

Original Research Paper

## Enhancing the Global Competitiveness of Lombok Tourism Polytechnic Students through Basic Mandarin Training

Setyaning Pawestri<sup>1,4</sup>, Kurniawan Apgrianto<sup>2,4</sup>, Boniesta Zulandha Melani<sup>3,4</sup>, Desi Herayana<sup>2,4</sup>, Hartati Suryaningsih<sup>2,4</sup>, Naufal Nanda Fiandra<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Food Science and Technology Study Program, University of Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia;

<sup>2</sup> English Language Education Study Program, University of Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia;

<sup>3</sup> Doctoral Program in Education, University of Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia;

<sup>4</sup> Language Academic Support Unit, University of Mataram, Mataram, Indonesia;

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.29303/jpmipi.v8i2.11656>

Sitasi: Pawestri, S., Apgrianto, K., Melani, B, Z., Herayana, D., Suryaningsih, H., Fiandra, N, N. (2025). Enhancing the Global Competitiveness of Lombok Tourism Polytechnic Students through Basic Mandarin Training. *Jurnal Pengabdian Magister Pendidikan IPA*, 8(2)

### Article history

Received: 20 Mei 2025

Revised: 26 Mei 2025

Accepted: 10 Juni 2025

\*Corresponding Author:

Setyaning Pawestri; Program

Studi Ilmu dan Teknologi

Pangan, Universitas Mataram,

Mataram, Indonesia

Email:

setyaning\_pawestri@unram.ac.id

**Abstract:** Basic Mandarin Training for Tourism for Lombok Tourism Polytechnic students was held on Tuesday, May 6, 2025. This community service program, organized by University of Mataram's Language Academic Support Unit, aimed to introduce Mandarin to students. Participants were students who would be undertaking internships in the hotel industry in Taiwan. The training consisted of two stages: program socialization and the training sessions themselves. The material provided covered Mandarin phonetic basics, Hanzi character writing, and simulation-based conversation practice. Participants learned through role-playing activities in tourism scenarios, such as hotel room bookings and restaurant services. Despite the program's limited duration, participants showed high enthusiasm and actively participated. They were also introduced to using the Pleco application as a tool to support independent learning. Evaluation results indicated that this program was quite effective in providing a basic understanding of Mandarin for Lombok Tourism Polytechnic students, though independent practice in pronunciation is highly needed. Therefore, after the training, participants were advised to integrate applications and AI to support their self-study efforts. With improved Mandarin skills, students are expected to compete in the global tourism industry and provide higher-quality services to Chinese tourists.

**Keywords:** Mandarin training; Lombok Tourism Polytechnic; tourism education; community service program

## Introduction

The tourism sector plays a crucial role in Indonesia's economy, contributing to regional growth, job creation, and overall community welfare. Since 2017, the government has actively promoted tourism through the "10 Priority Tourism Destinations" initiative, commonly known as "10 New Balis" (Kesuma & Ciptafiani,

2021). One of the key destinations in this program is Mandalika, which has been continuously developed to attract both domestic and international visitors (Ramadhan et al., 2021).

To achieve its tourism growth targets, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has set a goal of 14.3 million international visitors by 2024 (Rizka, 2024), with China being a priority market due to its high tourism potential. The government aims to attract 1 to 1.5 million Chinese tourists (Lanhan, 2024), implementing

targeted promotions and facility improvements tailored to their preferences.

Despite these efforts, foreign tourist arrivals in Lombok through Zainuddin Abdul Madjid International Airport (BIZAM) have shown significant fluctuations. BPS NTB (2024) reported that in May 2024, 7,742 foreign tourists arrived, marking an 18.45% increase from April. Most visitors came from ASEAN (4,921 people), followed by Europe (1,773 people) and non-ASEAN Asian countries (656 people). However, this growth was not sustained, as by November 2024, the number had dropped sharply to 4,947, a 30.99% decrease from October (Dhani, 2025). Addressing this decline requires stronger promotional strategies and improved facilities, especially for Chinese tourists, who remain a key focus.

Beyond its natural beauty and cultural richness, service quality plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall visitor experience. However, language barriers continue to challenge Lombok's tourism industry. Heavy reliance on Indonesian and local dialects often limits effective communication, particularly with Mandarin-speaking tourists.

As a higher education institution under the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Lombok Tourism Polytechnic Lombok plays a vital role in preparing skilled professionals for the tourism sector (Politeknik Pariwisata Lombok, 2024). Based in Central Lombok, NTB, it offers four specialized programs which are. D4 Tourism Management, D3 Food Service, D3 Culinary Arts, and D3 Room Division Management. Those four study programs closely aligned with hospitality and tourism.

Foreign language training has become a necessity for tourism professionals, helping them provide better service and enhance industry competitiveness. Various institutions have introduced language programs to support this goal, including Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, which offers English language training through the MBKM Village Development Program in Purwosari (Widiatmoko et al., 2024). Similarly, Ishak et al. (2021) provide English training for local tourism groups (*pokdarwis*) in Sukajadi Tourism Village, Bogor, strengthening their communication skills. With the increase in Chinese visitors, Mandarin proficiency has become

even more essential. OTC Bali Nusa Dua offers Basic Mandarin Training for Tourism, helping students prepare for internships in Taiwan or careers in hospitality and tourism (Yuda, 2024).

Recognizing these needs, Mandarin training tailored for the tourism industry will be highly beneficial for Lombok Tourism Polytechnic students, enabling them to compete globally while delivering better services for Mandarin-speaking visitors. The training covers pinyin, initials, finals, and tones, along with Mandarin conversation practice and hanzi writing lessons. More than just language skills, this structured program plays a key role in preparing students for internships in Taiwan, helping them confidently navigate real-world Mandarin communication challenges in their daily professional activities.

## Method

The Basic Mandarin Training for Tourism at was carried out in two stages:

### a. Program Introduction

This initial discussion aimed to introduce the program to Lombok Tourism Polytechnic. An online orientation was held via Zoom on April 17, 2025, where the program structure was presented, followed by an open discussion and Q&A session. The community service team from University of Mataram, representing University of Mataram's Language Academic Support Unit (UPA Bahasa), emphasized the importance of Mandarin proficiency in the tourism sector. They addressed the Lombok Tourism Polytechnic representative's questions to ensure clarity regarding the program's objectives and schedule. Afterward, Lombok Tourism Polytechnic was responsible for facilitating the training by informing students, setting up a WhatsApp group as a communication hub for the Mandarin training class, and preparing accommodations for the training session.

### b. Training Sessions

On Tuesday, May 6, 2025, the Basic Mandarin Training was held at Lombok Tourism Polytechnic in Room 203, attended by 15 participants. The core of the session revolved around introducing the fundamentals of pinyin, initials, finals, and tones, alongside practical exercises in writing and accurately pronouncing Hanzi characters.

Beyond phonetic lessons, students delved into tourism-specific vocabulary, covering essential terms like destination names and widely used expressions within the industry. To build their conversational abilities, participants participated in paired role-playing and simulated dialogues. These exercises mimicked real-world interactions between tourists and hotel or restaurant personnel, focusing on scenarios such as hotel room reservations, ticket bookings, and restaurant service. This hands-on approach allowed students to sharpen their pronunciation and gain practical experience in applying Mandarin in various tourism contexts.

## Results and Discussion

The Basic Mandarin Training was specifically designed for D3 Tourism students preparing for internships in the hospitality industry in Taiwan. This program also signified the implementation of a partnership agreement between University of Mataram's Language Academic Support Unit and Lombok Tourism Polytechnic. The community service team was composed of four faculty members from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education and one from the Faculty of Food Technology and Agroindustry, University of Mataram, all of whom are actively involved with University of Mataram's Language Academic Support Unit. Figures 1–3 display the documentation from the training activities.



Figure 1. Opening Ceremony of the Community Service Program



Figure 2. Language Training Participants at Lombok Tourism Polytechnic



Figure 3. Mandarin Language Training Session

In Mandarin language learning, participants are introduced to fundamental concepts, including the pinyin system, initials, finals, and tones (Figure 4). In addition to understanding phonetic structures, they also learn how to write hanzi characters and pronounce them correctly. One of the key aspects of this training is the introduction to the four tones in Mandarin, which play a crucial role in distinguishing words with similar sounds.

Tones in Mandarin are not just a pronunciation feature but an essential element of

verbal communication. Some characters share the same pronunciation, making tones necessary for clarifying meaning in conversations (Su, 2024). Therefore, students must develop a strong understanding of tones and use them accurately to ensure clear and effective communication.

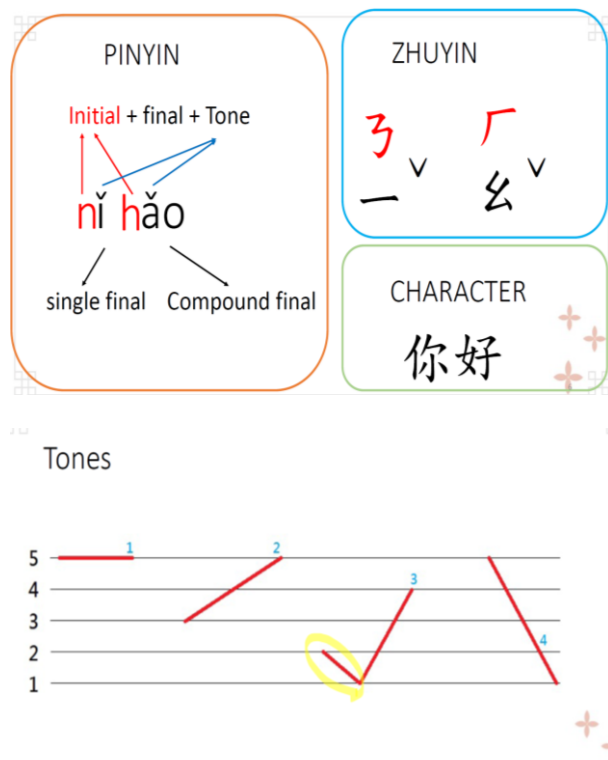


Figure 4. Phonetic structures

After gaining a basic introduction to Mandarin, participants explored key vocabulary and common expressions used in tourism-related interactions. To enhance their communication skills, they took part in simulated conversations and role-playing exercises, allowing for more hands-on practice and active participation.

These activities covered everyday tourism scenarios, including welcoming guests, booking hotel rooms, offering menu suggestions, and assisting with ticket reservations. The goal was to help participants feel more confident using Mandarin in real-world settings, improve their pronunciation, and strengthen their vocabulary retention. Figure 5 shows the vocabulary and dialogues practiced.

Figure 5. Mandarin Vocabulary

Participants were also introduced to Pleco, an English-Chinese dictionary app available for iOS and Android (Figure 6). Developed by Michael Love in May 2000, the app supports both simplified and traditional Chinese characters and is widely used in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan (Pleco Inc, 2025). It offers various tools that assist in language learning, including optical character recognition (OCR), full-screen handwriting input, stroke order diagrams, and customizable user dictionaries. Additional features such as flashcards, a document reader, handwriting recognition, audio pronunciation, cross-referencing links, and a merged search function help users familiarize themselves with Chinese vocabulary and character writing (Hobbs, 2023).



Figure 6. Pleco Application

Participants were highly engaged and enthusiastic throughout the learning sessions. They were encouraged to practice pronunciation and active conversation through role-playing exercises, which provided a dynamic and interactive learning experience. This approach offers several advantages—participants not only improve their pronunciation but also develop mental readiness and communication skills for real-world tourism interactions in Mandarin (Yuda, 2024).

Additionally, the training introduced participants to Taiwanese culture and etiquette, helping them understand appropriate ways to communicate in professional settings. The program aims to inspire Lombok Tourism Polytechnic students to further develop their Mandarin proficiency, preparing them for broader opportunities in the hospitality and tourism industry.

## Conclusions

The conclusions of the basic Mandarin training conducted for Lombok Tourism Polytechnic students are :

1. Participants developed a foundational understanding of Mandarin, including pronunciation, pinyin, and basic character writing.
2. Role-playing exercises allowed participants to actively engage with Mandarin in a tourism context, reinforcing their communication skills.
3. The short duration of the program limited in-depth learning, especially for mastering tones and complex sentence structures.
4. Extending the training duration would provide more time for in-depth pronunciation and fluency practice. Integrating learning apps like Pleco and AI-driven tools, could further support comprehension and boost conversational confidence.

## Acknowledgments

The authors extend sincere appreciation to the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at UNRAM for providing financial support for this community service initiative.

## Reference

- Badan Pusat Statistik NTB. 2024. NTB, Februari 2024: Perkembangan Pariwisata Nusa Tenggara Barat, <https://ntb.bps.go.id/id/pressrelease/2024/04/01/987/ntb--februari-2024--perkembangan-pariwisata-nusa-tenggara-barat.html>, accessed June 6 2025.
- Dhani. 2025. Tantangan Pariwisata NTB, Penurunan Signifikan pada Tingkat Penghunian Kamar Hotel, <https://www.ntbnews.com/daerah/tantangan-pariwisata-ntb-penurunan-signifikan-pada-tingkat-penghunian-kamar-hotel/>, accessed June 6 2025.
- Hobbs, M. 2023. Pleco Review (MUST DOWNLOAD) // The Ultimate Guide 2024, <https://flexiclass.com/mandarin/pleco-review/>, accessed June 6 2025.
- Ishak, R.P., Simanihuruk, M. 2021. Pelatihan Bahasa Inggris bagi pokdarwis dalam rangka mendukung pengembangan Desa Wisata di Desa Sukajadi, Bogor. *Academics in Action Journal*, 3(1), 11-22
- Kesuma, M., and Ciptafiani, V. 2021 Persiapan pengembangan kawasan pariwisata strategis nasional super prioritas Labuan Bajo. Seri Seminar Nasional Universitas Tarumanagara Implementasi MBKM Tahun 2021: 31–38.
- Lanlan, H. 2024. Indonesia targets million-plus Chinese visitors in 2024, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202406/1313574.shtml>, accessed June 6 2025.
- Pleco Inc. 2025. Pleco Chinese Dictionary Reviews, <https://justuseapp.com/en/app/341922306/pleco-chinese-dictionary/reviews>, accessed June 6 2025.
- Politeknik Pariwisata Lombok. 2024. Profil Politeknik Pariwisata Lombok. <https://ppl.ac.id/profil-singkat-politeknik-pariwisata-lombok/>, accessed June 6 2025.
- Ramadhan, G., Hudaiby, A., and Kusumah, G. The 10 New Bali Project in Indonesia, Real Or Gimmick. 2021. *Journal of Humanities and Social Studies*, 6(1), 30–34.
- Rizka, A. 2024. Indonesian Ministry of Tourism Aims for 14.3 Million Foreign Tourist

- Visit in 2024.  
<https://www.socialexpat.net/indonesian-ministry-of-tourism-aims-for-14-3-million-foreign-tourist-visit-in-2024/>, accessed June 6 2025.
- Su, Q.G. 2024. The Four Mandarin Chinese Tones, <https://www.thoughtco.com/four-tones-of-mandarin-2279480>, accessed June 6 2025.
- Widiatmoko, P., Endarto, I.T., Wati, M. 2024. Pelatihan Bahasa Inggris bagi pelaku wisata dalam Program MBKM Pembangunan Desa. *Kontribusi*, 4(2), 256-266.
- Yuda, I.B.N.K.P. 2024. Pelatihan bahasa mandarin dasar pariwisata (basic mandarin for tourism) pada mahasiswa di OTC Bali Nusa Dua, Jimbaran, Bali. *Jurnal Pengabdian Dosen Republik Indonesia*, 1(1), 42-48.