

**FORMATIVE EVALUATION FOR MANDARIN COURSEWARE
ENHANCEMENT**



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Report

Proposed Executive Summary

Learning Mandarin as the third language has always been difficult to the Bumiputera students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Terengganu. Due to the time constraint in class, most of the students are having problem to memorize the correct Mandarin pronunciations after each lesson. To overcome this problem, a Mandarin courseware has been developed with the aim to help especially the beginner students to improve in Mandarin pronunciations and speaking skills. The courseware, which combines all the multimedia elements, could be a very effective tool for the teaching of Mandarin as a foreign language to the students. In order to guarantee the quality of the courseware as an effective educational tool, a formative evaluation of the Mandarin courseware has to be conducted before it could be formally used as a supplementary learning material. Formative evaluation is the judgments of the strengths and weakness of the interface in its developing stages, for the purpose of revising the navigation. To produce an instructionally-sound courseware package, researchers should always carry out formative evaluation of the product, or even ongoing evaluation at its different stages from prototype to final version. The prototype multimedia courseware has to be checked throughout the stages of design and development so that errors could be detected.

Enhanced Executive Summary

Courseware has long been used as a teaching and learning material in higher institutions. The potential of interactive multimedia in the learning environment is well-recognized worldwide, as evidenced by various projects funded by universities, schools, government bodies and private organizations (Norhayati & Siew, 2004). In foreign language education, multimedia plays a very important role in acquisition of listening and speaking skills as it compensates the inability of instructor in catering the learner's individual need especially in attaining the correct pronunciation (Goh et al., 2008). Aware of the benefits of the interactive multimedia in learning, the Level One Mandarin courseware has been developed for UiTM (Terengganu) students. The courseware could also overcome the problem of insufficient Mandarin instructors and cater for the need of student's self learning. The courseware is based on Mandarin Level One syllabus in UiTM which offers comprehensive content for beginners. In order to guarantee the quality of the courseware as an effective educational tool, a formative evaluation of the Mandarin courseware has been conducted before it could be formally used as a supplementary learning material. Formative evaluation is the judgments of the strengths and weakness of the interface in its developing stages, for the purpose of revising the navigation (Maslowski & Visscher, 1999). To produce an instructionally-sound courseware package, researchers should always carry out formative evaluation of the product, or even ongoing evaluation at its different stages from prototype to final version. In this research, the evaluation is divided into two sections. The first section is the evaluation of the students' perception and acceptance towards the courseware while the second section is the evaluation of courseware's critical usability which is based on Heuristic Evaluation for Courseware (HeCW).

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