

Curriculum Development and Learning Motivation: A Review and Prospect of Chinese Language Courses in Universiti Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (UniKL)

课程编排与学习动机： 马来西亚吉隆坡大学汉语课程检讨与展望

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Abstract: Throughout the Chinese language courses offered by higher education institutes in Malaysia, which usually start from the outcome based education theory, has nurturing students' Chinese language communication skills as the utmost important learning objective. In theory of outcome based education, teaching and learning module should be student-centred, valuing students' personality development, and focusing on the cultivation of their ability and capability attainment after the completion of their education. Therefore, the design and implementation of curriculum should aim at attending to the students' final learning outcome through education process. However, a variety of problems still exist in the current curriculum development and teaching and learning module of Chinese language courses in UniKL, i.e. poor selection of module content, imbalance distribution between course syllabus and learning hour, poor arrangement of language skills' training, conducting classes as comprehensive course which includes all four of the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, student-centred principle is indistinguishable, and etc. All these existing problems in Chinese language courses are unfavourable against students' commitment to their learning motivation, thus causing negative responses from them, which also affected the effectiveness of the teaching and learning module. Based on both curriculum development of Chinese language courses in UniKL and their students, this study will conduct an analysis on the survey result in regards of the syllabus and teaching materials, as well as the learning motivation demonstrated by students. The study result will be helpful in proposing concrete methods to improve the quality of development and implementation of Chinese language courses.

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Keywords: Chinese Language Course, Curriculum Development, Learning Objective, Communication

摘要：在马来西亚各大专院校所提供的汉语课程中，一般从成果导向（Outcome based education）理论出发，以培养学生的汉语交际技能为最大的目标。在成果导向理论下，教学理应突出以学生为中心，重视学生个性发展，是聚焦于学生受教育后获得什么能力和能够做什么的培养模式，教学设计和教学实施的目标是关注学生通过教育过程最后所取得的学习成果。然而目前的汉语课程安排与教学中还存在着各种问题，如教学内容的不当、课程大纲与学时的分配不均、技能训练安排欠妥、多以综合课的形式进行，涵盖听说读写四项技能、以学生为中心的原则不鲜明等等。汉语课中的这些问题往往不利于学生学习动机的坚持，也导致学生产生消极的反应，从而影响教学效果。因此，本文拟从吉隆坡大学的汉语课程编排与学生两种角度出发，结合对课程、教材上的分析与学生学习汉语的动机的问卷调查剖判，尝试从结果分析列举提升及改善汉语课程教学上的建议和对策。

关键词：汉语课程，课程编排，学习动机，交际

1. Introduction

The learning attitude, learning motivation, learning interest and those related to the learning awareness of Chinese language learners are not only connected to each other internally, but also influenced by external factors such as social environment, requirement from education system and etc. This is especially true in Malaysia's higher education institutes, where the outcome based education theory is essential as the foundation of performance appraisal for the courses offered, including elective courses such as Chinese language.

In theory of outcome based education, the design and implementation of curriculum are required to be student-centred, while valuing students' personality development and the cultivation of practical abilities. Unfortunately, a variety of problems still exist in the current curriculum development and module design of Chinese language courses in local higher education institutes, i.e. poor selection of module content, imbalance distribution between course syllabus and learning hour, poor arrangement of language skills' training, conducting classes as comprehensive course which includes all four of the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, student-centred principle is indistinguishable, and etc. All these existing problems in Chinese language courses are unfavourable against maintaining students' commitment to their learning motivation, thus causing negative responses and rejection from them, deviating far from the education objectives set beforehand.

Through the comparison of data obtained from questionnaire survey, this paper aims to analyse students' learning situation to have a better understanding on problems related to the learning motivation of Chinese language learners, mainly including their learning objectives, level

of understanding towards Chinese language prior to learning it, their attitude during learning process and post-learning impressions. Together with the analysis on the content and teaching materials of Chinese language course syllabus, this study result will be helpful in proposing concrete methods to improve the quality of development and implementation of Chinese language courses.

2. Research Background

Since the foundation of UniKL in year 2002, the university has established two levels of Chinese language course: Mandarin 1 and Mandarin 2. These courses and other foreign language courses such as Arabic, French, Korean, and Spanish are also listed as University Compulsory subjects for all diploma and bachelor's degrees. The allocation of credit hours is only one credit per each level, and the teaching hours of each level are two hours per week, a total of 28 hours per one semester. The total teaching hours also included quizzes, assignments and tests. In addition, 94% of the university students are Malay ethnic. Therefore, due to external factors such as insufficient learning hours, fewer opportunities for hands-on practice, and lack of language environment, the course arrangement and learning effectiveness will be a great challenge.

3. Research Methods

Two research methods were applied in this study. First, the analysis and discussion on curriculum design and curriculum contents. Second, a questionnaire survey was conducted among students from two campuses, which are Royal College of Medicine Perak (RCMP) and Malaysian Institute of Marine Engineering Technology (MIMET). The students have completed both levels of Chinese language courses at the end of January semester 2019. A total of 107 students were involved in the questionnaire survey (32 male and 75 female). The respondents were all non-native Chinese language speaker. The average age was between 19 to 22 years old. 74.8% (80 students) of the respondents currently enrolled in diploma programme while the remaining 25.2% (27 students) enrolled in bachelor's degree programme. 91.6% (98 students) of the respondents' mother tongue were Malay language, and 97.2% (104 students) of them attended national primary schools. The questionnaire survey started on 10th June, 2019 and ended on 1st July, 2019.

All respondents had completed both level of Chinese language courses by the time the survey was conducted, yet only 17 students or 15.9% of the respondents were confident that they could speak Chinese language fluently. This is basically in line with the result data showing around 19% of respondents that have been learning Chinese language for more than a year. Students at both campuses have two lessons per week (55 minutes for each lesson). Although the Chinese

language course is one of the third language compulsory courses designated by universities, it only worth one credit hour per semester (three credit hours for general core compulsory course). Although the students involved in the survey were taught by different instructors, the textbooks used were the same, namely “Learn Mandarin 1” and “Learn Mandarin 2”, published by UniKL and Cengage Learning Asia Pte Ltd in year 2017.

The survey was conducted independently and confidentially, where students logged in to Google Forms to fill up their responses through the link sent by lecturers in WhatsApp. Before the survey begin, it was made clear to the students that the survey results will not affect students' grades. The questionnaire includes four items: 1. Personal Information; 2. Language Interest; 3. Language Skills; and 4. Course Syllabus and Content Review. Each item has around eight questions in average, and Likert scale were used in some of the questions. The questionnaire is attached in the appendix.

4. Analysis on The Curriculum Syllabus

The curriculum syllabus is a teaching guidance document that complies the requirements of subject content and teaching plan to achieve the teaching objectives, standardizing the teaching purposes, tasks, knowledge and skills of the course, and it is an important basis for compiling teaching materials, organizing teaching, and evaluating learning quality.

In order to understand UniKL's Chinese language courses' content requirements and design, this paper analyse the teaching objectives, learning outcomes, learning contents and assessment methods of the courses according to the curriculum syllabus as follows:

Table 1: Course contents, expected learning outcomes and assessment methods of the two-level Chinese language courses of Universiti Kuala Lumpur

Courses	Learning Objectives	Expected Learning Outcomes	Learning Contents	Assessment Methods
Mandarin 1	Knowledge of conversational Mandarin enhances learners' communication skills and gives them an extra edge in the job market. This course allows	1. Use words & phrases in Pinyin system and/or Chinese characters. 2. Express themselves verbally in basic Mandarin for daily communication within the limits of vocabulary and structures acquired in the course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to <i>Hanyu Pinyin</i> ● Introduction to Chinese characters and numbers ● Social greeting and expressions ● Self-introduction and family members 	Assignment 1 (Chinese characters writing) Assignment 2 Assignment 3 Oral Test 1 & 2 Written Test

	beginner-level learners of Mandarin to understand and construct simple, structured sentences in the language.	3. Apply learned Chinese vocabularies, phrases or short sentences in limited contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Date ● Time ● Food and beverages 	
Mandarin 2	Knowledge of conversational Mandarin enhances learners' communication skills and gives them an extra edge in the job market. This course allows advanced beginner-level learners of Mandarin to understand and construct structured sentences in the language.	1. Produce Chinese words, phrases, short sentences about learned topics. 2. Express themselves verbally in Mandarin, within the limits of vocabulary and structures acquired in Mandarin 1 and Mandarin 2, in daily communication. 3. Demonstrate their understanding of Chinese vocabularies, phrases or short sentences in various contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● My house ● My university ● Shopping and purchases ● Direction and location ● Going to a place ● Holiday activity 	Assignment 1 (Chinese characters writing) Assignment 2 Assignment 3 Oral Test 1 & 2 Written Test

Table 1 shows the course contents, teaching objectives, and evaluation methods of both levels of Chinese language course. From the perspective of teaching objectives, the university aims to enhance students' employment advantages in future and is committed to develop students' basic Chinese communicative competence. The expected learning outcomes also show that the courses focused on the Chinese language communicative competence, which is the initial stage designed especially for students to cultivate language skills and communication competency. Mandarin 1 has 7 topics while Mandarin 2 has 6 topics in the course content. Mandarin 1 starts with introduction to both *Hanyu Pinyin* and Chinese characters respectively, and progress towards simple to complex conversation topics that involve personal information exchange, such as self-introduction, social greeting and expression, time, date, food and drink.

However, the course contents of Mandarin 2 were somewhat disjointed with Mandarin 1, and is also lack of recurrence, the topics start from “my house” and continue with “my university”, “shopping and purchases”, “direction and location”, “going to a place”, and “holiday activities”. Anyway, both levels of the course are mainly focused on training real life communication ability.

In traditional teaching that is more to teacher-centred, what and how teachers teach as well as relevant teaching plans and designs are unable to fulfil students’ needs. Students only passively accept and follow the arrangement to complete their study. On the contrary, outcome-based education has theorized students as the important participant in learning process. They are entitled to know what and how they are to learn. On the other hand, teachers should prioritize on demonstration, evaluation, providing feedback, and performing constructive intervention, to help and guide students to achieve learning outcome. Therefore, through applying outcome based education as the basis of the course, the course contents shall not be limited to teacher-centred method, but aim to meet students’ needs, for the purpose of stimulating students’ learning motivation and attitude, as well as promoting learning effectiveness.

There were six different types of assessments in both levels of Chinese language course, where three of which are assignments. Assignment one was Chinese characters writing, assignment two and three were not specified in the syllabus but based on each teacher’s discretion. There were also two oral tests and a written test. In addition, the syllabus only specified the types of assessments and marks allocated, while the assessment scope and format were determined by each teacher respectively. As language learning course generally focuses on prioritizing “listening and speaking” compared to “reading and writing”, and to achieve teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes, the evaluation method should test students systematically based on the teaching learning objectives and standards, and evaluate its value, strength and weakness for further improvement. However, the assessments in this course does not particularly highlight the evaluation of Chinese language communication ability, whereas the assessment methods have slightly deviated from the teaching objectives, in which two assessments focused on writing skills such as assignment one (Chinese characters writing) and written test. Furthermore, the lack of listening skill assessment in the course is also calling attention to the poor setting and arrangement of assessment methods. Hence, the syllabus should attach greater importance to the rectification of assessment methods, in order to fully achieve the purpose of evaluating and assessing the learning outcome and students’ achievement.

5. Analysis on the Questionnaire Survey Result Statistics

Educationist and psychologist from different eras had been suggesting different categorization and definition from a variety of dimensions on learning motivation. Among them are Robert

C. Gardner, Wallace E. Lambert, who proposed “integrative motivation” and “instrumental motivation” from the point of view of sociolinguistic (Gardner and Lambert, 1972), which is also the main theoretical basis of this paper. “Integrative motivation” refers to a favourable attitude toward the target language community, possibly a wish to integrate and adapt to a new target culture through use of the language (Gardner, 1985, p.54), while “instrumental motivation” refers to a practical or pragmatic reason for language study. Instrumental motivations for language learning include passing a language requirement, getting a monetary reward such as an increase in pay grade for language competence, or having a better chance of getting into medical school (Ehrman, 1996, p.139).

In the first part of our questionnaire survey, we investigate students’ learning motivation through Question No. 4 (Hours spent learning Chinese language), No. 5 (Objective of learning Chinese language) and No. 6 (Aim/target for learning Chinese language), to determine whether their motivation can be categorized as either “integrative motivation” or “instrumental motivation”. For example, the options “establishing a basic understanding of Chinese language”, “to master Chinese language as an additional communication skill” and “personal interest” in Question No. 5 are considered “integrative motivation”, while the options “to fulfil university’s credit hour requirement” and “to secure better job/career in the future” are considered “instrumental motivation”.

Students generally have the tendency to quit learning Chinese language once they considered themselves to have successfully achieved their learning outcome due to the practicality nature of “instrumental motivation”. Experts believed that “integrative motivation” plays a more important role in sustaining students’ learning interest for a longer period compared to “instrumental motivation”. We also believe that different types of motivation will also influence and affect students’ learning behaviour and their preference of various skills in Chinese language. Thus, the following parts of the questionnaire survey, such as “language skills”, “self-expectation” and “curriculum review” were designed to assist in establishing a concrete evidence of the link relation between these two criteria.

5.1 Language Interest

In the questionnaire survey designed for this study, Question number 4, 5 and 6 were asked to inspect students’ language interest under the aforementioned two types of learning motivation.

Question No. 5: The objective(s) of learning Chinese language in UniKL (Multiple choice)

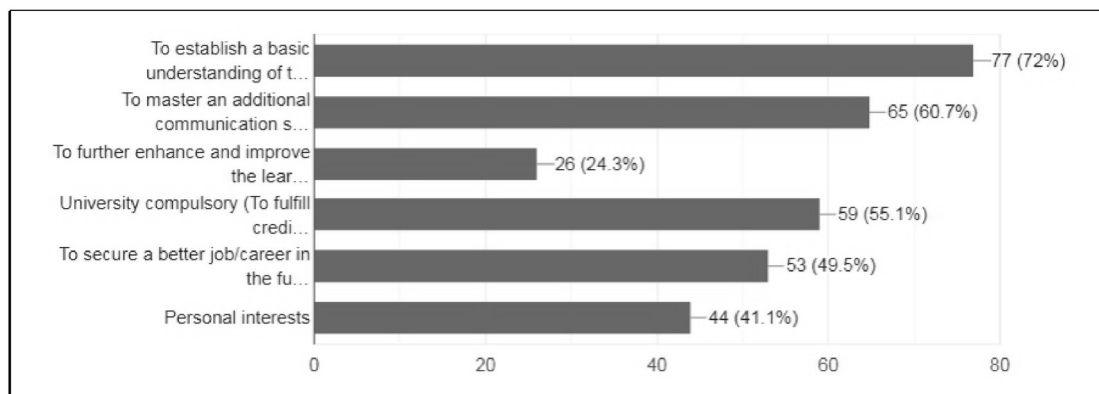


Figure 1

The statistic in Figure 1 shows that there are 72% (77 students) and 60.7% (65 students) of respondents demonstrated higher interest in establishing a basic understanding of Chinese language, and shows positive recognition towards the advantage of mastering Chinese language as an additional communication skill, respectively. However, it is interesting to note that there are only 41.1% respondents (44 students) view learning Chinese language as “personal interest”, which corresponds more to the core definition of “integrative motivation”. On contrary, 55.1% (59 students) and 49.5% (53 students) of respondents are categorized under “instrumental motivation”, where they stated that learning Chinese language is only to fulfil university’s credit hour requirement as it is one of the third language courses compulsory for students to learn. Some respondents also noted that learning Chinese language allows them to gain advantage in securing better future career. In conclusion, even though there are more than half of the respondents demonstrated both types of the learning motivations, the number of respondents with pure “integrative motivation” is in fact less than “instrumental motivation” learners. From the feedback received after students have completed both Chinese language 1 and 2 courses, even though they are aware of the practicality of “instrumental motivation”, but the lack of continuous environmental support makes it more difficult for students to sustain their motivation in further learning advanced level Chinese language.

Question No. 6: The aim/target for learning Chinese language

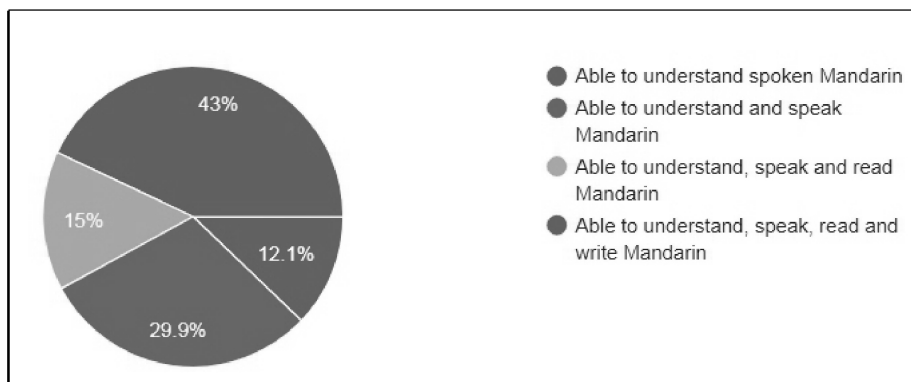


Figure 2

According to the statistic in Figure 2, 43% of respondents (46 students) aimed to completely master all four of the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of Chinese language, while 29.9% (32 students) have aimed to only be able to understand and speak Chinese language. This means that there are 57% (61 students) are not interested in mastering both reading and writing skills, or believed that the practicality of both these skills are lower compared to listening and speaking skills. Comparing this statistic with the result from Question number 4, as shown below:

Question No. 4: Hours spend to study Chinese language OUTSIDE of classroom per week

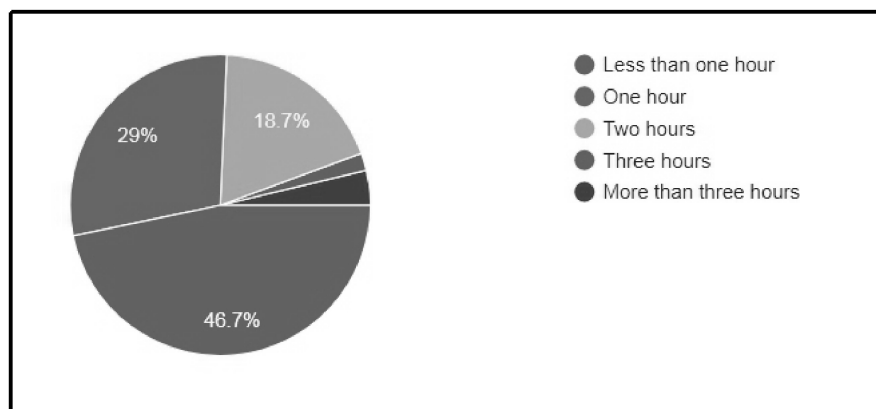


Figure 3

There are 75.7% of respondents who only able or willing to spend maximum one hour per week to study or revise Chinese language outside of classroom. Such short time spent is definitely not enough for students to completely mastered all four language skills in one semester.

To make matters worse, respondents have to fulfil 20 credit hours or eight subjects (including Chinese language subject) per semester on average, which will be a burden that forces students to reduce the time they are able to spent on studying Chinese language outside classroom.

5.2 Language Skills

The six questions under this section focuses on the level of interest, anticipation and evaluation demonstrated by students regarding the knowledge, skills and difficulty level in learning Chinese language, which will help analyse and determine their priority and practicality value from the students' point of view.

Question No. 7: What do students wish to learn from Chinese language subject

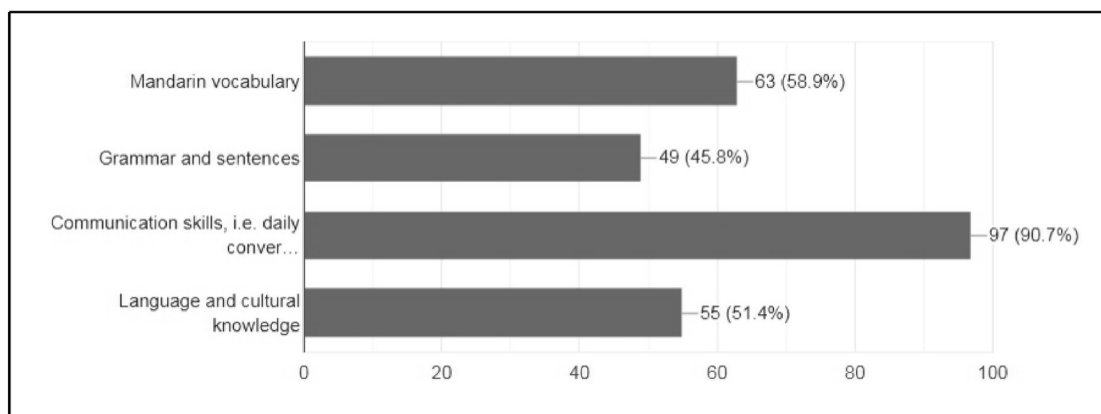


Figure 4

There are 90.7% of respondents (97 students) wish to learn and mastered communication skills, such as daily conversation and expressions in Chinese language. Only 58.9% (63 students) and 51.4% (55 students) prefer to learn about vocabulary and the cultural background respectively. Grammar and sentence structure is the least favourite among students, with only 45.8% (49 students) are interested in learning it.

Question No. 8: Students' self-expectation in learning Chinese language

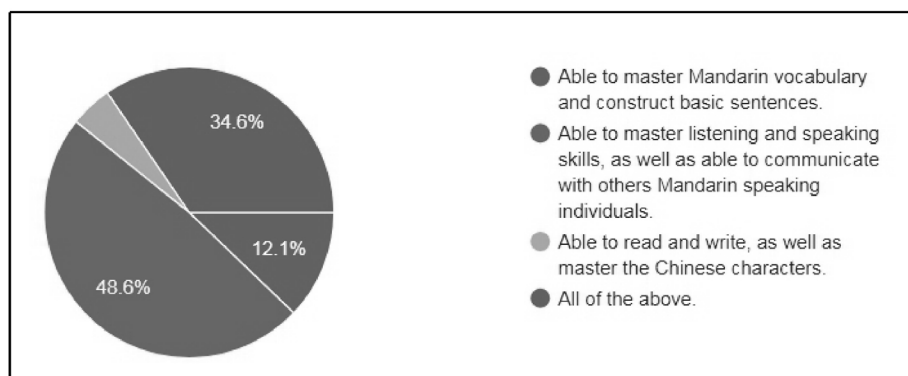


Figure 5

The statistic in Figure 5 shows that 48.6% of respondents' (52 students) greatest self-anticipation is to be able to master listening and speaking skills, as well as able to communicate with other Chinese language speaking individuals, which is higher than 34.6% (37 students) who wish to master all four of the language skills. It is worth noting that choices related to mastering Chinese language vocabulary, sentences, grammars and even Chinese characters are the least, which correspond to the statistic shown in Figure 4, further proves that students show low interest towards learning Chinese characters and grammar knowledge in Chinese language course.

Question No. 9: The MAIN skill(s) for Chinese language students wish to master (Multiple choice)

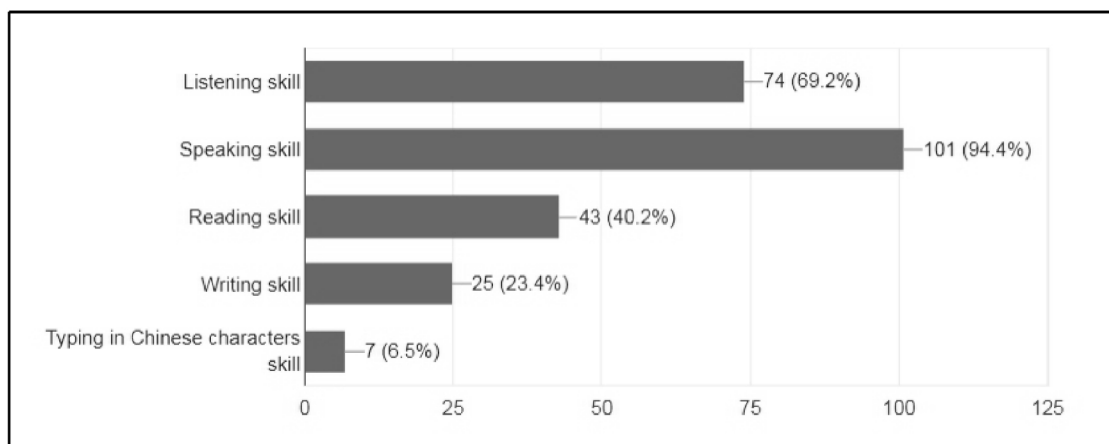


Figure 6

Question No. 10: The main skill(s) that need to be stressed and focused on in the teaching and learning of Chinese language (Multiple choice)

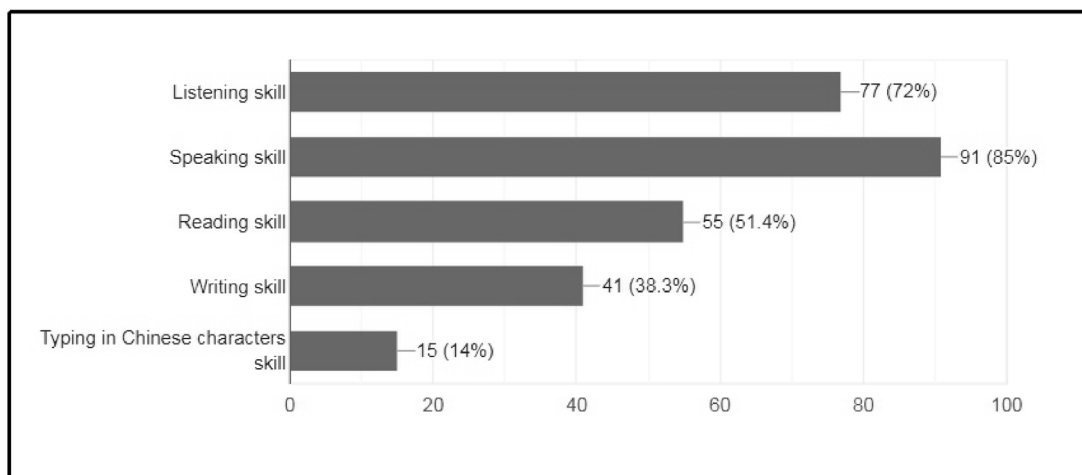


Figure 7

From both statistics of Figure 6 and 7, it is obvious that speaking skill, which was chosen by more than 90% of the respondents, is the most important part in Chinese language that students wish to master, as well as the main skill that need to be stressed and focused on in the teaching and learning of Chinese language. While both listening skill and reading skill account for around 70% and 40% to 50% respectively. Writing skills (including typing in Chinese characters skill) remains the least favourite among all.

Question No. 11: The level of importance of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in Chinese language learning

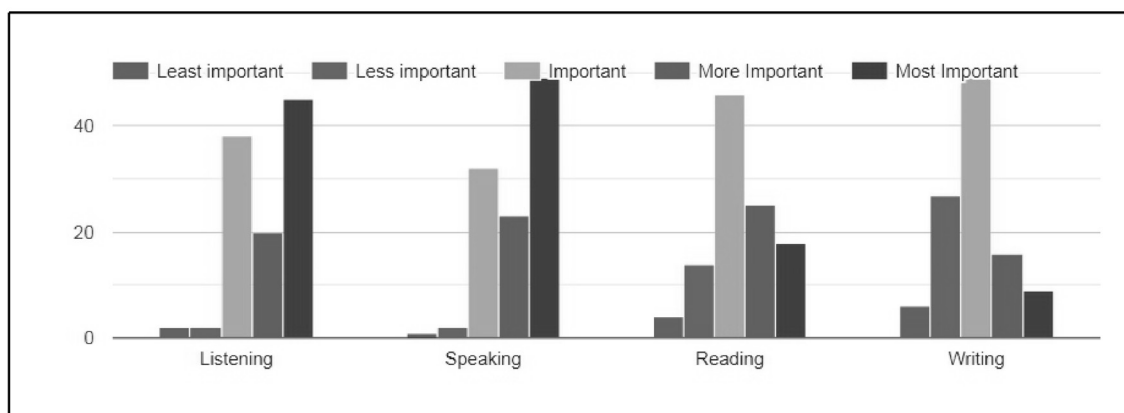


Figure 8

Table 2

Level of importance Language skills	Least important (student)	Less important (student)	Important (student)	More important (student)	Most important (student)	Total (student)	Percentage
Listening	2	2	38	20	45	103	96.2%
Speaking	1	2	32	23	49	104	97.2%
Reading	4	14	46	25	18	89	83.2%
Writing	6	27	49	16	9	74	69.2%

For this question, five-segment measurement approach was provided as selections in regards with the level of importance of the four language skills, which range from “least important” to “most important”. The statistic shows that speaking is the most important skill in learning Chinese language, followed by listening skill. Both these skills have lesser respondents choosing “least important” and “less important” as well. Reading skill and writing skill account for lower percentage in higher level of importance but higher percentage in lower level of importance in comparison to speaking and listening skills.

Question No. 12: The difficulty level of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in Chinese language learning

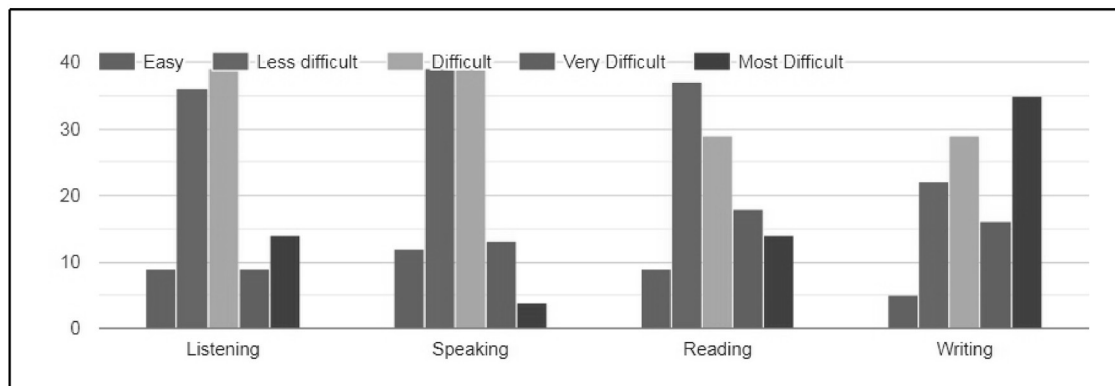


Figure 9

Table 3

Level of difficulty Language skills	Easy (student)	Less difficult (student)	Difficult (student)	Very Difficult (student)	Most Difficult (student)	Total (student)	Percentage
Listening	9	36	39	9	14	62	57.9%
Speaking	12	39	39	13	4	56	52.3%
Reading	9	37	29	18	14	61	57.0%
Writing	5	22	29	16	35	80	74.8%

Comparing all four language skills, most respondents had selected writing skill as the hardest skill to learn and master in Chinese language, while majority of them thinks that speaking skill is just within the range of average or less difficult to learn, not to mention it also account for the lowest percentage of difficulties according to students' opinion. These statistics corresponds to the previous survey results that demonstrated students' higher interest in learning speaking skill, and are also interrelated with the acknowledgement that speaking skill has higher practicability in real life situation. Due to this particular mentality, teaching and learning module as well as course syllabus that prioritize speaking skills are easier to be accepted and has higher learning effectivity by students. At the same time, for non-Chinese language speaking students, it is less demanding for them to be able to speak basic Chinese language through mastering simple and plain *Hanyu Pinyin* (Chinese phonetic). This will allow them to master a variety of beginner-level Chinese language knowledge within a short period of time (approximately four months to one year), and to sustain their motivation to learn Chinese language continuously in a longer run.

5.3 A Review of Course Syllabus

The six questions under this section focuses on the students' evaluation and opinion on the syllabus content and its practicability of Chinese language offered by UniKL, which will help to better understand from students' point of view in regards with plausible improvements on the quality of Chinese language courses.

Question No. 13: Students' rating on the Chinese language learning environment of their education institution

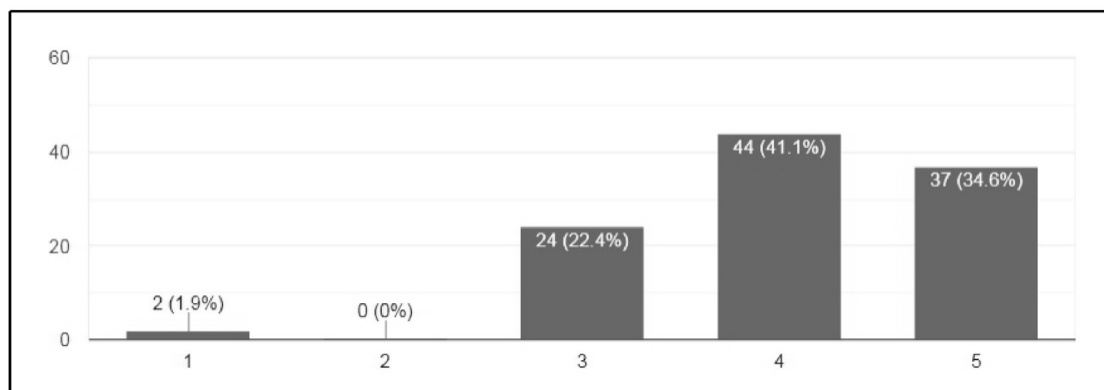


Figure 10

This statistic shows that 75.7% of respondents (81 students) believe that the learning environment of their education institution is either “good (4)” or “very good (5)”. However, the remaining 24.3% (26 students) that believe otherwise should not be taken lightly as well, and should serve as a reminder that improvement on Chinese language learning environment is necessary.

Question No. 14: Students' opinion on how to further improve the Chinese language learning environment of their education institution (Multiple choice)

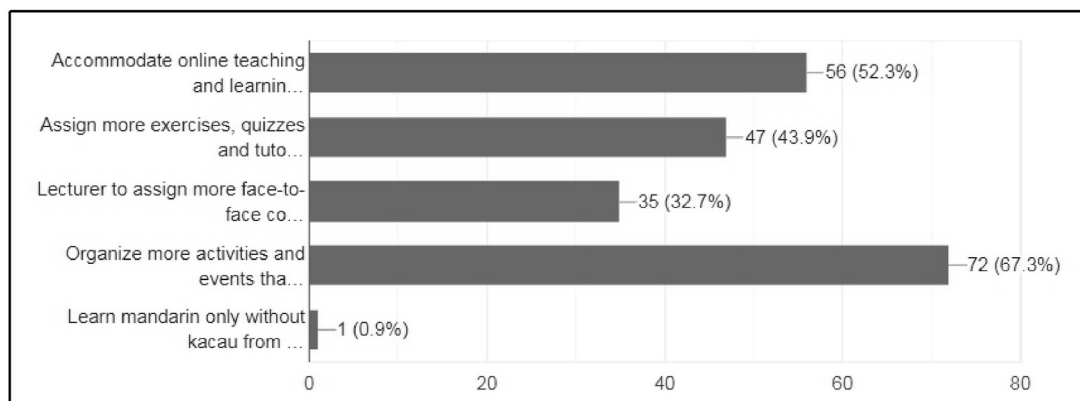


Figure 11

The statistic in Figure 11 shows that there are 67.3% of respondents (72 students) believed that “organizing more activities and events that encourage/incorporate Chinese language-speaking” will be more effective in improving the Chinese language learning environment of their education institution, followed by 52.3% (56 students) whom supported the idea of “accommodating online teaching and learning facilities inside and outside of classroom”. It is worth noting that both “assigning more exercises, quizzes and tutorials to students as homework” (43.9%, 47 students) and “assigning more face-to-face consultation hour for students” (32.7%, 35 students) was deemed the least favourite by students, indicating that students no longer consider the conventional classroom teaching style as an effective learning method, but prefer to study in a fun-filled environment that are able to established more two-way interactivity through classroom activities instead.

Question No. 15: Students’ opinion on the ability of current Chinese language course syllabus in their education institute to satisfy need and requirement as a student

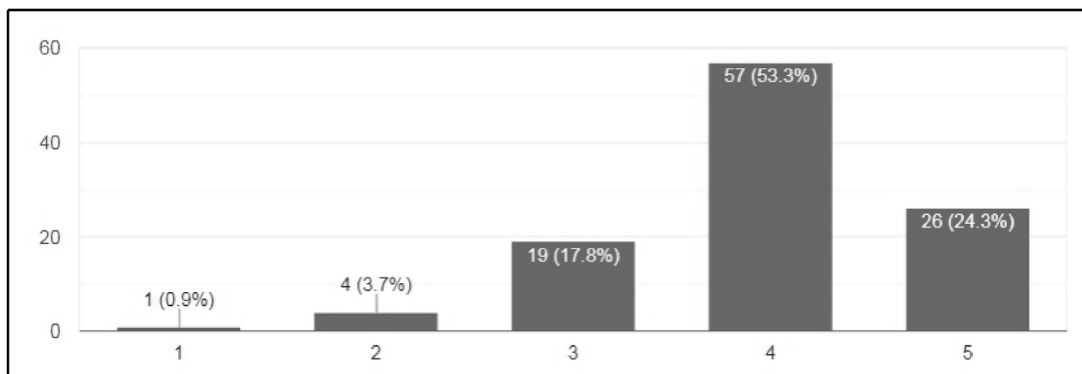


Figure 12

The statistic in Figure 12 indicates that a total 77.6% of respondents (83 students) are either “agree” (4) or “strongly agree” (5) to the notion that the current Chinese language course syllabus in their education institute is able to satisfy students’ need and requirement, while 17.7% (19 students) remain neutral and 4.6% (5 students) is in disagreement respectively.

Further analysis also indicates that students have different evaluation regarding the practicability value and relevancy of real-life application on each topic introduced in both Mandarin 1 and 2 course syllabuses, as shown below:

Question No. 16: Students' opinion on the relevancy in real-life application of the following Mandarin level 1 syllabus offered by UniKL

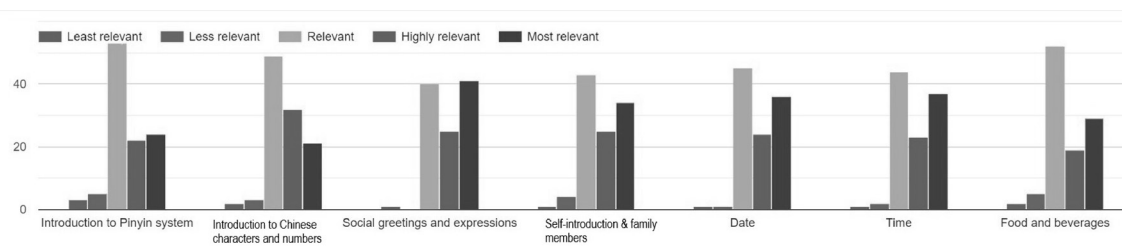


Figure 13

Table 4

Level of relevancy Topic	Least relevant (student)	Less relevant (student)	Relevant (student)	Highly relevant (student)	Most relevant (student)	Total (student)	Percentage
Introduction to Pinyin system	3	5	53	22	24	99	92.5%
Introduction to Chinese characters and numbers	2	3	49	32	21	102	95.3%
Social greetings & expressions	1	0	40	25	41	106	99.1%
Self-introduction & family members	1	4	43	25	34	102	95.3%
Date	1	1	45	24	36	105	98.1%
Time	1	2	44	23	37	104	97.2%
Food and beverages	2	5	52	19	29	100	93.5%

Question No. 17: Students' opinion on the relevancy in real-life application of the following Mandarin level 2 syllabus offered by UniKL

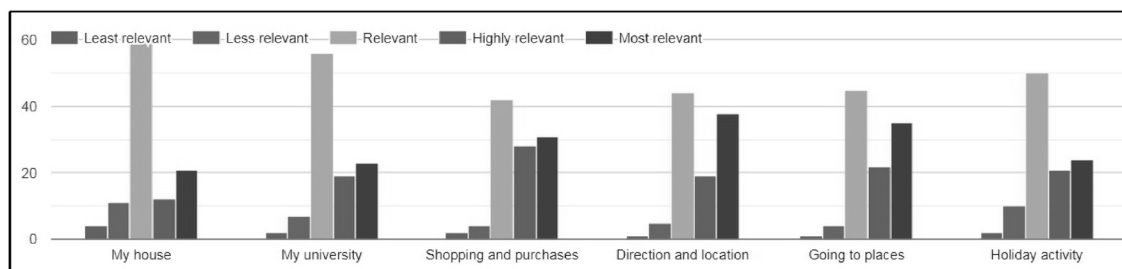


Figure 14

Table 5

Level of relevancy Topic	Least relevant (student)	Less relevant (student)	Relevant (student)	Highly relevant (student)	Most relevant (student)	Total (student)	Percentage
My house	4	11	59	12	21	92	86%
My university	2	7	56	19	23	98	92%
Shopping & purchases	2	4	42	28	31	101	94%
Direction and location	1	5	44	19	38	101	94%
Going to places	1	4	45	22	35	102	95%
Holiday activity	2	10	50	21	24	95	89%

According to the statistic of Mandarin 1 course syllabus survey result, “Social greetings and expressions” is deemed as the most relevant and practical topic to learn by students, followed by “Date”, “Time” and “Self-introduction and family members”. “Food and beverages” has lower relevancy compared to the previous topics due to students’ familiarity and preference to remember or say the Malay or English name of local food instead of in Chinese language. It is worth noting that between the topics of “Introduction to Pinyin system” and “Introduction to Chinese characters and numbers”, the latter was deemed more relevant, which is slightly contradicting with the previous statistic that indicates students have less interest in learning to write Chinese characters. This might be due to the reason that “numbers”, which is essential in the later topics, especially “Date” and “Time”, was included under the same topic, thus causing students to give this topic a higher rating overall.

On the other hand, regarding the statistic of Mandarin 2 course syllabus survey result, “Going to places” is deemed as the most relevant and practical topic to learn by students, followed by “Direction and location” and “Shopping and purchases”. On the contrary, the three topics of “My university”, “Holiday activity” and “My house” was deemed less relevant by students. This is likely due to students yet to be well-versed and have less self-confidence in communicating such personal-life related topics using Chinese language, or the preference of using own mother tongue to speak among same ethnicity.

Question No. 18: Students' suggestion(s) on any other topic / lesson / subject that they are interested in learning that was not included your Chinese language course syllabus

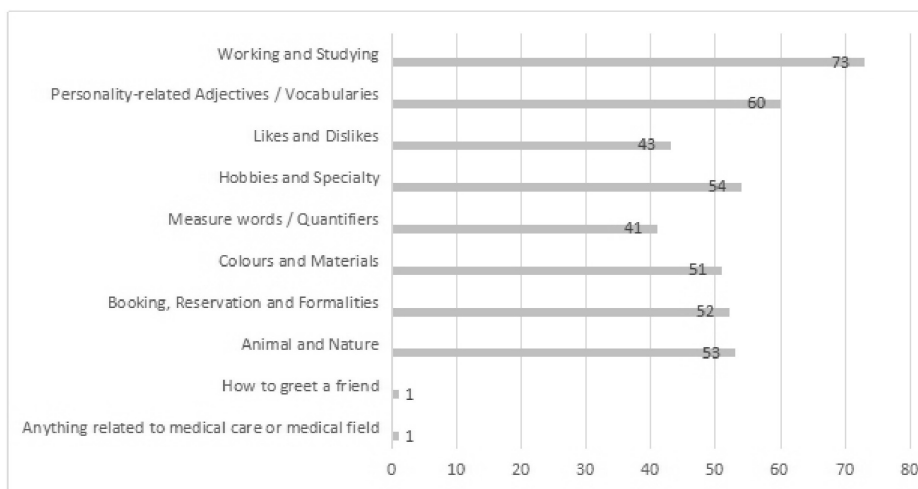


Figure 15

Figure 15 shows that 62.8% of respondents (73 students) suggested including Chinese language topics that are related to “working and studying”, which further proves that “instrumental motivation” is the main drive that prompt students to learn Chinese language. Following after are topics that closely relate to daily social life, such as “personality-related adjectives / vocabularies” (56.1%), “hobbies and specialty” (50.5%), “animal and nature” (49.5%), and “colours and materials” (47.7%), while “likes and dislikes” (40.2%) and “measure words / quantifiers” (38.3%) are at the bottom. This statistic maybe a reference for Chinese language lecturers in local higher education institutes.

Question No. 19: Should Chinese language subject in UniKL be principally based on the fundamental as communication language?

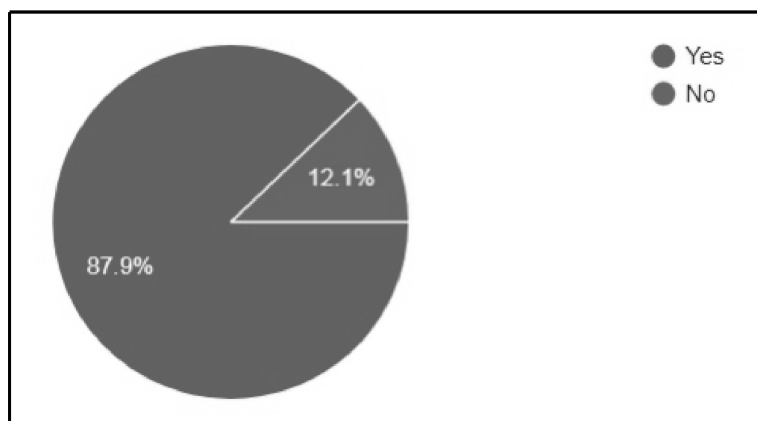


Figure 16

There are 87.9% of respondents agreed on the notion that Chinese language subject in UniKL should be principally based on the fundamental as communication language, which indicates that in the students' opinion, learning Chinese language should have a clear focus that prioritize on speaking and verbal communication skills, therefore it is necessary to make adjustment to the curriculum development, teaching method and even material preparation accordingly.

6. Analysis and Discussion

Through the analysis of course syllabus, regardless of learning objective, structure content and expected outcome, the Chinese language courses offered by UniKL prioritize on developing students' verbal communication skill and ability. However, under a limited 28 hours of face-to-face learning hours, rather than targeting primarily on speaking skill, the curriculum developed thus far is comprehensively conducted and include the learning and training of all four of the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Certain assessment methods even put too much emphasis on writing skill rather than evaluating students' improvement on listening and speaking skills. Besides, lecturer need to take students' real-life learning situation into consideration, where if there are insufficient language environment that enable students to be able to apply Chinese language outside of classrooms and in their daily personal life, it will be a burden for them to be required to master all four language skills through the courses. Furthermore, the learning content does not fully reflect on the real-life environment and requirement by students. Hence, in order to correspond to students' proposal to include contents related to "work and study" in Chinese language course, the curriculum development should be student-centred, where the content and topic learned should be related to and applicable in daily life, which will not only strengthen their interest and motivation in learning Chinese language in a short-term period, while abstaining students from rejecting or giving up too easily and too early during the learning process, but also to encourage further learning due to acknowledging and valuing its practicability in both personal and work life in the long run.

As Chinese language courses are categorized as a one-credit third language compulsory courses in UniKL, students usually take learning Chinese language for granted. After a mere total 50 learning hours (including both face-to-face and non-face-to-face sessions) for each level per semester respectively, students have no other means to study Chinese language in the university, as there are no continuation or extension courses offered. Therefore, both lecturers and students should make the full use of that limited learning hours, where instead of requiring students to learn all four language skills at once, curriculum development and activity arrangement should be focusing on assisting students in mastering Chinese language speaking and verbal communication skills. Based on this consideration, the learning objective and expected

outcome will not only be applicable and attainable, but also enable students to benefit from the practicability of their learning content.

7. Conclusion

In summary, the respondents whom are UniKL students have obvious “instrumental motivation” in terms of learning Chinese language, yet under an unsupportive learning environment, it is difficult to continuously sustain their motivation to keep learning or using Chinese language after they have completed the credit requirement of Mandarin 1 and 2 courses. In comparison to writing and reading skills, they also believed that speaking skill is the most important objective and ability to achieve and acquire. This is the main reason to prioritize on developing a curriculum that is friendlier to non-Chinese language speaking students, where they will be able to master a variety of basic Chinese language knowledge and skills within a short-term period (few months to one year), through the teaching and learning process that mainly focused on using *Hanyu Pinyin* (Chinese phonetic). With this, they will also be driven and encouraged to continuously learn and apply their learning outcome confidently in a longer run.

However, under a limited 28 hours of face-to-face learning hours, rather than targeting primarily on speaking skill, the curriculum developed thus far is comprehensively conducted and include the learning and training of all four of the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Certain assessment methods even put too much emphasis on writing skill rather than evaluating students’ improvement on listening and speaking skills. Therefore, this paper suggests that in order to correspond to students’ proposal to include contents related to “work and study” in Chinese language course, the curriculum development should be student-centred, where the content and topic learned should be related to and applicable in daily life, which will not only strengthen their interest and motivation in learning Chinese language in a short-term period, while abstaining students from rejecting or giving up too easily and too early during the learning process, but also to encourage further learning due to acknowledging and valuing its practicability in both personal and work life in the long run. Only by envisioning this objective, lecturers are able to draft concrete and applicable teaching plan and teaching materials.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Dear students, I am doing a research in order to help you learn Chinese language better. Your honest feedback is highly appreciated.

Section A. Personal Information

Gender	Age	Mother tongue	Course
			Bachelor / Diploma

1. What other languages can you speak fluently besides your mother tongue? (You may choose more than one answer.)
 - A. Malay
 - B. English
 - C. Mandarin
 - D. Tamil
 - E. Other (please specify _____)
2. How long have you learned / been learning Mandarin?
 - A. Three months
 - B. Three months to six months
 - C. Six months to one year
 - D. More than one year
 - E. Other (please specify _____)
3. Which primary school were you enrolled before?
 - A. Sekolah Kebangsaan
 - B. Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina)
 - C. Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Tamil)
 - D. International School
4. How many hours do you spend to study Mandarin OUTSIDE of classroom per week?
 - A. Less than one hour
 - B. One hour
 - C. Two hours
 - D. Three hours
 - E. More than three hours

5. What is your objective of learning Mandarin in UniKL? (You may choose more than one answer.)
- A. To establish a basic understanding of the language
 - B. To master an additional communication skill
 - C. To further enhance and improve the learning progress (for those who had learned Mandarin previously)
 - D. University compulsory (To fulfill credit hour requirement)
 - E. To secure a better job/career in the future
 - F. Personal interests
 - G. Others (please specify _____)
6. Which of the following is your aim/target for learning Mandarin?
- A. Able to understand spoken Mandarin
 - B. Able to understand and speak Mandarin
 - C. Able to understand, speak and read Mandarin
 - D. Able to understand, speak, read and write Mandarin

Section B. Language Skills

7. What do you wish to learn from Mandarin subject? (You may choose more than one answer.)
- A. Mandarin vocabulary
 - B. Grammar and sentences
 - C. Communication skills, i.e. daily conversation and expressions
 - D. Language and cultural knowledge
8. What is your self-expectation in learning Mandarin?
- A. Able to master Mandarin vocabulary and construct basic sentences.
 - B. Able to master listening and speaking skills, as well as able to communicate with other Mandarin speaking individuals.
 - C. Able to read and write, as well as master the Chinese characters.
 - D. All of the above.
9. In your opinion, what is the MAIN skill(s) for Mandarin you wish to master? (You may choose more than one answer.)
- A. Listening skill
 - B. Speaking skill
 - C. Reading skill
 - D. Writing skill
 - E. Typing in Chinese characters skill

10. In your opinion, what is the MAIN skill(s) that need to be stressed and focused on in the teaching and learning of Mandarin? (You may choose more than one answer.)

- A. Listening skill
- B. Speaking skill
- C. Reading skill
- D. Writing skill
- E. Typing in Chinese characters skill

11. What do you think of the importance of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in Mandarin learning?

Least important	Less important	Important	More important	Most important
1	2	3	4	5

a. Listening	
b. Speaking	
c. Reading	
d. Writing	

12. What do you think of the difficulty level of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in Mandarin learning?

Easy	Less difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult	Most Difficult
1	2	3	4	5

a. Listening	
b. Speaking	
c. Reading	
d. Writing	

Section C. Course Syllabus and Content Review

13. How do you think of the Mandarin learning environment of your education institution?

Poor	Not good	Average	Good	Very good
1	2	3	4	5

14. How do you think the Mandarin learning environment of your education institution can be further improved? (You may choose more than one answer.)

- A. Accommodate online teaching and learning facilities inside and outside of classroom.
- B. Assign more exercises, quizzes and tutorials to students as homework.

- C. Lecturer to assign more face-to-face consultation hour for students.
 D. Organize more activities and events that encourage/incorporate Mandarin-speaking.
 E. Others (please specify _____)

15. Do you think the current Mandarin course syllabus in your education institute is able to satisfy your need and requirement as a student?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

16. What do you think of the relevancy in real-life application of the following Mandarin level 1 syllabus offered by UniKL?

Least relevant	Less relevant	Relevant	Highly relevant	Most relevant
1	2	3	4	5

Topics / Lessons	Relevancy
Mandarin 1	
1. Introduction to Pinyin system	
2. Introduction to Chinese Characters and numbers	
3. Social greetings and expressions	
4. Self-introduction and family members	
5. Date	
6. Time	
7. Food and beverages	

17. What do you think of the relevancy in real-life application of the following Mandarin level 2 syllabus offered by UniKL?

Least relevant	Less relevant	Relevant	Highly relevant	Most relevant
1	2	3	4	5

Mandarin 2	
1. My house	
2. My university	
3. Shopping and purchases	
4. Direction and location	
5. Going to places	
6. Holiday activity	

18. What is your suggestion(s) on any other topic / lesson / subject that you are interested in learning that was not included your Mandarin course syllabus?
- A. Working and Studying
 - B. Personality-related adjectives / vocabularies
 - C. Likes and Dislikes
 - D. Hobbies and Specialty
 - E. Measure words / Quantifier (Penjodoh bilangan)
 - F. Colours and Materials
 - G. Booking, Reservation and Formalities
 - H. Animals and Nature
 - I. Others (please specify _____)
19. In your opinion, should the Mandarin subject in UniKL be principally based on the fundamental as communication language?
- A. Yes
 - B. No