Integrating Task-Based Learning and Total Physical Response to Develop Listening Comprehension among Primary School EFL Learners in Thailand

Sermsak Srasri[1], Saiphin Siharak[1]*, Jean Claire Morales[1]

***Corresponding author's email: saiphin_s@rmutt.ac.th**

[1]Faculty of Technical Education, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, Pathum Thani, Thailand

Received: November 25, 2025 *Revised: May 13, 2026* *Accepted: June 16, 2026*

Abstract

This quasi-experimental study evaluated the effectiveness of integrating Task-Based Learning (TBL) with Total Physical Response (TPR) to improve listening comprehension among Thai Primary 6 EFL learners. Sixty students aged 11–12 from a primary school under the Nonthaburi Primary Educational Service Area Office 1 were assigned to an experimental ($n = 30$) or a control ($n = 30$) group using cluster sampling. The experimental group received 6 hours of integrated TBL-TPR instruction, whereas the control group received conventional Presentation–Practice–Production (PPP) instruction. Listening comprehension was assessed using a validated test (KR-20 = 0.72; IOC = 1.00) at pre-test and post-test. The experimental group demonstrated significant gains, with a 30.2% increase in listening scores ($p < .05$) and outperformed the control group by a mean difference of 1.83 points (15.1% relative to the control group's post-test mean; $d = 1.21$; $p < .05$). The control group also demonstrated significant within-group improvement (15.6%), though the magnitude was substantially smaller than the experimental group. The findings indicate that TBL-TPR integration effectively enhances listening comprehension by leveraging motor-based learning, reducing affective barriers, and facilitating authentic communication. This study provides one of the few controlled empirical investigations into the synergistic effects of integrating TBL and TPR on listening comprehension in primary EFL contexts characterized by limited exposure to the target language and elevated language anxiety.

Keywords: Task-Based Learning, Total Physical Response, listening comprehension, EFL primary education, Thai EFL learners

Introduction

English proficiency is increasingly critical across Southeast Asia due to regional economic integration, expanding tourism, and global communication needs (Kirkpatrick, 2012). Among the four language skills, listening comprehension holds particular importance as it is the first skill children encounter in natural language acquisition and constitutes the primary channel through which young learners receive and process linguistic input (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). For primary school EFL learners, the development of listening competence is foundational, as it underpins vocabulary acquisition, reading development, and the emergence of communicative ability (Rost, 2011). In Thailand's EFL context, where classroom instruction represents the predominant—and often sole—source of target language exposure, the quality of listening instruction is especially consequential for learners' overall English development (Baker, 2008).

In Thailand, despite curriculum reforms and national initiatives aimed at strengthening English language education, many learners continue to experience difficulties in developing communicative competence (Darasawang, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2008; Noom-ura, 2013). Previous research has identified persistent challenges, including limited opportunities to use English meaningfully beyond the classroom, insufficient language proficiency, and instructional constraints that restrict communicative language use (Noom-ura, 2013). More recent evidence has also highlighted continuing difficulties in listening comprehension among Thai EFL learners, particularly in processing authentic spoken English and understanding connected speech in academic contexts (Rutamornchai et al., 2024). According to Thailand's Basic Education Core Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008), Grade 6 students are expected to identify main ideas and specific details from spoken texts, follow multi-step instructions, and respond appropriately in communicative situations. However, the persistent gap between these curriculum expectations and learners' actual communicative competence suggests the need for more effective instructional approaches that provide meaningful language exposure and active opportunities for listening and communication.

Key challenges stem from major linguistic differences between Thai and English, including contrasts in grammar structure, stress and tone, and connected speech patterns (Khamkhien, 2010). Continued reliance on grammar-translation and teacher-centered approaches limits opportunities for functional listening practice (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Wiriyachitra, 2002). Moreover, Thailand's primary EFL context provides minimal target language exposure outside classrooms, restricting natural language acquisition (Baker, 2008). Recent investigations confirm that Thai EFL students face medium-to-high listening difficulty levels, requiring targeted improvement strategies including increased native speech practice, explicit listening strategies, and vocabulary development (Rutamornchai et al., 2024). Research consistently supports the value of active, movement-based, and meaning-focused approaches for developing listening skills among young learners (Er, 2013; Pinter, 2017). Two methodologies that have individually demonstrated effectiveness in EFL listening instruction are Task-Based Learning

(TBL) and Total Physical Response (TPR). Regarding TBL and listening comprehension, prior studies indicate that task-based instruction promotes deeper processing of spoken language by engaging learners in purposeful communicative activities that require authentic meaning construction rather than form recognition (Ellis & Shintani, 2014; Nunan, 2004). Learners who engage in TBL demonstrate stronger listening outcomes because tasks create authentic communicative purpose—students must attend carefully to spoken input in order to accomplish meaningful goals (Long, 2015). Regarding TPR and listening comprehension, research has consistently documented its effectiveness for young and beginner EFL learners by reducing affective barriers, providing comprehensible input through physical enactment, and building receptive competence before demanding verbal production (Asher, 2009; Nuraeni, 2019). Recent research conducted in the Thai EFL context further supports the effectiveness of TPR-based instruction. A quasi-experimental study integrating the Natural Approach with Total Physical Response reported that primary school students achieved significantly higher listening comprehension scores after the intervention and outperformed those receiving traditional instruction (Srasri et al., 2025). Similar findings have also been reported in vocabulary instruction. For example, Putri et al. (2025) found statistically significant improvements in elementary school students' vocabulary performance following TPR-based instruction. However, Dweikat et al. (2023) reported no statistically significant improvement in vocabulary learning among Palestinian fifth-grade learners, suggesting that the effectiveness of TPR may vary according to instructional context, learning objectives, intervention design, and learner characteristics.

Despite their individual effectiveness, TBL and TPR have rarely been investigated in combination. TPR's strength lies in its ability to establish foundational receptive competence through sensorimotor engagement and low-anxiety input processing, yet it provides limited opportunities for extended communicative interaction or higher-order comprehension (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). TBL, conversely, excels at developing interactive and authentic listening through collaborative task completion, but may impose excessive cognitive and affective demands on beginning learners without adequate input-based scaffolding. The integration of these two methodologies therefore addresses a clear pedagogical gap: no controlled empirical study has systematically examined how sequential embedding of TPR techniques within a TBL framework can scaffold EFL primary learners' listening development from foundational comprehension to authentic communicative listening. This gap is particularly salient in Thailand's constrained EFL environment, where learners require carefully designed instructional support to develop the listening abilities mandated by national curriculum standards (Ministry of Education, 2008). In the present study, this integration was operationalized by systematically embedding five TPR input-scaffolding techniques (TPR-Body, TPR-Object, TPR-Drama, TPR-Storytelling, and TPR-Picture) across the three phases of Ellis's (2003) TBL framework, with particular emphasis on the pre-task phase as the primary receptive scaffolding stage, enabling a systematic instructional progression from controlled receptive comprehension toward authentic communicative listening across three sequentially scaffolded lessons.

This study addresses these gaps by evaluating an integrated approach combining TBL and TPR among Primary 6 EFL learners in Thailand. The focus on listening comprehension as the primary outcome reflects its foundational role in primary EFL development and its status as the most consistently underperforming skill among Thai learners (Noom-ura, 2013; Rutamornchai et al., 2024). Although TBL-TPR integration may also exert positive effects on vocabulary acquisition and speaking confidence, the current study deliberately delimits its scope to listening comprehension in order to achieve rigorous measurement of this foundational skill within the constraints of the intervention period. The study is grounded in complementary theoretical frameworks—Asher's (1969, 2009) trace theory of memory and motor-based cognition (Glenberg, 2010) for TPR, and Ellis's (2003) task framework within sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) for TBL—which together predict that the integration will generate synergistic benefits exceeding what either approach can achieve independently.

This study makes three key contributions. First, it provides one of the few controlled empirical investigations of the pedagogical synergy between TBL and TPR in enhancing listening comprehension. Second, it offers a structured instructional model demonstrating how TPR can be systematically embedded within a TBL framework. Third, it contributes context-specific evidence from Thai primary EFL classrooms, addressing the lack of localized research in this area.

Research Questions

To address the research objectives outlined in this study, three primary research questions guide the investigation:

1. To what extent does an integrated TBL-TPR approach improve Primary 6 EFL learners' listening comprehension scores, as reflected in pre-test and post-test results?
2. Is there a significant difference in post-intervention listening comprehension performance between students receiving integrated TBL-TPR instruction and those receiving traditional Presentation–Practice–Production (PPP) instruction?
3. To what extent can the observed improvement in listening comprehension be interpreted through the theoretical mechanisms underlying TPR and TBL?

These questions are directly aligned with the educational context of Thai primary EFL instruction, the theoretical frameworks of TPR and TBL, and the listening needs identified in the national curriculum. They address the empirical gap identified above and are designed to generate evidence-based pedagogical guidance for teachers in similar constrained EFL environments.

Theoretical Foundation

This study investigates an innovative pedagogical approach that integrates TPR and TBL, two established methodologies that address complementary dimensions of language acquisition. TPR, a comprehension-based approach grounded in developmental psychology and first language acquisition research (Asher, 1969, 2009), operationalizes the observation that children initially comprehend and respond physically to language before verbal production. It presents linguistic input through imperative structures requiring physical rather than verbal responses, thereby reducing performance anxiety while building receptive competence (Krashen, 1985).

TPR's theoretical foundation is grounded in trace theory of memory, which posits that memory associations become stronger through repeated activation across multiple sensory and motor modalities (Asher, 2009). By integrating physical movement with language input, TPR promotes the formation of multimodal memory traces that facilitate deeper encoding and more efficient retrieval of linguistic information (Glenberg, 2010; Macedonia & Klimesch, 2014). Recent empirical research has continued to support this theoretical perspective. For example, Putri et al. (2025) reported statistically significant improvements in elementary school students' vocabulary performance following TPR-based instruction, suggesting that combining physical actions with verbal input can enhance vocabulary learning among young EFL learners.

TBL represents a paradigm shift from form-focused instruction to meaning-focused communication, positioning authentic tasks as the central organizing principle (Ellis, 2003; Long, 2015). It engages learners in meaningful tasks requiring language use for completion, promoting both incidental acquisition and intentional learning (Nunan, 2004). Ellis's (2003) TBL framework comprises three phases: (1) pre-task activities that frame the task and introduce essential language, (2) task cycle activities where learners engage in meaning-making during task completion, and (3) post-task activities involving reporting, reflection, and explicit language analysis. This balances fluency development with attention to linguistic accuracy (Ellis & Shintani, 2014), creating complementary integration with TPR's kinesthetic, comprehension-based foundation.

The integration of TPR and TBL addresses complementary dimensions of listening skill development. TPR excels at providing comprehensible input, reducing affective barriers, and supporting initial comprehension through sensorimotor learning (Ellis & Shintani, 2014), while TBL emphasizes authentic communication, interactive listening, and meaning negotiation to develop higher-order comprehension skills (Nunan, 2004). This integrated approach enables systematic instructional progression from controlled, input-focused TPR activities to more open-ended, interactive TBL tasks, scaffolding learners' development from basic comprehension toward communicative fluency.

Literature Review

Total Physical Response (TPR) in Language Learning

TPR has demonstrated robust theoretical grounding since Asher's (1969) seminal work established that physical responses to commands enhance language comprehension. The methodology mirrors natural first language acquisition patterns, creating a comprehension-before-production sequence that minimizes learner anxiety and establishes optimal conditions for language acquisition (Asher, 2009; Krashen, 1985).

Contemporary neuroscientific research substantiates TPR through motor-based cognition theory (Glenberg, 2010), revealing that physical engagement during learning reinforces neural pathways and promotes long-term retention. Macedonia and Klimesch (2014) documented sustained memory benefits when gestures accompanied foreign language vocabulary instruction.

The pedagogical value of Total Physical Response (TPR) for young language learners has been widely recognized in the literature. Er (2013) highlighted the importance of integrating physical movement with language input to create developmentally appropriate and engaging learning environments for young foreign language learners. Empirical research has generally supported this theoretical perspective. For example, Nuraeni (2019) documented an approximately 29% improvement in young learners' English competence following a TPR intervention, while Putri et al. (2025) reported statistically significant improvements in elementary school students' vocabulary performance, with average scores increasing by approximately 31% following TPR-based instruction. However, findings have not been entirely consistent across contexts. Dweikat et al. (2023) reported no statistically significant improvement in vocabulary learning among Palestinian fifth-grade learners, suggesting that the effectiveness of TPR may depend on contextual factors such as instructional design, learning objectives, intervention duration, and learner characteristics. Similarly, empirical evidence from Thailand indicates that integrating TPR with naturalistic language learning approaches can significantly enhance listening comprehension among primary school learners (Srasri et al., 2025).

Despite empirical support, TPR possesses acknowledged limitations as a standalone methodology. The approach demonstrates optimal effectiveness for concrete, physically demonstrable vocabulary and commands, yet exhibits restricted applicability to abstract conceptual content or complex grammatical structures (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Furthermore, TPR provides limited opportunities for authentic communicative interaction or productive language use beyond physical responses, necessitating integration with communicative pedagogical approaches (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

A critical dimension of TPR's effectiveness concerns its role in reducing language learning anxiety. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) demonstrated that anxiety occupies working memory capacity that would otherwise support comprehension and acquisition processes, establishing that affective states directly constrain cognitive resources available for language learning. Krashen's (1985) affective filter

hypothesis extends this insight, predicting that when anxiety is reduced, comprehensible input becomes more available for acquisition. TPR operationalizes these predictions by allowing learners to respond physically rather than verbally, eliminating the face-threatening risk of public verbal error. From a motivational perspective, Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory further illuminates TPR's effectiveness: collaborative and movement-based activities characteristic of TPR satisfy learners' fundamental psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, thereby sustaining intrinsic motivation and engagement throughout the learning process.

Task-Based Learning (TBL) in Language Education

TBL represents a fundamental reconceptualization of language instruction, shifting focus from linguistic forms to meaningful communication (Ellis, 2003; Long, 2015). TBL organizes instruction around tasks—activities requiring language use to achieve communicative goals rather than presenting language items for decontextualized practice. This approach aligns with communicative language teaching principles and sociocultural theories emphasizing that language acquisition occurs through meaningful interaction and collaborative problem-solving (Vygotsky, 1978).

Ellis's (2003) three-phase TBL framework provides systematic structure balancing meaning-focused communication with attention to linguistic form. The pre-task phase introduces the task, activates relevant schemas, and pre-teaches essential vocabulary. The task cycle engages learners in collaborative task completion, prioritizing meaning-making over linguistic accuracy. The post-task phase provides opportunities for reporting outcomes, comparing approaches, and explicit language focus, promoting metalinguistic awareness and consolidating learning (Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

Recent meta-analyses and empirical studies have strengthened the evidence base for task-based language teaching. Long's (2015) comprehensive review provides evidence that task-based instruction produces superior outcomes compared to traditional form-focused approaches, particularly for developing fluency and interactive communication skills. Recent action research by Graciano (2025) demonstrated experimental group mean scores increasing from 2.81 to 4.27 following TBLT intervention, with reduced anxiety and increased confidence. TBL aligns particularly well with young learners' developmental characteristics, as children prefer active, varied, game-like activities over decontextualized drills and exercises (Pinter, 2017).

TBL's effectiveness can also be understood through Craik and Lockhart's (1972) levels-of-processing framework, which posits that meaningful, goal-directed cognitive engagement generates stronger and more durable memory traces than shallow, form-focused processing. When learners engage in TBL tasks, they process linguistic input at a deeper semantic level because the communicative goal requires them to construct meaning rather than merely recognize forms. This deep processing contrasts fundamentally with the surface-level rehearsal characteristic of decontextualized drills, explaining why TBL-based listening practice yields more durable comprehension gains. The authentic communicative purpose embedded in each task transforms listening from a passive, receptive exercise

into an active meaning-construction process (Nunan, 2004), a distinction with direct implications for both immediate comprehension and long-term retention.

English Language Education in Thailand

Thailand's English language education confronts persistent challenges despite decades of policy reforms and compulsory instruction beginning at the primary level (Darasawang, 2007). Thai students continue to experience limited communicative competence, particularly because of insufficient English exposure, limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom, and persistent instructional challenges (Noom-ura, 2013). Rutamornchai et al. (2024) reported that Thai EFL university students face medium-to-high levels of English listening difficulties, particularly problems related to speaking speed, pronunciation, and first-listening comprehension.

These outcomes stem from multiple interrelated factors. Linguistically, the typological distance between Thai—a tonal, analytic language—and English—a stress-timed, inflectional language—creates substantial perceptual and comprehension difficulties (Khamkhien, 2010). Pedagogically, grammar-translation methods persist despite curriculum reforms advocating communicative approaches (Wiriyachitra, 2002). Large class sizes, examination pressures prioritizing reading and grammar, and constraints on teacher English proficiency further impede communicative methodology implementation (Noom-ura, 2013).

Thailand's EFL environment offers minimal English exposure beyond classroom instruction, contrasting sharply with ESL contexts where learners encounter the target language in daily life (Baker, 2008). Although Thailand's Basic Education Core Curriculum emphasizes student-centered, communicative approaches promoting functional language use (Ministry of Education, 2008), implementation remains inconsistent, revealing significant gaps between policy intentions and classroom practices (Darasawang, 2007). Innovative, empirically validated pedagogical approaches that align with curriculum objectives while addressing contextual realities are essential for advancing Thai students' English proficiency outcomes.

Methodology

Research Design and Participants

This study employed a quasi-experimental pre-test-post-test nonequivalent control group design to investigate the effectiveness of an integrated TBL-TPR approach. The design was selected as the most appropriate and ethically feasible option for school-based research, given that random assignment of individual students was not possible without disrupting intact class groupings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants

Sixty Primary 6 students (ages 11–12, Mage = 11.5 years) from a medium-sized public primary school in Nonthaburi Province, Thailand, participated in the study during the second semester of Academic Year 2021. The school serves approximately 2,000 students in a suburban context representative of typical Thai public schools in terms of class sizes, resource availability, and student demographics, thereby enhancing external validity for similar EFL contexts nationwide.

Participants were drawn from two intact classes, which were randomly assigned to the experimental (n = 30) and control (n = 30) conditions. All participants were Thai native speakers who had received formal English instruction since Grade 1, accumulating approximately five years of English study at approximately three hours per week, in accordance with Thailand's national curriculum requirements (Ministry of Education, 2008). Based on teacher assessment and classroom performance records, participants were estimated to be functioning at approximately the A1–A2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). No participants had previously lived or studied in an English-speaking country, and socioeconomic backgrounds were broadly homogeneous, with the majority of students coming from middle- to lower-middle-income families in the suburban Nonthaburi area, as indicated by school demographic records.

The data were collected during the English for Communication course, a compulsory subject within Thailand's Basic Education Core Curriculum for Primary 6. The course objectives center on developing students' ability to use English for basic communicative purposes, including listening for information, following instructions, and engaging in simple interactive tasks. The TBL-TPR intervention was implemented during the middle phase of the second semester (Weeks 8–10 of 20), after students had established foundational vocabulary knowledge from the first half of the semester but before summative assessments, positioning the intervention at an optimal point in the instructional sequence.

Given that participants were under 18 years of age, detailed information sheets and informed consent forms were distributed to both students and parents. Written parental consent and student assent were obtained prior to data collection.

Listening Comprehension Challenges at the Study Site

Prior to the intervention, the school's English teachers and the researcher identified several persistent listening comprehension difficulties among Primary 6 students through classroom observation and informal diagnostic assessment. Students consistently struggled with connected speech features such as word stress, weak forms, and linking, which rendered authentic spoken English difficult to segment and decode. Many students exhibited difficulty sustaining attention across extended spoken texts, particularly those exceeding three or four sentences in length. Anxiety during listening tasks was notably elevated, with students frequently disengaging or guessing randomly when they encountered unfamiliar words rather than employing compensatory strategies. These difficulties were compounded by limited vocabulary depth and infrequent exposure to authentic English outside the classroom,

consistent with broader patterns documented in Thai primary EFL contexts (Noom-ura, 2013; Rutamornchai et al., 2024). Prior to this study, listening instruction at the school relied predominantly on PPP-based approaches involving vocabulary translation, choral repetition, and gap-fill exercises, which provided limited opportunities for functional listening practice in communicative contexts.

Instructional Treatments

Experimental Treatment: Integrated TBL-TPR Approach

The experimental intervention systematically integrated TPR techniques within Ellis's (2003) three-phase TBL framework through strategic embedding of five TPR extensions across instructional phases. The intervention comprised three lessons (each lesson for 2 hours, totaling 6 hours over 3 weeks) addressing content aligned with Thailand's Basic Education Core Curriculum for Primary 6: (1) School Subjects and Time; (2) Places Around Town; and (3) Prepositions of Place.

Grouping and Collaborative Structure

Consistent with TBL principles that emphasize collaborative meaning-making (Nunan, 2004), students in the experimental group worked in small groups of four to five members throughout the task cycle phase of each lesson. Groups were formed by the teacher using mixed-ability composition, intentionally pairing stronger and weaker listeners to support peer scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978). Within each group, students assumed rotating functional roles: a task coordinator who managed the group's progress and ensured all members participated, a materials handler who managed physical props and worksheets, a reporter who presented the group's outcomes during the post-task phase, and task participants who contributed equally to task completion. This role-based structure promoted accountability, distributed responsibility, and created meaningful communicative engagement, as each member's contribution was essential for successful task completion.

Weekly Instructional Sequence

The three-lesson sequence progressed systematically in terms of task complexity, language demand, and degree of learner autonomy, as detailed below.

Week 1 — Lesson 1: School Subjects and Time

Pre-task phase (30 minutes): The teacher introduced twelve target vocabulary items related to school subjects and time expressions using TPR-Body (students performed physical gestures representing each subject, e.g., miming writing for English, counting for Mathematics) and TPR-Object (students manipulated mini-schedule cards and clock props). Vocabulary was presented aurally three times with simultaneous physical demonstration before students produced responses. No translation

was provided; meaning was conveyed exclusively through physical context and visual support, reducing cognitive translation load and promoting direct form-meaning mapping.

Task cycle phase (60 minutes): In groups of four to five, students engaged in an information-gap task titled "What's Mike's Schedule?" Each group received a partially completed weekly timetable and a set of audio commands describing a fictional student's schedule. Students listened to the teacher deliver the commands (read twice at normal speed) and collaboratively completed the timetable by marking subjects in the correct time slots. The task required genuine collaborative listening: students needed to coordinate their responses, negotiate meaning when uncertain, and verify their answers with peers. TPR-Storytelling was employed as students physically enacted the daily routine described in the audio to confirm comprehension before recording answers.

Post-task phase (30 minutes): Each group's reporter presented their completed timetable to the class using sentence frames provided on the board ("At [time], Mike has [subject]"). The teacher facilitated brief comparison of group answers, highlighting discrepancies and directing students' attention to specific listening features (e.g., distinguishing "quarter past" from "quarter to"). TPR-Picture was used as students matched time expressions to clock-face images while listening to teacher-read confirmations.

Week 2 — Lesson 2: Places Around Town

Pre-task phase (30 minutes): Target vocabulary comprising ten place names (e.g., library, post office, train station) and associated action verbs (go to, turn left, walk past) was introduced through TPR-Object (students physically moved miniature figures along a large floor map) and TPR-Picture (students held up picture cards of places in response to orally presented names). This lesson increased kinesthetic demand compared to Week 1, requiring students to coordinate listening with physical navigation of the map.

Task cycle phase (60 minutes): Groups engaged in a "Find the Place" task in which the teacher orally delivered a series of navigation instructions (e.g., "Start at the school. Walk straight. Turn left at the bookshop. The place you are looking for is on your right"). Students collaboratively traced the route on their group map and identified the destination. Three progressively more complex routes were presented, with the final route incorporating four-step instructions and requiring students to retain and sequence multiple pieces of information. TPR-Drama was employed as students physically walked the route described before transferring their understanding to the paper map, supporting embodied comprehension.

Post-task phase (30 minutes): Groups reported their identified destinations and described their routes using target prepositional phrases. The teacher used TPR-Storytelling to review the routes, with students physically enacting the navigation sequence as the teacher narrated. Explicit attention was drawn to prepositions of direction as linguistic forms embedded within the communicative tasks.

Week 3 — Lesson 3: Prepositions of Place

Pre-task phase (30 minutes): Eight prepositions of place (on, in, under, next to, between, behind, in front of, across from) were introduced through TPR-Body (students positioned themselves relative to furniture and classroom objects in response to teacher commands) and TPR-Object (students arranged objects on their desks according to orally delivered instructions). This lesson required the highest level of attentional precision, as students needed to distinguish semantically similar prepositions through careful listening and physical discrimination.

Task cycle phase (60 minutes): Groups completed a "Describe My Room" task in which the teacher read a description of a bedroom scene (approximately 100 words, read twice). Students collaboratively drew the described room layout, placing furniture and objects according to the prepositions heard. Groups then compared their drawings and discussed discrepancies, requiring a second listening of targeted sentences. TPR-Drama was used as students physically enacted "living inside" the described room by arranging themselves and props according to the description, before finalizing their drawn layouts.

Post-task phase (30 minutes): Groups presented their drawings and described one item's location using target prepositions. Peer feedback was structured through a "same or different?" comparison activity in which groups compared their room layouts and identified any differences using the target language. The teacher concluded with explicit focus on form, directing attention to correct prepositional usage through TPR-Picture matching activities.

Control Treatment: Traditional PPP Instruction

The control group received traditional PPP instruction covering identical content but employing conventional teacher-centered methodologies. The Presentation phase involved vocabulary translation (English-Thai-English), explicit grammar explanation, and teacher modeling. The Practice phase included gap-fill exercises, matching activities, translation tasks, and choral repetition drills. The Production phase involved scripted dialogue practice with minimal adaptation or personalization.

This approach emphasized accuracy over fluency, individual performance over collaborative learning, and explicit rule learning over meaning-focused communication, representing standard practice in many Thai EFL classrooms. In contrast to the experimental group's collaborative, movement-based, and meaning-focused activities, the PPP approach provided no opportunities for group work, physical engagement, or authentic communicative listening. Students remained seated throughout all lessons, engaged primarily in individual written exercises and whole-class choral repetition, with listening practice confined to teacher modeling of discrete vocabulary items and scripted dialogue reading.

To control teacher variables, the researcher served as instructor for both groups. To ensure treatment fidelity, detailed lesson plans specified procedures, timing, and language use for each session.

A research assistant observed 50% of randomly selected lessons using structured observation protocols that confirmed fidelity rates exceeding 95% for both conditions.

Instrumentation

A researcher-developed listening comprehension test assessed participants' receptive listening skills across two skill dimensions. The instrument comprised two sections totaling 15 items.

Part A: Listening Comprehension of Extended Discourse. Five items (5 points total) assessed comprehension of an extended passage (approximately 150 words) describing a student's school schedule. The passage was presented orally at normal conversational speed and repeated twice with a 30-second interval. Five four-option multiple-choice questions assessed a range of comprehension skills: identification of main ideas (2 items), recall of specific details (2 items), and simple inferencing from context (1 item), reflecting a hierarchical progression from literal to interpretive comprehension consistent with listening assessment frameworks (Buck, 2001).

Part B: Listening for Instructions. Ten discrete items (10 points total) required students to demonstrate comprehension through observable physical responses, including drawing specified objects on a provided worksheet, writing words or numbers in designated spaces, and marking locations or sequences on a printed diagram. Spoken commands were delivered once at moderate speed with 10-second response intervals. Items varied in complexity from simple one-step directives to complex multi-step instructions, providing a range of difficulty appropriate for detecting variation in listening ability among learners at this level.

Scoring Procedures for Part B. Each of the ten items in Part B was scored on a two-point scale: 1 point was awarded for a fully correct response demonstrating complete comprehension of all elements of the instruction, and 0 points were awarded for an incorrect or absent response. In cases of multi-step instructions, partial credit was not awarded; scoring required complete and accurate execution of all components to ensure that the score reflected genuine listening comprehension rather than partial decoding. Two independent raters evaluated all Part B responses using a standardized scoring rubric specifying correct responses for each item. Discrepancies were resolved through consensus discussion, with inter-rater agreement reaching 97.3%.

Acknowledged Limitations of the Instrument. The 15-item total represents a constrained sample of listening behavior that may limit the instrument's capacity to detect fine-grained variation in listening ability among learners, as a larger item pool would provide more reliable differentiation across the ability range. While the KR-20 reliability coefficient of 0.72 meets the acceptable threshold for research purposes (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), it represents a minimum acceptable level rather than an optimal standard, and future research should employ longer instruments with a broader item pool to enhance measurement precision. Furthermore, the use of a single extended passage in Part A may have limited content representativeness; future studies should incorporate multiple passages across varied text types and topics. The two task formats assess listening comprehension primarily within controlled,

structured contexts and, as acknowledged in the Limitations section, may not fully capture the breadth of real-life listening ability, particularly in open-ended or interactional communicative contexts. Future research should incorporate a wider range of formats and authentic materials to provide a more comprehensive assessment of listening competence.

Validity and Reliability

Content and construct validity were evaluated through expert review. A panel of five specialists comprising three university professors specializing in EFL education and two primary school English teachers (minimum 10 years' experience) independently examined all test items. The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) yielded 1.00, demonstrating complete expert agreement that all items accurately measured intended learning objectives.

Following expert validation, the instrument was piloted with 30 Primary 6 students not included in the main study sample. Item difficulty indices ranged from 0.40 to 0.80, and discrimination indices met the minimum criterion of $r \geq .20$. Internal consistency reliability was estimated using Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.72, indicating acceptable reliability for research purposes (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Data Collection Procedures

The assessment tool was administered twice, once prior to the intervention in Week 1 and again following the intervention in Week 4. Standardized administration procedures ensured measurement consistency. All assessments were conducted in participants' regular classrooms during scheduled instructional periods. For Part A, passages were presented orally at normal conversational speed and repeated twice, with a 30-second interval. Part B commands were delivered once at moderate speed, with 10-second response intervals. Two independent raters evaluated all test responses. Both raters were experienced English teachers who remained blind to participant group assignments and testing occasions. Inter-rater agreement reached 97.3%, demonstrating high scoring reliability.

Data Analysis

All statistical analyses were conducted using JAMOVI Version 2.7.12. Preliminary analyses verified that data met assumptions for parametric statistical procedures. Data screening revealed no missing values or univariate outliers. The Shapiro–Wilk test indicated that all distributions were normally distributed ($p > .05$). Levene's test confirmed homogeneity of variance across groups for both pre-test ($p = .214$) and post-test ($p = .631$) scores. Independence of observations was supported by the research design: the two groups were assigned to separate classrooms with no cross-group contact during the intervention, and each participant contributed data to only one condition.

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) characterized group performance on pre-test and post-test measures. A paired-samples *t*-test examined within-group improvement for both the experimental group and the control group. An independent-samples *t*-test evaluated between-group differences in post-test performance. All statistical tests were conducted at $\alpha = .05$. Cohen's *d* effect sizes were calculated to assess the magnitude of observed effects, with benchmarks of small ($d = 0.20$), medium ($d = 0.50$), and large ($d = 0.80$) applied to interpret practical significance (Cohen, 1988). For paired-samples comparisons, Cohen's *d* was computed using the mean difference divided by the standard deviation of the difference scores. In addition to within-group analysis of the experimental group, a paired-samples *t*-test was also conducted for the control group to examine whether students receiving traditional PPP instruction demonstrated significant improvement from pre-test to post-test. This analysis enables direct comparison of within-group learning trajectories across both instructional conditions.

Results

This section presents the findings in three stages: (1) pre-test between-group equivalence, (2) post-test between-group comparison, (3) within-group analysis of the experimental group. All analyses were conducted using JAMOVI Version 2.7.12 at $\alpha = .05$.

Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary analyses verified that data met assumptions for parametric statistical procedures. Data screening revealed no missing values or univariate outliers. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that all score distributions were approximately normally distributed ($p > .05$). Levene's test confirmed homogeneity of variance across groups for both pre-test ($p = .214$) and post-test ($p = .631$) scores. The assumption of independence of observations was further examined through design review and diagnostic checks. Residual plots from both the paired- and independent-samples *t*-tests showed no systematic patterns indicative of dependency. Although participants were nested within intact classroom groups, both groups were drawn from the same school under comparable conditions, the analysis was conducted at the individual level, and no student appeared in more than one condition. The independence assumption was therefore considered tenable for all statistical analyses reported in this study.

Stage 1: Pre-test Between-Group Comparison

Table 1.

Pre-test Listening Comprehension Scores — Between-Group Comparison

Group	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
TBL-TPR (Experimental)	30	10.70	0.99	0.78	.439
Traditional PPP (Control)	30	10.47	1.31		

Note. df = 58

An independent-samples *t*-test confirmed no statistically significant difference between groups at pre-test, $t(58) = 0.78$, $p = .439$. This baseline equivalence validates the quasi-experimental design by demonstrating that both groups entered the study with comparable listening comprehension ability, allowing post-test differences to be more confidently attributed to the differential instructional treatments.

Stage 2: Post-test Between-Group Comparison

Table 2.

Post-test Listening Comprehension Scores — Between-Group Comparison

Group	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
TBL-TPR (Experimental)	30	13.93	1.43	6.18	<.001*	1.21
Traditional PPP (Control)	30	12.10	1.56			

Note. df = *58;* *$p < .05$; Maximum possible score = 15

An independent-samples *t*-test revealed a statistically significant difference between groups at post-test, $t(58) = 6.18$, $p < .001$. Students who received integrated TBL-TPR instruction ($M = 13.93$, $SD = 1.43$) demonstrated significantly higher listening comprehension scores than students who received traditional PPP instruction ($M = 12.10$, $SD = 1.56$), representing a between-group performance differential of 1.83 points, equivalent to 15.1% superior performance. The large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.21$) indicates substantial practical significance.

Stage 3: Within-Group Analysis

Within-Group Analysis — Experimental Group

Table 3.

Listening Comprehension Scores Before and After Integrated TBL-TPR Instruction (Experimental Group)

Assessment	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Mean Difference	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Pre-test	30	10.70	0.99	3.23	17.60	<.001*	2.51
Post-test	30	13.93	1.43				

Note. df = 29; *$p < .05$; Maximum possible score = 15

A paired-samples *t*-test revealed a statistically significant improvement in listening comprehension scores for the experimental group from pre-test ($M = 10.70$, $SD = 0.99$) to post-test ($M = 13.93$, $SD = 1.43$), $t(29) = 17.60$, $p < .001$. This represents a mean gain of 3.23 points, equivalent to a 30.2% increase relative to pre-test performance. The effect size was exceptionally large (Cohen's $d = 2.51$), indicating that the integrated TBL-TPR intervention produced gains of substantial practical significance beyond statistical significance alone. All 30 students in the experimental group demonstrated improvement from pre-test to post-test, with individual score gains ranging from 2 to 5 points.

Supplementary Analysis: Within-Group Analysis — Control Group

Table 4.

Listening Comprehension Scores Before and After Traditional PPP Instruction (Control Group)

Assessment	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Mean Difference	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Pre-test	30	10.47	1.31	1.63	7.98	<.001*	1.46
Post-test	30	12.10	1.56				

Note. df = 29; *$p < .05$; Maximum possible score = 15

A paired-samples *t*-test for the control group also revealed a statistically significant improvement from pre-test ($M = 10.47$, $SD = 1.31$) to post-test ($M = 12.10$, $SD = 1.56$), $t(29) = 7.98$, $p < .001$. This represents a mean gain of 1.63 points, equivalent to a 15.6% improvement relative to pre-test performance. The effect size was large (Cohen's $d = 1.46$), indicating that traditional PPP

instruction also produced meaningful, statistically significant gains in listening comprehension over the intervention period.

However, a direct comparison of within-group effect sizes reveals a substantial differential: the experimental group's improvement (d = 2.51) was markedly greater than the control group's improvement (d = 1.46), despite both groups receiving the same amount of instructional time and being exposed to identical content. This pattern indicates that while conventional instruction produced observable gains consistent with any structured instructional exposure, the integrated TBL-TPR approach generated substantially larger improvements than the traditional PPP approach, providing initial evidence that the integration produces a substantially more effective learning experience.

Summary of Findings

Table 5.

Summary of All Statistical Analyses

Comparison	Group	Pre-test *M (SD)*	Post-test *M (SD)*	Gain	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Within-group	Experimental (TBL-TPR)	10.70 (0.99)	13.93 (1.43)	+3.23 (30.2%)	17.60	<.001	2.51
Within-group	Control (PPP)	10.47 (1.31)	12.10 (1.56)	+1.63 (15.6%)	7.98	<.001	1.46
Between-group (pre)	—	10.70 vs 10.47	—	—	0.78	.439	—
Between-group (post)	—	—	13.93 vs 12.10	+1.83 (15.1%)	6.18	<.001	1.21

Note. All within-group df = 29; between-group df = 58; *p < .05

The summary of findings reveals a coherent and internally consistent pattern across all four comparisons. Both instructional approaches produced statistically significant within-group gains, confirming that structured language instruction generates measurable listening improvement over time. However, the magnitude of improvement differed substantially: the experimental group's within-group effect size (d = 2.51) was substantially larger than that of the control group (d = 1.46), and the between-group post-test comparison confirmed significantly superior performance by the experimental group (d = 1.21). These findings provide convergent evidence that the integrated TBL-TPR approach generates substantially stronger learning outcomes that cannot be attributed to pre-existing ability differences, differential content exposure, or instructional time.

Discussion

Enhancement of Listening Comprehension Through Integrated TBL-TPR

The experimental findings provide robust evidence that the integrated TBL-TPR approach substantially enhanced listening comprehension among Primary 6 Thai EFL learners. The experimental group's 30.2% improvement and exceptional within-group effect size (Cohen's d = 2.51) stand in marked contrast to the control group's more modest 15.6% gain (d = 1.46), despite identical content exposure and instructional time. This differential pattern converges with the between-group post-test comparison (d = 1.21) to indicate that the integration generated substantially stronger learning outcomes that cannot be explained by content familiarity or time-on-task alone. The following discussion examines the theoretical mechanisms underlying these outcomes, relates the findings to prior empirical research, and connects the results to the specific instructional activities employed. The absence of a delayed post-test limits conclusions regarding the durability of the observed gains, and the results should therefore be interpreted as short-term instructional effects. It should be noted that the assessment primarily measured structured listening performance, which may not fully represent learners' ability to process authentic real-world spoken language. These findings are consistent with recent research conducted in Thailand, which reported that TPR-based instruction significantly improves listening comprehension and produces higher achievement than traditional approaches (Srasri et al., 2025).

A central mechanism underlying these gains is the motor-linguistic integration that TPR activities introduced prior to each TBL task cycle. Drawing on Asher's (2009) trace theory and Glenberg's (2010) motor-based cognition theory, the physical enactment of vocabulary and spatial commands during pre-task phases created multimodal memory traces that reduced cognitive load during the subsequent listening tasks, enabling learners to direct attentional resources toward higher-order comprehension rather than basic decoding. This scaffolding function was most evident in Week 2, where students who had physically navigated the floor map demonstrated visibly stronger performance on the "Find the Place" listening task, consistent with Macedonia and Klimesch's (2014) evidence that gesture-accompanied instruction produces sustained memory benefits.

Theoretical Mechanism 1: Affective Barrier Reduction and Motivational Enhancement

The first mechanism concerns the role of anxiety reduction in freeing cognitive resources for listening comprehension. Language learning anxiety occupies working memory capacity that would otherwise support comprehension processes (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994), and Thai primary learners often have limited opportunities to practice English, insufficient confidence in using the language, and restricted exposure beyond the classroom (Noom-ura, 2013). TPR's allowance of a pre-production silent period, wherein students respond physically rather than verbally, systematically reduced this performance pressure by eliminating the face-threatening risk of public verbal error. Krashen's (1985)

affective filter hypothesis predicts precisely this outcome: when affective barriers are lowered, comprehensible input becomes more available for acquisition.

This anxiety-reduction function was most clearly operationalized in the Week 3 lesson on prepositions of place. Students who might have been reluctant to verbally distinguish between "next to" and "across from" in a traditional oral exercise were able to demonstrate their comprehension by physically positioning objects—a low-stakes response mode providing immediate evidence of understanding without exposing students to public verbal performance demands. Field observations consistently documented high engagement and positive affect in the experimental group. From a Self-Determination Theory perspective (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the collaborative task structure additionally satisfied students' need for relatedness through group interaction and competence through scaffolded success experiences. As established in the literature review, MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994) research confirms that reducing anxiety directly frees working memory capacity for language processing, while Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory predicts that satisfying learners' needs for competence and relatedness sustains the intrinsic motivation necessary for sustained attentional engagement during listening tasks.

Theoretical Mechanism 2: Authentic Communicative Listening and Deep Processing

The second mechanism concerns TBL's creation of purposeful, authentic listening contexts that promote deeper cognitive processing of spoken input. Within Craik and Lockhart's (1972) levels-of-processing framework, meaningful, goal-directed language processing generates stronger and more durable memory traces than shallow, form-focused processing. TBL operationalizes this principle by positioning authentic tasks as the central unit of instruction, creating communicative interaction demand that motivates careful and sustained attention to spoken input (Ellis, 2003; Long, 2015).

This distinction was most clearly demonstrated in the Week 1 "What's Mike's Schedule?" information-gap task. Students were not listening to identify correct grammatical forms; they were listening to help their group complete a timetable that would subsequently be presented to the class. This genuine communicative purpose transformed listening from a passive receptive exercise into an active, collaborative, meaning-construction process—a distinction that aligns with Nunan's (2004) argument that task-based listening develops interactive listening competence rather than merely passive decoding ability. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory predicts precisely this scaffolding function: collaborative peer interaction within the zone of proximal development enables learners to accomplish listening comprehension tasks that would exceed their individual capacity when attempted alone.

Theoretical Mechanism 3: Scaffolded Progression and Zone of Proximal Development

The third theoretical mechanism explains not only why each component produced benefits, but also why their integration generated synergistic effects exceeding what either approach could achieve independently. The three-week instructional sequence was deliberately designed to operationalize

Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development through graduated withdrawal of support. Week 1 tasks involved concrete, highly scaffolded vocabulary with maximum physical support through TPR-Body and TPR-Object. Week 2 increased both linguistic and navigational complexity, requiring students to integrate sequential spoken instructions with spatial reasoning. Week 3 presented the most semantically demanding content within the most cognitively complex task format. This progressive scaffolding structure ensured that each week's TPR pre-task phase adequately prepared students for the cognitive demands of the corresponding TBL task cycle, while each completed task cycle built the schema and vocabulary knowledge enabling more ambitious engagement in subsequent weeks.

Comparative Performance Between Instructional Groups

The experimental group's 15.1% superior post-test performance (d = 1.21) relative to the control group provides direct evidence that the integrated TBL-TPR approach produces meaningfully better listening outcomes than traditional PPP instruction. Importantly, the control group's own significant within-group improvement (15.6%, d = 1.46) confirms that the between-group difference cannot be attributed to a failure of traditional instruction per se, but rather reflects the substantially greater effectiveness of the integrated approach. Both groups received structured instructional exposure to identical content; the differential outcome must therefore be attributed to the qualitative characteristics of the instructional approach.

These findings align with and extend previous research in several important respects. Regarding the contribution of TPR, the experimental group's 30.2% improvement closely parallels the approximately 29% gain reported by Nuraeni (2019) among young Indonesian EFL learners and is also consistent with the findings of Putri et al. (2025), who reported statistically significant improvements in elementary school students' vocabulary performance following TPR-based instruction. Collectively, these studies provide additional empirical support for the pedagogical value of TPR in facilitating young learners' language development and extending the foundational work of Asher (1969, 2009) to contemporary EFL classrooms. However, the present findings differ from those of Dweikat et al. (2023), who reported no statistically significant improvement in vocabulary learning following TPR instruction among Palestinian fifth-grade learners. This discrepancy suggests that the effectiveness of TPR may be influenced by contextual factors, including instructional design, learning objectives, intervention duration, learner characteristics, and classroom implementation.

Concerning TBL's contribution, the marked performance differential between groups corroborates Long's (2015) comprehensive review demonstrating that task-based instruction produces superior outcomes compared to traditional form-focused approaches. Graciano's (2025) action research documenting experimental group mean scores increasing from 2.81 to 4.27 following TBLT intervention—alongside reduced anxiety and increased confidence—provides a parallel pattern to the present study's findings. The present study extends these findings specifically to listening

comprehension, a skill area that has received comparatively less attention in TBL research, which has traditionally emphasized speaking and writing outcomes (Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

Most significantly, the study provides controlled empirical evidence for the synergistic effects of integrated TPR-TBL implementation. The between-group effect size (d = 1.21) and within-group effect size for the experimental group (d = 2.51) both substantially exceed Norris and Ortega's (2000) meta-analytic benchmark for typical instructional interventions in second language research, suggesting that the integration creates additive or synergistic benefits that neither approach generates independently. This may represent one of the study's key theoretical contributions: demonstrating empirically that systematic integration of complementary methodologies—one optimizing input processing through sensorimotor engagement, the other optimizing meaning construction through authentic communicative tasks—can produce outcomes substantially superior to either approach employed in isolation. These findings must, however, be interpreted in light of several methodological constraints that qualify the scope of conclusions that can be drawn.

The six-hour intervention period, while sufficient to produce statistically significant and practically large effects, precludes conclusions regarding the durability of these gains; without a delayed post-test, it remains unclear whether improvements reflect durable learning or performance effects associated with novelty and heightened engagement. The modest sample size (n = 60) drawn from a single suburban public school limits generalizability, and the researcher's dual role as instructor for both groups, despite treatment fidelity adherence exceeding 95%, may have introduced experimenter effects. The assessment instrument sampled listening ability through two constrained formats—structured and controlled—and therefore captures improvement in structured listening comprehension rather than the full breadth of real-world communicative listening. Furthermore, restricting outcome measurement to listening comprehension alone prevents conclusions about transfer to other skill domains, and the absence of TPR-only and TBL-only comparison conditions means the unique contribution of each component cannot be empirically isolated. Collectively, these constraints define the boundaries within which the present findings should be understood, and directly motivate the agenda for future research outlined below.

Practical Implications for EFL Instruction

The findings yield several important implications for language teaching practice in Thailand and comparable EFL contexts. First, the study demonstrates that methodological integration—rather than exclusive adoption of a single approach—can generate superior outcomes by leveraging complementary pedagogical strengths. Educators should consider how TPR's input-based, kinesthetic scaffolding can systematically prepare learners for the more cognitively demanding authentic communication required in TBL task cycles.

Second, the weekly progression from TPR-dominant pre-task phases to increasingly autonomous TBL task cycles provides a replicable instructional template that requires no specialized

materials or technology. All three lessons employed locally available classroom resources, confirming the approach's feasibility for resource-limited public schools throughout Thailand.

Third, the culturally specific findings merit attention. Thai students' traditional classroom reticence renders TPR's non-verbal response modes especially contextually appropriate. By systematically allowing students to demonstrate comprehension through physical action before requiring verbal production, the integrated approach reduces face-threatening risks while simultaneously building the receptive foundations from which productive skills can subsequently develop.

Fourth, the role structure employed in TBL group work—task coordinator, materials handler, reporter, and participants—provides teachers with a practical organizational framework that distributes responsibility and creates genuine communicative interdependence. Teachers implementing this approach in Thai classrooms should invest time in establishing these roles clearly in Week 1, as the progressive task complexity across subsequent weeks depends on students having internalized their collaborative responsibilities.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that integrating Task-Based Learning and Total Physical Response significantly enhanced listening comprehension among Thai primary EFL learners. Students receiving the integrated instruction achieved significantly higher post-test scores and larger effect sizes than those receiving traditional PPP instruction. The findings suggest that combining movement-based input with meaning-focused tasks provides a powerful pedagogical framework for developing listening comprehension in contexts where opportunities for authentic language exposure are limited.

To realize that potential more fully, several directions for future research warrant priority. Most urgently, longitudinal studies incorporating delayed post-tests across full academic terms are needed to establish whether the gains documented here reflect durable acquisition or short-term performance effects. Component analysis designs comparing TPR alone, TBL alone, integrated TBL-TPR, and traditional instruction would empirically isolate each approach's contribution and verify whether the synergistic effects observed here are replicable under controlled conditions. Systematic replication across varied age groups, proficiency levels, and EFL contexts beyond Thailand would determine the boundary conditions of generalizability. Mixed-methods designs combining quantitative outcome measures with qualitative process data—classroom observation, think-aloud protocols, and teacher interviews—would illuminate not only whether the integrated approach works, but how and for whom it works best. These investigations, taken together, would transform the present findings from a promising single-site study into a robust evidence base capable of informing policy and practice at scale.

The findings highlight that meaningful, movement-based, and collaborative learning experiences can help young learners engage with English more actively and effectively. More broadly, the study underscores the importance of creating supportive learning environments that foster meaningful language use and communicative development. If the findings encourage teachers and researchers to explore ways of creating similar learning conditions in their own contexts, the study will have achieved an important educational purpose.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies

The authors acknowledge the use of Perplexity AI, a generative artificial intelligence tool, to support language refinement and enhance overall readability during the preparation of this manuscript. Following its use, the authors carefully reviewed and edited the text to ensure accuracy and integrity and take full responsibility for the final content of the publication.

Declaration of Interests

The authors declare that there are no financial or personal relationships that could have inappropriately influenced the research presented in this manuscript.

References

Asher, J. J. (1969). The total physical response approach to second language learning. *The Modern Language Journal, 53*(1), 3–17. https://doi.org/10.2307/322091

Asher, J. J. (2009). *Learning another language through actions: The complete teacher's guidebook* (7th ed.). Sky Oaks Productions.

Baker, W. (2008). A critical examination of ELT in Thailand: The role of cultural awareness. *RELC Journal, 39*(1), 131–146. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688208091144

Buck, G. (2001). *Assessing listening*. Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Craik, F. I. M., & Lockhart, R. S. (1972). Levels of processing: A framework for memory research. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, 11*(6), 671–684. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-5371(72)80001-X

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE.

Darasawang, P. (2007). English language teaching and education in Thailand: A decade of change. In D. Prescott (Ed.), *English in Southeast Asia: Varieties, literacies and literatures* (pp. 187–204). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry, 11*(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

Dweikat, K., Fayyoumi, N., Shehade, A., & Jarrar, H. (2023). Impact of total physical response method (TPR) on vocabulary learning in the Palestinian school context. *Journal of English Studies in Arabia Felix, 2*(1), 50–59. https://doi.org/10.56540/jesaf.v2i1.48

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R., & Shintani, N. (2014). *Exploring language pedagogy through second language acquisition research*. Routledge.

Er, S. (2013). Using total physical response method in early childhood foreign language teaching environments. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 93*, 1766–1768. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.10.113

Glenberg, A. M. (2010). Embodiment as a unifying perspective for psychology. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science, 1*(4), 586–596. https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.55

Graciano, J. C. (2025). Action research for implementing task-based language teaching and enhancing speaking skills in a class of 12th grade English students in an Angolan school. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics, 15*(3), 473–496. https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2025.153027

Khamkhien, A. (2010). Thai learners' English pronunciation competence: Lesson learned from word stress assignment. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 1*(6), 757–764. https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.1.6.757-764

Kirkpatrick, A. (2012). English as an international language in Asia: Implications for language education. In A. Kirkpatrick & R. Sussex (Eds.), *English as an international language in Asia: Implications for language education* (pp. 29–44). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4578-0_3

Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.

Long, M. H. (2015). *Second language acquisition and task-based language teaching*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Macedonia, M., & Klimesch, W. (2014). Long-term effects of gestures on memory for foreign language words trained in the classroom. *Mind, Brain, and Education, 8*(2), 74–88. https://doi.org/10.1111/mbe.12047

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The subtle effects of language anxiety on cognitive processing in the second language. *Language Learning, 44*(2), 283–305. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1994.tb01103.x

Ministry of Education. (2008). *The basic education core curriculum B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008).* https://academic.obec.go.th/images/document/1525235513_d_1.pdf

Noom-ura, S. (2013). English-teaching problems in Thailand and Thai teachers' professional development needs. *English Language Teaching, 6*(11), 139–147. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n11p139

Norris, J. M., & Ortega, L. (2000). Effectiveness of L2 instruction: A research synthesis and quantitative meta-analysis. *Language Learning, 50*(3), 417–528. https://doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.00136

Nuraeni, C. (2019). Using total physical response (TPR) method on young learners English language teaching. *Metathesis: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching, 3*(1), 26–34. https://doi.org/10.31002/metathesis.v3i1.1223

Nunan, D. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Pinter, A. (2017). *Teaching young language learners* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Putri, C. S., Taslim, & Syarifuddin. (2025). The effectiveness of the TPR (total physical response) method in enhancing students' vocabulary. *International Journal of Integrative Sciences, 4*(1), 29–40. https://doi.org/10.55927/ijis.v4i1.13387

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Rost, M. (2011). *Teaching and researching listening* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.

Rutamornchai, N., Manokarn, P., Petchmongkon, P., Thinthonglang, S., Montreewong, S., Jiamanukunkij, N., & Thatsakhorn, C. J. (2024). Listening problems in the TOEIC test for English majors: An exploratory case study in a Thai university. *Journal of Studies in the English Language, 19*(1), 93–125. https://doi.org/10.64731/jsel.v19i1.270888

Srasri, S., Siharak, S., & Khuanwang, W. (2025). The natural approach combined with the total physical response method to enhance English listening ability of primary students. *Education Journal of Nakhonratchasima College, 4*(2), 121–133. https://so08.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/edunmcj/article/view/5786

Vandergrift, L., & Goh, C. C. M. (2012). *Teaching and learning second language listening: Metacognition in action*. Routledge.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Wiriyachitra, A. (2002). English language teaching and learning in Thailand in this decade. *Thai TESOL Focus, 15*(1), 4–9.

Sermsak Srasri is the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs and Head of the Academic Department at Metapaht School, Thailand. He holds a master's degree in Curriculum and Learning Management Innovation from Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi. His research interests include English language education, curriculum development, and innovative teaching.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-7099-0643

Saiphin Siharak is an Assistant Professor and faculty member at Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, Thailand. She holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction and a master's degree in educational psychology from Chulalongkorn University. Her research interests include curriculum development, instructional design, and educational innovation.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3207-123X

Jean Claire R. Morales is a Home Economics teacher at Ongkharak Demonstration School, Srinakharinwirot University, Thailand. She holds a master's degree in Curriculum Development and Instructional Innovation from Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi. Her research interests include innovative teaching, curriculum implementation, and life skills education.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0578-3954