

## **Guidelines to Develop Listening and Speaking Skills in Chinese as a Foreign Language among Thai Students**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to explore the significance of self-efficacy and Grasha and Riechmann's learning style theory enhances Thai secondary school students' Chinese listening and speaking ability. Through deeply analyzing the motivation and effectiveness of Thai secondary school students in learning Chinese, as well as the learning habits of Thai secondary school students in the process of learning Chinese, the results show that Thai secondary school students' self-efficacy of their Chinese listening and speaking abilities is in the low-medium range. General Thai secondary school students prefer the avoidance, dependence, and cooperative styles, which are essential insights for educators and policymakers in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. First, improving Thai secondary school students' listening and speaking skills should be emphasized, and students' oral expression and listening comprehension should be strengthened through targeted teaching methods and activities. Second, teaching should fully consider the characteristics of students' learning styles and provide different types of students with learning environments and resources that suit their needs. To summarize, this study provides essential references and insights for understanding Thai secondary school students' Chinese listening and speaking abilities and their learning styles, and it has specific theoretical and practical significance for improving Chinese as a foreign language teaching strategies and enhancing teaching quality.

**Keywords:** Chinese listening and speaking skills, Self-efficacy, Learning style, Chinese as foreign language

## **Introduction**

As globalization accelerates, the importance of language as a bridge for cultural exchange and cooperation is becoming increasingly prominent. As one of the world's oldest and most dynamic languages, Chinese not only carries the deep cultural heritage of the Chinese nation but also plays an increasingly important role in the international arena. The friendly exchanges between China and Thailand have a long history, traced back to the ancient Silk Road period. Since ancient times, China and Thailand have established a profound friendship through trade and cultural exchanges. Since modern times, China-Thailand relations have developed significantly, with extensive cooperation between the two countries in politics, economy, culture, etc. With the advancement of the "One Belt, One Road" Initiative, the cooperation between the two countries has reached an unprecedented high level, and the relationship between the two countries has also reached an unprecedented high level. With the promotion of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the cooperation between China and Thailand has become closer, and the relationship between the two countries has reached an unprecedented height.

Chinese language education in Thailand can be traced back to the early 20th century. However, the development process has had its ups and downs, from private and church schools at the beginning to being suppressed and banned at the later stage to the present day, when Chinese language education is emphasized and supported. As times have changed, the Thai government has gradually recognized the importance of Chinese language education. It has increased its investment in Chinese language education and introduced a series of policies and measures to encourage and support schools to offer Chinese language courses. In addition, China and Thailand have strengthened their cooperation and exchanges in Chinese language education, which has provided strong support for Chinese language education in Thailand. Despite the remarkable achievements of Chinese language education in Thailand, students have difficulties in listening and speaking Chinese because of the significant differences between Thai and Chinese; on the other hand, because Chinese language education started late in Thailand, it has not been able to form systematic

teaching and learning, there is a relative lack of educational resources, and the level of teachers is uneven, which also affects the improvement of students' listening and speaking Chinese.

Self-efficacy plays a vital role in improving Chinese listening and speaking skills, while Grasha and Riechmann's learning style theory emphasizes students' differences and initiative in the learning process. Combining the self-efficacy theory and Grasha and Riechmann's learning styles theory can help teachers better understand the learning needs and characteristics of students, explore more flexible and diversified teaching methods and tools, promote the further development of Chinese language education in Thailand, and make more significant contributions to the promotion of cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and Thailand.

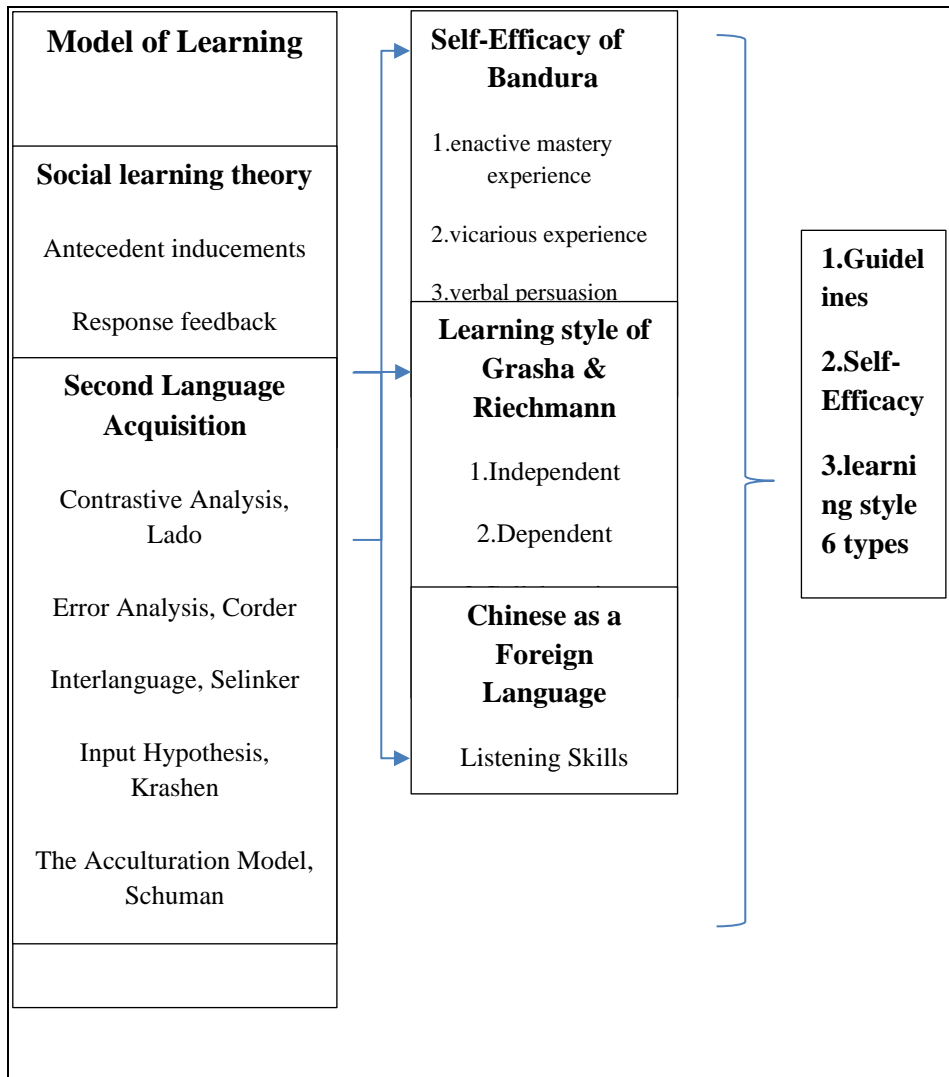
### **Objectives**

-To study the self-efficacy of listening and speaking ability of Chinese as a foreign language among Thai students;

-To study learning style of listening and speaking skills in learning Chinese as a foreign language among Thai students

-To propose guidelines for developing listening and speaking skills among Thai students learning Chinese as a foreign language.

**Framework**



**Research Methodology**

*Population and Samples*

The target population of this study is Thai secondary school students learning Chinese in Thailand. Because the target population is large and widely distributed, the sample selected for this study is 400 secondary school students learning Chinese in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand.

## **Research Instrument**

### ***Tools in the Study***

The questionnaire is the primary data collection tool of this study, which was designed by the researcher herself according to the self-efficacy theory and the Grasha and Riechmann learning styles theory, and the prepared instrument is based on answering the problem statement, with a total of 36 questions, and the number of questions is designed moderately, which is mainly to understand the self-perceptions of Thai students' listening and speaking ability in Chinese and their learning styles' preferences in the process of learning Chinese. Considering the significant differences in Chinese language proficiency among Thai secondary school students, the language of the questions was set to be Thai to avoid causing comprehension bias or reducing the accuracy of the survey if Thai secondary school students could not understand the questions. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: 1) basic information, 2) Self-efficacy Scale for Chinese Listening and Speaking Skills, and 3) Learning Style Preference Scale. The second and third parts are based on a 5-point Likert scale, and each test and rating is based on the general public's opinions, which are synthesized as follows: Means Strongly Agree, four means agree, three means average, two means disagree, and one means strongly disagree.

### ***Tool creation and testing***

In this study, the researcher first submitted the self-created questionnaire to three Thai experts from the Faculty of Education, Chiang Mai University organizing committee, who reviewed the questionnaire and used the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) to determine content validity. The Content Validity Score for each question was more significant than 0.5, indicating this questionnaire's internal consistency and stability.

After the revision of the questionnaire survey after the expert review, the designed questionnaire survey through Google from randomly selected secondary school students in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and other places in Thailand to carry out the first round of surveys, a total of 163 questionnaires were issued in this round, and 162 pieces of valid data were recovered. The reliability of the data was analyzed through the SPSS 23.0 system and

concerning the critical value of Pearson correlation coefficient  $r$  of the graph. In this study,  $Df=n-2=162-2=160>100$ ,  $\alpha$  is set to 0.01, and according to the Pearson correlation critical value table, Critical value (c.v)=0.254 can be determined. After the reliability analysis of the questionnaire, the Cronbach coefficient of the Chinese Listening and Speaking Ability Self-perception Scale is 0.942. The learning style preference scale as a whole was 0.811. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  coefficients of the dimensions were distributed in the range of 0.519 to 0.851, which indicated that the questionnaire had good reliability.

### **Collection of Data**

Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher analyzed the required sample size in the target population for prediction using G\*Power, a free-to-use software developed by the University of Düsseldorf, Germany, to calculate statistical efficacy. The program provides the ability to calculate the efficacy of various statistical tests, including t-tests, F-tests, and chi-square tests. It was presupposed that there is effect size,  $f=0.25$ , power  $(1-\beta)=0.9$ , significance level  $(\alpha)=0.05$ , and the results indicate that the required sample size is 391. After determining the required sample size for this questionnaire survey, it will be distributed using a random sampling method to select Thai secondary school students learning Chinese in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand.

### **Data Analysis**

To ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the data, the researcher will use SPSS 23.0 to analyze the data after the questionnaires have been sorted out, recovered, and coded by the researchers after the study participants have finished answering the questionnaires. The researcher will perform descriptive statistics on the data values, including frequencies, measures of concentration trends (mean, plural, and median) and measures of dispersion (extreme and standard deviation), one-way ANOVA, and correlation analysis.

## Results

This study involved 400 Thai secondary school students from the first to the sixth year of secondary school in more than ten secondary schools in Chiang Mai Province, Thailand, with a relatively even distribution. The majority of the respondents, 268 (67.1%), were from junior high schools 4 to 6, while the remaining 132 (32.9%) were from junior high schools 1 to 3. As shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Student grade level distribution table

	choice	Number(people)	percentage
Grade Level	Junior High School 1	67	16.8%
	Junior High School 2	34	8.5%
	Junior High School 3	31	7.8%
	High School 1	69	17.3%
	High School 2	42	10.5%
	High School 3	157	39.3%
	Totals	400	100%

Most secondary school students learning Chinese have yet to take any Chinese language-related level exams, totaling 247, or 61.8%. Most of the 153 secondary school students who have taken the exams are also at the middle and lower levels, totaling 94, or 61%, and only seven have passed the hsk6 level exams, totaling 5%. As shown in table 2.

Table 2 Student participation in the HSK Chinese Language Proficiency test

	choice	Number(people)	percentage
Have you taken the HSK exam yet?	Yes	153	38.2%
	No	247	61.8%
Totals		400	100%

From the perspective of Chinese learning time, most students have been learning Chinese for a relatively long time, more than two years. Most of them learn Chinese 1-3 days a week, but a few students spend time learning Chinese daily. From the final results, most of the students' Chinese listening and speaking proficiency levels are still at the lower middle level, and only a few think that they can use Chinese fluently or even reach the level of their mother tongue. Most students think Chinese listening and speaking skills are critical in Chinese listening, reading, and writing.

In the second part of the questionnaire, Thai secondary school students' self-efficacy in Chinese language ability, it can be seen that the respondents' self-perception scores have a mean score of 31.8, a median score of 31, a multitude score of 36, and a standard deviation of 11.82. The distribution of the students' median and mean. Multitude scores range from 13 to 36 points, suggesting that most Thai secondary school students are at the lower to middle level regarding their listening and speaking ability in Chinese and need more confidence and interest in learning Chinese. As shown in Table 3

Table 3 Analysis of self-efficacy scores of secondary school students in Thailand

Valid	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD.
Self-efficacy	400	31.8	31	36	11.82

According to the study data, the learning styles of the respondents were ranked in the order of average scores from highest to lowest. The highest scoring style was the avoidance style, with a mean value of 3.05, followed by the dependent style, with a mean value of 2.85, followed by the collaborative style, with a mean value of 2.77, and then followed the independent style and the participant style, which both have a mean value of 2.74, and the lowest is competitive style with a mean of 2.72. As shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Analysis of the status of learning styles of secondary school students in Thailand



Learning Styles	N	Mean	Median	Mode	SD.
Independent Style	400	2.74	2.5	2	1.25
Dependent Style	400	2.85	3.00	3	0.83
Collaborative Style	400	2.77	2.67	1	1.32
Avoidance Style	400	3.05	3.00	3	1.03
Competitive Style	400	2.72	2.50	3	1.12
Participant Style	400	2.74	2.67	2	1.21

After that, the researchers used one-way ANOVA to test the differences between different grade levels, different times of learning Chinese, and different levels of Chinese listening and speaking ability on Thai secondary school students' self-perceptions of Chinese listening and speaking ability and learning style preferences, and post hoc tests were conducted to illustrate further. According to the data, the significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between grade level, time spent learning Chinese, and Chinese listening and speaking ability in Thai secondary school students' self-perception of Chinese listening and speaking ability implies that grade level, time spent learning Chinese and Chinese listening and speaking ability all affect students' self-efficacy. Among the differences in grade level, the scores of fifth-grade students were significantly higher than those of students in other grades, with a mean of 36.2 and a variance of 10.43; among the differences in learning time, the scores of students who had been learning Chinese for more than two years were significantly higher than those of other students, with a mean of 33.46 and a variance of 12.08; among the differences in the levels of Chinese listening and speaking ability, the scores of students who were fluent in Chinese were significantly higher than those of students who were not fluent in Chinese, with a mean of 49.57 and a variance

of 12.08. students, with a mean of 49.57 and a variance of 9.21. The sample size and the specific learning environment may limit the results of this study. There is no significant difference between grade level and Chinese listening and speaking ability in Thai secondary school students' preferences for Chinese learning styles ( $p > 0.05$ ), implying that grade level and Chinese listening and speaking ability do not affect students' learning preferences. In contrast, there is a significant difference between the time spent learning Chinese in Thai secondary school students' preferences for Chinese learning styles ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Correlation analysis is a method to explore the mutual influence relationship between variables, which includes measuring the correlation coefficient and conducting the significance test of the correlation coefficient. Taking Pearson's correlation coefficient  $r$ , the most common quantitative data computation, as an example, the larger the correlation coefficient  $r$  obtained between the two variables, the higher the correlation between the two is. The results of the correlation analysis obtained in this study based on the correlation between the six learning styles of Grasha-Reichimann and self-efficacy show a significant positive correlation in the process of Chinese language learning, avoidance styles, and self-efficacy. In contrast, no significant correlation between the remaining five learning styles and self-efficacy is shown. In addition, among the six learning styles of Grasha-Reichimann, except for avoidance styles, which showed a significant negative correlation of  $-0.127$ , the other five learning styles showed significant positive correlations and participant style showed the most significant positive correlation of  $0.861$ . Avoidance style showed a significant positive correlation with independent style, collaborative style, competitive style, and participant style, while participant style showed a significant positive correlation with self-efficacy. Avoidance style showed a significant negative correlation with independent, collaborative, competitive, and participant styles, with the most significant negative correlation with collaborative style at  $0.411$ . As shown in Table 6

Table 6 Relationship between Learning styles and Self-efficacy

	Independent Style	Dependent	Collaborative	Avoidance	Competitive Style	Participant Style	Self-efficacy	Learning

		nt Style	ve Style	Styl e				style s
Indep enden t Style	1							
Depen dent Style	.475* *	1						
Colla borati ve Style	.540* *	.654 **	1					
Avoid ance Style	-.284* *	-.08 1	-.414* *	1				
Comp etitive style	.580* *	.492 **	.490* *	-.227 **	1			
Partici pant Style	.598* *	.599 **	.805* *	-.411 **	.621* *	1		
Self- effica cy	-0.032	0.05 3	0	.162 **	0.012	-0.001	1	
Learni ng styles	.730* *	.806 **	.839* *	-.127 *	.730* *	.861* *	0.05	1
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).								
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

1) The study involved 400 Thai senior school students, most of whom had been studying Chinese for more than two years but had a low pass rate on the Chinese language test (HSK), and most of them were at the lower intermediate level. This suggests that the duration of learning is one of many factors determining Chinese listening and speaking ability. However, the learning method and the quality of learning may be more critical.

2) The study found that the primary motivations for Thai secondary school students to learn Chinese were consideration for future work, interest in Chinese culture, and love of the Chinese language. The influence of family and school was relatively small. This suggests that students' intrinsic motivation may significantly influence the persistence and depth of Chinese language learning.

3) By analyzing the self-efficacy of Thai secondary school students' Chinese listening and speaking ability, the researchers found that they have a certain degree of self-efficacy in their Chinese listening and speaking ability and can accurately assess their competence level. However, because of the lack of a sufficient Chinese communication environment and the lack of systematic learning of the Chinese language, they cannot make the best use of what they have learned to communicate with others in Chinese. They are afraid of using Chinese to communicate with others or of using Chinese to communicate with others. However, they may need help fully utilizing what they have learned to communicate with others in Chinese, or they may be afraid to use Chinese to communicate with others.

4) Different grade levels, different Chinese learning times, and different Chinese listening and speaking abilities significantly affect Thai secondary school students' self-efficacy, suggesting that self-perception is closely related to factors such as learning experiences and interests. Students in higher grades may have more learning experiences and skill accumulation and thus hold higher self-efficacy for their Chinese listening and speaking abilities. On the contrary, students in lower grades may have lower self-efficacy regarding their abilities due to shorter learning time or less experience.

5) The statistical analysis showed no significant difference in the relationship between grade level and Chinese listening and speaking ability and learning style preference ( $p>0.05$ ). This suggests that students' grade level and Chinese listening and speaking proficiency levels do not directly affect their preferences for learning styles. In other words, no matter what grade level students are in or their level of listening and speaking ability, it only significantly affects their preferences for different learning styles.

6) In the process of Chinese language learning, there is a significant positive correlation between avoidance style and self-efficacy, which means that the extent to which students choose avoidance style positively correlates with their self-perception level. Students who prefer the avoidance style tend to hold stronger self-perceptions of their abilities and show higher self-efficacy. Except for the avoidance style, the other five learning styles did not correlate significantly with self-efficacy. This may indicate that the relationship between the other learning styles and students' level of self-perception is not significant or that these learning styles do not directly affect students' self-efficacy.

7) All five learning styles showed significant positive correlations among the six, except for the avoidance style, which showed a significant negative correlation with the other learning styles. This indicates that students who preferred a particular learning style were more inclined to choose other learning styles that matched that learning style and vice versa. This may reflect that students tend to form a consistent learning style preference during the learning process, indicating some intrinsic connection between learning styles.

### **Suggestion**

1) Setting clear learning goals: Set specific and measurable goals for Thai secondary school students to learn Chinese listening and speaking, such as mastering a certain number of Chinese vocabulary words and sentence patterns each week, to ensure that they are clear about the direction of their learning and the expected results.

2) Provide successful experiences: Create opportunities for students to successfully use Chinese for listening and speaking exercises in class, such as role-playing and simulated

dialogues. These successful experiences will enhance students' self-efficacy and motivate them to participate more actively in learning.

3) Give positive feedback and support: Teachers should give positive feedback and support to students' performance in listening and speaking Chinese, such as encouraging students to go to Chinese movies, supporting them to speak their minds in Chinese, and recognizing their progress and achievements, to enhance their self-confidence and motivation to learn.

4) Knowing students' learning styles: Teachers need to know each student's learning style to provide them with individualized learning resources and strategies. For example, some students prefer to learn independently, while others prefer to work with others.

5) Designing diversified teaching activities: According to students' learning styles, diversified teaching activities can be designed for teaching Chinese listening and speaking. For example, independent learning materials and online resources can be provided; group discussions and cooperative tasks can be organized for students who prefer cooperative learning.

6) Promote communication and cooperation between different learning styles: Promote communication and cooperation between different learning styles by organizing group activities and sharing sessions. This helps students understand different learning styles and strategies and enhances their communication skills and collaborative spirit.

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