Welcoming Chinese investors in Indonesia: improving the competency of professional Indonesian-Mandarin translator

Y Ying1, T N Mursitama2, Theresia1 and Mariana1

1 Chinese Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Bina Nusantara, Jl. Kemanggisan Ilir III No.45, Jakarta 11480
2 International Relations Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Bina Nusantara, Jl. Kemanggisan Ilir III No.45, Jakarta 11480

E-mail: yi_ying@binus.edu

Abstract. The study discusses the importance of improving the competency of Indonesian-Mandarin translators to increase economic relations between Indonesia and China. As China’s investment in Indonesia expands in various industry sectors, the need for qualified translators escalates. However, the situation described that Indonesia lacks competent and qualified translators in Mandarin. The study adopts the qualitative approach. Technically, the study utilizes a variety of secondary data consisting of documents, books, publications, and website to collect data based on the needs of qualified translators and how to improve their competency. In addition, primary data collection involves industry and translation service providers, from high schools, vocational schools, colleges, and Chinese language courses through interviews. In this respect, the study contributes to the development of the Mandarin Chinese translator competency through professional translator training programs. The competencies developed include Mandarin language skills in a variety of contexts or themes such as business, industry, accounting, taxation, law, and socio-political issues. The findings of this research indicate the significance to complement the lack of knowledge and skills that are not acquired during the college. Importantly, the authors propose a professional interpreter training model to meet the demand of Chinese investors in Indonesia eventually.

Keywords: China investment, competence, model training, translator

1. Introduction

The rise of China’s economic power is one of the most interesting phenomena in the world. Doubtless, China’s three decades of economic growth has made China the driver of world economic growth and the power behind the world’s continuous economic growth. In this point, China’s influence emerged during East Asia’s economic crisis at the end of the 1990s and the recent world economic crisis [1]. Presumably, China’s economic growth and power pose as the main engine of the world’s economic growth [2]. Since 2004, China’s outward direct investment and foreign direct investment in China has grown significantly. In this point, China’s desire to get the best technology, management skills, and natural resources is the trigger of its investment [3]. In addition, China’s economic growth and its needs for natural resources and energy results on the crisis. Most likely, Southeast Asia has become an important source for China’s future [4]. Therefore, China is increasing its investment in Southeast Asia,
including Indonesia. Not surprisingly, China is aggressively increasing its investment in Indonesia recently. For an instance, in 2016, China’s investment in Indonesia reached $1.01 billion. It's a huge increase from 2015 where China’s investment in Indonesia was only $160.27 million. With $1.01 billion in investment, China became the third biggest investors in Indonesia. Prior to that, China ranked 10th investor in Indonesia. Now, China overtook United States of America and South Korea. The $1.01 billion investment in 2016 is only 6% of China’s commitment to Indonesia for the period of 2011 to 2016 that totaled $52.7 billion. In this respect, it is estimated that in 2017, the investment will be more aggressive [5].

China investment in Indonesia ranges from sectors of mining, transportation, construction, real estate, plantation to electricity. China's main construction projects in Indonesia include the construction of the Suramadu Bridge, Jatigede Dam, Coal power plant, oil palm plantation, and stainless steel production. The figure 1 illustrates China’s investment in Indonesia from 2010 to 2014 [6].

![China's Investment value (US $ million)](image)

**Figure 1.** China’s Investment in Indonesia

*Retrieved from: [www.bareksa.com/id/text/2015/07/27/investor-china-mulai-kucurkan-dana-bangun-smelter-us410-juta/11009/newsd]*

The growth of China’s investment in Indonesia increases the demands for Mandarin-speaking workers to employ in Chinese companies. Based on jobs’ advertisements in id.neuvoo.com, Chinese companies require translators placement in the following industries such as food, electronic, mining, construction, e-commerce, technology, textile, and airlines. Big companies that require Chinese-language workers include China Railway Construction Corporation Ltd., PT Sinar Tambang Arthalestari, PT. New Hope Indonesia, Research, and Development Center of Hebei Geotechnical, PT. Sansan Brother Tex Jaya Textile, PT. Wook Mobile Commerce, Beijing shows Environmental and Energy Technology, Pocket Network Technology PT Vlivo Communication Indonesia, Oppo Indonesia CO, Chinglüh Indonesia Victory, and Alibaba.com. The demands for Chinese-speaking workers direct the writers to investigate three main topics. First, do the current Chinese translators in Indonesia possess the ability to meet the demands. Following that, what are the challenges in finding professional Chinese translators in Indonesia? Lastly, what is the ideal model to produce professional Chinese translators in Indonesia?

**2. Methods**

The purpose of this research is to extend the professional translation model from Mandarin-Indonesia-Mandarin. Initially, this study devised two sets of questions. The first set targeted industry groups and translators. Meanwhile, the second set targeted high schools, colleges, universities, and Mandarin
vocational schools. In this case, the participants are involved in a random selection. Participants derived from six participating companies. The stakeholders involved range from the communications services industry, electronics, food, expeditions, tourism, and translation. Participants are among managers and owners of the company. The research team interviewed five principals, three heads of the Chinese Department, and one owner of a Mandarin vocational school. Interviews transpired from March to July 2017. It contained ten questions related to the skills and knowledge of the translator needed. Questions addressed to educators relating to the offered Mandarin-grade curriculum, and the experience of alumni working as translators.

In this study, the questions to the industry and translators include the seven major topics, notably language ability (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), cultural awareness, general knowledge, computer skill, communication skill, Certificate HSK (Mandarin’s language ability), and other skills. Meanwhile, the questions to the educators include the topic of core classes for the translators, graduates’ profile, alumni’s challenges as translators, and the use of technology in translating.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Literature Review

Translators should have extensive skills and knowledge. This means that knowledge of the industry they have will be beneficial to their profession. Studies show that a professional translator should have a comprehensive knowledge of the industry and not solely knowledge of the language. Further, an interpreter should broaden their horizons. This suggests that the skill and knowledge of the translator is a measure of the training and recruitment program of translators [7]. In addition, translators are not sufficient just to learn linguistics in the classroom. In other words, the translation skills learned in the classroom are an important basis and should be practical. In addition, students will benefit from the use of translation using computers [8].

Currently, schools offer foreign languages, integrate technology into the classroom, and rethink their teaching methods to meet today’s demands. It is very important for students in learning a foreign language using an electronic dictionary to find words in English in their native language [9]. The students need help finding the true meaning of a word based on a context. Research on the use of mini-dictionaries from a foreign language into English shows the effectiveness of work and student preferences. The use of a dictionary is not limited to students studying a foreign language. Medical students also use daily dictionaries. The dictionary helps them understand the true meaning of a word because it includes its meaning and usage in the sentence [10].

3.2 Results

All survey participants stated that the ability to listen, speak, read, and write well in Mandarin and Indonesian is urgently needed. In this regard, they emphasize the ability to listen and speak Mandarin, and suggest improving the skill at the same time. They less consider about cultural skills, but they emphasize the importance of hard work. Some participants perceived that translating Mandarin into English receives significant attention. In this scope, participants from civil engineering background expect the translators to master the technical requirements and be able to translate them correctly. They also consider that computer skills contribute important aspect and expect translators to understand some applications such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel & PowerPoint) and email. Good communication skills play an important role in ensuring smooth work operation. They also underscore that other characters also received special attention such as initiative, self-discipline, ability to work independently and under pressure, responsibility, and become fast learners. Based on this study, one respondent stressed that level 4 and 5 HSKs are the minimum requirements to become translators. The respondent derives from Hebei, China.

Educators’ responses center on the absence of translation training provided in secondary schools or vocational schools. In this context, colleges and universities are the only providers who offer translation training. In addition, limited time and practice in translation will be a challenge in the translation process.

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Based on the alumni profile, the data show a lot of them who work as translators. Challenges that emerge as a workplace translator are usually associated with certain industry-related words, such as mining, machinery, tourist destinations, and other fields. In this vein, all learning facilitates them to study outside the classroom. Therefore, alternative solutions are required to become professional translators.

With the advancement of technology and the growth of smart phones, respondents consider that it is time they utilize smart phones to learn the language. All students have smart phones so that learning does not need to rely solely on face-to-face meetings. This makes the respondents think that learning Mandarin can optimize mobile learning. Importantly, the students are not limited to the time and place of learning the language. Mobile Language Learning (MALL) can overcome the limitations of time and location of language learning [11]. MALL gives students access to language learning materials, and instant communication. Digital technology also provides students the ease of learning a foreign language. Students not only learn a foreign language in the classroom, but they can also learn to use mobile devices, wherever they are. Therefore, research suggests learning methods via MALL. The suggested models include listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. This research uses MALL in tourism industry like interface below

![Figure 2. Interface of learning translation](image-url)

Figure 2 represents the app of learning translation for tourist destination in Natuna Regency, Riau Island. In this application, the language options setting of application offer the command in English, Mandarin, and Indonesian. Relating to the theme, this application introduces tourism, culture, and culinary in Natuna Regency. It also shows the map of Natuna to provide the picture for the user.
Figure 3. Interface about tourist destination

Figure 3 shows information about tourist destination, Natuna islands. The details of one destination in the Natuna islands may appear by clicking on picture intended. By doing this, it will lead the user to figure 4.

Figure 4. Interface about Kompang

Figure 4 shows the art of Kompang in three languages. Other than Chinese character, there is pinyin with the intonation in Mandarin. If one intends to learn, read, or listen in Mandarin, the user may click on the dark blue character. If one wants to learn the word, click 字, and it will direct to new interface as shown in Figure 5.
Figure 5 describes the word and the pronunciation. If one clicks on the Chinese character, a screen as in Figure 6 will show and explain how to write the Chinese character. If one wants to learn further about the writing, the user may click the button and it will show you how to write the Chinese character as seen in Figure 7.

The user can use the eraser or paper icon when someone makes mistake in writing the Chinese character. The app MALL covers four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the app MALL, the researchers expected that the ability to translate the language increases as learning foreign language beyond the classroom setting. The Chinese character-writing app in smartphone for Chinese learner was undertaken in non-Latin writing system. The user may change the virtual keyboard text input, and it enables iPhone to input Chinese character and draws it with finger or switch to pinyin text input with appropriate character selection.
4. Conclusions
This study concludes that learning is not only limited to Chinese and Indonesian language skills, but also hone related skills such as computers, communication, discipline, initiative, the ability to work under pressure, and hard work. Learning foreign languages is no longer limited to learning in the classroom, but learners access the opportunity to learn outside the classroom. With technological advances, learning can be done with applications like MALL. This shows that students may perform the study wherever and whenever. The applications enable learners to access learning flexibly, especially the Chinese learning process. In addition, the use of MALL applications is not limited to space and time so that learners can set the time to study independently. In conclusion, through the application, it is expected that all learner goals achieve the goal, especially as a tour guide.

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