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## PLECO APPLICATION AS A WRITING LEARNING MEDIA HANZI LANGUAGE MANDARIN

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### ABSTRACT

Hanzi is a character or writing in Chinese. Writing in Mandarin is very different from Indonesian because in Mandarin the learner must know the terms strokes and have knowledge of the rules of Chinese writing. With the development of technology in this era, there are now many application media that can help teachers, lecturers, other educators, and students in the learning process. One of the media applications that can help in learning to write Chinese is the Pleco Application. The Pleco application is a Chinese-English digital dictionary that has the advantage of supporting features for learning to write Chinese.

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### INTRODUCTION

Following the development of today's era, foreign languages are very important to learn, to help humans to communicate with each other in the era of globalization. In addition to English, Arabic, German, French, Japanese, and others, Mandarin is also one of the most important foreign languages to learn. Learning Mandarin is very different from other foreign languages because in the application of using Chinese there are 汉字 hanzi, 拼音 pīnyīn, and 声调 shēngdiào that must be learned (Widyahingsih, 2019). 汉字 hanzi [Hànzi] is a character or writing in Chinese, also known as the character hanzi. 拼音 Pinyin [pīnyīn] is a way of reading hanzi use Latin letters and tones [Shēngdiào] is pitch or intonation. Writing skills as an activity to express ideas in Mandarin are different from several other languages, including Indonesian. The writing system in Indonesian uses the alphabet to put together a word or sentence while writing in Mandarin uses a well-known pictogram system. 汉字[Hànzi]. Mandarin does not have an alphabet for writing but uses ideograms in

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the form of strokes to assemble a word or sentence. This is a special difficulty faced by novice learners.

The development of science and technology today has provided benefits for human life. In the world of education, especially related to the learning and teaching process, technological advances have provided many benefits. The presence of various kinds of software or applications makes the teaching and learning process easier and more interesting. The concept of learning is finally no longer synonymous with the classroom but can take place anytime and anywhere with the help of educational applications. The presence of applications in the world of education strengthens the concept of independent learning. This is supported by the increasing number of students who have gadgets as electronic devices in everyday life, whether in the form of smartphones, laptops, or personal computers (PCs). This condition must be utilized to achieve more optimal learning outcomes.

The Pleco application as a format in the form of a Chinese-English digital dictionary that has various interesting features can be used not only to increase the learner's vocabulary mastery but also to learn to write Chinese. What and how to use the Pleco Application in learning to write Chinese is the focus of this article.

## **MANDARIN LEARNING**

Mandarin Learning Mandarin is currently a subject that is widely studied at all levels of school starting from Elementary School (SD), Junior High School (SMP), and High School (SMA). Even now in Indonesia Mandarin has become one of the study programs at various universities, both public and private Indonesia.

Learning Mandarin has four competencies, namely: Through learning Mandarin it is hoped that students can grow and develop into smart and skilled citizens and can understand foreign cultures to be developed in national development (Thamrin, 2020) listening 听力 [tīnglǐ], read 阅读 [yuèdú] which is the receptive ability and speech 口语 [kǒuyǔ], writes 写作 [xiězuò] as a productive ability, supported by mastery of vocabulary and grammar. Writing is the last and most difficult skill. Because in writing, writers must master a lot of vocabulary and grammar in a language.

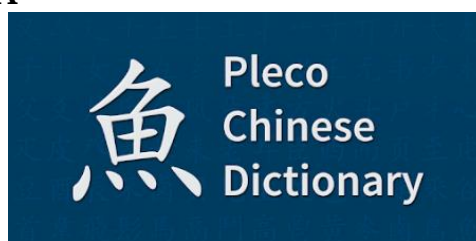
## **WRITE HANZI**

Hanzi is known as the script in writing Mandarin. Hanzi is a relic of the Huang dynasty. hanzi is a character that has pronunciation and does not symbolize sound, but expresses a meaning and has undergone a change. There are two types of Chinese characters in Chinese, namely simplified Chinese characters 简体字 (jiǎntǐzì) and traditional Chinese characters 繁体字 (fántǐzì) traditional. But now used by learners are simplified Chinese characters.

There is a lot of hanzi, but the number of components or parts of the character is limited. Every character in hanzi has different meanings, although sometimes they have the same pronunciation the written form is very different. Writehanzi Of course some rules and methods must be understood and mastered by Mandarin learners. Shape various hànzi composed of one or more strokes. The shape, number, and location of different strokes will form different hànzi (Widyarningsih, 2019).

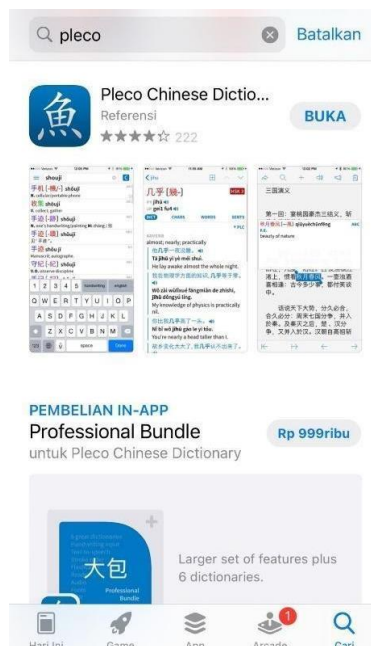
Writing Chinese characters needs to pay attention to the rules so that in writing the characters are not wrong and look strange. Writing Chinese characters should not be careless because knowledge of Chinese strokes is required and there is also a sequence for writing strokes (Syam, 2020). Writing characters hanzi is one of the basic competencies that must be taught in learning Mandarin so that it can affect the recognition and writing of characters. Writing in Indonesian and Mandarin is very different. Because the writing system in Indonesian uses the alphabet to assemble a word or sentence while writing in Mandarin, the script is known as [Hànzǐ]. Mandarin does not have an alphabet for writing but uses strokes to string a Chinese character together to form a word or sentence. Every character Hanzi is composed of about 20 to 30 strokes, but only 8 basic strokes. The rest are variations of the eight strokes (Y. L Philip, 2010). There are also rules for writing Chinese strokes.

## PLECO APPLICATION MEDIA



Picture.1 logo of pleco

It's hard to write hanzi, but some applications can make it easier for new learners to learn to write hanzi, namely the Pleco application. The Pleco application was invented by Michel Love, the Pleco software company founded in May 2000. The Pleco application is a downloadable Chinese-English dictionary on Android and iOS with a logo using the traditional Chinese character “fish” 魚 [Yú].



Picture.2 App store iOS

According to Tamba (2017) "Initially the name of the application was not Pleco but Plek-o. That's because he's used to calling it Pleco (with the long e spelling *pleeco*). Pleco has multiple input modes, optical character recognition, and has a large set of dictionaries (including Oxford, Logman, FLTRP, and Ricci), audio recordings of two native speakers. which are different in Chinese and English, the flash card functions and there is a process feature for the stroke stages of a character hanzi. Goh in Wibowo and Ina (2020) said he concluded that Pleco should be involved as a pedagogical tool in enforcing the effect of teaching Chinese characters.

The pleco application can help users to find the meaning of words easily. Pleco is an application-based digital dictionary, but one of its features is the process of writing character strokes hanzi. This can help new learners learning Chinese to overcome difficulties in writing hanzi.

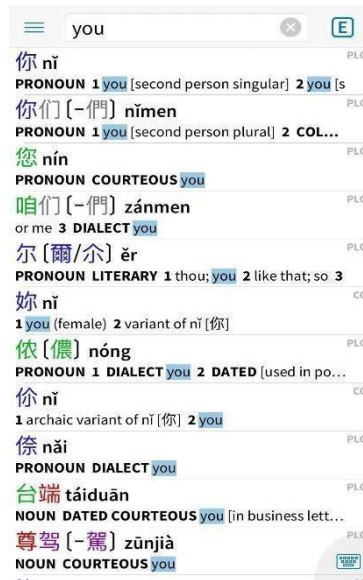
The Pleco application has interesting features for users, namely: 1) For the search method, there are four types of methods, namely: Handwriting, keyboard input (EnglishPinyin-Chinese), Radical as in conventional dictionaries and Voice; 2) Help users recognize characters hanzi Mandarin in both simplified and traditional writing. There are also[Pīnyīn] Pinyin that can make it easier for users to read characters and is equipped with a voice feature that can help users hear how native speakers pronounce the character; 3) Application can help users how to write characters gradually. There is also the number of strokes of the character hanzi and radical elements of character hanzi; 4) Equipped to understand a character, including adjectives, verbs, adverbs, or nouns and equipped with example sentences; 5) Give an example of a clause in the form of combining two or more words to create a new meaning; 6) Pleco is also equipped with a special vocabulary dictionary feature, such as an idiom dictionary, a Chinese medicine dictionary, a classical dictionary, and so on (Elyana & Chapri, 2017); 7) This application can be used both online and offline.

However, there are also drawbacks to the Pleco application, namely: 1) The Pleco application is only available in English, not in Indonesian. Indonesian users of course automatically learn also in English; 2) The features are limited for demo users, but to activate all the features, the user is charged a fee; 3) Video features of how to or steps to write hanzi are limited, not available on all characters.

## **HOW TO USE PLECO APP IN WRITING SKILLS HANZI**

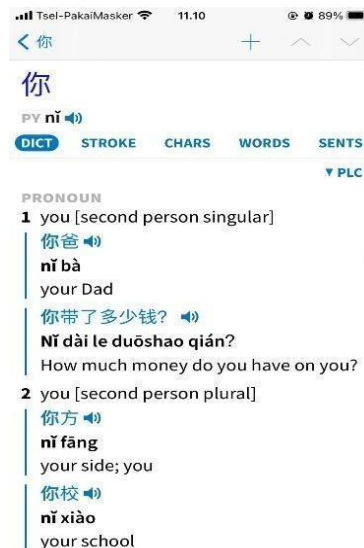
For new learners, of course, there are difficulties in writing hanzi characters. The presence of Pleco as a digital dictionary is an option for introducing hanzi because it has many features. Of course, this makes it easier for students to see step by step in writing hanzi. Because in Mandarin it says hanzi must pay attention to the rules and strokes contained in the character hanzi. As for how to use the Pleco application which helps in writing skills hanzi, as follows:

- 1) Users can search for the desired word or character in four ways, namely: Handwriting, Keyboard input, radically and in a voice. In search of special words keyboard input user's input in English, Chinese, or Pinyin.



Picture.3 pleco display

- The user can select the desired character, then the meaning of the character and voice narrative appears if you want to hear how it is pronounced, and there are examples of using the word in a sentence.



Picture.4 pleco dictionary

- To find out how to write it, there are strokes. The stroke will give an example of how to write hanzi in the form of videos in stages according to the rules of writing correctly, users can pause the video themselves. As well as in the charts, is a radical element contained in the character hanzi.



Picture. 5 Stroke Ni



Picture.6 Chars character Ni

## CONCLUSION

For new Chinese learners, one of the most difficult skills to master is writing skill. Writing skills in Mandarin and Indonesian are very different. Because in writing Indonesian, we use a writing system that recognizes 26 alphabets that are easy to remember, while in Mandarin the learner must first know Hanzhi.

Pleco as a form of digital Chinese-English dictionary that has a variety of interesting features can be used not only to increase students' vocabulary mastery but also to learn to write Chinese. The Pleco application has many superior features, one of which is a feature that can help students learn to write Chinese characters. This can help new learners to overcome difficulties in writing Chinese because there is also a video on how to write Chinese according to the order and rules contained in writing Chinese.

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