Analysis of Learning Difficulties in Mandarin Among Fifth-Grade Students at Gembala Baik II Elementary School

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menganalisis berbagai kesulitan yang dihadapi oleh siswa kelas V di Sekolah SD Gembala Baik II dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa Mandarin. Bahasa Mandarin merupakan salah satu bahasa yang menuntut penguasaan keterampilan mendengarkan, berbicara, membaca, dan menulis. Namun, banyak siswa menghadapi hambatan, terutama dalam hal tata bahasa, pelafalan, serta penulisan aksara Mandarin yang kompleks. Faktor lain yang turut mempengaruhi keberhasilan belajar adalah rendahnya rasa percaya diri siswa dalam menggunakan bahasa Mandarin secara aktif dan interaktif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan instrumen berupa kuesioner dan wawancara yang disebarkan kepada 38 siswa. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif untuk mengidentifikasi pola umum dalam kesulitan yang dialami siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa selain masalah linguistik, faktor eksternal seperti metode pengajaran dan lingkungan kelas juga berdampak signifikan terhadap tingkat pemahaman siswa. Guru disarankan untuk mengadopsi pendekatan pembelajaran yang lebih kreatif dan interaktif, seperti kegiatan simulasi dan permainan bahasa, guna meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa dan membantu mereka mengatasi kesulitan dalam belajar bahasa Mandarin. Studi ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi bagi pengembangan strategi pengajaran yang lebih efektif di kelas bahasa asing, khususnya Mandarin.

Kata Kunci: *Kesulitan Belajar, Tata Bahasa Mandarin, Pelafalan, Strategi Pembelajaran*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the various difficulties faced by fifth-grade students at Gembala Baik II School in learning Mandarin. Mandarin is a language that requires mastery of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. However, many students encounter significant challenges, particularly in grammar, pronunciation, and the complex structure of Chinese characters. Additionally, students' lack of confidence in actively and interactively using the language contributes to their learning difficulties. This research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing questionnaires and interviews conducted with 38 students. The data were analyzed descriptively to identify common patterns in the difficulties experienced by the students. The findings indicate that, aside from linguistic challenges, external factors such as teaching methods and classroom environment significantly impact students' understanding. It is recommended that teachers adopt more creative and interactive teaching approaches, such as simulations and language games, to enhance student engagement and help them overcome their learning challenges in Mandarin. This study aims to contribute to the development of more effective teaching strategies for foreign language classrooms, particularly in Mandarin instruction.

Keywords: *Learning Difficulties, Mandarin Grammar, Pronunciation, Teaching Strategies*

Introduction

Mandarin language education is becoming increasingly important in Indonesia due to growing international relations and trade. Proficiency in this language benefits both cross-cultural communication and career prospects in a globalized world (Fan & Liu, 2022). However, elementary school students often face significant challenges in mastering Mandarin, including its unique grammar, tonal pronunciation, and complex characters (Retnawati, 2014; Sun & Li, 2022).

In Gembala Baik II Elementary School, fifth-grade students frequently struggle with speaking Mandarin fluently, which negatively impacts their confidence in using the language in daily interactions (Jayanti & Senam, 2017). These challenges are not only due to the students' internal factors but also due to external ones, such as the teaching methods employed in schools.

Traditional teacher-centered methods, such as lectures and rote learning, often fail to engage students or help them develop their Mandarin skills effectively (Yang, 2018; Liu, 2020). According to Zhao and Liu (2024), innovative teaching methods are essential for overcoming the challenges of learning foreign languages like Mandarin. Moreover, educational technology plays a crucial role in enhancing language learning.

Tools such as interactive applications and e-learning platforms can support students in grasping Mandarin grammar and character writing in a more engaging way (Chen & Zhou, 2021; Wang & Zheng, 2021). However, teacher training and the improvement of teaching quality must also be addressed to ensure effective language instruction (Zhang & Wang, 2019; Huang & Zhang, 2023).

This study aims to analyze the primary factors that affect learning difficulties in Mandarin among fifth-grade students at Gembala Baik II Elementary School. The findings are expected to offer useful recommendations for improving Mandarin language teaching, particularly in terms of teaching methods, technology integration, and classroom environment.

Method

This qualitative study explores the Mandarin learning challenges faced by fifth-grade students at Gembala Baik II Elementary School. The sample included 38 students selected based on their progress in learning Mandarin. Data were collected through questionnaires and structured interviews.

The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions that examined various aspects of learning difficulties, including grammar, pronunciation, and character writing. The interviews provided deeper insights into the students' learning experiences and challenges.

The data were analyzed descriptively to identify common patterns. This analysis helped in understanding the relationship between internal factors, such as motivation and confidence, and external factors, such as teaching methods and classroom environment. The findings were then used to suggest improvements in Mandarin teaching strategies.

Result and Discussion

The study found that most students struggle with understanding Mandarin grammar, especially in forming correct sentence structures and phrases. About 66% of
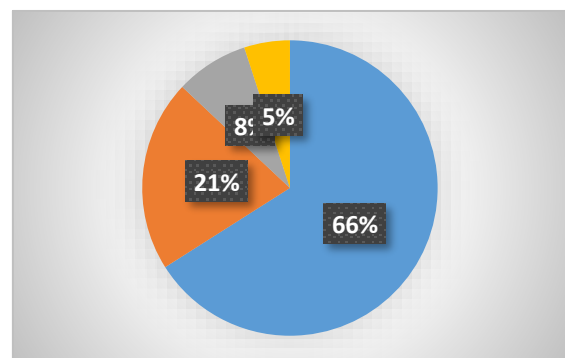

students reported difficulties with grammar, particularly in spoken communication.

Additionally, approximately 63% of students found it challenging to memorize and write Mandarin characters, identifying this as a

major obstacle in their learning.
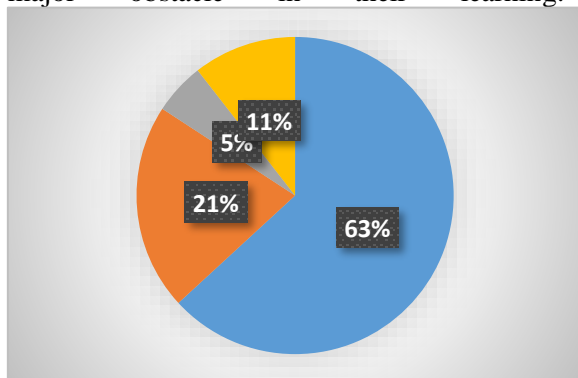
In terms of pronunciation, 65% of students faced difficulties distinguishing tones, a crucial element of Mandarin. Errors in tone often result in changes in meaning, posing a significant barrier to effective communication. These challenges were further compounded by students' low confidence in speaking Mandarin, primarily due to fear of making mistakes.
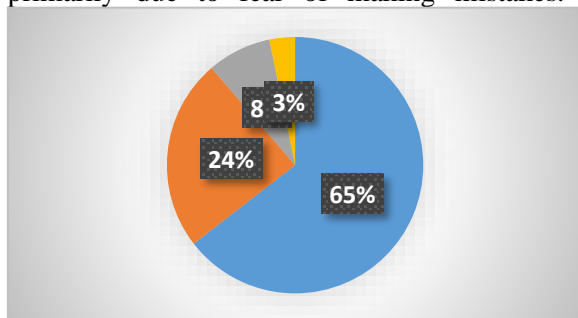
External factors also played a role in learning difficulties. About 39% of students mentioned that the classroom environment affected their concentration. Furthermore, non-interactive teaching methods led to reduced student engagement. Teachers who used fast-paced or unengaging teaching methods made it difficult for students to follow the material.
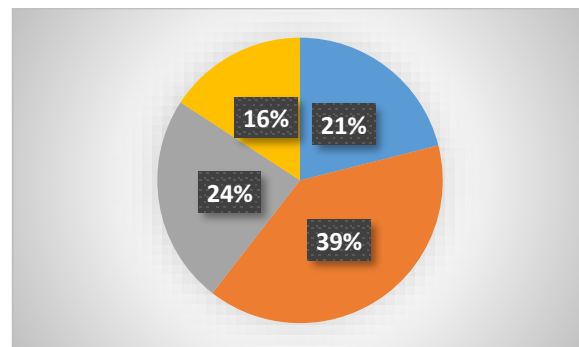
This discussion highlights that learning difficulties in Mandarin stem not only from linguistic challenges but also from external factors, such as teaching strategies and classroom environment. More active and creative teaching methods, such as simulations and language games, are needed to improve student engagement and motivation. These approaches can help students overcome difficulties in grammar, pronunciation, and character writing.

Conclusion

This study concludes that fifth-grade students at Gembala Baik II Elementary School primarily face difficulties in understanding Mandarin grammar, pronunciation, and character writing. Classroom environment and teaching methods also contribute to these challenges. It is recommended that teaching becomes more interactive, with gradual practice in speaking and writing Mandarin characters.

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