

Original Paper

Effectiveness of Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative
Language Teaching in Enhancing the English Language
Grammar Proficiency and Attitude among Intermediate Chinese
EFL Learners

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Abstract

The current study delved into examining the effectiveness of Audio-lingual Method (ALM) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in developing the English language grammar skills and language learning attitude of EFL intermediate Chinese learners. The study employed a quasi-experimental research design in the two groups of 60 Chinese EFL middle grades. The study uses a quasi-experimental research method for two groups of respondents. Findings showed that the ALM and CLT are effective in enhancing the English language grammar proficiency and language learning attitude among Chinese EFL intermediate learners. The gender gap in language learning favors female respondents to exhibit better performance. Consequently, the EFL learners exposed to the Communicative Language Teaching method showed better language learning grammar performance compared to those in the Audio-lingual Method. Language grammar learning attitude is not affected by gender, implying that both sexes were able to obtain the same level of benefits of the ALM and CLT. Finally, the study further concludes that language proficiency is not associated to attitude towards learning grammar of the two groups of respondents after their exposure to Audio-lingual method and Communicative Language Teaching implying that regardless of the learners' attitude towards learning grammar they are capable of manifesting better performance in language learning with the use of ALM and CLT. The theoretical and practical implications of the study are presented and discussed.

Keywords

Audio-lingual method, Communicative Language Teaching, EFL, grammar competence, Linguistic

Accuracy Quasi-Experimental

1. Introduction

English is an international language occupying a dominant role in the industry, commerce, education, and human sciences, and all professions and walks of life. The ability to use the English language in different levels of situations is an essential learners' attributes to achieve global competence. English language proficiency allows an individual to have an understanding of the world's diverse people. Educational systems of the world are rejecting intervention to prepare learners towards communicative competence.

Language education requires teachers to become conversant on the use of effective language teaching strategies to address the needs of the global economy, emphasizing the English language as the language of the world, particularly with the advent of education 4.0 (Magulod, 2018). In the Chinese context, problems are arising with the use of teaching strategies producing deaf-and-dumb English learners (Fang, 2017; Li, Tao & Xu, 2018; Liu, Lin & Wiley, 2016; Wang, Smyth, & Cheng, 2017; Wei & Su, 2015a, 2012b) showing that the learners do not have the capacity to use English language in real-life situation. It was confirmed that Chinese EFL learners do not have the language facility to speak English. To address such emerging concerns, the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2001 initiated interventions to standardized English language instruction for all levels of schools. The emphasis was on English language writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The response hopes to increase the English language performance of Chinese learners.

At present, the Chinese language curriculum calls for the effective implementation of learner-centered, task-based oriented, and interactive English language instruction and communication. Although authorities in education are now presently working on the promotion of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), it has not yet gained full acceptance among language teachers in China (Hu, 2002a, 2005b; 2005c; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Yu & Lee, 2016). Teachers claimed that they do not have a proper understanding of the principles and methods underlying the use of CLT. Likewise, on the learners' perspective, their attitude and motivation are considered factors influencing their language learning proficiency. They only have a fragmentary level of knowledge in English grammar, and they still manifest weak performance in the four macro skills of language learning. Only 21% of Chinese EFL learners established satisfactory level of communicative competence in the English language (Wei & Su, 2015; Tian, 2019).

Communicative competence encompasses grammatical competence or accuracy in grammar. Grammar is a description of the structure of a language, and the way words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language. Covert grammar teaching means that grammatical rules are not directly given to the students. They are indirectly learning the language without an explanation of the rules. Overt grammar, teaching means the teacher provides the students with grammatical rules and examples. As teachers of English, teaching grammar may emphasize usage or use. Adhering to a covert or overt

way of teaching grammar. Grammar teaching is fun and exciting if teachers are creative enough to think about ideas and functions appropriately and meaningfully. Grammar is essential because it is the foundation of communication. It is the system of rules and principles of writing a language, whether spoken or written. Grammar improves messages to become more evident and easily understand. It provides the structure to be able to express oneself to achieve excellent communication. The mastery of grammar is considered a foundation of communicative competence. In other words, grammar teaching does not end with the definition of terms or generalizations, but it goes beyond the grammar point in focus. It includes appropriacy or appropriateness.

To extend the world's understanding of the Chinese EFL characteristics and attributes using two distinct language methods, Audio-lingual Language Method (ALM) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), this study objectively unravel their cognitive and attitudinal effects in the intermediate classroom. It hopes that this study will help provide necessary interventions to improve English language teaching in China.

1.1 Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)

The audio-lingual method is a language teaching approach anchored on the B.F. Skinner theory of Behaviorism. The theory expounded that learning and acquiring a language is a product of external and internal stimuli shaping human actions through reinforcement involving the process of effective modeling and practice, practice and rewards (Azizifar, 2015; Bagheri et al., 2019; Barona-Oñate et al., 2019; Littlewood, 2018; Mart, 2012; Virvou et al., 2015). The use of ALM is fundamentally founded on two distinct principles involving the behaviorism theory and the view of structural language teaching. The structural view of language teaching in ALM focuses on the linguistic system, which makes up the structural rules and vocabulary. Hence, the theory of behaviorism implies that in the learning environment, when learners are positively and properly reinforced to learn grammar, the higher the tendency of becoming communicative competent.

The primary medium of teaching language for the audio-lingual method is oral. Language is speech where the oral practice is given much emphasis. This method is teacher-centered. This implicates that the teachers' role is a model for the target language in monitoring and correcting learners' performance and outcomes. The teacher controls the learning situation by letting the students engaged with tasks and drills to practice language structures and grammar items. Interaction of the learners is not encouraged, which frequently the learners may not understand the meaning of what they are repeating. It is believed that when they listen and imitate the teacher as they are learning the structures of grammar (Bin Tahir & Hanapi, 2017; Draeger, 2019; Hamada, 2016; Hamada, 2016; Littlewood, 2018).

For audio-lingual method, grammar is taught indirectly or covertly (Deya, Gaibani, & Elmenfi, 2019; Lee, Schallert, & Kim, 2015; Liao et al., 2018; Magulod, 2018; Qi & Lai, 2017; Rashid, Abdul Rahman, & Yunus, 2017). Previous researches highlight (Bleske-Rechek et al., 2019; Efremova, Plotnikova, & Ustyuzhanina, 2015; Loh, Liao, & Leung, 2018; Min, 2016; Okpe & Onjewu, 2016; Thoms, Sung, & Poole, 2017; Uysal & Yavuz, 2015; van Rijt et al., 2019; Vercellotti, & Packer, 2016; Verhoeven,

Perfetti, & Pugh, 2019; Zheng, & Yu, 2018) that failure of learners to achieve mastery of the linguistic systems and forms at their stage, they will be capable enough to obtain proficiency in the target language, which is English. Hence, communicative competence requires linguistic accuracy is a critical component suggesting that in communication, it does not only matter what message is transmitted but also how the message is transmitted. Errors in language form may elicit negative reactions by the listener. The teaching for accuracy is a useful goal for language instruction as it improves communication. Therefore, the teaching and testing of grammar should not at all be ignored. The teaching and testing of grammar can be viewed in two ways, namely structural view, and communicative view. The structural view highlights the testing of one's awareness of the grammatical features of the structures of the language.

1.2 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching is another significant variable of the study derived from the language theory of communication. The primary purpose of this language learning theory is to develop communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). CLT is a task-based language teaching of grammar where lessons are taught in a stimulating and meaningful way. The learners can explore the correct use and usage of the language. Students were given a formal explanation of the rules and structures of grammar and allowed language interaction in meaningful situations. In CLT, integration among listening, speaking, reading, writing skills which can be taught as a communication process via grammar teaching in which two or three macro-skills can be integrated into grammar lessons (Candlin, 2016). CLT also focuses on form and function. Form refers to a specific grammar point or structure of the target language like verbs, nouns, or adjectives. Function refers to language in different situations like narrating past events, inviting a friend to a party, apologizing for a mistake done, suggesting solutions to a particular problem, expressing likes and dislikes, and many others.

For language teachers, teaching students to learn the grammatical form to perform effectively and appropriately in various communication situations is necessary. CLT is described to have a learner-centred characteristics (AlHassan & Wood, 2015; Bajrami & Ismail, 2016; Elder et al., 2017; Foote et al., 2016; Larsen-Freeman, 2015). CLT is a language teaching approach that aims to facilitate language learning through engagement and interaction with the use of authentic performance (East, 2016; Fulcher, 2000; Morrow, 2018; Rahimi & Zhang, 2015; Rao, 2002). Tasks are performed by the students to provide them real language learning exposure. For the CLT classroom, student learning performance is both for the teacher and students. Instead of establishing a dominant personality in the learning process, teachers are the facilitators of the communicative process, creating an atmosphere of democratic, secured, and non-defensive climate.

1.3 Theoretical Grounding, Research Gap and Context

This study underpins the theory of communicative competence, composed of four equally important dimensions, namely grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence (Bagarić & Djigunović, 2007; Canale & Swain, 1981; Canale, 2014).

Grammatical competence is the ability of the speaker to understand the arbitrary rules of grammar, and every learner must be grammatically competent in order to perform effectively in communication situations. Language teaching today requires the teaching of grammar. Teachers do not know how to carry out activities in the classroom.

Language teachers need to assess the effectiveness of Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in enhancing English language proficiency and attitude of Chinese EFL learners at the intermediate level is an essential research gap of this study. Charting the problem in the Chinese context, there is still a shortage of literature about the effectiveness of ALM and CLT as foreign language teaching methods in China. Previous studies are focused on the application of ALM and CLT in the mandarin language teaching in the elementary and college levels (Bao, Zhang, & Dixon, 2016; Ge, 2012; Gu, 2016; Jiang, 2014; Liu, 2015a, 2016b; Liu, Lin, & Wiley, 2016; Sheng-heng, 2008; Te-jung, 2009; Yan, Goh, & Zhou, 2018), others are along with the perception of learners and teachers role in language teaching (Cai, 2018; Dai, 2011; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Liu, Lin, & Wiley, 2016; Qi, 2018; Rao, 2010; Wu, 2015, Xiaotong, 2014; Yu & Liu, 2018; Zhang, 2014), several studies also investigated the use of mobile-assisted language teaching (Hsu, 2013; Lin, 2016; Wang, 2017; Kim & Kwan, 2012; Xu & Peng, 2017). The mentioned studies have limited scope on the actual implementation of ALM and CLT, as well as their effectiveness in the intermediate levels.

Despite the presence of existing literature on ALM and CLT, Chinese EFL learners still have insufficient opportunities with the use of the English language (Jiang, 2014; Jiang, Zhang, & May 2019; Liu, Lin & Wiley, 2016; Ya-Ting & Hui-Min, 2019). Consequently, Chinese as foreign language learners have difficulty in oral production, grammar, words, pronunciation, and aural reception (Hu, 2010; Hu & Tian, 2012; Stickler & Shi, 2013; Shen & Xu, 2015; Qian & McCormick, 2014). Problems on such are attributed to the necessity of appropriate and proper grammar teaching among Chinese EFL learners considering that mastery of grammar is the foundation of English language competence. This research aims to shed light on the use of ALM in the Chinese classrooms of the intermediate EFL as well as to suggest realistic language teaching initiatives.

Developed nations such as China recognized the significant role of the English language in the global arena. They had already initiated reforms in English language education programs to address the language learning needs of learners. As the context of the study, positioning English language competence among learners in China requires teachers to have a practical sense of sociocultural-sensitive pedagogy with the use of effective language teaching methods considering that China already implemented a policy articulating English as a medium of instruction (Jiang, Zhang, & May 2016; Wilkinson, 2013). It is, therefore, essential to deepen understanding how Chinese EFL learners in the intermediate level experience and view language teaching using ALM and CLT. Hence, this paper aims to expand the worlds' understanding of the implementation of ELT in the Chinese intermediate classrooms in particular and the English language education in a broader context.

2. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study were formulated based on the comparative effectiveness of two teaching methods in language teaching. Hence, the following are the specific research questions: (1) How different are the pre - and post- English language grammar proficiency test scores of the two groups of respondents in the Audio-lingual method and Communicative Language teaching? (2) How different is the attitude of the ESL intermediate Chinese learners exposed to the audio-lingual method and communicative language teaching method before and after the study? (3) How different is the attitude of the ESL intermediate Chinese learners exposed to the audio-lingual method and communicative language teaching method before and after the study when grouped according to gender? (4) Is there a relationship between the Achievement and Attitude of the Respondents in the Audio-lingual method and Communicative Language teaching

2.1 Research Hypotheses

The following are the null hypotheses of the study: (1) There is no difference in the English language grammar proficiency scores of the groups of subjects before and after the study; (2) There is no difference in the attitude towards learning English grammar of the subjects exposed to ALM and CLT before and after the study; (3) There is no difference in the English language grammar proficiency scores and attitudes of the groups of subjects before and after the study when grouped according to gender; (4) There is no relationship between the intermediate ESL Chinese learners attitude and proficiency in English language grammar?

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a quasi-experimental research design, which is commonly used in teaching-learning setting. It specifically employed the pre-test-post-test experimental research method. This method is considered appropriate to examine the effects of innovations in an educational setting, which is a common method for educational research (Bloomfield & Fischer, 2019; Campbell & Stanley, 2015; Dugard & Todman, 1995; Secomb & Smith, 2011). The method measures the growth and gain of learners' performance with their exposure before and after a particular intervention is initiated. In this study, it involves the comparison of the achievement and attitude of Chinese EFL intermediate learners exposed to Audio-lingual method and Communicative Language Teaching. The pre-test-post-test design was used to measure the change in language proficiency and language learning attitudes of the Chinese EFL learners with the use of ALM and CLT in the classroom.

3.2 Research Participants, Sampling Procedure and Ethical Considerations

The respondents of the study were a total of 60 Chinese EFL intermediate learners grouped into the Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching in one intermediate school in Beijing, China. Figure 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the sampling background of the respondents of the study. When taken as a whole, the majority are females (n=39) compared to males

(n=21). When taken separately as a group, the audio-lingual method group has 19 females and 11 males, while the communicative language group has 20 males and ten males, respectively. The two classes named with Class A for the ALM and Class B for the CLT.

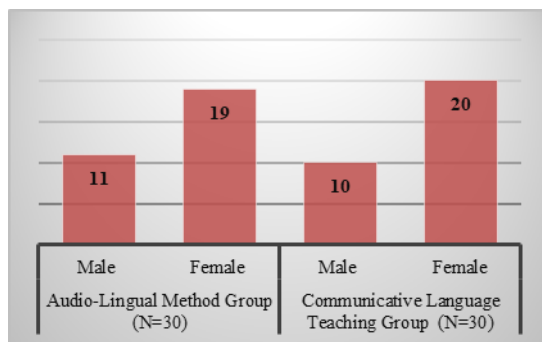


Figure 1. Frequency Distribution of Participants on the ALM and CLT Groups

The calculation of the sampling size used the t-test of the mean difference for math pairs of G*Power with the power of 0.90. To ensure homogeneity of the participants' English language grammar proficiency to assure that the learners were at the same level of language skills, the Oxford Quick Placement Tests (2001) was adopted, showing that all the learners were at the advance or moderate level of English language proficiency. Meanwhile, the test of homogeneity of variances of the English language proficiency level uses the Levene's test for equality of variances set at 0.05 alpha level.

Anchored on the study's understanding of ethical studies, the participants' personal information and data were handled confidentially. The written request was approved by the school authorities before the selection of participants and conduct of the study. The parents' consent was also secured by the researcher. The parents were provided information regarding the risks and benefits of the study, which may cause to their children. With clear intentions, the parents allowed their children to become the participants of the study with the affirmation of the school headmaster and department head. Likewise, the respondents and parents have filled out a data privacy agreement form. Finally, anonymity of the respondents' and institutions was observed for ethical reasons.

3.3 Research Instruments

The study used two necessary research instruments, namely the Oxford Quick Listening Level Tests and the English Language Grammar Attitudinal Scale. The tools were adequately used by the researcher considering their validity and content. The measure of English Language Grammar Proficiency was the Oxford listening level tests (2001). The instrument comprises of 60 item test but reduced to 15 items by the researcher in multiple-choice to match with the learners at the intermediate level. It assessed how the level of learners' grammatical and vocabulary skills as well as comprehension of the meaning in communication. The instrument has been used by previous authors on language learning and acquisition in Europe, Asia and Americas (Athanasopoulos, 2006a, 2007b; Azkarai & del Pilar García Mayo, 2015;

Bagheri, Hadian, & Vaez-Dalili, 2019; Barner, Inagaki, & Li, 2009; Lemhöfer & Broersma, 2012; Sato, Gygax, & Gabriel, 2013).

Meanwhile, the measure of Attitude towards Learning English Grammar was the standardized research instrument adopted from Akay and Toraman (2015). The tool is known as the Students' English Grammar Attitude Scale (SEGAS). It is designed for students with an introductory level of English education. It has 16 items answerable with a five-point Likert scale with one as the lowest indication of favorable attitude and five as the highest. It has a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.874 considered to have high reliability. Similarly, the instrument has also been used by previous langue researchers (Demir, 2018; Karatas et al., 2016; Uzun, 2013; Yang, Chen, & Jeng, 2010).

3.4 Procedure and Treatment Phases

The study use three-phase treatment following the Pre-test-Post-Test Research Design to achieve the objectives of the study, the Phase I involved the pre-treatment phase, Phase II the implementation phase, and Phase III the Post-treatment phase. Before the implementation of the two teaching methods in the Chinese Intermediate EFL classes, lesson planning and class scheduling was conducted. The necessary preparation of the learning contents to be covered was prepared to assure the validity and reliability of results. Two experienced language teachers were requested to teach the two Classes using ALM and CLT. Both teachers have the same level of learning experiences and specialization and have undergone professional development for 21st-century language teachers. Both also have conducted action researches on language teaching strategies. They were randomly assigned for Class A and Class B. The Pre-treatment phase involved the pre-testing of the language learning skill and English grammar attitude of the two groups of respondents. For the treatment phase, it involved the implementation of Audio-lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching to the two classes. Class A exposed to ALM, and Class B exposed to CLT. The experimental sessions lasted for three weeks covering grammar lessons covered in the lesson plan and tasks designed. The lessons taught in the morning sessions. After the implementation phase of the study, post-testing of the language learning skill and English grammar attitude of the two groups of respondents. Before and after testing, the students provided with necessary instructions highlighting the significance of their scores in the fulfillment study.

3.5 Data Analysis

Scoring and interpretation of the gathered data, descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation were used. The pre-test and post-test achievement scores were analyzed using the following points scale: 13-14- Excellent; 10-12- Very Good; 7-9- Fair; 4-6- Poor; 1-3- Very Poor. Meanwhile, to analyze and interpret the attitudes of the respondents before and after their exposure to ALM and CLT, the following scale was adopted: 4.20-5.00- Highly Favourable; 3.40-4.19- Favourable; 3.60-2.39- Neutral; 1.80-2.59- Not Favourable; 1.00- 1.79-Very Unfavourable.

Inferential statics were also used. To ascertain the significant differences in the language proficiency and English language grammar attitude with the use of ALM and CLT before and after the interventions when grouped into gender, the t-test of dependent sample means was used. It is generally used to compare the

difference between means in match sample design (Kim, Park, & Wang, 2018). In like manner, the Cohen's d effect size was used to interpret the effect of the gain scores before and after the interventions. The use of Cohen d avoids a Type II, or β , error (Albers & Lakems, 2018; Lakens, 2013; Sullivan & Fein, 2012). Finally, Pearson r was used to test the relationship between language proficiency and English language grammar attitude with the use of ALM and CLT. Pearson r highlights the relationship existing between variables (Akoglu, 2018; Ly, Marsman, & Wagenmakers, 2018; Mu, Liu, & Wang, 2018). Moreover, to ensure that all necessary assumptions and hypotheses followed, the test of homogeneity of variances of the English language proficiency level used the Levene's test for equality of variances which set at 0.05 alpha level. Likewise, the test of normal distribution was used. As presented in Table 2, the result of the test of normality of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk showed a normal distribution of the pre-test-post-test scores obtained with the use of Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) and Communicative Language teaching (CLT). This indicates that the test of normality is obtained, indicating that there is a normal distribution of the pre-test-post-test scores in ALM and CLT.

Table 2. Test of Normality of the English Language Proficiency Pre-Test and Post-Test in Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)						
Pre-test	.227	30	.532	.889	30	.145
Post-test	.172	30	.024	.927	30	.042
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
Communicative						
Language teaching (CLT)	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	.165	30	.325	.950	30	.106
Post-test	.162	30	.044	.881	30	.003

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*=Significant at 0.5 level.

4. Results

4.1 Research Question 1. English Language Proficiency and Attitude of the Chinese EFL learners before and After the Implementation of ALM and CLT

Primarily, the descriptions of the scores of the two groups of respondents were described in this part of the study to provide a clear background of the pre-test and post-test scores in using the ALM and CLT. Table 3 shows that in the audio-lingual method, the EFL learners have an entry score of 9.16 (sd=2.50) while in the Communicative Language Teaching, they obtained an entry score of 8.30 (sd=1.82) both described to have a moderate level of performance. This shows that before the implementation of the

methods in the two groups of respondents, the Chinese EFL learners have already established an acceptable performance in the English language proficiency level. Consequently, looking at the post-test scores of the learners after the implementation of the two teaching methods, the learners were able to score a very good level of performance as evidenced with their obtained score of 11.63 (sd=1.93) for ALM and 12.86 (sd=1.96) for CLT. The data shows improvement in the scores of the respondents after the implementation of the two methods in English language grammar in the Chinese EFL intermediate classroom.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the ALM and CLT Pre-Test Post-Test Achievement Scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
ALM Achievement Score				
Pre-test	30	9.16	2.50	Fair
Post-test	30	11.63	1.93	Very Good
CLT Achievement Score				
Pre-test	30	8.30	1.82	Fair
Post-test	30	12.86	1.96	Very Good

Note. 13-14- Excellent; 10-12- Very Good; 7-9- Fair; 4-6- Poor; 1-3- Very Poor

On the other hand, when the attitude of the two groups of respondents was taken as a whole, neutral or uncertain level of attitude towards learning English grammar is expressed by the respondents before the implementation of ALM with the mean of 2.80 (sd=0.76) and the CLT with the mean of 2.50 (sd=.086). However, after the application of the language teaching methods, the two groups of respondents obtained a favorable level of attitude towards learning English grammar, where ALM has the post-test score of 4.03 (sd=0.88), and CLT scored 3.83 (sd=0.69). Results imply that there was improvement on the learners' attitude after the implementation of ALM and CLT.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching Pre-test Post-test Attitude Scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Interpretation
ALM Attitude Score				
Pre-test	30	2.80	0.76	Neutral
Post-test	30	4.03	0.88	Favourable
CLT Attitude Score				
Pre-test	30	2.50	0.86	Uncertain

Post-test	30	3.83	0.69	Favourable
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Notes. 4.20-5.00- Highly Favourable; 3.40-4.19- Favourable; 3.60-2.39- Neutral; 1.80-2.59- Not Favourable; 1.00- 1.79-Very Unfavourable.

4.2 Research Question 2. Pre and Post Achievement Scores of the Respondents in the ALM and CLT

Interestingly, Table 4 presents the differences between the pre and post achievement scores in the audio-lingual method and communicative language teaching. The pretest and posttest were administered to ascertain the significant differences in the English language grammar proficiency of the respondents. It can be noted that statically significant results are shown that after the exposure of the two groups of respondents in Audio-lingual Method ($M=11.63$, $SD=1.93$, $p=0.00$, $d=0.72$) and Communicative Language Teaching ($M=12.86$, $SD=1.96$, $p=0.00$, $d=0.74$) they scored significantly higher in the post-test scores compared to the pre-test scores. Their performance significantly changed from fair to very good level of English language grammar skills. Hence, there are significant differences in the pre and post achievement scores of the Chinese EFL learners after their exposure to the ALM and CLT language teaching methods. The null hypothesis is, therefore, rejected.

Table 4. The Difference between the Pre-Test-Post-Test Achievement Scores in the Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching

Achievement in	Mean	SD	Mean	t-value	df	p-Value	Effect
ALM	Score		Diff.				Size
Pre-test	9.16	2.50	-2.466	-4.337	29		0.72
Post-test	11.63	1.93				0.00**	
Achievement in	Mean	SD	Mean	t-value	df	p	Effect
CLT	Score		Diff.				Size
Pre-test	8.300	1.82	-4.566	-9.637	29		0.74
Post-test	12.866	1.96				0.00**	

*= Significant at 0.01 level ns= not significant d=Effect Size Convention (Cohen's d): Large Effect Size.

4.3 Research Question 3. Pre and Post Attitude Scores of the Respondents in the ALM and CLT

Remarkably, results showed in Table 5 that significant differences are also seen in the pre and post attitude scores of the two groups of respondents after the implementation of ALM and CLT. The significant differences are seen in the test of differences on the attitudinal level. Post-test results in ALM ($M=4.03$, $SD=0.88$, $p=0.00$, $d=0.72$) and CLT ($M=3.85$, $SD=0.69$, $p=0.00$, $d=0.75$) had significantly higher scores compared to the pre-test result. In the advent of implementation ALM and CLT, the respondents were able to score a significantly higher level of attitude after using both teaching

strategies. It can be simply illustrated that the exposure of the respondents in both language teaching methods increased their level of attitude from neutral to a favorable level. Hence, there is a significant difference in the pre and post attitudinal scores of the Chinese EFL learners after their exposure to the ALM and CLT language teaching methods. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 5. The Difference between the Pre-Test-Post-Test Attitude Scores in the Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching

Attitude in ALM	Mean Score	SD	Mean Diff.	t-value	df	p-value	Effect Size
Pre-test	2.80	0.76	-1.23				0.72
Post-test	4.03	0.88		-4.88	29	0.00**	
Attitude in CLT	Mean Score	SD	Mean Diff.	t-value	Df	p	Effect Size
Pre-test	2.50	0.86					0.75
Post-test	3.83	0.69	-1.33	-7.10	29	0.00**	

*= Significant at 0.01 level **=Significant at 0.05 level

ns= not significant d=Effect Size Convention (Cohen's d): Large Effect Size

4.4 Research Question 4. Difference between the pre and post Achievement and Attitude Scores of the Respondents in the ALM and CLT when Grouped According to Gender

Consequently, the comparison of the language learning proficiency level of the two groups of respondents when grouped according to gender is presented in Table 6. The table shows that there are significant differences in the level of language grammar proficiency of the respondents when compared to gender. The significant differences are seen in the Audio-lingual Method pre-test score where females ($M=9.84$, $SD=1.89$, $p=0.05^*$) scored significantly higher than males. Meanwhile, for Communicative Language Teaching both in the pre-test and post-test showed that females consistently scored higher than males in the pre-test score ($M=9.60$, $SD=1.53$, $p=0.004^*$) and post-test score ($M=14.20$, $SD=1.96$, $p=0.008^*$). It was found out that female Chinese EFL intermediate learners have higher English Language Proficiency levels compared to males before and after the implementation of ALM and CLT. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 6. The Difference between the Pre-Test-Post-Test Achievement Scores of the Respondents in the Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching when Grouped According to Gender

Group	Category	N	Mean Score	SD	t-value	df	p-value
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Audio-lingual method							
Pre-test	Male	11	8.00	3.06	-2.04	28	0.05**
	Female	19	9.84	1.89			
Post-test	Male	11	11.90	11.90	.586	28	0.56ns
	Female	19	11.47	11.47			
Communicative Language teaching							
Pre-test	Male	10	7.65	1.71	3.16	28	0.004*
	Female	20	9.60	1.53			
Post-test	Male	10	12.20	1.13	2.96	28	0.008*
	Female	20	14.20	1.96			

*= Significant at 0.01 level **=Significant at 0.05 level ns= not significant.

Accordingly, when the attitude is compared between the male and female in the Audio-lingual method and the Communicative Language Teaching method, no significant differences were found before and after the implementation of ALM and CLT in the two groups of respondents. The findings manifest that when gender is taken, no attitudinal effects are seen for both teaching methods. Hence, the Null Hypothesis is accepted. The results imply that both sexes highly benefitted from the use of ALM and CLT.

Table 9. The Difference between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Attitude Scores of the Respondents in the Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching when grouped According to Gender

Group	Category	N	Mean Score	SD	t-value	df	p-value
Audio-lingual method							
Pre-test	Male	11	2.81	0.75	0.09	28	0.92ns
	Female	19	2.78	0.78			
Post-test	Male	11	3.90	1.04	-5.75	28	0.57ns
	Female	19	4.10	0.80			
Communicative Language teaching							
Pre-test	Male	10	2.10	0.73	-1.87	28	0.71ns
	Female	20	2.70	0.86			
Post-test	Male	10	3.80	0.42	-1.82	28	0.85ns
	Female	20	3.85	0.81			

*= Significant at 0.01 level **=Significant at 0.05 level ns= not significant.

4.5 Research Question 5. Difference between the Post Achievement and Post Attitude Scores of the Respondents with the Use of ALM and CLT

In light of the data presented in Table 7, when ALM and CLT are compared in terms of the language learning proficiency level of the two groups of respondents after the implementation of the two teaching methods, Communicative Language Teaching ($M=12.86$, $SD=1.96$, $p=0.039^*$) scored significantly higher compared to the Audio-lingual method ($M=11.63$, $SD=1.93$, $p=0.039^*$) in the post-test score of the respondents. This shows that the students exposed to CLT scored significantly higher marks than the students exposed to ALM, though when taken as a whole, both mean scores are interpreted to have a very good level of performance. Hence, the hypothesis of the study is rejected.

Table 7. The Difference between the Post-Test Achievement Scores in the ALM and CLT

	N	Mean Score	SD	Mean Diff.	t-value	df	p-value
ALM	30	11.63	1.93	-1.23	-2.16	29	0.039*
CLT	30	12.86	1.96				

*= Significant at 0.01 level **=Significant at 0.05 level ns= not significant.

Moreover, the attitude of the respondents exposed to ALM and CLT was compared. Table 8 presents the difference between the post-attitude scores of the two groups of responses exposed to ALM and CLT. Both groups of respondents manifested a favorable attitude in learning English language grammar with the use of ALM and CLT. The computed p-value of 0.169, which is higher than the alpha level of 0.05, showed that no significant differences were found. This indicates that the Chinese EFL intermediate learners manifest the same level of favorable attitude with their exposure with ALM and CLT; hence they were able to find benefits of both teaching strategies in language learning.

Table 8. The Difference between the Post-Test Attitude Scores in ALM and CLT

	N	Mean Score	SD	Mean Diff.	t-value	df	p-value
ALM	30	4.03	0.88	0.20	1.43	29	0.169 ns
CLT	30	3.83	0.69				

*= Significant at 0.01 level **=Significant at 0.05 level ns= not significant

4.6 Research Question 6. Relationship between the Achievement and Attitude of the Respondents in the Audio-Lingual method and Communicative Language Teaching

The test of the relationship was conducted to ascertain the relationship between the achievement and attitude of the two groups of exposed to ALM and CLT. Table 9 shows that no significant relationships

were found between the level of English language grammar proficiency and attitude towards learning the grammar of the two groups of respondents after their exposure to the Audio-lingual method ($r=.310$, $p=0.95ns$) and Communicative Language Teaching ($r=-.113$, $p=0.55ns$). Hence, the hypothesis of the study is rejected. This implies that regardless of the attitude of the respondents towards learning grammar, the respondents will attain the same English language grammar proficiency score.

Table 10. Relationship between Post-Test Achievement and Attitude Scores of the Respondents in the Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching

Variables	Mean	SD	r	p-value
<i>Audio-lingual method</i>				
Achievement	11.63	1.93	.310	0.95 ns
Attitude	4.03	0.88		
<i>Communicative Language teaching</i>				
Achievement	12.86	1.96	-.113	0.55 ns
Attitude	3.83	0.69		

*= Significant at 0.01 level **=Significant at 0.05 level ns= not significant

5. Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the cognitive and attitudinal effects of ALM and CLT among Chinese EFL learners at the intermediate level. The respondents have a fair level of language proficiency and attitude prior to the implementation of language teaching methods. After their exposure to both teaching methods, the respondents obtained a very good level of English skill and a favorable level of attitude towards learning grammar. This is a manifestation that those exposed to ALM and CLT gained a significantly higher level of performance attitude. Therefore, ALM and CLT have better effects in terms of students' achievement and attitude.

The effectiveness of ALM as a language teaching method is attributed to its systematic process of teaching grammar lessons. It made learners learn and appreciate the structure of language using drills, tasks, and by choosing a relevant situation to practice. The learners listened directly to the teacher and imitated the teacher accurately. In this study, the implementation of the audio-lingual method consisted of using dialogues, drills which were used to repeat, memorize, observe correct pronunciation, follow rhythm of stress, intonation. Specific grammar patterns are chosen in the dialog after debate has been introduced and memorized and become the subject of various types of drills and practice pattern exercises. Hence, audio-lingual method highlighted the following: (1) the language is primarily speech; (2) oral practice is given much emphasis, (3) it is a teacher dominated method; (4) the focus of the teacher is on the accuracy of language rather than on fluency; (5) correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are emphasize; (6) drills and pattern practice were done. Therefore, ALM found to have

significant effects on Chinese EFL learners' achievement and attitude. The finding concurs with previous results showing that when language teachers utilize ALM in the classroom, it tends to offer learners the proper understanding of vocabulary and the use of correct language patterns and structure (Harmer, 2001; Kwon & Lee, 2010; Littlewood, 2018; Rilling, 2018; Savignon, 2018).

Meanwhile, the effectiveness of CLT can be attributed to the significant increased in the learners' performance and attitude as they were engaged with various communication situations. The teacher gave opportunities to the learners to use English language, which is English, through interaction and collaboration among themselves. Teacher talk was lessened, and student talk was given more time and priority. Another essential feature of CLT, which provided learners' increase of achievement attitude, is that activities are contextualized or sensationalized. Here, the students were given real communication like telephone conversations, act interviews, or dialogues, giving advice to a friend. In general, the use of CLT in this study highlighted the following: (1) emphasis in integration rather than the separation of skills; (2) focused on form and function; (3) learner-centered rather than teacher-centered activities are contextualized. Integration focuses not on formal elements, but the practical dimensions of language. It is based on the idea that by communicating it, proper and adequate English language learning can be achieved. The method, therefore is interactive language learning (Candlin, 2016; Sarfraz, Mansoor, & Tariq, 2005; Savignon, 2018; Zhang & Wang, 2016). The participation of learners in actual communication thus improves their language skills. The effectiveness of CLT method corroborates with previous studies showing its superiority as communicative approach (Asassfeh et al., 2012; Huang & Andrews, 2010; Huang, 2016; Littlewood, 2010; Lixin, 2011; Ochoa et al., 2016; Rao, 2010; Wolf, 2013; Wong, 2012; Zhang, 2012; Zhang, Li, & Wang, 2013).

Moreover, the study showed difference between the pre and post achievement and attitude scores of the respondents in the Audio-lingual method and Communicative Language Teaching when grouped according to gender. In this study, gender was taken as a significant factor in English language learning using ALM and CLT among Chinese EFL intermediate learners. In terms of grammar language proficiency, the female Chinese EFL intermediate earners displayed a higher level of performance compared to their male counterparts before, and after the use of ALM and CLT while on the attitudinal effect, both sexes gained positive effects from learning using ALM and CLT. Considering that previous studies on language teaching have reported that gender is a variable defining different language learning styles and attitudes (Oxford, 1995; Van Der Slik, Van Hout, & Schepens, 2015; You, Dörnyei, & Csizér, 2016). The significant difference in the level of proficiency in grammar favored female respondents. This strengthens the previous finding that among Chinese female EFL learners have a higher level of vocabulary knowledge and learning strategies (Coates, 2015; Gu, 2002; Kim et al., 2015; Liu, Lin, & Wiley, 2016; Tang & Tian, 2015; Rao & Liu, 2011). In the study of Zhou and Intraraprasert (2015), gender and types of personality are factors in Chinese students' language learning strategies. Hence this study supports the claim that the gender gap is present in learning a language.

Result of this study also showed that the learners scored significantly higher in the CLT compared to

ALM. This implies that the students exposed to CLT have higher performance in language grammar proficiency. The finding is indicative that the learners, regardless of their language learning attitude, were able to perform better in CLT than those with ALM. This finding is in line with previous study results on the differences showing the superiority of CLT over ALM (Bagheri & Hadian, 2017; Fadilah, 2018; Ghofur et al., 2017; Gurunathan, N., & Geethanjali, 2016; Li, 2015; Manzano, 2015; Sumathi, 2016).

Finally, the study found no significant association between English grammar skills and respondents' attitudes in the ALM and CLT. The finding implies that regardless of the learners' attitude towards learning grammar, they will still achieve the same level of language proficiency using ALM and CLT. Reasons for the non-significant result can be attributed to a number of related variables not covered in the present study. While no significant relationship is found, further studies need to be conducted considering other variables not included in this study. This finding contradicts the studies reported that language learning performance and attitude are positively correlated (Lim & Fraser, 2018; Öz, 2015; Paker, T., & Erarslan, 2015; Sakuragi, 2006). These studies have established a positive relationship between learning achievement and attitude.

6. Conclusion

This research adds to the current literature body on the effectiveness of the ALM and CLT in the sense of intermediate Chinese EFL learners. Using quasi-experimental research method to two groups of respondents, findings showed that Audio-Lingual Method and Communicative Language Teaching are effective in enhancing the English language grammar proficiency and language learning attitude among Chinese EFL intermediate learners as being measured by their achievement and attitude scores before and after the implementation of the teaching methods. The study showed that female learners exhibited a higher level of English language grammar proficiency than males. When the attitude is compared between the male and female, no significant differences were found before and after the implementation of ALM and CLT. Meanwhile, the test of difference showed that the EFL learners exposed to the Communicative Language Teaching method exhibited better language learning grammar performance compared to those in the Audio-lingual Method. Language grammar learning attitude is not affected by gender, implying that both sexes were able to obtain the same level of benefits of the ALM and CLT, showing no significant difference. Finally, the study further concludes that no relationship is found between level of English language grammar proficiency and attitude towards learning grammar of the two groups of respondents after their exposure to Audio-lingual method and Communicative Language Teaching implying that regardless of the learners' attitude towards learning grammar they are capable of manifesting better performance in language learning with the use of ALM and CLT.

6.1 Practical Teaching and Learning Implications

The findings of the study on the use of the Audio-lingual method and Communicative Language Teaching provide realistic teaching and learning considerations of language training to provide students

with more opportunities to develop their communicative skills. This study contends that it is difficult to develop communicative competence of the students when their grammatical skill is at a low level; hence, this study provides significance to the literature showing the effectiveness of the CLT method will be better implemented when supplemented or complemented with ALM. It implies that language teachers must be capable enough to adopt an eclectic teaching approach in the English language in such a way that students will be engaged to master the rules in language as well as exposing them to the real-application of language use.

The specific practical implications are as follows: (1) Language teachers must be able to properly combine the use of both CLT and ALM for Chinese EFL learners in both language and content area subjects to help students develop their grammar skills and attitudes; (2) conducting professional development for language arts teachers based on merits and benefits associated with ALM and CLT should be initiated; (3) the gender gap in language learning can be appropriately addressed by providing the students more extensive opportunity of using strategies that will help improve the language proficiency of male EFL learners. The use of strategies that will suit to the personality, styles, and inclinations of male and female students in language teaching may be considered; (4) ALM and CLT need to be combined with the use of technology as a means of meeting the requirements of Education 4.0; (5) strong support of educational authorities on ALM and CLT is sought. (6) Finally, this study highlights the following specific teaching strategies for ALM and CLT, as shown in Table 10, which can be the bases for teachers to incorporate into their language teaching practice. Teachers are encouraged to come up with innovative other task learning designs for the students.

Table 10. Model Teaching Strategies in ALM and CLT

Strategies in ALM	Strategies in CLT
Read-a-loud	Use of authentic materials
Dialogue memorization	Song analysis
Repetition Drills	Interview people about situations.
Controlled Question-and-Answer Drill	Role Play
Grammar games	Debate
Use of minimal pairs	Panel discussion
Oral-writing activity	Use of cartoon strips
Chain Drill	Language games

6.2 Limitations and Future Research Direction

Having accomplished this study's stated goals, this study has several limitations that may be dependent on future studies. First, the study is only limited to a small sampling size of Chinese EFL learners at the intermediate level, which can be a limiting factor on the test of differences. Second, the use of the

simple pre-test-post-test as the weakest type of quasi-experimental research design was not able to cover all the needed factors and variables on the implementation of ALM and CLT. The use of a mixed-method design is recommended for further investigation. Such a hybrid research design using two or more methods can be more reliable to triangulate the findings gathered. Third, future studies are encouraged whether to replicate or adapt the context of the study to the different levels of education in China considering and correlating other variables such as learners' cultural background, parents' education, level of income, and language performance. Lastly, there is a need to identify the cognitive and attitudinal effects of other language teaching strategies not covered in this study such as grammar-translation method, Direct-method, Oral Approach and, Situational Language Teaching, Physical Response (TPR), Community Language Learning (CLL), Natural approach and others in the Chinese EFL classroom.

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