

The Influence of Task-based Language Teaching on Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self among Mandarin Learners

(Pengaruh Pengajaran Bahasa berasaskan Tugas kepada *Ideal L2 Self* dan *Ought-to L2 Self* dalam kalangan Pelajar Bahasa Mandarin)

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ABSTRACT

The Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) has highlighted the learning of third languages as one of its thrusts. However, little studies are done on the teaching and learning of Mandarin as a foreign language in the Malaysian context. This mixed-method study aimed at investigating the application of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in changing learners' learning motivation, in terms of Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self. This study involved 52 non-native Mandarin learners as participants. It also used a questionnaire and semi-structured interview for data collection. Findings show that overall, the non-native Mandarin learners' Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self were always at a high level, and the application of TBLT in this study only slightly caused changes the learners' Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self, which was their learning motivation. Besides, this study also discovered that there were two significant challenges of TBLT application, which interfered with the results of this study, which were time constraint and language knowledge requirement. This study implicates that in order to ensure the successful application of TBLT, course designing has to be thorough and detailed and takes into account the threats in the implementation of TBLT.

Keywords: Task-based Language Teaching; Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self; Learning Motivation; Teaching Mandarin as a Foreign Language.

ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran bahasa ketiga telah diketengahkan dalam Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia 2015-2025 (Pengajian Tinggi), namun tidak banyak kajian dilakukan mengenai pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa Mandarin sebagai bahasa asing dalam konteks pembelajaran di Malaysia. Kajian kaedah campuran ini mengkaji penerapan pengajaran bahasa berdasarkan tugas (TBLT) dalam mengubah motivasi pembelajaran pelajar, dari segi Ideal L2 Self dan Ought-to L2 Self. 52 pelajar Mandarin yang bukan penutur asli dipilih sebagai peserta. Soal selidik dan temu bual separa berstruktur digunakan untuk mengumpul data. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa secara keseluruhan, Ideal L2 Self dan Ought-to L2 Self pelajar Mandarin yang bukan penutur asli berada pada tahap yang tinggi, dan penerapan TBLT dalam kajian ini hanya melakukan perubahan yang sedikit pada Ideal L2 Self dan Ought-to L2 Self pelajar, yang menunjukkan motivasi belajar mereka. Selain itu, dapatan menunjukkan bahawa ada dua ancaman utama penerapan TBLT, yang mengganggu dapatan kajian ini, iaitu kekangan masa dan keperluan pengetahuan asas bahasa. Kajian ini mengimplikasikan bahawa reka bentuk kursus yang lebih teliti dan terperinci yang mempertimbangkan ancaman dalam pelaksanaan TBLT harus dilakukan untuk memastikan keberhasilan penerapan TBLT.

Keywords: Pengajaran Bahasa berasaskan Tugas; Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self; Motivasi Pembelajaran; Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Bahasa Mandarin sebagai Bahasa Asing.

INTRODUCTION

Mandarin has become one of the most widely used foreign languages due to its official status in China and Taiwan, which consist of 1284 million Mandarin native speakers worldwide. Also, its rapid growth in the world's economy, as well as political status, has led to an increased number of non-native Mandarin learners worldwide (Xiong 2018).

Malaysia is aware of the importance of Mandarin, as the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010 highlighted the language as a part of national policy. Tertiary students are required to learn an additional language besides the national language (Bahasa Malaysia) and second language (English). The policy was further enhanced in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (PPPM) and the integrated Cumulative Grade Point Average (iCGPA)

Rubric Learning Outcomes Assessment Guide (Ministry of Education Malaysia 2015). Language proficiency is stressed as one of the six primary attributes found in PPPM. The language proficiency attribute emphasises on students' proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia and English, yet the policy also emphasises on the learning of a foreign language. According to the iCGPA assessment system, communication is included as one of the skills that students need to master. The communication skills mentioned here include conversing in different contexts by conducting effective communication using Bahasa Malaysia, English and also a foreign language.

The teaching of Mandarin as a foreign language (MFL) syllabus in Malaysian tertiary education context is unique compared to that of China. In China, language teaching is categorised into four language skills, such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, it is carried out 'regardless of the language skills' as written by Zhou (2010) to describe the teaching methodology that integrates all language skills without emphasising on any particular language skill (as cited in Hoe & Lim 2015). Therefore, the teaching of Mandarin in Malaysia focuses more on communication and interaction. The difference in focus and approach might be due to the status of Mandarin language in both countries, as Mandarin is the first language in China. Meanwhile, it is a foreign language in Malaysia.

However, throughout the implementation and enhancement of the above-mentioned foreign language policy, learners have voiced up their fear as they are unable to communicate effectively in the language they learned (Tan et al. 2016). There are many probable causes, such as the interference of their mother tongue and insufficient learning time (Cheun 2006; Tan et al. 2016), as well as limited opportunities to use the target language daily (Jeon 2005). These factors have caused them to become less motivated to learn the language. Therefore, it may be helpful for non-native learners of Mandarin to be provided with authentic and pragmatic usage to give them proper language exposure in class.

Regarding language practice opportunities, Tan et al. (2012) suggested that Mandarin teachers should adopt suitable teaching approaches to take full advantage of the learning orientations. Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) seems to offer several advantages to cope with the phenomena in Mandarin practice because it is an approach that provides students with opportunities to have an active engagement in communication using the target language in order to achieve a goal or to complete a

task using the target language. The application of TBLT is popular in the teaching of Mandarin as a second language (MSL) in China, where the application of TBLT is more focused on each language skill. However, Malaysia is lacking in research focusing on TBLT in the teaching of Mandarin as a foreign language since most studies centre on communication and students' learning motivation.

Hence, to fill in the research gap, this research aimed to investigate how applying TBLT in the teaching and learning of Mandarin as a foreign language (MFL) could cause changes in non-native Mandarin learners' learning motivation in the Malaysian context. Specifically, this research focuses on how non-native Mandarin learners view themselves as foreign language users, focusing on how the learners' ideal image (Ideal L2 self) and the expectation they ought to meet (Ought-to L2 Self) changes when their Mandarin learning employs TBLT. Below are the research questions that guided this study:

1. Are there any changes in the learners' Ideal L2 Self following the TBLT of Mandarin?
2. Are there any changes in the learners' Ought-to L2 Self following the TBLT of Mandarin?

TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING MOTIVATION

TBLT is a teaching approach applied in the teaching of a second or a foreign language that was first implemented by Prabu (1987) in his project in Bangalore, India. The teaching approach engages learners to perform a series of tasks in an interactional authentic language environment (Murad 2009) by using the target language for communication. The activities in the task should relate to daily work; or in other words, the task is focused on a real-life situation. It is a process-oriented teaching approach, where communicative competence is the main objective of language teaching. However, communicative competence referred here is not the ability to be native-like in the use of the language; it is referred to as the ability to communicate competently to accomplish a communication goal (Koucká 2007). Nevertheless, during the process of learning, TBLT aims not only to enable learners to acquire new linguistic knowledge but also to enhance their existing knowledge. Hence, from this point, it could be said that TBLT involves both input-providing and output-prompting tasks, where a simple input-based task is initially used to build up target language proficiency. Thus, features of TBLT are emphasised on meaningful

learning, involvement in the real-world process of language use and engagement of cognitive process (Ellis 2003).

The introduction of TBLT in foreign language context has given a positive impact on learning outcomes as researchers discovered that TBLT could increase learners' learning motivation (Chua et al. 2018). This is because TBLT creates a positive learning environment to promote learning enjoyment (McDonough & Chaikitmongkol 2007) and decreases learning anxiety by boosting their confidence (Lopez 2004) (as cited in Bao & Du 2015). Besides that, Motallebzadeh and Defaei (2013) in their research also proved that TBLT listening activities promoted the improvement of listening self-efficacy among EFL intermediate learners.

Several studies done in the context of teaching MFL have also suggested similar views. For instance, Bao and Du (2015) found that the use of TBLT among lower-secondary learners assists in increasing the learners' participation and spurred their interests in the learning process. The same situation happened in the learning of Chinese characters among high-school learners, as reported by Kirkebæk (2012). Moreover, Bao and Du (2015) also proved in their study that TBLT contributes to increasing participation, creating more opportunities for speaking the target language, easing learners' anxiety, and enhancing learning enjoyment.

The above highlighted the cases of teaching MFL in countries outside of China towards non-native speakers. For the teaching of Mandarin as a second language (MSL) in China context, Zhang (2016) has done her research on the application of TBLT in one international school in China, and the result has shown that the teaching approach could enhance non-native Mandarin students' enthusiasm and interest in learning Mandarin. However, Zhang (2016) pointed out that one of the problems in TBLT application is that although students seemed enthusiastic in completing tasks, the documentation on how they learned Mandarin is lacking. Hence, there is a need to look into students' learning motivation during the application of TBLT.

Through observation of scholarly articles published on TBLT in the teaching of second and foreign languages, there is a noticeable lack of studies done on the teaching of MFL in the Malaysian context. Only a few studies were done, one of it by Chua et al. (2019) about comparing the influence of TBLT and audio-lingual teaching approach in teaching MFL on learning motivation among non-native Mandarin beginners. The research had shown that TBLT could increase students' learning motivation by a long run by decreasing their learning anxiety, although students' learning motivation tend to be low when the

teaching approach was first introduced to the students compared to audio-lingual teaching approach.

IDEAL L2 SELF AND OUGHT-TO L2 SELF

The concept of Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self were derived from the L2 motivational self-system proposed by Gardner (1985). They were firstly introduced in Higgins' (1987; 1996) self-discrepancy theory (Martinović 2017). The concepts refer to how one views oneself concerning using a second language. The Ideal L2 Self has the promotion focus; it is the hope, aspiration, advancement, growth and accomplishment. Meanwhile, the Ought-to L2 Self has a prevention focus; which regulate the absence or presence of adverse outcomes, and are concerned with safety, responsibilities, and obligations.

However, in Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), Ideal L2 Self is defined as an image that one has of oneself as a proficient L2 speaker (Dörnyei 2009). This aspect of the L2 self is more internalised. Motivation to learn an L2 will be the result of efforts to reduce the disparity between one's actual and ideal self. For example, if one wishes to be a fluent L2 speaker who seamlessly communicates with native speakers, the image of oneself as a proficient L2 speaker would be the motivation to reduce the gap between one's current proficiency and the ideal image.

Meanwhile, Dörnyei (2009) defined Ought-to L2 Self as the beliefs one has about what is expected of him/her in speaking the target language as a result of perceived duties, obligations, or responsibilities and the avoidance of adverse outcomes. This aspect of the L2 self is less internalised. For example, if the reason one learns an L2 is to pass an examination, the avoidance of failure could be the motivation for one to learn the language.

Besides, Dörnyei (2005) further distinguished between the two selves by explaining that motives related to increasing job success are instrumental motives that have a promotion focus and are part of the Ideal L2 Self; conversely, motives such as studying to avoid parental disappointment have a prevention focus and are related to the Ought-to L2 Self. The result of Dörnyei and his colleagues' (Csizér & Dörnyei 2005; Dörnyei et al. 2006) study showed that pragmatic motives played an essential role in the motivation disposition of learners.

Therefore, the application of TBLT should consider looking into its influence on non-native Mandarin learners' Ideal L2 self and Ought-to L2 Self as the teaching approach focuses on the usage of the target language for communication to complete given tasks, which involves both Ideal and Ought-to L2 Selves.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research adopted a mix-method approach, where the time-series design was the central core of the research design. As suggested by Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2015), this type of research design includes typical pre- and post-treatment tests, observations or measurements taken before and after treatment. The duration of the research was almost ten weeks.

Willis' (1996) TBLT framework includes three main phases: pre-task, during-task, and post-task, as well as the private and public use in the during-task phase. In this study, there were two task cycles applied: i) selling goods, and ii) face-to-face and phone call appointments. Both task cycles consisted of pre-task, during-task, and post-task, with private and public use in the during task phase.

For the first task cycle, the private use in the during-task phase involved peer learning between the learners and their partners. Meanwhile, the public use in the during-task phase involved all learners in the class, where they were divided into groups with all the groups played a different role: two groups of food seller, two groups of clothes seller and two groups of consumers. When they were doing the tasks, the teacher would record their performance and play the recordings after the task completion for the teacher and the learners to comment.

For the second task cycle, the private use in the during-task phase involved a pair work conversation practice based on a situation that they had chosen. The public use in the during-task phase involved learners presenting their conversation in front of the class, where their classmates and the teacher will comment on their presentation.

PARTICIPANTS

This study involved 52 non-native Mandarin learners who were taking Level 2 Mandarin as a Foreign Language in a public university in Malaysia. Convenience sampling was used to select the participants due to the overlapping timetable between the teacher and researcher. The participants chosen had taken Level 1 Mandarin and have passed the exam for the course as a pre-requisite for Level 2 Mandarin course. All 52 participants underwent TBLT and responded to the questionnaire as part of the quantitative component of the study, while only 11 participants were selected to participate in a semi-structured interview as part of the qualitative component of the study.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

In the quantitative component of the study, a questionnaire adapted from Brander (2013) was used as the instrument. This study adopted the second part of Brander's (2013) questionnaire related to the Ideal L2 Self and the Ought-to L2 Self to determine how the participants' perspectives changed due to the application of TBLT in their learning of Mandarin. The questionnaire used 5-point Likert scale (1: Strongly Disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Neither Agree Nor Disagree; 4: Agree; 5: Strongly Agree) which allows the participants to rate their assessment of Ideal L2 Self and the Ought-to L2 Self. The questionnaire was administered as a pre-test before the instructor applied TBLT cycles in the teaching and learning of Mandarin. The same questionnaire was given as post-tests after each cycle of TBLT. The questionnaire was piloted and received Cronbach's Alpha reliability index of 0.87, which shows that it has excellent reliability.

In the qualitative component of the study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data on the participants' perspectives about their Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self. The semi-structured interview was firstly carried out before the TBLT cycles were applied in the teaching and learning of Mandarin to discover the students' initial Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self before the application of TBLT. After each cycle of TBLT, subsequent rounds of semi-structured interviews took place to record their Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self after the application of TBLT, and other factors that might have caused changes in their learning motivation.

DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

The quantitative data was analysed by using descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 software to find out the difference in the mean scores for the result of *Ideal L2 Self* and the *Ought-to L2 Self* between the pre-test, first task cycle post-test and second task cycle post-test. The mean scores of the tests, which shows the degree of motivation in learning, were interpreted according to Srisa-ard's (2002) mean interpretation, as shown in Table 1.

Mean	Degree of Motivation
4.21-5.00	Very high
3.41-4.20	High
2.61-3.40	Average
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Very low

The qualitative data in this study were analysed using content analysis. The data, which consist of semi-structured interview recordings, were transcribed verbatim by a transcriber and translated from Bahasa Malaysia into English. The transcripts were analysed individually and collectively, through a horizontal and vertical content analysis process, to confirm and refute the trend of *Ideal L2 Self* and the *Ought-to L2 Self*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

CHANGES IN THE LEARNERS' IDEAL L2 SELF FOLLOWING THE TBLT OF MANDARIN

Table 2 shows the pre-test, first cycle post-test and second cycle post-test mean scores for the participants' Ideal L2 Self.

In the pre-test, the overall mean was 3.8237, which means that their initial Ideal L2 Self was at a high level. Among the items, item Q2 has the highest mean score (4.21) and item Q4 has the lowest mean score (3.25). From the semi-structured interview, learners stated that their ideal goal in learning Mandarin was to be competent in communicating the language so that they could apply it in the future. Most of the participants mentioned that learning Mandarin would make them easier *"to get a job in the working society when [they] can speak Mandarin"*, they *"want to communicate with Chinese [people] using Mandarin"*, they *"want to improve [their] Mandarin score"*, and they *"want to use Mandarin to communicate once [they] have a chance to travel to China."* From the data, it was clear that the learners' motivation to learn Mandarin was instrumental, which is in line with Gardner and Lambert's (1972) statement of instrumental motivation, which refers to the learning of target language for pragmatic considerations like obtaining a job, earning more money or learning for a good score. In other words, the learners saw the effective use of the language that drives the motivation for them to learn the language.

In the first cycle post-test, the overall mean was 3.8974, which has slightly increased from the original score. Among the items, item Q2 has the highest mean score (4.18), and item Q5 has the lowest mean score (3.57). After the first cycle of TBLT application, the learners emphasised that throughout the TBLT process, the tasks that they need to do helped them to reach their Ideal L2 Self. They stated that the selling and buying activity *"triggered [their] interest because the given situation is spontaneous"*, where they *"need to know the question [asked] and respond to the questions."* They also stated that the practical activity provided feedback and made them aware of their *"ability to speak Mandarin"* and made them *"become*

more confident" in speaking Mandarin that they *"can apply the knowledge [they] gained throughout the learning when [they] meet with a Chinese."*

In the second cycle post-test, the overall mean was 3.8782, which has slightly decreased from the first cycle post-test score. Among the items, item Q2 has the highest mean score (4.12) and item Q4 has the lowest mean score (3.45). After the second cycle of TBLT application, the learners commented on the influence of TBLT on their Ideal L2 Self, but at the same time, they also raised the problems that they faced during the application of TBLT, which caused them to have less input. Among the problems faced were too *"many vocabularies to master in order to perform a task that made [them become] less-motivated"*. They also commented that *"many vocabularies have almost the same pronunciation, but different meaning, which confused [them]"*. These difficulties then caused them to have problems to *"balance [their] time allocation between [their] major courses and Mandarin level 2 course, [even though their] participation in Mandarin learning looks good"*.

The slight increment and decrement in Ideal L2 Self from the pre-test to the first cycle and second cycle post-test has shown that there were not many changes in Ideal L2 Self following the application of TBLT in the teaching and learning of Mandarin. These phenomena happened perhaps due to other factors that interfere with the learning, such as time constraint. TBLT focuses on the practical application of the language in a real situation, which requires the learners to have certain levels of background knowledge in the language – which they may not have met yet – before they can practice it in practical usage. Meeting that requirement takes much time, which in their case, were finite. Therefore, in this study, the activities done in TBLT can be said to have slightly improved the learners' Ideal L2 Self.

CHANGES IN THE LEARNERS' OUGHT-TO L2 SELF FOLLOWING THE TBLT OF MANDARIN

Table 3 shows the pre-test, first cycle post-test and second cycle post-test mean scores for the participants' Ought-to L2 Self.

In the pre-test, the overall mean was 3.6596, which means that their initial Ought-to L2 Self was at a high level. Among the items, item Q1 has the highest mean score (3.94) and item Q14 has the lowest mean score (3.04). From the semi-structured interview, learners stated that they were influenced by the people from their surroundings to learn Mandarin, such as their peers, parents, and teachers. One of them mentioned that she *"wants to learn Mandarin because [her] grandmother is Chinese, but [she does] not have a chance to learn from her"*. Another said that having

TABLE 2. Mean score for Ideal L2 Self

Item	Statement	Mean		
		Pre-test	First cycle post-test	Second cycle post-test
Q2	I can imagine feeling bad if I disappoint my teachers.	4.21	4.18	4.12
Q3	I can imagine myself finding it difficult to make Chinese friends because of my Mandarin.	3.69	3.77	3.78
Q4	I can imagine myself jobless as a result of failing my Mandarin studies.	3.25	4.05	3.45
Q5	I can imagine myself speaking Mandarin with Chinese friends.	3.96	3.57	4.02
Q6	I can see myself as a successful user of Mandarin in the future.	3.96	4.02	3.97
Q16	Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using Mandarin.	3.87	3.8	3.95
Overall		3.8237	3.8974	3.8782

TABLE 3. Mean score for Ought-to L2 Self

Item	Statement	Mean		
		Pre-test	First cycle post-test	Second cycle post-test
Q1	Mandarin is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of Mandarin.	3.94	4.08	3.86
Q7	I study Mandarin because my friends think/say it is important.	3.83	3.83	3.86
Q8	I think my parents would be disappointed with me if I was not good at Mandarin.	3.87	3.85	3.86
Q9	I want to get respect from others for speaking Mandarin well.	3.56	3.92	3.85
Q10	I worry about letting my friends down if I failed.	3.62	3.68	3.77
Q11	I worry that most people I meet will be better at Mandarin than me.	3.79	3.75	3.83
Q12	I would be embarrassed to admit it to others if I was bad at Mandarin.	3.77	3.58	3.88
Q13	My parents believe that Mandarin is important, and I want to please them.	3.67	3.72	3.88
Q14	Other people would not respect me if I didn't speak Mandarin.	3.04	3.26	3.57
Q15	Studying Mandarin is important to me in order to gain the approval of my teachers.	3.52	3.66	3.78
Overall		3.6596	3.7338	3.8121

the ability to speak Mandarin would make him “*feel proud [like his] dad [who are] able to speak Mandarin to his friends*”. Besides, one of the learners also stated that she “*wants to be like [one of her] Indian friend, who studied Mandarin since primary school [which made her able to] communicate well in Mandarin that made her has many Chinese friends*”. These feedbacks show that they believe the ability to speak Mandarin as a third language would gain them respect from the social surroundings, as can be seen from the items that got the highest mean, which are Q1, Q7, and Q8. Supporting this, Calvo (2015) said that learners get motivated by rewards, praises or respect as well as to avoid disappointment from people surrounding them.

In the first cycle post-test, the overall mean was 3.7338, which has slightly increased from the original score. Among the items, item Q1 has the highest mean score (4.08) and item Q14 has the lowest mean score (3.26). After the first cycle of TBLT application, the learners addressed that their Mandarin proficiency has improved because of the encouragement from the teacher to communicate more, and the competition they felt when their peers could do better than them. They said that “*from the previous course, [they]*

seldom have grouping activities as [they just learn on their] own, but what [the] teacher did this semester, which was more towards interaction [enabled them to] move from station to station and from there [they] learn to communicate”. One of them stated that he felt challenged as his friends *could speak fluently but [he] cannot speak fluently, so it encouraged [him] to practice Mandarin to be like them*”.

In the second cycle post-test, the overall mean was 3.8121, which has slightly increased from the first cycle post-test score. Among the items, item Q12 and Q13 have the highest mean score (3.88) and item Q14 has the lowest mean score (3.57). After the second cycle of TBLT application, the learners commented that the improvement in their Mandarin learning came from the social surrounding that had made them believe that they had met their expectation. One of them said that he tried to listen and guess the meaning when “*Chinese students speak among their friends. [He] asked them to reconfirm [his guess of] the meaning of what they were talking about. When [he] successfully get the meaning [right, he] felt satisfied*”. Another learner said that she received “*praises that [she] has improved a lot*”.

The overall findings show a continuous increment of the learners' Ought-to L2 Self from the pre-test to the first cycle and second cycle post-test. It shows that TBLT has made them more aware of their social surroundings' expectations and perceptions of them in learning Mandarin. This awareness could be because as they are trying to adapt their learning into a practical situation, they tend to gain affirmation from their native-speaker Chinese friends and peers that had encouraged their improvement in Mandarin. This condition is supported by Rattanaphummthath (2016), who suggested that the application of TBLT could make learners aware of the social expectation that influenced and shaped their belief and perception, which boosted their learning.

OVERALL CHANGES IN THE LEARNERS' IDEAL L2 SELF AND OUGHT-TO L2 SELF FOLLOWING THE TBLT OF MANDARIN

Figure 1 shows the changes in the non-native Mandarin learners' Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self. When comparing the overall mean score for Ideal L2 Self, there was an increment from pre-test to first cycle post-test, from 3.8237 to 3.8974, and a slight decrease to 3.8782 in the second cycle post-test. Meanwhile, for Ought-to L2 self, there was a continuous increment from pre-test to first cycle post-test to second cycle post-test, from 3.6596 to 3.7338 to 3.8121.

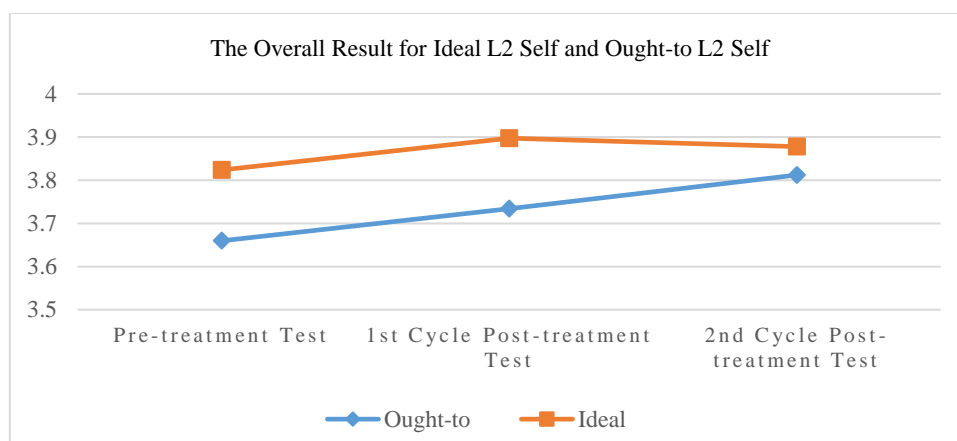


FIGURE 1. The Overall Result for Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self

CONCLUSION

This study investigated how applying task-based language teaching (TBLT) in the teaching and learning of Mandarin as a foreign language (MFL) in the Malaysian context could cause changes in non-native Mandarin learners' learning motivation, in terms of Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self. Findings show that overall, the non-native Mandarin learners' Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self were always at a high

level, and the application of TBLT in this study only slightly affect the learners' Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self, which was their learning motivation. It was also discovered that there were two significant challenges of TBLT application, which interfered with the results of this study, which were time constraint and language knowledge requirement. In conclusion, the results disclose that the application of TBLT shows a promising effect on the learners' learning outcome, provided that the challenges are overcome. Therefore, this study implicates that a more thorough and

Overall, the findings show that the non-native Mandarin learners' Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self were always at a high level with slight changes along with the application of TBLT. This shows that the application of TBLT in this study only slightly affects the learners' Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self, which was their learning motivation. This study also discovered that there were two significant challenges of TBLT application, which interfered with the results of this study. They were time constraint and language knowledge requirement. As TBLT focuses on the application of the communicative aspect of the language in real settings, a certain basic level of language knowledge needs to be possessed first before it can be applied effectively in communication. The time limitation allocated for the course posed a threat to the learning, which caused the students to have less input. Bao and Du (2015) supported these findings, as they believed TBLT faces some challenges such as lack of Chinese pronunciation practice, difficulty in balancing learners' different preferences for learning strategies, and a lack of sufficient instructional time support. These challenges exist even though TBLT application in the teaching and learning of Mandarin as a foreign language benefits learner in terms of increasing active participation and enjoyment as well as creating more communication opportunities while easing learners' anxiety.

detailed course design that takes into account the threats in TBLT implementation should be done in order to ensure the successful application of TBLT. In this study, the outcome of TBLT application had been only descriptively measured; hence, it is suggested that future research be done, which measures the outcome of TBLT application inferentially.

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