

## **PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES IN TEACHING MANDARIN FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS OF APPLIED MANDARIN LANGUAGE BACHELOR PROGRAM AT UNIVERSITAS PRIMA INDONESIA**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine the pedagogical approaches used in teaching Mandarin to first-year students of the Mandarin Applied Bachelor Program at Universitas Prima Indonesia. The research method used is descriptive qualitative through classroom observation and interviews with teachers and students. The main focus of this study is to identify the learning methods applied, assess their effectiveness, and understand the challenges faced in the process of mastering the four language skills: listening (听 *tīng*), speaking (说 *shuō*), reading (读 *dú*), and writing (写 *xiě*). The results of the study indicate that the pedagogical approaches used include Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), scaffolding, direct method, audio-lingual, and grammar translation method. These approaches encourage active student involvement, improve understanding of language concepts, and create a communicative and collaborative learning environment. Several challenges are still found, such as the lack of variation in learning media, less conducive learning time, and differences in student motivation levels. This study suggests the integration of interactive digital media and project-based learning approaches as solutions. The novelty of this study lies in the reflective integration of classical pedagogical approaches with the practical needs of business communication in the global era, as well as the direct mapping between learning time, student sitting position, and level of learning enthusiasm, which have not been widely explored in the local context of Mandarin learning in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** pedagogical approach, Mandarin, learning method

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pendekatan pedagogis yang digunakan dalam pengajaran Bahasa Mandarin kepada mahasiswa tingkat satu Program Sarjana Terapan Bahasa Mandarin di Universitas Prima Indonesia. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif melalui observasi kelas dan wawancara terhadap pengajar serta mahasiswa. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah mengidentifikasi metode pembelajaran yang diterapkan, menilai efektivitasnya, serta memahami tantangan yang dihadapi dalam proses penguasaan empat keterampilan berbahasa: menyimak (听 *tīng*), berbicara (说 *shuō*), membaca (读 *dú*), dan menulis (写 *xiě*). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan pedagogis yang digunakan meliputi *Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)*, *scaffolding*, metode langsung, *audio-lingual*, dan *grammar translation method*. Pendekatan-pendekatan tersebut mendorong keterlibatan aktif mahasiswa, meningkatkan pemahaman konsep bahasa, dan menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang komunikatif serta kolaboratif. Beberapa tantangan masih ditemukan, seperti kurangnya variasi media pembelajaran, waktu belajar yang kurang kondusif, dan perbedaan tingkat motivasi mahasiswa. Penelitian

ini menyarankan integrasi media digital interaktif dan pendekatan pembelajaran berbasis proyek sebagai solusi. Kebaruan dari penelitian ini terletak pada integrasi reflektif antara pendekatan pedagogis klasik dengan kebutuhan praktis komunikasi bisnis di era global, serta pemetaan langsung antara waktu pembelajaran, posisi duduk mahasiswa, dan tingkat antusiasme belajar, yang belum banyak dieksplorasi dalam konteks lokal pembelajaran bahasa Mandarin di Indonesia.

**Kata Kunci:** pendekatan pedagogis, bahasa Mandarin, metode pembelajaran

## **Introduction**

The teaching of Mandarin as a foreign language in higher education presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly for first-year students in applied language programs. According to the (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2016), education is a process of changing individuals' attitudes and behaviors through teaching and training activities. Language education, as part of this process, plays a vital role in developing cognitive and communicative competencies. Mandarin has gained increasing importance as a second language after English, especially in international business and diplomacy. Zhu Fanghua in (Rodiman, 2008) asserts that Mandarin language instruction for non-native speakers should focus on active language use and communicative competence rather than solely on theoretical knowledge. To achieve this, teaching approaches must support the development of the four fundamental language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

At Universitas Prima Indonesia, many graduates of the Applied Mandarin Language Program still face challenges in effectively using Mandarin in real-world business contexts. These difficulties highlight a disconnect between the teaching methods used and the practical linguistic demands of the workplace. This gap underscores the need for a pedagogical approach that is not only theoretically grounded but also adaptable to students' needs and the dynamic realities of language use. This study aims to analyze the pedagogical approaches used in teaching Mandarin to first-year students and assess their effectiveness in developing language skills. Teaching methods observed include Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), scaffolding, direct method, audio-lingual method, and grammar translation. These approaches were evaluated based on their ability to support meaningful, interactive, and student-centered learning. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the integration of pedagogical theories within the teaching of Mandarin at the vocational university level, a topic not widely explored in existing literature. Prior studies, such as (Lestari, 2016), (Yulianto, 2019), (N. Sari, 2021), (Nugroho, 2018), and (Rodiman, 2008), support the theoretical framework, emphasizing interaction, teacher competence, and communicative competence in language learning.

This study fills the research gap by providing a detailed account of pedagogical strategies in a real-world classroom setting and evaluating their relevance to student needs. It contributes both theoretically—by advancing understanding of pedagogical applications in Mandarin language education—and practically—by offering insights for improving curriculum and teaching practices. This paper will explore the methods employed in Mandarin language instruction, examine the strengths and limitations of each approach, and evaluate how these methods affect student engagement and language acquisition at Universitas Prima Indonesia.

## **Method/Metode**

Research methods are systematic steps used by researchers to design, implement, and evaluate a scientific research process. According to (Sugiyono, n.d.) research methods are a series of systematic and planned ways or procedures to collect and process data, so that they can be used to answer previously

formulated research questions. This chapter aims to explain in detail the approaches and strategies used in this study, starting from the type of research, data sources, data collection techniques, to data analysis techniques. This comprehensive explanation of the method is important to ensure the validity and reliability of the research results, as well as to show that the research process is carried out objectively and scientifically.

In the context of this study, the method chosen is adjusted to the characteristics of the problem being studied, namely regarding the Mandarin language teaching method in the Mandarin Language Applied Undergraduate Study Program, Universitas Prima Indonesia. Therefore, the methods used are directed at exploring descriptive and qualitative data, in order to provide a complete picture of the implementation of learning and the effectiveness of the methods applied.

This study applies a qualitative approach as its main method. A qualitative approach is a scientific method used to understand and reveal a social phenomenon in depth through descriptions of non-numerical data, such as words, narratives, and observations. (Creswell, 2018) the purpose of this method is to describe the situation or behavior of the research object comprehensively and contextually, in accordance with the real conditions that occur in the field. In this study, the data collection process was carried out through observation of the research subjects, the subject refers to the individual or group that is the main focus of the research, while the object is the aspect or variable being studied.

The subjects in this study were first-year students of the Mandarin Applied Bachelor's Program at Prima Indonesia University, while the object was the Mandarin teaching method applied in the teaching and learning process. Observation as one of the data collection techniques in the qualitative method is not limited to the use of the sense of sight alone, but also involves the other five senses, such as hearing and feeling. This aims to gain a richer and deeper understanding of the situation being observed. By using this approach, it is hoped that the data obtained will be more accurate, relevant, and reflect the real conditions that occur in the field. In addition, the qualitative approach also allows researchers to capture the dynamics of interactions in the classroom, teaching strategies, and student responses to the methods used.

Data sources are the origin or place where the information used in this study is obtained. (Sujarweni, 2014) there are two types of data sources commonly used in research, namely:

1. Primary data, namely data obtained directly from respondents through techniques such as questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGD), expert panels, or interviews conducted by researchers with sources. This type of data is raw and requires further processing before it can be analyzed. In other words, primary data comes directly from sources that provide information to researchers.
2. Secondary data, namely data that is already available in the form of written documentation such as official reports, articles, scientific books, archives, or other relevant publications. Unlike primary data, secondary data has generally been processed by other parties and is ready to be used by researchers as a reference or theoretical basis.

In this study, researchers focused on primary data as the main data source. Data collection was carried out through direct observation in the field and interviews with relevant sources. More specifically, the primary data in this study are divided into two types:

1. The main data source was obtained through survey activities and interviews conducted directly at the Mandarin Language Applied Undergraduate Study Program, Universitas Prima Indonesia. The main respondents were first-year students who were the subjects of the study. The focus of this data collection was to describe how Mandarin language learning activities were implemented in class, as well as the teaching methods used in the process.
2. Interview sources consisted of students and Mandarin language teachers. The information obtained from this interview will provide an overview of the students' learning experiences, the effectiveness of the teaching methods used, and the students' responses to the learning.

The selection of first-year students as research subjects was based on the fact that they had experience taking Mandarin language lessons in the previous year, so they were considered to have sufficient basis to provide relevant and reflective information on the learning process they underwent. Research instruments are tools or means used by researchers to collect data needed in a study. These instruments include various forms, such as questionnaires, tests, rating scales, interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and checklists. (Creswell, 2017) the process of collecting data using the right instrument aims to make it easier for researchers to work, while producing accurate, complete, and systematically arranged data. That way, the data collected can be processed efficiently and in depth.

The stages of data collection for this research are as follows:

1. Observing in the field using open observation, namely the researcher directly observing Mandarin teaching and learning activities in the classroom with the teacher.
2. Using observation sheet guidelines, taking notes according to what happens in the classroom during teaching activities.
3. Observations are strengthened by taking image data during the activity.

In qualitative research, the data analysis process plays an important role in producing valid and reliable conclusions. (Sugiyono, n.d.). Qualitative data analysis is carried out through three main stages, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Data reduction is the initial stage in which researchers carry out the process of selecting, simplifying, and focusing on raw data that has been obtained from the field. At this stage, researchers eliminate irrelevant information, summarize important findings, and begin organizing data based on certain categories to make it easier to analyze. Data reduction aims to clarify the main picture of the collected data, as well as to help researchers understand the patterns that emerge. The next stage is data presentation, which is the process of organizing and arranging data that has been reduced into a systematic form, allowing for better interpretation and understanding. Data can be presented in the form of descriptive narratives, tables, graphs, charts, or matrices.

This data presentation helps researchers to see the relationship between data components as a whole, while facilitating the decision-making process.

The final stage is drawing conclusions and verification, researchers make temporary conclusions based on the results of observations and data presentation. The conclusions drawn at this stage are tentative and can change if new data or evidence is found during the research process. Therefore, the process of verifying or rechecking the data is an important part of ensuring that the conclusions drawn truly reflect the reality in the field and not just the researcher's assumptions. By following these three stages systematically, data analysis in qualitative research is expected to produce a deep, valid, and scientifically accountable understanding.

## **Result and Discussion**

The study observed first-year students of the Applied Mandarin Language Program at Universitas Prima Indonesia during six consecutive days of Mandarin language instruction. Observations focused on student engagement, teaching methods, and classroom dynamics. The primary pedagogical approaches identified included Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), scaffolding, direct method, audio-lingual method, and the grammar translation method.

Key findings include:

1. Teaching listening (听 tīng) and speaking (说 shuō) skills was conducted simultaneously using the Direct Method, with emphasis on accurate pronunciation and tone recognition.
2. Reading (读 dú) and grammar (语法 yǔfǎ) instruction used Grammar Translation Method, incorporating vocabulary memorization and structural explanation.
3. Writing (写 xiě) focused on stroke order and character formation, with limited classroom practice but supplementary home assignments.

4. Students demonstrated higher engagement in sessions conducted after the break, compared to morning sessions where attentiveness was low.
5. Positioning in the classroom (e.g., sitting at the front) correlated with more active participation.
6. The teacher provided individual feedback, especially on pronunciation, and used repetition and demonstration to ensure mastery.
7. Despite the lack of printed materials in the initial sessions, the teacher adapted by writing lesson content on the board and maintained learning continuity.

Challenges identified include lack of concentration among some students, minimal interactive speaking practice, and limited use of multimedia due to time constraints.

The study confirmed that Mandarin language instruction benefits significantly from adaptive and interactive teaching approaches. The Direct Method proved useful for beginners in practicing pronunciation and listening comprehension. However, lack of focus among students led to tonal errors—a critical issue in Mandarin phonology. This supports (Sweller, 2011), suggesting that reduced attentional capacity impairs information processing, especially in tonal recognition.

The application of scaffolding, as described by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978), was evident when teachers provided individual assistance until students achieved independent mastery. For instance, correcting pronunciation through modeling and repetition aligns with effective scaffolding strategies. In terms of speaking skills, the Audio-Lingual Method, with drills and repetition, laid a good foundation in pronunciation. However, the absence of real-time dialogue practice reduced opportunities for spontaneous use of language. This indicates a need for combining CLT principles to develop communicative competence. (Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, 2014) emphasize that CLT requires learners to practice language in realistic and meaningful contexts, which was underutilized in this study.

The Grammar Translation Method used in reading instruction allowed for structured learning, vocabulary acquisition, and character recognition. Although often criticized for being outdated, it functioned effectively at the beginner level. (Yulianto, 2019) similarly found this method valuable in introductory Mandarin courses, especially when integrated with contextual reading. Writing instruction, while practiced less intensively in class, incorporated direct modeling. However, limited student note-taking and focus may have reduced effectiveness. Vygotsky's theory implies the need for collaborative and dialogic interactions during writing exercises. Group-based writing or peer review could strengthen engagement and knowledge construction. Compared to previous research, such as (Lestari, 2016), (D. K. Sari, 2021), which emphasized interaction and continuous verbal engagement, this study highlights the importance of timing, classroom atmosphere, and teacher adaptability. It also echoes (Nugroho, 2018) findings that teacher expertise and responsiveness are central to student outcomes.

The combination of multiple pedagogical approaches in this study provided a balanced framework for beginner Mandarin learners. Nonetheless, refinements—such as greater use of multimedia, collaborative tasks, and dialogue-based speaking exercises—could enhance student motivation and language acquisition more effectively.

## **Conclusion**

This section will present the results of observations on the teaching and learning process that have been carried out for six meetings a week, which consistently take place every Monday-Saturday. This observation is focused on first-year students of the Mandarin Applied Bachelor Study Program at Universitas Prima Indonesia. Monitoring is carried out to identify learning dynamics, student participation, teaching methods used, and the effectiveness of material delivery. The observation data are summarized in the form of a table presented below, which describes in detail the various learning activities that have taken place during the period.

Day/Date	Skills	Activity	Student Interaction
<b>April 21, 2025-April 22, 2025</b>	Reading (读 dú) Pronunciation (发 音 fāyīn)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher writes the basic pronunciation of Mandarin on the board and reads it out loud.</li> <li>If there are students whose pronunciation is not correct, the teacher provides personal guidance to the student.</li> <li>The teacher repeats the explanation about reading tones (声调 shēngdiào).</li> <li>The teacher writes the Chinese characters (汉字 hànzi) on the board.</li> <li>The teacher mentions the names of the strokes in writing Chinese characters.</li> <li>Students are given the opportunity to practice writing the steps of writing Chinese characters (汉字 hànzi).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students repeat the pronunciation said by the teacher while observing the board write.</li> <li>Students count the number of strokes on the characters written.</li> <li>Students repeat the pronunciation of the names of the strokes.</li> <li>Students appear very enthusiastic in the activity.</li> </ul>
<b>April 23, 2025</b>	Reading (读 dú)  Writing (写 xiě)  Memorize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing a list of new vocabulary (生词 shēngcí) that will be learned in Chapter 1.</li> <li>Writing some han characters (汉字 hànzi)</li> <li>The teacher asks students to memorize han characters (汉字 hànzi) and pronunciation (拼音 pīnyīn) for one minute and will be tested.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In class session A, students seemed less enthusiastic because they had not had a break.</li> <li>Counting the number of strokes of characters using Mandarin.</li> <li>Memorizing Han characters (汉字 hànzi) and how to pronounce them (拼音 pīnyīn).</li> </ul>
<b>April 24, 2025-April 25, 2025</b>	Reading (读 dú)  Grammar (语法 yǔfǎ)  Writing (写 xiě)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the lesson material in Chapter 1.</li> <li>Explain the use of the particle 的 (de) to indicate possession, including how to understand the meaning and construct sentences with the particle.</li> <li>Give students homework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read along with the texts in Chapter 1.</li> <li>Translate the contents of the reading in Chapter 1.</li> <li>Practice constructing sentences using the particle 的 (de).</li> </ul>
<b>April 26, 2025</b>	Quiz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give students 10 minutes to review the vocabulary in Chapter 1 before the quiz.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct tests.</li> <li>Complete exercises on pages 2–3 related to the number of strokes and sentence structure.</li> </ul>

Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute the exam question sheet consisting of 10 questions.</li> <li>• Students complete exercises through discussions, as well as direct dialogue with friends and teachers.</li> </ul>
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Based on the findings that have been explained through notes on the observation sheet, the next stage is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the teaching methods used. This analysis includes identifying approaches, strategies, and learning techniques applied by teachers in the Mandarin learning process. The focus of this study is specifically aimed at the teaching process for first-year students of the Mandarin Applied Bachelor Program at Universitas Prima Indonesia. The results of this observation will be linked to language education theories, to see whether the methods used are included in the communicative approach, task-based, skills-based, or other conventional methods that are relevant in the context of foreign language teaching.

### 1. Class Activities During Mandarin Class

This research was conducted in the classroom of the Mandarin Language study program for First Year Students in the Mandarin Language Applied Bachelor Program, Universitas Prima Indonesia. Observation activities were carried out on Monday, April 21, 2025-April 26, 2026. Learning activities began at exactly 08.30-09.30 WIB and 09.45-10.45. Based on the results of observations during the Mandarin language lesson, it appeared that most students showed less activeness and enthusiasm. One of the main causes identified was because the class took place before break time, so students looked sleepy and unfocused. When the teacher asked questions, only a few students responded, while some others showed a passive attitude. In fact, there were students who did not want to participate in teaching and learning activities at all, which of course is a challenge for teachers in creating a conducive and interesting classroom atmosphere. Interestingly, the results of the observation also found that students who showed active responses and participation. Most of these students sat in the front row. This shows that sitting position can affect the level of concentration and involvement of students in learning. In the second session, learning was carried out after break time. When the lesson began, it was clear that the students showed high enthusiasm in participating in the learning activities. The classroom atmosphere felt more lively and dynamic when compared to the first session.

Based on the results of observations conducted on first-year students of the Mandarin Language Study Program at Universitas Prima Indonesia, it was found that the level of student activity and enthusiasm in learning was influenced by class time and sitting position. In the learning session before break time, most students appeared passive, sleepy, and lacked focus. Conversely, in the session after break time, students showed higher enthusiasm and participation. In addition, students who sat in the front row tended to be more active and involved in the learning process, indicating that sitting position also affects concentration and involvement in class. This finding is an important concern for teachers in designing more effective and interesting learning strategies.

### 2. First-Second Meeting

The teacher started the learning activity by writing several Chinese characters (汉字 hànzi) on the board. After that, students were asked to mention the names of each stroke that formed the character. This activity aims to train students' accuracy and precision in recognizing the structure of Chinese characters. Next, the teacher wrote several additional characters and gave students the opportunity to demonstrate the sequence of writing steps directly. It was seen that the students were very enthusiastic and motivated to show their abilities in front of the class. The classroom atmosphere became more lively because students supported each other and their enthusiasm for learning increased.

If there were students who had difficulty or made mistakes in writing characters, the teacher provided positive guidance and motivation. The approach used was not punitive, but rather encouraged students to learn from their mistakes and improve their writing gradually. At this meeting, learning did not use textbooks because printed books were not yet evenly available. Therefore, the teacher took the initiative to copy and write material from Chapter 1 directly on the board based on the guidebook that the previous teacher had. This was done so that the learning process could continue even though the facilities were not yet fully complete. The findings in this meeting indicate that an interactive, gradual, and learner-centered learning approach greatly influences the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The use of repetition methods, individual coaching, and providing concrete examples (such as pronunciation of tones and writing of letters) are forms of behavioristic and scaffolding approaches in language learning. Theoretically, this is in line with Vygotsky's scaffolding concept (Santrock, 2015), which emphasizes the importance of teacher support when students are in the zone of proximal development (ZPD)—that is, when they have not fully mastered a skill, but are able to understand it with proper guidance. In practice, teachers provide assistance gradually by repeating pronunciations, providing clear examples, and guiding students who are having difficulty directly.

In addition, this learning reflects a social constructivism approach, interaction between students and teachers, and enthusiasm between students in the classroom, encouraging the formation of a collaborative learning environment. As expressed by (Schunk, 2016), "Learning occurs as learners actively engage with content and through interactions with others." This approach is also closely related to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) theory which emphasizes the importance of active involvement of learners in real communication. In the class, joint pronunciation exercises, live demonstrations of writing Han characters, and giving students responsibility to try themselves are real practices of the CLT principle. (Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, 2014) CLT "seeks to develop learners' communicative competence by involving them in real communication."

### 3. Third Meeting

In this meeting, the students received two official printed books entitled 千岛华语 (Qiāndǎo Huáyǔ), consisting of a textbook (课本 kèběn) and an exercise book (练习册 liànxícè). The use of these books is an important step in supporting the process of learning Mandarin systematically and structured. The teacher begins the lesson by discussing the contents of Chapter 1, which contains simple readings and vocabulary lists (生词 shēngcí) that are directly related to the reading material.

As an initial stage, the teacher introduces new vocabulary by writing Mandarin characters (汉字 hànzi) along with their pronunciation using pinyin (拼音) on the board. After that, students are invited to read together both the characters and the pinyin, in order to build visual and phonetic recognition simultaneously. Some of the vocabulary introduced include:

**Table 3.1. Vocabulary Chapter 1**

拼音 (Pīnyīn)	汉字 (Hànzi)	Arti	拼音 (Pīnyīn)	汉字 (Hànzi)	Arti
Shū	书	Book	běnzǐ	本子	Notebook
Bǐ	笔	Pencil	chǐzi	尺子	Ruler
tóngzhuō	同桌	Deskmate	zài	在	In
shūbāo	书包	School bag	lǐ	里	in the
Wánjù	玩具	Toys	Xiǎoqiáng	小强	(Name of the person)

This vocabulary had previously been introduced verbally in the previous meeting, but had not used a printed book as the main reference. On this occasion, the teacher repeated the vocabulary to strengthen students' memory. The repetition process was carried out using the collective reading method, all students read aloud together, then continued with individual reading based on the writing on the board. However, the results of observations showed that students' enthusiasm for learning today was still low.



Some students looked sleepy and less enthusiastic about participating in learning activities. This is thought to be due to the lesson schedule starting in the morning, which affected their level of concentration and readiness to learn. This condition indicates the importance of arranging learning time that takes into account the physical and psychological needs of students. In addition, learning that involves interactive activities such as vocabulary games or audio-visual media can be an alternative to increase student enthusiasm. Thus, the vocabulary introduction process is not only cognitive, but also fun and motivates students to be more actively involved in learning Mandarin.

In this process, the teacher emphasized the importance of mastering pinyin, because according to him pronunciation is the main foundation in learning Mandarin. Without a good understanding of pinyin, students will have difficulty reading, writing, or speaking with correct pronunciation. Therefore, the approach used focuses on intensive pronunciation training as a foundation before moving on to more complex stages, such as grammar or paragraph writing. This emphasis on pinyin is also in line with the principle of bottom-up processing in language learning, mastery of basic elements (phonology) is the foundation for higher language skills.

#### 4. Fourth Meeting

In this meeting, the teacher conducted an evaluation in the form of a vocabulary test (生词 shēngcí) from the material in chapter 1 as a form of measuring students' understanding of the lessons that had been given. Before starting the test, the teacher gave 10 minutes of preparation time so that students could focus and prepare themselves well. After the preparation time was over, the teacher distributed a test sheet consisting of 10 questions, students were asked to write the pronunciation (拼音 pīnyīn) that corresponded to the Han characters (汉字 hànzi) available in the questions.

During the test, it was seen that most were able to complete the questions quickly and correctly, although some took longer to complete the task. This shows variations in the level of vocabulary mastery among students, so that teachers can identify further individual learning needs.

After the test was completed, the teacher continued the activity by providing additional exercises on pages 2 and 3 of the exercise book (练习册 liànxí cè). The exercises included questions related to the order of strokes of Han characters (汉字 hànzi) and making sentences using the vocabulary that had been learned. Although the classroom atmosphere was somewhat less conducive because students worked on the questions closely and interacted, they still worked on the assignments independently without cheating, indicating integrity and discipline during the learning process. This situation shows that although the learning environment is sometimes less than ideal in terms of calmness, the enthusiasm and honesty of students in completing assignments are maintained. This condition is a reflection for teachers to rearrange class management so that the learning atmosphere is more conducive, while maintaining the positive attitudes that have been formed. In the learning process, when teachers find several students having difficulty working on questions, teachers provide individual or personal guidance so that these students can understand the material better. This approach is carried out by providing special attention and more in-depth explanations according to their respective needs. After students complete their assignments, they actively come to the teacher to check the results of their work. If errors or inaccuracies are found in the work, the teacher immediately provides corrections and guidance so that students can improve and understand the material properly. The teacher also emphasizes the importance of doing assignments with one's own efforts and abilities, without cheating or relying on others. As a form of support and motivation, the teacher provides positive encouragement to students who are still having difficulties to continue trying and improve their learning outcomes gradually, without using a punitive approach such as giving bad grades or harsh reprimands.

Thus, the learning atmosphere remains conducive, and students feel supported to develop optimally. The approach taken by this teacher is in line with the social constructivism theory of (Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and guidance from more competent people

to support the development of students' abilities in the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Personal guidance provided by the teacher is a form of scaffolding, namely temporary support that helps students overcome difficulties until they are able to do it independently. In addition, a positive motivational approach that does not rely on punishment is also in accordance with the principles of humanistic learning which prioritizes respect for individuals and creates a supportive and non-threatening learning environment. This can increase students' intrinsic motivation to continue learning and developing.

### **5. Teaching Methods in Listening Skills (听 tīng)**

Teaching listening skills (听 tīng) is carried out simultaneously with speaking skills (说 shuō) using the Direct Method. This method emphasizes the direct relationship between words or phrases and the intended object or action, without using the mother tongue as an intermediary (Ghazali, 2010). In the application of sharpening listening skills, students actively follow and imitate the pronunciation spoken by the teacher repeatedly to improve their understanding and listening skills. The use of the direct method in learning listening skills was chosen because of the limited time efficiency, considering that the study session is only held once a week. This method allows teachers to focus directly on listening and speaking exercises without having to spend time translating or explaining in another language, so that learning is more effective and students can practice intensively.

In the application of direct methods to develop listening skills, the role of experienced teachers who have good mastery of Mandarin pronunciation is crucial. This is a distinct advantage for Mandarin teachers in the classroom, who already have an elementary HSK certificate (初级汉语水平考试 chūjí hànyǔ shuǐpíng kǎoshì), so that they are able to provide accurate and clear pronunciation examples to students. Based on the interview results, teachers expressed their intention to utilize audio-visual media such as videos or songs as a means of supporting listening learning. The use of this media is expected to create a more interesting and enjoyable learning atmosphere so that students do not get bored quickly during the learning process. However, the implementation of the use of this media is constrained by the limited time available in the relatively short Mandarin language lesson hours in class, so teachers must focus more on pursuing the material targets that have been set in the curriculum. This condition shows a real challenge in integrating innovative learning media in the Mandarin language teaching and learning process, especially when meeting time is limited. Therefore, a more effective time management strategy and learning planning are needed so that audio-visual media can still be used as an aid without sacrificing the completion of the lesson material. Based on the results of the observations that have been carried out, the advantages and limitations of the application of the Direct Method in developing listening skills (听 tīng) can be identified. One of the main advantages of this method is its ability to allow students to capture information directly and immediately apply it in front of the teacher. This provides an opportunity for teachers to make direct corrections if there are errors in pronunciation, so that the learning process becomes more interactive and responsive. However, there are weaknesses that arise when some are less able to maintain concentration during the learning process.

This condition has an impact on inaccuracy in absorbing information, such as when the teacher pronounces a word with a third tone (上声 shàng shēng) which has a falling then rising intonation pattern, students repeat it with a second tone (阳平 yáng píng) which only rises consistently. This error shows that lack of focus can cause errors in processing phonological information which is very important in Mandarin.

### **6. Teaching Method in Speaking Proficiency (说 shuō)**

In the learning process, honing speaking skills (说 shuō) is carried out using the audio-lingual method, an approach that emphasizes language patterns and views spoken language as the main and most effective form of communication in language learning. The application of this method, students are invited to repeat and imitate the pronunciation given by the teacher repeatedly. As an aid, the teacher

writes a table of consonants and vowels on the board which is then pronounced together with all students so that they can recognize and internalize the basic sounds of Mandarin correctly. However, in implementing this method, the teacher has not implemented direct dialogue in Mandarin as an interactive speaking practice, so that there are still some students who are not able to distinguish variations in tone in pronunciation, which is an important element in Mandarin.

In addition to the audio-lingual method, the teacher also uses the translation method as an additional strategy to improve students' speaking comprehension. This method emphasizes translating a foreign language into their mother tongue, so that students can more easily understand the meaning and context of the sentences being studied. In practice, teachers read a text in Mandarin with students, then translate it simultaneously into Indonesian. This approach helps students understand the meaning of vocabulary and sentence structure before they try to pronounce it themselves. In theory, the use of the audio-lingual method is strongly supported by the concept of behaviorism developed by Skinner, who considers language learning as a process of forming habits through repeated practice and positive reinforcement (Skinner, 1957). This method emphasizes repetition and drill as the main way to form correct language patterns. Meanwhile, the translation method provides a cognitive bridge between the mother tongue and the target language, in accordance with the theory of language transfer which explains how first language skills can influence second language learning. However, in order for speaking proficiency learning to be more effective, teachers need to integrate interactive dialogue exercises that can train students to speak spontaneously and naturally, so that they not only memorize language patterns but are also able to use Mandarin communicatively and contextually.

Thus, a balanced combination of methods and approaches can improve students' learning outcomes in Mandarin speaking proficiency. The use of the audio-lingual method in classroom learning provides several advantages, especially for teachers who can easily observe and monitor the development of students' language skills individually. This method is very suitable to be applied in classes with a relatively small number of students, such as classes with only 15 students, because it allows for more intensive interaction and focus on each student. On the other hand, the translation method has its own advantages, namely helping students not only understand grammatical structures in depth but also practice pronouncing new vocabulary (生词 *shēngcí*) better. However, there are several weaknesses that need to be considered from both of these methods. In the audio-lingual method, students tend to feel bored because the teaching pattern is monotonous and repetitive, thus reducing their motivation and concentration in learning. Meanwhile, the weaknesses of the translation method arise when there are students who have difficulty following the material; they have the potential to fall further behind because this method requires more rapid understanding and the ability to translate directly, which may be difficult for some students.

## **7. Teaching Methods in Writing Skills (写字 *xiě*)**

In the process of learning Chinese writing skills (汉字 *hànzì*), teachers have not often implemented intensive writing exercises in class. When teaching writing skills, teachers usually first demonstrate the steps of writing Chinese characters on the board by repeating them several times, then give students the opportunity to try writing directly on the board. The approach used in honing this writing skill is the direct method, which focuses on demonstration and direct practice. To improve writing skills independently, teachers also give homework in the form of exercises in exercise books (练习册 *liànxí cè*). However, the results of observations show that students rarely note or write down the steps of writing Chinese characters in their notebooks. The advantage of implementing this direct method is that students gain direct practical experience by writing Chinese characters on the board, making it easier for them to understand the shape and order of strokes. However, the weakness of this method is that not all students

are able to concentrate fully, because the teacher's attention is more focused on the process of explaining and writing on the board, so that some students can lose their way or not fully pay attention.

### 8. Teaching Methods in Reading Proficiency (读 dú)

In the reading method, teachers utilize media in the form of printed books containing various simple reading texts. The book is designed to introduce sentence structures and basic vocabulary commonly used in everyday communication. In the learning process, teachers adopt the Grammar Translation Method, which focuses on mastering grammar rules and enriching vocabulary. To support this, teachers provide students with a list of new vocabulary (生词 shēngcí) along with their translations into Indonesian. This list is used as initial provisions before students read and understand the contents of the text in the textbook. Before reading activities are carried out, students are first invited to understand the meaning of each vocabulary that will appear in the text. This aims to ensure that they do not have difficulty in grasping the meaning of the reading as a whole. In addition, teachers also insert explanations regarding relevant grammatical structures (语法 yǔfǎ), including an emphasis on the use of the particle 的 (de) which functions as a connector in descriptive phrases or clauses. Through this approach, it is expected that students will not only be able to read texts in Mandarin, but also understand the sentence structure and meaning contained therein in more depth. The application of the grammar translation method in learning Mandarin has a number of significant advantages. One of the main advantages is that this method allows students to learn grammar systematically, while simultaneously developing speaking skills and strengthening their memory of Han characters (汉字 hànzi).

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