



Implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching as a Reinforcement for Prospective Chinese Language Teachers to be Adaptive and Responsive

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Abstract

The graduate profile of the Chinese Language Education Study Program aims to produce Chinese language teachers who can both teach and conduct research on Chinese language learning issues. Culturally responsive teaching is a method for developing adaptive and responsive educators. Chinese language teachers who are culturally responsive will be able to connect Chinese culture with students' backgrounds and create meaningful learning by utilizing cultural knowledge and students' learning styles. This research aims to analyse the distribution of courses in the Chinese Language Education curriculum in Indonesia that adopt culturally responsive teaching; identify the implementation of culturally responsive teaching for strengthening prospective Chinese language teachers; and explain the factors hindering and supporting the success of culturally responsive teaching for strengthening prospective Chinese teachers. The research method used is qualitative research, utilizing an observational descriptive qualitative approach. The study was conducted to systematically describe the phenomenon of culturally responsive teaching based on factual data. Data collection techniques include literature review, documentation, observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The results of this study show that the Chinese Language Education programs in Indonesia have adopted culturally responsive teaching in their curricula, both in education-focused and non-education-focused programs. This implementation helps prospective teachers understand the relationship between language and culture, although various challenges remain, such as a lack of training, limited resources, negative attitudes, and high workloads. However, success is also evident through teacher commitment and interest, institutional support, integrated curriculum, technology and learning media use, and interdisciplinary approaches. With continuous evaluation and proper support, culturally responsive teaching has the potential to further enhance the competencies of prospective Chinese language teachers in implementing culturally responsive teaching.

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INTRODUCTION

The graduate profile of the Mandarin Language Education Study Program is to produce Mandarin language teachers who are expected not only to teach but also to be capable of conducting research on issues related to Mandarin language learning (Maria, 2018). The availability of Mandarin teachers with an educational background in Mandarin is expected to minimize the deficiencies encountered in Mandarin language teaching. These deficiencies include: (a) lack of utilization of interactive learning media (Muyassaroh et al., 2021), (b) selection of teaching materials that are not yet appropriate or engaging (Sutandi & Limuria, 2019), (c) the use of unsuitable teaching methods (Elisabeth, 2019; Haryanti, 2011), and (d) curriculum content that needs improvement (Maria, 2018).

The rapid advancements in the field of education today, including changes in curricula and related tools, demand that educators become individuals who are responsive to various changes and adaptable to different conditions. Adaptive ability is related to the spirit and capacity to innovate, be creative, and act proactively in facing change (D. I. Ayu, 2023; Widyantini, 2022). The adaptive and responsive capabilities of educators greatly assist them in completing tasks effectively, handling various situations with greater ease, and adjusting to the norms or standards that apply in their environment (Safiri, 2022).

Culturally responsive teaching is a means to develop adaptive and responsive educators, including Mandarin language teachers. To date, Mandarin language instruction has already incorporated elements of Chinese culture. The Confucius Institute Headquarters has developed a Mandarin Language Education Curriculum that has been adopted by Mandarin Language Education programs. Chinese cultural content is embedded in the distribution of Mandarin language materials (Trihardini et al., 2019). Mandarin teachers face a unique challenge in connecting Chinese cultural content with the students' cultural backgrounds. Mandarin teachers must be aware of the integration of students' cultural backgrounds in order to bring students closer to the learning material while also fostering their awareness of their own cultural identity (Inayah et al., 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2020). Culturally responsive Mandarin teachers will be able to create meaningful learning experiences by utilizing students' cultural knowledge, experiences, and learning styles (Handayani et al., 2022; N. Siregar et al., 2023). On the other hand, the inclusion of cultural content in language teaching remains an unresolved issue, with many educators facing challenges due to negative attitudes toward cultural teaching, a lack of effective instruction, limited resources, and educational technology, as well as insufficient academic support for cultural teaching (I. G. Ayu et al., 2021; Chen & Yang, 2016).

The emerging issue is that the implementation of culturally responsive teaching to strengthen prospective Mandarin language teachers has not yet been carried out in a systematic and measurable manner, thus necessitating further research on this matter.

METHOD

This study is a qualitative research utilizing an observational descriptive qualitative approach. The research subjects include administrators, lecturers, students, and alumni of the Mandarin Language Education Study Program at public universities in Indonesia. The selection of research subjects was carried out using purposive sampling to ensure that the selected participants align with the focus of the study. Data collection techniques included literature review, documentation, observation, distribution of questionnaires, and systematic interviews. The data analysis techniques employed in this study consist of the following stages: (a) initial stage, (b) horizontalization stage, (c) cluster of meaning stage, (d) essence description stage, (e) construction stage, and (f) conclusion drawing stage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Mandarin Language Education Study Program at public universities in Indonesia has been established since 2009. The establishment of this program was based on proposals from the respective universities or mandates from the Directorate General of Higher Education. Mandarin Language Education Study Program was opened at five public universities: Universitas Tanjung Pura (2009), Universitas Negeri Surabaya (2010), Universitas Negeri Malang (2011), Universitas Negeri Semarang (2011), dan Universitas Negeri Jakarta (2014).

Non-education study programs that teach Chinese language and literature can be found at several universities, including: (1) Chinese Literature Study Program at Universitas Indonesia; (2) Chinese Literature Study Program at Universitas Brawijaya; (3) Mandarin Language Study Program at Universitas Sumatra Utara; (4) Mandarin Language Study Program at Universitas Jenderal Soedirman; (5) Chinese Literature Study Program at Universitas Bina Nusantara; (6) Mandarin Language and Chinese Culture Study Program at Universitas Al Azhar; (7) Mandarin Language Study Program at Universitas Bunda Mulia; (8) Mandarin Language Study Program at Universitas Kristen Petra; (9) Chinese Literature Study Program at Universitas Kristen Maranatha; dan (10) Mandarin Language and Chinese Culture Study Program at Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta.

Distribution of Courses in the Curriculum of Education and Non-Education Mandarin Language Study Programs in Indonesia

In the Mandarin Language Education Study Program at Universitas Negeri Jakarta, the courses taught include introductions to language, literature, and Chinese culture, which not only focus on linguistic aspects but also involve cultural analysis and relevant teaching methods. For example, courses such as "Introduction to Chinese Culture" and "Chinese Language Teaching Methods" provide a strong foundation for prospective teachers to understand and teach the language within a broader cultural context.

Meanwhile, non-education study programs, such as the Chinese Literature Study Program at Universitas Brawijaya, offer a curriculum that includes in-depth studies of Chinese literature and culture. With courses like "History of Chinese Literature" and "Chinese Culture," students are invited to explore various literary genres and the cultural backgrounds that influence these works. The Chinese Literature Study Program at Universitas Brawijaya is one of the programs under the Faculty of Cultural Sciences. This program was established to meet the demand for education in Chinese language and literature in Indonesia, with a focus on mastery of the language, culture, and Chinese literary works.

Mandarin has become a focus of study at various universities, including the Universitas Indonesia, which has a Chinese Literature Study Program under the Faculty of Cultural Sciences. The curriculum in this program is designed to provide comprehensive education, with a total study load of 144 credits, consisting of 98 credits for university compulsory courses, 33 credits for faculty compulsory courses, and 13 credits for elective courses. The distribution of courses taught covers various aspects of Chinese language, culture, and literature. One of the courses related to Chinese culture is "Introduction to Chinese Culture."

These three study programs share a common focus on teaching that emphasizes mastery of the Mandarin language and understanding of Chinese culture. All three offer courses that integrate cultural aspects into language learning, enabling students to comprehend the social and cultural contexts underlying language use. Moreover, both the Mandarin Language Education and Chinese Literature Study Programs strive to enhance the quality of education through comprehensive teaching that combines theory and practice, as well as involving students in socialization activities and material introduction. This creates a strong foundation for graduates to contribute to the teaching and study of the Chinese language and culture in Indonesia. The distribution of courses in both types of programs demonstrates a commitment to preparing students not only to be proficient in the language but also to understand the cultural values that are important in intercultural communication.

Implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching for Strengthening Prospective Mandarin Language Teachers in Mandarin Language Education Study Programs in Indonesia

The implementation of culturally responsive teaching in the Mandarin Language Education Study Programs in Indonesia aims to strengthen prospective teachers' ability to relate Mandarin language learning materials to the cultural context of their students. In recent years, the integration of cultural aspects into the curriculum has become a priority, alongside increasing awareness of the importance of cultural context in language learning.

1. Curriculum Implementation: Study programs at various universities, including the State University of Jakarta, have adopted courses that emphasize cultural content. Examples of such courses include "Introduction to Chinese Culture," "Ancient Chinese History," and "Chinese

Language Teaching Methods," which are expected to provide an in-depth understanding of cultural aspects related to the language. This learning is not limited to theory but also involves practical activities, such as cultural text analysis and visits to cultural institutions.

2. **Learning Methodology:** Instructors in the Mandarin Language Education Study Program are expected to use interactive and contextual approaches. In practice, teachers encourage students to explore culture through discussions, collaborative projects, and presentations. This responsive teaching method aims to increase student engagement and motivation in learning Mandarin through the lens of culture.
3. **Challenges in Implementation:** Despite progress, challenges remain. Many instructors feel they lack sufficient experience or resources to teach cultural aspects effectively. This leads to teaching that is more theoretical and less practical. Additionally, the limited time available within a dense curriculum makes it difficult for instructors to allocate enough time to thoroughly cover cultural materials.

Factors Hindering and Supporting Culturally Responsive Teaching for Strengthening Prospective Mandarin Language Teachers in Mandarin Language Education Study Programs in Indonesia

In efforts to improve the quality of Mandarin language teaching, understanding the factors that influence culturally responsive teaching is crucial. In the Mandarin Language Education Study Program, there are various challenges and successes that affect the strengthening of prospective teachers in integrating cultural aspects into the curriculum. Through an in-depth analysis of these hindering and supporting factors, it is hoped that effective solutions can be found to enhance the effectiveness of teaching, enabling educators to be better prepared to connect language materials with the cultural context of their students.

Hindering Factors:

1. **Lack of Training and Professional Support:** Many teachers feel inadequately trained to integrate cultural learning into language teaching. The absence of systematic professional training makes it difficult to understand effective methods for teaching culture.
2. **Limited Resources:** The availability of teaching materials and digital resources remains very limited. This includes books, audiovisual materials, and technology that support cultural learning. Without adequate resources, cultural teaching cannot be optimized.
3. **Negative Attitudes and Less Positive Perceptions:** Some teachers exhibit skepticism regarding the importance of cultural teaching, considering it as an unnecessary addition to language learning. This results in teaching that does not focus on integrating culture into language instruction.

4. **High Workload:** The heavy workload involved in teaching multiple courses and other academic activities makes it difficult for teachers to find time to explore and incorporate cultural content into the curriculum.

Success Factors:

1. **Teacher Commitment and Interest:** Teachers who have an interest and experience in Chinese culture demonstrate greater success in applying cultural teaching. This personal interest often motivates them to explore creative ways to teach the material.
2. **Institutional Support and Collaboration:** Collaboration with cultural institutions, such as the Confucius Institute, provides richer teaching and access to more varied materials. Such cooperation can include seminars, workshops, and exchange programs that support teachers' professional development.
3. **Integrated Curriculum:** A curriculum that systematically includes cultural content enables students to learn about culture comprehensively. This creates opportunities to apply cultural knowledge in everyday language use contexts.
4. **Use of Technology and Learning Media:** The utilization of technology and interactive media, such as videos, simulations, and online learning platforms, has helped make cultural learning more engaging and relevant, encouraging active student participation.
5. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Teaching that connects various disciplines, such as history, arts, and sociology, can enrich students' understanding of the broader cultural context. This approach allows students to see the relationship between language and culture more comprehensively.

Considering the factors above, the Mandarin Language Education Study Programs in Indonesia have the potential to continuously improve the implementation of culturally responsive teaching. Ongoing evaluation and development, as well as support from all stakeholders, are essential to achieve the desired educational goals.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the Mandarin Language Education Study Programs in Indonesia have adopted culturally responsive teaching in their curricula, both in education-focused and non-education-focused programs. This implementation helps prospective teachers understand the relationship between language and culture, although various challenges remain, such as a lack of training and professional support, limited resources, negative attitudes and less positive perceptions, as well as heavy workloads. However, success is also evident through teacher commitment and

interest, institutional support and collaboration, an integrated curriculum, the use of technology and learning media, and interdisciplinary approaches. With ongoing evaluation and appropriate support, culturally responsive teaching has the potential to continuously strengthen the competencies of prospective Mandarin language teachers in Indonesia in implementing culturally responsive teaching.

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