

The Lingodeer Mobile Application to Learn Mandarin

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Abstract. There is a rapid development in the advancement of cellular technology-based language learning, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) provide an easy access for students to learn languages anywhere and anytime with the support of appropriate content and design. Many applications have been developed for learning Mandarin as a second language. The Lingodeer application is a mobile-based language learning media that is useful in learning Mandarin. This study aims to describe the technological features of the Lingodeer application in learning Mandarin and evaluation for teachers and students. This study is used qualitative research methods which came up with the results that the Lingodeer application provides content features for learning grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, spelling and speaking based on beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. In addition, it provides statistical features of learning development and attractive application designs consisting of pictures, videos, and audio which can motivate students in the learning process. Lingodeer is suggested to be an additional resource in supporting the language learning experience and a companion material in learning Mandarin.

Keywords: MALL, Mobile Learning, Lingodeer Application, Learning Mandarin.

1. Introduction

At present technological advances in the field of education are growing rapidly. The learner's interest in the use of technology is quite large, for example, cellular technology which facilitates language learning. In the study approach, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), or what is called cellular-based language learning is focused on contextual learning, flexibility, and active participation of students [1]. As written by Kvavik in a study of students in the United States, 82% have cellular technology [2]. Mobile technologies are usually more expensive than standard equipment such as PCs, but they can be easily used outside or in the classroom to learn material that can be managed anywhere to take advantage of convenience [2]. MALL has benefits such as allowing students to access learning materials easily and quickly. The nature of digital technology assists students in collaborative and individual learning and mobile technology provides resources and learning tools that increase student engagement [3] and have a variety of ways learning [4].

Four skills must be mastered in Mandarin, namely: reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. To assist students in mastering these skills, they can use learning media such as the use of mobile applications. Application assistance in learning Mandarin characters provides a lot of sensory stimulation through audio, visuals, icons, or animations that can help students imagine

between visual images and sounds of these characters [5]. In terms of learning to write, technology can improve the quality of student writing, work together outside the classroom environment much easier, support students to learn without the time and place limits and become student learning facilities [6]. Practicing pronunciation and doing exercises online can make it easier for students to pronounce Mandarin vocabulary or sentences with the help of pinyin [7].

One of the Mandarin learning applications that can be accessed in mobile technology is the Lingodeer application. Lingodeer is a website and application designed for foreign language learning. Lingodeer provides 11 languages that can be learned, namely Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, English, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, Italian, and Vietnamese. Lingodeer consists of complete material such as grammar, reading, speaking, listening, and writing with adjustable levels of ability, namely beginners, intermediate, and advanced. There are online quizzes such as composing words, filling in the blanks, practicing thinking about words or sentences, writing scribbled words, and listening to the pronunciation. Lingodeer application can be applied through or on the website. The website claims that Lingodeer is built on the following principles because the curriculum is made by language teachers who are experts in their field to help students with the material, detailed explanations so that learning is clearer and not guesswork, effective learning is on target by reviewing the grammar language as well as online quizzes, learning is assisted with audio features that come from the voices of native speakers so that the pronunciation is clear, and has an engaging story by introducing cultural facts while banning new words and sentences. Each topic has comprehensive training material, this application has the effect of being used for language learning, which can assist students in honing their foreign language skills. This application can be accessed via the website lingodeer.com or can be downloaded via the Play store or iOS for free. In learning Mandarin, Lingodeer offers features such as grammar, pinyin, tones, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Mobile-based learning has potential use outside the classroom where students may engage in informal learning (eg games), language learning services, or applications [8]. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct critical research on second language learning applications. The following are the research questions: what are the technological features of the application in learning Mandarin, and how to evaluate deploying applications for teachers and students. This study aims to go into greater detail about how the technological features of the Lingodeer application in learning Mandarin using Indonesian as the first language and provide evaluation for teachers and students.

2. Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. This method aims to explain a phenomenon by describing in detail and accurately what happened in the field of study. The choice of qualitative descriptive research is because it is believed to be able to comprehensively describe the application of the Lingodeer application features in learning Mandarin. There are two types of research data: the primary data is the Lingodeer application, especially the features of learning Mandarin, and the secondary data is related documents or journals. The data collection technique is observation. First, observing the Lingodeer application and using the various features contained in the application, and second, noting the features and uses in learning Mandarin. Data analysis techniques consist of two parts: firstly, analyzing various features of application and features of learning Mandarin by paying attention to the six skills (writing, reading, grammar, speaking, spelling, and listening) and study tips, and secondly, analyzing the

evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of implementing applications for teachers and students.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Feature Description

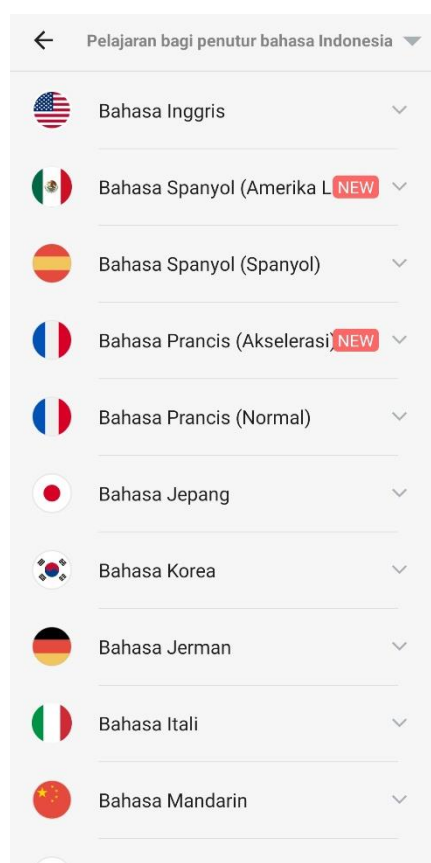


Figure 1. Choice Of Speaker Language and Target Language.

To use the application, firstly, students must download through Google Play or Apple Store. Lingodeer offers 11 foreign languages that facilitates students in choosing which language to use and which language to learn. As seen in **Figure 1**, there is a choice of the speaker's language and the choice of language to learn. Students who speak Indonesian can learn Mandarin. In Mandarin lessons, there are several choices of material based on a user level, namely beginner, intermediate, and advanced, and there is a collection of travel phrases besides practicing Mandarin characters. Furthermore, as a new user, the registration is quite easy.

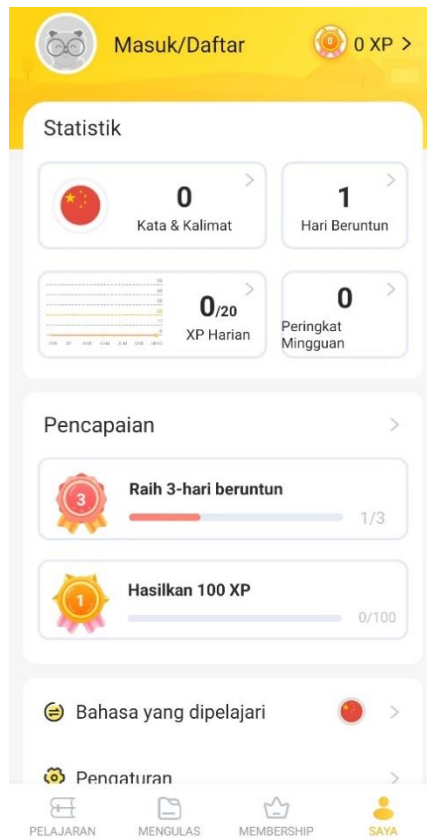


Figure 2. User Account Registration.

In **Figure 2**, on the "me" menu section to register a user account clicks "enter/register", users can either fill with their email and password or a Google or Facebook account. After login process is completed, next, filling the age on Biodata.



Figure 3. Ability Level.

After an user selects the spoken language and the desired language, it will be shown along with many menu features. In **Figure 3**, there is a feature of the level of ability and interest in Mandarin. There are five offered materials, namely Mandarin for beginners, intermediate, and advanced students, a collection of travel phrases, and practicing writing characters. Students can study all materials according to their individual needs.



Figure 4. Beginner Chinese Topics.

In **Figure 4**, there are different topics at the beginner Mandarin level. These topics are Basic I, Basic II, Basic III, Colors, Numbers I, and others. Firstly, the students would work sequentially from Elementary I onwards.



Figure 5. Basic Material I.

As seen in **Figure 5**, the basic topic I contains some materials. In section 1, 2, and 3, there are online quizzes. After lesson 1 is finished, students can work on lessons 2 and lesson 3. Students can also repeat material that was previously done. The study tips section contains detailed grammar explanations so before the quiz practice, students are advised to study the main knowledge points. The reading stories section contains material to practice reading sentences and answer several questions. The speaking story section contains audio that can be heard later on, however, students can record their voices.



Figure 6. Quiz example.

In the subject matter, there are several basic quizzes that students can do. In **Figure 6** the example of the “American” vocabulary quiz has 4 answer choices. The elementary level students can choose with the help of keywords in pictures of people who represent vocabulary. So, not only written vocabulary but also visual image forms can make students be enthusiastic in answering the quiz. While choosing the answer, students can listen to the audio and how to pronounce it, if students make a mistake in answering, they will get feedback on the answer.



Figure 7. Listening Practice.

In **Figure 7** there is a listening exercise. Students can press the speaker button to listen to the audio then, students choose vocabulary answers based on the audio. Vocabulary does not only display Mandarin characters but also assists with pinyin and pronunciation, so that can help students to understand audio and vocabulary. The Lingodeer application provides a clear audio.

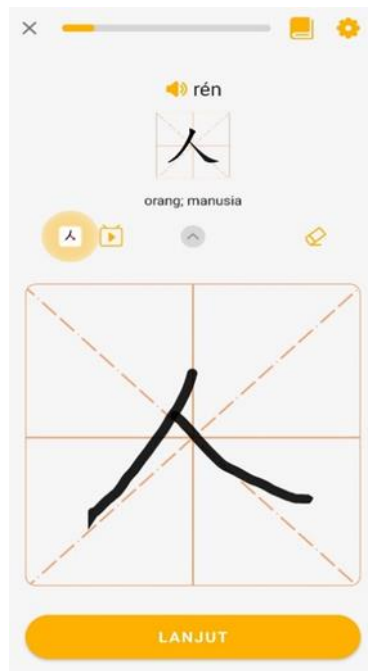


Figure 8. Writing Practice.

In **Figure 8** there is an exercise in writing Mandarin characters. Students can write characters based on vocabulary examples with the help of the order of strokes in writing. On this application, it presents the meaning of the vocabulary, the way to pronounce, and the history behind the character. However, students not only practice writing but also understand the meaning, pronunciation, and history of writing these characters.



Figure 9. Grammar Practice.

In **Figure 9**, it shows a grammar exercise that help students to translate and construct Indonesian sentences into Mandarin sentences correctly. Also, students can listen to the pronunciation audio and the vocabulary that contains Mandarin and pinyin characters

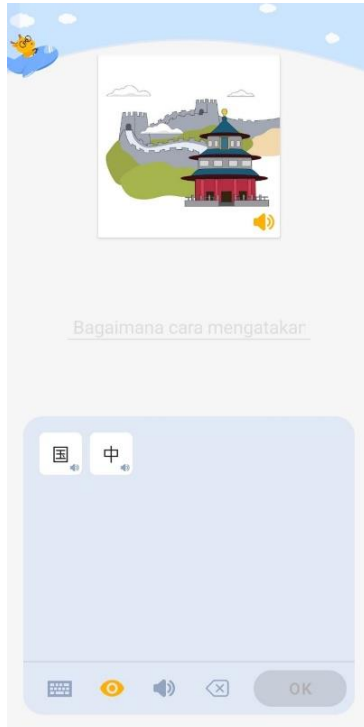


Figure 10. Spelling Practice.

In **Figure 10** it is the part of spelling exercise. Students suppose to listen the pronunciation audio and arrange words according to the audio which helps students to spell perfectly. In addition, this application contains attractive image illustration designs.

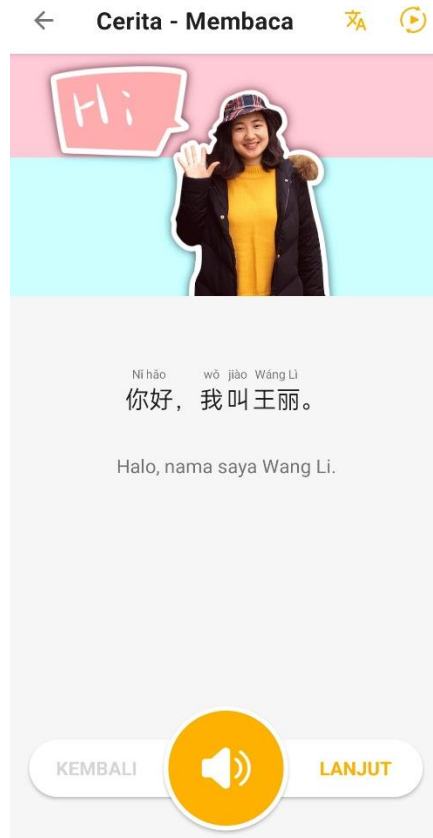


Figure 11. Reading Practice.

Figure 11 contains exercises to deepen the reading material. This feature includes reading sentences, meanings, audio pronunciations, and practice questions. Students can read sentences, listen how to pronounce them, and do practice questions. Sentence readings are not only with Mandarin characters but also accompanied by pinyin. The practice questions are came with the previous sentence so that students train their focus in reading as well as listening. After the reading exercise is done, continue the speaking material.

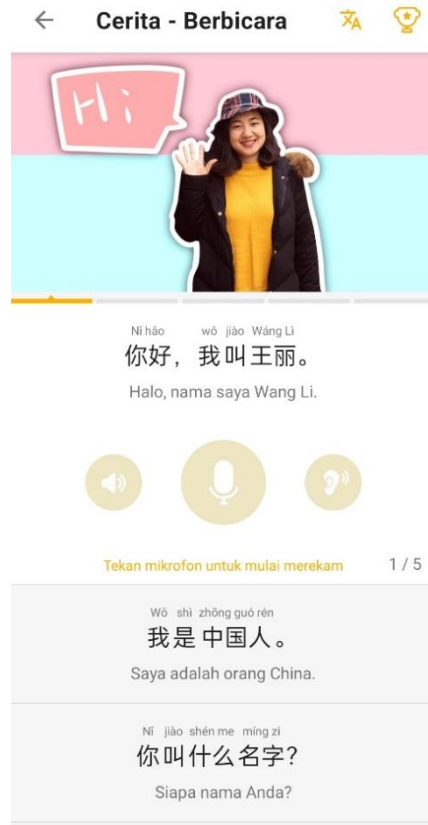


Figure 12. Speaking Practice.

As seen in **Figure 12** there are speaking exercises. There is a sentence feature in Mandarin accompanied by pinyin, pronunciation audio, a microphone for voice recording, and a button for listening to the recording. First, students read the sentences along with their meanings, listen to audio, then students record their voice to practice speaking by pressing the microphone symbol and replay the recording to ensure the pronunciation accuracy.



Dasar 1

Kabar baik bagi Anda yang merupakan pemula: bahasa Mandarin sangatlah mudah! Karena:

1. Susunan kata sama dengan Bahasa Inggris

Susunan kalimat dasar dalam mandarin sangat mirip dengan bahasa Inggris, diikuti dengan Subject-Verb-Object . Susunan kalimat dasar dalam bahasa Mandarin yaitu:

Subject + Verb + Object (SVO).



Subjek	Kata kerja	Objek	Kalimat
wǒ	ài	nǐ	Wǒ ài nǐ
我	爱	你	我爱你
saya	cinta	Anda	Saya cinta Anda.
nǐ	chī	fàn	Nǐ chī fàn
你	吃	饭	你吃饭
anda	makan	nasi/makanan	Anda makan nasi.  
			Tā xī huan zhōng

Figure 13. Study Tips.

In **Figure 13**, there is a menu of learning tips that needs to be considered and studied before starting to do the exercises. The study tips menu is very important for beginner to understand grammar, meaning, pronunciation, sentence or vocabulary in Mandarin. After students understand these tips, they can start working on online quizzes. Learning tips are very useful for students to gain more in-depth knowledge of Mandarin and make it easier to understand Mandarin.

3.2. Evaluation

An evaluation in the form of advantages and disadvantages for teachers and students was discovered from the findings of the summary of observations on the Lingodeer application for learning Mandarin.

3.3. Teacher

Lingodeer adopts a learning method in which learning the language through various types of exercises and negative feedback when answers are incorrect. Although Lingodeer provides

writing, reading, listening, and speaking practice features in Mandarin, there is a lack of interactive communication features. The available content is mostly focused on improving learner skills in grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, and listening. Pronunciation is very important when learning Mandarin which can be a big challenge because there are pinyin and tones as the basic components of learning Mandarin. To improve pronunciation skills, speaking activities with feedback will be useful for Lingodeer users if it is implemented. As well as Lingodeer facilitates vocabulary-honing skills, teachers can also create their courses with vocabulary learning lists tailored to the needs of a particular class.

3.4. Student

Lingodeer can be a tool to motivate the second language students who want to learn vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening, and speaking Mandarin with everyday topics tailored to the ability level of each learner. However, due to the lack of context and interactive communication features, students who wish to hone their speaking skills cannot rely on these applications as a source of learning their second language. Thus, Lingodeer can be an additional tool for students who want to strengthen their vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, and listening memory in Mandarin. Lingodeer offers comprehensive learning by allowing users to freely choose any available materials they want to learn from Mandarin beginners, intermediate, advanced, travel phrases, and character writing. Lingodeer provides learning progress statistics feature for students to monitor as a learning strategy. In addition, this attractive application design added with clear pictures, videos and audio that motivate students in the learning process.

4. Conclusion

Lingodeer provides grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, spelling, and speaking learning features that have great value to many learners. However, there is still a lack of oral skill features that helps students having interactive conversations and getting feedback on pinyin and tones. Oral skill features serve as a basic component in learning Mandarin. Lingodeer is not recommended for language students who wish to reach a fluent level, it can only be used as an adjunct to support the language learning experience and as companion material in learning Mandarin.

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