

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

INTEGRATING TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH TRADITIONAL
INSTRUCTION : EXPLORING ITS FEASIBILITY IN CHINESE SECONDARY
SCHOOL

MÉMOIRE

PRÉSENTÉ

COMME EXIGENCE PARTIELLE

MAÎTRISE EN DIDACTIQUE DES LANGUES

PAR

QIAN SUN

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UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

L'INTÉGRATION D'UN ENSEIGNEMENT BASÉ SUR LES TÂCHES DANS UNE
APPROCHE TRADITIONNELLE : UNE EXPLORATION DE SA FAISABILITÉ
DANS DES ÉCOLES SECONDAIRES CHINOISES.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TBLT	Task-based language teaching
L2	Second language
CLT	Communicative language teaching
ESL	English as a second language
SEDC	State Education Development Commission
SLA	Second-language acquisition
CAF	Complexity, accuracy, and fluency
CFL	Chinese as a foreign language
EFL	English as a foreign language
RMANOVA	Repeated-measures analysis of variance
CG	Control group
EG	Experimental group
SD	Standard deviation

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ABSTRACT

The benefits of task-based language teaching (TBLT) on second language development have been demonstrated in many studies, largely conducted in western countries (Long (1985), Ellis (2003), Nunan (2004), Van den Branden (2006) and Willis & Willis (2008)). TBLT has also been adopted in English classes in the schools of China, however only a limited number of studies have focused on its application in secondary school (Lin & Wu, 2012). This study aims to investigate the feasibility of applying TBLT in conjunction with a traditional method for the teaching and learning of English. It asks what the impact is of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' scores on obligatory English tests and students' oral performance.

To answer the research questions, 108 students of beginner-level English L2 from a secondary school participated in the study. Data collected from students was analyzed quantitatively. The results show that integrating TBLT with traditional instruction had no positive or negative impact in terms of test results on the obligatory English test and no positive impact on oral competence operationalized as fluency and accuracy on the oral test.

Key words: task-based language teaching, traditional instruction, teaching English in China, oral communicative competence

RÉSUMÉ

Les bénéfices de l'enseignement des langues basé sur les tâches (TBLT) sur l'acquisition d'une langue seconde ont été mis en évidence dans de nombreuses études, menées principalement dans les pays occidentaux (Long (1985), Ellis (2003), Nunan (2004), Van den Branden (2006) et Willis & Willis (2008)). Le TBLT a également été adopté dans les classes d'anglais des écoles chinoises, mais peu d'études ont été consacrées à son application au secondaire (Lin & Wu, 2012). Cette étude a pour objectif d'étudier la possibilité d'appliquer le TBLT en association avec une méthode traditionnelle pour l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de l'anglais. Elle vise à vérifier quel est l'impact de l'intégration du TBLT dans l'enseignement traditionnel sur les notes des élèves aux tests obligatoires d'anglais et sur leur performance orale.

Pour répondre aux questions soulevées par la recherche, 108 étudiants de niveau débutant en anglais L2 dans une école secondaire ont participé à l'étude. Les données recueillies auprès des étudiants ont été analysées quantitativement. Les résultats montrent que l'intégration du TBLT à l'enseignement traditionnel n'a eu aucun impact positif ou négatif sur le plan des résultats du test concernant le test d'anglais obligatoire ni d'effet positif sur la compétence orale opérationnalisée sous forme de fluence et de précision à l'épreuve orale.

Mots-clés: enseignement des langues basé sur les tâches, enseignement traditionnel, enseignement de l'anglais en Chine, compétence en communication

CHAPTER I

MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The teaching and learning of English has become increasingly popular in China, which has resulted in its having the largest English learning population in the world with over 400 million learners (Bolton & Graddol, 2010). In terms of the employed teaching approach, it remains grammar-oriented (Pan & Block, 2011) as the Grammar-Translation Method “has persisted throughout the history of ELT in China” (Hu, 2002, p. 28). Thus, the focus is on written English; students’ communicative competence is largely ignored (Hu, 2002; Zheng & Borg, 2013), which has resulted in Chinese learners not being able to communicate effectively in English (Fang, 2010). The Chinese Ministry of Education has revised and published a series of English curriculum standards to improve this situation (Liu et al., 2016). In 1986, the English curriculum for compulsory education adopted communicative language teaching (CLT) and in 2011, it adopted task-based language teaching (TBLT) in order to help students develop communicative competence. Nevertheless, despite government-led policy adoption, little has changed with traditional methods remaining more common (Hu, 2002; Fang, 2010; Yan, 2015; Yuan, 2016). Furthermore, students do not have confidence in their communicative competence despite wishing to improve (Liu et al., 2016). As the adoption of new methods does not seem to have been successful in replacing more traditional methods of instruction despite a desire at the individual (e.g. motivation on improving speaking skills, more opportunities to use English outside of school, (Liu et al., 2016)) and institutional level (e.g. respect government policy), it is possible that a middle ground needs to be

found between traditional and contemporary teaching methods (Ellis, 2016a). The present study aims to understand the possible effects of adopting an approach that integrates both grammar-oriented and communication-oriented teaching materials on oral competence and on standardized tests as this mixed approach may be more palatable in a context in which teaching has traditionally been teacher-orientated (Ellis, 2016a).

1.1 English Teaching in China

Foreign language teaching in China focuses on language structures and thus, language as an object; vocabulary and grammar are of vital importance. Translation plays a significant role in the class: sentence-text-analysis, vocabulary work and reading comprehension are done through translation; grammar is also taught using translation (Mao, 2012; Rao, 2013; Zheng & Borg, 2013). The education system overall is exam-oriented, which is reflected in its English examinations. The English exams are designed by local governments, and they are structurally-based with no evaluation of communicative competence in primary and secondary school (Gu, 2012). Success in such examinations is achieved by students practicing mechanical exercises of language structure (Mao, 2012; Rao, 2013; Zheng & Borg, 2013).

However, knowing a language does not only involve knowing about its form. Indeed, meaning and use, which require the development of communicative competence, are vital for language learning (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). The lack of a focus on communication in Chinese classrooms has led to students' discontent as their ability to communicate, especially in oral interaction, remains extremely low (Fang, 2010). This discontent with China's traditional English teaching has resulted in the introduction and application of communicative-based approaches by the Chinese

government with the most recent curriculum adopting TBLT (Yu, 2001; Liao, 2004; Chinese Ministry of Education 2011).

1.2 TBLT in China

TBLT is “a teaching approach based on the use of communicative and interactive tasks as the central units for the planning and delivery of instruction” (Richards & Schmidt, 2013, p. 585). It has received much research attention, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts in western countries since the 1980s (e.g. Long 1985; Ellis 2003; Nunan, 2004; Van den Branden, 2006; Willis & Willis 2008). However, in East Asian contexts, only a limited number of case studies have focused on TBLT (Lin & Wu, 2012). In China, it has received some research attention (e.g. Mao, 2012; Zheng, 2013; Zheng & Borg, 2013; Luo, 2014), however, it is important to note that the majority of interest comes from post-compulsory education; studies examining its application in secondary schools remains limited (Carless, 2007; Lin & Wu, 2012).

In terms of practice, it has been adopted in European, North American, and South American contexts (e.g., Byrnes, 2002; Colpin & Van Gorp, 2007, Van den Branden, 2006). In China, TBLT has also been adopted. There has been a revolution in the English curriculum for compulsory education (currently Grades 1-12): a “paradigm shift from the traditional teacher-centered, skills-based English instruction to the current student-centered, communicative competence-based instruction” (Ruan & Leung, 2012, p. xi). Nevertheless, despite its official adoption and thus, China now having a theoretically sound method for the teaching and learning of English, its implementation is challenging for various reasons (Luo & Xu, 2011).

1.3 Implementing TBLT in China: Challenges

The first challenge that is evident in terms of the implementation of TBLT in China relates to the teachers. English teachers tend to be non-native English speakers with little or no experience communicating with native speakers (in China or abroad).

Thus, overall, the teachers' English proficiency is limited with their strengths likely to be in teaching language as an object and focusing on reading and writing, due to their learning, personal, and professional experiences (Littlewood, 2007).

Furthermore, it has been suggested that they receive inadequate professional development opportunities, and these opportunities may not reflect the new curriculum contents (Ruan & Leung, 2012). Many English teachers, especially those trained before 2011 when TBLT was officially adopted, are likely to have had no formal training in TBLT (Mao, 2012). Zheng and Luo (2012) argue that even for teachers who have received some formal training in TBLT, they have a vague understanding of its concept and what a task entails.

New textbooks reflecting the new curriculum are starting to be published. However, it is debatable whether they reflect true TBLT. One of the principal tenets of TBLT is the use of real-world tasks. However, in our analysis of one TBLT book (Shandong Provincial Education Department, 2013; the book used in the present study's research context), it is clear that the notion of a real-world task has been misinterpreted. Even though the book focuses on functional language use (rather than being oriented towards conveying structural information), the students complete a number of decontextualized activities involving the use of fictitious characters that resemble drills. This type of disconnect between research into teaching methods and how it is put into practice in course book material is common (Nitta & Gardner, 2005), and it points towards an important challenge for TBLT's success: research has

demonstrated that TBLT can be an effective method for helping students develop communicative competence, but its effectiveness will be reduced or removed if TBLT is misrepresented in course books.

Another issue in terms of its implementation relates to obligatory tests. In the majority of tests, students' communicative competence is not measured (Luo, 2014). Therefore, in order to raise students' test scores, teachers return to traditional teaching despite having possibly made an attempt at teaching based on TBLT (Luo & Xu, 2011). In other words, they teach based on the knowledge that may appear on tests instead of the new curriculum. In Chinese classrooms, teachers and students face enormous test pressure (Gu, 2012). This pressure exists in the English classroom as well and thus, teachers focus their efforts on teaching students how to pass the English test. As the English tests have not been adapted to follow the new curriculum, this leads to teaching for tests that are not designed according to the curriculum (Gu, 2012). An array of discrete language knowledge with a focus on prescriptive grammar is tested on multiple-choice questions. For example:

—Dave, it's dangerous to swim here. Look at the sign.

—Oh, I _____ it. Thank you.

A. didn't notice B. won't notice C. hadn't noticed D. don't notice

(Bureau of Education of Zibo, 2013)

In the above example, it is also not clear what the correct answer should be as the speaker's intent is not taken into account. Options B and D are clearly erroneous, but both options A and C could be used. If the speaker situates his/her utterance before the initial utterance, option C is accurate. If the speaker situates his/her utterance in

the past with no regard to its relevance vis-à-vis the initial utterance, option A is accurate (Larsen-Freeman & Celce-Murcia, 2016).

Fourthly, in Chinese primary and secondary schools, there are about 40 - 50 students in a class, and this number may reach 56 or more in underdeveloped and rural areas (Wu & Yang, 2008). This large class size is challenging for the completion of interactive (oral) tasks as teachers have difficulties managing the whole class and providing feedback (Littlewood, 2007; Butler, 2011). Thus, large class sizes may hinder the implementation of certain communicative aspects of TBLT.

The above-mentioned challenges in implementing TBLT in China are not easy to overcome as they require a number of integral changes: smaller class sizes, greater teacher training, improved language proficiency of the teachers, a more thorough understanding by publishers of the meaning of TBLT and the operationalization of a task, and perhaps most importantly, a seismic shift in evaluation practices, which have deep cultural roots (Wang, 2013). Thus, it is apparent that requiring the application of TBLT only in China's English classes, which have always used traditional pedagogical approaches, is unfeasible (Ellis, 2016b). Based on Ellis's experiences using TBLT in a number of contexts including China, he suggests that an integrative approach could be a means of moving forward. In this approach, Ellis (2016a) suggests an overall traditional framework should be employed due to the aforementioned reasons, but TBLT should be integrated to ensure students receive some opportunities to use the language for communicative purposes.

1.4 Research Objectives

This exploratory, quasi-experimental study will therefore answer Ellis's (2016a) call to investigate the feasibility of applying TBLT in conjunction with a traditional method for the teaching and learning of English in China. An integrative approach is perhaps a more realistic goal in a country whose English teaching methods, despite shifts over the years, have remained traditional (Hu, 2002). This study is guided by two research objectives:

- 1.) Observe whether this integrative approach leads to improvements on the obligatory test.
- 2.) Observe whether this integrative approach leads to improvements on measures of oral proficiency.

1.5 Significance of the Research

1.5.1 Scientific Significance

This study is an important step in furthering understanding of how research-based teaching methods can be integrated into traditional education systems. The above-mentioned issues on the implementation of TBLT in educational contexts that remain traditional is not unique to the Chinese context. Therefore, understanding the feasibility and the efficiency of an integrated approach is an important first step towards advancing knowledge on a subject which will likely receive much research attention in the future as researchers strive to make their findings suitable for real-world application (Ellis & Shintani, 2013). Of particular interest will be to observe whether combining TBLT with a traditional approach will help in the improvement of oral proficiency in large classes whilst also permitting students to pass the traditional examinations.

1.5.2 Social Significance

The results from this study are of great social importance for learning and teaching in China, and in other contexts where language teaching remains traditional.

Understanding the feasibility of implementing an integrated approach can provide information for education systems struggling to implement communicative-based approaches. The results from the measures will also permit educators to have a deeper understanding of how to help students develop their communicative competence and their ability to respond on discrete-item tests in large classes.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study aims to further understanding with regards to the possibility of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction in Chinese classrooms and to observe whether this implementation results in improvements on measures of oral proficiency and traditional, standardized tests. In this chapter, a brief review of the English curriculum for secondary school in China will be introduced (2.1), and important historical approaches to language instruction will be described (2.2). This will lead to a definition of TBLT and task (2.3) a discussion of different task types (2.4), and procedures for TBLT lessons (2.5). Oral communicative competence (2.6), and some experimental studies of TBLT and its impact on oral communicative competence (2.7) will be presented. Finally, the research questions will be advanced.

2.1 A Review of the English Curriculum for Secondary Schools in China

Chinese education policies have evolved as a result of sociopolitical and economic changes. Since 1965, English has been the major foreign language taught in schools according to the *Twelve-Year Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Schools in 1965* and it has been a compulsory school subject in primary and secondary schools since 1977 (Gu, 2012). The 1978 and 1980 English syllabi issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education “emphasized the skills of English in addition to the traditional

emphasis on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, and on integrated instruction in listening, speaking, reading, and writing” (Gu, 2012, p. 37). With the introduction of the communicative approach to China by the State Education Development Commission (SEDC) in 1992, the English curriculum began to devote more attention to students’ communication skills. In 2001, the *English Curriculum Standards for Full-time Compulsory Education and Senior High Schools (Trial Version)* adopted TBLT in order to develop students’ communicative competence. The new *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* released in 2011 continued calling for the application of TBLT in the classrooms; guidelines are also provided for teachers to create appropriate tasks (MOE, 2011). The specific details of TBLT’s operationalization in the Chinese context will be discussed in the following chapter. However, its definition is in line with the international conceptualization of TBLT that is employed in other teaching contexts (e.g., Long, 1985; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Van den Branden, 2006; Willis & Willis, 2008): teachers create real-life tasks to develop students’ ability to use English for non-linguistic tasks (MOE, 2011).

2.2 Historical Approaches to Second Language Instruction

Teaching approaches throughout time have oscillated between focusing on language as an object (form) and language as a means of communication (meaning).

The Grammar Translation Method, which focuses on language form, dates back to the end of the 18th century and achieved a dominant position in the area of foreign language teaching all around the world in the 19th century (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). This method, which focuses on teaching through translation, is still widely used (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Language structures are taught explicitly through translating

between the foreign language and the first language (L1), and students are supposed to learn by memorizing texts. It emphasizes the written word with a focus on reading and the translation of literary texts. Grammar points are covered in a linear fashion based on a structural syllabus, and oral competence receives little, if any, consideration (Rodgers & Richards, 2001).

The Audio-Lingual Method, based on behaviorist theories, became popular during and after World War II (1939 - 1945) in order to meet the strong ascending need for oral communication. Unlike the Grammar Translation Method, this method suggested that the foreign language should be taught directly without using the L1 or translation; the focus should be on oral language. However, in this method, syntactic structures still played a significant role with vocabulary also receiving attention. As this method remained structural in nature with a focus on form, real-life communication skills remained ignored (Ellis & Shintani, 2013).

These two structure-based approaches focusing on form have been found to be inadequate for developing the real-life communication skills of L2 learners. To meet learners' communicative needs, meaning-based approaches have become ever more popular since the onset of the communicative approach that was conceptualized in the late 1960s and its basic premises were expanded in the mid-1970s (Li, 1981). It "led to a shift away from an exclusive focus on language forms to a focus on meaning and language use in communicative contexts" (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011, p. 6). The communicative approach seeks to improve students' communicative competence in all four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. There are different conceptualizations of the communicative approach that vary based on the role of language as an object. Traditionally, TBLT was seen as a strong version of the communicative approach that focused solely on language use. It was first developed by Prabhu (1987) in the Bangalore Project. The Bangalore Project was put into

practice in English classes at several primary and secondary schools in India between 1979 and 1985 in order to explore alternative teaching methods (1987). It is considered to be an early “example of task-based principles in action” (Samuda & Bygate, 2008, p. 200).

2.3 Definitions of TBLT and Task

TBLT is an approach that engages students in communication through meaningful tasks in order to develop students’ communicative competence (Ellis & Shintani, 2013). According to a number of researchers (Van den Branden, 2006; Nunan, 2004; Ellis, 2009; Long, 2014), TBLT has many advantages. Firstly, “it offers the opportunity for ‘natural’ learning inside the classroom” (Ellis, 2009, p. 242). Secondly, it helps to develop learners’ communicative fluency and accuracy by integrating a focus on both meaning and form, and lastly it can be integrated within traditional approaches.

The word “task” in TBLT has been defined many times. Table 2.1 contains five definitions by TBLT researchers.

Table 2.1 Definitions of “task”

Long (1985)	“a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward” (p. 89)
Prabhu (1987)	“an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process” (p. 24)
Ellis (2003)	“A task is a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills, and also various cognitive processes” (p. 16)
Nunan (2004)	“a pedagogical task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form” (p. 4)
Samuda and Bygate (2008)	“a task is a holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some non-linguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge, with the overall aim of promoting language learning, through process or product or both” (p. 69)

These various definitions share characteristics. Researchers agree that a task must have a non-linguistic goal and thus task completion should include an exchange of

information to fill a gap, as in real-life communication. It should also require the use of language and thus focus on meaning, not form, and should reflect real-world tasks such as making an appointment to see the doctor.

The present study uses Ellis's (2003) definition of "task". He states that a task should focus primarily on meaning, engage learners in real-world language use and generate a non-linguistic communicative outcome. The reason for selecting this definition is that it is used by many TBLT researchers today and this research attention has demonstrated different possibilities in terms of operationalizing tasks for research purposes (Erlam, 2016; Asgarikia, 2014; Calvert & Sheen, 2014).

2.4 Task Types

Defining "task" provides a theoretical framework from which different types of tasks can be created and investigated. An initial distinction between task types is made based on the motivation for their selection – a task chosen with no specific language feature in mind is unfocused; a task chosen to highlight a specific feature, for example the past tense, is focused (Ellis, 2003). Ellis (2017) further distinguishes two dimensions of tasks: input-based tasks and output-based tasks. According to Ellis (2017), input-based tasks are more suitable for beginners due to their weak ability to speak or write in the L2. They are also easier to combine with traditional teaching approaches in classes with large sizes. However, they are frequently overlooked with materials containing many more examples of output-based tasks despite the importance of ensuring students have opportunities to practice comprehending (Ellis, 2017). In contrast, according to Ellis, output-based tasks are more suitable for learners with higher levels of foreign language proficiency.

Other researchers have specified the types of tasks that are necessary in order for a task to be a task, and thus lead to “an outcome from given information through some process of thought” (Prabhu, 1987, p.24). Prabhu (1987) classified three types of tasks depending on whether there is an information gap, a reasoning gap, or an opinion gap. An information gap involves transferring or sharing information between learners. A reasoning gap involves deriving new information from given information. An opinion gap involves exchanging opinions on a controversial issue.

Willis and Willis (2008) identified seven types of tasks according to the tasks that are frequently found in textbooks:

- Listing: e.g. make a list of food you like.
- Ordering and sorting: e.g. collect favorite fruits of students in your group and rank them in order from most to least fond.
- Matching: e.g. match photos of people with descriptions of them given by the police.
- Comparing: e.g. find differences between two given pictures.
- Problem-solving: e.g. suggest solutions to air pollution in China.
- Creative project/survey: e.g. create a small newspaper about a famous city, asking students in your group for advice or information and adding more information based on others' ideas.
- Sharing personal experiences, story/anecdote-telling: e.g. think of a memorable trip and tell people in your group about it.

Role-play tasks as one kind of information-gap task have been adopted by several researchers in TBLT classes to develop students' oral communicative competence and have proved to be successful (e.g. Gonzalez-Lloret & Nielson, 2015; Bao & Du, 2015).

A task in the TBLT classroom can thus include different types of activities. However, as mentioned above when defining “task”, regardless of task type, the task must focus on meaning, engage learners in language use and have a non-linguistic outcome. Furthermore, the application of these tasks in a TBLT lesson, that is, the procedure of a TBLT lesson, must also follow certain steps.

2.5 Procedure of a TBLT Lesson

The recommended procedure of a TBLT lesson does not necessarily differ from other approaches, in particular CLT. However, it is important to bear in mind that the procedure that follows does not include the presentation and practice of language form, as is the case in many approaches. The Bangalore Project suggests a TBLT class should include three parts: a pre-task phase where the teacher organizes the whole class to perform a task using a question-answer format; a task where the learners complete the task independently or collaboratively; an outcome assessment where the teacher gives feedback to learners (Prabhu, 1987). Willis (1996) proposed another framework of TBLT that involves three phases: a pre-task phase that refers to the introduction to the topic and task by the teacher; a during-task phase where students do and complete the task, then report the task outcome after planning; a post-task phase that focuses on language details through analysis and practice by students.

As Ellis (2003) pointed out, all these various designs have three principle phases: pre-task (such as providing a model), during task (the task itself and various instructions such as carrying out the task under time pressure) and post-task (such as reflecting on the task). TBLT lessons should be structured clearly through this framework that allows different options in each phase.

All of the various tasks and the procedure of a TBLT lesson aim to develop students' written and oral communicative competence. This study focuses on oral communicative competence, thus it will be discussed in the following section.

2.6 Oral Communicative Competence

Hymes (1972) defined communicative competence as the ability to understand and use language to communicate effectively in various authentic communicative contexts. This definition includes sociolinguistic awareness, defined as social rules, culture and nonverbal behavior. This concept has received interest from applied linguists and has been adapted over the years. Canale and Swain (1980) defined communicative competence as involving four aspects: linguistic competence (grammatical rules), sociolinguistic competence (sociocultural rules), discourse competence (organization), and strategic competence (recognition and reparation of communication breakdowns). Since these definitions, much research has been conducted to develop understanding related to students' communicative competence. In China, instead of using the term 'oral communicative competence', the curriculum sets the target requirements at all levels in the way that students "can do things in English", with the aim of cultivating students' comprehensive language skills.

Teachers should develop students' ability to "do things in English" by creating a variety of contexts close to real life, adopting gradual language practice activities, and various teaching methods and methods that emphasize both process and results, such as task-based language teaching (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2011, p.26&27).

In terms of TBLT research, much discussion has revolved around the measurement of communicative competence. Measuring communicative competence, especially oral production, has proven problematic due to “the lack of an established unit” of analysis (Ellis, 2003, p. 115). Various specific measures, such as the number of words per minute, the repetitions, specific linguistic features (e.g. the use of target pronouns, conjunctions), have been used to evaluate learners’ oral production by Tong-Fredericks (1984), Brown (1991), and Newton and Kennedy (1996) (as cited in Ellis, 2003, p. 116). Complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) as the measurements of oral communicative competence started to appear frequently as both dependent and independent variables in second-language acquisition (SLA) research in since the middle of 1990s (e.g. Freed 1995; Skehan, 1998; Skehan & Foster, 1999, 2007; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). In TBLT, these three dimensions are also key when evaluating language proficiency (Housen & Kuiken, 2009).

Skehan and Foster (1999) defined accuracy as “the ability to avoid error in performance possibly reflecting higher levels of control in the language, as well as a conservative orientation, that is, avoidance of challenging structures that might provoke error” (p. 96). According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), various measures of accuracy have been used by researchers (e.g. Wigglesworth, 1997; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Skenhan & Foster, 1997; Mehnert, 1998; Crookes, 1989). However, some of the measures have been suggested as inappropriate for reflecting learners’ L2 accuracy, such as self-corrections. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) suggests that using “incidence of errors per AS-unit” (p. 150) instead of the widely used measure “percentage error-free clauses and errors per 100 words” (p. 150) as Bygate (2001) (as cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 150) argues that “this might produce a more sensitive measure of accuracy as it takes account of all the errors produced”. Furthermore, specific measures of grammatical accuracy are taken into account while evaluating focused tasks that focus on particular linguistic features (Ellis, 2003).

According to Schmidt (1992), fluency in language use involves “the processing of language in real time” (p. 358) which means fluency is demonstrated by students participating in meaning-focused activity. Second language fluency can be developed through not only increasing speed but also “changes in the nature of the knowledge of language” (Nation & Newton, 2008, p. 152). They also argue that learners could develop fluency when they are involving in meaning-focused activities with familiar topics and language items as well as support to push learners to a higher level of performance, such as time pressure. Two principal types of fluency measures have been employed: temporal variables and hesitation phenomena (Wiese 1984; Lennon, 1990; as cited in Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). Temporal variables include speech/writing rate, number of pauses, pause length and length of run. Hesitation phenomena include false starts, repetitions, reformulations and replacements. Speech/writing rate is considered as the principal temporal variable that “is usually measured in terms of the number of syllables produced per second or per minute on task” (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 157). Pause (e.g. number of pauses, pause length, pause frequency, average pause time) is also considered as another crucial measure by several researchers (e.g. Robinson, Ting & Unwin, 1995; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Witton-Davies, 2014; Valles-Ferrer, 2012; Prefontaine, 2013). Many researchers (Skehan, 2014; Witton-Davies, 2014; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012; Prefontaine, 2013; Kahgn, 2014) suggest that the mean length of run that refers to “the mean number of syllables between two pauses of a pre-determined length” (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 157) is an important measure of fluency. Tavakoli and Skehan (2005) distinguished speech fluency in terms of speed, breakdown and repair fluency.

Complexity refers to the use of complicated advanced language features or systems, such as attributive clauses. It includes cognitive complexity and linguistic complexity (Housen & Kuiken, 2009). Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) divided complexity measures into five types “according to the aspect of language they relate to: (1) interactional

(number of turns, mean turn length), (2) propositional (number of idea units encoded), (3) functional (frequency of some specific language function), (4) grammatical (amount of subordination, use of some specific linguistic features and mean number of verb arguments), and (5) lexical (type-token ratio)” (p. 152 - 154). Among these types, grammatically in nature is the most frequently used in research (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005).

2.7 Experimental Studies of TBLT and Their Impact on Oral Communicative Competence

As mentioned earlier, many studies have attempted to explore the effects of TBLT in different contexts, especially in western countries. The following three studies are the most recent studies that focus on the utility of TBLT for the development of oral communicative competence.

2.7.1 Gonzalez-Lloret and Nielson (2015)

Gonzalez-Lloret and Nielson (2015) were interested in the effectiveness of a task-based Spanish program designed for students at the US Border Patrol Academy (BPA). In the US, a growing number of Spanish learners require programs that focus on the development of language competence for their future careers, a need that traditional language teaching methods seem inadequate to meet (2015). TBLT is believed to be an interesting alternative for foreign language education, but it requires further investigation.

Three exploratory empirical studies are used to evaluate the program. The first study compares the performance of students between a grammar-based group and a TBLT group on an oral picture-guided narration task. The results showed that students in TBLT group outperformed students in the grammar-based group on fluency and syntactic complexity. The groups performed very similarly in terms of lexical complexity and grammatical accuracy. The small sample of students and the absence of pre-test were criticized by the authors.

The second study tested whether students' overall Spanish proficiency improved after the program and the relationship between proficiency gains and the proficiency of the students at the outset through a Spanish proficiency test (the Versant Spanish test). Students' proficiency improved as a result of the program, and there was no significant correlation between the variables which means all the students benefited from the TBLT program regardless of their proficiency level at the outset of the program.

The third study investigated students' opinions of the TBLT program. Two electronic surveys were sent to participants in the task-based BPA program who worked as Border Patrol Agents after completing the program. Results showed that students were satisfied with the program overall. They expressed that TBLT was useful for their real-world needs, for example in their search for future careers. These results are similar to previous research (e.g., McDonough & Chaikitmongkol, 2007).

2.7.2 Bao and Du (2015)

Bao and Du (2015) investigated the effects of TBLT on beginner learners of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) in Denmark. They addressed three research questions: “(1) How do beginner CFL learners benefit from TBLT? (2) What challenges arise during the implementation of TBLT? (3) What improvements can be made to better apply TBLT to beginner CFL learners in the Danish context?” (p. 294).

Eighteen students of Aalborg University in two beginner-level adult CFL classes participated in the study. Tasks in both classes had almost the same features, such as being designed based on the same principles; only the range of words and grammatical items varied. The authors collected data through observations of eight lessons and through semi-structured interviews at the end of the semester, after course completion.

The qualitative analysis of the coded data showed that firstly, TBLT provides more opportunities for speaking, it eases students’ anxiety and increases their enjoyment. Secondly, challenges in the implementation of TBLT include insufficient Chinese pronunciation practice and a lack of instructional time to support all students. Lastly, it is suggested that to improve TBLT in the Danish context, it is important to: “raise learners’ understanding of TBLT and its intentions, increase varieties in task design, and highlight the combination of teacher-fronted instruction and TBLT” (p. 302).

The authors conclude that a weak form of TBLT rather than a strong form is more suitable for beginners of CFL in Denmark. They suggest that future research on the effects of TBLT in the CFL context should be conducted with more learners in different geographical contexts.

2.7.3 Albino, G. (2017)

Albino (2017) investigated the effects of TBLT on high school learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) at PUNIV-Cazenga in Angola. Communication in English is required for students who wish to seek employment in private sectors after graduation, however, the students are taught linguistic items in their structural syllabus to pass the examination instead of oral communication. Thus, the author tried to find out “how can the EFL learners, AT PUNIV-Cazenga, improve their speaking fluency in the TBLT approach?” (p. 4). Forty students participated in the study and they were taught by meaning-making and form-focused tasks sixty minutes per week for eight weeks. They were required to describe a picture before and after the TBLT approach. Three of the forty students’ speeches were randomly selected and transcribed. Word count and grammatical accuracy were used to assess the speaking fluency. The results showed that students improved their oral performance: the number of words increased and the grammatical errors decreased. The author concludes that TBLT helped developing learners’ “speaking fluency by maximizing their speed of speech production, increasing grammatical accuracy, elaborating on their utterances, and developing interactional language” (p. 7).

These three studies highlight certain advantages for TBLT in developing L2 learners’ oral competence, such as the development of students’ fluency, syntactic complexity, grammatical accuracy, and proficiency through the provision of more speaking opportunities. It can also increase students’ enjoyment and meet their real-world needs such as seeking employment. However, there are still many challenges in its implementation in China as discussed in the first chapter. TBLT differs from traditional teaching methods to such a large degree that adapting it to traditional contexts may be difficult, and even impossible. In addition, as Bao and Du (2015) underlined, “TBLT is not a one-size-fits-all method for all learners in all contexts” (p. 306), and thus, combining it with a more traditional teaching approach may be more realistic in certain contexts.

2.8 Research Questions

To investigate the feasibility of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction in Chinese secondary English classrooms, the following research questions will be addressed:

- 1.) What is the impact of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' scores on obligatory English tests?
- 2.) What is the impact of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' oral performance?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In chapter I, it was stated that the objectives of this study are to further understanding of whether it is possible to integrate TBLT with traditional instruction in Chinese classrooms and to observe whether this implementation results in improvements on measures of oral proficiency and the traditional, standardized tests. This chapter describes the methodology that was used to achieve these objectives.

3.1 Type of Research

According to Thouin (2014), “a quasi-experimental research study involves an experimental group and a control group” (p. 73) with membership to a group being out of the researcher’s hands. As the present study will use a control group and an experimental group that come from two intact classes, the present study is quasi-experimental.

3.2 Participants and Context

The study aimed to explore the feasibility of integrating task-based language teaching with traditional instruction in Chinese secondary schools. A secondary school in Zibo

in Shandong Province in eastern China was the data collection site. This secondary school is one of the top five public secondary schools in Zhangdian District of Zibo out of thirty. Two intact classes in year 2 participated in this study, which included one hundred and eight students. All students spoke Chinese as their first language. The students had already received three years of English instruction in primary school. However, exposure being limited, on entering middle school, they were retaught English letters; they were beginner-level learners. They were in their first semester of their second year in secondary school. They had five, forty-minute English lessons per week which means a total of 200 minutes per week. They did not have any other significant exposure to English. The two classes had the same English teacher who is a Chinese native-speaker and had nine years of experience teaching English as a foreign language in secondary school. The teacher used the obligatory English textbook published by Shandong Education Press and this textbook is supposed to include TBLT as it is compiled based on the current *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* (2011) that calls for TBLT.

All students received an explanation in Chinese concerning the aims of the research. They and their parents/guardians completed the consent form (see Appendix III). The students completed the obligatory pre-test at the end of their first year of secondary school. After a two-month summer vacation, the oral pre-test was administered at the beginning of the first semester of their second year of secondary school via email. Then the experimental group received regular teaching using the obligatory English textbook with task-based variations for half of each unit of the textbook. The control group received regular teaching for each unit of the textbook. After two weeks, the two groups completed the obligatory post-test and the oral post-test via email. Due to the difficulty in recording their oral test at school, students were asked to complete their oral test by themselves and then send its recording to the researcher via email. All students completed the two obligatory tests, however, for the oral test, out of one

hundred and eight possible participants, only twenty-five in the control group and thirty-two in the experimental group completed the two oral tests. The schedule of tests and teaching is shown in detail in Table 3.1. Each unit from the English textbook takes five English classes to complete. The TBLT classes were usually given during the first two or three classes of each unit.

Table 3.1 Schedule of tests and teaching

Event	Experimental group	Control group
Obligatory pretest	At the beginning of July	
	2-month school summer holiday	
Oral pretest	September 13	
TBLT class 1	September 14	X
TBLT class 2	September 15	X
TBLT class 3	September 18	X
TBLT class 4	September 19	X
TBLT class 5	September 20	X
TBLT class 6	September 22	X
TBLT class 7	September 25	X
TBLT class 8	September 26	X
Oral posttest	September 29	
Obligatory posttest	September 28	

Note: X indicates that the group received the regular English class instead of the TBLT class on that date.

A variety of tasks were designed by the author of this study and discussed with the classroom teacher who sometimes modified content in order to suit her students (See Appendix II). The task-based variations were based on the topics in the textbook with relevant authentic materials added that focused on the development of oral

competence. Suitable TBLT materials were found by the author of this study. Table 3.2 shows the tasks used for one unit in the study.

Table 3.2 Tasks of Unit 2 completed during the study

Task completed unit 2	Aim	Author comments from class observation
Pre-task	Exposure to vocabulary and structure	The teacher asked students to read the vocabulary together and to answer a few questions regarding the topic together.
Task 1: Dictogloss	Encourage students to understand and use the vocabulary and structure to communicate	
Task 1a: Listen to an authentic English conversation	As above	The teacher needed to play the video three times for students to write down the important messages. Some students were not able to get important information.
Task 1b: Dictogloss in small groups	As above	Almost all students discussed in Chinese and took more time to finish.
Task 2: Interview	As above	Some students could not complete the conversation.

Post-task: Report	As above	Some students did not finish this task because they did not write down the effective information during the previous task.
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The topic of unit 2 in the textbook is “I’d like some noodles”. This unit normally takes five classes to complete. TBLT was adopted in the first two classes that focus on listening and speaking, the remaining three classes will be mainly for reviewing and doing grammar exercises. During the TBLT class, a task asking the students to find out the most popular food and drinks of their classmates when they eat at the restaurant was organized. As the pre-task, the teacher introduced the topic with the help of pictures of different food and drinks. Then students listened to an authentic conversation about ordering in a restaurant and were asked to write down what they heard as much as possible. Then they had to complete a conversation based on their notes in small groups. After this task, they pretended to be a server in a restaurant to ask five ‘clients’ (other classmates) what they preferred to order by writing the names of foods and drinks in a table based on the responses. After collecting the data, the students were divided into small groups again (usually six) and everyone reported his/her findings to the rest of the group. This post-task provided an opportunity for students to repeat themselves, which may help to improve their production.

The other class, as the control group, received regular teaching using the obligatory English textbook. Importantly, the number of classes spent on each unit was controlled for the two groups.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

The final spring semester English exam of 2017 (as overall pre-test) and monthly autumn semester English exam of 2017 (as overall post-test) designed by the Bureau of Education of Zibo were used to address the first objective, which was to observe whether this implementation would result in improvements on the traditional, standardized tests. The obligatory English tests are designed to measure oral comprehension, knowledge of grammar, reading comprehension and writing.

The oral pre-test and post-test were conducted to achieve the second objective of this study which is to observe whether this implementation results in improvements on measures of oral proficiency. The suitcase story (Derwing et al., 2004) was initially chosen as the oral test. However, the teacher insisted that it was impossible for the students to complete the test due to their limited level of oral proficiency. Therefore, a highly controlled conversation was created for the oral test (see appendix 1). This test was created based on a YouTube video that is no longer accessible on-line, and thus cannot be referenced. The students received a PDF document from the English teacher consisting of an uncompleted conversation. Students were asked to look at the uncompleted sentences and the pictures in order to understand the conversation. They were then asked to read the whole conversation aloud while filling in the blanks containing between one and five words. They recorded the conversation by themselves. After doing this, they were asked to send their audio document to the researcher via email.

3.4 Analysis

This study is quantitative in nature as the employed measures produced data that was analyzed statistically. The research questions asked what the impact of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' traditional exam performance and on their oral performance were. To answer the two questions, a repeated-measures analysis of variance (RMANOVA) was conducted. It consists of the groups (control and experimental) as the between-subjects factor, and scores at time 1 and time 2 on the oral measure and on the obligatory exam as the within-subjects factors. Learners' oral performance on the two oral tests were digitally recorded and transcribed for fluency and accuracy measures. For accuracy, the number of errors in the blanks was counted by the author of this study listening to the conversation and writing down the errors. For fluency, PRAAT (Boersma & Weenink, 2013) software was used to measure the duration (length of the conversation) and length of pause.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In the previous chapter, the methodology employed to answer the research questions was presented. In this chapter, the results are presented in order to answer the two research questions. Firstly, results are presented from the compulsory English test (4.1), then results from the oral test (4.2).

4.1 Results of the Obligatory English Test

The first research question is: What is the impact of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' scores on obligatory English tests?

In order to answer this question, the students' scores on the two obligatory English tests were compared. The first test, administered as a pre-test, was done in July. This test was the grade 1 China-wide test. The second test, administered as a post-test, was done in September and was the grade 2 China-wide test. To address the research question, a two-way RMANOVA was conducted with the groups (experimental and control) and time (pre-test and post-test) as the independent variables was conducted. The dependent variable was the scores on the obligatory test. Assumptions of

sphericity, normal distribution and homogeneity of variances were all met (Larson-Hall, 2010).

Descriptive statistics for the pre-test and the post-test for all students are presented in Table 4.1, while the results from the RMANOVA are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics for obligatory tests scores of the pre-test and the post-test across groups (all students)

	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pretest	CG	89.28	23.32	55
	EG	89.25	21.66	55
Posttest	CG	79.88	22.99	55
	EG	81.89	21.19	55

Note: CG = Control group, EG= Experimental group

Table 4.2 Tests of between and within subjects effects for the two obligatory tests for all students

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Group	53.51	1	53.51	0.06	0.815	0.00
Error (Between-Subjects)	105036.63	108	972.56			
Time	3859.83	1	3859.83	170.67	0.000	0.61
Time*Group	57.53	1	57.53	2.54	0.114	0.02
Error (Within-Subjects)	2442.52	108	22.62			

The RMANOVA (Table 4.2) shows that there are no differences between the two groups. The difference in scores between the pre-test and the post-test is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), but the interaction between time and group is not statistically significant ($p = 0.114$). Thus, both groups changed, but there are no between-group differences due to the experimental intervention. Table 4.1 reveals that both groups had lower scores on the post-test (CG: mean = 79.88, SD = 22.99; EG: mean = 81.89, SD = 21.19) than the pre-test (CG: mean = 89.28, SD = 23.32; EG: mean = 89.25, SD = 21.66). In response to the first research question, integrating TBLT with traditional instruction had no positive impact in terms of test results on the obligatory English test.

4.2 Oral Test Results

The second research question asked what the impact was of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' oral performance. To address this question, the English oral performance of the two groups of students before and after the TBLT intervention was examined. As discussed in the methodology (see page 34), two components of oral language performance (accuracy and fluency) were measured. In the following tables, the number of pauses and durations reflect fluency while the number of grammar mistakes reflect accuracy.

To answer the question, a two-way RMANOVA was conducted. The independent variables were time (pre-test and post-test) and group (experimental and control). The three dependent variables were number of pauses, duration of output, and number of grammatical mistakes. All assumptions were met (Larson-Hall, 2010).

Descriptive statistics for the oral pre-test and post-test are presented in Table 4.3 while the RMANOVA is presented in Table 4.4. The participant numbers are lower for the oral test than the standardized test as students had to send their response to the oral test via email. The standardized test was compulsory for all students outside of this research project. Out of 108 possible participants, only 25 in the CG and 32 in the EG completed both the oral pre-test and post-test. The standardized test was conducted in exam conditions and thus, all students in both classes had to sit it.

Table 4.3 Descriptive statistics for the oral pre-test and oral post-test

	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pauses Pre-test	CG	38.56	9.61	25
	EG	40.47	8.08	32
	Total	39.63	8.75	57
Pauses Post-test	CG	36.84	9.03	25
	EG	36.22	6.33	32
	Total	36.49	7.56	57
Duration Pre-test	CG	84.43	15.33	25
	EG	87.73	20.32	32
	Total	86.28	18.22	57
Duration Post-test	CG	78.02	14.34	25
	EG	79.42	16.98	32
	Total	78.80	15.75	57
Accuracy Pre-test	CG	5.68	1.97	25
	EG	5.25	2.11	32
	Total	5.44	2.04	57
Accuracy Post-test	CG	5.20	1.92	25

EG	5.19	2.38	32
Total	5.19	2.17	57

Table 4.4 Tests of between and within subjects effects for the oral test

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Square	
Within- Subjects	Time	Pauses	250.11	1	250.11	10.39	0.002	0.16
		Accuracy	1522.34	1	1522.34	14.08	0.000	0.20
		Duration	2.07	1	2.07	1.96	0.167	0.03
	Time * Group	Pauses	44.92	1	44.92	1.87	0.178	0.03
		Accuracy	25.44	1	25.44	0.24	0.630	0.00
		Duration	1.22	1	1.22	1.16	0.286	0.02
	Error (Time)	Pauses	1324.52	55	24.08			
		Accuracy	5946.36	55	108.12			
		Duration	58.06	55	1.06			
Between- Subjects	Intercept	Pauses	162320.05	1	162320.05	1460.56	0.000	0.96
		Accuracy	762351.96	1	762351.96	1590.01	0.000	0.97
		Duration	3189.02	1	3189.02	402.05	0.000	0.88

Group	Pauses	11.63	1	11.63	0.10	0.748	0.00
	Accuracy	154.71	1	154.71	0.32	0.572	0.01
	Duration	1.37	1	1.37	0.17	0.679	0.00
Error	Pauses	6112.44	55	111.14			
	Accuracy	26370.54	55	479.46			
	Duration	436.26	55	7.93			

Table 4.4 reveals that there were no between-group differences as no statistically significant differences for pauses ($p = 0.748$), duration ($p = 0.679$) or accuracy ($p = 0.572$). Thus, there is no evidence to suggest that the EG performed better on the two oral tests than the CG.

Within groups, in the case of pauses, the difference is statistically significant ($p = 0.002$). As Table 4.3 shows the CG had more pauses in the pre-test (mean = 38.56, SD = 9.605) than in the post-test (mean = 36.84, SD = 9.031). The EG also had more pauses on the pre-test (mean = 40.47, SD = 8.080) than the post-test (mean = 36.22, SD = 6.328). Within-group accuracy is also statistically significant ($p = 0.000$). As Table 4.3 reveals, the CG made more grammar mistakes in the pre-test (mean = 5.68, SD = 1.973) than in the post-test (mean = 5.20, SD = 1.915). The EG also made more grammar mistakes in the pre-test (mean = 5.25, SD = 2.110) than in the post-test (mean = 5.19, SD = 2.375). In terms of duration, no significant within-group differences were found ($p = 0.167$). Overall, these results show that both groups were

more accurate at the post-test. When fluency was measured as number of pauses, both groups also improved.

In addition, Table 4.4 shows there were no statistically significant differences in the interaction between time and group for the three variables: pauses ($p = 0.178$), durations ($p = 0.286$) and accuracy ($p = 0.630$).

In response to the second research question, the results demonstrate integrating TBLT with traditional instruction had no positive impact in terms of fluency and accuracy as measured by the employed oral test.

In the following chapter, the results from this study will be interpreted based on extant research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results of the research presented in the previous chapter to answer the first research question (5.1) and the second research question (5.2).

5.1 Impact of Integrating TBLT with Traditional Instruction on Students' Scores on Obligatory English Tests

The first research question is: What is the impact of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' scores on obligatory English tests?

The results in the previous chapter indicate that integrating TBLT with traditional instruction had no positive impact in terms of test results on the obligatory English test. The results for the EG and the CG were the same at the beginning, but they were also the same at the end. Thus, the experimental treatment did not have a negative effect either. Overall, both groups had significantly lower scores at the post-test than at the pre-test. This finding is not worrying as the standardized test was not identical, and one would expect a later test to be more challenging than an earlier one. The fact that both groups' scores were lower speaks to this.

In order to understand the lack of improvement due to the experimental treatment, it is necessary to bear in mind that there is no evaluation of communicative competence on the obligatory tests (Gu, 2012). As such, it is not surprising that the experimental group did not perform better than the control group. In order to succeed in such tests, many mechanical exercises of language structure need to be practiced (Mao, 2012; Rao, 2013; Zheng & Borg, 2013). Due to the time spent integrating TBLT classes in the experimental group's classroom, students had much less time to do such practicing than students in the control group. Furthermore, the experimental group's English teacher discussed her concerns regarding the lack of time to practice for the test throughout the experiment. These concerns were not, however, borne out.

The experimental group did not perform worse on this test. This finding is extremely positive as a number of stakeholders (not just the teacher in this research) have raised concerns regarding the government's decision to implement TBLT in terms of its potentially negative impact on standardized test scores (Yan, 2015; Yuan, 2016). Furthermore, the control group's comparatively longer amount of time for practicing language structures did not lead to higher scores when compared to the experimental group. This result is very positive as it suggests that integrating TBLT with traditional instruction does not reduce scores on the obligatory test. In other words, taking time away from practicing for the test had no negative impact. In addition, as the experiment only lasted for three weeks, any positive impact of integrating TBLT on outcomes on the obligatory test may not have been evident. Further research should include longer implementation of TBLT materials and delayed post-tests.

Extant research investigating TBLT in the Chinese context has focused on oral performance (see section 5.2), but to our knowledge, no research has investigated the relationship between TBLT and scores on the standardized test as in the present study. The results from the present study challenge existing theories that students

have to practice a number of mechanical exercises of language structure in order to get higher scores on the obligatory examinations in China (Mao, 2012; Rao, 2013; Zheng & Borg, 2013). They also challenge existing concerns about the possible negative effect of using TBLT on students' performance on obligatory tests. The experiment provides a new insight into the relationship between TBLT and the obligatory tests in the Chinese context. The decision to implement TBLT in Chinese English L2 classrooms has not been accompanied by a reevaluation concerning the contents of the obligatory test, which remains focused on grammatical accuracy, and reading and writing. Furthermore, the mandated materials, as previously mentioned, do not correspond to today's conceptualization of TBLT and teacher training has not been given. There thus remain clear discrepancies between the different objectives and goals in the Chinese English as an L2 classroom at all levels from government decision-makers, test writers, teacher trainers, teachers and material developers.

5.2 Impact of Integrating TBLT with Traditional Instruction on Students' Oral Performance

The second question of this study sought to study the impact of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' oral performance. The results reported in the previous chapter demonstrate that integrating TBLT with traditional instruction had no positive impact in terms of test results on the oral test as the experimental group did not outperform the control group at the post-test. However, the students in both groups performed better in the post-test in terms of fluency and accuracy. Between the two groups, no evidence was found to show that integrating TBLT has more positive effects on students' oral performance than traditional instruction.

These results are relatively unexpected because, in theory, the experimental group should have outperformed the students in control group, who received no oral performance practice. One possibility is that the duration of the experiment was not sufficient for the TBLT group to make more improvements than the control group. The experiment lasted for three weeks and there were only 8 TBLT classes during this period. The author of this study had planned to do the experiment over a longer period of time, however, the principal of the secondary school and the English teacher were both concerned about the possible negative effects of TBLT on students' obligatory test scores, a concern that was not borne out (see section 5.1). As a result, only three weeks were permitted. This is in line with one of the challenges that was discussed in chapter I, which is the obligatory tests.

Another plausible explanation is that the form of the oral test made it difficult to find differences between the two groups' oral proficiency. As discussed in the third chapter, "The Suitcase Story" (Derwing et al., 2004) was initially chosen as the oral test. This test has been widely used to measure oral performance in terms of complexity, fluency and accuracy (Derwing et al., 2007; Derwing et al., 2009; French & Beaulieu, 2016; Trofimovich et al., 2017), and it is considered to be a fairly spontaneous measure. However, the English teacher insisted that it was impossible for the students to complete the test due to their limited level of oral proficiency. Therefore, a highly controlled dialogue was created to test the students' oral proficiency. Due to the structure of this test, which consisted of filling in blanks containing between one and five words, it could be that the experimental group students were not placed in a position to demonstrate their improved oral performance. Supporting this is the fact that both groups improved their scores on this test, which could demonstrate a test-retest effect (familiarity) rather than any real improvement.

Due to the fact that the control group did not have any opportunities to practice their oral English, and the well-documented low levels of oral competence in the Chinese context (Hu, 2002; Zheng & Borg, 2013), it would be surprising to find improvements in the control group's oral English performance over such a short period with no oral communication practice.

The design of the task-based lessons is another possible reason that the experimental group did not perform better than the control group. As mentioned in chapter II, in general, a task-based lesson contains three phases: pre-task, main-task and post-task (Ellis, 2003). During the pre-task, whether or not to teach the grammatical target is an important issue. Some researchers (e.g. Long, 2015) believe that this pre-teaching runs contrary to the key tenet of TBLT that is the natural use of language. Ellis (2003) and Willis and Willis (2007) have also demonstrated concern as they feel that this pre-teaching might lead students to practice the target structure instead of using the target naturally during the main task. In contrast, some researchers (DeKeyser, 1998; Mochizuki & Ortega, 2008) believe that pre-teaching of the grammatical structure is effective and helpful. Research investigating these two theoretical stances is scarce. However, what does exist suggests that explicit instruction as a pre-task is not helpful. Ellis, Li and Zhu (2019) asked seventy two eighth-grade EFL Chinese students at a school in China. They found that pre-teaching with explicit instruction had a negative effect on the participants' overall task performance in terms of complexity, accuracy and fluency. In the present study, as mentioned in chapter III, during the pre-task phase, target vocabulary and grammar structures were presented to the learners. According to Ellis, Li and Zhu's (2019) study, this may have had an effect on task performance for the experimental group. Of course, it is important to bear in mind that Ellis, Li and Zhu measured task performance immediately after a pre-task. In the present study, the oral test was completed after the treatment and, as

such, it is difficult to draw conclusions between the two studies. It is clear that more research is needed to understand the effects of TBLT on oral performance.

Furthermore, the design of the task-based lessons in the present study followed extant research cited in chapter III. However, it has been suggested that in the Chinese context, certain task-based characteristics may need to be adapted. Ji and Pham (2018) attempted to develop more appropriate TBLT materials to teach English grammar in university classes in China. They adjusted TBLT by “adding grammatical input, encouraging students to focus on form, to discuss grammar matters and to provide mutual corrective feedback, and emphasizing the teacher’s participation into tasks as a facilitator” (p. 1) based on their observation of students’ reaction and performance during the general task-based classes. They found that the adjusted TBLT materials had positive effects on students’ grammar acquisition and task performance within groups measured by differences in the students’ perceptions toward pre-task language input. The present study was conducted with secondary school students, but it may be that the nature of the Chinese school system should be taken into account when designing TBLT lessons to ensure that there is an appropriate match between students’ and teachers’ expectations, and the employed materials.

Compared with previous studies, in terms of fluency, the results contradict the findings of the experiment by Gonzalez-Lloret and Nielson (2015) that reported that learners in TBLT group outperformed learners in the grammar-based group. One difference between the two studies is that in this study, an oral pre-test showed that all the participants had the same level of oral proficiency. In their study, there was no pre-test so it is not known whether the two groups were at the same level before the experiment.

In terms of accuracy, both this study and Gonzalez-Lloret and Nielson's (2015) showed that the two groups performed very similarly in terms of accuracy. However, the findings of our study constitute stronger evidence for this because the lack of pre-test of their study failed to show all the participants have a similar oral performance in terms of accuracy. Another difference between the two studies is that in this study, complexity is not considered as a measure of performance. As mentioned in the third chapter, the participants' oral performance was gauged by measuring accuracy and fluency. Although complexity was considered as another measure of oral performance, it was not possible to include it due to the highly structured nature of the oral test. As discussed, the choice of oral test was heavily influenced by the participating teacher, who refused to implement a test which, from a research perspective, could be truly classified as a test of oral performance.

5.3 General Discussion on TBLT and China

According to Swan (2005), many teachers believe that TBLT is not suited to foreign language contexts because there are no environments for learners to access the target language. It is not suitable for beginners either because their insufficient acquisition of grammar makes it difficult to communicate. However, Ellis and Shintani (2014) argue that grammar is unnecessary to perform simple tasks because natural L2 acquisition does not begin with 'grammar'. Furthermore, TBLT is an effective way to provide opportunities to communicate inside classrooms in most foreign language contexts where learners have no opportunities outside the classroom. Nowadays, access to on-line content in English also somewhat blurs the boundaries between the traditional distinction of second language and foreign language contexts. Although the present study did not demonstrate that the TBLT is more effective than a traditional teaching approach, the experimental group did perform better on the oral

post-test (when compared to the pre-test). From this view, the present study supported those researchers that argue that TBLT is also suitable for beginners in foreign language contexts. However, how to implement TBLT in such contexts as China still needs to be considered.

As mentioned previously (see section 5.2), due to the relatively short intervention, the design of the task-based lessons and the form of the employed oral test, the results do not confirm that integrating TBLT leads to better oral performance when compared to the control group. These findings improve our understanding of the effects of TBLT on students' oral performance. The results should be taken into account when considering how to integrate TBLT with traditional instruction in secondary school English classes in secondary school.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The research questions addressed in the present study were as follows: (1) What is the impact of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' scores on obligatory English tests? (2) What is the impact of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' oral performance? In order to answer these two questions, two intact classes from the second year of secondary school in Zibo, China were selected. They were divided into one experimental group (N = 54) and one control group (N = 54). The experimental group students received their normal traditional instruction with 8 TBLT lessons. The control group received their normal traditional instruction. The experiment occurred over three weeks.

An obligatory test (the version changed between the pre-test and the post-test) and one oral test were used to measure learning. The obligatory tests (pre- and post-) were analyzed to show the impact of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' scores on obligatory English tests between and within the two groups. The highly controlled conversation as the oral test was designed to verify the impact of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction on students' oral performance accuracy and fluency between and within the two groups.

The results showed that integrating TBLT with traditional instruction had no positive or negative impact in terms of test results on the obligatory English test. Test scores

for both groups declined from the pre- to post-test. These findings were interpreted in terms of differences in difficulty between the standardized tests and in terms of the obligatory tests having no evaluation of oral competence. The short period of the experiment also may have made it difficult to show evidence in favor of the integration of TBLT lessons. The results also showed that integrating TBLT with traditional instruction had no positive impact on oral competence operationalized as fluency and accuracy on the oral test. The insufficient time for the experiment, the form of the oral test, and the design of the TBLT lessons are all possible reasons for this result.

Extant research has not examined the impact of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction despite calls for a task-supported approach in the Chinese context (Ellis, 2018). The present study thus provides new insights into the relationship between teaching approaches, and scores on obligatory tests and oral competence.

There are a number of limitations with the present study. Firstly, the treatment lasted only three weeks with eight TBLT lessons for the experimental group, which is a short amount of time to see improvements in oral proficiency. However, this limitation cannot be avoided due to the restrictions of the target school, which likely reflect restrictions in other Chinese schools. Secondly, the design of the TBLT lessons were not completely suitable for the target students, because they followed extant research cited in chapter III that had not been adjusted to the Chinese context. Thirdly, the form of the oral test, a highly controlled conversation, made it difficult to show differences after the treatment.

TBLT has been investigated in numerous studies since the 1980s with a focus on ESL contexts (e.g. Van den Branden, 2006; Ellis, 2003; Long, 1985; Nunan, 2004). Its advantages have been demonstrated when compared to other teaching methods in

various contexts, especially in terms of developing learners' oral communicative competence. In China, the current curriculum, *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education*, was released in 2011 and it calls for the implementation of TBLT in English classrooms. However, it seems unrealistic at present for a variety of reasons notably teacher training, obligatory tests and class size. Combining TBLT with traditional English teaching therefore seems to be more feasible; it is easier for teachers to implement especially in large classes and compatible with the obligatory test.

How to integrate TBLT into traditional instruction in secondary schools in China is an important issue (Ji and Pham, 2018). Clearly, one study cannot provide the solution to this issue, and more research is needed to explore the best way to integrate TBLT into traditional instruction. As Ji and Pham (2018) mention, it is necessary to develop appropriate TBLT for teachers and students in English classes in China in further research in order to work towards helping Chinese learners become competent Chinese users of English.

APPENDIX I

ORAL TEST

Complete the dialogue below with the help of the hint (the words beside the blanks).
You will have five minutes to prepare before recording your dialogue. You can also
use the following words to help you. (The instructions are in Chinese)

words and phrases 单词/词组:

model: 样式

try on: 试穿

corridor: 走廊

suit: 适合

dollar: 美元

credit card: 信用卡

change: 零钱

dressing room: 试衣间

pay cash: 付现金

S = saleswoman (售货员) C = customer (顾客)

S: Hello, can I help you?

C: _____ (T-shirt)

S: What color do you like?

C: _____

S: And what size do you need?

C: _____ (mall, medium, large)

S: OK. In your size we have these three models.

C: _____

S: Do you want to try them on?

C: _____ (dressing room)

S: Just at the end of the corridor. They are just over there.

C: _____

A few minutes later...



S: Do they suit you?

C: _____ (price)



S: It is 100 dollars.

C: _____ (cheap)

S: Yes, of course. This T-shirt is very similar, but it only costs 55 dollars.

C: _____

S: Would you like to buy anything else?

C: _____

S: OK, come with me, please. Will you put it on your credit card?

C: _____ (pay cash)

S: Thank you. Here is your change.

C: _____

S: Goodbye.



APPENDIX II

LESSON PLAN AND TASKS

LESSON PLAN AND TASKS 1

Unit 2 I'd like some noodles (1)

Pre-task – The teacher-led introduction (5 minutes)

- Teacher begins by telling students about some foods she likes.
- Teacher introduces some food and drink vocabulary that some are in the video that they are going to listen to.

Vocabulary:

Hamburger, French fries, Coke, cheese (use pictures to help students with understanding)



<http://amolife.com/reviews/history-of-hamburger.html>



<https://www.thedailymeal.com/copycat-mcdonalds-french-fries-recipe>



<http://www.superskinnym.com/calories-in-cheese.html>



<https://ramonamarket.com/product/cole-2-liter/>

Structure: I'd like``

Task 1: Dictogloss

Task 1: Dictogloss (15 minutes)

- Teacher asks students to listen to the conversation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49QFHWIky-k>) three times and take notes.
- Teacher gets students to work in groups of three to write down as much of the conversation as they can remember based on their notes.
- Students listen to the conversation again to check their conversation. Teacher give a quick bit of feedback on meaning.

Task 2: Interview (15 minutes)

Teacher gets students to pretend to be a service man in a restaurant to ask 5 clients (other classmates) what they preferred to order by writing the names of food and drink in a table based on the responses.

Post-task: Report (5 minutes)

Teacher gets students to work in groups to report his/her finding to the rest of the group.

LESSON PLAN AND TASKS 2

Unit 2 I'd like some noodles (2)

Pre-task: The teacher-led introduction (10 minutes)

- Teacher begins by asking students when they last ate out (elicit two or three responses). Then tell students about a restaurant she likes (must not be ShiHaMa).
- Teacher asks students whether they have been to this restaurant and what restaurants they like.
- Teacher distributes menus from Pizza Hut and ShiHaMa (a famous dumpling restaurant in the city) then introduces new vocabulary items on the menu.

Vocabulary: Seafood, spicy, mushroom, onion, Spaghetti, shrimp, sausage, BBQ wings, dumplings, cabbage, cucumber, corn (using pictures to help understanding)



<https://www.canadiancanica.com/food/lu-nch-and-inner/recipe/>

deluxe-pizza

<http://www.lagoonseafood.com/en/pro/about/>

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/278858.php>

<http://www.onionsnz.com/>



<https://tasty.co/recipe/cheddar-ranch-popcorn-chicken>



<https://jesspryles.com/recipe/beer-brined-bbq-wings/>



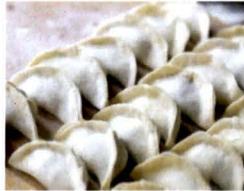
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sausage>



<http://www.pbs.org/food/recipes/audrey-hepburn-spaghetti-al-pomodoro/>



<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/315947.php>



<https://www.chinasichuanfood.com/dumpling-wrappers/>



<https://www.livescience.com/51000-cucumber-nutrition.html>



<https://organicempire.com.au/product/organic-green-cabbage/>



<https://www.organicfacts.net/health-benefits/cereal/health-benefits-of-corn.html>

Pizza Hut Menu

Food and Drinks	Price (Yuan)
Sea Food Pizza	Small: 45 Medium: 85 Large: 115
Meat Pizza	Small: 43 Medium:83 Large: 113
Spaghetti with Shrimp	48
Spaghetti with Sausage	45

Popcorn Chicken	28
BBQ Roasted Wings	28
Mushroom Soup	15

ShiHaMa Menu

Types of Dumplings	Price (Yuan)
Cabbage and Pork Dumplings	15
Mushroom and Pork Dumplings	15
Cucumber and Egg Dumplings	15
Vegetable and Mushroom Dumplings	15
Corn and Pork Dumplings	15

Task: Role Play (15 minutes)

- Teacher asks students about things that customers ask waiters (hot water, anything you don't eat, etc.)
- Teacher tells students to play one of the following roles:
 - Student A, the waiter/waitress of the restaurant (Pizza Hut or ShiHaMa),
 - Student B, a vegetarian, which is a person who doesn't eat meat (This person needs to confirm if the dish he/she wants contains meat or not)
 - Student C: a person who is not able to eat spicy food. (This person needs to confirm if the food he/she wants is spicy or not)
 - Student D: a person who has a seafood allergy (This person needs to confirm if the food he/she wants contains seafood or not)

The waiter/waitress asks what they would like and the clients ask questions about the food according to his/her role and order.

Task 3: Report (15 minutes)

- One of the students from each group presents what the clients ordered to the class.

- The students need to listen carefully in order to decide which food is the most popular at Pizza Hut and ShiHaMa.

LESSON PLAN AND TASKS 3

Unit 2 I'd like some noodles (3)

Pre-task – The teacher-led introduction (5 minutes)

- Teacher begins by asking students questions about food delivery.
- Teacher introduces some vocabulary that some are in the video that they are going to listen to.

Vocabulary:

thirsty, orange juice, snack, toppings, delivery

Structure:

Can I take your order? Your order is `` Can I have your name? And your address and your telephone number, please? That will be `` dollars.

Task: Preparation (10 minutes)

- Teacher asks students to listen to the conversation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Bot3fhUAgw>) three times and make the list of what the people ordered in the conversation.
- Teacher asks students to compare their list within small groups.

Task: (15 minutes)

- Teacher tells students that they are going to order food delivery.
- Teacher tells students to play one of two roles: customer and operator of the restaurant.
- Teacher asks the operator to write down the orders.

Post-task (10 minutes)

- Teacher asks the students that answered phones to report what they have taken notes to the class.
- Teacher asks students which food is most ordered.

LESSON PLAN AND TASKS 4

Unit 3: How was your school trip? (1)

Pre-task: The teacher-led introduction (5 minutes)

Teacher begins by reviewing the vocabulary and chunks about activities during a trip that they have learned in their textbook.

Task: Dicto-dash (35 minutes)

Teacher puts students in group of six. Two students from each team is at the front with the following six sentences. Three (or four) students are at the back of the class with a blank sheet of paper. The final student runs back and forth between the team member at the front and the team members at the back. The student at the front reads aloud each sentence individually to the runner, who must memorize it and relay it to the team members at the back of the class. Their job is to write down what the runner says. When they are done, they throw their pen down and yell "Finished!". The team that finishes first gets two points; the team that finishes second gets one point.

1. Yesterday my school visited a place (there are 4 different places, a zoo, a park, an aquarium and a farm).
2. We left early in the morning.
3. We went there by bus.
4. I saw a lot of animals and I took some photos.
5. My classmates and I also went to the gift shop and bought some gifts.
6. We had a great day.

Afterwards, the team members in the back and the runner double-check their story to make sure they think it is accurate. Then they read aloud each sentence to the team member in front, who checks the accuracy of each sentence. The team gets one point for each correct sentence. The team with the most points wins.

Students should check with their team member at the front to see what exactly they got wrong in each sentence.

Finally, the teacher asks students “where did they go”, and students will be surprised because each team went to a different place. Then the students decide which place would be the most fun to visit.

LESSON PLAN AND TASKS 5

Unit 3: How was your school trip? (2)

Pre-task: The teacher-led introduction (10 minutes)

- Teacher begins by asking students if they have ever taken a trip and telling students about one of her trips.
- Teacher asks students what people do when they visit new places and give feedback on their ideas to check language. (e.g., if a student says ‘make photos’, the teacher would say, yes, great! But we say ‘take photos’ and write it on the board).

Task: Talk about your trip (25 minutes)

Teacher puts the students in groups of six. Students talk about one of his/her trips to the rest of the group (When, Where, Who, What, How). Students choose the most interesting trip in their group. Teacher gives feedback on both language and meaning during the task.

Post-task: (5 minutes)

Teacher asks students to write the trip for homework.

LESSON PLAN AND TASKS 6

Unit 4 What did you do last weekend? (1)

Pre-task: The teacher-led introduction (5 minutes)

- Teacher begins by asking students what they did last weekend (elicit vocabulary and chunks from students)

Task 1: Target task 1 (15 minutes)

- Student listen to the song “What did you do yesterday” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0r2sUv-n6M>) three times. Teacher asks students to write down what people did this morning, yesterday and last weekend.
- Teacher puts students in groups of four and asks them to discuss their answers and gives (non-count) quick feedback.

Task 2: Target task 2 (20 minutes)

- Teacher puts students in groups of six, and tell the students they are going to talk about their last weekend.
- Teacher asks students to tell some truths and some lies.
- At the end, the other students in the group have to guess which things were true and which were lies.

LESSON PLAN AND TASKS 7

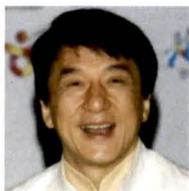
Unit 4 What did you do last weekend? (2)

Pre-task: The teacher-led introduction (10 minutes)

Teacher elicits some famous people by using their photos (Yao Ming, Jacky Chan, Donald John Trump, Adele Adkins, Jay Chou, Ma Yun, Bill Gates) and tell students to think and make up what one of them did last weekend.



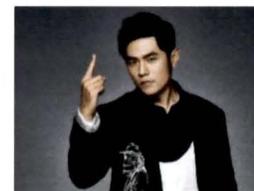
<https://exnba.com/article-s-news/yao-ming-about-his-values-and-nba-career-in-his-own-words/>



<https://www.biography.com/actor/jackie-chan>



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Trump



<https://sg.style.yahoo.com/jay-chou-criticised-scolding-security-071100451.html>



<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/32998810-adele>



<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/alibabas-jack-ma-to-advise-malaysia-on-digital-economy-ambitions-says-najib>



<https://imgur.com/gallery/G9bG0XV>

Task (25 minutes)

Teacher puts the students in groups of six and asks them to guess each other's famous person. The most difficult one then goes up against another group in the class.

Teacher tells students not to give a too direct clue (e.g., Yao Ming – they can't say – I played basketball. They could say something like-I was outside....)

Post task (5 minutes)

Teacher asks the students to do a homework of writing down what a famous person did last week.

LESSON PLAN AND TASKS 8

Unit 4 Where did you go on vacation?

Pre-task: The teacher-led introduction (5 minutes)

Teacher begins by reviewing the most comment places student went on their summer vacations.

Teacher asks students to talk about what they did during the vacation and which city they would like to visit on next vacation.

Task (20 minutes)

Teacher puts students in groups of six to produce a tourist brochure for a city they like including information such as the famous tourist spots, the local specialty, the famous people. Since there will be some vocabulary that students have not learned, the teacher walks around the class and provides help in such situation.

Post-task (15 minutes)

- Students introduce the city using the tourist brochure to the class. The teacher gives feedback on form.
- The class votes for the most popular city they would like to visit.
- Teacher asks students to write a travel dairy.

APPENDIX III

CONSENT FORMS

(À l'attention du Comité d'éthiques de la recherche, ce formulaire sera présenté en anglais et en chinois aux parents. La traduction de ce formulaire en chinois sera faite après l'obtention du certificat d'éthique.)

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM (minor participant) (For the kids of the control group)

INTEGRATING TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION: EXPLORING ITS FEASIBILITY IN CHINESE SECONDARY SCHOOL

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT-RESEARCHER

Project Leader: Qian Sun

Teaching program: Second Language Pedagogy, UQAM

Email address: sun3758@gmail.com

Phone: (+86) 134-6673-7264

IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH SUPERVISOR

Philippa Bell

Université du Québec à Montréal, département de didactique des langues

514-987-3000, poste 5501

bell.philippa@uqam.ca

PREAMBLE

We would like you to participate in a research project that is being conducted by Qian Sun as part of her master's thesis under the supervision of Philippa Bell.

Your child's school management and teacher, ZHANG HAN, have also agreed to this project.

Your child's contribution will promote the advancement of knowledge in the area of school second language learning.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This study aims to better understand the use of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in the Chinese school system and is guided by three research objectives:

- 1.) Understand the feasibility of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction in Chinese classrooms;
- 2.) Observe whether this integrative approach leads to improvements on measures of oral proficiency.
- 3.) Observe whether this integrative approach leads to improvements on the obligatory test.

PROCEDURE (S) OR TASKS REQUESTED FROM YOUR CHILD

Participation in this project will require your child to complete two tasks and one questionnaire during their normal English class. For the first task, we will ask the students to record themselves telling a short story. Four weeks later, they will do this same task and they will complete a short questionnaire asking them some questions about their English (e.g., I am confident in my ability to speak English.)

ADVANTAGES AND RISKS OF DISCOMFORT

There is no risk associated with your child's participation in this project. The two tasks they will complete are similar to the tasks normally used in their English class. Nevertheless, be assured that the project leader and the teacher, Zhang Han, will

remain attentive to any manifestation of anxiety your child may experience during his/her participation.

ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

It is understood that the information collected from your child is confidential. To this end, his/her data will be made anonymous and only the student-researcher will have access to this information (contained in a protected electronic document). At no time will it be possible to link data to individual participants. All of the data will be destroyed 5 years after the final publication.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your child's participation in this project is voluntary. This means that even if you consent today to your child's participation in the research, he/she is completely free not to participate or to terminate his/her participation at any time without justification or penalty. You can also withdraw your child from the project at any time.

If you choose for your child not to participate, they will not participate in any part of this research.

COMPENSATION

Your child will not be compensated directly. However, the findings of this research can help in the development of innovative teaching practices for Chinese students. On request, a summary of the research results will be sent to you at the end of the project. Please see below to provide us with your contact details if you would like to receive the research results.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT OR YOUR RIGHTS

You can contact the student-researcher with any additional questions about this project. You can also contact the research supervisor, Philippa Bell, with any questions concerning the conditions under which your child's participation will take place and his/her rights as a research participant.

The project you are participating in has received ethics approval for research involving humans. For questions that cannot be addressed to the supervisor or to make a complaint or comment, you may contact the reception of the Chair of the

Student Research Ethics Committee (GREC) on +1 514 987 3000 (extension 1646) or by e-mail: covanti.veronique@uqam.ca.

Your collaboration and that of your child's are important to the realization of this project and we would like to thank you.

PARENTAL AUTHORIZATION

As a parent or legal guardian of _____, I acknowledge that I have read this consent form and voluntarily consent to my child participating in this research project. I also acknowledge that the project leader has responded to my questions in a satisfactory manner and that I have had sufficient time to discuss with my child the nature and implications of his / her participation. I understand that his/her participation in this research is entirely voluntary and can be terminated at any time without any form of penalty or justification. It is enough for him/her to inform a member of the team. I can also decide, for reasons that I do not have to justify, to withdraw my child from the project.

I authorize my child to participate in this project. YES NO

I would like to receive a summary of the research findings. YES NO

E-mail: _____

Child's Signature:

Date:

Signature of Parent / Legal Guardian:

Date:

Name (print) and contact information:

I declare that I have explained the purpose, nature, benefits, risks of the project and have responded to the best of my knowledge to the questions.

Signature of project leader:

Date:

Name (printed letters) and contact information: QIAN SUN

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM (minor participant) (For the kids of the experimental group)

INTEGRATING TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION: EXPLORING ITS FEASIBILITY IN CHINESE SECONDARY SCHOOL

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT-RESEARCHER

Project Leader: Qian Sun

Teaching program: Second Language Pedagogy, UQAM

Email address: sun3758@gmail.com

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IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH SUPERVISOR

Philippa Bell

Université du Québec à Montréal, département de didactique des langues

514-987-3000, poste 5501

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PREAMBLE

We would like you to participate in a research project that is being conducted by Qian Sun as part of her master's thesis under the supervision of Philippa Bell.

Your child's school management and teacher, ZHANG HAN, have also agreed to this project.

Your child's contribution will promote the advancement of knowledge in the area of school second language learning.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This study aims to better understand the use of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in the Chinese school system and is guided by three research objectives:

- 1.) Understand the feasibility of integrating TBLT with traditional instruction in Chinese classrooms;
- 2.) Observe whether this integrative approach leads to improvements on measures of oral proficiency.
- 3.) Observe whether this integrative approach leads to improvements on the obligatory test.

PROCEDURE (S) OR TASKS REQUESTED FROM YOUR CHILD

Participation in this project will require your child to complete different tasks during their normal English class. All of these tasks have some similarities to the tasks which they normally complete in their English class (for example, telling a story, talking in pairs). For the first task, we will ask the students to record themselves telling a short story. They will also do this same task four weeks later. Over a four-week period, the students will also be given special tasks adapted from their course book. We will ask the students to record themselves telling a short story at the start and at the end of this project. At the end of the four weeks, the students will also be asked to complete a short questionnaire asking them about whether they enjoyed the special tasks which they did with their teacher.

ADVANTAGES AND RISKS OF DISCOMFORT

There is no risk associated with your child's participation in this project. The activities they will complete are similar to their normal English activities. Nevertheless, be assured that the project leader and the teacher, Zhang Han, will remain attentive to any manifestation of anxiety your child may experience during his/her participation.

ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

It is understood that the information collected from your child is confidential. To this end, his/her data will be made anonymous and only the student-researcher will have access to this information (contained in a password-protected electronic document). At no time will it be possible to link data to individual participants. All of the data will be destroyed 5 years after the final publication.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your child's participation in this project is voluntary. This means that even if you consent today to your child's participation in the research, he/she is completely free not to participate or to terminate his/her participation at any time without justification or penalty. You can also withdraw your child from the project at any time.

If you choose for your child not to participate, they will not complete the audio recorded task (at the beginning and the end of the research). Furthermore, their results on the compulsory English exam will not be collected.

COMPENSATION

Your child will not be compensated directly. However, the findings of this research can help in the development of innovative teaching practices for Chinese students. On request, a summary of the research results will be sent to you at the end of the project. Please see below to provide us with your contact details if you would like to receive the research results.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT OR YOUR RIGHTS

You can contact the student-researcher with any additional questions about this project. You can also contact the research supervisor, Philippa Bell, with any questions concerning the conditions under which your child's participation will take place and his/her rights as a research participant.

The project you are participating in has received ethics approval for research involving humans. For questions that cannot be addressed to the supervisor or to make a complaint or comment, you may contact the reception of the Chair of the Student Research Ethics Committee (GREC) on +1 514 987 3000 (extension 1646) or by e-mail: covanti.veronique@uqam.ca.

Your collaboration and that of your child's are important to the realization of this project and we would like to thank you.

PARENTAL AUTHORIZATION

As a parent or legal guardian of _____, I acknowledge that I have read this consent form and voluntarily consent to my child participating in this research project. I also acknowledge that the project leader has responded to my questions in a satisfactory manner and that I have had sufficient time to discuss with my child the nature and implications of his/her participation. I understand that his/her participation in this research is entirely voluntary and can be terminated at any time without any form of penalty or justification. It is enough for him/her to inform a member of the team. I can also decide, for reasons that I do not have to justify, to withdraw my child from the project.

I authorize my child to participate in this project. YES NO

I would like to receive a summary of the research findings. YES NO

E-mail: _____

Child's Signature:

Date:

Signature of Parent / Legal Guardian:

Date:

Name (print) and contact information:

I declare that I have explained the purpose, nature, benefits, risks of the project and have responded to the best of my knowledge to the questions.

Signature of project leader:

Date:

Name (printed letters) and contact information: QIAN SUN

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