THE INFLUENCE OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING AND AUDIO-LINGUAL TEACHING APPROACH ON MANDARIN LANGUAGE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to look into the influence of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) and audio-lingual teaching approaches on Malaysia tertiary level non-native Mandarin learners' learning outcomes in the teaching of Mandarin as a global language. A quasi-experimental study was carried out on 43 Universiti Malaysia Kelantan students, where they were divided into two groups. Group A contained 21 students, while Group B had 22 students. The two groups were studied to compare the influence of the two different teaching approaches: TBLT (Group A) and audio-lingual teaching approach (Group B). Willis' (2006) Task-based Learning Framework

was applied as the teaching framework in Group A (TBLT), while dialogue memorisation was applied in Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach). The results of the teaching approaches were analysed using simulated oral test, where language fluency, language accuracy and language pronunciation were the elements the researcher looked into. The results of the findings showed that Group A indicated a drop in the learning outcomes' mean score in the first cycle of the post-treatment test, but the condition changed in the second cycle post-treatment test and delayed post-treatment test, where the learning outcomes of Group A (TBLT) outperformed the control group's (audio-lingual teaching approach). The finding of the research provides suggestions towards teachers to apply communicative task between non-native learners and native speakers to improve learners' learning outcomes. It also advises teachers to apply TBLT in a longer term rather than in a short term.

Keywords

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), Audio-lingual Teaching Approach, Learning Outcomes, Mandarin Teaching

1. Introduction

The teaching of Mandarin in Malaysia's tertiary education was firstly introduced in National Higher Action Plan 2007-2010 where tertiary students are required to learn an additional language besides national language-Bahasa Malaysia, and second language-English. The policy was further enhanced in Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) (MEB) and iCGPA Rubric Learning Outcomes Assessment Guide. Language proficiency is stressed as one of the six primary attributes found in MEB. The language proficiency attribution emphasizes on students' proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia and English, yet the policy also emphasizes the learning of a global language[1]- as the third language. According to the late curriculum development, the integrated Cumulative Grade Point Average (iCGPA), communication is included as one of the skills students have to master. The communication skills mentioned here include conversing in different contexts by conducting effective communication using Bahasa Malaysia, English and also the global language.

Throughout the implementation and enhancement of the above mentioned third language policy, learners have voiced up their fear as they are unable to communicate effectively in the

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[1] Global language refers to a language that is learned and spoken internationally by a number of its native and second language speakers, and its use in international organizations and in diplomatic relations. (Crystal, 2003)

language they learned (Tan, et al, 2016). There are many probable causes, such as the interference of their mother tongue and insufficient learning time (Cheun, 2006, as cited in Tan, et al, 2016), as well as limited opportunities to use the target language on a daily basis (Jeon, 2005). These factors have caused them to become less-motivated to learn the language. Therefore, it may be helpful for non-native Mandarin learners to be provided with authentic pragmatic usage for exposure to language use in class.

Regarding the language practice opportunities, Tan, Ooi and Ismail (2012) had suggested that Mandarin teachers should adopt suitable teaching approaches to take full advantage of the learning orientations. Hence, to solve the problem of limited Mandarin practice, Mandarin language instructors normally adopts the application of audio-lingual teaching approach. Yet, comparatively noted that, Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) seems to offer several advantages to cope with the phenomena in Mandarin practice. This is because TBLT is an approach that provides students with opportunities to have active engagement in communication in order to achieve a goal or to complete a task. The application of TBLT is popular in the teaching of English as a second language or a foreign language. However, most researchers to date were conducted with intermediate learners of English as the target language in a controlled setting. The feasibility of TBLT in teaching foreign languages, such as Mandarin in Asian or other international setting has not yet been convincingly demonstrated (Carles, 2009). Hence, the application of TBLT and audio-lingual teaching approach in this research is to look into the influence of both teaching approaches in the learning outcomes.

1.1 Research Objective

The research objective is to compare the changes in non-native Mandarin learners' learning outcomes between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach).

1.2 Research Question

Are there any significant changes in non-native Mandarin learners' learning outcomes between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach)?

2. Literature Review

2.1 What is Task-based Language Teaching?

TBLT is an approach applied in teaching a second language and foreign language that engages learners to perform a series of tasks in an interactional authentic language environment (Murad, 2009) by using the target language for communication. The activities in the task should

relate to daily work or in other words, the task is focused on real-life situation. TBLT also focuses on 'learning by doing', or process-oriented teaching approach, where communicative competence is the main objective of the language teaching. The communicative competence mentioned is not referred to the ability to use the language correctly and appropriately as a native speaker, but it is about the communicative language that promotes the ability to communicate competently to accomplish a communication goal (Koucká, 2007). TBLT aims not only to enable learners to acquire new linguistic knowledge, but also to enhance their existing knowledge. Hence, from this point, it could be said that TBLT involves both input-providing and output-prompting tasks, where a simple input-based task initially is used to build up target language proficiency.

2.2 TBLT Learning Outcomes

The implementation of TBLT in foreign language context has shown positive learning outcomes. For instance, Leaver and Kaplan (2004) who had done a research on the application of TBLT in teaching Czech, Ukrainian and Russian as foreign languages in US, found out that the learners who undergone TBLT course had a lower attrition rate and higher proficiency results compared to those without TBLT course. TBLT also had been proven to contribute to shaping and enhancing learners' oral skills such as fluency, listening comprehension, vocabulary building skills (Chacón, 2012); increasing learners' use of the target language (Sachs, 2007); and enhanced learners' ability to transfer the knowledge they learnt in the classroom to the real world (Macías, 2004 as cited in Bao & Du, 2015). The contribution of TBLT is due to the participation of learners in the classroom interaction where feedback is given based on the result of the given task. From the given feedback, it can lead learners to recast non-target utterance and also to be more successful in the production of modified output (Bao & Du, 2015).

2.3 What is Audio-lingual Teaching Approach?

Audio-lingual teaching approach, also known as Army Method or New Key, because it is first applied by the United States army for "cash" instruction in foreign language during World War 2. The approach firstly requires students to listen to or watch recordings of language models acting in certain situation. Later, students are acquired to practice with a variety of drills and the teacher emphasises the use of target language of all times. From this point, the approach is used for teaching foreign language by the support of behaviourist theory that emphasises on the development of oral skill through habit formation and fostered by the use of repetition.

The principles of audio-lingual teaching approach can be divided into two parts, which involve the nature of interaction between teachers and learners, and learners and their peers. Audio-lingual teaching approach is teacher-centred, where the teachers have the responsibility to provide their learners with a good model for imitation. The role of the teachers is like an orchestra leader who direct and control the language behaviour of their learners. In contrast, students imitate teachers' model or video supplies of model speaker accurately. Hence, the teaching approach emphasises the use of drill techniques, which mean that students are required to do a particular process repetitively until it is reproduced without errors (Setiawan, 2011). From this point, it can be said that the nature between learners' interaction happens in chain drills or in dialog when they take different roles as directed by the teacher. In audio-lingual teaching approach, the teacher is the centre of the teaching and learning, hence the interaction between teacher and learners are initiated by the teacher.

2.4 Audio-lingual Teaching Approach Learning Outcomes

Most of the scholars perceived audio-lingual teaching approach is outdated but more importantly, they ascertained that it is a non-authentic approach to language learning that often does not result in great success especially when the students leave the classroom and are expected to function in the real world.

However, although researchers claim that audio-lingual teaching approach is outdated, but it is still in use today, though normally as part of individual lessons rather than as the foundation of the course. This teaching approach can be popular as it is relatively simple, from the teacher's point of view, and the learner always knows what to expect.

There are a few numbers of researches on audio-lingual teaching approach been carried out in Indonesia for English language teaching. The researches focused on the effectiveness in listening and speaking skills. From an action research conducted, Abdul (2016) showed that audio-lingual teaching approach could improve learners' English listening comprehension. The research also claims that the teaching approach helps in learners' word meaning and text content recognising. Besides that, Setiawan (2011) discovers that by using single slot substitution drill and transformation drill, learners' English oral past tense could successfully be improved. This is due to the progress in students' score in grammar aspect, which indicated the students' improvement in simple past tense. The findings of the study found that audio-lingual teaching approach had helped learners to understand past tense easier.

3. Methodology

This research applied a quasi-experimental study design, where time series design was also adapted. As suggested by Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2015), this type of research design includes typical pre- and post-treatment tests, observations or measurements taken before and after treatment. There were two comparative groups, namely Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach). The research had been carried out for 8 weeks.

The subjects of the research consisted of 50 non-native Mandarin learners, who were taking Mandarin language level 1 in Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. The duration of the research was almost three months from 10 September 2017 until 30 November 2017. Convenience sampling was applied in the research due to the overlapping timetable between the teacher and researcher.

The sample was chosen based on certain criteria, in which students must have no experience in speaking, writing, listening and reading in Mandarin. A screening test using independent samples, t-test was conducted in the pre-treatment test to ensure that Group A and Group B were not significant. The result of the screening test had shown that students for both groups had 0 standard deviation. It has shown that the threats to internal control for the groups' Mandarin proficiency were controlled.

The adapted Willis' (1996) Task-Based Learning (TBL) framework was applied in Group A (TBLT), while dialogue memorisation type was applied in Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach). Willis' (1996) TBL framework includes three main phrases: pre-task, during-task and post-task as well as the private and public use in the 'during-task' phase. In the study, native-speaking students were involved to create a natural learning environment in the 'during-task' phase of TBLT. Hence, the task was not only focused on the tasks conducted between non-native Mandarin learners.

The dialogue memorisation type of audio-lingual teaching approach contained three main steps. Firstly, the context of the dialogue was presented to the students. The teacher and one of the students would later take a speaking role each and rehearse the dialogue while being observed by other students. Students would then need to rote memorise the whole dialogue in the text, and the teacher would go to each group to look into their drilling.

Simulated oral test was given to the participants of the research. There were two questions in the simulated oral test: (first question contained the context of the first cycle while the second question contained the context of the second cycle). The content for the first part

included the knowledge in chapter one until chapter three in the textbook published by Universiti Malaysia Kelantan. While, the second part consisted the knowledge found in chapter four until chapter six of the same textbook. The aim of the simulated oral test is to examine the effectiveness of target language use, which includes fluency, accuracy, and pragmatic. From this point, it also means that learners are aspired to communicate without undue hesitation and fragmentation, without making multi-linguistic errors, and without offending their interlocutors. Hence, the application of the oral test is to look into learners' language fluency, language accuracy and language pronunciation.

Figure 1 below shows the research procedures, which involved pre-treatment test, first cycle and second cycle post-treatment test, and delay post-treatment test.
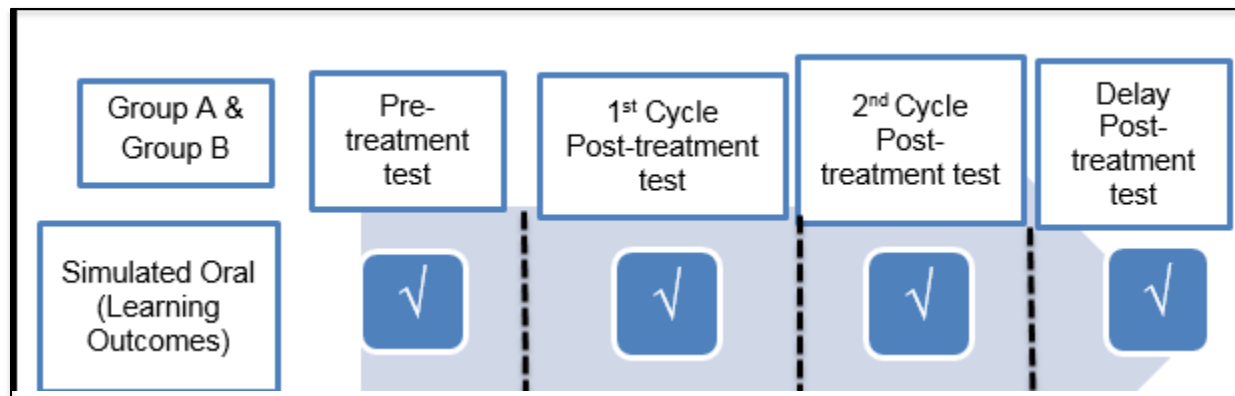

Figure 1: *Research procedures*

All the results of the simulated oral test were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 20.0) in terms of mean scores, standard deviations and independent t-test on the three learning outcomes: language fluency, language accuracy and language pronunciation.

4. Results

The findings of the research consisted of the comparison of mean scores between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach). Mean scores help in the analysis of the changes in learning outcomes in pre-treatment test and the three stages of the post-treatment test: first cycle post-treatment test, second cycle post-treatment test and delay post-treatment test. The learning outcomes contain three elements, including language fluency, language accuracy and language pronunciation.

4.1 Hypothesis One: There are no significant changes in non-native Mandarin learning outcomes between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) in pre-treatment test

At the beginning of the study, there were 25 students for each Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach). There were seven students elicited from the study because one of the student was able to speak simple Mandarin conversation as her grandmother was Chinese, and the other six students were absent during the pre-treatment test. Hence, Table 2 below shows that the students for Group A (TBLT) was 21 and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) was 22. They did not have any basic Mandarin as their mean score for language fluency, language accuracy and language pronunciation were zero.

Table 1: *The mean score, total mean score and result of independent t-test for three learning outcomes: language fluency, language accuracy and language pronunciation between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) for pre-treatment test.*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. value	Sig. (2 tailed) value
LF	Group A	21	.00	.00	.00	.00
	Group B	22	.00	.00		
LA	Group A	21	.00	.00	.00	.00
	Group B	22	.00	.00		
LP	Group A	21	.00	.00	.00	.00
	Group B	22	.00	.00		
Total	Group A	21	.00	.00	.00	.00
	Group B	22	.00	0.00		

4.2 Hypothesis Two: There are no significant changes in non-native Mandarin learning outcomes between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) in first cycle post-treatment test

Table 2: *The mean score, total mean score and result of independent t-test for three learning outcomes: language fluency, language accuracy and language pronunciation between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) for first cycle post-treatment test.*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. value	Sig. (2 tailed) value
LF	Group A	21	4.3333	.677	.14773	0.098	0.446
	Group B	22	4.4773	.54505	.11620		
LA	Group A	21	3.8086	1.1497	.25088	0.001	0.074
	Group B	22	4.2727	.29790	.06351		
LP	Group A	21	4.6762	.38458	.08392	0.908	0.525
	Group B	22	4.7500	.37001	.07889		
Total	Group A	21	12.8181	1.42994	.31204	0.00	0.055
	Group B	22	13.500	.74001	.15777		

Table 2 also illustrates the detail of the mean for three learning outcomes: language fluency (LF), language accuracy (LA) and language pronunciation (LP) between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach). Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) showed higher mean in the aforementioned three learning outcomes, which were 4.4773, 4.2727 and 4.75 in LF, LA and LP, while Group A's (TBLT) mean for the three elements were 4.3333, 3.8086 and 4.6762, slightly lower than the mean of Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach).

Meanwhile, the mean score for the sum of the three learning outcomes in Table 2 above has shown that the sum mean score for Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) was 13.5, which is slightly higher than that of Group A (TBLT), 12.8181. Meanwhile, the standard

deviation for Group A (TBLT) was 1.42994, which was higher than Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach), 0.74001. The result of the standard deviation had shown that the sum score of Group A was higher than Group B in first cycle post-treatment test.

Although the mean score of the control group for LF, LA and LP was higher, but the sig. value shown in Table 2 shows that the value of LF was 0.098 and LP was 0.908, which were greater than 0.05. Therefore, the variability in between Group A and Group B during first cycle post-treatment test were the same. Only LA's sig. value was 0.001 which was lesser than 0.05. The result meant that the variability in Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) during first cycle post-treatment test were not the same. As for the sig (2-tailed) value shown in Table 2 above, the three elements were greater than 0.05, which were 0.446 for LF, 0.074 for LA and 0.525 for LP. Hence, there was no statistically significant difference between Group A and Group B during first cycle post-treatment test. It can be concluded that the mean differences between the two groups were likely coincidental and not likely due to the application of TBLT or audio-lingual teaching approach.

Table 2 also shows the sum means for Group A and Group B in first cycle of post-treatment test. The sig. value was 0.00, which was lesser than 0.05. The result meant that the variability in task value for Group A and Group B during first cycle post-treatment test were not the same. However, the sig (2-tailed) value was greater than 0.05, which was 0.055. Hence, there was no statistically significant difference between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) during first cycle post-treatment test. It can also be concluded that the differences between the means of Group A and Group B were likely coincidental and not likely due to the application of TBLT or audio-lingual teaching approach.

To conclude, there were no significant changes between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) in their learning outcomes, and the analysis had shown that the result could be coincidental and not likely due to the application of TBLT and audio-lingual teaching approach.

4.3 Hypothesis Three: There are significant changes in non-native Mandarin learning outcomes between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) in second cycle post-treatment test

Table 3: *The mean score, total mean score and result of independent t-test for three learning outcomes: language fluency, language accuracy and language pronunciation between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) for second cycle post-treatment test.*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. value	Sig. (2 tailed) value
LF	Group A	21	8.7095	1.07466	.23451	0.000	0.04
	Group B	22	7.0682	2.25354	.48046		
LA	Group A	21	8.4324	1.24084	.27077	0.000	0.04
	Group B	22	6.8136	2.12856	.45381		
LP	Group A	21	9.319	0.61532	.13427	0.000	0.05
	Group B	22	7.7182	2.40528	.51281		
Total	Group A	21	26.461	2.14081	.46716	0.000	0.04
	Group B	22	21.6	6.63591	1.41478		

Table 3 above compares the mean for each learning outcome; language fluency (LF), language accuracy (LA) and language pronunciation (LP) between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach). In the second cycle post-treatment test, it could be seen that the mean for each element for Group A (TBLT) was higher than Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach). For LF, the mean score of Group A (TBLT) was 8.7095, while Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) was 7.0682. For LA, the mean of Group A (TBLT) was 8.4324, while the mean of Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) was 6.8136. The mean score for LP of Group A was 9.319, while for Group B was 7.7182.

The mean score for the sum of the three learning outcomes shown in Table 3 suggested that Group A (TBLT) had a result of 26.461, which was higher than that of Group B, 21.6. The total marks for the assessment was 30. Meanwhile, the standard deviation for Group A was

2.14081, which was lower than that of Group B, 6.63591. The result of the standard deviation showed that the sum score of Group B was bigger than Group A.

According to Table 3, the sig. value for LF, LA and LP were 0.000, which means the variability between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) during second cycle post-treatment test were not the same. While for the sig (2-tailed) value shown in Table 3, LF, LA and LP had lesser or same value of 0.05, which was 0.04 for both LF and LA, and 0.05 for LP. Hence, it can be concluded that the mean differences between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) for LF and LA were not likely coincidental but due to the application of TBLT or audio-lingual teaching approach.

Table 3 above shows the sig. value for the total of all three learning outcomes of Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach), which was 0.000 that was lesser than 0.05. Hence, the result of the total means showed that the variability in Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) during second cycle post-treatment test was not the same. The sig (2-tailed) value shown in Table 3 above for sum means was lesser than 0.05, which was 0.03. Therefore, it can be concluded that the differences of total mean between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) were not likely coincidental but due to the application of TBLT or audio-lingual teaching approach.

To conclude, the learning outcomes in Group A (TBLT) had a significant change compared to Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach). However, detailed analysis of the three learning outcomes would suggest that language fluency, language accuracy and language pronunciation had changes in second cycle post-treatment test, the condition had happened due to the application of TBLT or audio-lingual teaching approach, or, not coincidental.

4.4 Hypothesis Four: There are significant changes between in non-native Mandarin learning outcomes between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) in delay post-treatment test

Table 4: *The mean score, total mean score and result of independent t-test for three learning outcomes: language fluency, language accuracy and language pronunciation between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) for delay post-treatment test.*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. value	Sig. (2 tailed) value

LF	Group A	21	8.1905	.66099	.14424	0.136	0.872
	Group B	22	8.2273	.81251	.17323		
LA	Group A	21	8.7333	.72342	.15786	0.000	0.006
	Group B	22	7.6336	1.6034	.34185		
LP	Group A	21	8.7762	.48673	.10621	0.702	0.28
	Group B	22	8.6136	.48628	.10368		
Total	Group A	21	25.7	1.67123	.36469	0.04	0.077
	Group B	22	24.4745	2.62858	.56041		

According to Table 4, the mean for element LA and LP in Group A (TBLT) was slightly higher than Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach). In language accuracy (LA), the mean score was 8.7333 for Group A, while the mean score for Group B was 7,6336. The standard deviation for LA in Group A was 0.72342, while Group B was 1.6034. In language pronunciation (LP), the mean score for Group A was 8.7762, while Group B gave the result of 8.6136. The standard deviation for LP in Group A was 0.48673, while Group B was 0.48628. While, only mean for language fluency (LF) of Group B was slightly higher than Group A, which was 8.2273 for Group B and 8.1905 for Group A. The standard deviation for LF in Group A was 0.66099, while Group B was 0.81251.

The mean score for the sum of the three main elements in Group A (TBLT) was higher than Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach), where Group A had a mean score of 25.7, while Group B had 24.4745. The total standard deviation for all learning outcomes in Group A was 1.67123, while Group B was 2.62858.

The sig. value for LF and LP, which was 0.136 and 0.702, exceeded the value of 0.05. From the result, it can be observed that the variability means for LF and LP of Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) during delay post-treatment test were the same. Only the sig. value for LA was 0.000 that was lesser than 0.05, which means the variability for LA between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) during delay post-treatment test was not the same. While the sig (2-tailed) values for LF and LP between the two

groups exceeded 0.05, which were 0.872 and 0.28. Therefore, it can be concluded that the mean differences in LF and LP between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach), were likely coincidental and were not likely due to application of TBLT or audio-lingual teaching approach. However, the sig (2-tailed) value for LA was 0.006, which was lesser than 0.05. Thus, from the result, the mean differences for LA between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) were not likely coincidental but were likely due to the application of TBLT or audio-lingual teaching approach.

The sig. value of total mean score of the three learning outcomes was 0.04 which was lesser than 0.05. Therefore, the variability of total mean between Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) during delay post-treatment test was not the same. On the other hand, the sig (2-tailed) value for total mean score for the three learning outcomes was 0.077, which was more than 0.05. Hence, it can be concluded that the total mean differences between Group A and B were likely to be coincidental and were not likely due to the application of TBLT or audio-lingual teaching approach.

To conclude, the language accuracy element of learning outcomes of Group A (TBLT) had a significant change compared to Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach), and the condition did not happen by chance. Although the result of language fluency of Group B seem to exceed Group A, but this situation was happened coincidentally.

5. Discussion

The findings have shown that Group A (TBLT) and Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) had been progressing during the research. However, in the first cycle post-treatment test, Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) had progressed well compared to Group A (TBLT), but this condition had changed in the second cycle post-treatment test and delay post-treatment test.

Thus, it can be concluded that TBLT has changed learners' learning outcomes by increasing learners' language fluency, language accuracy and language pronunciation more significantly compared to audio-lingual teaching approach. Although Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) had once over-performed Group A (TBLT) in first cycle post-treatment test, this condition could be explained. McDonough and Chaikitmongkol as cited in Bao & Du (2015) for instance had once done a research to investigate learner's reactions to a task-based course in a Thai university and they found that the learners' initial reaction was negative towards TBLT.

The same condition happened in this research as TBLT had made learners facing difficulties in communication as they needed to communicate in Mandarin with Mandarin native speakers in their very beginning Mandarin activities. However, the condition had changed once learners have adapted with the teaching method.

This same situation was mentioned by Lynch and Maclean (2000) who investigated the benefits of TBL in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) course for health professionals, where the students of the profession were tasked to present paper in English in an international conference. The findings showed that students tended to wrestle with the conceptual material and its linguistic expression during the first few task cycles, but with more practice of answering questions by poster visitors, they gained increased familiarity with the vocabulary and hence achieved fluency (Tang, Chiou & Jarsaillon, 2015).

The underperformed situation of Group A (TBLT) in the first cycle post-treatment test could be looked as a protective "bubble" of the language classroom as mentioned by Springer and Collins (2008) in their research study, where no preparation was made by learners to face unpredictable events that increased the linguistic demand. However, after managing the execution of the different tasks and completing them successfully, the learners had achieved a sense of how well their language was understood. Hence, during the process of learning, they had attended to linguistic features of English through initiated reformation and through providing and receiving language assistance, both solicited and unsolicited. Therefore, this situation could explain the phenomena happened in the research findings where Group A (TBLT) had underperformed Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) in first cycle post-treatment test, but the condition turned the other way around as Group A (TBLT) had outperformed Group B (audio-lingual teaching approach) in second cycle post-treatment test and delay post-treatment test.

When probing into the learning outcomes, Group A's (TBLT) language accuracy had outperformed Group B's (audio-lingual teaching approach) in second cycle post-treatment test and delay post-treatment test. The result analysis for the two tests showed that this situation did not happen by chance and it could be caused by the application of TBLT or audio-lingual teaching approach. This condition is supported by previous research done by Jung et al. (2017), who had explored the role of task repetition in the development of second language stress patterns through collaborative priming tasks. The findings showed that task repetition did not

only enhance learners' accuracy production, but also retained it. The research findings are the same as the result provided by Kim and Tracy-Ventura (2013).

6. Conclusion

This study has analysed the influence of TBLT and audio-lingual teaching approach in Teaching Mandarin as a global language among non-native Mandarin learners in Malaysia. The findings provide further evidence that utilising TBLT together with Mandarin native speakers is able to increase non-native Mandarin learners' learning outcomes, usually in language accuracy, compared to audio-lingual teaching approach. The findings of the study show that TBLT is suitably to be practised in long-term language teaching for it to be effective, compared to audio-lingual teaching approach that could affect language learners once the teaching approach is applied.

For future studies, it is recommended for researchers to do researches on the context of learning motivation when learners are applied with TBLT and audio-lingual teaching approach. Hence, there will be more information provided to the effect of both teaching approaches besides the effects of the teaching approaches in learning outcomes.

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