

The Effects of Learning Mandarin Online with a Native Lecturer to University Students' Anxiety

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ABSTRACT

The Diploma Mandarin Language Study Program at UNS transitioned to online learning as an alternative to face-to-face instruction following the COVID-19 pandemic. Foreign language learning, including Mandarin Chinese, typically involves native speakers as instructors. However, online learning with native speakers can inadvertently result in student anxiety. To address this issue, the program collaborated with the UNS Confucius Institute to bring native lecturers onboard. Nevertheless, certain native lecturers encountered visa-related challenges that prevented them from teaching in a face-to-face setting. Inspired by the post-COVID online learning landscape, the Study Program formulated a policy to continue certain Chinese language courses online. This study aims to analyze the impact of online Chinese language learning with native lecturers on the levels of anxiety among Diploma Mandarin Language students. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing a case study design and data collection techniques, including observation and questionnaires. The research seeks to contribute theoretically by addressing the gaps in the literature related to student anxiety during online Mandarin learning with native speakers. The study involved 30 randomly selected students from the Diploma Mandarin Language classes of 2021 and 2022 at UNS. The results of this study indicated that 73.33% of the respondents experienced anxiety while participating in online learning with native instructors. The types of anxiety included reduced learning conditions, diminished self-efficacy, and decreased learning effectiveness.

KEYWORDS

Anxiety; Mandarin; Online; Native

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to significant changes in the organization of educational systems worldwide. The way in which learning activities took place underwent major changes as a result of COVID-19. The government regulation that governs these bold learning policies (COVID-19) is Regulation No. 4 of 2020, which pertains to the implementation of educational policies during the emergency period for the spread of the Corona Virus Disease. Online learning is one way to replace face-to-face learning. It is a type of learning that involves using modern technology, such as computers, gadgets, and

internet devices (Kuntarto, 2017). Learning with this system can be done anywhere, at any time because of technological advancements. University students can engage with their lecturers through online class platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, and others.

The transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered how the UNS Chinese Diploma programme engages students in the learning process. Nevertheless, it is essential to comprehend the motivation behind this research. While the pandemic has compelled substantial changes in education, it is crucial to ascertain why the shift to online Chinese learning holds such significance. Is there an immediate necessity that needs to be addressed? The objective of this study is to offer a more profound understanding of the impact of online Chinese language learning with native speakers on UNS Chinese Diploma students.

When it comes to learning foreign languages, native speakers play a vital role. This is because learning foreign languages directly with native speakers can provide a positive language environment for foreign language learners. For instance, when it comes to learning Mandarin, native Mandarin speakers are considered the standard as they have an impeccable pronunciation, well-structured language, and a rich vocabulary. Therefore, they have an advantage over non-native speakers in communicating and are considered to be the standard in speaking Mandarin.

Within the realm of Chinese language learning, there exist knowledge gaps that still require attention. Although prior research has explored Chinese language acquisition, there remains an insufficient understanding of how instruction by native Chinese teachers impacts students' anxiety levels. This research endeavor aims to address these lingering questions.

In 2022, Liu Xue conducted research on the factors that affect the effectiveness of learning Mandarin in an online setting. The study identified seven key factors that contribute to successful learning: 1. The teacher's ability to teach positively and significantly influences the design of students' learning activities; 2. The design of learning activities by teachers is positively and significantly impacted by network conditions; 3. The teacher's design of learning activities positively and significantly affects students' self-efficacy; 4. The ability of the teacher to teach positively and significantly impacts the interaction between the teacher and students; 5. The teacher's learning activity significantly and positively affects students' learning motivation; 6. Student self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on learning motivation; 7. The interaction between teachers and students has a positive and significant effect on interactions between one student and another. Overall, the study concludes that the teacher's role plays a significant influence on the effectiveness of Chinese language learning in an online environment (Liu Xue, 2022).

To improve the quality of Mandarin language learning in the Diploma 3 Mandarin Language Study Program at Vocational School of Sebelas Maret University, the Study Program collaborates with the UNS Mandarin Language Center to facilitate students in doing learning activities with native lecturers. Learning Mandarin supported by direct teaching from native lecturers can provide opportunities for students to practice the language with native speakers, improve Mandarin pronunciation, and understand native Chinese culture related to the language itself, and more importantly, shape the language environment of Mandarin for students of Master program.

However, in the process of obtaining entry visas to Indonesia for face-to-face teaching, several native lecturers encountered some difficulties. It caused disruptions in the learning plans, which affected the smooth running of courses. As a result, some courses had to be conducted online, which may have a negative impact on the students' learning experience.

Learning a foreign language, such as Mandarin, is more effective when done face to face. This is supported by Fithriyah et al. (2022) which stated that poor planning and implementation of online learning can lead to cognitive decline among students. The online learning experience for students in the Diploma 3 Mandarin Language Study Program at UNS Vocational School, which includes native lecturers, has raised concerns and caused anxiety among students

According to Li Ying Zhang in 2022, anxiety is a negative emotion that arises psychologically when a person anticipates undesirable consequences, leading to feelings of sadness, worry, panic, fear, etc. Five main reasons cause anxiety in learning Mandarin: 1. The complexity of Mandarin pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar can make students feel anxious; 2. Students may feel stressed because they are unable to understand the repeated teacher's corrections; 3. Compared to other students, some students may find it difficult to convey their meaning in Mandarin, which can cause anxiety; 4. Students may feel nervous when speaking Mandarin in front of the class; 5. Students may also feel anxious due to the lack of effective learning methods (SHI Renjuan, 2017).

Online learning with native Mandarin lecturers presents unique challenges for students who have limited mastery of Mandarin vocabulary and inactive Mandarin language skills. Despite being accompanied by study program lecturers, the biggest challenge for them is understanding the pronunciation of the native lecturers and overcoming their limited mastery of Mandarin. This is especially true for the majority of students who have never previously studied basic Mandarin language. As a result, these conditions often cause anxiety among students during online learning sessions.

Implementing Mandarin language learning with native speakers not only poses language barriers, but also encounters network problems due to the online nature of the learning process. Other universities, like Tanjungpura University, face similar obstacles in implementing online Mandarin learning. These obstacles include internet network instability, limited data quotas, a high volume of assignments, difficulty for students to focus on learning, complex learning platforms, and students who prefer face-to-face learning (Lily Thamrin, 2020).

Several previous studies, such as SHI Renjuan in 2017, have analyzed factors contributing to anxiety in Chinese language learning, while Lily Thamrin in 2020 identified obstacles to the implementation of online Chinese language learning. Additionally, Liu Xue's research in 2022 explored important factors affecting the success of online Chinese language learning. However, there remains a gap in our understanding regarding the impact of instruction by native Chinese speakers on students' anxiety. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this knowledge gap and enhance our comprehension of Chinese language learning in an online context.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine how online Mandarin learning, taught by native lecturers, affects the anxiety levels of students in the UNS Diploma 3

Mandarin Language study program. Additionally, this study aims to identify the challenges faced by students in implementing online learning and to find appropriate solutions to improve the quality of Mandarin language education for Diploma 3 Mandarin Language Study Program students at the UNS Vocational School.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research conducted in this study used a quantitative descriptive method to describe the results of observations and data collected through questionnaires. The study aimed at determining students' anxiety levels, identifying problems in the learning process, and finding solutions or strategies to overcome these problems when learning Mandarin online with native speakers. The data collection techniques used in this study were observation and questionnaires. During the observation process, student behavior during online learning was observed. The DASS-42 questionnaire was employed to assess the level of student anxiety. This questionnaire consists of 42 items, which are further categorized into three scales: 14 items measure the depression scale, 14 items assess the anxiety scale, and another 14 items evaluate the stress scale. The questionnaire encompasses three scales: depression, anxiety, and stress. In terms of research subjects, a total of 30 student respondents were selected using a sampling method to determine their anxiety levels in the context of online learning with native speakers.

The questionnaires were distributed to students of Class 2021 and 2022, Diploma 3 Mandarin Language Study Program, Sebelas Maret University Vocational School, through Google Forms as research subjects to obtain data on students' anxiety levels in online learning with native lecturers. They were chosen as research subjects because they attended online learning classes with native speakers. Respondents were free to choose the answers that best corresponded to their individual situations, and the questionnaire was kept confidential. A total of 78 respondents were selected from 2 classes using a random sampling method by taking 30 correspondents.

The data analysis technique involved analyzing quantitative data from the respondents' questionnaires and interpreting the results of this analysis according to the research problem.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Several previous studies have explored the factors influencing anxiety levels in Chinese language learning, including the research conducted by SHI Renjuan in 2017. However, our study takes a distinct approach. It not only delineates these factors but also critically evaluates the research methodologies employed in the existing literature. Our findings are compared to those of SHI Renjuan and other studies to offer a more comprehensive understanding of anxiety factors in Chinese language learning. The results of our study demonstrate that online Chinese language instruction with native teachers significantly impacts students' anxiety levels, addressing a persistent knowledge gap in prior research. The following section describes our study's results :

1. The Process of Online Mandarin Learning with Native

Online learning supports facilities such as media platforms that students can access using electronic devices, namely computers, and gadgets that are connected to the Internet

network. The internet network can be used if lecturers and students have internet quota on their devices or use Wi-Fi.

The online learning process at the D-3 Mandarin Language Study Program at the UNS Vocational School is carried out using different platforms adapted to the lecturers teaching the courses. The Basic Mandarin Listening and Speaking course for the class of 2022, as well as the Comprehensive Mandarin Language course for the class of 2021, are carried out online using Zoom as the learning medium. The learning process in these two courses is taught by native lecturers from China online and accompanied by study program lecturers. Learning is held twice a week, divided into 32 meetings, namely 30 meetings for material and 2 meetings each for the mid-term test and final test.

The results of observations during the online learning process with natives using the Zoom media platform in the two courses above, native lecturers usually deliver the material first, namely discussing vocabulary in the form of word meanings and their application in sentences, then giving practice questions both orally and in writing related to the material which is discussed. After that, the native lecturer started to interact more with students to conduct question-and-answer sessions, presentations, and discussions. In this session, the native lecturer gave time for students to further hone their communication skills in Mandarin.

2. Students' Anxiety Level in Online Mandarin Learning with Native

Table 1. Title of Table

	Anxiety		Stress		Depression	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	8	26,67%	24	80%	21	70%
Mild	3	10%	5	16,67%	5	16,67%
Moderate	4	13,33%	1	3,33%	3	10%
Severe	11	36,67%	0	0%	1	3,33%
Very Severe	4	13,33%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	30	100%	30	100%	30	100%

Based on the results of the questionnaire data, three condition patterns were found among the students, namely anxiety, stress, and depression. Out of 30 surveyed students, 8 students (26.67%) had a psychological condition that could be considered normal. In addition, 3 students (10%) experienced mild levels of anxiety, 4 students (13.33%) experienced moderate levels of anxiety, and 11 students (36.67%) experienced severe levels of anxiety. Furthermore, 4 students (13.33%) experienced very severe levels of anxiety.

As for stress levels, it was found that students experienced mild and moderate levels of stress, apart from normal conditions. The questionnaire results showed that 5 students (16.67%) experienced mild levels of stress, 1 student (3.33%) experienced moderate levels of stress, and the remaining 24 students were in normal condition.

Out of the 30 students who participated in the study, 5 students (16.67%) experienced mild depression while 3 students (10%) experienced a moderate level of depression. Only 1 student (3.33%) experienced severe depression while the other 21 students (70%) were in a normal condition.

The analysis of the student questionnaire data revealed that students feel anxious when taking part in online learning with native lecturers. This anxiety is reflected in decreased learning conditions and self-efficacy, which ultimately leads to decreased learning effectiveness.

In this study, data were obtained through a questionnaire administered to 30 students enrolled in the Diploma of Chinese Language program at UNS. The DASS-42 questionnaire was used, which includes a range of questions designed to assess students' anxiety levels in Chinese language learning. The questionnaire results revealed that 73.33% of the respondents reported experiencing anxiety. This anxiety level data was categorized as follows: 10% of the respondents experienced mild anxiety, 13.33% experienced moderate anxiety, 36.67% experienced severe anxiety, and 13.33% experienced very severe anxiety when participating in online Chinese language learning with native teachers. These findings provide solid evidence supporting the notion that online Chinese language instruction with native speakers significantly impacts students' anxiety levels.

3. Problem and Solution in Online Learning with Native

During the online learning process in both courses, there were three significant obstacles that caused students anxiety when learning with native speakers. These were: internet connectivity issues, learning methods and techniques, and excessive worry about not being able to follow or answer questions from native speakers

Internet connectivity issues were a major problem for both native students and lecturers, resulting in less effective learning. According to Lily Thamrin's 2020 research, internet network instability poses a hindrance in online learning. This same issue is also encountered when students participate in online Mandarin learning with native speakers. Students often panicked when the network was suddenly disconnected. Therefore, it is essential to have reliable networks to make online learning more efficient. The learning methods and techniques used in online learning should be adapted to the system. Traditional lecture methods and techniques using discussion are less effective in online learning since they require more time. Additionally, the ability of students' networks to respond to each feed or question from native lecturers varies. Therefore, alternative techniques should be employed to make online learning more effective. Finally, excessive anxiety arises when students cannot understand the material or answer questions from native speakers. This lack of confidence affects their learning conditions and can lead to a decline in their academic performance.

To overcome the issues mentioned above, there are several things that can be done. In case of network problems, native lecturers can record the learning process to anticipate the sudden interruption of the network. Additionally, they can provide video recordings of lessons to help students who are lagging behind in the material. In cases where there are problems with the learning methods and techniques used by native lecturers that is accompanied by lecturers from Study Program, it is necessary to analyze the needs and problems faced by students. To overcome students' feelings of excessive worry, native lecturers can create a pleasant learning atmosphere while still adhering to the learning plan. This is where the role of study program lecturers becomes influential in reviving students' enthusiasm for learning. Study program lecturers can help by discussing with native lecturers to provide sufficient time to explain the material that students have not yet mastered and require deeper explanation.

CONCLUSION

The Diploma 3 Mandarin Language Study Program at UNS Vocational School teaches Basic Mandarin Listening and Speaking to the Class of 2022 and Comprehensive Mandarin Language to the Class of 2021 with native speakers through the Zoom media platform. However, the online learning process faces three main problems: internet connectivity, learning methods, and excessive anxiety amongst students when communicating with native lecturers. These issues contribute to high anxiety levels in students.

The research concludes that online teaching with native speakers has a severe negative impact on students' anxiety levels, while their stress levels remain normal. Similarly, their depression levels remain within the normal range. Students experience anxiety due to poor learning conditions and reduced self-efficacy, leading to a decrease in learning effectiveness.

The study highlights crucial issues in teaching Mandarin as a foreign language. Lecturer should focus on teaching methods and delivery, create a relaxed, enthusiastic and interesting classroom environment, and employ appropriate methods to help students overcome anxiety for better learning outcomes. Moreover, the research also discovered several factors that are similar to anxiety research in other languages, such as class activities and interactions between teachers and students, which should be carefully considered in teaching. These suggestions can enhance students' learning experience and achievement in Mandarin as a foreign language, helping them to better understand Chinese language and culture. The conclusion illustrates the problem that has been formulated. The conclusion is not repetitive, but rather on the summary of the findings of the problems. Sometimes, the author also points out any limitations, and offer suggestions for future research.

This research contributes theoretically by identifying that online Chinese language instruction with native teachers can influence students' anxiety levels. We enhance the understanding of factors impacting anxiety in Chinese language learning and existing theories. Nevertheless, the authors acknowledge the limitations of this study, notably the small sample size. Future research should broaden its scope and increase the sample size to delve deeper into the effects of teaching Chinese with native instructors in diverse contexts.

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