

Research Article

Proficiency Test Training for Mandarin Learners in Surakarta

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Abstract.

Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) or the Chinese Language Proficiency Test is an international standardized test in Chinese language proficiency. It is used to assess non-native Chinese speakers' ability in using the Chinese language in their daily, academic, and professional lives. The purpose of administering training activities for the HSK Mandarin competency test is to help Mandarin language learners know the importance and benefits of the Mandarin language proficiency test (HSK) and where the certificate is used as one of the requirements to continue to a higher education level. It is also used to assess Mandarin language proficiency when applying to better job opportunities. The participants of this research are the teachers and students of SMA Bina Widya Solo where their learning system is at the HSK 4 level. The results showed that the students and the teachers of SMA Bina Widya Solo are more open to perspectives about the benefits of the HSK competency test as an instrument of measuring language skills that are internationally certified.

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1. Introduction

The program of "Chinese Proficiency Test Counseling and Training for Mandarin Learners in Surakarta" is a Community Service Activity for D-3 Mandarin Language Vocational Schools. This activity is carried out with the UNS Mandarin Language Center as a partner to provide counseling and training of Mandarin language proficiency test for Senior High School levels (SMA) in Surakarta which have Mandarin language as a program and a subject in their school curriculum. This activity is intended by the problem of learning Mandarin faced by several schools in Surakarta where they still do not understand well yet about the benefits and the importance of Mandarin language proficiency test as an instrument to measure their students' Mandarin language competency in which the certificate that is obtained from the result of the Mandarin language proficiency test, HSK can be used as one of the requirements to get a job as well as to continue their study to higher level.



The other things that underlie the importance of the counseling and training activity is needed to be carried out is because the lack of Mandarin language teachers' role and participation in schools to motivate their students to join Mandarin language proficiency test, HSK, and the lack of awareness of the Mandarin language teachers in Surakarta to always monitor and develop their Mandarin language competency.

The National Trilingual School of Bina Widya Solo was established in 2007. At the beginning of its establishment, the school only provided kindergarten and elementary levels. Then, in 2013, it was expanded to junior high school. Finally, in 2016, a high school was opened. The Mandarin language subject at Bina Widya High School is a cross-interest subject.

Based on the explanation above, the counseling and training activities for the Mandarin language proficiency test, HSK need to be carried out to educate schools in Surakarta that have Chinese subjects about the importance and benefits of Mandarin proficiency test for Mandarin language learners. The material delivered in the counseling activity includes socialization of the components of the tested questions, the duration needed to do the test, language competency including the number of vocabulary that must be mastered to reach a certain level of HSK and also some tips and tricks to do the HSK language proficiency test. Meanwhile, the HSK competency test training is packed in the form of an HSK simulation test that utilizes the web from Chinese D-3 Study Program by developing Quiz and Survey Master system owned by the WordPress.

2. Literature Review

Bina Widya Solo High School has Mandarin subject in its school curriculum that is used as cross-interest subject. Having done the observation, we found the problem, that is HSK is not used as a standard for measuring Chinese language skills or to determine the increase of the level of students' Mandarin language competency skill.

Starting from this issue, the Study Program decided to carry out a socialization program and a simulation of the Mandarin proficiency test, HSK, so that Chinese language learners and teachers can use HSK as a benchmark for Chinese language competency.

Initially, the HSK test consists of 9 levels, but since 2009, it has changed its name to New HSK which is divided into 6 levels. (Pauw Budiarto, Noviana Laurencia)[3]. HSK is classified as a proficiency test that assesses a person's competence in using Mandarin language. (Ayu Trihardini, et al)[5].

3. Methods

This research used descriptive method through a qualitative approach. Descriptive method is a research method that describes objects of the data based on the reality and aims to describe objects systematically and based on facts (Sukardi, 2003: 157). The quantitative method is a research that uses numbers in data collection, data interpretation, and presentation of the result of its data (Suharsimi, 2013: 27). This research focused on describing the steps and results of the socialization and simulation of the HSK test at SMA Bina Widya Solo.

4. Result and Discussion

The counseling and training program (mentoring) were implemented in gradual strategy. The training was carried out by providing education on the importance of the HSK competency test for Chinese language learners, giving tips and tricks in doing the HSK Mandarin language proficiency test to motivate students, that is by explaining that taking HSK test is not difficult, providing a simulation of the HSK Mandarin competency test which was adjusted to the level of students' Mandarin language skills, and discussing the results of the training as an evaluation. Moreover, the training was carried out free of charge. It was done with the aim that participants are getting more interested and enthusiastic in participating in the activities held.

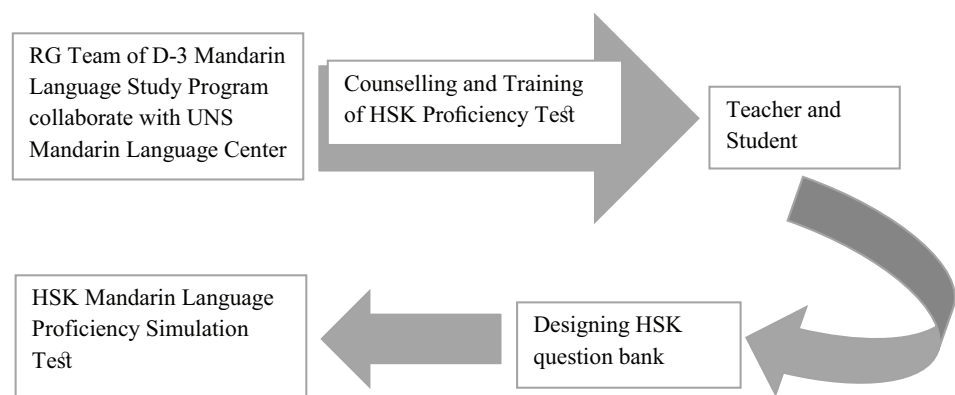


Figure 1: Activity Scheme.

The implementation of the Counseling and Training program of HSK Mandarin Language Proficiency Test at SMA Surakarta which took samples from SMA Bina Widya Solo as the object of the research was divided into three stages, namely preparation, implementation, and monitoring stage. The following are the details of the steps that had been carried out:

1. *Preparation Stage*

a. Programming.

Framing the program of Counseling and Training of Mandarin Language Proficiency Test, HSK is needed to make the activities more organized and directed. The stages consisted of the following components: all technical things, managerial, and activities schedule. The team did the observations at SMA Bina Widya Solo to obtain data on the process and the tool of Mandarin language learning, and also to find out the HSK level achieved by students at school.

b. Preparation of the training concept.

The training concept consisted of the mentoring techniques, counseling, and sustainable training. It was carried out by socializing the HSK test and also making HSK simulation on the Chinese D-3 study program, namely <https://prodi.vocation.uns.ac.id/mandarin>.

c. Preparation of training facilities and infrastructure.

The preparation included the provision of facilities and infrastructure for training and counseling. In this activity, the Team prepared a zoom link and PPT for socialization and created a page on the Study Program web to simulate the HSK competency test. Those were done to make it easier for students to take the HSK test simulation.

d. Field coordination.

Field coordination were carried out by the Team. The counseling and training program were carried out by coordinating and scheduling the training with the Bina Widya High School Solo which was already held on September 23, 2021, started at 12:00-14:00 p.m.

2. *Implementation Stage*

a. HSK Mandarin Proficiency Test Counseling.

At this counseling stage, the Team conducted socialization about the importance and the benefits of the HSK Mandarin competency test. This stage consisted of the socialization of the HSK competency test, the explanation of the HSK test questions, and tips and tricks in taking the HSK competency test which was intended to motivate students not to hesitate to take the HSK competency test in order to measure their Mandarin competency skills.

b. HSK Mandarin Proficiency Test Training.

At the training stage, the team provided a simulation of the Chinese language proficiency test and gave a question bank for the HSK Chinese proficiency test that can be used as a practice for the participants. In this simulation activity, the Team designed questions that only showed the results of the assessment for listening and reading competence, whereas the score of writing competence was not taken.

3. *Monitoring and Evaluation Stage*

Monitoring and Evaluation Phase. Monitoring was carried out intensively by the implementation team in every activity taking place to ensure that the implementation of activities could go well as planned. Evaluation was carried out in line with the monitoring, so if there are obstacles and problems, solutions will be found immediately to solve them. Evaluation was carried out at each stage of the activity. It contained a description of how and when the evaluation would be carried out, criteria, indicators to achieve the goals, and benchmarks used to state the success of the activity.

In general, the activity program “Chinese Proficiency Test Counseling and Training for Mandarin Learners in Surakarta” was carried out in the following ways:

1. *General Approach*

Prior to the counseling and training, the team had done observations about the Mandarin language learning system at SMA Bina Widya Solo. It was found that the Mandarin language at Bina Widya High School is a cross-interest subject where every level has Chinese subject which is adjusted to the level of the students. And it was found that the students of class X and XI were students with HSK Level 10 = HSK 4A (beginner level) and Level 11 = HSK 4B (advanced level).

After determining the HSK level that would be used as question in a simulation. The team and the school determined the time for the counseling and training, and the team immediately compiled the HSK questions for simulation using the UNS Mandarin Language Center library in which then it was published on the Chinese D-3 Study Program website. The reason to choose study program website as simulation media was to promote study program of UNS D-3 Mandarin Language Vocational School as it contains all information about study program.

2. *Methods Used in Counseling and Training*

To support the optimal results of achievement of the objectives of counseling and training, the team used a combination between a lecture and a simulation method, and an integrative approach with the support of complete audio-visual facilities, as follows:

1. Counseling and training were carried out using a PPT slide show which was expected to attract the attention of the participants. Materials presented in the counseling activity are:
 - a. the components of the tested questions,
 - b. the duration needed to do the test,
 - c. language competence included the number of vocabularies that must be mastered to reach a certain level of HSK,
 - d. tips and tricks in doing HSK competency test.
1. Doing simulation of the HSK test using the Chinese D-3 Study Program web facility by developing the WordPress Quiz and Survey Master system. This website was chosen because it can also be a mean of promotion of Study Program for high school students who are interested in continuing their education at university. On this website, there is various information about the study program of D-3 Mandarin Language Vocational School. In this website, participants can immediately get the results of the HSK level 4 simulation test that they take.
2. Simulation Test Steps
 1. Before starting the simulation, the team gave directions to the participants on how to take a simulation test, including explaining what they needed to be prepared to take a simulation test;
 2. Participants opened the <https://prodi.vocation.uns.ac.id/mandarin> page and chose menu "HSK 4 simulation";
 3. Filled in personal data, namely name and email address;
 4. The duration of the test is 65 minutes. When students started entering their personal information, the timer would start counting down. The listening and reading sections are the only ones to be tested;
 5. Students began to spell the test;
 6. After completing the test, the results would immediately come out in the score menu;

7. The perfect score for the HSK level 4 simulation test was 85.

TABLE 1: Simulation test question.

Test Material	Number of Questions		Test Duration (Minute)
LISTENING	Part 1	10	30 minutes
	Part 2	15	
	Part 3	20	
READING	Part 1	10	35 minutes
	Part 2	10	
	Part 3	20	

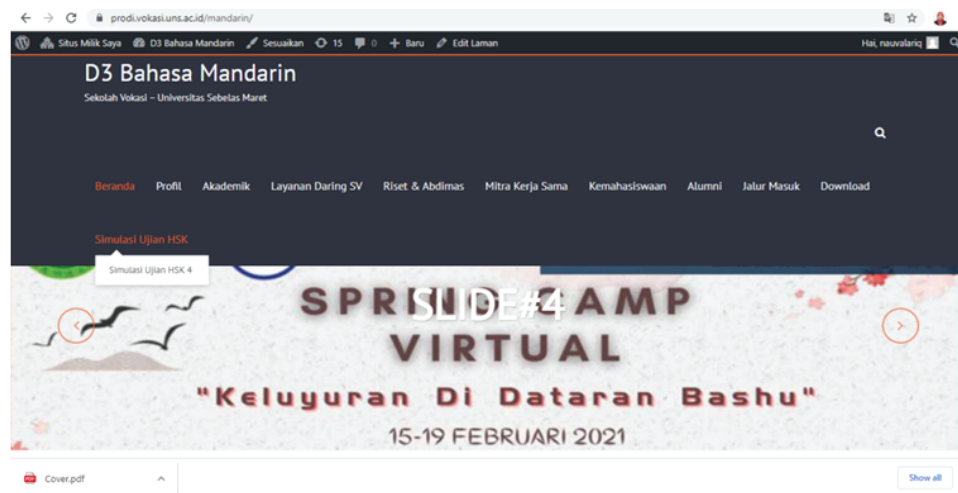


Figure 2: Web Appearance.

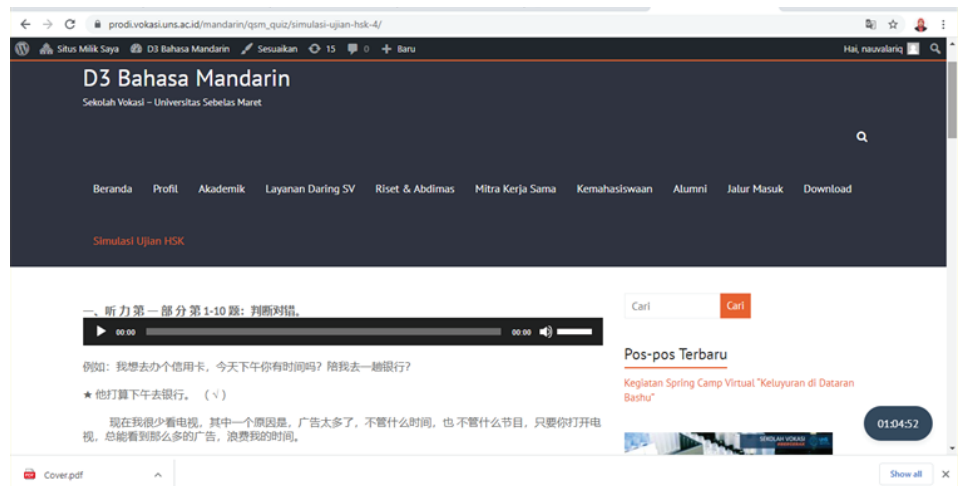


Figure 3: The appearance of simulation test question.

TABLE 2: Result of HSK simulation level 4.

NUMBER	NAME	POINT
1.	Angelina Kuo	81
2.	Tania Crisoberyl	69
3.	Bianca Cindy C	67
4.	Siannori Kwee Sian Lie	66
5.	Marcellina KPW	66
6.	Arya Dewangga Kusuma N	62
7.	Wynona Michelle Luna N	59
8.	Jason Fernando Kristan	56
9.	Fahimah Alfi Nastiti	55
10.	Steven Christiawan	55
11.	Karisa Amelia Dimasto	53
12.	Eleazar Folakhomi Ticoalu	31
13.	Lavenia Davinci	24

5. Conclusion

Counseling activities and training of Mandarin proficiency test for Bina Widya High School students went well, although it was carried out online using the Zoom platform, but it was well organized because of the help from the headmaster and the supervising Mandarin teacher from the school. The highest score of the HSK simulation test is achieved by Angelina Kuo who scored 81/85. It can be concluded that after doing the activity:

1. HSK in addition to functioning as a competency test (proficiency test), can also function as an achievement test for students.
2. HSK can be an instrument to analyze the needs of Mandarin language curriculum at school.
3. Bina Widya Solo High School, as a trilingual school, is necessary to make Mandarin language teaching scheme based on HSK test.

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