

Abstract

This research focused on understanding how to use Japanese honorific and humble expressions among post-basic Thai learners, and their attitudes toward both types of languages in relation to education, self-assessment regarding usage and usage in Japanese society. Moreover it studied the demand on Thai learners of the both classes of language.

One hundred sixteen 3rd and 4th year Japanese major students from 6 universities, Thammasat University, Silpakorn University, Kasetsart University, Srinakharinwirot University, Ubon Rajathanee University, and Thepsatri Rajabhat University, were the sample population. Descriptive statistics and percentiles were performed to complete the research.

Documentary study shows that an addresser has to analyze essential factors and/or other conditions when Japanese honorific and humble expressions are performed. Therefore, this research picked up those factors, including Soto-Uchi (inner-outsider), social status, formality, age and intimateness, for examination. Moreover, the study also shows that the negative attitudes of students toward Japanese polite languages influence their Japanese polite language learning.

The study of factors which affect students when they use two kinds of Japanese honorific and humble expressions shows that there are main and supporting factors which cause more than 50% of the errors in the usage of students, follows: 1. The factor of formality. It is found that most Thai students have a problem in using honorific and humble expressions under the main factor of formality with supporting factors of intimacy and social status in a situation in which an addresser who has a higher social status than an addressee who is intimate with him/her, is making a request to the addressee. 2. The factor of Soto-uchi (outsider-insider). It is found that most Thai students have a problem in using honorific and humble expressions under the main factor of Soto-uchi with supporting factors of social status and age in a situation in which an addresser who has lower social status than an addressee who is an outsider to the addresser, is talking about an insider of him/her, and in a situation in which an addresser

who has a higher social status than an addressee who is an outsider, is talking about an insider of him/her who has a higher social status than him/her. Moreover, the study also shows that under the main factors of Soto-uchi and social status, the sample students have problems in using honorific and humble expressions. However in comparing the numbers of students who gave wrong answers in each situation under the two main factors, it is found that the number of students who gave wrong answers in a situation under the main factor of Soto-uchi is higher than number of the students who gave wrong answers in a situation under the main factor of social status. Thus, it can be obviously concluded that Thai students face more of a problem when they use these two kinds of languages under the factor of Soto-uchi than under the factor of social status.

The study of students' understanding of the honorific and humble expressions shows that the average score of the sample students is 14.86. It also shows that most of them have a medium degree of understanding in the using these two kinds of expressions. The sample students in the four groups of degree of understanding (low, medium, high, and highest) have the same problem when they decide to use two kinds of polite expressions under the main factor of formality with the supporting factor of social status and intimacy, the students in three groups of degree of understanding (low, medium, high) have the same problem when they decide to use polite expressions under the main factor of Soto-uchi (outsider-inner) with supporting factors of social status and age, and more than half of students in the group of low degree of understanding who gave a wrong answer are found in the situation under the main factor of social status.

The study of students' attitudes toward the honorific and humble expressions shows that the sample Thai students have a negative attitude to the Japanese polite language classes, and their own competence in the usage of honorific and humble expressions. This finding also shows the desires of Thai student for education in various aspects of Japanese honorific and humble expressions.