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Students' Perceptions of Self-Directed Learning Experiences in *Joukyuu Bunpou* (Advanced Japanese Grammar) Learning

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ABSTRACT

Self-directed learning before face-to-face classes in the *Joukyuu Bunpou* course is applied to help students develop analytical skills by independently identifying grammar patterns, understanding sentence context, simplifying new vocabulary, and practicing grammar in exercises. This study aims to understand students' perceptions of their self-directed learning experiences and the difficulties they faced in the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course, referring to the theories of perception, self-directed learning, and learning difficulties. The research method used is qualitative with a case study design. Data collection techniques included questionnaires, interviews, and documentation, which were then analyzed using thematic analysis. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of ten students who had taken the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course and achieved final grades of A, B, C, and D, to provide detailed insights into students' perceptions of self-directed learning experiences. The validity of the study was ensured through technique triangulation and member checks. The results of the study indicate that: (1) Students' perceptions of self-directed learning in the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course are generally positive. Most students feel that self-directed learning is an effective strategy, provides satisfaction, helps improve their understanding of grammar, and boosts their confidence. However, students with lower performance levels (grades C and D) did not fully exhibit satisfaction and confidence. (2) The main difficulties students face including learning materials, learning sources, and psychological pressure. Based on response patterns, higher-performing students (grades A and B) tend to experience difficulties related to learning materials, learning sources, time management, and psychological pressure. On the other hand, lower-performing students (grades C and D) tend to face difficulties mainly related to learning materials and sources. Although self-directed learning has shown effectiveness in several aspects, the difficulties faced by students indicate the need for further investigation. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand its focus to other courses and to involve participants from various proficiency levels in a balanced manner, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of self-directed learning experiences in the context of foreign language education.

KEYWORDS

Bunpou (Japanese grammar); Learning Difficulties; Perception; Self-Directed Learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Bunpou refers to Japanese grammar. The Japanese Language Education Study Program at Brawijaya University, within its 2020 curriculum, implements three levels of *bunpou* learning: *shokyuu* (beginner), *chuukyuu* (intermediate), and *joukyuu* (advanced). At the *shokyuu* and *chuukyuu* levels, learning is conducted using the *Minna no Nihongo* textbook series, where students study various *bunpou* patterns, from the most basic to more complex ones. In advanced-level *bunpou* learning, particularly the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course, the textbook used differs from the previous levels. While the *Minna no Nihongo* series is used in earlier levels, this level utilizes a compilation book titled *Joukyuu Nihongo Bunpou*, which was developed by the course instructors using the Genre-Based Approach method. The Genre-Based Approach is a teaching method that focuses on language learning through the introduction and understanding of specific text types (Herawati, 2024).

Through the Genre-Based Approach, students study various advanced-level *bunpou* patterns by engaging with texts in diverse contexts. Students are required to first read the text to identify the *bunpou* patterns being taught in each chapter. They also need to look up the meanings of all new vocabulary words (at the *joukyuu* level) listed in a table, understanding their usage in the context of the text, to complete the provided exercises. The vocabulary is further explained using simpler Japanese, enabling students to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings and contextual usage of the words in sentences. All these activities are conducted independently by the students before attending face-to-face classes.

According to Handayani, Dantes, and Suastra (2013), self-directed learning is a learning process that encourages students to recognize that the responsibility for their learning lies in their own hands. Setyoningrum and Sukestiyarno (2019) also described self-directed learning as an active process where students identify the materials they need to learn by managing the search and organization of their own answers. This approach allows students to understand the subject matter with minimal guidance from educators. In other words, learners are given the freedom to explore learning materials according to their individual learning styles and interests.

Pinachesti (2016) says that self-directed learning offers several advantages, such as promoting independence, enhancing learning awareness, fostering satisfaction with achievements, and improving the ability to seek information and collaborate in groups. However, it also has its drawbacks, including: ineffectiveness for learners who are not emotionally or cognitively mature, the potential for inaccuracies in learning outcomes, the need for significant time to prepare well-structured learning materials, and challenges in maintaining learners' motivation.

Self-directed learning before face-to-face classes aims to provide students with the time and space to develop their analytical skills regarding the material to be discussed in class. They have the opportunity to independently identify *bunpou* patterns, understand their context, and practice linking new vocabulary to the grammar concepts being studied. The implementation of self-directed learning in the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course results in varying outcomes among students. Some succeed in identifying *bunpou* patterns and simplifying vocabulary accurately, while others struggle or make errors in identification. According to Mulyadi (in Cahyono, 2019), learning difficulties are conditions or situations in the learning process characterized by various obstacles that potentially hinder or disrupt the achievement of learning outcomes. Fatah, Suud, and Chaer (2021) identify two indicators of learning difficulties: low learning outcomes and students' subjective feelings of difficulty. The challenges faced by students are not limited to mastering the learning material but also include psychological issues, such as lack of motivation, laziness, and similar factors.

Armella and Rifdah (2022) identify two factors influencing learning difficulties: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. The cognitive aspect is characterized by difficulties in understanding the material. The affective aspect is characterized by emotional disturbances such as excessive anxiety, lack of motivation, low self-confidence, and similar issues. Psychomotor aspect includes physical or motor difficulties, such as delays in grasping learning materials, causing students to fall behind their peers. External factors include a disharmonious family environment, an uncomfortable community environment, and a lack of a supportive school environment.

This study explores how the combination of internal and external factors influencing learning difficulties contributes to students' learning

experiences, which are subsequently reflected in their perceptions or views. According to Ermawati and Delima (2016), perception is the process by which an individual selects, receives, and interprets information to convey it to their surroundings. Similarly, Schermerhorn, Hunt, and Osborn (in Simbolon, 2008) define perception as the process by which individuals select, organize, interpret, and respond to information they receive from their environment. Each person interprets the information received in different ways, even when facing the same object. Consequently, the perceptions formed are unique, leading to diverse views on the same subject (Akbar, 2015).

Previous research discussing self-directed learning was conducted by Riyaningrum (2020) on the aspect of students' level of self-directed learning readiness in the FIKES UMP Bachelor of Nursing Study Program. She found that implementing self-directed learning before face-to-face classes could enhance students' readiness to learn. Handayani, Dantes, and Suastra (2013) investigated the impact of self-directed learning models on independence and academic achievement in middle school science. They found that self-directed learning significantly improved both independence and academic performance compared to conventional teaching methods. Wu (2014), in his study on self-directed vocabulary learning among university students, stated that individual learning styles significantly influence the effectiveness of self-directed learning strategies. He found that students with visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learning styles tend to adopt different approaches in seeking and utilizing learning sources independently. These differences affect students' abilities to manage their time, maintain motivation, and cope with challenges during the learning process.

Self-directed learning is a crucial element in language education, particularly in the context of higher education, where students are expected to develop autonomy and initiative in their learning. However, in practice, the implementation of self-directed learning in the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course presents considerable challenges for students. Not all students possess the same level of readiness for self-directed learning. Some demonstrate good learning outcomes, while others experience confusion or difficulty in completing tasks. This situation reflects a diversity of perceptions, stemming from varying degrees of readiness during the self-directed learning process.

Therefore, it is important to investigate how students perceive their self-directed learning experiences and what difficulties they encounter, in order to help educators better adapt their teaching strategies.

Previous studies have explored self-directed learning in various educational contexts, but few have examined students' perceptions in grammar classes, particularly at the higher education level. Therefore, this study aims to extend and deepen previous findings while providing significant contributions to understanding and optimizing self-directed learning strategies. This research emphasizes updating perspectives on self-directed learning by focusing on students' perceptions of their self-directed learning experiences in *bunpou* studies; while also examining the difficulties they face during the self-directed learning process. Thus, this study offers a distinct contribution to the understanding of self-directed learning by providing a nuanced exploration of students' experiences and challenges, specifically within the context of *bunpou* learning.

METHOD

This study is qualitative research with a case study design. The participants in this study were 10 students from the 2021 cohort of the Japanese Language Education Study Program at a state university in East Java, who had completed the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course. The participants consisted of seven male and three female students, aged between 20 and 22 years (with an average age of 21) as presented in Table 1. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the criteria being students who had received grades of A, B, C, and D in the course across three different classes (classes A, B, and C). Initially, the plan was to select four participants from each class—one student for each grade (A, B, C, and D)—making a total of 12 predicted participants. However, the final number of participants was set at 10 due to the absence of students with grades A and D in class B. The final composition of participants included: two students with grade A, three students with grade B, three students with grade C, and two students with grade D. This variation in academic performance was intended to capture a diverse range of perceptions based on different levels of academic achievement.

Table 1: Participant details.

Participant's Initial	Characteristic		
	Age	Class	Final Grade
P1	20 years old	A	A
P2	20 years old	A	B
P3	21 years old	A	C
P4	20 years old	A	D
P5	20 years old	B	B
P6	21 years old	B	C
P7	21 years old	C	A
P8	21 years old	C	B
P9	22 years old	C	C
P10	21 years old	C	D

Data were collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire served as an initial instrument to identify students' perceptions and the difficulties they encountered in self-directed learning for the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course before further exploration through interviews. The questionnaire was developed based on the same set of questions as the interview guide, covering two main aspects in accordance with the research questions: (1) students' perceptions of their self-directed learning experiences, and (2) the challenges they faced during the process (see Table 2).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants who had previously completed the questionnaire. This method allowed the researcher to follow a core set of questions while also providing space for participants to respond freely and exploratively. The interview consisted of nine core questions, aligned with the main aspects of the study, but the number could increase during the process due to the flexible and open-ended nature of the interviews.

To ensure data validity, this study employed a triangulation technique and member checks. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data from multiple sources: questionnaires, interviews,

and documentation. Member checking involved asking participants to verify the interview transcripts and findings to ensure that the interpretations accurately reflected their original experiences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study comprise a total of 9 pieces of data. The data findings were divided into 2 groups: four data points regarding students' perceptions of self-directed learning experiences in the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course and five data points concerning the difficulties faced by students in *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* learning through self-directed learning.

Students' Perceptions of Self-Directed Learning Experiences in *Joukyuu Bunpou 2*

This section is structured based on 4 indicators (see Table 3) used to explain students' perceptions of self-directed learning experiences in *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* learning.

Table 2: Core questions of the questionnaire and interview.

Indicator		Question Item
Effectiveness of Self-Directed Learning	Describe how students assess the effectiveness of self-directed learning in understanding the material.	1. In your opinion, how effective is self-directed learning before face-to-face classes in helping you understand <i>bunpou</i> at the <i>joukyuu</i> level?
Satisfaction with Self-Directed Learning	Describe the level of student satisfaction with the self-directed learning experience.	2. How do you feel overall about your self-directed learning experience? Do you feel satisfied, or are there aspects you think need improvement?
<i>Bunpou</i> 's Ability Improvement	Describe how students view the role of self-directed learning in improving their <i>bunpou</i> skills.	3. Do you think self-directed learning has helped you improve your Japanese language skills, especially in understanding <i>bunpou</i> , compared to previous levels?
Confidence in Self-Directed Learning	Describes students' motivation and confidence in their learning abilities during the self-directed learning process.	4. Do you feel confident in your ability to learn independently, or do you often feel confused during the process?
Material	Describes the difficulties faced by students in understanding learning materials during self-directed learning.	5. What difficulties did you face when completing assignments before face-to-face classes? For example, in interpreting the texts/readings, identifying the <i>bunpou</i> , or simplifying new vocabulary.
Learning Source	Describes the difficulties faced by students in finding reliable learning sources during self-directed learning.	6. What learning sources did you use to verify grammar points (<i>bunpou</i>) or to simplify new vocabulary during self-directed learning? Did you have difficulty finding relevant sources or references? What solutions did you take when all available sources were unreliable at a certain time?
Social Environment	Describes the presence or absence of support from the social environment during self-directed learning.	7. Did you feel a lack of support from your surroundings during the self-directed learning process? For example, support from your peers.
Time Management	Describes how students manage their time during the self-directed learning process.	8. How did you manage your time for self-learning? Did you experience difficulties in scheduling time for it?
Psychology Pressure	Describes the level of psychological pressure felt by students when completing self-directed learning tasks.	9. Did you feel pressure or stress when completing self-directed learning assignments before the face-to-face classes?

Table 3: Findings of students' perceptions.

Indicator	Description of Findings	Number of Participants
Effectiveness of Self-Directed Learning	Students feel that self-directed learning is very effective in helping to understand <i>bunpou</i> , improve discipline, prepare for discussions in class, and encourage responsibility and active learning.	9
	Students feel that self-directed learning is less effective because it risks causing confusion due to uncorrected errors, so studying together with direct guidance is considered more helpful.	1
Satisfaction with Self-Directed Learning	Students feel satisfied with self-directed learning because they can thoroughly explore aspects of the Japanese language (<i>bunpou</i> , vocabulary, kanji, and reading skills)	6
	Students feel dissatisfied due to grades that are not worth the effort and interference from other activities.	4
<i>Bunpou</i> 's Ability Improvement	Students felt that self-directed learning helped increase their understanding of <i>bunpou</i> through in-depth exploration and study.	9
	Students feel that self-directed learning does not support improving <i>bunpou</i> abilities because of the lack of interaction and discussion with friends during self-directed study.	1

Effectiveness of Self-Directed Learning

This section presents how students at different proficiency levels evaluate the effectiveness of self-directed learning. Figure 1 shows the number of students with positive and negative perceptions across all achievement levels (A, B, C, and D).

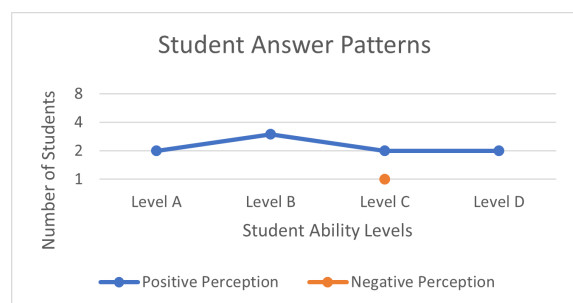


Figure 1: Effectiveness of self-directed learning.

Based on the answer patterns shown in Figure 1, the effectiveness of self-directed learning was positively perceived by students across all ability levels (A, B, C, and D). Generally, self-directed learning is seen as helping students better understand *bunpou*, making it easier for them to participate in class discussions. Compared to previous passive learning strategies that required little to no preparation, self-directed learning was regarded as more engaging. It demands genuine effort, such as reading and studying seriously, which ultimately enhances the quality of understanding. Additionally, self-directed learning is considered beneficial for fostering students' discipline and sense of responsibility toward their tasks. On the other hand, one student at the C ability level found self-directed learning less effective. They noted that it could lead to confusion during quizzes or exams, particularly if they remembered incorrect answers from their self-study sessions.

Based on these findings, self-directed learning is proven to not only serve as a part of the learning strategy but also to foster students' discipline, responsibility, and readiness. These results align with the previous research by Riyaningrum (2020), which stated that implementing self-directed learning before face-to-face classes improves students' preparedness for classroom activities. However, while self-directed learning offers many benefits to students, it can also lead to confusion if there is no direct guidance to correct errors made during the learning process. This aligns with the shortcomings of self-directed learning noted by

Pinachesti (2016), who emphasized that the outcomes of self-directed learning are not always accurate and require follow-up through question-and-answer sessions or discussions to ensure correctness.

Satisfaction with Self-Directed Learning

This section presents students' levels of satisfaction with self-directed learning. Figure 2 shows the number of students who expressed positive and negative perceptions across all proficiency levels (A, B, C, and D).

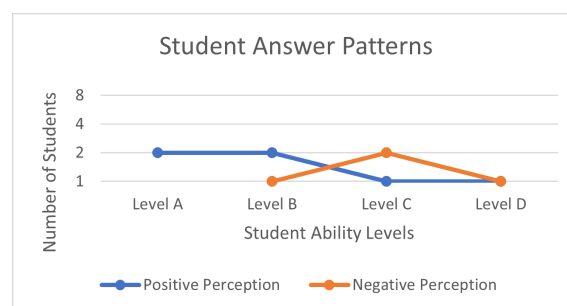


Figure 2: Satisfaction with self-directed learning.

Based on the answer patterns in Figure 2, satisfaction with self-directed learning is generally experienced positively by students at levels A and B. These students feel that this strategy allows them to delve deeper into various aspects of the language, including vocabulary (*goi*), *kanji/hyouki*, and reading skills (*dokkai*). Additionally, self-directed learning provides opportunities to better understand the material. Conversely, some students at levels C and D tend to feel less satisfied with their learning experiences because they perceive that the grades they receive do not correspond to the effort they have invested. One of them also mentioned that organizational responsibilities on campus disrupted their preparation for completing assignments in the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that most students express satisfaction with self-directed learning as it enables a thorough exploration of Japanese language material, covering aspects such as *bunpou*, vocabulary (*goi*), *kanji/hyouki*, and reading skills (*dokkai*). This aligns with the advantages of self-directed learning described by Pinachesti (2016), who emphasized that learners feel satisfaction when successfully completing given tasks. However, some students report

dissatisfaction due to a lack of motivation stemming from unsatisfactory grades or distractions from other activities. As noted in Riyaningrum's (2020) study, readiness for self-directed learning is a critical factor in its effectiveness. Students must prepare adequately and have self-awareness of the responsibilities tied to this course.

Bunpou's Ability Improvement

This section presents how students at varying levels of academic achievement assess the improvement of their *bunpou* skills during self-directed learning. Figure 3 shows the number of students with positive and negative perceptions across all achievement levels (A, B, C, and D).

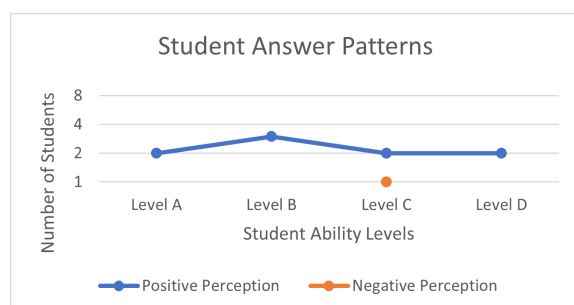


Figure 3: *Bunpou*'s ability improvement.

Based on the answer patterns in Figure 3, improvements in *bunpou* skills were positively perceived by students across all ability levels (A, B, C, and D). In general, students reported being more active in exploring, studying, and independently delving into the material, leading to a deeper and more meaningful learning experience. However, one student at the C level felt that self-directed learning had little impact on improving their *bunpou* skills. This was attributed to limited interaction during the learning process, which they believed restricted deeper exploration of the material.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that self-directed learning plays a crucial role in enhancing *bunpou* skills for most students. This finding supports previous research by Handayani, Dantes, and Suastra (2013), which demonstrated that self-directed learning can significantly improve the quality of learning. Nevertheless, one student noted a lack of improvement in *bunpou* skills, citing limited interaction and discussion during self-directed learning. This aligns with the shortcomings of self-directed learning as described

by Pinachesti (2016), which emphasizes that learners who are not yet cognitively mature often require additional support and guidance to learn effectively on their own.

Confidence in Self-directed Learning

This section presents students' confidence levels during self-directed learning. Figure 4 shows the number of students with positive and negative perceptions across all achievement levels (A, B, C, and D).

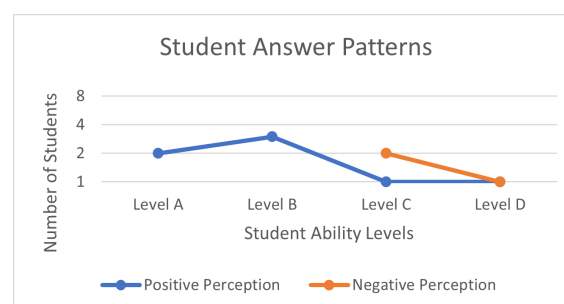


Figure 4: Confidence in self-directed learning.

Based on the answer patterns in Figure 4, confidence in self-directed learning was predominantly observed among students at levels A and B. These students felt more prepared to take initiative and complete the material on their own. This confidence served as a critical asset, motivating them to persevere despite encountering challenges, such as difficult material or unfamiliar vocabulary. They adapted by leveraging their confidence to tackle problems, influenced by the complexity of the material and their ability to find solutions. Conversely, some students at levels C and D tended to struggle with self-directed learning, often due to delayed understanding of the material and self-doubt about their answers, leading them to constantly seek confirmation from others.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that self-directed learning significantly contributes to fostering student confidence. Most students felt more confident and capable of taking initiative by adapting and seeking solutions, such as engaging in peer discussions. On the other hand, some students experienced confusion and a lack of confidence in self-directed learning, particularly due to difficulties keeping up with the pace of the material. This is consistent with the findings of Wu (2014), which indicate that a mismatch between students' learning styles and the strategies they use

in self-directed learning can affect their self-regulation abilities and confidence. This observation corresponds to Armella and Rifdah's (2022) theory on internal factors of learning difficulties. Specifically, challenges in the psychomotor domain can slow down students' progress in completing tasks, impacting their overall confidence in self-directed learning.

Difficulties Faced by Students in *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* Learning Through Self-Directed Learning

This section is structured based on 5 indicators used to explain student difficulties during the self-directed learning process in learning *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Findings of difficulties faced by students.

Indicator	Description of Findings	Number of Participants
Material	1. Students experience difficulty identifying <i>bunpou</i> , sometimes even mistaking it for regular vocabulary. 2. Students struggle to comprehend texts with lengthy and complex structures in the learning materials. 3. Students find it challenging to simplify new vocabulary.	10
Learning Source	Students do not find it difficult to locate relevant learning sources, utilizing various sources such as applications, learning forums, Japanese language books, and websites.	5
	Students occasionally struggle to find relevant learning sources, with most relying primarily on Takoboto and Edewakaru.	5
Social Environment	Students feel that their social environment, especially friends, is very supportive during self-directed learning.	8
	Students experience a lack of support from their social environment, forcing them to find solutions independently, often relying on inadequate online sources.	2
Time Management	Students feel that they are able to manage their time well in various ways, such as making study schedules, completing assignments, and making the best use of free time to do assignments.	7
	Students find it difficult to manage time, especially when completing assignments from several courses, facing the habit of postponing assignments, and having difficulty finding the right sources.	3
Psychology Pressure	Students feel able to manage stress so that they do not feel too much psychological pressure, with support from the social environment as well.	3
	Students feel pressured because of difficulties in managing time, understanding the material, and the discrepancy between the efforts made and the results obtained.	7

Difficulties Regarding Learning Materials

This section presents the difficulties students experienced in understanding the learning materials during self-directed learning. Figure 5 shows the number of students with positive and negative perceptions across all achievement levels (A, B, C, and D).

Based on the answer pattern in Figure 5, this difficulty is felt by students at all ability levels (A, B, C, and D). Students agree that when it comes to material, learning *bunpou* with this new learning strategy often makes it difficult.

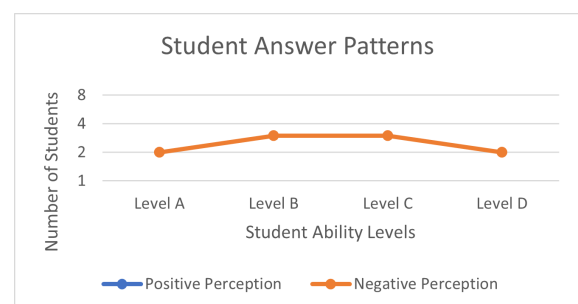


Figure 5: Difficulties regarding learning material.

The difficulties felt by students consist of 3 things. First, the difficulty in finding the right *bunpou* is the main difficulty often expressed by students. This process requires a deep

understanding of the different meanings and uses of *bunpou*, which appear similar. Second, students also often experience difficulty in connecting sentences or paragraphs, especially in complex or long texts. Third, students also have difficulty simplifying new vocabulary lists. Students need to ensure that they understand the meaning of vocabulary according to the context of the text, but this process is often hampered by limited reference sources or a lack of experience in analyzing vocabulary.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that self-directed learning requires additional support, both from the environment and supporting facilities. One form of support that can be provided is recommendations for relevant learning sources to help students overcome the difficulties they face. This aligns with Armella and Rifdah's (2022) theory that inadequate learning facilities are a primary factor contributing to student difficulties. This is also in line with the study conducted by Wu (2014), which found that the effectiveness of students' self-directed learning is strongly influenced by their ability to select and utilize learning sources that align with their individual learning styles.

Difficulties Regarding Learning Source

This section presents the challenges students faced in finding appropriate supplementary learning sources during self-directed learning. Figure 6 shows the number of students with positive and negative perceptions across all achievement levels (A, B, C, and D).

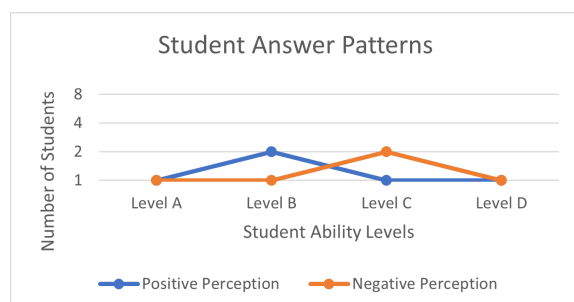


Figure 6: Difficulties regarding learning source.

Based on the answer patterns in Figure 6, students at all proficiency levels (A, B, C, and D) encountered difficulties in finding reliable and easily understandable learning sources. Students often have difficulty finding sources that are truly relevant and easy to understand. Learning sources

such as the Takoboto online dictionary and the Edewakaru website are often used as their references, although the explanations provided are not always reliable and sometimes even non-existent. In this situation, students choose to discuss with friends to compare answers and verify their correctness. However, this discussion does not always produce a satisfactory solution, because other students sometimes also face similar problems. In some cases, students even seek help from more experienced individuals, such as upperclassmen.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that students tend to be limited and lack exploration in the use of learning sources, with the majority relying on only 2 online sources, namely the Takoboto dictionary and the Edewakaru website. However, students demonstrated perseverance and initiative by exploring various alternatives to overcome these limitations, such as discussing with peers, consulting more experienced individuals, or using various digital tools. This reflects their efforts in addressing the limitations of available learning sources. Wu (2014) also noted in his study that individual learning styles influence how students independently select and use sources in foreign language learning.

Difficulties Regarding Social Environment

This section presents how students perceived the role of their social environment in relation to self-directed learning. Figure 7 shows the number of students with positive and negative perceptions across all achievement levels (A, B, C, and D).

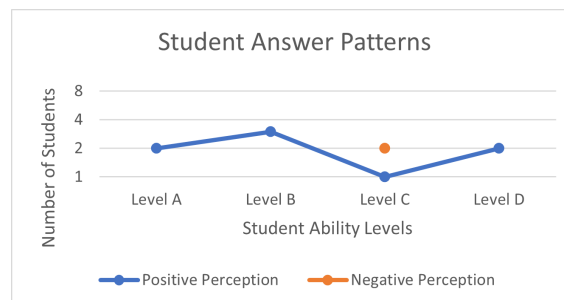


Figure 7: Difficulties regarding social environment.

Based on the answer pattern in Figure 7, difficulties related to social support were specifically reported by students at level C. Students feel that their circle of friends is not supportive enough when they need it. When a small percentage of students ask their friends about

a problem, they don't get a solution, because their friends don't know the answer either. Apart from that, support from the family is also felt to be inappropriate in this context, especially if family members do not have a background in Japanese. This lack of support from the social environment creates a sense of isolation in the self-directed learning process, which ultimately increases the psychological burden on students.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that the success of self-directed learning not only depends on the efforts of one individual but also requires strong support from the social environment. This is in line with the theory of learning difficulties by Armella and Rifdah (2022), which emphasizes that the social environment can also negatively influence students' learning activities. Apart from that, motivation and emotional encouragement from a supportive family also play an important role in increasing student motivation in facing self-directed learning.

Difficulties Regarding Time Management

This section presents students' time management abilities during self-directed learning. Figure 8 shows the number of students with positive and negative perceptions across all achievement levels (A, B, C, and D).

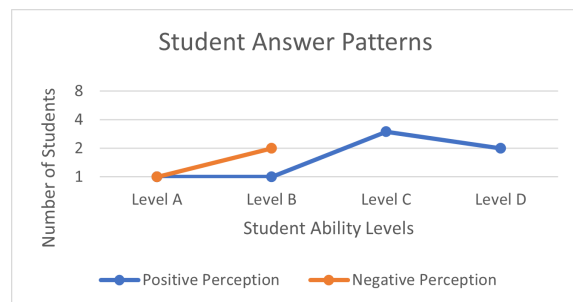


Figure 8: Difficulties regarding time management.

Based on the answer pattern in Figure 8, this difficulty tends to be felt by students at levels A and B. Students expressed that they felt overwhelmed, especially at the beginning of learning meetings, where they often did assignments at the last minute. Sometimes students also face difficulties in finding references, so it takes longer than expected. On the other hand, students also continue to work diligently by using their free time between one course and another to do assignments, such as completing translations or studying material, in order to reduce the burden that has accumulated.

However, they still feel that the dense assignments that use text-based teaching materials from 2 courses at once per week, such as *Joukyuu Bunpou* 2 and *Joukyuu Dokkai* 2, make time management more difficult and must be done very carefully in order to complete everything on time.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that time management is one of the things that influences the smoothness of students' self-directed learning. The habit of procrastinating and having difficulty finding the right references also often makes it difficult for them to complete assignments quickly. However, students show efforts to remain disciplined by making the best use of their free time to complete assignments, even though they feel overwhelmed. This is in line with the theory of self-directed learning according to Pinachesti (2016), which emphasizes that students must manage their own time and efforts without relying on constant help from others. This aligns with the findings of Wu (2014), which indicate that students' ability to manage their time and learning strategies—both influenced by their individual learning styles—has a significant impact on their success in self-directed language learning.

Difficulties Regarding Psychological Pressure

This section presents how students experienced psychological pressure during the self-directed learning process. Figure 9 shows the number of students with positive and negative perceptions across all achievement levels (A, B, C, and D).

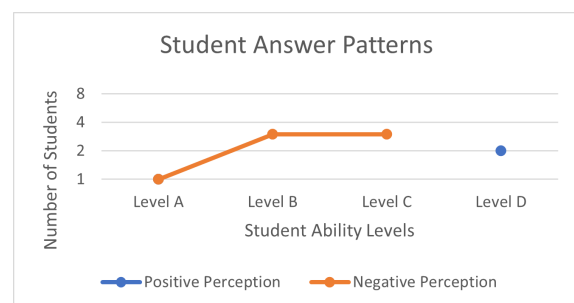


Figure 9: Difficulties regarding psychological pressure.

Based on the answer pattern in Figure 9, this difficulty tends to be felt by students at levels A, B, and C. Students often feel pressure when undergoing self-directed learning. Students feel forced to study more because self-directed learning requires them to prepare themselves more seriously. Students also often feel stressed as deadlines approach because they feel unprepared or have not

understood the material well, which adds to the worry of not being able to participate in class discussions. Apart from that, there is also a feeling of frustration that arises when the value received does not match the efforts and processes that have been undertaken.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that self-directed learning causes quite a lot of pressure on students, especially related to limited preparation time, the need to understand the material independently, and high hopes of getting better grades than before. Wu (2014) stated that students' ability to cope with such difficulties is closely related to how well their individual learning styles support their capacity for self-monitoring, time management, and the use of self-directed learning strategies in the context of language learning. This is also in accordance with the learning theory presented by Pinachesti (2016), who states that students must be trained to develop an attitude of independence and awareness in the learning process and be able to manage their own time and efforts.

In general, the analysis results indicate that students tend to have a positive perception of self-directed learning in the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course. This learning approach is considered effective as a learning strategy, providing a sense of satisfaction, enhancing *bunpou* skills, and fostering confidence in learning. This is evident among the majority of students at levels A and B, who expressed positive assessments across all indicators: the effectiveness of self-directed learning, satisfaction with the learning process, improvement in *bunpou* ability, and confidence in self-directed learning. On the other hand, students at levels C and D showed differing tendencies. While they still gave positive assessments regarding the effectiveness of self-directed learning and its benefits in improving *bunpou* understanding, they expressed dissatisfaction with their overall learning experience. Their level of confidence in the self-directed learning process also tended to be lower.

In addition to perceptions, the analysis also revealed several main difficulties faced by students, including challenges related to the learning material, limited learning sources, and psychological pressure. Based on response patterns, students at levels A and B reported difficulties in these areas, as well as in time management. However, they did not report significant issues related to social support. Conversely, students at level C experienced a broader range of difficulties, including a lack of social support. Interestingly,

time management was not reported as a major challenge at this level. Meanwhile, students at level D primarily reported difficulties related to the material and learning sources.

These variations in perception and difficulty suggest that while self-directed learning has the potential to offer significant benefits, its success largely depends on students' readiness to face the challenges of learning independently. Therefore, educators play a crucial role not only in designing the learning structure but also in providing guidance and consultation opportunities that help students become better prepared to engage in effective self-directed learning.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the analysis in this research, it can be concluded that: (1) Students' perceptions of self-directed learning in the *Joukyuu Bunpou 2* course generally tend to be positive for all indicators and all levels of student ability. However, it should be noted that students with low ability levels (C and D) tend to give positive perceptions of indicators of the effectiveness of self-directed learning and improving *bunpou* abilities alone. In other words, they still show a tendency to be not completely satisfied with their self-directed learning experience and lack confidence in their own abilities. (2) The difficulties faced by many students lie in material indicators, learning sources, and psychological pressure. Students with ability levels A and B tend to complain about difficulties with materials indicators, learning sources, time management, and psychological pressure, while students with ability levels C and D tend to complain about difficulties with materials indicators and learning sources.

This research has limitations in terms of the unequal number of participants at each ability level (A, B, C, and D). This can affect the conclusions of the results because data from levels with fewer participants may not be able to describe student experiences more broadly. Apart from that, this research only focuses on one course, namely *Joukyuu Bunpou 2*. Therefore, for further research, it is recommended to expand the study to other courses by using a fairer method of selecting participants by ensuring a balanced number of participants at each ability level, to better reflect a more complete pattern of findings regarding student perceptions of self-directed learning in different aspects.

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