

## **An Error Analysis of Japanese Business Letters Written by Undergraduates Learning Japanese as A Foreign Language in The University of Kelaniya**

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The technique of writing Japanese business letters is very helpful for students who learn Japanese as a foreign language, especially if they wish to work for a Japanese company. With the aim of improving knowledge on business Japanese, a new Japanese course called “Business Japanese” was started in Kelaniya University in 2014. But the area of writing business letters is identified as a difficult area for students to master, although there are many books about techniques of business writing in Japanese. Most of the time students tend to memorize the examples that are given in text books and if they memorize it incorrectly that mistake will be made by them repeatedly. So this paper aims to specifically extract the errors found in the business letter writings of students, examine the frequency of errors and to point out often committed errors. In this paper, examples of errors made by undergraduates who are specializing in Japanese language, in writing Japanese business letters were collected, analyzed, and evaluated. The data were collected from a course taught in the first semester of 2016, and consisted of errors in internal and external letters written as practice on the use of honorific expressions. Many types of errors related to word choice were found. In particular, inappropriate combinations of recipient name and honorific title, inappropriate combinations of verbs and objects, mixing of respectful and humble language, and insufficient understanding of fundamental Japanese constructions were prevalent. Other types of mistakes included inappropriate layout, incorrect use of abbreviations, and incorrect use of Arabic and Japanese numerals. There was a tendency to make the same mistakes repeatedly, and it was concluded that the guidance offered by textbook examples is insufficient and that systematic training in formal written Japanese is desirable.

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