

Students satisfaction in learning Mandarin in higher education institute in Perlis

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Abstract— This research aims to investigate satisfaction of students in learning Chinese Mandarin by the International Business students in higher education institute in Perlis, Malaysia which is focus on course contents, instructor and materials used in Chinese Mandarin class level 3. Forty five students from International Business year 3 participated in this research. Class room observation, interviews and questionnaires were use in this research. The questionnaires design were base in the “Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory” (BALLI), developed by Horwitz (1987) with slight modification done. The result of this study will provide the outline to educators to improve the course contents and materials used in class. The findings show that students are interested in learning business content, which related to their major course. And hope that it would help the instructors to enhance their teaching ability to meet the standard and students satisfaction. There are few limitation in this study were limited group and number of respondents who participated in this study.

Keywords- student satisfaction, Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), student, educator, course contents, Mandarin, materials used in class.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mandarin as an official language in 3 countries, While Mandarin actually consists of closely related varieties of Chinese spoken natively across most of northern and southwestern China, a standard form based on the variant of the Beijing area has been established as its standard and is official in China, Taiwan and Singapore. However, in the later two countries, local languages have influences the spoken vernacular form of Mandarin.

Now a day Mandarin becomes second most important language in the world. The numbers of people who are interesting in learning Mandarin are increasing significantly. After China has opened the country the majority business hub has been established in many important areas of China. Such as Beijing, Hong Kong, etc.

In Malaysia there are many school teaching Mandarin start from primary school to the high level. In Malaysia Mandarin is one of the second languages used by Malaysian that to communicate among Malay Chinese. As the world changing,

there lots of Malay and Indian in Malaysia are able to communication in Chinese as well as Malay Chinese do. As Malaysia slogan ‘1 malaysia’ all races in Malaysia accept other culture and there can live together. Although, Chinese has start teach in some of primary school in Malaysia. However, there are still many of students are never learning Chinese since there are in primary school, secondary school or higher level.

In the past several years Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) offering Mandarin to Engineering students who interesting to learn and add Chinese as their advantage for future career. In year 2009 UniMAP offered Chinese to International Business students who really want to learn Chinese as foreign languages. Students have to go through 4 levels which start from level 1 till level 4. The topics teach and teaching activities used for Mandarin class has been desired for a student who has no basic in Chinese which is students who has no formal educational background in Chinese.

This research aims to find out UniMAP International Business student’s satisfaction in learning Mandarin. The target group is UniMAP International Business student’s years 3 which is taking Mandarin level 3 in UniMAP. It is hope that the result of study may help in developing the teaching and learning Mandarin of UniMAP and other who are interesting to learning Chinese.

Countries where Mandarin as an official language

The increasing of people who are native spoken Mandarin shown by the number of population of China (1,349,585,838), Taiwan (23,299,719) and Singapore (5,460,302) is related to the important of Mandarin.

In China, the public usage of dialects other Mandarin (Putonghua is officially discouraged by the government and nearly all education and media is conducted in the standard variant, with a notable exception being Cantonese in Guangdong media and public transportation. As a result, younger populations are increasing losing knowledge of their local dialects (Yeping, Ying, 2011). However, in the recent years, there has been limited activity in reintroducing local dialects at schools thorough cultural programs and broadcasting restrictions on dialects have been somewhat slightly uplifted (Dandan, Ni,2011).

Although Standard Mandarin is the official dialect of Chinese in Taiwan, the Taiwanese and Hakka dialects are widely spoken and used in media. Additionally, the two dialects are used in public transportation announcements. However, there are many Taiwanese who unable to speak Hakka dialect. Taiwan government has added Hakka to be taught at the primary school.

Countries where Mandarin has a significant minor presence

Due to historically large Chinese minority populations, the Chinese language has a significant presence in Malaysia and Indonesia despite having no official status. In Malaysia, Cantonese is widely used in commerce among the Chinese Malaysian community, especially in Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh (Amy, Chua, 2010). Cantonese television shows from Hong Kong are popular. Meanwhile, the Hokkien dialect that originates from the southeastern Chinese province of Fujian is the most spoken Chinese variant. However, Chinese schools in Malaysia use Mandarin as medium of instruction (Lewis, 2005) Hokkien is also the most spoken dialect among Chinese Indonesians, with Cantonese, Mandarin and Hakka also present (West, 2010).

Southern Vietnam also hosts a smaller but still significant and historic Chinese population that was heavily involved in the country's trade and industry from the 16th century, through French colonization and the Vietnam War, up to the present despite a mass exodus following the Fall of Saigon. Cantonese is the lingua franca among members of the community, although there is also a significant presence of speakers of Teochew and Hakka (West, 2010).

Taishanese, a closely related variant of Chinese to Cantonese, was originally the main Chinese dialect spoken throughout Chinatowns in the United States and Canada as early Chinese immigrants to the west originated from the Sivi area of Guandong province. Since the mid-20th century, standard Cantonese has since replaced it as the main Chinese variant among the Chinese American and Chinese Canada communities due to a larger immigration from other parts of China and Taiwan has resulted in a larger presence of Mandarin speakers in the United States as well (Lai, H. mark, 2004)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mandarin Chinese in Malaysia

Malay-Chinese or Chinese-Malay are Malaysians of Chinese, most are the descendants of Chinese who arrived between the early and the mid-twentieth century. Malaysian Chinese constitute one group of Oversea Chinese and constitute the third largest Chinese community in the world, after those in Thailand and Indonesia. Within Malaysia, they are usually simply referred to as "Chinese" and represent the second largest ethnic group in Malaysia after the ethnic Malay majority. As of 2010, approximately 6,960,000 Malaysian Chinese –majority of the population in Malaysia self identify as "Chinese"

Malaysian Chinese are a socioeconomically well established middle-class ethnic group and make up a highly disproportionate of Malaysia's professional and educated class with a record of high educational achievement, a high representation in the Malaysian professional white-collar workforce, and one of the highest household incomes among minority demographic groups in Malaysia. Like in much of Southeast Asia, Malaysian Chinese are dominant in both the business and commerce sectors, controlling an estimated 70% of the Malaysian economy (Amy, Chua, 2010). They are also one of the biggest taxpayers, contributing almost 90% of the national income tax and 60% of Malaysia's national income.

Education system in Malaysia

Malaysia has a unique public education system whereby students can choose form three languages which are Malay, Mandarin Chinese and Tamil as the language of instruction for their primary education. This is due to a combination of historical can socio-political circumstance and pragmatic compromises rather than an official embrace of mother tongue education. Former Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi, for instance, stated publicly that the government promotes the Malay medium education as the choice education for all and the platform for national unity. In recent times there have been isolated attempts initiated by etholinguistic minority communities themselves to preserve or develop their respective languages for inclusion as a subject in the school system.

The factors that affecting student's satisfaction in learning courses it related between students expectation and course design. With the clarity design of the course contents, material and instructor can be lead to the higher level of student's satisfaction. According to Swan (2006), well prepare of course material, interaction with instructor and active discuss among course participants is significant influenced student's satisfaction and perceived learning. However, in learning language now a day internet influence the interesting of the learner. The useful of internet in learning language depends on how well the material found match with the needs of the learner and their ability. (Egbert, 2001)

Well prepare of course material may not lead to some of student's dissatisfaction with the course. Therefore the technology, especially the emergence of the internet, is affecting student's learning (Paulsen, 2001). Zhang (2005) found learner achieved better performance and the higher level of satisfaction when internet was use in learning language. With the technology of the internet plus with the instructor assist could effectively help student in learning language (Shiao & Tun, 2002).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire, personal interview and class room observations were use in this research. Student's satisfaction in learning Chinese Mandarin is the dependent variable and independent variables are: content of Chinese Mandarin level 3, Chinese Mandarin's instructor and Material used in Chinese Mandarin level 3 class. A apply and self-designed

questionnaire, classroom observation and interview in-depth were used to gather the research data. The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part comprised of demographics and profile information of the respondents. Second part consisted of 11 questions which were intended to measure pre-class student's expectation from learning Chinese Mandarin in UniMAP. The respondents were asked to rank the statement on contextual condition related to contents, instructor and material used in Chinese Mandarin level 3 class using 5-point liker scale anchored by strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questions were I expect that Mandarin course content will consist of what I want to learn, I expect that Mandarin course content will consist of topics related to my major course (international business), I expect that I will be able to speak basic Mandarin, I expect that I will be able to understand basic Mandarin, I expect that I will be able to read basic Chinese characters, I expect that my Mandarin instructor will assist me in learning Mandarin, I expect that instructor will make the class interesting, I expect that the instructor's teaching skill will help me to learn Mandarin, Material that the instructor will use in the class will help me to improve my learning Mandarin, and I expect that Mandarin will add value to make me more competitive in the job market.

Third part consisted of 11 questions which were intended to measure post-class student's satisfaction in learning Chinese Mandarin in UniMAP. The questions were The Mandarin course content consisted of what I want to learn, The Mandarin course content consisted of topics related to my major course (international business), The course helped me to speak basic Mandarin, The course helped me to understand basic Mandarin, The course helped me to read basic Chinese characters, The course helped me to write basic Chinese characters, The Mandarin instructor made the class interesting, The Mandarin instructor's teaching skill helped me to learn Mandarin, The materials that the Mandarin instructor used in the class helped to improve my learning Mandarin, and I am confident that Mandarin has added value for me to be more competitive in the job market.

A total 45 sets of questionnaires were distributed through hard copy and total 45 copies were responded. The study intended to see the relationship between student's satisfactions and course contents, instructor and materials used in class.

From the above theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were derived:

- H1 There is a relationship between satisfaction of students in learning Mandarin Chinese and Mandarin course contents.
- H2 There is a relationship between satisfaction of students in learning Mandarin Chinese and instructor's teaching skill.
- H3 There is a relationship between satisfaction of students in learning Mandarin Chinese and the materials used in class.

- H4 There is a relationship between satisfaction of students in learning Mandarin Chinese and learner's achievement in 4 skills. (speaking, listening, reading and writing skills)

IV. SURVEY RESULT

Total 45 sets hard copies of questionnaires were distributed to the international business year 3 students who are taking Mandarin class level 3 all questionnaires were collected back. Descriptive analysis shown that out of 45 respondents, there were more male than female respondents. The results show that 28 of the respondents were male and the remaining 17 were female. The majority of the respondents, a total of 31 are Malay, 9 are other race, 5 are Indian, and none is Chinese. There are 40 of the respondents are Muslim, 5 are other religions and none are Buddhist. The respondents' mother's tongue, there are 31 are Malay, 9 are other, 4 are Tamil and 1 is English. There are 20 respondents spent 1 hour in learning Mandarin out of the classroom per week, 18 spent more than 3 hours, 4 spent 3 hours and 3 spent 2 hours. There are 25 of respondents that the majority of their friends are Malay, 18 are mixed, 2 are Indian and none is Chinese.

Pre-class student's expectation in learning Mandarin

From 11 questions in part II there were two questions asking about course contents. Question no. 1 asking course contents will consist of what I want to learn. It is subject 'strongly agree' with the course contents by percentage of the respondents were 72%. For 'agree' with the course contents will consist of what I want to learn by percentage of the respondents were 28%. For course contents will consist of topics related to my major course. It is subject 'strongly agree' were 95% of the respondents. And the respondents were 'agree' by 5%.

There were 4 questions asking about respondent's expectation on their four skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading skill). It is subject 'strongly agree' with their have basic skill for speaking, listening, reading and writing by the percentage of the respondents were 40%. For 'agree' by percentage of respondents were 35%. For 'uncertain' by percentage of respondents were 25%.

There were 3 questions asking about respondent's expectation about instructor. For 'strongly agree' with the topic asking instructor will assist me in learning Mandarin by the percentage of the respondents were 89%. For 'agree' by the percentage of 6%. It also 'uncertain' by the percentage of respondents were 5%. The question asking instructor will make the class interesting. For 'strongly agree' with the topics asked by the percentage of respondents were 99%. For 'agree' with the percentage of respondents were 1%. For 'strongly agree' with the instructor's teaching skill will help me to learn Mandarin with the percentage of respondents were 91%. For 'agree' were 5%. It also 'uncertain' with the percentage of the respondents was 4%.

There was 1 question asking about material use in class will help the learner improve their learning Mandarin. For 'strongly agree' with the percentage of the respondents were 75%. For 'agree' the percentage of the respondents were 10%.

It also 'uncertain' with the topic asked by the percentage of respondents were 15%.

There was 1 question asking about student's expectation after graduate from university. For 'strongly agree' with Mandarin will add value to make me more competitive in the job market with the percentage of the respondents were 72%. For 'agree' with the percentage of the respondents were 9%. For 'uncertain' with the percentage of the respondents were 19%.

Post-class student's satisfaction in learning Mandarin

From 11 questions in part III there were two questions asking about course contents. Question no. 1 asking course contents consisted what I want to learn. It is subject 'strongly agree' with the course contents by percentage of the respondents were 59%. For 'agree' with the course contents consisted what I want to learn by percentage of the respondents were 24%. For 'uncertain' with the percentage of the respondents were 12%. It also 'disagree' with the percentage of the respondents were 5%. For the question asked about course contents consisted of topics related to my major course. It is subject 'strongly agree' were 91% of the respondents. And the respondents were 'agree' by 9%.

There were 4 questions asking about respondent's satisfaction on their four skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading skill). It is subject 'strongly agree' with the course helped me have basic skill for speaking, listening, reading and writing by the percentage of the respondents were 73%. For 'agree' by percentage of respondents were 12%. For 'uncertain' by percentage of respondents were 15%.

There were 3 questions asking about respondent's satisfaction about instructor. For 'strongly agree' with the topic asking instructor assisted me in learning Mandarin by the percentage of the respondents were 98%. For 'agree' by the percentage of 2%. The question asking instructor made the class interesting. For 'strongly agree' with the topics asked by the percentage of respondents were 99%. For 'agree' with the percentage of respondents were 1%. For 'strongly agree' with the instructor's teaching skill will helped me to learn Mandarin with the percentage of respondents were 90%. For 'agree' were 5%. It also 'uncertain' with the percentage of the respondents was 5%.

There was 1 question asking about material used in the class will helped the learner improve their learning Mandarin. For 'strongly agree' with the percentage of the respondents were 76%. For 'agree' the percentage of the respondents were 22%. It also 'uncertain' with the topic asked by the percentage of respondents were 2%.

There was 1 question asking about student's confident in their knowledge after taken Mandarin level 3. For 'strongly agree' with Mandarin will have added value for me to be more competitive in the job market with the percentage of the respondents were 63%. For 'agree' with the percentage of the respondents were 18%. For 'uncertain' with the percentage of the respondents were 17%. It also 'disagree' with the percentage of the respondents were 2%.

V. DISCUSSION

As learner found course contents consisted what they want to learn from the course, the students will pay more attention to the learning process. Also material which used in the class room is related to their need and their major course, students seem to be interested and participating more during class room. Together with the instructor, who assist student in the learning of the course, have a good teaching skill, and able to make the class more interesting. The learner was open mind and ready to learn. The level of the achievement is higher than the learners who are not satisfied with the instructor.

Using the internet information technology as online learning combine with the traditional classroom are crucial to gain a better understanding of the learner, which lead to higher level of learner satisfaction. Once learner found course contents, material used in the class room and the instructor skill meet with their need or expectation. The student achievement and satisfaction levels were significantly higher achievement than students who found course contents, materials used in the class room and the instructor skill doesn't meet with their expectation.

However, the findings of this study indicate that students in Mandarin level 3 statistically significant higher on the overall quality of course, the quality of learning, and the quality of the interactive with the instructor in the class room. The finding in this study suggest that a well-designed of the course contents, material used and well prepared of the instructor can be effective in learning wellness. The finding of this study are somewhat limited by the lack of random participant, because Mandarin is students self-selected course.

Despite the fact that Mandarin level 3 course content which added business context may not satisfy with the few number of the students. However, it is important for business student to learn the business context which will be come essential to their future job opportunity.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence found in this study confirms that students satisfied with the business contents, which been add into half of level 3. Mandarin contents of level 3 should continuous develop the course contents as economic development in a conjunction of Malaysia becoming a member of Asean Economics Community (AEC) in year 2015.

Business students who are taking Mandarin level will graduate and go through the job market soon. They to be alert that Mandarin added the job opportunity for them. Therefore, they should prepare them self as AEC is the next year the same time as there are in the job market.

For foreign languages course which is offering to business students it a need to add business context to the courses. And the instructor also need to improve them self continuously.

VII. LIMITATION OF STUDY

The primary limitations of this study are the data collection and the target group. The questionnaire that used in this study using 5-point liker scale anchored by strongly agree to strongly disagree. Some respondents not really read the questions asked in the questionnaire. For the target group, this study only focused on International business students who are taking Mandarin level 3. The numbers of the respondents were 45 students. The data that have been collected and the target group may not various enough to get the overall accurate data.

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