

Jiko Hyoka or Self Assessment on *Chukyu Sakubun*

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Abstract: Chukyu Sakubun II is a compulsory subject at Japanese Department Andalas University. Chukyu Sakubun II focuses on Japanese writing practice of the student in the sixth semester. Even though the student has learned Japanese grammar to intermediate level, they could not yet grasp the use of grammar in composition or sakubun. Later we as teachers improved our teaching method and assessment. We used a jiko hyoka or self-assessment method to assess the student comprehension of sakubun. Students file the weekly task, peer responds comments, and revised task and self-assessment result in a portfolio and conduct jiko hyoka in the midterm test and final test. We have used this method for one semester and as a result, we found that the students improved in their ability to use sakubun. Almost all of the students commented that they enjoyed the lectures, understood their own abilities in grammar, sakubun, and kanji. Furthermore, students could reflect on how they could improve their Japanese language skills.

1 INTRODUCTION

Chukyu Sakubun II is a compulsory subject in the Japanese Department of the Humanities Faculty of Universitas Andalas. *Chukyu Sakubun* II focuses on Japanese writing practice of the student in the sixth semester (Idrus and Devi, 2017). This subject aims to drill the student to make a *sakubun* or composition using the Japanese grammar, vocabulary, and kanji that they have learned in *Nihongo Kiso* or Japanese grammar class. A student's ability to apply Japanese grammar can sharpen by the *sakubun* drills in *Chukyu Sakubun* class. After learning in this class students are expected to have the ability to write a composition in Japanese and apply what they have learned to writing a thesis, speech, memo, email and other written texts. A student should also gain soft skills including the intrapersonal skills of independence, critical and analytical thinking, and the interpersonal skills of teamwork and oral communication (Hyland, 2003).

References or teaching materials used include the textbooks used in the grammar class *Minna No Nihongo Chukyu* or Japanese Intermediate Grammar and Writing in Japanese is Fun. In addition, this semester the book *Nihongo Raitinggu* (writing in Japanese) was used.

Research that was conducted last year showed that one output of learning *Chukyu Sakubun* II was that

the student's comprehension of composition increased significantly after applying a peer response method. Distribution of student grades also showed an improvement in learning. Before the use of the peer response method, no students obtained an A grade, but after the students had received responses from a peer about their composition, 50% of students gained an A.

The next question that arises is about how to assess the student's progress. Up to now, assessment relied on the learning process of a weekly task, the midterm test, final test, and attendance. The students' self-assessment or *jiko hyoka* of their learning achievement was not used. However, the JF Standard or Japanese language proficiency standards issued by The Japan Foundation states that *jiko hyoka* or self-assessment of the learning process is important in achieving the goals of learning the Japanese language (The Japan Foundation, 2010). Learners who understand the material being taught clearly, understand the standard of assessment and assess the learning process independently will be more motivated to improve the ability. Through this *jiko hyoka* method the material that has been studied every week is filed in one portfolio and during the semester and the end of the semester the students can look back at the portfolio and provide an assessment of the learning process. In this case, the student assessment

not only refers to the results but also the *jiko hyoka* or self-assessment process.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Learning Plans

The learning plans were arranged in *Rencana Pembelajaran Semester (RPS)*, which is the learning plan for one semester. The *Chukyu Sakubun* class was based on last year's RPS that was the result of improvement after conducting classroom action research conducted over one previous semester. The teaching method continued to include peer response. Teachers and students in the learning process used the RPS from last year's classroom action research result as a reference. So in this research, the RPS revisions were focussed on the student assessment section.

2.2 Development of Students Assessment

- 1) *Jiko hyoka* Subsequent to Do Weekly Task: The lectures were divided into two sections; odd and even meetings. Lectures at even meetings included peer response activities, and the student received comments from their peers in the group. After the student revised their *sakubun* according to the suggestions and input from their peers, the student conducted a *jiko hyoka* of their own *sakubun* before and after revision.
- 2) *Filing in Portfolio*: The weekly task, comments from peers, revised tasks based on peer's comments and *jiko hyoka* were collected in one folder as a portfolio and submitted to the teacher. The teacher checked the student's task whether the student had followed directions and then returned it to the student to be kept in their portfolio folder. Each weekly task that had been assessed by the students themselves were put in the portfolio. These task files were arranged sequentially based on the meeting date.
- 3) *Jiko hyoka* in the Mid Semester Test (MST): Students brought their portfolio to the MST and then re-read the *jiko hyoka* comments from their peers and their own comments. Then the students conducted *jiko hyoka* again on their writing skills progress over the half semester. The student's own assessment of learning over the period became the teacher's reference in the grading of the MST.c
- 4) *Jiko hyoka* at the End of the Semester Test (EST): As at MST, Students brought all their portfolios to the EST. The task files were separated according

to date. Weekly tasks done in the middle of the second half of the semester were re-read by the students then given an assessment. Assessment of students in the beginning and end of the semester were then combined to obtain the final assessment. Students were given a final grade reflecting their development of learning during the semester as a reference for teacher when determining the final grade.

- 5) Questionnaire: *Jiko Hyoka* includes a questionnaire at the end of the semester. After submitting the portfolio and *jiko hyoka* results, the students then filled out a questionnaire about their satisfaction regarding the *jiko hyoka* process and results. An open question for student comments and suggestions to develop the learning on *Chukyu Sakubun II* was included.

2.3 Classroom Action Research Parameters

- 1) Learning Outcomes: Research can be considered successful when the learning objectives are achieved. How students provided assessment and responded to their own *sakubun* is paramount. How well students know and understand the targets that need to be achieved in learning *Chukyu Sakubun* are also important. This learning achievement is seen from the students' understanding and *jiko hyoka* result.
- 2) The Distribution of Final Grades: This Action research can be considered successful if the students attended the class regularly according to the learning plan and obtain grades of B and above.
- 3) Student Response to the *Jiko hyoka*: Student response is obtained from the questionnaire. Questionnaires are a part of assessments so that the result of *jiko hyoka* is also an action research parameter.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Learning Achievement

63 students attended the *Chukyu Sakubun II* classes: 38 in class A and 25 in class B. Learning was conducted using the semester plan that had been based on the results of a previous classroom action research. Because students who took part in the *Chukyu Sakubun II* class were students who did not know about the peer response method, the first lecture session explained this method and how it worked.

The steps taken were the same as last year, which guided students to carry out peer responses and explained the rules and how to respond to a peer *sakubun*.

3.2 Student Assessment

When using *Jiko hyoka* in the *Chukyu Sakubun II* class, the student revises the *sakubun* based on the responses received from a peer and the student conducts a *jiko hyoka* of his own *sakubun*. The first time students assess their own *sakubun*, they focus more on improving grammar, vocabulary, and *kanji*. Students were not been able to assess their own *sakubun* as a whole. Assessment of the *sakubun* itself and the response of peers helped students to pay attention to matters beyond grammar to the coherence between sentences and paragraph structure.

The questions used in the student assessment of the *sakubun* as follows,

- 6) Write down interesting points from the *sakubun*.
- 7) Write down points that need to be revised or added.
- 8) Write down the aspects of language that need improvements such as grammar suitability of vocabulary and *kanji*.

The answers to these questions were written in Japanese and students responded to their peer writings and assessed their own *sakubun* using Japanese. This was performed so that students could be trained to give responses in Japanese, and this is also a writing exercise in Japanese.

The collected *sakubun* in the portfolio for half a semester consisted of three sets of *sakubun*. Students read and re-assessed the three sets of *sakubun* in the midterm exam. The student's assessment of the *sakubun* itself is a reference to provide the mid term grade. At this stage, students begin to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of *sakubun* beyond grammar, vocabulary or *kanji* alone. Students also found that their Japanese language skills were starting to improve. This could also be seen from the increase in vocabulary and *kanji* used in their *sakubun*.

Jiko hyoka in the Final Semester Examination not only assessed three sets of *sakubun* collected after the mid term assessment but also included the three sets of *sakubun* before so that the number of *sakubun* to be assessed was six sets. Students now had a portfolio containing six sets of *sakubun*, each of which consists of *sakubun* according to the theme given by the teacher, the response of the peer, the *sakubun* that has been revised, and the results of the weekly *jiko hyoka*.

The assessment aspects that are used remained the same in each *jiko hyoka* process that is assessing points of interest from *sakubun*, points that needed improvement and grammar aspects. In addition a question was added, which was the opinion of students about the learning process using the method of *jiko hyoka*. This one question forms a questionnaire with an open question that asks what the student thought about the learning process using with the method of *jiko hyoka*.

After analysing the results of the questionnaire, it was found that students did not only respond to the *jiko hyoka* method but also about the peer response method. This was because students had never participated in learning using these two methods and there was no questionnaire provided for peer response learning methods from last year's research. So, The questionnaire results also included the application of these two methods.

The students' responses were divided into two parts according to the points that were considered when implementing *jiko hyoka* namely points of interest, points that need improvement, and aspects of language. Interesting points and points that need improvement were in the form of student responses that were appreciative of the learning process so that these two points were combined into one, namely

- 1) Students are pleasant and enjoy attending class because they understand good *sakubun* but not after reading peer *sakubun*.
- 2) Students know their own strengths and weaknesses and avoid repeating the same mistakes by making a personal note about what needs attention.
- 3) Students become more active in learning and enthusiastic and feel motivated by seeing the development of their *sakubun* so that a sense of responsibility for the study being undertaken arises.
- 4) Students feel grateful to peers who have responded to their *sakubun*.
- 5) Students feel more excited about practicing making good to advanced *sakubun*.
- 6) Students use peer responses as references to improve their own *sakubun*.

As for grammar aspects, students responded as follows,

- 1) Students realize that their knowledge of Japanese is still lacking in grammar, vocabulary, and *kanji*.
- 2) Students feel trained to read and assess *sakubun* so that knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and *kanji* increases.

- 3) Students become excited about repeating lessons that have been forgotten or not properly understood.

Regarding the distribution of student grades, these surpassed the expected target. Students obtained A, A-, B +, grades only. No student obtained a B grade. From this result it can be said that the application of the *jiko hyoka* method is very effective. This method, in addition to training and improving understanding of Japanese, is also effective in increasing student grades. The effectiveness of this method is also seen from the responses of students who assessed this teaching method positively.

3.3 Action Research Parameters

Learning achievements of *Chukyu Sakubun II* class using *jiko hyoka* method showed very satisfactory results. This can be explained as follows,

- 4) Students are more adept at assessing and responding to both their peers and their own *sakubun*.
- 5) Students are trained to respond in Japanese.
- 6) Students can see more objectively the advantages and disadvantages of the peer *sakubun* and self *sakubun* themselves.
- 7) Students understand by themselves, the points or parts of their Japanese comprehension that need to be improved without it being explained one on one by the teacher.

Students are more eager to simultaneously learn to use the peer response method of *jiko hyoka*.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Sakubun or composition exercises can work well and produce the desired student outcomes if the correct method is applied. The *jiko hyoka* or self-assessment method is very suitable for *Chukyu Sakubun II* classes. This method produced very satisfactory results for both teachers and students. The *jiko hyoka* method encouraged active student learning and fostered a sense of responsibility for their studies.

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