

## APPLICATION OF TASK-BASED LEARNING IN TEACHING BUSINESS CHINESE READING IN THAILAND

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**Abstract:** Task-Based Learning (TBL) has been attracting the attention of researchers and language teachers for many years. However, far less research has been carried out as to whether TBL works for teaching Business Chinese Reading. This study aims to offer a unique contribution by integrating a discussion of TBL pedagogical principles with descriptions of their application to teaching Business Chinese Reading. This study uses the basic principles and main ideas of TBL as the foundation and combines the specific characteristics of Business Chinese Reading. Integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study examines the knowledge and application of TBL among Assumption University students who study Chinese as a second language. To testify TBL is more effective than traditional teacher-center instruction, an experimental study is carried out in the research. The research subjects consisted of 54 senior students in Business Chinese Department of Assumption University. Students in both experimental group and control group received a pretest during the week before instruction began, and they also received a post-test during the week after instruction concluded. From the analysis it is easy to get the conclusion that TBL used appropriately in teaching Business Chinese Reading is helpful in improving students' reading skills.

### Introduction

With the progress of international economic integration and the deepening of Chinese economic reform, Chinese foreign trade is developing rapidly and business activities between China and foreign countries are getting more and more frequent. Recent developments in China help accelerate her links with foreign countries, especially with the developed countries, by increasing exchange of business. Modern China has been regarded as a world factory where over one hundred thousand foreign enterprises have settled down, and hundreds of thousand foreign entrepreneurs, businessmen and managers are living and working there.

In order to have a better understanding of modern Chinese business, university students, who study Chinese as a second language and choose business Chinese as a major, need to read and analyze Chinese business articles. Business Chinese Reading course builds such a bridge for those university students who wish to acquire necessary business Chinese knowledge and skills that may be needed in their commercial contact with local dealers, or wish to do business in China or work for the

companies which have close contact with their Chinese counterparts, and thus to enhance their success in business.

I have been teaching business Chinese in Assumption University of Thailand for more than four years. I'm happy to see a good number of Thai students take great interest in learning business Chinese. However, in my advanced Business Chinese Reading classes, I have found an unusual phenomenon: many advanced level Thai students who have very good Chinese language abilities cannot understand a simple Chinese business article. One reason for this is that Business Chinese Reading is not just a basic Chinese reading. Business Chinese Reading requires not only advanced business knowledge but also advanced Chinese language.

Business Chinese Reading course focuses on the business and economic life of China today, with a higher level of specialization. In addition to language related to commodities and trading, it gives an up-to-date picture of the economic situation in China, and gives the readers an insight into the culture of Chinese business and economic life. This requires comprehensive knowledge of the essentials of Chinese economic circumstances and rules for business performance, such as government and trade, international business law, products and pricing, advertising and publicity, international business cooperation, accounting and financial management, finance and securities, the stock market, business environment, business strategy, human resource management, operations management and innovation, information technology and e-commerce, business ethics and corporate social responsibility, etc. In front of so many reading tasks, it's better for the teacher to apply the Task-Based Learning model into teaching Business Chinese Reading among those students who study Chinese as a second language.

### What is Task-Based Learning?

According to Kris (2006), tasks are activities and that these activities are goal-directed. Rod (2003) asserted that tasks hold a central place in current second language acquisition research and also in language pedagogy. David (2005) stated that task-based language teaching has strengthened the six principles and practices including a need-based approach to content selection, an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language, the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation, the provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning process itself, an enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning, and the linking of classroom language learning with language outside the classroom.

Task-Based Learning is a method of instruction in the field of language acquisition. It focuses on the use of authentic language, and to students doing meaningful tasks using the target language. Assessment is primarily based on

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