Analysis of Listening Skills in The HSK 4 Test Simulation Among Mandarin Department Students at University in Makassar

Mir'ah Azizah[1✉], Ria Riski Marsuki[2], Hasria Riski[3]

[1] Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

[2] Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

[3] Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

Keywords	Abstract
HSK 4, Listening Skills, Test Simulation, Learning Method	This research, titled Analysis of Listening Skills in the HSK 4 Test Simulation Among Mandarin Language Department Students at a University in Makassar, identifies factors or obstacles that may affect the Mandarin language learning of fourth-semester students, particularly in relation to errors made during the HSK 4 listening simulation test, based on results collected through Google Forms and Zoom. Due to a lack of understanding of the question context and audio conversations, many participants made mistakes in answering the questions. This study aims to analyze the listening skills of fourth-semester students in the Mandarin language education program at a university in Makassar in completing the HSK 4 listening simulation test.

✉ Corresponding Author:

E-mail: mirah.azizah@unm.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Currently, learning Mandarin has become a necessity for the public as a means of preparing for the workforce. In addition, many schools—from elementary to university level—have introduced Mandarin language subjects. The Mandarin language curriculum in Indonesian universities has been designed for beginner learners and for foreigners studying at universities in China. As a result, the Chinese government has developed a standardized test for international students, called the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK), which ranges from Level 1 to Level 6, and is administered by the Chinese Ministry of Education (Yang Nadia Miranti, Pun Aji Setyosari, Saida Ulfa, 2016).

The HSK test serves to simplify the setting of goals or curriculum objectives in Mandarin learning, enabling students to discuss various topics relevant to China and communicate effectively with native Chinese speakers. By taking the HSK, students can improve their Mandarin language skills in broader fields.

The reason the author chose Listening Skills in the HSK 4 Test Simulation is because many students are easily misled by the audio-based questions and struggle to comprehend the content delivered through the audio recordings. This study also aims to identify the types of difficulties experienced by Mandarin Language major students in Makassar when working on the Listening section of the HSK 4 Simulation Test.

In order for it to be useful for careers such as translators, teachers, or tour guides, the HSK system was developed with the aim of aligning Mandarin language teaching with the proficiency test used, thereby encouraging students to further improve their Mandarin learning process. This is achieved by emphasizing the principle that the teaching and learning process and proficiency testing should support students' development (Pauw Budianto, 2014). Based on this discussion, the author found issues faced by students when completing the HSK 4 test simulation using the Mandarin Listening Competency learning method. Therefore, the author chose the title: "An Analysis of Listening Competency in the HSK 4 Test Simulation Among Mandarin Language Program Students in Makassar.

METHOD

In this research, the author used a descriptive quantitative method. According to Sugiyono (2012), descriptive research is a study that describes the objectives to be achieved, then plans how to approach them, and begins collecting the data as material for writing a report. Meanwhile, the quantitative approach, as explained by Arikunto (2013), is an approach that uses numbers, starting from data collection, interpretation of the data, and presentation of the results. The purpose of systematically collecting data is to facilitate the research process, and the author uses a research flowchart as a tool to assist with this, as follows:
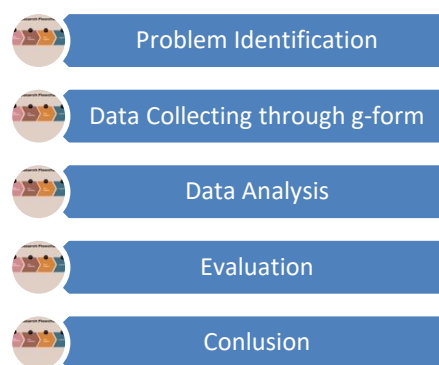
Figure 1 Research Flowchart

Based on the figure, The research process begins with problem identification. In this study, the researcher observes that many students in the Mandarin Language Department at a university in Makassar face difficulties when completing the listening section of the HSK 4 test. The problem lies not only in their low performance scores but also in their inability to comprehend audio recordings during test simulations. The researcher identifies this issue as a significant barrier to student progress, especially for those intending to study in China or pursue Mandarin-related careers. Therefore, the researcher seeks to understand what specific listening challenges students encounter and what factors may be contributing to their poor performance.

Next is the data collection phase. To gather relevant information, the researcher uses tools such as Google Forms to distribute questionnaires and conducts test simulations via Zoom. Students are asked to participate in listening practice tests modeled after the HSK 4 format. Following these simulations, the students complete questionnaires where they reflect on their listening experiences, including what parts they found most difficult, how confident they felt, and whether they understood the vocabulary or context of the audio. Additional interviews or observations may also be conducted to gain deeper insight.

After collecting the data, the researcher proceeds to data analysis. The researcher evaluates the test scores, questionnaire responses, and any qualitative feedback from students. For instance, patterns may emerge showing that students struggle more with fast-paced speech or certain vocabulary categories. The researcher might use statistical analysis to determine how widespread the difficulties are and thematic analysis to interpret common student comments and feedback. This helps identify the key issues, such as vocabulary limitations, lack of exposure to native pronunciation, or poor note-taking strategies.

The evaluation stage involves interpreting the results in light of the research objectives. The researcher considers how the findings compare to expectations and prior studies on Mandarin listening comprehension. It might be discovered that students have not been sufficiently trained in contextual listening or that current teaching methods do not align with the HSK test format. The evaluation may

also highlight gaps in the curriculum or a need for more practice with authentic listening materials.

Finally, the research ends with a conclusion. Based on the analysis, the researcher summarizes the core findings: for example, that a high percentage of students misinterpret the main idea of audio clips or fail to identify key words. The conclusion might suggest that additional listening practice, targeted vocabulary instruction, or simulated test drills could improve performance. The study may also recommend curriculum adjustments or teacher training focused on HSK listening strategies. This final step ensures the research has practical value for educators, curriculum designers, and future Mandarin learners.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In collecting the data, the researcher used the Sample Test HSK 4 from the Chinese Test website, with the test code H4000. The researcher then gathered the fourth-semester students of the Mandarin Language Department at Universitas Negeri Makassar into one room via the Zoom application (conducted online), and distributed the test in the form of a Google Form containing the HSK 4 Listening Comprehension questions. The researcher allocated 30 minutes for students to complete a total of 45 questions from the HSK 4 Listening Simulation Test. After collecting the survey results, the researcher analyzed and described the questions that many of the fourth-semester students answered incorrectly in the HSK 4 Listening Comprehension Simulation Test.

Table 1 Results of the HSK 4 Listening Comprehension Simulation Test for Part 1: True or False Questions

Item	True	False
Item-1	17	4
Item-2	9	12
Item-3	11	10
Item-4	17	4
Item-5	13	8
Item-6	15	6
Item-7	17	4
Item-8	13	8
Item-9	14	7
Item-10	12	9

In addition, the researcher also conducted interviews with fourth-semester students of the Mandarin Language Education Program at Universitas Negeri Makassar who had completed the HSK 4 Listening Comprehension Simulation Test. The questions asked focused on the students' opinions regarding the obstacles they faced when working on the HSK 4 Listening Simulation Test. The researcher also asked for their perspectives on more effective ways to learn Mandarin in order to improve listening comprehension skills.

What factors or obstacles did students experience when working on the HSK 4 Listening Comprehension Simulation Test?

- Lack of Vocabularies
- Lack of Understanding
- Confused by some of the words
- Lack of Sufficient Practice
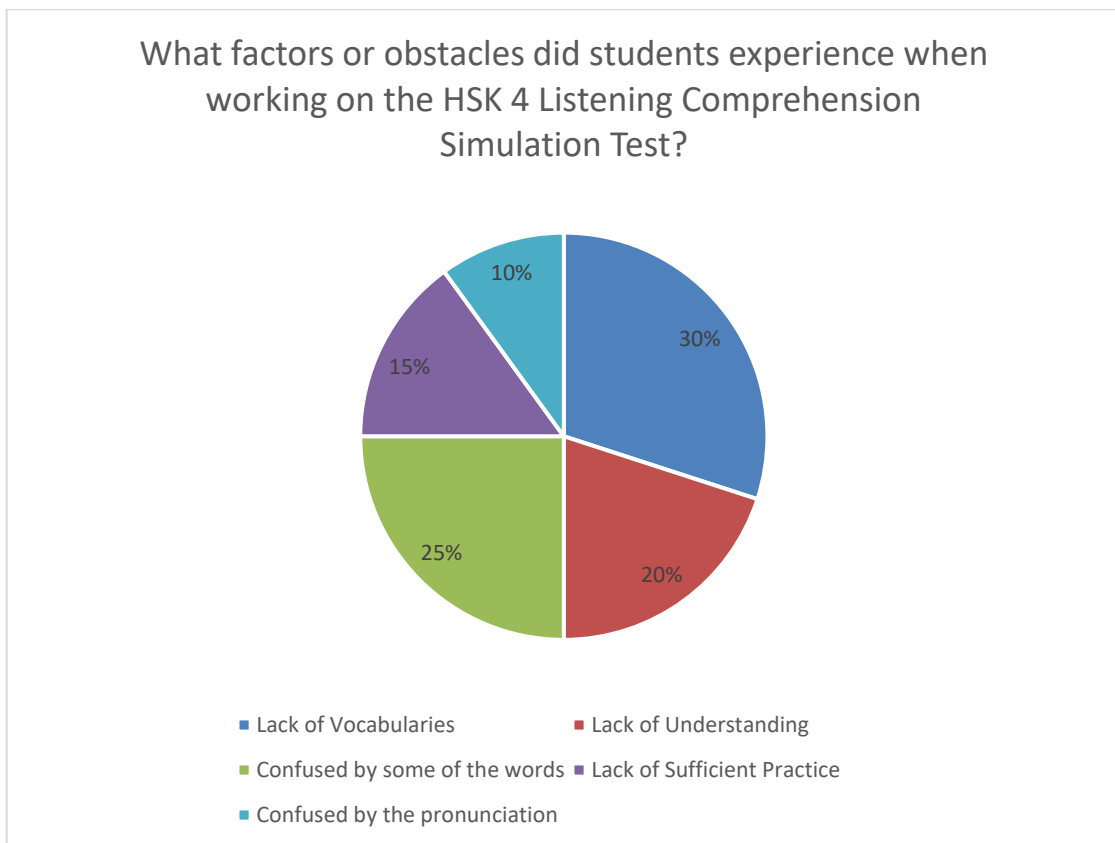- Confused by the pronunciation

Figure 2 Interview Results on the Informants' Opinions Regarding the Obstacles in Answering the HSK 4 Listening Simulation Test Questions

Based on the Figure, there are several key challenges that these students face when it comes to their listening comprehension. The breakdown of the difficulties encountered by the students is as follows:

1. 30% Lack of Vocabulary: A significant proportion of the students, 30%, reported that their primary obstacle was a lack of vocabulary. This indicates that many students struggle to recognize and understand key words during the listening portion of the test. Without a strong vocabulary foundation, students may find it difficult to follow the conversations or passages, leading to a lower level of comprehension.

2. 20% Lack of Understanding: About 20% of the students admitted to simply not fully understanding the content of the listening material. This may stem from unfamiliarity with the topic, complex sentence structures, or an inability to grasp the overall meaning of the audio. This suggests that there may be gaps in the students' ability to understand Mandarin at a more general or abstract level.

3. 25% Confusion by Certain Words Heard: For 25% of the students, confusion arose from specific words they heard during the test. This suggests that while students might have recognized certain words, their meaning in context was unclear, leading to misunderstandings. This could be a result

of similar-sounding words, homophones, or unfamiliar expressions that are difficult to interpret in a real-world conversation.

4. 15% Lack of Practice: 15% of students reported a lack of practice as a key challenge. This group likely faced difficulties due to insufficient exposure to listening exercises, reducing their familiarity with the rhythm, speed, and tone of Mandarin speech. Without enough practice, it is difficult for students to improve their listening skills to match the demands of the HSK 4 test.

5. 10% Confusion by Pronunciation: Finally, 10% of the students were confused by the pronunciation of certain words. Mandarin Chinese is a tonal language, and subtle differences in tone can change the meaning of words. As a result, students may have had difficulty differentiating between words that sounded similar but had different meanings based on their pronunciation, leading to confusion during the listening comprehension section.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of Listening Competence in the HSK 4 Simulation Test among 4th-semester students of the Mandarin Language Program at Makassar State University, the writer concludes that the students' ability in completing the HSK 4 Listening Simulation Test can be considered fairly good. This is supported by the results of the simulation test, where 68.5% of the 4th-semester students scored above the average of 80 points out of the maximum score. Furthermore, it can also be understood that the obstacles faced by the students in answering the questions in the HSK 4 Listening Simulation Test are mainly due to a lack of vocabulary comprehension and insufficient practice in listening to conversations in Mandarin. This is also influenced by the limited environment in which they can practice speaking or communicating in Mandarin, resulting in a lack of exposure to listening practice.

REFERENCES

Arikunto, Suharsimi. (2013). *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta.

Budianto, P., Pauw, N. L. (2014). Keterkaitan New HSK dan Kurikulum Bahasa Mandarin di Perguruan Tinggi. Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Kristen Maranatha.

Chinesetest.cn.(2020). *HSK Level IV* Diambil dari: https://www.chinesetest.cn/gosign.do?id=1&lid=0#

Miranti, Y. N., Saida, U. (2016). *Pembelajaran Bahasa Kedua (Mandarin-HSK 3) Berbasis Mobile Learning*. Universitas Negeri Malang.

Putri, M. P., Anggraeni. (2017). *Analisis Kesulitan Mahasiswa Semester VI Angkatan 2013 Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Mandarin Universitas Negeri Semarang Dalam Memahami Teks* 阅读 *Pada* 汉语水平考试 *(HSK) Level IV*. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Semarang.

Sugiyono. (2012). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabet.