



The Influence of Language Attitudes on Language Choice among Mandarin Education Students at UNESA

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji hubungan antara sikap bahasa dan pilihan bahasa pada 34 mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Mandarin Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) angkatan 2025. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan mixed method dengan pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner daring yang dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, regresi linear sederhana, dan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki sikap positif terhadap bahasa Mandarin serta memahami nilai pentingnya dalam konteks akademik dan profesional. Namun, hasil analisis regresi menunjukkan bahwa pengaruh sikap bahasa terhadap pilihan bahasa bersifat positif tetapi tidak signifikan secara statistik ($R^2 = 0,094$; $p = 0,078$). Temuan kualitatif menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan bahasa Mandarin dipengaruhi oleh kepercayaan diri, kesempatan praktik, lingkungan belajar, serta kendala kebahasaan seperti penguasaan kosakata, nada, dan pelafalan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran bahasa Mandarin tidak cukup hanya membangun sikap positif, tetapi juga perlu menyediakan lingkungan komunikasi yang mendukung dan kegiatan praktik berbicara agar penggunaan bahasa lebih aktif.

ABSTRACT

This study explores how language attitudes relate to language choice among 34 Mandarin Education students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) batch 2025. Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics, simple linear regression, and thematic analysis. The findings reveal that students generally perceive Mandarin positively and recognize its value in academic and professional contexts. However, the regression analysis indicates that the influence of language attitudes on language choice was positive but statistically insignificant ($R^2 = 0.094$; $p = 0.078$). The qualitative findings indicate that Mandarin use is shaped by students' confidence, opportunities for practice, learning environment, and language difficulties, particularly in vocabulary, tones, and pronunciation. This study highlights that Mandarin learning should move beyond building positive perceptions by providing supportive communication environments and practical speaking activities to encourage active language use.

1. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of globalization and the digital era has strengthened the role of foreign languages across various domains, including education, communication, and professional settings. Among these languages, Mandarin has gained increasing importance due to China's expanding economic and cultural influence (Sae-thung & Boonsuk, 2022). As a result, more students are showing interest in learning Mandarin, particularly those enrolled in Mandarin Education programs.

In language learning, language attitudes are considered a key factor influencing both learning outcomes and actual language use. They are commonly understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral components that shape how individuals perceive and engage with a language (Garrett, 2010). Previous research has demonstrated that language attitudes are closely linked to language proficiency and academic achievement, highlighting their significance in second or foreign language acquisition (Li & Wei, 2022).

In addition, attitudes toward Mandarin are associated with learners' motivation and performance. Studies involving non-native learners of Mandarin suggest that positive attitudes and strong motivation

tend to correlate with higher proficiency levels, although this relationship may vary depending on other contributing factors (Heng et al., 2022). Similarly, empirical findings indicate that learners' attitudes have a significant positive impact on Mandarin language achievement (Ju et al., 2022).

Within the field of sociolinguistics, language attitudes are often regarded as an important factor influencing language choice because they shape how individuals perceive, evaluate, and respond to a particular language (Garrett, 2010). According to (Gardner, 2006) socio-educational model, positive attitudes toward a language can enhance learners' motivation and encourage them to engage more actively with that language. Besides situational influences, language choice is also affected by various psychological factors, including language preference, confidence, and perceptions of usefulness. Moreover, studies have indicated that favorable language attitudes can support language use and facilitate sociocultural adaptation across different communicative settings (Yi & Zhang, 2025). Therefore, students who hold positive views of Mandarin may be more inclined to use the language when appropriate opportunities arise.

However, the link between language attitudes and language choice is often more complex than it appears. Previous studies have indicated that learners may develop positive attitudes toward a language without regularly using it in their daily interactions. This inconsistency can be attributed to several factors, such as limited opportunities for communication, social influences, language proficiency, and peer interactions. In the Indonesian context, language choice has also been found to be shaped by a combination of social and psychological factors, including language attitudes, language functions, and family background (Yuliana, 2023).

Although a substantial body of research has examined language attitudes and language learning outcomes, relatively few studies have explored the direct relationship between attitudes toward Mandarin and language choice among Mandarin Education students in Indonesian higher education. Existing studies have primarily focused on areas such as language proficiency, academic performance, and learning motivation rather than actual language-use behavior. As a result, there remains limited evidence regarding whether positive attitudes toward Mandarin are reflected in students' language choices. Exploring this issue is essential for enhancing understanding of language behaviour within Indonesian higher education settings.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate students' attitudes toward Mandarin and examine their influence on language choice among Mandarin Education students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), batch 2025.

2. METHODS

This study utilized a mixed-method approach that combined quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the influence of language attitudes on language choice among Mandarin Education students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), batch 2025. The selection of this approach allowed the researchers to obtain both statistical findings and detailed insights into students' language behaviour. The quantitative aspect focused on examining the relationship between language attitudes and language choice, whereas the qualitative aspect was intended to explore the factors that shape students' language use across various communication settings.

The target population consisted of Mandarin Education students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), batch 2025. A total of 34 students voluntarily participated in the study. Participants were recruited using a convenience sampling technique, which involved selecting respondents who were readily accessible and willing to participate in the research (Bougie & Sekaran, 2025). Although the number of respondents represented only a portion of the population, it was considered sufficient to address the objectives of the study and identify initial patterns related to language attitudes and language choice. However, the relatively limited sample size should be considered when interpreting and generalizing the findings.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The instrument consisted of 20 items. Items 1–18 were close-ended statements assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items 1–10 were designed to measure Language Attitudes, while Items 11–15 measured Language Choice, whereas Items 16–18 examined factors related to Mandarin language use. More specifically, Q17 measured students' confidence in using Mandarin, whereas Q18 examined the extent of environmental support perceived by students in relation to Mandarin use. Examples of Language Attitude items included statements such as "I enjoy learning Mandarin" and "Mandarin is important for my future career." Examples of Language Choice items included "I use Mandarin when communicating with my classmates" and "I use Mandarin in daily conversations outside of class." Meanwhile, Items 19–20 consisted of open-ended questions designed to collect qualitative information about students' experiences, communication contexts, and challenges encountered when using Mandarin. The

questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on theoretical concepts of language attitudes and language choice found in sociolinguistic literature (Garrett, 2010).

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 29. The analytical procedures included validity testing, reliability testing, descriptive statistical analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and simple linear regression analysis. Validity and reliability tests were conducted to verify that the instrument measured the intended constructs accurately and consistently (Suratmini et al., 2024). Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize participants' response patterns. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the association between Language Attitudes and Language Choice, whereas simple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive effect of Language Attitudes on Language Choice.

For the qualitative analysis, responses obtained from the open-ended questions (Q19 and Q20) were analyzed through thematic coding. The process began by reviewing all responses several times to develop familiarity with the data. Subsequently, significant keywords and meaningful statements related to Mandarin language use and learning difficulties were identified and assigned initial codes. Similar codes were then organized into broader categories. For Q19, categories such as academic or classroom contexts, interaction with Mandarin-speaking peers, reactive language use, and self-practice emerged from the data. For Q20, categories including tones (shengdiao), limited vocabulary, Chinese characters (hanzi), lack of confidence, and environmental support were identified. These categories were further examined to identify recurring themes across participants' responses. Throughout the coding process, the researchers repeatedly compared the codes and categories with the original. To strengthen the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings, the coding process was carried out systematically, and the resulting codes, categories, and themes were repeatedly compared with the original responses to ensure consistency and accurate representation of participants' perspectives. This iterative procedure helped reduce potential bias and improve the credibility of the analysis.

By integrating quantitative and qualitative findings, the study provided a more comprehensive understanding of students' language attitudes and language choice practices. The mixed-method approach not only enabled the identification of statistical relationships between variables but also offered deeper insights into the contextual and social factors influencing students' language behavior.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section outlines the findings and discussion of the research on the influence of language attitudes on language choice among Mandarin Education students at UNESA. A mixed-method approach was employed by integrating quantitative and qualitative data (Cresswell, 2013). The quantitative data were collected through Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed using validity and reliability tests, descriptive statistics, and simple linear regression. In addition, qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions were examined through thematic coding to provide further explanation and support for the quantitative results. The findings are discussed in detail in the following sections (Harunasari, 2023).

To ensure the appropriateness of the research instrument, validity and reliability testing was conducted before the quantitative analysis was performed. These tests aimed to determine whether the questionnaire items accurately measured the target constructs and produced reliable results. Item validity was evaluated using Pearson Product Moment correlation, and the findings are presented in the following tables (Harunasari, 2023).

Table 1. Results of the Instrument Validity Test of Independent Variable

Item	R item	R tabel	Conclusion
X _{1.1}	0.584	0.339	Valid
X _{1.2}	0.597	0.339	Valid
X _{1.3}	0.447	0.339	Valid
X _{1.4}	0.632	0.339	Valid
X _{1.5}	0.588	0.339	Valid
X _{1.6}	0.601	0.339	Valid
X _{1.7}	0.678	0.339	Valid
X _{1.8}	0.523	0.339	Valid
X _{1.9}	0.651	0.339	Valid
X _{1.10}	0.605	0.339	Valid

Source: Processing from SPSS 29

The validity test for the Language Attitudes variable was carried out to assess whether each questionnaire item effectively measured the intended construct among Mandarin Education students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). The analysis utilized the Pearson Product Moment correlation method by examining the correlation between individual item scores and the total score of the variable.

As shown in Table 1, the *r* item values for all ten items ranged from 0.447 to 0.678. Item X1.7 produced the highest correlation coefficient ($r = 0.678$), suggesting that it had the strongest association with the overall Language Attitudes construct. In contrast, item X1.3 yielded the lowest coefficient ($r = 0.447$). Despite being the lowest value, it still exceeded the required *r*-table value of 0.339.

A comparison between the obtained *r*-item values and the *r*-table criterion indicates that all items satisfied the validity requirement, as every *r*-item value was greater than the corresponding *r*-table value. Consequently, all questionnaire items were considered valid. This finding demonstrates that each statement successfully represented the construct of language attitudes and contributed appropriately to the measurement of the variable. Moreover, most of the correlation coefficients fell within the moderate range, indicating that the questionnaire items had an adequate relationship with the overall construct. The fact that no items were categorized as invalid further suggests that the instrument was appropriately developed and aligned with the objectives of the study.

In conclusion, the Language Attitudes instrument demonstrated acceptable construct validity. Since all ten items fulfilled the established validity criteria, they were retained for further analyses, including reliability testing, descriptive statistical analysis, correlation analysis, and simple linear regression.

Table 2. Results of the Instrument Validity Test of Dependent Variable

Item	r-item	r-table	Conclusion
Y _{1.1}	0.764	0.339	Valid
Y _{1.2}	0.814	0.339	Valid
Y _{1.3}	0.895	0.339	Valid
Y _{1.4}	0.819	0.339	Valid
Y _{1.5}	0.742	0.339	Valid

Source: Processing from SPSS 29

The validity test of the Language Choice variable was conducted to determine whether each questionnaire item effectively measured students' language choice tendencies among Mandarin Education students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). The analysis employed the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique, which examined the relationship between individual item scores and the total score of the Language Choice variable. As shown in Table 2, all five items produced *r*-item values ranging from 0.742 to 0.895. The highest correlation coefficient was obtained by item Y1.3 ($r = 0.895$), indicating that it had the strongest association with the overall Language Choice construct. Conversely, item Y1.5 recorded the lowest coefficient ($r = 0.742$). Despite being the lowest value, it remained considerably higher than the required *r*-table value of 0.339.

A comparison between the calculated *r*-item values and the critical *r*-table value reveals that all questionnaire items satisfied the validity criterion. Since every *r*-item value exceeded the threshold, all items were categorized as valid. This finding demonstrates that each statement adequately represented the construct of Language Choice and contributed to measuring students' language selection tendencies. Moreover, the correlation coefficients indicated strong to very strong relationships between the individual items and the overall variable score. Items Y1.1, Y1.2, Y1.3, and Y1.4 exhibited very strong correlations, whereas item Y1.5 showed a strong correlation. These results suggest that the instrument items were highly consistent in capturing students' language choice behavior.

The relatively high coefficients further indicate that the questionnaire items were closely connected to the theoretical concept of Language Choice. Therefore, the instrument effectively reflected students' preferences and tendencies in choosing Mandarin across different communication situations. The absence of invalid items also suggests that the instrument was properly constructed and aligned with the objectives of the study. Overall, the results confirm that the Language Choice instrument demonstrated strong construct validity. As all five items fulfilled the established validity requirements, they were retained and deemed suitable for further analyses, including reliability testing, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression.

Table 3. Results of the Instrument Reliability Test

No	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
1	Language Attitudes (X)	0.781	Reliable

2	Language Choice (Y)	0.856	Reliable
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Source: Processing from SPSS 29

The reliability test was carried out to assess the consistency of the research instrument in measuring the variables examined in this study (Shafa et al., 2022). Reliability analysis was conducted using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient through SPSS version 29. In general, an instrument is regarded as reliable when its Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.70. Based on the results presented in Table 3, the Language Attitudes variable (X), consisting of ten questionnaire items, achieved a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.781. Since this value exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.70, the instrument can be considered reliable. This result indicates that the items used to measure Language Attitudes were sufficiently consistent and successfully captured the same underlying construct. For the Language Choice variable (Y), which included five questionnaire items, the Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.856. This coefficient is well above the accepted reliability standard and reflects a high level of internal consistency.

The finding suggests that the items measuring Language Choice were closely related and effectively represented students' language choice behaviour. When comparing both variables, the Language Choice instrument demonstrated a higher reliability coefficient than the Language Attitudes instrument. This indicates that responses to the Language Choice items were slightly more consistent across participants. However, both variables produced Cronbach's Alpha values above the minimum requirement, confirming that the instruments were reliable and suitable for use in the study. In addition, the reliability coefficients suggest that the questionnaire items were capable of generating stable and dependable results under similar conditions. The satisfactory reliability levels obtained for both variables further support the overall quality of the research instrument. Overall, the reliability analysis confirms that the instruments used to measure Language Attitudes and Language Choice met the required reliability standards. Therefore, all questionnaire items were retained and considered appropriate for subsequent analyses, including descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, simple linear regression, and qualitative interpretation.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
Language Attitudes	34	38.00	50.00	44.9706	3.64721
Language Choice	34	11.00	25.00	16.8529	3.49140

Source: Processing from SPSS 29

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to summarize the characteristics of the data collected for the Language Attitudes and Language Choice variables. The analysis focused on several statistical indicators, including the number of respondents (N), minimum and maximum scores, mean values, and standard deviations. These measures were used to describe the distribution of responses and to provide a preliminary understanding of participants' tendencies before proceeding to more advanced statistical analyses. According to Table 4, the Language Attitudes variable was based on responses from 34 participants. The scores ranged from a minimum of 38.00 to a maximum of 50.00. The mean score was 44.9706, suggesting that respondents generally held positive attitudes toward Mandarin. Since the average score was close to the highest possible score, it can be inferred that most students perceived Mandarin as an important and valuable language for educational, professional, and personal development. The standard deviation of the Language Attitudes variable was 3.64721. This value indicates that the respondents' scores were relatively concentrated around the mean, reflecting a fairly consistent pattern of positive attitudes among the participants. The limited variation in responses suggests that students shared similar views regarding the importance and value of Mandarin.

Regarding the Language Choice variable, the scores ranged from 11.00 to 25.00. The mean score of 16.8529 indicates that students demonstrated a moderate tendency to select Mandarin in various communication situations. Although respondents generally expressed positive attitudes toward Mandarin, the average score suggests that the language was not consistently used as the preferred medium of communication in everyday interactions. The standard deviation for the Language Choice variable was 3.49140, indicating a moderate level of variability among respondents. Compared with Language Attitudes, students displayed greater differences in their actual language-use behaviour. While some participants reported frequent use of Mandarin, others tended to use it less often depending on the communication setting, interlocutors, and situational demands. When the two variables are considered together, an important pattern emerges. Respondents showed highly positive attitudes toward Mandarin, yet their tendency to use the language in daily communication was relatively lower. This finding suggests that positive attitudes alone may not be sufficient to encourage frequent language use. Other factors, including self-confidence, availability of communication opportunities, environmental support, vocabulary

knowledge, and pronunciation challenges, may also play significant roles in shaping language choice behaviour.

Overall, the descriptive statistics indicate that Mandarin Education students at UNESA generally possess favourable attitudes toward Mandarin and demonstrate a moderate inclination to use the language in communication. Furthermore, the relatively low standard deviation values for both variables suggest that respondents' answers were reasonably homogeneous, indicating comparable experiences and perceptions among the participants.

Table 5. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Model Statistic		Value
R		0.307
R Square		0.094
Adjusted R Square		0.066
Std.Error of the estimate		3.37473
F Change		3.321
Sig.F Change		0.078

Variable	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t-value	Sig.	Conclusion
Constant	3.653	7.267	-	0.503	0.619	-
Language Attitudes	0.294	0.161	0.307	1.822	0.078	Positive (+)

Source: Processing from SPSS 29

To examine the relationship between Language Attitudes and Language Choice, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted among Mandarin Education students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). The analysis aimed to assess whether students' attitudes toward Mandarin significantly influenced their tendency to choose the language in communication. The regression model was evaluated using several indicators, including the correlation coefficient, coefficient of determination, regression coefficient, t-statistic, and significance value.

The results presented in Table 5 show that the correlation coefficient (R) was 0.307. This value reflects a positive relationship between Language Attitudes and Language Choice, indicating that students with more positive attitudes toward Mandarin were generally more likely to choose the language for communication purposes. Despite this positive association, the strength of the relationship was relatively weak. The R Square value of 0.094 indicates that Language Attitudes accounted for only 9.4% of the variation in Language Choice. Consequently, a substantial proportion of the variation (90.6%) was explained by factors outside the scope of the present model. These may include individual, linguistic, social, and environmental variables that affect language-use decisions.

The regression coefficient (B) for Language Attitudes was 0.294, demonstrating a positive direction of influence. This finding suggests that increases in positive language attitudes were associated with corresponding increases in students' tendency to choose Mandarin. However, the effect size was relatively modest. The standardized beta coefficient was also positive ($\beta = 0.307$), reinforcing the positive relationship observed between the variables. The simple linear regression model can be expressed as:

$$Y = a + bX$$

where Y represents Language Choice, X represents Language Attitudes, a denotes the constant (intercept), and b denotes the regression coefficient. Based on the regression results presented in Table 5, the regression equation is:

$$Y = 3.653 + 0.294X$$

The regression equation indicates that for every one-point increase in the Language Attitudes, the predicted Language Choice score increase by 0.294 points. The positive regression coefficient demonstrates that students who possess more favourable attitudes toward Mandarin are likely to exhibit a stronger tendency to select Mandarin as a means of communication. However, the statistical test yielded a t-value of 1.822 and a significance value of 0.078. Since the significance value exceeded the conventional threshold of 0.05, the influence of Language Attitudes on Language Choice was not statistically significant.

These findings imply that favourable attitudes toward Mandarin do not necessarily lead to its frequent use in communication. Although students generally acknowledged the importance and benefits of Mandarin, their actual language-use decisions appeared to be affected by factors beyond attitudes alone. As a result, language attitudes may serve as a supporting factor rather than the primary determinant of language choice. This interpretation is consistent with the qualitative findings, in which participants frequently referred to challenges such as low confidence, limited opportunities to practice Mandarin, insufficient environmental support, and difficulties related to vocabulary, pronunciation, tones, and Chinese characters. Such obstacles may discourage students from actively using Mandarin despite holding positive attitudes toward the language.

Overall, the results indicate that Language Attitudes had a positive yet statistically insignificant effect on Language Choice among Mandarin Education students at UNESA. The findings suggest that language choice is a complex phenomenon influenced by a combination of linguistic, psychological, and social factors, rather than being determined solely by attitudes toward the language.

Discussion

The results of the simple linear regression analysis indicate that the *Language Attitudes* variable had a positive relationship with *Language Choice* among Mandarin Education students at UNESA. Based on the analysis, the correlation coefficient (R) was 0.307 with an *R Square* value of 0.094. This result indicates that *Language Attitudes* accounted for 9.4% of the variance in *Language Choice*, while the remaining 90.6% was influenced by other factors outside the research model. In addition, the regression coefficient (B) value of 0.294 indicates a positive relationship, meaning that the more positive students' attitudes toward Mandarin were, the higher their tendency to choose Mandarin in communication contexts.

However, the significance test produced a Sig. value of 0.078, which was higher than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the influence of *Language Attitudes* on *Language Choice* in this study was considered positive but statistically insignificant. These findings suggest that positive attitudes toward Mandarin have not directly encouraged students to consistently choose Mandarin in their daily communication practices.

The results suggest the existence of an attitude-behaviour gap among the participants. In other words, students may hold favourable attitudes toward Mandarin and recognize its importance; however, these attitudes do not always lead to corresponding language-use behaviour. Despite generally positive evaluations of Mandarin, students' decisions to use the language in daily communication were not significantly affected by their attitudes. This finding implies that language choice is shaped by factors beyond attitudes alone, such as psychological influences, social contexts, and linguistic competence (Alhadidi et al., 2025). To further investigate this issue, a qualitative analysis was conducted to identify the factors underlying the non-significant relationship between Language Attitudes and Language Choice.

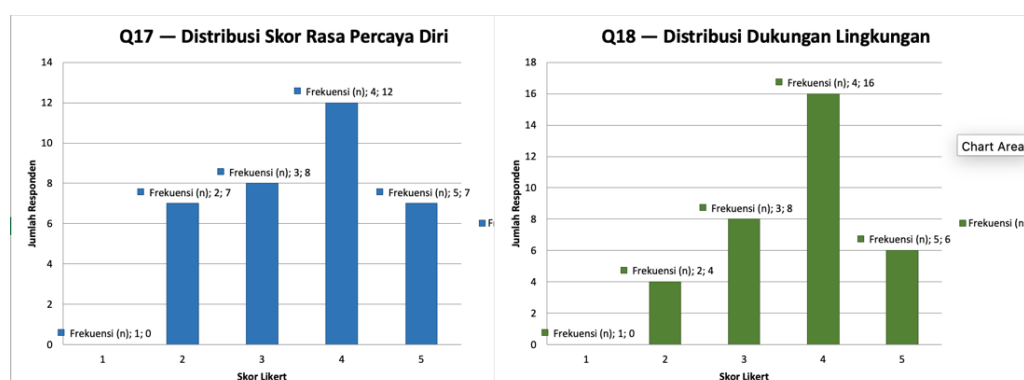


Figure 1. Distribution of Students' Confidence (Q17) and Environmental Support (Q18)

Although the results of the regression analysis show that Language Attitudes have a positive influence on Language Choice, the relationship is not statistically significant (Sig. = 0.078). This finding indicates that a positive attitude toward Mandarin has not been fully translated into actual language use behaviour in daily life. Therefore, to gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing students' language choices, the quantitative analysis was subsequently complemented by a qualitative analysis of questions number 17–20. This qualitative analysis aims to explain the previous statistical findings by identifying psychological aspects, environmental support, the context of language use, as well as the various obstacles faced by students in using Mandarin. Thus, the integration of these two approaches provides a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between Language Attitudes and Language Choice among Mandarin Language Education students at UNESA.

Based on the distribution of responses to Q17, it is important to note that the item was negatively worded: "I feel less confident when using Mandarin". Consequently, the interpretation of the scores is reversed, with higher scores reflecting lower levels of confidence in using Mandarin. The majority of respondents gave a score of 4 (12 respondents), followed by a score of 3 (8 respondents), and a score of 5 (7 respondents). In addition, a score of 2 was selected by (7 respondents), while no respondents selected a score of 1 (0 respondents). The dominance of scores 4 and 5 indicates that some students still experience doubt or a lack of confidence when using Mandarin, especially in spontaneous communication situations. This finding shows that psychological factors remain one of the barriers to the active use of Mandarin. These results are also consistent with the findings in Q20, which show that a lack of confidence remains one of the obstacles students face in using Mandarin.

Meanwhile, in Q18 regarding environmental support, most respondents also gave high scores. A total of 16 respondents gave a score of 4, while 6 respondents gave a score of 5. These results indicate that the students' academic environment relatively supported the use of Mandarin, particularly in classroom activities, presentations, and interactions with fellow Mandarin Education students. However, such environmental support was mainly limited to academic contexts and had not yet been fully established outside the campus environment.

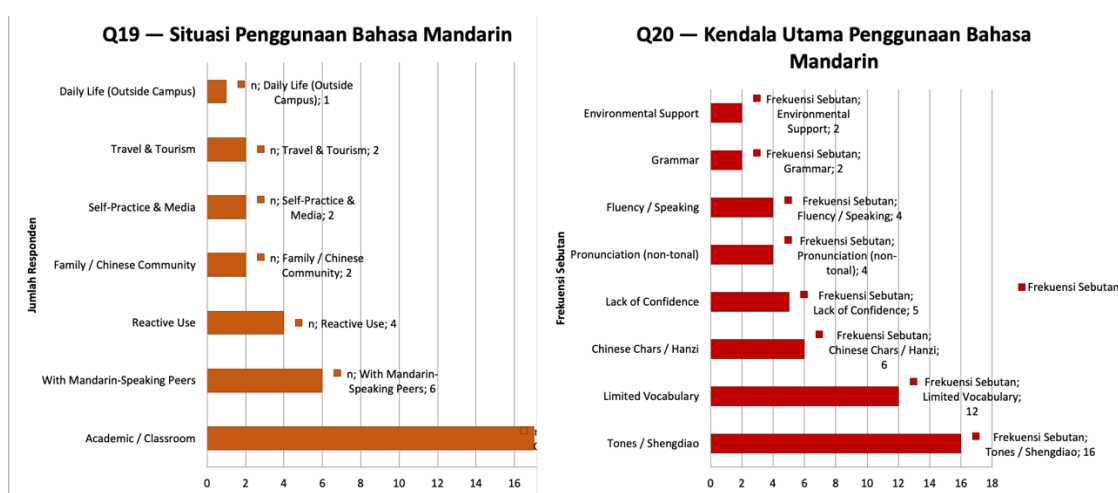


Figure 2. Thematic Coding Results of Language Use Contexts (Q19) and Main Obstacles in Mandarin Use (Q20)

The thematic coding results for Q19 showed that Mandarin use was most dominant in *academic/classroom* contexts, with a frequency of 17 respondents. In addition, Mandarin was also frequently used when students interacted with peers who could speak Mandarin (*with Mandarin-speaking peers*) with a frequency of 6 respondents, and in *reactive use* situations with a frequency of 4 respondents, where students used Mandarin because their interlocutors initiated the language first. In contrast, the use of Mandarin in daily life outside campus (*daily life outside campus*) remained very limited, with only 1 respondent reporting such usage.

These findings indicate that Mandarin language choice was still highly dependent on particular social domains, especially academic settings. This finding is consistent with the theory of *domains of language choice* proposed by (Rakhmat & Qohar, 2024), which explains that language choice in bilingual societies is influenced by social context, communication environment, and interlocutors. In other words, students tended to use Mandarin when they were placed in situations that required or supported the use of the language (Wijaya et al., 2025).

In addition to environmental and contextual factors, the thematic coding results for Q20 showed that the major obstacles in using Mandarin were still dominated by linguistic and psychological factors. The most frequently mentioned obstacle was difficulties with *tones (shengdiao)* with 16 mentions, followed by *limited vocabulary* with 12 mentions. Furthermore, students also experienced difficulties in remembering *hanzi* (6 mentions), lack of confidence (5 mentions), and problems related to fluency/speaking and pronunciation (4 mentions each).

The dominance of tone and vocabulary-related difficulties indicates that although students possessed positive attitudes toward Mandarin, they still faced phonological and linguistic challenges that directly affected their actual language-use practices. Mandarin has a tonal language system that is relatively

complex for second-language learners, causing tone-related mistakes to frequently make students feel hesitant or anxious when speaking. As a result, this condition contributed to the low intensity of Mandarin use in everyday communication.

The findings of the present study support (Gardner, 2006) *Socio-Educational Model*, which argues that favourable attitudes toward a second language do not automatically translate into active language use. The use of a second language is also influenced by factors such as a supportive social environment, opportunities for communication, and learners' confidence in using the language. Gardner further highlighted the importance of affective variables, including motivation, language anxiety, and communicative experiences, in shaping second-language learning and use.

Moreover, (Gardner, 2006) suggested that positive attitudes may coexist with limited language use when learners continue to encounter psychological and linguistic difficulties in authentic communication situations. This perspective is reinforced by (Kirkpatrick et al., 2024), who emphasized that language-use decisions are closely associated with individuals' confidence, communication anxiety, and perceptions of their own language proficiency.

The results of this study indicate that Mandarin Education students at UNESA generally held positive views toward Mandarin. Nevertheless, their actual use of the language remained affected by several factors, including self-confidence, environmental support, vocabulary knowledge, and challenges related to tones and pronunciation. As a result, Language Attitudes alone did not have sufficient influence to significantly predict Language Choice in everyday communication.

A further explanation for the weak and non-significant relationship may be the relatively homogeneous nature of respondents' attitudes. The descriptive findings revealed that most participants expressed similarly positive attitudes toward Mandarin, resulting in a limited range of scores for the Language Attitudes variable. When participants share comparable perceptions, statistical analyses often have less ability to identify strong relationships between variables. Therefore, the restricted variability in respondents' attitudes may have contributed to the positive yet statistically insignificant result observed in the regression analysis.

4. CONCLUSION

This study found that Mandarin Education students at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) generally hold positive attitudes toward Mandarin and recognize its importance for academic, professional, and future communication purposes. However, these positive attitudes were not sufficient to significantly influence students' language choice in everyday communication. This finding suggests that language attitudes alone do not automatically translate into actual language-use behaviour.

The qualitative findings indicate that students' language choices are influenced by various factors beyond language attitudes, including self-confidence, communication opportunities, environmental support, and linguistic competence. Difficulties related to vocabulary, tones, pronunciation, and fluency were also identified as barriers that limited the active use of Mandarin, particularly outside academic settings. These findings demonstrate that language choice is a complex phenomenon shaped by the interaction of psychological, social, and linguistic factors.

Therefore, efforts to promote Mandarin use should focus not only on developing positive attitudes but also on creating supportive communication environments and providing meaningful opportunities for language practice. Increasing students' confidence and opportunities to use Mandarin in authentic contexts may help encourage more active and consistent language use.

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