

Using symbolism-based system to explore and understand Chinese literature: A symbolism-based system in Chinese narrative poems

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Abstract: This poster presentation is going to demonstrate the symbolism-based structure in facilitating the teaching of Chinese literature. In most patterns of Chinese literature teaching, symbol is one of the significant elements to be introduced to lead students in learning the contents. In this presentation, the computer animated graphics and an instructional program of symbols in Chinese literature are presented. The capacity of computer technology in supporting human language teaching is explored and highlighted as well.

The paper is to develop a system that would support the teaching and learning of Chinese narrative poems, as well as provide a platform for conducting research into the cognitive aspects of Chinese symbolism. Although the numbers of generally used Chinese symbols are counted to thousand, there are many structural commonalities and regularities among the symbols locate in the narrative poems. One of the objectives in developing this system is to build a knowledge-based structure representing the features of the symbols and the relationships of these symbols among Chinese narrative poems.

Chinese literatures are plenty of ideographic and metaphors. Especially for the narrative poems, the symbols and expression are the main essences encoded and through the life of poems. Therefore, the categorized symbols are arranged to represent the scenarios and morals of the narrative poems. Through the transformation of the printed materials, the power of hypermedia and animation incorporated into the symbolism-based system, traditional stories and classical poems should never be too hard to be accepted or understood for students. Conversely, many of the elements, characters, and educative stories in the old literature could be highlighted in different angles. This could give the teachers a new path for thinking and teaching. The abstract parts could be transformed to a simple pattern to be understood.

The structure is made to be more explicit and explorable to the learner. With the computer's interactive graphic ability, the system can provide a medium where the symbol structure can be presented with flexible highlights, so the learners' attention is grabbed to various components. Meanwhile, the system can also provide a variety of activities where the learners can practice disassembling and assembling graphical components of Chinese narrative poems. It is promising that through interactions with this system, the learners' would be able to develop a structural understanding about Chinese narrative poems and acquire effective strategies for learning them.