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Difficulties in Learning Japanese Reading Comprehension Reviewed from the Perceptions of Indonesian Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe and analyze the difficulties faced by students in learning *Shochuukyuu Dokkai*, as well as their efforts to improve their reading comprehension skills. This study used a quantitative descriptive research method. The technique used is a survey technique. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires via Google form to 67 fourth-semester students of the Japanese Department from three Private Universities in West Java Indonesia, namely Universitas Kristen Maranatha, Universitas Komputer Indonesia, and Universitas Nasional PASIM on March 20–April 19, 2024. The results of the study showed that in sequence the difficulties experienced by students in learning *Shochuukyuu Dokkai* were understanding the content of Japanese language discourse, the teaching methods used by lecturers, understanding the use of Japanese grammar, understanding the meaning of Japanese vocabulary, understanding Japanese expressions, and understanding the meaning of kanji characters in Japanese language discourse. The most frequent efforts made by students to overcome these difficulties and improve their ability to read and understand Japanese texts are to often discuss with lecturers and friends outside of class hours and also often read Japanese comics that suit their interests. Improving the ability to read Japanese texts by motivating students to continue studying hard, enriching learning resources, and varying the teaching methods used by lecturers is highly required.

Keywords: Learning Difficulties; Shochuukyuu Dokkai Learning; Student Perceptions; Reading Comprehension

1. Introduction

The ultimate goal of language teaching is for learners to be skilled in language. Language skills include four aspects, namely listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills[1]. However, in practice, many obstacles are encountered in learning Japanese as a foreign language, including the number and variety of letters used; complicated grammar; and a large vocabulary in Japanese. This causes students to have difficulty in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Japanese. Being skilled in language means being skilled in listening, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills with good and correct language. Reading skills as one of the elements of the four language skills have an important role in mastering language which functions to receive information in writing[2].

Reading is a process carried out and used by readers to obtain messages that the author wants to convey through the media of words/written language[3]. Furthermore, in Japanese, learning that focuses on the ability to read and understand discourse is called *Dokkai,* where learners are required not only to be able to read texts but also to be able to understand and draw information from reading texts[2]. The Consortium of Japanese Study Programs throughout Indonesia agreed that graduates of Japanese study programs in Indonesia are expected to have Japanese language skills at the N3 Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) level organized by The Japan Foundation Japan, which is between the basic and intermediate levels or commonly called *Shochuukyuu*[3].

However, in reality in the field, many learners do not yet have the N3 certificate. One of the causes is the low average score on the *Dokkai Bunpou* exam. Empirical experience proves that the activity of reading Japanese texts or books for learners studying Japanese is something that is felt to be difficult. Difficulties in mastering *Dokkai* skills are certainly also experienced by Japanese Literature Study Program students from various universities in West Java as foreign learners who are studying Japanese. For this reason, an evaluation of the problem in Shochuukyuu Dokkai learning is needed, which includes students' ability to understand Japanese texts, difficulties faced by students, and efforts by teachers to improve students' ability to understand Japanese texts.

In Japanese language courses, reading skills are honed through the *Dokkai* course. When viewed from the writing of the kanji letters 読解, *Dokkai* consists of two letters, namely 読む (*yomu* means reading) and 解く (*toku* means opening; dismantling; completing; describing; solving; canceling). So, the word *Dokkai* does not only mean reading but can understanding what is read[4]. *Dokkai* is a course that emphasizes understanding a discourse or Japanese text. In *Dokkai* learning, learners not only learn how to read a Japanese reading text but they must also be able to understand the contents of the Japanese text. Mastery of the *Dokkai* course is very necessary to support the ability of other courses because it can be used to explore information on Japanese language material, most of the sources of which are written using Japanese text. Understandably, improving the quality of learning and the quality of the assessment system are two things that cannot be separated. A good learning system will produce good-quality learning. *Dokkai* teaching can be done with the following methods;

(1) Student-Centered Learning (SCL) in the form of small group discussions by utilizing the name *Kyozai* (learning materials) available electronically and conventionally, this method has succeeded in improving students' reading skills because students become more active in-class learning. As a result, improving their Japanese language skills and test scores[5].

(2) The Skimming and Scanning techniques with the reciprocal learning model can improve students' reading comprehension because reciprocal learning requires students to be responsible for each part that has been determined. The reciprocal reading teaching strategy contains steps that encourage students to be active, critical, and independent so that they can improve their reading skills and effectively improve their understanding of Japanese texts[6].

(3) The Flipped Classroom method significantly increases comprehension skills and emphasizes understanding reading skills[7].

(4) Students feel that they have increased learning motivation with the application of Project Based Learning (PjBL) in *Dokkai* learning. Students feel confident in solving problems in working on extensive reading material projects on *Dokkai* Sakubun 4. With the PjBL method, students are more courageous in expressing their opinions, in addition, to their collab-

orative skills[8].

(5) Increase through this learning model. This can be seen from the increased ability to work together in working on reading material creation projects. Through group discussions, students can receive criticism/suggestions from other friends[8].

Evaluation is an effort to document and assess what happened and also why it happened, the simplest evaluation is to collect information about the conditions before and after the implementation of a program or plan. Evaluation is carried out to obtain values about the object to be assessed. This evaluation activity must be carried out carefully, accurately, and systematically. The evaluation process in learning activities is carried out both during the planning process, implementation, and the end of the learning process.

Evaluation functions as a benchmark for the success of a learning process that is carried out and at the same time influences the next learning process. The objectives of the evaluation are divided into four, including 1. Keeping track, which is to trace and track the learning process of students according to the learning plan that has been set. 2. Checking-up, which is to check the skills and abilities of students in the learning process and the shortcomings of students during the learning process. 3. Finding-out, which is to search for, find, and detect deficiencies, errors, or weaknesses of students in the learning process, so that teachers can quickly find alternative solutions. 4. Summing-up, which is to conclude the level of student mastery of the competencies that have been set[9]. Evaluation is a process of giving/making considerations about the meaning and value of a level of achievement or accomplishment of a process, activity, product, or program[10]. Giving considerations about meaning concerns something internal. Giving considerations about value concerns something external. To provide considerations about meaning and value, information or data is needed, so measurements are carried out (tests as one of the data collection techniques in measurement) and assessments. Thus, it can be stated that evaluation is a concept that emerges as a process of testing, measuring, and assessing. The main goal is comprehensive recommendations based on analyzed information or data.

Efforts to improve the quality of education can be taken by improving the quality of learning and the quality of the assessment system. The two are interrelated, where a good learning system will produce good learning quality. Furthermore, a good assessment system will encourage teachers to determine good teaching strategies and motivate students to learn better. In the world of education, evaluation is a very important mechanism to be able to assess the level of progressiveness of learning that has been carried out. This evaluation will be very significant material to be able to take steps for improvement in the future when a program is restarted. One way to evaluate learning is by finding out how students perceive the learning activities[11]. Perception is the process of interpreting stimuli received by the five senses into an understanding. This perception will then move students to be able to organize and manage themselves in online lecture activities. Students need to have skills regarding how to learn, the thinking process, and motivating themselves to achieve learning goals[12]. Furthermore, each student's perception is not the same as each other because perception is relative, depending on the differences of each student. These differences in perception can be traced to differences in experience, differences in personality, differences in attitude, or differences in motivation,[13]. In addition, one way to evaluate the success of the learning process is to collect student responses and perceptions[14]. Therefore, collecting data on student perceptions of learning to read and understand Japanese texts is important as an effort to improve the quality of learning.

Until now, there have been several challenges in learning Japanese as a foreign language for the most part, let alone the problem of reading Dokkai. In fact, based on reports from several educational institutions, many students of Japanese language study programs in Indonesia have difficulty reaching the N3 level in the JLPT, especially in reading. In addition, the lack of effectiveness of the Dokkai learning method in the classroom is also the main factor that affects the level of students' reading comprehension.

Therefore, the identification of what factors underlie the low reading comprehension score and the evaluation of the learning methods carried out is the purpose of this study, in addition to providing broader positive implications for more effective learning strategies that can improve Dokkai Japanese reading skills. Because of the importance of Dokkai's comprehension in acquiring overall Japanese, an evidence-based approach is needed to improve this achievement.

This research was conducted to introduce students' low understanding of Japanese texts, especially Dokkai. This new language is reportedly difficult to teach with incidents of factors that make it difficult to understand, although previous research material has reviewed it. However, very little research has focused on Dokkai's viscous strategy at the *Shochuukyuu* level. Evaluation of *Dokkai* Learning That Is Not Optimal.

Learning evaluation is still carried out by relying on test results without considering student motivation. Recent research discusses that learning effectiveness can be improved along with perception- or motivation-based evaluation. The Effectiveness of Untested Teaching Methods in the Context of *Shochuukyuu Dokkai.*

In several publications, Shochuukyuu teaching techniques have been published in accordance with SCL, Skimming & Scanning, Flipped Classroom, and PjBL. However, there is hardly any literature collection that reviews the overall effectiveness of Shochuukyuu even though it is complete.

The solution is developed based on a more interactive learning strategy accompanied by an SCL approach and digital technology. Evaluations are made based on students' learning perceptions to ensure their initial knowledge of *Dokka*i. The analysis was carried out by clamping the combination of learning methods whether Belar intended to lower *Dokkai* to increase or decrease Dokkai's understanding at the N3 level.

2. Methods

The method used in this study is quantitative descriptive. Descriptive analysis is a statistic used to analyze data by describing the data that has been collected as it is without intending to make conclusions that apply to the public or generalizations[15]. The technique used is a survey technique. Survey techniques are used to collect information from several people regarding a particular topic or issue[16].

This research employs a descriptive quantitative method to investigate the difficulties and efforts of students in improving their reading comprehension skills in Japanese texts (Shochuukyuu Dokkai). A total of 67 fourth-semester students from the Japanese Literature study program at three private universities in West Java (Universitas Kristen Maranatha, Universitas Komputer Indonesia, and Universitas Nasional Pasim) participated in the study. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms from March 20 to April 19, 2024. The questionnaire consists of three sections: respondent identity, a. Difficulties in learning Shochuukyuu Dokkai, and b. Students' efforts to enhance their reading comprehension skills in Japanese texts. The use of Google Forms facilitated efficient data distribution and collection.

The quantitative data collected were analyzed descriptively using a Likert scale. The data were then tabulated and interpreted to illustrate the profile of students' difficulties and efforts. The following **Table 1** is below.

Table 1. The main variables of the research.

Variable	Description	Measurement Method
a. Difficulties in Learning Shochuukyuu Dokkai	Various obstacles faced by students in understanding basic-level Japanese reading (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, context).	Likert scale (1–5: Strongly Disagreed–Strongly Agreed)
b. Students' Efforts to Improve Reading Comprehension Skills in Japanese Texts	Strategies and actions taken by students to enhance their reading comprehension skills (e.g., intensive reading, using dictionaries, engaging in discussions).	Likert scale (1–5: Strongly Disagreed–Strongly Agreed)

Table 1 above presents two key variables in the study of Japanese language students' reading comprehension. The first variable, Difficulties in Learning Shochuukyuu Dokkai, includes obstacles such as vocabulary and grammar, measured using a Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagreed) to 5 (Strongly Agreed). The second variable, Students' Efforts to Improve Reading Comprehension Skills in Japanese Texts, focuses on the strategies employed by students, such as intensive reading and engaging in discussions, which are also measured using the same Likert scale.

The process of respondent selection in this study began with the identification of the target population: fourth-

semester students from the Japanese Literature study program at three private universities, and the stage for this research is presented in **Table 2** below.

The research process begins with population identification, where fourth-semester students from the Japanese Literature study program at three private universities in West Java are selected. Following this, university permission and support are obtained to ensure the research can be conducted smoothly. The next step involves questionnaire develop-

ment and validation, which includes crafting questions that address the difficulties and efforts related to understanding Shochuukyuu Dokkai reading comprehension. Once the questionnaire is validated, it is distributed online via Google Forms. Throughout the data collection period, from March 20 to April 19, 2024, the researchers actively monitor data collection and follow up with respondents to ensure a robust response rate.

Table 2. The stages involved in this research.

No	Stage	Description
1	Select Respondents	Selecting fourth-semester students from three private universities in West Java, Indonesia. Reason: their academic journey requires a deep understanding of the difficulties faced by students since the beginning of their studies.
2	Data Collection	Collecting data through the distribution of a questionnaire disseminated online using Google Forms from March 20 to April 19, 2024.
3	Data Processing	Tabulating data using a Likert scale with a range of values from 1 to 5.
4	Analysis	Conducting descriptive quantitative analysis to interpret the data results and draw valid conclusions.
5	Report Generation	Generating a report based on the findings and data analysis conducted.

To maintain the integrity of the research measures such as assurance of anonymity and confidentiality are implemented to protect respondents' identities. The collected data is then processed using a Likert scale and subjected to descriptive quantitative analysis to derive valid and informative findings that can contribute to the development of Japanese language teaching methods. The credibility of the data and findings is upheld through various steps, including obtaining respondent consent, validating the questionnaire instrument, and ensuring transparency in data analysis procedures. Ethical considerations are prioritized throughout the research

process to ensure that the study is conducted responsibly and yields accurate, accountable results.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Difficulties in Learning Shochuukyuu Dokkai

Based on the questionnaire, it is known that the student's response to the *Shockyuu Dokkai* course is presented in the following **Table 3**.

Table 3. Students have difficulties in learning *Shochuukyuu Dokkai*.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	4	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Disagreed	17	25.4	25.4	31.3
	Agreed	42	62.7	62.7	94.0
	Strongly agreed	4	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

Based on **Table 3**, most of the students had difficulties following a lecture related to Shochuukyuu Dokkai. There were only a few students who claimed they had no issues. This information agrees with the indirect data from current

research that understands reading specifically in a Japanese language context as more challenging for non-native students than listening comprehension and speaking skills. 68.6 % of the students had difficulties following the course; 31.4 % of

them experienced no issues meaning that reading a Japanese language text is still a significant problem for most students, despite some of them feeling competent enough.

This is in line with the opinion stated that reading comprehension in Japanese is a very difficult activity when compared to listening and speaking activities [17].

The difficulties in learning *Shochuukyuu Dokkai* are explained in **Table 4** Students' perceptions regarding one of the problematic factors in understanding the material in learning *Shochuukyuu Dokkai* is the lack of understanding of *Kanji* letters, presented in **Table 5** below.

Table 4. Difficulty in understanding Kanji characters.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagreed	2	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Disagreed	13	19.4	19.4	22.4
Valid	Agreed	47	70.1	70.1	92.5
	Strongly agreed	5	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

Difficulty in Understanding Kanji Characters as **Table 5** shows, 77.6% of the students had difficulties in understanding Kanji. This information is aligned with this research that lacks their prior knowledge regarding recognizing foreign characters, which is one of the main factors affecting text difficulty. Most of the students had Kanji problems 77.6%, which affected their ability to read Dokkai reading. This fact confirms that the mastery of Kanji characters significantly impacts the efficacy of learning how to read in the Japanese language.

This follows the statement that mastery of kanji is very important and influences *Dokkai* learning [18]. Furthermore, the most difficult reading comprehension problems for students stem from a lack of experience with foreign characters in the areas of vocabulary, working memory, and text processing [19].

Table 5. Difficulty in the understanding of Japanese vocabulary.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagreed	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagreed	11	16.4	16.4	17.9
Valid	Agreed	49	73.1	73.1	91.0
	Strongly Agreed	6	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

Difficulty in Understanding Japanese Vocabulary Concerning **Table 5**, around 82.1% of students had a hard time learning Japanese vocabulary. This information is congruent with the following research that understands Dokkai in connection with how comprehensive student vocabularies are. Most students, 82.1%, reported that they had difficulty understanding a lot of Japanese vocabulary." Therefore, it provides a clue that vocabulary enrichment is essential for improving dokkai reading skills.

This is in line with the opinion of those who stated that the ability to understand *Dokkai* texts cannot be separated from the ability to understand vocabulary. The more vocabulary you master, the easier it will be to understand the reading text [20].

Sentence Patterns from **Table 6**, the majority of students, namely 88.1%, stated difficulties in understanding sentence patterns. This problem is related to difficulties with Japanese grammar. Most students, 88.1%, expressed difficulties with Japanese sentence patterns. That shows that Dokkai material needs a more effective teaching method that explains Japanese grammar.

This is in line with the findings which showed that Japanese grammar is difficult [21]. However, it can be easily understood if taught with the right method.

Expressions from **Table 7**, as many as 81.6% of students expressed difficulties in expressing expressions in Japanese.

Table 6. Difficulty in understanding the sentence patterns.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagreed	7	10.4	10.4	11.9
	Agreed	55	82.1	82.1	94.0
	Strongly Agreed	4	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

This percentage encourages the study claims about the benefits of the extensive reading method in improving students' ability to understand expressions [22]. Most students 81.6% expressed difficulties in Japanese expression. However, this shows that students may need reading context to help them better understand expressions in Japanese.

Table 7. Difficulty in understanding Japanese expressions.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	2	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Disagreed	9	13.4	13.4	16.4
	Agreed	51	76.1	76.1	92.5
	Strongly Agreed	5	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

From **Table 8**, 89.6% of students reported difficulties in understanding the content of the reading. Most of the students, 89.6%, expressed difficulties about the content of the reading of the Dokkai material. That is what shows that a better strategy will better understand the understanding of dokkai and the meaning of the reading context.

This is in line with the results of Noviana's study which stated that reading comprehension skills have a positive effect on the ability to solve story problems. This means that the higher the level of reading comprehension skills, the higher the ability to solve story problems. While the rest is influenced by other factors such as experience, motivation, and critical thinking skills [17]. Therefore, reading comprehension skills are important to improve during learning so that the ability to solve story problems is expected to also increase. The results of this study can be a recommendation for teachers and prospective teachers in efforts to improve the quality of the learning process, especially in reading comprehension learning. Increase reading practice so that students can get used to reading, understanding reading, and increasing their vocabulary. Students prefer reading materials with simpler and more familiar themes over lengthy Japanese texts [23].

Table 9 showed that a small number of students (10.4%) disagreed, more than half of the students (79.1%) agreed, and a small number of students (10.4%) strongly agreed that they had difficulty with the teaching methods used by the lecturer in charge of the *Shochuukyuu Dokkai* course. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that almost all students (89.5%) stated that they had difficulty with the teaching methods used in the *Shochuukyuu Dokkai* course. This is in line with Kusrini's research which states that in teaching reading comprehension, it is necessary to choose the right teaching method so that students do not have difficulty understanding the learning material [24]. Furthermore, suggests that with the appropriate teaching method, students can summarize lecture materials effectively [25]. According to the research findings questions based on materials with engaging themes can make it easier for students to answer, especially when supported by an interesting *Dokkai* teaching method [17].

Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that the problems faced by students in learning *Shochuukyuu Dokkai* can be listed as follows: 1) Difficulty in understanding the content of the discourse (89.5%); 2) Difficulty with the learning methods used by the lecturer (89.5%); 3) Difficulty in understanding the use of Japanese grammar (88.1%); 4) Difficulty in understanding the meaning of Japanese vocabulary (82.1%); 5) Difficulty in understanding Japanese expressions (81.6%); 6) Difficulty in understanding the meaning of kanji characters in Japanese discourse (77.6%). This is in line

Table 8. Difficulty in understanding the contents of discourses.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagreed	6	9.0	9.0	10.4
	Agreed	53	79.1	79.1	89.6
	Strongly Agreed	7	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

Table 9. Difficulty with the teaching methods used.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagreed	7	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Agreed	53	79.1	79.1	89.6
	Strongly Agreed	7	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

with the results of the study which states that factors that cause learning difficulties in reading comprehension skills come from internal and external factors. Internal factors originating from students include less than optimal physical conditions, intelligence seen from students' ability to read comprehension which is still lacking, students' low learning motivation, students' lack of interest in reading, students' social and emotional maturity, and unstable self-control. External factors originating from outside students include teachers' teaching methods that are not varied and families who do not encourage students to learn to read with understanding. Supported by students' learning activities, it is included in the sufficient category [26].

3.2. Student Efforts to Improve Reading Comprehension of Japanese Texts

Efforts made by students to improve their reading comprehension skills are described in **Tables 10–15**.

Table 10. Discussion with friends and lecturers.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagreed	2	3.0	3.0	4.5
	Agreed	41	61.2	61.2	65.7
	Strongly Agreed	23	34.3	34.3	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

From **Table 10** above, it can be seen that very few (1.5%) students stated that they strongly disagreed, very few (3%) students stated that they disagreed, most students (61.2%) stated that they agreed and a small number of students (34.3%) stated that they strongly agreed that discussing with fellow lecturers when experiencing difficulties in *Shocuhukyuu Dokkai* lectures can help improve reading comprehension skills. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that almost all students (95.5%) stated that it was necessary to discuss with lecturers and friends when experiencing difficulties in *Shocuhukyuu Dokkai* lectures. According to research conducted, asking for clarification from teachers or friends when encountering unclear material is one strategy to improve understanding in the *Shocuhukyuu Dokkai* course [27].

From **Table 11** below, it can be seen that very few (7.5%) students stated that they Strongly Disagreed with reading Japanese comics to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts, very few (20.9%) students stated that they disagreed, most students (61.2%) stated that they agreed and a small number of students (10.4%) stated that they strongly agreed with reading Japanese comics to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that almost all students (95.5%) stated that

Table 11. Reading Japanese comics.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagreed	5	7.5	7.5	7.5
	Disagreed	14	20.9	20.9	28.4
Valid	Agreed	41	61.2	61.2	89.6
	Strongly Agreed	7	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

they agreed with reading Japanese comics to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts in *Shocuhukyuu Dokkai* lectures. This is following the results of the study that there is a significant relationship between reading Japanese comics and the ability to understand Japanese texts[28].

Table 12. Reading Japanese novels.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagreed	6	9.0	9.0	9.0
	Disagreed	27	40.3	40.3	49.3
Valid	Agreed	31	46.3	46.3	95.5
	Strongly Agreed	3	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

From **Table 12** above, it can be seen that very few (9%) students stated that they Strongly Disagreedd with reading Japanese novels to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts, very few (40.3%) students stated that they disagreed, most students (46.3%) stated that they agreed and a small number of students (4.5%) stated that they strongly agreed with reading Japanese novels to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that almost all students (50.8%) stated that they agreed with reading Japanese novels to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts in *Shocuhukyuu Dokkai* lectures. This is consistent with the study which states that reading Japanese novels can enhance comprehension in *Dokkai* courses[29].

Table 13. Reading Japanese social media.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagreed	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagreed	5	7.5	7.5	9.0
Valid	Agreed	49	73.1	73.1	82.1
	Strongly Agreed	12	17.9	17.9	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

From **Table 13** above, it can be seen that very few (1.5%) students stated that they Strongly Disagreedd with reading Japanese social media to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts, very few (7.5%) students stated that they disagreed, most students (73.1%) stated that they agreed and a small number of students (17.9%) stated that they strongly agreed with reading Japanese social media to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that almost all students (91%) stated that they agreed with reading Japanese social media to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts in *Shocuhukyuu Dokkai* lectures. This aligns with the study, which states that the social media platform Instagram can serve as a tool for learning Japanese, not only for language comprehension but also for understanding Japanese culture[30].

Table 14. Reading Japanese newspapers or magazines.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	7	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Disagreed	19	28.4	28.4	38.8
	Agreed	37	55.2	55.2	94.0
	Strongly Agreed	4	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

From **Table 14** above, it can be seen that very few (10.4%) students stated that they Strongly Disagreedd with reading Japanese newspapers/magazines to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts, very few (28.4%) students stated that they disagreed, most students (55.2%) stated that they agreed and a small number of students (6%) stated that they strongly agreed with reading Japanese newspapers/magazines to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that almost all students (61.2%) stated that they agreed with reading Japanese newspapers/magazines to improve their ability to understand Japanese texts in *Shocuhukyuu Dokkai* lectures. One way to improve text comprehension skills is by practicing reading newspapers and magazines [31].

Table 15. Communicate through writing using Japanese with lecturers, friends, or native speakers to improve my ability to understand Japanese texts.

Students' Perceptions		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagreed	3	4.5	4.5	4.5
	Disagreed	9	13.4	13.4	17.9
	Agreed	48	71.6	71.6	89.6
	Strongly Agreed	7	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	67	100.0	100.0	

From **Table 15** above, it can be seen that very few (4.5%) students stated that they Strongly Disagreed, very few (13.5%) students stated that they disagreed, most students (71.6%) stated that they agreed and a small number of students (10.4%) stated that they strongly agreed that frequently communicating through writing using Japanese with friends improves the ability to understand Japanese texts. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that almost all students (82%) stated that they agreed that frequently communicating through writing using Japanese with friends improves the ability to understand Japanese texts in *Shocuhukyuu Dokkai* lectures. Using mobile phones and laptops to send messages in Japanese is one way to improve Japanese language skills [32]. Additionally, podcast media can also be used as a tool for learning Japanese. Frequently speaking with native speakers can aid comprehension in *Dokkai* courses by improving vocabulary [20].

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the efforts made by students to overcome difficulties in learning *Shochuukyuu Dokkai* and to improve reading comprehension skills can be ranked as follows: 1) Discussing with teachers and/or friends (95.5%); 2) reading Japanese comics (95.5%); 3) reading Japanese social media; 4) Communicating through writing with lecturers, friends, and native speakers (82%); 5) reading Japanese newspapers or magazines; and 6) reading Japanese novels.

4. Conclusions

Based on the findings and discussions that have been explained, it can be concluded that almost all Japanese literature students from the three universities in West Java have difficulty in learning reading comprehension at the pre-intermediate level. The difficulties faced by students in learning *Shochuukyuu Dokkai* are limited understanding of the contents of the discourse, lack of mastery of Japanese grammar, lack of mastery of pre-intermediate kanji letters, and lack of understanding of the meaning of vocabulary and expressions in Japanese. In addition, external factors, namely the use of teaching methods carried out by lecturers when

teaching reading comprehension, are also difficulties faced by students. Efforts made by students to overcome this are to discuss with lecturers and friends outside of class hours; often read comics, social media, newspapers, magazines, and Japanese novels; and communicate in writing with lecturers, fellow students, or native speakers. To improve the quality of reading comprehension learning, good cooperation is needed between lecturers and students in the learning process. Lecturers need to do good teaching planning, motivate students to study seriously, and use a variety of teaching methods. In addition, it is also necessary to match the teaching materials for reading comprehension in Japanese at the pre-intermediate level with the demands of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) N3 conducted by The Japan Foundation to meet the minimum requirements for Japanese literature graduates in Indonesia.

Author Contributions

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Institutional Review Board Statement

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Informed Consent Statement

Patient consent was waived due to the study posing minimal risk and involving routine educational practices that do not require formal consent under institutional guidelines.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the reported results are available on request from the corresponding author. Due to privacy and ethical restrictions, the data are not publicly accessible.

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Conflicts of Interest

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