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## **Analysis of Reading Comprehension Ability in Mandarin Language among Undergraduate students**

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### **Abstract**

**This study was conducted to determine undergraduate students' reading comprehension in the class of 2017, Mandarin Language Education Study Program, Universitas Tanjungpura by administering the HSK Level IV test. The reading comprehension was divided into three sections: vocabulary, structure, sentence arrangement, and understanding of the reading text's content. The test results showed that the average score obtained by undergraduate students only reached the level of completion. This case indicated that undergraduate students' understanding of vocabulary in reading reaches 77%, undergraduate students' understanding of structure and sentence arrangement is only 52.7%, and student's understanding of the content of the text reaches 70%. Based on the results, it can be concluded that undergraduate students lack of understanding of the structure and sentence arrangement contained in the reading problem on the HSK level IV test.**

**Keywords: Reading, HSK Level IV, Comprehension Ability**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mandarin is an international language. Currently, mastering Mandarin is important to broaden knowledge and build international cooperation. Lily revealed that learning Mandarin is almost the same as other languages in general. In learning Mandarin, there are four language skills are important to master, namely: reading, speaking, writing, and listening (Lily, 2020). These four skills are interrelated with one another and cannot be separated.

According to Lily, mastering these four competencies requires adequate vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery. In other words, someone who learns Mandarin will not be able to communicate using the language he is learning without mastering the vocabulary well. To master adequate vocabulary and be used to communicate or work on problems is not an easy thing. In mandarin, learners often find obstacles in mastering vocabulary that can interfere with a person's fluency in communicating (Lily, 2021).

Lily stated that learning Mandarin also requires appropriate and fun learning methods to help undergraduate students understand the information presented. In learning Mandarin, undergraduate students not only sit quietly listening to the teacher's explanation, but undergraduate students also have to be active in class to practice it in daily use so that the language learned can be used in

everyday life. One of the learning strategies used to improve student's learning abilities is using word cards. Undergraduate students usually learn Mandarin through several media, such as books, videos, or Chinese songs at school (Lily, 2018).

According to Sigit, Reading is a process of understanding or enjoying a reading text that involves the process of thinking, reasoning and processing data, and observing writing visually by utilizing the ability to see to obtain information (Sigit, 2015). So reading is a process of building meaning from the information conveyed through symbols in writing.

According to Zhao Jin Ming, reading or reading is generally divided into two, namely intensive reading and extensive reading. Intensive reading is speed reading which refers to accurate and correct reading comprehension. The content of understanding includes two aspects: the main information, detailed reading, and studying the character of words and sentences. Extensive reading is reading quickly and looking for the main ideas in the reading (Zhao Jin Ming, 2011).

According to Liu Qian Gong, based on the purpose of reading, several reading methods can be explained as follows, namely:

1. Finding the main idea from the reading  
This reading method is enough only to understand the main idea of the reading text, so it does not require understanding every vocabulary in the sentence.
2. Read to find specific types of information.  
This reading method must be done quickly to find information such as people, events, numbers, and certain aspects contained in the reading. Because there is a lot of information in the reading text, understanding the use of language and experience in finding the right information is needed.
3. Read on a certain paragraph.  
This third method is to select a certain paragraph from the text to be read and conclude its meaning by relying on thinking skills, previous knowledge, and predicting the meaning of the reading (Liu Qian Gong, 2004).

Wang Zu Mei stated that Mandarin proficiency could be measured using an international HSK test. HSK is a test to test undergraduate students' abilities to understand Chinese vocabulary, sentences, and segments (Wang Zu Mei, 2012). The HSK test has six levels representing the level of mastery of the Mandarin language.

Manda stated that the HSK test was widely known in Indonesia. Several research studies use the HSK test, such as the research conducted by Manda Pirm Winarti et al. entitled "Analysis of Difficulties of Semester VI Undergraduate students of the Class of 2013 in Mandarin Language Education Study Program, the University of Semarang in Understanding Reading Texts at HSK Level 4". In his research, it was found that the sixth-semester undergraduate students of the 2013 class had difficulty understanding the mandarin text at HSK level 4 in the reading section. Problems experienced when reading texts include understanding new vocabulary, arrangement of sentence patterns, relationships between sentences. Undergraduate students are less able to find the main ideas and conclusions in the HSK level 4 reading text questions, so undergraduate students have difficulty finding the correct answers (Manda, 2018). In addition, Inawati et al. conducted research under the title "Quick Reading Ability and Understanding of OKU State Elementary School," with the study's results stating that OKU State Elementary School undergraduate students had medium and low reading speeds. For undergraduate students who belong to moderate reading ability, it is certainly not too difficult to improve their reading ability. Undergraduate students who have low abilities need to get guidance and attention so that undergraduate students reading skills are adequate (Inawati, 2018).

Based on the research above, the writer is interested in researching the undergraduate students' reading comprehension ability in Mandarin Language. The author used HSK level 4 as a test tool because one of the requirements for graduating undergraduate students from the Universitas Tanjungpura Mandarin Language Education Study Program is to pass the HSK Level IV test.

## **METHOD**

The author used the literature study method and the test method to achieve the research objectives. According to Sugiyono, a literature study is a theoretical study and other references closely related to values, culture, and norms that develop in the studied social situation (Sugiyono, 2018). According to Sudaryono, the test method is a collection instrument in the form of questions or exercises used to measure intelligence, abilities, or talents possessed by undergraduate students (Sudaryono, 2016).

*Data collection technique*

The author collected data through the HSK Level 4 test, which questions are sourced from Kua Yue Xin HSK (跨越新HSK四级) (Li Zeng Ji, 2012). Li Zeng Ji revealed 40 questions in this test consisted of three parts. The first part is filled with choosing vocabulary with ten questions. Undergraduate students need to choose words to fill in the blanks from the options provided; The second part is Arranging the sentences in the correct order, with ten questions. Each question has three sentences, so undergraduate students need to arrange them in the right order. The third part contained 20 questions in the form of short paragraph text. Each paragraph included one or two questions. Undergraduate students must choose an answer from four options.

The HSK test questions were given in the form of a google form which is distributed to undergraduate students within the allotted time. The test time provided was 35 minutes, so the average answer time was 50 seconds per answer. The undergraduate students involved in this research were 26 undergraduate students of the class of 2017 in Mandarin Language Education Study Program, Universitas Tanjungpura.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The following is the percentage of undergraduate students who have taken the HSK test.

Table 1. Undergraduate students who have taken the HSK test

HSK Level	The Number of Undergraduate students	Percentage
HSK Level 3	1	4%
HSK Level 4	14	54%
HSK Level 5	7	27%
Never taken the HSK test	4	15%

It can be seen in the graph above that 4% of undergraduate students had taken HSK Level 3, 54% of undergraduate students had taken HSK Level 4, 27% of undergraduate students had taken HSK level 5, and 15% of undergraduate students had not taken HSK. Therefore, most of the undergraduate students have taken the HSK test, and some even ventured to take the HSK test above level 4. The Mandarin Language Department in Universitas Tanjungpura has a mandatory requirement to pass the HSK Level 4 exam because this is one of the student graduation requirements.

*Analysis of undergraduate students' reading ability*

There were three forms of tests to determine undergraduate students' reading ability. First was to choose words and fill in the blanks, there were a total of 10 questions. Second was to arrange sentence sequences, there were a total of 10 questions. The third was to understand sentences and essays, a total of 20 questions. The following were the data collection results from each part of the HSK test.

*First Part of the Test*

The first part of the test question was choosing words to fill in the blanks. There were ten questions in total. This part of the test mainly tests undergraduate students to choose vocabulary correctly and use vocabulary appropriately. The following are the results of data collection from the test.

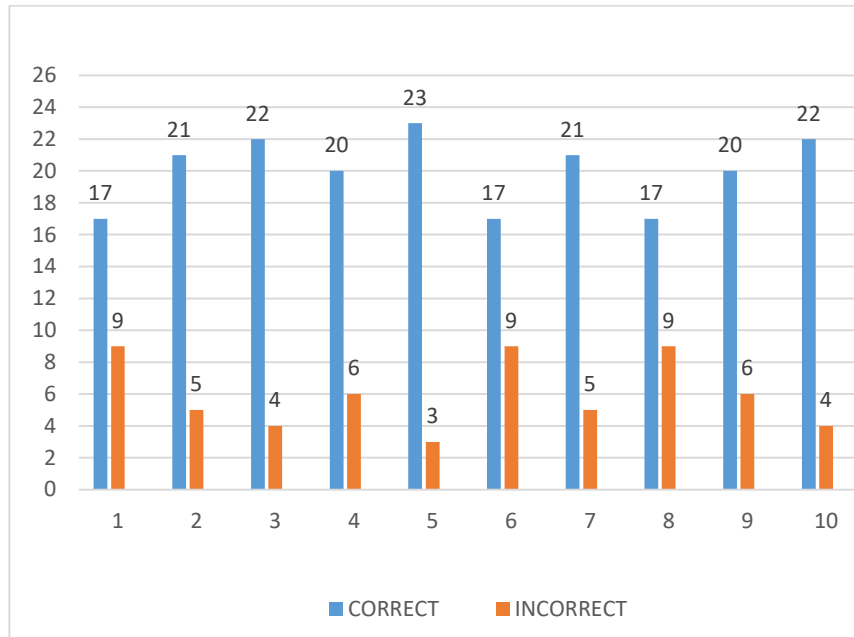


Fig 1. First Part of Reading Test

*Second Part of the Test*

The second part of the test questions was to compose sentences, and there were ten questions. This part of the test asked undergraduate students to structure Chinese words and sentences correctly and correctly. Reading and judging the order of sentences accurately. The following are the results of student data collection.

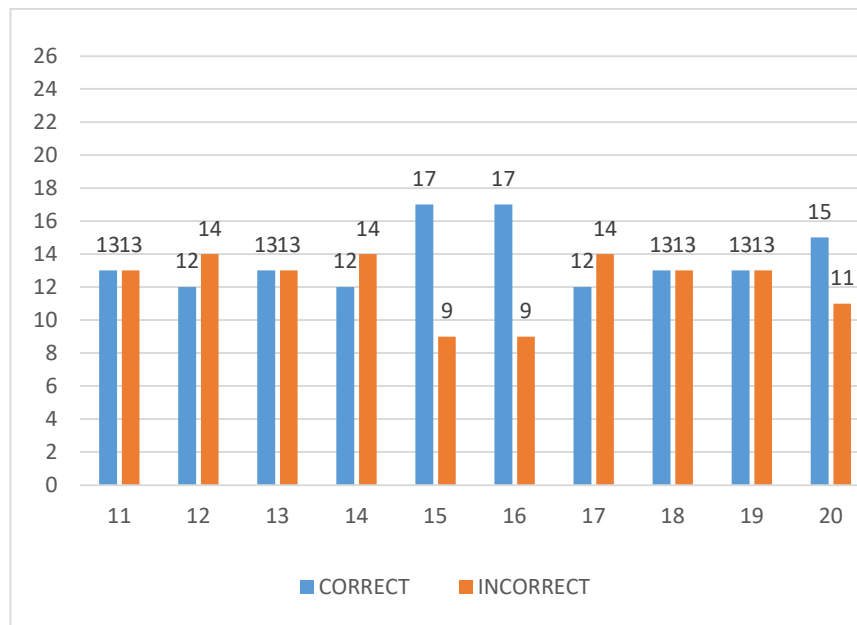


Fig 2. Reading Test Part Two

*Third Part of the Test*

The third part was sentence comprehension, and there were 20 questions. The test questions in this section to investigate whether undergraduate students understand the sentences and the content of the text in reading. The following are the results of student data collection.

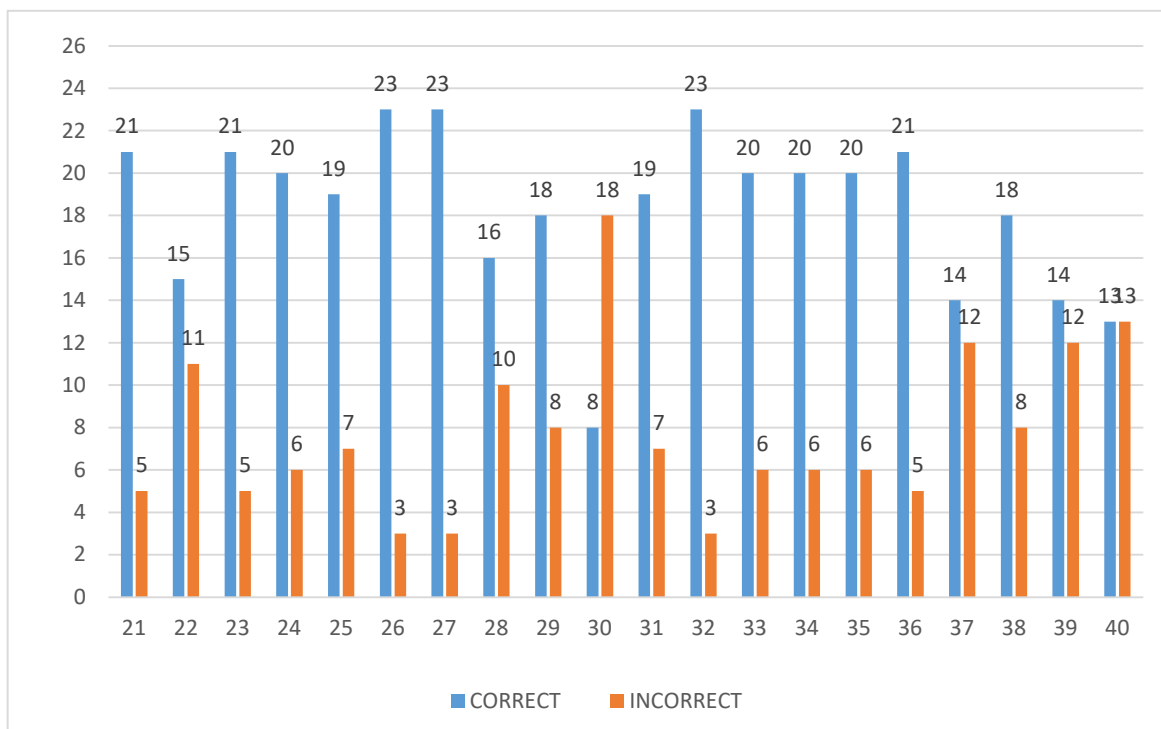


Fig 3. Third Part of Reading Test

#### *Overall Score HSK Test Level 4*

The table below shows that seven undergraduate students in class A have not passed the HSK test, while seven have passed. Only one student did not pass in class B, while 11 undergraduate students passed. So from the test results, it can be concluded that the 2017 class of undergraduate students of the Mandarin Language Education Study Program, FKIP Universitas Tanjungpura, who passed the HSK level 4 test, reached 69%.

Table 2. HSK test results in level 4

No.	Class	HSK levels that have been joined	The Number of Questions	Correct	Incorrect	Score
1	Class A	Level 4	40	23	17	57.5
2	Class A	Level 4	40	35	5	87.5
3	Class A	Level 4	40	35	5	87.5
4	Class A	Level 4	40	33	7	82.5

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5	Class A	Level 4	40	37	3	92.5
6	Class A	Level 3	40	36	4	96
7	Class A	Level 4	40	36	4	96
8	Class A	Level 4	40	24	16	60
9	Class A	Level 4	40	24	16	60
10	Class A	Level 4	40	25	15	62.5
11	Class A	Level 4	40	10	30	25
12	Class A	Level 4	40	28	12	70
13	Class A	Never	40	10	30	25
14	Class A	Never	40	11	29	27.5
15	Class B	Never	40	33	7	82.5
16	Class B	Level 5	40	35	5	87.5
17	Class B	Level 5	40	39	1	97.5
18	Class B	Level 4	40	27	13	67.5
19	Class B	Level 5	40	37	3	92.5
20	Class B	Level 4	40	30	10	75
21	Class B	Level 5	40	36	4	96
22	Class B	Level 4	40	29	11	72.5

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23	Class B	Level 4	40	37	3	92.5
24	Class B	Never	40	8	42	20
25	Class B	Level 5	40	38	2	95
26	Class B	Level 5	40	35	5	87.5

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### Conclusions

This study found that undergraduate students majoring in Mandarin Language Education, FKIP Universitas Tanjungpura in class of 2017 had a general understanding of HSK reading level 4 and only achieved passing grades. In the first part of the test, namely choosing vocabulary correctly, it was found that some undergraduate students did not have a good understanding of the use of vocabulary. Some undergraduate students know the meaning of the vocabulary but did not know how to match the vocabulary correctly. The percentage of vocabulary selection reached 77%. In the second part, namely compiling sentences with the proper structure from the test results, undergraduate students have difficulty in this section because undergraduate students did not understand sentences and the role of grammar, so they did not master this section well. The correct rate of this section was only 52.7%. In the third part of short reading comprehension, it was found that some undergraduate students had difficulties in this section because undergraduate students still did not understand the contents of the reading. The correct level of understanding in this section reached 70%. Therefore, the author believed that undergraduate students still need to improve their reading comprehension skills. The author advised undergraduate students to do more practice questions. If they find difficulties, undergraduate students can ask the teacher for help.

### Suggestions

It is hoped that undergraduate students still need to evaluate themselves to improve their reading comprehension skills in Mandarin language by doing more practice questions and reading more so that undergraduate students can recognize new vocabularies more. If undergraduate students find difficulties, they can ask the concerned teachers, especially teachers who teach the subjects in question, to continue improving and providing learning motivation for undergraduate students.

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