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Chief Editors:

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Preface

Pioneering Educational Perspectives: Series 2025 is a collection of thought-provoking insights and research contributions exploring contemporary educational trends and practices. This eBook presents a diverse range of perspectives on innovative teaching methodologies, digital learning strategies, and transformative approaches in education. Designed to serve as a resource for educators, researchers, and practitioners, it aims to inspire meaningful discussions and advancements in the field. Through carefully curated chapters, this publication offers fresh ideas and practical solutions to enhance learning experiences in an ever-evolving educational landscape.

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MANDARIN ON THE GO: UNLOCKING MANDARIN THROUGH DAILY ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

This project introduces an innovative and engaging method for learning Mandarin, integrating visual elements, vocabulary, and audio functions into a cohesive learning experience. The use of visuals aids in memorization and helps learners connect words to their meanings, promoting deeper cognitive processing. The audio feature further enhances pronunciation skills, making the learning experience more comprehensive. AI-generated images ensure the highest quality, making the picture e-book visually appealing and more engaging for learners. This enhanced visual appeal not only attracts learners but also makes the learning process more enjoyable and effective. These picture e-books can be developed as a series and made available on various platforms, such as the Google Play Store. Premium features can be unlocked through in-app purchases, creating a potential revenue stream. The picture e-books are suitable for learners at all levels, offering flexible, on-the-go learning, and enabling them to study Mandarin anytime and anywhere. In conclusion, the picture e-book is a powerful educational tool that can significantly improve learning outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Mandarin learning, Beginner, Picture e-book.

PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE

For beginners without prior knowledge of Mandarin, the primary challenges lie in mastering vocabulary, sentence patterns, and pronunciation. There are three main issues that learners face. First, Mandarin's tones, grammar structure, and writing system may seem unfamiliar and complex, creating initial obstacles. Second, traditional paper-based teaching materials often lack convenience and interactivity, which can make it difficult for beginners to stay engaged and motivated. Third, while there is an abundance of learning resources available, the lack of systematic and targeted approaches often leads to information overload, causing learners to lose direction.

Picture books, known for promoting language, cognitive, and emotional development, offer a solution by nurturing a love for reading through rich illustrations and narratives. These books engage students by combining text with vivid imagery, helping them naturally expand their vocabulary and enjoy the learning process (Wang & Zheng, 2023). The Dual Coding Theory by Allan Paivio (1986) and Richard Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory (2001) support the effectiveness of using both verbal and visual inputs to enhance memory retention and comprehension. Additionally, John Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (1988) emphasizes that appropriately designed visual elements can reduce cognitive load, making it easier for learners to absorb new information. a

This project focuses on creating a bilingual picture e-book in English and Mandarin to address these challenges. The book aims to spark interest in Mandarin among university students who

are absolute beginners. By incorporating basic vocabulary and phrases into narratives reflecting everyday experiences, the book seeks to provide an engaging entry point into Mandarin learning, foster a positive attitude towards the language, enhance the ability to recognize and use basic Mandarin in context, and encourage further exploration of Mandarin and Chinese culture. The bilingual format also enriches students' experiences with language switching, which is crucial in bilingual environments, improving their overall language skills (Potter et al., 2024).

DESIGN DESCRIPTION

This project aims to create a visual e-book that introduces essential vocabulary and phrases for beginners learning the language. By using visual associations, the e-book enhances memory retention and accelerates the acquisition of basic vocabulary, simple sentence structures, and accurate pronunciation. The goal is to provide an engaging Mandarin language learning experience through relatable scenarios and activities. Below is a brief overview of the picture e-book's content.

Story overview: “A Day in the Life of a Student” follows the protagonist, Li Zhongwei, a university student, as he goes through his daily routine. The story is divided into 16 illustrated pages, each highlighting different activities and incorporating basic Mandarin vocabulary from the HSK 1 list. Each scenario introduces specific vocabulary and phrases in Mandarin, with a focus on practical language use. The story is set in a vibrant, modern environment with semi-realistic illustrations to make the scenes relatable and visually appealing.

Target audience: (1) The beginners in Mandarin language learning, particularly university students with zero to minimal prior knowledge of Mandarin. (2) Educators and language instructors looking for a resource to introduce Mandarin in a classroom or tutoring setting. The book's design allows for both self-study and guided learning.

Project component: (1) Story Development, involves creating a cohesive narrative that smoothly transitions from one activity to the next while maintaining a focus on the target vocabulary. (2) Illustrations, play a crucial role by providing a storyboard with text descriptions and lively illustrations for each scene, which serve to visually enrich the text and enhance vocabulary comprehension. (3) Language Integration, ensures that each page incorporates HSK 1 vocabulary in a manner that is both understandable and relevant to the scene. (4) Educational Support, includes the addition of pinyin and translations for the vocabulary to aid learners in pronunciation and comprehension. (5) Interactive Elements, such as a vocabulary list, pronunciation audio guides, and summary categories of nouns are added to make the learning experience more engaging and effective.

Implementation plan: (1) Research and Planning, involves compiling a comprehensive list of HSK 1 vocabulary and identifying key daily activities that can naturally incorporate these words. (2) Storyboard Creation, involves developing a detailed storyboard that outlines each scene, dialogue, and corresponding vocabulary. (3) Illustration Development, an AI image generator is used to create vibrant and engaging illustrations for each scene.

(4) Text Integration requires writing and refining the text to ensure clarity and appropriate use of vocabulary. (5) Review and Feedback, the e-book is tested with a sample group of beginners to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments. (6) Finalization and Production, the design and text are finalized, and the project proceeds to digital publication.

VISUALS

The picture e-book leverages AI-generated technology for a systematic layout and elegant composition. Each scene is carefully designed to offer contextual insights and visual cues for the vocabulary being introduced. Mandarin vocabulary and phrases will be prominently presented on each page, along with Pinyin (phonetic pronunciation) and English translations above the Mandarin text. The text will be seamlessly integrated with the illustrations, ensuring harmony between visual and verbal elements. Learners can use this e-book as part of their curriculum or enjoy it as casual comic reading material. The following are sample illustrations:



NOVELTY AND UNIQUENESS

The localization of Mandarin teaching materials in Malaysia currently suffers from a lack of systematic organization and reliable sources. While numerous online platforms offer relevant resources, most do not align with classroom content, leading to confusion and inadequate support for learners. Moreover, learners often struggle to assess the accuracy of these materials, risking the acquisition of incorrect information. This picture e-book incorporates visual, auditory, and interactive elements to provide a multisensory learning experience. Designed around real-life scenarios, it helps learners connect classroom knowledge with practical contexts through illustrated scenes, thereby enhancing language application skills. Unlike many language learning e-books that prioritize text and audio, this one emphasizes visual associative memory, increasing engagement with vibrant illustrations and narrative visuals. Additionally, it features a multilingual comparative learning function, enabling learners to quickly grasp new vocabulary and sentence structures by comparing them with their native language and Mandarin, thereby easing the learning process.

BENEFITS TO MANKIND

Developing a picture e-book for Mandarin beginners not only provides convenience and support for individual learners but also has a positive impact on the entire human society. The benefits of this include:

1. Educational resources: Accessible online, it helps bridge the gap for learners in remote areas, promoting educational equity.
2. Reducing carbon footprint: Digital distribution reduces resource use and emissions from transporting textbooks, supporting carbon reduction efforts.
3. Enhancing digital literacy: Using the e-book boosts learners' tech skills for future digital workplaces.

COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL

This picture e-book can evolve into a series covering various life scenarios, like shopping, dining, and social interactions. Many online platforms currently offer free technical services, enabling cost-free production. By uploading the e-book to popular social media and introducing a subscription model for ongoing access to updated content and features, a stable revenue stream can be established, enhancing user engagement. The e-book has significant potential for sustainable development. As advanced technologies mature and become more affordable, it can integrate with AI tools for pronunciation assessment and leverage Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) for immersive learning, effectively addressing real challenges in the learning process.

CONCLUSION

This project is primarily based on theories of visual, auditory, and sensory stimulation, aiming to design a picture e-book that is convenient, targeted, and engaging for Mandarin beginners. The purpose is to eliminate the obstacles faced during the initial stages of language learning and to stimulate learners' sustained enthusiasm for learning. The application of AI technology to this picture e-book represents an optimal integration of technology and art, affording educators the opportunity to investigate a broader range of possibilities in their pedagogical pursuits and to impart course content that is more nuanced and diverse to their students.

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