



Analysis of Basic Mandarin and English Learning Needs in A Private Junior High School in Makassar

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Keywords

Needs analysis, Mandarin, English, Learning

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the needs for basic Mandarin and English language learning that has been conducted at a private junior high school in Makassar, as a reference for determining whether this activity should be continued and for the development of learning materials and syllabus creation. This study identifies the challenges in learning Mandarin and English after attending Mandarin and English lessons, the benefits of learning Mandarin and English, the continuity of the basic Mandarin and English training program, and the needs for learning basic Mandarin and English based on the four core language skills. This research uses a descriptive-analytical method with a quantitative approach. The data was obtained through a questionnaire distributed to 15 respondents, consisting of junior high school students from a private school in Makassar, teachers, and parents. The analysis of the questionnaire data indicates that the respondents are interested in learning Mandarin and English by increasing the number of study hours and changing the learning themes, as 53.3% of them feel they have already understood the current material well enough. In terms of Hanzi recognition and writing, they experienced significant difficulties—93.3% of the participants reported that they found learning Hanzi to be challenging. The overall results of the needs analysis for basic Mandarin and English learning suggest that students require Mandarin skills primarily to understand simple conversations and basic vocabulary.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of Mandarin and English are essential for facilitating business relations, education, trade, tourism, as well as in the industrial, technological, and development sectors. The importance of learning a Foreign languages serve as preparation for improving competence when entering the workforce. This awareness has led many Indonesians to become interested in learning. The main objective of conducting a needs analysis is to gather information that, when acted upon, will improve teaching and make it more sustainable (P. Balaei and T. Ahour, 2018). A needs analysis is the systematic collection of all information to obtain valid and necessary data for teaching. This data is obtained from: 1) Parties who have an interest in teaching, such as teachers, students, institutional leaders, or parents of students. 2) A curriculum that meets the needs of both students and teachers, as well as the institution involved, and is accepted by all stakeholder groups. 3) Information needed to define and validate the curriculum used in teaching (J. D. Brown, 2016).

According to J. C. Richards and R. Schmidt, a needs analyst in language teaching aims to gather information about: the situation in which the language will be used, the types of communication that will be employed (e.g., written, spoken, formal, informal), and the level of proficiency required by the needs of assessor (in this case, the teacher and the relevant institution). This information is used in curriculum development and syllabus creation for language teaching (J. C. Richards and R. Schmidt, 2010). Learning is the planning effort made to teach students. In the learning process, students not only interact with the teacher but also with all the learning resources used to achieve the learning objectives (Uno, 2006: 2). Learning is defined as a process of permanent behavioral change, from not knowing to knowing, from not understanding to understanding, from being less skilled to becoming skilled, and from old habits to new habits, which are beneficial both for the environment and the individual (Trianto, 2009: 16). In learning Mandarin and English, there are four components of learning that must be mastered: listening (听), speaking (说), writing (写), and reading (读).

Therefore, the role of the analyst is limited to providing information on whether the basic Mandarin and English language learning activity should continue. If continued, the level of language proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) needs to be adjusted to the students' abilities. To identify the students' needs, several forms of analysis were conducted:

1. **Target Situation Analysis (TSA)**, which refers to what the students need to be able to do, including their needs, lacks, and wants (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Needs refer to what students must know, lacks refer to the gap between the students' current proficiency and what they do not know, and wants represent what students wish to learn.
2. **Present Situation Analysis (PSA)**, this analysis identifies the students' proficiency at the beginning of the basic Mandarin class.

3. **Learning Needs Analysis (LNA)**, which refers to what students need to do in order to learn. LNA is related to the skills students need, the learning process, students' motivation, and differences in students' backgrounds. (Ibrahim, 2016)

METHOD

The method used in this study is descriptive analysis with a quantitative approach. The research population consists of participants in the basic Mandarin and English language training, which included 15 participants comprising private junior high school students in Makassar, their parents, and teachers from the same school. The data was obtained through the distribution of questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part contained questions regarding the respondents' identities, while the second part comprised 15 questions related to the needs analysis for basic Mandarin and English language learning. These questions covered the challenges in learning Mandarin and English after attending Mandarin and English lessons, the benefits of learning Mandarin and English, the continuity of the basic Mandarin and English training program, and the needs for learning basic Mandarin and English.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the identification of student needs, several forms of analysis were carried out:

1. **Target Situation Analysis**

This analysis focuses on the needs related to the continuation of the basic Mandarin and English training program, which involves the four core language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). To obtain these results, questionnaires and brief interviews were conducted.

2. **Present Situation Analysis**

This analysis identifies the respondents' basic Mandarin and English language skills. Nearly 95% of the training participants stated that they had never studied Mandarin before, while 5% had only been introduced to it but had since forgotten what they learned.

3. **Learning Needs Analysis**

This analysis examines the benefits of learning Mandarin and English as well as the challenges students face in studying basic Mandarin and English.

Before conducting this research, the Mandarin language learning activity had already been implemented through several stages, including:

1. **Planning Stage**

The activities carried out included coordinating with the school, preparing the learning materials, and scheduling the implementation of the program.

2. Implementation Stage

The training provided had to follow the principles of TCFL (Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language) and TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), which refers to the methods of teaching Mandarin and English as foreign or second languages to learners who do not speak Mandarin and English as their first languages. According to Xiaojun Fan (2012), the principle of teaching Mandarin and English to foreign children is that teachers should begin with simple, everyday topics from the students' surroundings and deliver the lessons in a relaxed manner without pressure. This stage was conducted online using the Zoom application. It consisted of four sessions, each with a duration of 90 minutes. The breakdown is as follows:

a. The first session, held on January 13, 2025, began with self-introductions, an introduction to the Mandarin language, and the presentation of materials on Recognizing Hanyu Pinyin (认识汉语拼音 Rènshí hànyǔ pīnyīn), Initial Consonants (声母 Shēngmǔ), Final Vowels (韵母 Yùnmǔ), and Tones (声调 Shēngdiào). While the presentation of materials in English are phonemes, syllables and word stress, Intonation, Rhythm, Connected Speech; b. The second session, held on January 14, 2025, covered Mandarin and English vocabularies related to family and basic greeting phrases; c. The third session, held on January 15, 2025, introduced Mandarin and English vocabularies related to types of food and beverages, along with greeting sentences; d. The fourth session, held on January 16, 2025, involved evaluation, review, and guidance covering the content from the first to the third sessions.

3. Evaluation Stage

In this stage, a questionnaire was distributed to be completed by the participants of the Mandarin and English learning program, followed by short interviews. Based on the results of the basic Mandarin and English learning program, questions related to the needs analysis for Mandarin and English learning were presented, and the results of these questions are summarized in the table below:

Table 1. Learning Needs for Mandarin and English

No	Learning needs for Mandarin and English	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Listening and understanding Mandarin and English language presentations from a lecturer or tutor.	53.3	46.7
2	Listening and understanding Mandarin and English vocabulary.	53.3	46.7
3	Pronouncing Hanyu Pinyin words and words stress with correct and proper pronunciation.	53.3	46.7
4	Introducing oneself and greetings in Mandarin and English.	86.7	13.3
5	Guessing the meaning of words in simple Mandarin and English conversations.	66.7	33.3
6	Understanding simple conversation readings.	53.3	46.7
7	Understanding simple conversation. readings through Hanzi.	0	100
8	Able to understand the meaning of English words and Hanzi characters	6.7	93.3

No	Learning needs for Mandarin and English	Yes (%)	No (%)
9	Able to write Mandarin vocabulary using Hanzi characters and English.	6.7	93.3
10	The classroom situation in basic Mandarin and English learning are enjoyable.	80	20
11	The topics provided during basic Mandarin and English learning are quite easy.	73.3	26.7
12	The material provided is in accordance with the theme.	86.7	13.3
13	For the next activity, is it necessary to change the theme?	93.3	7.7
14	The time used for the training is sufficient.	26.7	73.3
15	If the next Mandarin and English language learning training is held, would you like to continue participating?	86.7	13.3

From the data in the table above, it can be concluded that during the basic Mandarin and English language learning, 53.3% of the participants had a good understanding of listening skills. They felt capable of listening to and understanding Mandarin and English presentations from a lecturer or tutor, as well as comprehending vocabulary materials they heard in Mandarin and English. In terms of speaking, 86.7% of the students were able to introduce themselves and greet others in Mandarin and English. Regarding reading, 66.6% of the students were able to guess the meaning of words in simple Mandarin-English conversations using. This activity was conducted in the fourth session during the evaluation. However, 53.5% of the students were able to understand simple conversation readings through Hanyu Pinyin.

In terms of Hanzi recognition, almost the majority of participants in the basic Mandarin language learning program did not understand it, as it was considered too difficult. From the table above, the data shows that 93.3% were unable to understand the meaning of Hanzi characters, and were unable to write Hanzi. Additionally, all participants, 100%, reported difficulties in writing Hanzi.

In terms of the basic Mandarin language learning system, 80% of the students stated that the classroom atmosphere was quite enjoyable, 73.3% felt that the material provided was easy enough to follow, and 86.7% felt that the material given was well-aligned with the theme being taught. The topics covered included an introduction to simple greetings conversations, and self-introduction by using Mandarin in general (Hanyu Pinyin, consonants, vowels, Hanzi) and English in general (phonemes, syllables, word stress, connected speech). A total of 93.3% were quite satisfied with the material provided, and expressed a desire to change the theme of the material for the next activity. Regarding the time allocation, they felt that the 90 minutes provided was insufficient. This can be seen from the data table, where 73.3% of participants requested additional time for learning. Furthermore, 86.7% were willing to participate in the next activity.

CONCLUSION (Calisto MT 11 pt, Bold)

The analysis of the questionnaire data indicates that they are interested in learning Mandarin by increasing the number of activity hours and changing the theme, as 53.3% of them feel they already understand the current material theme. In terms of Hanzi recognition and writing, they experience difficulties, with 93.3% of participants reporting that they find learning Hanzi challenging. The results of the basic Mandarin-English language learning needs analysis suggest that this activity can continue with the addition of gradual Hanzi introduction, starting from simple strokes to more difficult ones for Mandarin. In terms of reading and listening skills in Mandarin and English, improvement should be made through material repetition so that participants can easily remember the material provided. Regarding study time, additional time should be considered, as the current 90 minutes per week is considered insufficient or less than ideal. The results of this needs analysis are expected to be useful for the development of syllabus creation, as well as the development of teaching materials for basic level Mandarin and English language instruction.

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