

The Function and Role of Chinese Language in the Import Business of Goods at PT Anson Ratu Bakindo

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KEYWORDS

Mandarin language, China, communication, negotiation, companies, cooperation.

ABSTRACT

Mandarin is currently significant in global commerce, particularly in the import sector, where it involves collaboration with Chinese trading partners. As one of the world's leading exporters, proficiency in *Mandarin* is a key advantage for businesses aiming to broaden their market presence and ensure efficient import operations. This research aims to thoroughly examine how the function and role of the *Mandarin* language are utilized in the operational aspects of PT Anson Ratu Bakindo, including communication and negotiation processes, document management, and the maintenance of business relationships with Chinese suppliers. Through interviews and observations with the owner and employees at PT Anson Ratu Bakindo, it was found that the use of *Mandarin* directly enhances communication effectiveness, reduces language misunderstandings, and accelerates transaction processes. The results of this study indicate that if the company's owner and purchasing department staff at PT Anson Ratu Bakindo possess fluent *Mandarin* language skills, daily operations can be conducted effectively without misunderstandings, such as incorrect types or quantities of delivered goods. Therefore, *Mandarin* language training for employees at PT Anson Ratu Bakindo, as well as recruiting staff with *Mandarin* proficiency, is recommended as part of the human resources development strategy and international business expansion. In conclusion, the *Mandarin* language not only serves as a medium of communication but also as a supporting factor for success in the import business.

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Introduction

The pandemic that hit the world in 2021 made us limited in socializing, interacting, and communicating with others (Hossain & Quaddus, 2020). But the needs of life must still be met, therefore e-commerce became a crucial part of our lives, helping us acquire household needs, personal products, electronics, and even food (Zhou et al., 2020). E-commerce applications such as Shopee, Tokopedia, and Lazada played a key role in meeting these needs, providing a convenient

platform for consumers to shop safely and efficiently (Chong et al., 2021). As the pandemic forced people to stay home, the reliance on e-commerce for daily essentials increased, highlighting the importance of digital platforms in the new normal (Sharma & Sharma, 2020). This shift towards online shopping was driven by factors such as safety concerns, ease of use, and the availability of a wide range of products (Lee et al., 2021).

Even though we have now entered an endemic period, people can no longer escape from e-commerce because they have become accustomed to it and have felt the convenience of transacting in e-commerce. According to information from Market Insights Statistics, in 2022, there are around 178.94 million individuals who use e-commerce in Indonesia. It is estimated that this number will jump to 244.67 million users by the end of 2027.

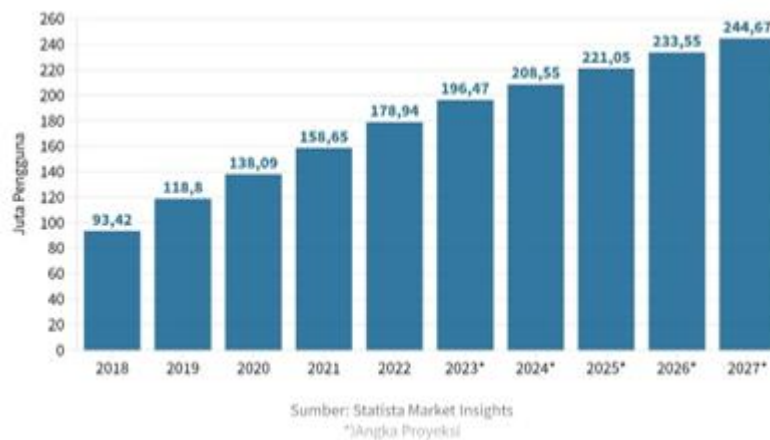


Figure 1. Number of e-commerce users in Indonesia
(Source: dataindonesia.id)

Judging from the increasing number of e-commerce users, many Indonesians also see this as a business opportunity and start a career by utilizing several e-commerce platforms such as: Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, etc. The products that are sold and traded are also very diverse, namely not only local products, but even more sellers import goods from other countries such as: China, Korea, Japan, etc. The largest import in Indonesia today is from China. This encourages our people to learn Chinese to facilitate business interactions (Liu & Lim, 2023).

It can be seen that currently China's economic power and influence continue to increase, making China one of the largest exporting countries in Asia and even the rest of the world. With the spread evenly of products made from China has become a common phenomenon in Indonesia. Products from China are now in great demand by Indonesian citizens and have received a very positive response in Indonesia, due to their relatively cheap selling price when compared to locally made products in Indonesia.

Currently, the government has begun to treat imported goods entering Indonesia due to the extraordinary gap between the percentage of sales of local and imported goods, coupled with many local companies going bankrupt due to competition, there are several goods that have begun to be

banned from entering Indonesia such as: clothing, textiles, ceramics and stainless, there are also current quota restrictions in order to keep local factories in Indonesia able to compete with foreign products black.

PT Anson Ratu Bakindo is a company engaged in the import of household appliances, especially in the field of baking tools (baking tools) in Indonesia, this company has been established for 6 years and is currently the third largest supplier in Indonesia. PT Anson Ratu Bakindo initially sold locally produced goods in the first year, but due to a lot of demand from consumers and fierce market competition, many baking tool companies competed to import goods from China, so to keep the company alive and competitive, PT Anson Ratu Bakindo started importing goods from China and was followed by several other countries.

At the beginning of communication with Chinese suppliers, PT Anson Ratu Bakindo had language limitations. This is because suppliers from China cannot speak English, while the purchasing department staff of PT Anson Ratu Bakindo does not speak Chinese, so the business transaction process is hampered due to communication problems. After knowing the obstacles faced, PT Anson Ratu Bakindo began to equip staff to learn Chinese and even the company owner also participated in learning and deepening Chinese and this is one of the roles of Chinese in today's business activities.

This study conducted a critical analysis of the two previous studies to identify gaps which were then filled by the case study of PT Anson Ratu Bakindo. First, the research of Sujana et al. (2024) examined the role of Chinese in trade transactions at PT SKM, but was limited to basic communication aspects without exploring its psychological and strategic impact. Second, Cahyaningtyas et al.'s (2018) research focuses on Chinese learning media for beginners, but does not discuss its application in a real business context. This study overcomes these limitations by showing how Chinese language proficiency at PT Anson Ratu Bakindo not only functions as a communication tool, but also as a business strategy to improve operational efficiency, build trust with suppliers, and strengthen bargaining positions. In addition, the research is also supported by recent references from Google Scholar, such as Chen & Wang (2020) and Liu (2019), which enrich perspectives on linguistic challenges in international trade.

The objectives of this research include: Knowing the function and role of Chinese as a means of communication in the goods import business at PT Anson Ratu Bakindo. Know what factors affect the smooth business communication in import transactions for the purchase of goods at PT Anson Ratu Bakindo. The results of this research are expected to provide the following benefits: The results of this study are expected to provide advice on business communication by using good and correct Chinese as a communication tool in the business of importing goods so that it can facilitate current business activities. The results of this research are expected to be a source of reference, teaching materials, and add insight in scientific research at Universitas Prima Indonesia, Faculty of Economics, especially for the D4 Chinese study program for business and professional communication. The results of this research are expected to expand the knowledge and insights of research in business communication using Chinese and how to implement it in

business. It is hoped that the results of this study can be used as a reference and reference for future researchers.

Materials and Methods

Research is a systematic and scientific method to obtain information with specific purposes and benefits (Umar and Choiri, 2019; Harahap, 2020; Hadi et al., 2021). It involves structured and objective steps to explore and discover meaning, often building on previous studies. In general, research can be divided into two main types: quantitative research, which is based on numerical data, and qualitative research, which relies on non-numerical data such as observations of human behavior and interactions within their context (Syahrudin and Salim, 2014; Puput, 2009). The choice between these types depends on the research problem.

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to explain and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, characteristics, beliefs, and thoughts through descriptive statements rather than numerical data. This approach is considered appropriate because the research is not based on quantifiable data.

Data collection methods in this study include distributing questionnaires, conducting face-to-face interviews, direct observation, and documentation. It is essential that the data collected is accurate, relevant, up-to-date, and aligned with the research objectives.

Data analysis in this qualitative research involves organizing and interpreting information from observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documents. The process includes identification, classification, and interpretation through descriptive explanations using inductive reasoning. This structured approach ensures that conclusions are drawn accurately and are relevant to the research objectives.

Results and Discussions

This study aims to find out the role and function of the Chinese language in goods import activities at PT Anson Ratu Bakindo. Based on the results of observations and interviews with Directors, Commissioners, purchasing staff, and several consumers, it was found that mastery of Chinese has a very important role in the smooth running of business processes, especially in relationships with suppliers from China.

Chinese as the Main Communication Tool in Imports

As many as 90% of the company's suppliers come from China and use Chinese as the main language in business transactions. This causes the company to be able to communicate in Chinese to avoid miscommunication that can be detrimental, both financially and operationally. According to Chaer (2010), language functions as a means of communication between individuals in a social community, and in the context of international business, language is an important means of bridging cultural and systemic differences. When PT Anson Ratu Bakindo still relies on forwarder services for communication, there are many obstacles, including additional costs (fee 5% of the transaction value), delays, and

miscommunication in product specifications. Once the company's staff learned Chinese, communication became more efficient and direct, thus speeding up the transaction process and reducing operational costs.

Chinese Improves the Effectiveness of Business Negotiations

A direct mastery of Chinese strengthens the company's bargaining position in the negotiation of price and quality of goods. In the negotiation process, not only a general understanding of the language is required, but also a mastery of the typical business language and the use of psychologically appropriate language towards the interlocutor. According to Kramsch (1998), language is not just a tool for exchanging information, but also a means to build interpersonal relationships based on certain social and cultural norms. For example, the use of the greeting 您 (nín) to respect an older or higher-ranking interlocutor, shows good manners and builds trust.

This psychological factor greatly affects the supplier's decision to provide better prices and services. In other words, the ability to speak in Chinese is not only interpreted as a communication tool, but also as a business strategy that is able to create emotional closeness with business partners, also create mutual trust, and gain benefits in the form of discounts and delivery priorities.

Chinese Language Becomes a Human Resource Investment

The company has taken strategic steps by providing Chinese language training to employees, especially in the purchasing department. This step has proven to be effective in supporting operational activities and increasing the company's competitiveness in the import market. At present, purchasing staff are not only able to understand the product specifications in Hanzi documents, but also able to conduct accurate verbal communication using correct pinyin and shengdiao, to avoid misunderstandings in conversations. This is in line with the opinion of Santoso (2015), improving foreign language competence in the work environment is a form of long-term investment in human resource development that is able to increase productivity and company efficiency.

Impact on Consumers and Business Relations

From the results of interviews with several consumers of PT Anson Ratu Bakindo, it is known that this company has a role as a liaison between local consumers and Chinese suppliers. Consumers are aware of the importance of the Chinese language, but do not have adequate skills so they depend on PT Anson Ratu Bakindo to procure large quantities of goods at more competitive prices. This shows that mastery of the Chinese language also provides added value for the company in the form of trust from local partners, which makes PT Anson Ratu Bakindo a reliable and professional intermediary in import activities.

From the above explanation and supported by theories from Chaer (2010), Kramsch (1998), and Santoso (2015), it can be concluded that the mastery of Chinese at PT Anson Ratu Bakindo is not only an ordinary communication tool, but has become an important pillar

in supporting import activities, strengthening negotiation positions, and building solid business relationships. Investment in human resources through Chinese language training has proven to have a positive impact on the company as a whole, both in terms of operational efficiency and competitive advantage in the domestic import market.

Conclusion

This study concludes that proficiency in *Mandarin* plays a crucial role in the import business, as greater fluency leads to increased profits and more effective negotiations with Chinese suppliers, who predominantly use their native language. At PT Anson Ratu Bakindo, *Mandarin* proficiency is essential for purchasing staff, as it not only facilitates smoother communication and better pricing but also positively influences supplier relationships, making them more accommodating. As a result, the company has become one of Indonesia's major distributors. For future research, it is suggested to explore comparative studies on the role of *Mandarin* across various import sectors, assess the effectiveness of technology-based language training, and examine the impact of cultural intelligence in business negotiations. Additionally, future studies could investigate the effect of *Mandarin* proficiency on MSMEs and cross-border digital trade communication, providing practical recommendations for international business language strategies.

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