Language Retention and Attitudes Among Foreign Students in Learning Mandarin at Jinan University: *Sociolinguistic Studies*

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini berjudul **"Pemertahanan dan Sikap Bahasa di Kalangan Mahasiswa Pembelajar Asing Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Mandarin di Jinan University: Kajian Sosiolinguistik".** _Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah Mendeskripsikan pemertahanan dan sikap Bahasa di kalangan mahasiswa pembelajar asing dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Mandarin di Jinan University: konteks kedwibahasaan. Metode yang digunakan untuk menganalisis adalah pendekatan kuantitatif untuk mendeskripsikan pemertahanan Bahasa ibu terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Mandarin oleh pembelajar asing di Jinan University. Pada penelitian ini menggunakan dua variabel yaitu variabel terikat dan variabel bebas. Metode yang digunakan dalam mengumpulkan data adalah metode kuesioner dengan wawancara. Data diperoleh dengan menyebar kuesioner kepada responden. Metode pengkajian data penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan generasi sampel terhadap populasi. Data dianalisis menggunakan teori sosiolinguistik oleh J.A.Fishman_

Abstract

This research is entitled "Language Retention and Attitudes Among Foreign Students in Learning Mandarin at Jinan University: Sociolinguistic Studies". The purpose of this study is to describe language retention and attitudes among foreign students in learning Mandarin at Jinan University: a bilingual context. The method used to analyze is a quantitative approach to describe the maintenance of the mother tongue in learning Mandarin by foreign students at Jinan University. In this study, two variables were used, namely the dependent variable and the independent variable. The method used in collecting data is a questionnaire method with interviews. Data obtained by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The research data assessment method uses a qualitative method with the generation of a sample of the population. Data were analyzed by applied sociolinguistic theory by J.A.Fishman

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication between members of society in the form of sound symbols produced by human speech instruments (Keraf, 1984). Language is used to convey the desires, explain the ideas or concept, express thoughts to the others. That means, the better a person's language, also means the better person's ideas, concept, and thought conveyed to the public, and vice versa. Human use the verbal expression in the form of language as a means of communication and interaction with others. The use of language in a speech of society is not always confined to a single or monolingual language, but it diverse. Human beings utilize the diverse language as a means to fulfill their communication needs in various activities. This reason motivates individuals who play the role of communicatiors to study the variety of languages as a means to fulfill these needs in both verbal and non-verbal communication.

The proficiency in various types of languages, often referred to as multilingual or bilingual, by a communicator during the language acquisition process. The bilingual or multilingual language acquisition events in the course of social interaction result in language events or language phenomena, including language development, the shift of language, and language extinction, thus giving rise to the opposing phenomenon language preservation (Kuswardono: 2013). Furthermore, the changes in language usage positions occur, leading to the emergence of a dominant language in terms of usage frequency, displacing the position of the mother tongue as the primary language that used in daily activities.

The term of bilingualism, as defined by Chaer, (2004: 84) relates to the use of two languages by a speaker in their daily activities. The bilingualism emerges as a result of language contact, in accordance with Weinreich (cited in Suwito, 1983: 39) which posits that language contact occurs when two or more language are used alternately, resulting in transfer, which is the transfer or borrowing of element from one language to another, thus leading to bilingualism. Bilingualism is related to language contact it involves the use of two languages by speakers in an alternating manner during social interaction. In the context of bilingualism, bilinguals do not necessarily needs to actively master both languages but can also do so passively. Activate usage implies proficiency using of two languages, whereas passive usage means having an ability to understand what is spoken or written in the second language. It is well-known that, in a literal sense, bilingualism is the habits of using two or more language alternately.

The acquisition of a foreign language is closely associated with the rapid development of the economy and cultural factors. Language has become a crucial element for countries with advanced economies and cultures. The Chinese language, as the majority language in China, alongside various regional languages, has indirectly gained prominence as a primary international means of communication, alongside English. Proficiency in Mandarin is of paramount importance for those seeking to invest in China, as the smooth operation of businesses begins with effective communication. Untuk dapat berinvestasi di Cina, penguasaan bahasa Mandarin menjadi amat penting karena kelancaran bisnis berawal dari kelancaran berkomunikasi. Given this background, Chinese language is increasingly popular among learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds around the world. Consequently, the teaching of Mandarin is gaining traction globally. Jinan University (JNU) is a leading comprehensive university and is part of Project 211, a list of top universities designated by the Chinese Ministry of Education. Jinan University is ranked 2nd in Guangdong Province, within the city of Guangzhou. Jinan University was established more than 100 years ago and is considered one of the oldest universities in China. The university has a total

of 12,288 international students coming from various parts of the world (from over 160 countries). It boasts the largest number of foreign students in China, and the presence of students from these 160 countries is the most extensive in China. These foreign learners come from diverse native language backgrounds. Continuous use of Mandarin during their stay in China leads to a process of shifting away from their native languages among foreign students.

Based on the data obtained by researchers, the Mandarin language classes at Jinan University are divided into three levels based on the basic proficiency of the learners: advanced level (Gaoji), intermediate level (Zhongji), and elementary level (Chuji). Foreign learners of the Mandarin language are classified according to the results of the HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi) language proficiency test, ranging from levels 1 to 6, and are further evaluated to determine whether they belong to class A, B, or C. The foreign learners of Mandarin at Jinan University come from countries such as Russia, Indonesia, France, Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia. These foreign learners also have diverse native languages. The diversity among these foreign learners at Jinan University, who come together in the same community and are in an environment that encourages the use of Mandarin for communication, creates a unique phenomenon in the process of learning Mandarin and its influence on their respective native languages. Bloomfield (1995:41) emphasizes that "the first language a person learns to speak is their mother tongue; that means they are the native speakers of that language."

The usage of one's native language often undergoes a shift due to the presence of a second language that takes on a more dominant role. The study of language preservation typically delves into the relationship between the stability of language usage and the ongoing psychological, social, and cultural processes taking place within different language communities (Damanik, 2009). Based on the description above, the decline of one's native language is a phenomenon drivem by the interest to learning a foreign language. Foreign language learners also tend to refrain from using their native language as a means of daily communication while in China, due to the cultural shift that occurs among the local community where they reside while learning Mandarin. This is the compelling reason that serves as the background for the researcher to study **"Language Retention and Attitudes Among Foreign Students in Mandarin Language Learning at Jinan University: A Sociolinguistic Study."**. This research focuses on foreign students studying Mandarin at the intermediate level, specifically, classes A, B, and C of the 中级汉语班 *(Zhōngjí hànyǔ bān)*, with Mandarin language proficiency equivalent to HSK level 4.

RESEARCH METHOD
1. Research Approach

Research method is crucial in research to achieve high-quality results. Theoretically, this research uses a field research approach, specifically within the field of sociolinguistics. In this study, the author uses qualitative research methods. Qualitative research involves the collection of qualitative data, which consists of numbers in the form of descriptive explanations. Data are rational sources of text, abundant in description and explanation (Miles and Huberman, 1994:1). Qualitative research is a method based on postpositivist philosophy, used to study natural conditions or attempt to describe actual objects, resulting in qualitative research outcomes that aim to understand meaning, grasp uniqueness, construct phenomena, and discover hypotheses. In qualitative research, researchers strive to identify whether the data align with fundamental assumptions,

2. RESEARCH VARIABLES

In this study, the researcher utilizes several independent and dependent variables. The first independent variable

applied in this research is the age variable. The respondents, who constitute the population and sample of this study, are intermediate-level foreign Mandarin learners in classes A, B, and C at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China, with ages ranging from 19 to 30 years. The independent variables employed in this study are education and place of birth.

The dependent variables used in this study consist of the variables of family, social interaction, education, neighbors, and transactions. The selection of these variables is aligned with the environmental domains in the research object, which include the domains of social interaction, occupation, education, neighborhood, family, and transactions. The selection of these domains is also in accordance with the sociolinguistic theory presented by Fishman (1972:217). The independent and dependent variables in this study are outlined in the following table.

Tabel 1. Independent and Dependent Variables

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
	The domain of language use :
1) Age	**1). Family**
2) Education	**2). Neighborhood**
3) Place of Birth	**3). Occupation**
	4). Transaction
	5). Transaction

1. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Population refers to the entirety of research subjects, including all elements within the research area (Arikunto, 2007:95). The population for this research includes the total number of intermediate-level foreign Mandarin

learners 中级汉语班 *(Zhōngjí hànyǔ bān)* in classes A, B, and C at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China, amounting to 50 students, with 15 students from classes A and B and 20 students from class C. These respondents consist of 15 males and 35 females. They come from six different countries: Russia, Indonesia, France, Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia. Below is a breakdown of the number of respondents based on their countries of origin. The table below illustrates the number of respondents.

Tabel 2. The Number of Respondent

Country of Origin	Number of Respondent		
	Class A	Class B	Class C
Russia	4	3	3
Indonesia	5	4	5
France	2	2	2
Vietnam	1	2	3
Thailand	2	4	5
Malaysia	1	-	2

A sample is a portion that can represent a population. According to Arikunto (2006: 91), when the subjects in a study are fewer than 100, the sample is considered the population, and the study is categorized as a population study. In this research, the number of research subjects is less than 100, classifying it as a population study, where the sample size is equal to the population size. The Mandarin language proficiency is equivalent to HSK level 4 and is divided into three classes, namely classes A, B, and C.

3. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Research instruments are tools used to collect data or information that is useful in addressing research questions. This aligns with Sugiono's opinion (2009, 76) that research instruments are tools used to measure observed natural or social phenomena, specifically referred to as research variables. The primary instrument in this research is a questionnaire containing a list of questions that has been prepared and then provided to the respondents to read one by one. The respondents are required to honestly complete and answer each question in the questionnaire without providing their names.

4. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Data collection techniques are a strategic step in research with the main goal being to obtain data (Sugiono, 2013). The data collection techniques used in this study are the questionnaire or survey technique and the interview technique to gain an understanding of the attitudes regarding the preservation of the native language in the context of Mandarin language learning. According to Sugiono (2005: 162), a questionnaire is a data collection technique conducted by providing a set of written questions or statements to respondents for them to answer. In other words, a questionnaire is a list of questions given to others with the intention of having them willingly respond according to the user's request based on the research variables. The variables used in this study pertain to the domain of language use utilized by the respondents. These domains are consistent with the theory proposed by Fishman (1972:217), which encompasses the family domain, social interaction domain, and school domain, with Jinan University serving as the educational institution.

5. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The data analysis process used in this research is the data analysis technique model by Miles and Huberman, as cited by Sugiyono (2017: 132), which consists of four stages, including (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data display, and (4) conclusion drawing/verification. In terms of measurement scales during data analysis in a study, nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio measurement scales are employed (Nasution, 2007). The nominal measurement scale is used for presenting tables containing data on age, education, and place of birth. The ordinal scale involves defining levels related to the respondents's age. The interval scale also has a role in this research by providing a quantitative classification of the research object.

Each question (indicator) in the questionnaire given to respondents is answered with response options. The language first mastered by the respondent is: 1. Native Language 2. Mandarin 3. Native Language and Mandarin 4. English 5. Other Language. Therefore, the assessment standard is in the form of an interval, which includes:

1. If the respondent's answer is the native language with a percentage of 51% - 100%, it is considered that the native language is preserved.

2. If the respondent's answer is the native language with a percentage of 0% - 50%, it is considered that the native language is not preserved.

The calculation of values using the interval system in quantitative research is done by calculating the middle value or median. The highest value is calculated from the middle upwards, and the lowest value is calculated from the middle downwards (Sujana, 2001: 138).

If the total number of respondents is 50 (100%), the calculation is as follows: **50 (100%): 2 = 25**. If the number of respondents who responded falls within the

range of 0 - 25 or ≤50%, it can be concluded that the native language is not preserved. Conversely, if the number of respondents who responded falls within the range of 26 - 50 or ≥50%, it signifies that the native language is still preserved.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are the results and discussion, which include the questionnaire results as primary data.

6. RESPONDENT SOCIAL IDENTITY

Based on the number, the respondents in this study consist of 50 intermediate-level foreign Mandarin learners at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China, with 43 female respondents and 7 male respondents. The higher number of female respondents compared to male respondents is based on the assumption that women tend to be better in language usage compared to men. In Table 1 below, the responses regarding gender in this study are presented through the following questions:

1. 你的性别是什么?
What is your gender?

Table 1 : Number of Respondents by Gender (N=5O)

No.	Gender	F	%
1.	Male	7	14%
2.	Female	43	86%
	Total	50	100%

In Table 2 below, an explanation of the respondents' answers is presented based on

age. The overall age range found based on the questionnaire responses is ≧ 17 years. These responses are provided through the following question:

1. 你今年多大了?
How old are you this year?

Table 2. Respondent's Age (N=50)

No.	Age	F	%
1.	≦17 岁	0	0%
2.	≧17 岁	50	100%
	Total	50	100%

The birthplace of respondents is grouped into three categories, that is (1) Home country, (2) Outside home country, and (3) China. Out of the total of 50 respondents, 39 (78%) were born in their home country, 8 respondents (16%) were born outside their home country, and 1 respondent (2%) was born in China. The responses of the respondents are presented in Table 3 below:

2. 你在哪出生?
Where were you born?

Table 3. Respondent's Birthplace (N=50)

No.	Birthplace	f	%
1.	Home Country	39	78%
2.	Outside Home Country	8	16%
3.	China	1	2%
	Total	50	100%

Respondents from various countries with different language backgrounds and varying proficiency in foreign languages, therefore, in questions related to the language first mastered, the options include: native language, Mandarin, native language and Mandarin, and other

languages. From the responses obtained by the researcher through the distributed questionnaire, a total of **50** respondents (100%) answered that the first language they learned was their native language

Thus, data related to the language first learned can be seen in the following table :

2. *你第一次学到的语言是什么？*

    What language did you first learn?

Table 4. Language First Learned by Respondents (N=50)

No.	Language First Learned	F	%
1.	Native language	50	100%
2.	Mandarin	0	0%
3.	Native language and Mandarin	0	0%
4.	Other languages	0	0%
	Total	50	100%

In terms of intragroup relationships, out of 50 respondents (100.00%) who acknowledged that there are a very large number of Chinese people in their residential area, 32 respondents (64%) responded 'very many,' 14 respondents (26%) responded 'many,' 4 respondents (10%) responded 'quite a few,' and 0.0% responded that there are no respondents who do not have any *Chinese ethnic* people in their residential area. Therefore, *the majority of respondents live in a neighborhood with people of Chinese ethnicity*. The responses presented in Table 5 are answers to the following question:

3. *你住的领域是否很多华人？*

Is there a significant presence od Chinese Ethnicity in Your Residental Area?

Table 5. Is your neighborhood predominantly Chinese Ethnicity?

(N=50)

No.	Language First Learned	F	%
1.	Very many	32	64%
2.	Many	14	26%
3.	Quite a view	4	10%

The intragroup relationships of the respondents are good. This can be seen from the frequency of intragroup relationships. Out of 50 respondents (100%) who answered that they still frequently visit their family/relatives, 13 respondents (25%) responded that they visit them somewhat frequently, and 5 respondents (10%) never visit their family/relatives. Meanwhile, for the type of visits received, out of 60 respondents (100%) who answered that they are somewhat frequently visited by family/relatives, 34 respondents (57%) responded that they are somewhat frequently visited, 15 respondents (30%) responded that they are frequently visited, and 8 respondents (13%) responded that they are never visited. A total of 28 respondents (65%) claimed that they never return to their hometown, 10 respondents (20%) claimed that they return somewhat frequently, and 9 respondents (15%) claimed that they return frequently to their hometown or ancestral land. *The intensity of intragroup relationships (visiting and being visited) is high.*

7. RETENTION OF MANDARIN LANGUAGE BASED ON LANGUAGE DOMAIN

The discussion on the retention of the mother tongue is based on several domains, as suggested by J.A. Fishman (1972: 217), such as the family domain, neighborhood domain,

education domain, government domain, transaction domain, and social domain. Based on the pre-defined respondents, which include 43 female respondents and 7 male respondents, answers were obtained regarding the use of Mandarin among respondents in the family domain, social domain, work domain, education domain, and transaction domain. So, the average percentage of the use of the native language, Mandarin language, native language and Mandarin language, and other languages in all domains by the respondents who are middle-level Mandarin language learners in classes A, B, and C at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China, consisting of 43 female respondents and 7 male respondents, is calculated as follows: the sum of all percentages divided by the number of domains.

The formula used is: $X = \underline{\Sigma X}$

$$n$$

X = averages

ΣX = the total percentage in all domain
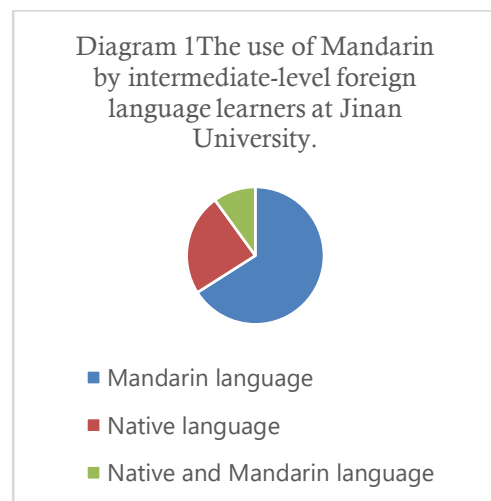
n = number of domains

The calculation for the total percentage and the number of respondents **using Mandarin** by intermediate-level Mandarin language learners divided into three classes, namely classes A, B, and C at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China, with a total of 43 respondents, consisting of 43 female respondents and 7 male respondents, is as follows: 76% + 60% + 73% + 75% + 74% : 5= 66% x 50 = **33 respondents.**

The calculation for the total percentage and number of respondents **using native language** b y intermediate-level Mandarin language learners in classes A, B, and C at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China, consisting of 43 female respondents and 7 male respondents, is: 24% + 30% + 27% + 15% + 26% = 122% : 5 = 24% x 50 = **12 responden.**

The calculation for the total percentage and number of respondents **using native language** by intermediate-level Mandarin language learners in classes A, B, and C at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China, consisting of 43 female respondents and 7 male respondents, is: 16% + 5% = 19%

: 2 = 10% + 10 % X 50 = **5 respondents.**

Here is the conclusion of language usage by intermediate-level Mandarin language learners in classes A, B, and C at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China, consisting of 43 female respondents and 7 male respondents, summarized in the form of a diagram.

Diagram 1The use of Mandarin by intermediate-level foreign language learners at Jinan University.

- ■ Mandarin language
- ■ Native language
- ■ Native and Mandarin language

Explanation:

1. Percentage of Mandarin language usage from 50% to 100% is considered as the most dominant language used (sustained).
2. Percentage of native language usage from 0% to 50% is considered as not dominant language used (not sustained)

From the diagram above, it can be concluded that Mandarin is the most actively used language, while the native language and other languages are considered passive languages used by foreign Mandarin language

learners at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China, based on the language events obtained through questionnaires distributed to the respondents as the primary data source.

CONCLUSION

1. Conclusion

The native language, as the first language mastered by foreign learners at Jinan University, is most frequently used only in specific language events involving friends from the same country, which accounts for about 24%, or 12 respondents. This indicates that the use of the native language doesn't persist in their social sphere due to the social environment that necessitates the use of Mandarin in their daily lives.

Mandarin, as the second language learned by foreign Mandarin learners at the intermediate level, is the most dominant and actively used language in various language events, with a percentage of 66% or 33 respondents actively using Mandarin in all social domains. This suggests that Mandarin usage is preserved in all language events.

2. Suggest

This study is a simple research of Mandarin language usage in social domains, focusing on foreign Mandarin learners at the intermediate level at Jinan University, Guangzhou, China. Further research with a larger sample size, more diverse variables, and more detailed analytical perspectives is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this topic

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