).

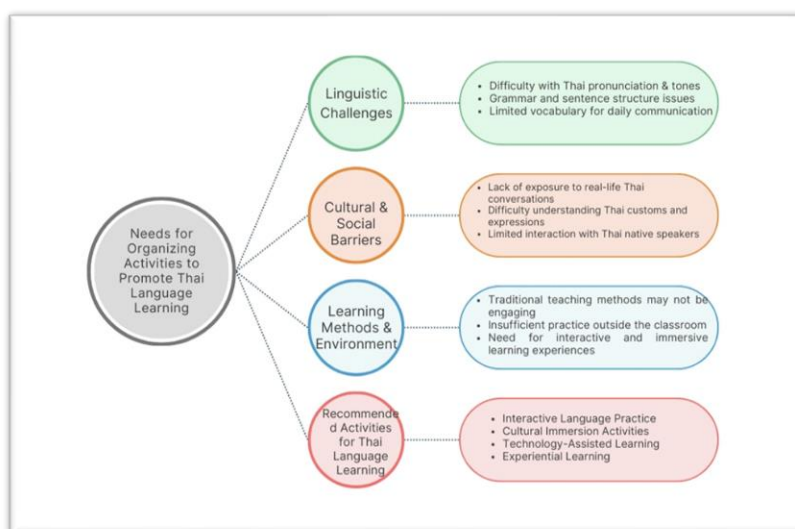
The activities that students expressed the most interest in joining were learning Thai through songs (85%), sentence arrangement and word-fill activities (55%), vocabulary bingo (52.5%), Thai whisper games (50%), drawing relay (45%), and role-playing (15%).

Knowledge from Research

The research on the "Needs for Organizing Activities to Promote Thai Language Teaching and Learning as a Foreign Language for Chinese Students at North Bangkok University" aims to:

1. Study the needs for organizing activities that promote Thai language teaching and learning as a foreign language for Chinese students at North Bangkok University.

This is a qualitative research study. The tool used was a questionnaire designed to assess the needs for activities that enhance Thai language learning for Chinese students at North Bangkok University. The data collected is intended to be used for the development and guidance in organizing activities that support Thai language education as a foreign language. The target group for this study is Chinese students at North Bangkok University. Problems and needs from the questionnaires are analyzed to identify solutions and improvements to better meet the learners' needs. As summarized in the diagram below.



Conclusion

The results from the questionnaire on activity needs reveal that the majority of Chinese students prefer extracurricular activities to classroom-based ones for promoting Thai language learning. The main problems Chinese students want to address are, in order: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The students largely seek activities focused on practical daily use, cultural understanding, business communication, and formal communication, respectively. The activities most desired by Chinese students for Thai language learning include learning Thai through songs, sentence arrangement, word-fill exercises, vocabulary bingo, Thai whisper games, drawing relay, and role-playing activities.

Suggestions

To better support Chinese students in learning the Thai language, future activities could expand beyond the classroom and focus on real-life situations and cultural norms. By incorporating extracurricular activities such as field trips, language immersion programs, and cultural exchange events, students can engage with native speakers in authentic environments. Such experiences would help students not only improve their language skills but also gain a deeper understanding of Thai customs, social etiquette, and cultural expectations. This practical exposure would allow them to navigate everyday situations more confidently, facilitating smoother integration into Thai society. Additionally, these hands-on experiences would

reinforce classroom learning by providing meaningful context to the language and cultural practices they encounter in textbooks.

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