

A STUDY ON THE SATISFACTION OF STUDENTS USING AUDIO-LINGUAL METHOD IN LEARNING MANDARIN IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN SABAH

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ABSTRACT

It has been proven that the audio-lingual method of teaching Mandarin as a second language is effective in improving student' listening and speaking skills. This study aimed to find out the students' level of satisfaction on the use of the audio-lingual approach. The participants were 9 primary years 4 students of Kota Kinabalu international school. These 9 students were grouped in an experimental group and treated with an audio-lingual method for three months. After the three months experiment, a questionnaire was distributed to the students to have their feedback in gauging students' satisfaction towards the teacher, teaching content and learning activities. The result showed that students' level of satisfaction towards teacher and teaching content is high and towards learning activities is moderate. The overall students' satisfaction is at a high level.

Keywords: Audio-lingula method, students' satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Mandarin has become a compulsory course in most international schools in Malaysia. Mandarin language is a second language but is a compulsory subject in Kota Kinabalu international school, Sabah, Malaysia. Despite the extra efforts made by some students in attending Mandarin tuition classes to support their study, they still complain learning Mandarin is so difficult. Mandarin teacher also finds it not an easy task to improve non-native students' Mandarin skills. Students have been facing some problems in learning Mandarin. All of these problems may be related to insufficient opportunities to practice the target language. The researcher believes that the audio-lingual method of learning Mandarin as a second language is effective to solve these problems and help improve students' listening

and speaking skills because the audio-lingual method emphasizes listening and speaking skills. Compared with traditional language teaching method, an audio-lingual method is more effective to improve students' listening and speaking skills due to its' extensive oral practice. However, some students complain that too much sentence pattern practice in the audio-lingual method is boring resulting in their losing interest in learning Mandarin. In this study, the researcher conducted a satisfaction questionnaire on the audio-lingual method to gauge student's feedback.

1.1 Objective of this study

The objective of this study is to gauge students' satisfaction on the use of audio-lingual method.

1.2 Definitions

Audio-lingual method:

Larsen-Freeman (2011) defined Audio-lingual method as an oral-based approach. The origin of this approach began in the United States in 1940s with the purpose of cultivating soldiers' good language ability in a short term. Richards and Rodgers (2007: 51) had mentioned that one main aspect of this "Army Method" was the intensive oral drilling. It was developed from the principle that "a language is first of all a system of sounds for social communication; writing is a second derivative system for the recording of spoken language" (Carroll, p. 1963). Audio-lingual method emphasizes speaking and listening skills through repeated sentences structure practice. In the Audio-lingual method most emphasis was put on the "mastery of the formal properties of language", which means good grammatical habits (Dendrinos 1992: 113). In this research, audio-lingual method will be used to improve students' listening and speaking skills of mandarin.

Students's satisfaction:

Satisfaction is a fulfillment of desire. Oliver (1997) defines satisfaction as the perception of pleasurable fulfillment of service. Satisfaction is a kind of fulfillment of need or desire, and the pleasure comes from such fulfillment. Customer's satisfaction has been very popular in researches, but in this study, the satisfaction refers to students' satisfaction. Elliot and Healy (2001) point out that student' satisfaction results from the evaluation of their experience with the education service received. According to Thomas and Galambos (2004) that students' satisfaction is a complexed construct influenced by a variety of characteristics of students and institutions. Students' satisfaction is very important because highlevel of satisfaction improves the quality of students' learning. In this research, questionnaire was used to measure students' level of satisfaction on the use of audio-lingual method.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Sample

In this research, Random sampling method was used. The participants are 9 primary year 4 students of Kota Kinabalu international school, Sabah, Malaysia. This group is called the experimental group.

2.2 Duration

This research lasted 3 months from 8th of January to 8th of April 2018, twelve weeks in total. Mandarin class is conducted once a week, one hour per session and 12 hours in total.

2.3 Treatment

Audio-lingual method was used in the experimental group.

2.4 Instrument

Likert scale questionnaire was conducted in the experimental group. The questionnaire comprises of three parts, namely students' satisfaction towards teacher, students' satisfaction towards teaching content and students' satisfaction towards learning activities. Students were asked to respond to these statements using Likert ranking scale of 1 to 5 according to their satisfaction.

3. FINDINGS

After collecting the data, they were analyzed by using SPSS version 2.1.

3.1 Overall means of students' satisfaction

Table 1 shows the overall mean scores of students' satisfaction. Based on the overall means of students' satisfaction, it is found that the mean score of students' satisfaction towards the teacher is at a high level of 3.9267. The mean score of students' satisfaction towards the teaching content is also at a high level of 4.1467. The mean score of students' satisfaction towards learning activities is at a moderate level of 3.3944. The average mean score is 3.8226 which is at high level.

Table 1 overall means of students' satisfaction

Component	Items	Mean	Standard deviation
Students' satisfaction towards teacher	3	3.9267	.27683
Students' satisfaction towards teaching content	3	4.1467	.25403
Students' satisfaction towards learning activities	9	3.3944	.62153
Overall	15	3.8226	.38680

3.2 Students' satisfaction towards teacher

Table 2 below shows students' satisfaction towards the teacher. It can be seen that the overall mean score is 3.9267 which is at a high level. The mean of statement 1 (The teacher has

clearly defined the objectives of each lesson before starting the class.) is 3.67 which is moderate. The mean of statement 2 (The teacher has acted as a classroom director to motivate students.) is at a high level of 4.22. The mean of statement 3 (The teacher gave positive reinforcement by using motivational expressions.) is also at a high level of 3.78. The standard deviation of statement 3 is the highest in this part.

Table 2 Students' satisfaction towards teacher

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
1: The teacher has clearly defined the objectives of each lesson before starting the class.	3.67	.866
2: The teacher has acted as a classroom director to motivate students.	4.22	.833
3: The teacher gave positive reinforcement by using motivational expressions.	3.78	1.093
Overall	3.9267	.27683

3.3 Students' satisfaction towards teaching content

Table 3 below shows that the average mean of students' satisfaction towards teaching content is 4.1467, this is at a high level. The table shows that the mean scores of statements 4, 5 and 6 are 4.00, 4.44 and 4.00 respectively. These mean scores are at a high level.

Table 3 Students' satisfaction towards teaching content

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
S4: The teaching content meets the needs of students.	4.00	1.118
S5: The order of difficulty of the teaching content was arranged from the easiest to the hardest.	4.44	.882
S6: The content can be applied to real life situation.	4.00	1.118
Overall	4.1467	.25403

3.4 Students' satisfaction towards learning activities

Table 4 below shows the average mean score of students' satisfaction towards learning activities is at a moderate level of 3.3944. As can be seen from the table, the statement 10 (The Question-answer practice between teacher and students.) is the lowest level of the questionnaire.

The means of statement 7(Mandarin was spoken as a language medium in class),9(The use of real-life objects and situation made the language easier to memorize.),11(Making sentences

with new words) and 14 (Changing sentences pattern, for example: positive sentences are changed to negative sentences.) are in the range of 2.34-3.67, which is moderate. Notice that the standard deviation of statement 14 is the highest meaning different students have different opinions.

The means of statement 12 (Expanding sentences with modifiers.) and statement 13 (Replacing a part of the sentence with synonyms) are in the range of high level.

Statement 15 (Learning speaking mandarin with the audio-lingual method has made students speak mandarin more fluently.) is the highest score in this part.

Table 4 Students' satisfaction towards learning activities

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
S7: Mandarin was spoken as a language medium in class	3.56	1.014
S8: The dialog was imitated and practiced repeatedly until it can be memorized.	4.33	1.000
S9: The use of real-life objects and situation made the language easier to memorize.	3.44	1.014
S10: The Question-answer practice between teacher and students.	2.33	.866
S11: Making sentences with new words.	2.78	1.093
S12: Expanding sentences with modifiers.	3.78	.833
S13: Replacing a part of sentence with synonyms.	3.78	1.093
S14: Changing sentences pattern, for example: positive sentences are changed to negative sentences.	3.33	1.414
S15: Learning speaking mandarin with audio-lingual method has made students speak mandarin more fluently.	4.00	1.118
Overall	3.3944	.62153

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

4.1 The level of students' satisfaction towards teacher

The result shows that students' satisfaction toward a teacher is at a high level. The students' satisfaction is in respect of defining objectives of each lesson before starting the class enabling the students to know their learning tasks and targets of each lesson at the beginning of class. This result is supported by WichudaKunnu (2017) who conducted research on the

satisfaction of learning spoken English through adapted audio-lingual method. It revealed that students feel uncomfortable when they were confronted with a difficult situation in a classroom leading to a decreased effort to the practise target language. Students are highly satisfied with the teacher who played the role of a classroom director to motivate students. The result is supported by the theory of Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) stating that the teacher is like an orchestra conductor, directing and controlling the language behaviour of students. Students are also highly satisfied in respect of teacher providing positive reinforcement by using motivational expressions. This is supported by Brown (1994) who summarized one principle of the audio-lingual method that states successful responses are immediately reinforced in the audio-lingual method.

4.2 The level of students' satisfaction towards teaching content

The result of this research shows that students' satisfaction level towards teaching content is high. In this research, the teaching contents meet the needs of students as it can be applied to real life situation. This result is supported by the theory of Richard (1986) that teaching content should connect with students' lives and interests. Furthermore, communicative competence, not simply grammatical competence, should be the goal of language teaching. Teaching content was arranged in the order from the easiest to the most difficult, this is another aspect that students are satisfied with. This is supported by Rosen (1966) whose theory is " In studying anything one should begin with the easiest aspect of the subject and gradually proceed to the more difficult ones".

4.3 The level of students' satisfaction towards learning activities

The result of this research shows that students' level of satisfaction towards learning activities is moderate. The level of satisfaction for activities like "Question-answer practice between teacher and students" and "Making sentences with new words" is low. This shows that some students do not like questions to be asked by the teacher. The reason being the students are not confident and are too afraid of making mistakes. The result is proven by Merritt (2012) who says some EFL teachers complain that students are too afraid of making mistakes in mispronunciation or grammatical error that would cause them embarrassment.

The level of satisfaction for activities like "Mandarin was spoken as a language medium in class" and "Changing sentences pattern" is moderate. This is because students' level of mandarin is still at the beginning stage. They cannot understand Mandarin very well making them not so satisfied with Mandarin as a medium language in the classroom. This result was supported by Yang Linping (2016) who made a study on an applied research of the listening and speaking training method for South Korea primary Chinese speaking course. He concluded that 32% of students could not understand the teacher's explanation in English because Korean students are not good at English. The use of English as medium language has become a burden to their Mandarin learning.

The remaining activities like "Expanding sentences with modifiers", and "Replacing a part of the sentence with synonyms" achieved a high level of satisfaction. The overall satisfaction, however, is at a moderate level. This result does not support the previous research findings by Wichudakunnu (2017) who conducted research on the satisfaction in learning speaking English through adapted audio-lingual method. It revealed that in the aspects of learning

activities, the overall students' satisfaction towards learning spoken English through adapted audio-lingual method was at extremely satisfied level.

The reason why the overall satisfaction is at a moderate level may be due to the classroom learning activities are not reflecting the real-life situation. The language classroom activities should, as far as possible, mirror the real world. This finding is supported by the theory of Clarke and Silbertstein (1977) that classroom activities should parallel the real language situation as closely as possible. The methods and materials should concentrate on the message and not the medium. Another reason could be most of the learning activities were pattern drills which are considered boring. This is supported by Hu RuiQi (2014) in his research on the application of the audio-lingual approach and the communicative approach to teaching Chinese as a foreign language. He revealed that some students do not like pattern drills and are easily distracted.

The level of satisfaction for questionnaire like "Learning spoken mandarin with the audio-lingual method has made students speak mandarin more fluently" is at a high level. This is because the audio-lingual method provides chances for students to practise target language, the more frequently the practice the more fluently you speak. This result was supported by Chen Yufei (2015) in his study on the class design of overseas Chinese class based on the audio-lingual method which revealed that some students think more opportunities of speaking target language are provided in an audio-lingual method that helps students to speak target language more fluently.

From students' feedback, students are highly satisfied with teacher and teaching content, but some learning activities cannot trigger students' learning interest. In this respect, when using the audio-lingual method, the teacher needs to know students' interest and responds towards learning activities and to arrange different learning activities according to students' interest and needs to get the maximum achievement.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research showed that students are satisfied with the teaching content. Teaching content should always be arranged from the easiest to most difficult, needs to be in line with teaching goals and can be applied to real-life situations. If the teaching content is more interesting the students will be more engaged. This research also showed that students are satisfied with learning activities but the level of satisfaction for activities like "Question-answer practice between teacher and students" and "Making sentences with new words" is low. Chandy (2013) says that practicing is the key to language learning. Practice is, therefore, the focus of learning activities. In order to make learning activities more interesting, the teacher needs to choose some activities according to students' feedback and interest.

Teaching content, learning activities and teacher' role are the keys to language learning because they determine the learning effectiveness. In order to maximize effectiveness, the teacher needs to choose teaching content and learning activities according to students' learning goals, needs and interest.

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