

Teaching Japanese attitudinal expressions using folklore 'mukashi banashi'

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ABSTRACT

Japanese attitudinal expressions or 'taigu hyougen' used to convey a speaker's attitude, emotions, and stance towards the listener in the given situation. In Japanese culture, these expressions are deeply intertwined with social context and politeness strategies. Japanese attitudinal expressions generally refer to expressions that use different words depending on the person and the situation. Basically, Japanese attitudinal expressions consist of 'Kei-go' (Honorifics), 'Futsu-go' (Common language) and 'Keihi-go' (Derogatory language), coated with speech styles of 'Tokubetsu teinei-tai' (Special polite style), 'Teinei-tai' (Polite style) and 'Futsu-tai' (Plain style). This unique concept is difficult for Japanese language learners to understand and digest. Other than textbooks and supplementary materials used for teaching Japanese attitudinal expressions, the researchers think anime type materials are also beneficial.

This paper suggests using folklore 'mukashi banashi' as the teaching aid materials in teaching Japanese attitudinal expressions because they are interesting story telling with eye-catching animations that could easily attract students' interests. Most importantly, there are many characters, as well as situations in the story, making them useful materials for students to deepen their understanding in the concept of Japanese attitudinal expressions. Two 'mukashi banashi' of 'Kaguya Hime' (The Tale of Princess Kaguya) and 'Yuki Onna' (Snow Woman) were chosen as the materials used in the Japanese language classrooms at the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, Universiti Malaya. There are four steps involved. As the feedback, using 'mukashi banashi' could enhance and support the learning process by making it more engaging and easier to understand the concept in context. Students are likely to be able to digest the concept of Japanese attitudinal expressions naturally while enjoying the story and visual animations of 'mukashi banashi'.