

Developing Folktales Podcasts as Foreign Language Teaching Materials for Japanese, Chinese, and English Beginner Learners Through Linguistic Adaptations

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Abstract. Indonesian foreign language teachers often need help to develop folktales as listening teaching materials due to the linguistic difficulties of the discourse. Therefore, this study aims to adapt folktales discourse linguistically to be utilized as teaching materials for Japanese, Chinese, and English beginner-level learners. This study conducted the research and development method by involving research participants of high school foreign language teachers in the needs analysis. The conclusion found that linguistic adaptations of folktales podcasts for beginner-level foreign language learners are adjusting compound sentences into single sentences, selecting diction, verbs, nouns, and adjectives at the beginner level whose meaning is synonymous with diction in classical language, and giving detailed information for complex vocabulary.

Keywords: Japanese, Chinese and English folktales; linguistic adaptation; podcast; language teaching material; beginner level.

1 Introduction

Along with the awareness that language learning should no longer be focused solely on grammar mastery but on communicative competence as a whole, there has also been an increased awareness of the importance of integrating cultural understanding into language learning [1], [2] In order to integrate culture into language learning, the use of technology and information can help integrate culture into the context and meaning of the language learning process [3].

In the context of foreign language learning in Indonesia, the awareness of cultural integration has begun to be reflected in the current curriculum at the school and university levels. For instance, at the high school level, the 2017 revised MA K13 high school curriculum includes cultural content in Japanese, Chinese, and English subjects, which are spread across the essential

competencies of classes X, XI, and XII [4]. Similarly, cultural integration in foreign language learning has been implemented at universities. For example, at University Al-Azhar Indonesia, implementing the KKNI curriculum at the Faculty of Humanities in four foreign language and culture departments have integrated culture into various language proficiency subjects and skill subjects such as translation, correspondence, and others [5].

One of the significant efforts made by various stakeholders in language education to integrate culture into language learning is to use folktales as an element of local wisdom as a medium for teaching materials [6]–[9]. However, using folktales as a medium for language learning teaching materials has various challenges. Quite a few foreign language teachers and foreign language instructors in Indonesia need help using folktales as a teaching material. The main obstacle is that the language style used in folktales needs to match the ability of foreign language learners [2], [10], [11]. In addition, the various digital learning medium that could be utilized by teachers in Indonesia are limited. Hence, the teachers could not create creative learning activities inside their classes. Besides that, the language style generally used in folktales is classical, the diction and grammar of which are difficult for foreign language learners, especially beginners to understand. The third obstacle is the need for more availability of folktales media as listening materials for foreign language learning. This is closely related to the availability of audio-visual teaching materials.

From the various previous research studies above, it can be understood that the urgency of developing intercultural literacy in the foreign language learning process, especially in listening learning, is high. Folktales media, full of cultural wisdom content, must be considered as a medium for developing intercultural literacy. However, it needs to be adapted to learners' ability at the primary and secondary levels regarding grammar and vocabulary usage, considering that folktales are stories in the past that uses much diction that are difficult to understand. In addition, to improve intercultural literacy, a comparative analysis of folktales from different cultural backgrounds is needed, starting with the culture of one's own country so that intercultural competence can be fully formed. In addition, digital media in the form of animated podcasts integrated into a dedicated learning website has the potential to enhance the development of learners' critical thinking in an intercultural context.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate the linguistic adaptation of folktales to be developed into digital media-based listening teaching materials for Japanese, Chinese, and English language learning, especially those suitable for beginners. In addition, the urgency and benefit of this research is to fill the lack of listening teaching materials in digital form in accordance with the abilities of beginner-level learners, which not only improves foreign language proficiency but also increases learners' intercultural competence.

2 Methods of Research

This study conducted research and development methods (R & D). The participants of this research, who will be involved in the needs analysis, are high school teachers of Japanese and Chinese language learning. These participants were selected considering that this research will focus on teaching materials for the basic-level learners.

The folktales that will be developed into media for intercultural literacy teaching materials in each language learning are selected with the criteria of folktales from each country that have similarities in the story but have their cultural characteristics in the intrinsic and extrinsic

elements of the story. The folktales agreed upon by three researchers with scientific backgrounds in foreign languages and cultures are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Japanese, Chinese and English-Western Intercultural-values Folktales

Japanese	Chinese	English-Western
Komefuku Nukafuku	Ye Xian	Cinderella

The steps of this research are as follows:

1. The literature review. This literature review will review recent studies on using folktales as media for learning Japanese, Mandarin, and English. In addition, the use of information technology in the development of foreign language learning media, especially digital media podcasts, will also be examined.
2. The analysis of the needs of teachers of foreign languages.
3. The preparation of listening materials of folktales set in Japanese, Chinese, and Western cultures in terms of linguistic content or linguistic adaptation and intercultural competence.
4. Developing teaching materials in the form of digital media, namely podcasts and websites using information technology.
5. Synthesis and conclusion.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Results of Needs Analysis of Folktales as Listening teaching Materials

In order to obtain input from foreign language teachers in secondary schools regarding the need for listening teaching materials developed from folktales and aimed at developing students' intercultural competence, interviews were conducted with five foreign language teachers, three Japanese teachers (GJ1, GJ2, and GJ3) and two Chinese teachers (GM1 and GM2) who teach in high schools or in Madrasah Aliyah. These five teachers participated in the training on developing folktales as teaching materials for foreign language learning, which was held as a community service activities of the Japanese Language and Culture Department and the Chinese Language and Culture Department of University Al-Azhar Indonesia. The following are the results of these interviews.

The first need is simplifying the folktales plot into a simple chronological plot.

- (1) *"Many folk tales have backward plots or a combination of forward and backward plots. This is certainly difficult for students because it is written in a foreign language. In addition, many characters appear in the original stories in the source language, making it difficult for students to focus on the plot". (GM2)*

From the interview result above shows that in order for folktales in a foreign language to be understood by beginner-level students, they need to use only a chronological plot and eliminate characters other than the main character as much as possible.

The second need is to adapt the language of the text to the level of foreign language proficiency of the beginner learners.

- (2) *"In the K13 Curriculum and the Merdeka Emergency Curriculum, folk tales are part of the teaching materials to be developed as a syllabus for Class XII. However, we always need help to reduce it to a syllabus because the folktales in the original language is too difficult. Even we teachers do not understand it. In the end, I did it myself by telling the summary of the story in Indonesian, but I still introduced the names of characters, place names, and names of objects that appear in the story in Japanese. If someone could provide folk tales adapted into Japanese according to the ability of high school students, it would greatly help teachers. (GJ2)*
- (3) *"The sentence patterns used are too difficult because there are many compound sentences. Also, the diction is unsuitable for beginners". (GJ4)*

From the interview results regarding the issue of folktales adaptation raised by GJ2 and GJ4, the linguistic adaptations that need to be made to create teaching materials from foreign-language folktales are 1) simplifying sentence patterns from compound sentences to single sentences and 2) selecting synonymous diction of verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that fall into the category of vocabulary mastered by learners at the A1 CEFR level for Japanese and Chinese because they are learning these foreign languages for the first time, and at the A2/B1 level for English students.

The third need is developing intercultural competence in foreign language learning.

- (4) *"The goal of foreign language learning is not only to master a foreign language. Students should also be able to recognize their cultural background in folktales and compare it with the cultural background of folktales in foreign languages. This will lead to an appreciation of one's own culture and the culture of others. However, we must learn to include this sociolinguistic content in the curriculum. (GJ1)*
- (5) *"Students should be introduced to the moral message of a nation's culture through folktales. Unfortunately, I still find it difficult to give students this understanding. (GM1)*

From the interviews with GJ1 and GM1, it can be seen that teachers are aware of the importance of developing intercultural competence. However, because the teachers are unfamiliar with intercultural literacy, intercultural literacy has yet to be integrated into the learning curriculum in the foreign language classroom.

3.2 Linguistic Adaptation of Folktales for Listening Teaching Materials

From the results of the analysis through interviews with foreign language teachers about the need to develop folktales as teaching materials for foreign language learning, there are findings that folktales in the source language could not be used as it is. Linguistic adaptation is needed to simplify the folktales into teaching materials that can be used in classroom activities regarding to the beginner learners. From the analysis of the folktales written in source language, namely Komefuku Nukafuku (Japan), Ye Xian (Chinese), and Cinderella (American English), it was found that there is a need for both macro and micro linguistic adaptations since the plots and grammar are not suitable for beginner learners.

Therefore, this study conducted macro linguistic adaptation through simplifying the plots of the stories. Through the plots, the readers or listeners can understand the content of the stories. Moreover, from three types of plots, the chronological plot is the most understandable for beginner learners, instead of reverse chronology and in medias res since the chronological plot tends to utilize single sentences or simple complex sentences. The data below show the process of simplifying the plot through macro linguistic adaptation.

- (6a) 昔一人のお母がぬか福という娘を産むと間もなく亡くなってしまった。そこでかわりのお母が来て、米福という娘が生まれた。そのお母は自分のこの米福ばかりかわいいだっってぬか福ふくのごとはにくらしいがった。

A long time ago, a mother gave birth to a daughter named Nukafuku, who soon passed away. Then a replacement mother came along and gave birth to a daughter named Awafuku. The mother said that her daughter, Awafuku, was all she had and that it was hard for her to have another daughter. She thought that Nukafuku was too cute, and was disgusted with Nukafuku's daughter

- (6b) 昔、1人の娘がいました。名前はぬか福です。ぬか福のお母さんは、ぬか福が生まれて、すぐ亡くなりました。そして、お父さんはもう一度結婚して、新しいむすめが生まれました。米福です。

A long time ago, There was a daughter. Her name was Nukafuku. Nukafuku's mother died soon after Nukafuku was born. Her father remarried and had another daughter. Her name is Awafuku.

Data (6a) and (6b) are the data of Nukafuku Komefuku folktale (Japan). Datum (6a) is the original sentences from source language (Japanese) that utilized classic style language. Whereas, datum (6b) is the adapted sentences which written in standard modern Japanese language. Despite there is a short part of reverse chronology in the first sentence (間もなく亡くなってしまった) which use formal adverbial (間もなく), in datum (6b) it is written in daily adverbial (すぐ) that could be understood by Japanese beginner learners. In addition, datum (6a) is single sentences and simple complex sentence that understandable for beginner learners instead of complex compound sentence in datum (6b).

- (7a) 南人相传，秦汉前有洞主吴氏，土人呼为“吴洞”。娶两妻，一妻卒，有女名叶限，少慧，善淘金，父爱之。

According to the legend, there was a tribal chief named Wu before the Qin and Han Dynasties, and the natives called him "Wu Dong". He was married to two wives, one of whom died, and had a daughter named Ye Xian. Her father loved her because she was smart and diligent.

- (7b) 秦汉以前，岭南有位部族长老，名叫吴洞。他娶了两个妻子，第一个妻子因病去世，留下一个女儿，名叫叶限。

Before the Qin and Han dynasties, there was a tribal leader in Lingnan named Wu

Dong. He married two wives. The first wife passed away due to illness, leaving behind a daughter named Ye Xian.

Data (7a) and (7b) are data from Ye Xian folktale (Chinese). Datum (7a) is original sentences from source language which written in classic style and (7b) is linguistic-adapted sentences which written in modern Chinese. Moreover, the process of linguistic-adaptation is conducted through the omission of detail information such as family name (吴氏), meanwhile in modern language version datum (7a) there is no explanation of surname (名叫吴洞). Besides, the reverse chronology part which is the explanation about the supplement information about the first wife that passed away (一妻卒) is written in classic Chinese style. 一妻卒, literally means "passed away", yet this diction is rarely used in modern Chinese. Also, in datum (7a) there are detail information about the characteristics of the daughter which are written in classic styles. Due to the grammatical and diction limitation in beginner learners, these information is omitted in datum (7b).

(8a) Cinderella's mother had passed away a very long time ago, and her father had brought her up on his own. One day when Cinderella's father remarried, her life had changed dramatically.

(8b) Cinderella's mother had passed away a very long time ago. Her father had raised her by himself. Cinderella's life changed very much when her father remarried.

Data (8a) and (8b) are data from the Cinderella (English) folktale text. The Cinderella text used in this analysis is a modernized version using American English. Sentences in Datum (8a) are taken from the original source whereas the sentences in datum (8b) are the linguistic-adapted sentences using a more simplified American English to suit the understanding of beginner learners. Overall, the text uses a chronological plot where the story moves forward in parallel with the characters' trait. This is a common use of plot in classical folktale short stories in English. The changes made in datum (8b) are related to the use of simple sentences in exchange of complex sentences which are considered harder to understand for beginner learners.

(8a) 米福にはいい着物を着せうまいものを食くわせ 仕事はあまりさせなかったが。ぬか福にはきたない着物を着せ硬い飯を食わせ 毎日石臼挽や掃除やら風呂焚きやらをさせていた。

(8b) 米福は、おかあさんから いつも いいものを もらいました。いいものやおいしい食べ物などでした。でも、ぬか福は 新しいお母さんから きたないきものや おいしくない食べ物を もらいました。そして、米福は あまり 家事を しませんでした。ぬか福は、たいへんな家事をしました。

In datum (8a) which is part of Komefuku Nukafuku folktale (Japan), there are only two sentences. Yet, both of the sentences are complex compound sentences. Both compound sentences consists of three causative simple sentences. In fact, Japanese causative sentence is taught for intermediate-advance Japanese learners. Besides, in late compound sentence, there is advanced adverbia (やら) that has not taught yet in beginner level. Hence, micro-linguistic adaptation is a must. Datum (8b) is one of results of micro-linguistic adaptation. Complex-compound sentences in datum (8a) is simplified to be simple sentences. Advanced verb (食う) and adverbia (やら) are changed to be beginner verb (食べる) and adverbia (や、など).

Data (9a) to (11b) are parts of Ye Xian foltale (Chinese).

(9a) 末岁，父卒，

At the end of the year, Ye Xian's father passed away.

(9b) 几年后，吴洞也死了，

A few years later, Wu Dong passed away as well

Despite original folktales written in classical Chinese style (9a) and the result of micro-linguistic adaptation written in modern Chinese style (9b), Both data have the same meaning. However, the difference is about the diction since diction in (9b) has chosen regarding the beginner level.

(10a) 为后母所苦，

Suffering from a stepmother.

(10b) 后母嫌弃叶限，

Stepmother disliked Ye Limit

Moreover, datum (10a) is written in causative-classical Chinese. In contrast, datum (10b) is adjusted by active-voice modern Chinese as the result of micro-linguistic adaptation. Therefore, the micro-linguistic adaptation in this data is grammatical.

(11a) 令樵险汲深。

let the woodcutter draw deep out of the sea of danger (idiom); Fig to draw on experience in order to help others

(11b) 后母常常让她到高山上砍柴，去湖边打水。

Her stepmother often sent her to the high mountains to cut wood and to the lake to collect water.

In datum (11a), which is written in classic Chinese, there is an implied meaning that is difficult to understand for the beginner level. On the other hand, datum (11b) clarified the implied meaning in datum (11a) through the addition of detail information of place. Hence, this adaptation could be concluded as giving detailed information as a micro-linguistic adaptation.

(12a) With a sarcastic laugh, the stepmother locked the door to the attic while mocking Cinderella, "How pathetic". Cinderella cried asking her stepmother to open the door, but her stepmother only laughed and said that the prince did not have anything in common with Cinderella.

- (12b) The stepmother laughed and locked the door to the room. She made fun of Cinderella and said how sad Cinderella was. Cinderella cried and asked her stepmother to open the door. Her stepmother kept laughing and said that the prince is not right for Cinderella.

As it can be seen above, datum (12a) which is taken from the original text of Cinderella (English) uses complex-compound sentences. This type of sentences is simplified into simple sentences as is shown in datum (12b). The used of gerund in datum (12a) is also considered unsuitable for beginner learners. Besides omitting the use of gerund and simplifying complex sentences, changes made are done in substituting certain phrases and diction that more understandable for beginner learners. The phrase and word 'how pathetic', 'mocking', 'did not have anything in common with' are changed into words and phrases that are more suitable for beginner learners (in equivalent to CEFR B1 in English).

In chronological plot, as the name implies, the time sequence of events is climactic from the initial event to the final event. Meanwhile, reverse chronology begins with past events and ends with present events. Furthermore, in medias res starts from the climax, continues with the past story and ends with the resolution stage. However, regarding the background of the foreign language skills in beginners, the chronological plot is relatively easier to understand for beginner learners.

Therefore, in this study after the macro linguistic adaptation is carried out by simplifying the plot, the next step of adaptation is micro linguistic adaptation. Moreover, micro-linguistic adaptation was carried out in two stages, namely 1) dividing compound sentences into single sentences, 2) using active sentences as much as possible because in Japanese and Chinese, passive sentences are only learned at the intermediate level and above, and 3) selecting sentence patterns and diction synonyms (verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) that match the learner's level, which is equivalent to CEFR A1/A2 for Japanese and Mandarin, and equivalent to CEFR B1 for English.

3.3 Folktales Podcasts as Foreign Language Teaching Materials

The folk tales of Nukafuku Awafuku (Japan), Ye Xian (China), and Cinderella (Western), which have been simplified through macro- and micro-linguistic adaptation, are then arranged in a chronological plot. In addition, in the chronological plot, the stages of the story in podcast are as follows (1)The story's initial stage describes the main character and other characters and explains the time, place, and atmosphere to be told; (2) The initial stage of conflict, which explains the causes of conflict between characters; (3) The climax stage, which explains the tension that is the climax of the story; (4) In the anticlimax stage, the reader's tension will decrease, and the main character's struggle will be seen; (5) The final conflict stage, which contains the resolution of the main character's problems.

In order to be utilized as foreign language listening materials, some questions are set into the stories as pre-activities, main activities, and post-activities. In pre-activities, the questions are mostly related to intercultural competence acquisitions. Moreover, in the main activities, the questions are relevant to linguistic competencies. Finally, in post-activities, the questions are intercultural and linguistics competencies.

4 Conclusions

The results of this study can be divided into two main conclusions. Firstly, the linguistic adaptation from classical to folklore materials that beginner foreign language learners can understand is the decomposition of compound sentences into single sentences, the selection of diction, both verbs, nouns, and adjectives at beginner level whose meaning is synonymous with diction in classical language, and the help of meaning information for complex vocabulary. Secondly, learners' intercultural literacy skills can be developed by exploring cultural values in folk tales, namely, livelihood, clothing, food, means of transportation, and moral values adopted by a nation.

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