

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS *TADOKU* USING GRADED READERS IN THE INDONESIAN JFL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Limited reading skills and difficulties in understanding Japanese texts are persistent challenges faced by learners of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) in Indonesia. These issues often stem from a limited vocabulary and insufficient knowledge of Kanji, resulting in a lack of confidence and motivation to engage with Japanese texts. To address this problem, this study implements *tadoku* (extensive reading) activities aimed at fostering a more positive reading experience and increasing students' interest in reading Japanese texts. While previous studies on Japanese language learning in Indonesia have primarily focused on reading anxiety, this study shifts the focus toward the emotional and motivational responses of learners participating in *tadoku* activities using graded readers—a relatively underexplored area in the context of JFL education in Indonesia. This qualitative research involved 48 second-year university students enrolled in a Japanese grammar course. *Tadoku* was introduced as an in-class introductory activity. Data were collected through classroom observations, questionnaires, and short interviews conducted after the *tadoku* sessions. The findings indicate that learners responded positively to the *tadoku* activity. The use of graded readers helped reduce anxiety when encountering unfamiliar Kanji and vocabulary, while also increasing students' engagement due to the presence of illustrations and a variety of accessible themes. Furthermore, the availability of graded readers at various levels enabled learners to select texts suitable to their proficiency, promoting greater autonomy, motivation, and enjoyment in reading.

Keywords: Japanese language learning, extensive reading, graded readers, JFL, students' attitudes

INTRODUCTION

In addition to listening, speaking, and writing, reading proficiency is a key skill in the teaching and learning of the Japanese language. Reading ability serves as a means to acquire new knowledge and broaden one's understanding and experiences. A strong reading comprehension ability enables students to extract information, which in turn enhances their understanding and knowledge acquisition (Liu et

al., 2023). This finding is consistent with those of Anaktototy and Lesnussa (2022), who state that students with higher reading comprehension strategies tend to have higher overall language proficiency. Therefore, it can be concluded that, in the context of foreign language learning, a learner's reading comprehension competence directly correlates with their overall language proficiency.

Unfortunately, in general, reading Japanese texts and understanding their content remain

significant weaknesses for Japanese language learners in Indonesia. This weakness is evidenced by students' inability to retell the content of the texts (Oesman & Wardhana, 2013). The low reading skills are also reflected in the poor reading scores of learners on the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT). The low reading proficiency of learners is primarily attributed to their limited mastery of vocabulary and Kanji found in the reading materials (Wahidati & Rahmawati, 2019).

This finding supports the research by Komori et al. (as cited in Nakano, 2023), which indicates a correlation between reading comprehension and an individual's vocabulary proficiency. While vocabulary acquisition can be enhanced through reading activities, a limited vocabulary and insufficient mastery of Kanji often discourage learners from engaging with Japanese texts (Safira et al., 2023).

Moreover, in this digital era, the younger generation increasingly accesses information through various social media platforms, in the form of short posts, images, or short videos. This has led to a decrease in attention span and interest in reading traditional text-based information sources (Permatasari & Wienanda, 2023). This trend can also be observed among Japanese language learners in higher education, and according to a survey conducted by the researcher in June 2024, 73% of the 37 respondents, who are Japanese language students, reported that the most frequently accessed information sources are social media platforms such as Twitter (currently renamed X), Instagram, or TikTok. Meanwhile, only 27% of respondents reported accessing information through YouTube channels or online news portals.

According to the same survey, a comparison of the time spent reading and accessing social media was also revealed. Only 24.3% of respondents reported spending one hour or more per day reading (texts in Indonesian or languages other than Japanese). In stark contrast, 75.7% of respondents reported spending one hour or more per day accessing social media. Supporting this data, interviews with five learners regarding their reading habits revealed that three of them do not have the habit of reading outside of class hours, whether in Indonesian or Japanese. They read only when they need references to complete assignments or to satisfy their curiosity about trending topics on social media. This low level of interest and reading habit warrants special attention from facilitators. Given this background, it is essential to implement appropriate teaching methods to increase the interest and the reading habits of Japanese language learners.

Extensive reading is a widely used method to enhance reading interest and reading skills among foreign language learners. Reading practices conducted during classes are often intensive (intensive reading) and teacher-dominated, where instructors typically explain the context of the reading material and ask students to answer questions related to the content, both orally and in writing. Williams (as cited in Day & Bamford, 2002) argues that foreign

language reading instruction should focus on reading activities with minimal teacher intervention. Day and Bamford (2002) suggested that extensive reading can serve as an alternative to address reading learning issues that cannot be resolved through intensive reading. According to them, extensive reading is key to increasing foreign language reading interest among foreign language learners.

In Japanese, extensive reading is referred to as *tadoku*. The term 'extensive reading' shall therefore be referred to as *tadoku* in this paper. There are four main principles in the application of *tadoku* (Awano et al., as cited in Yokoyama, 2021). First, reading books at an easy level. Second, using a dictionary to look up the meaning of an unfamiliar expression is not required. Suppose there are words or expressions whose meanings are unknown; we should infer their meanings by paying attention to the context of the reading or by looking at the illustrations included in the text. Third, skipping parts that are not understood. Since the use of a dictionary is not allowed, there will inevitably be sections that are not fully understood. In such cases, we do not need to guess the meaning of the words or sentences; we can continue reading the next section. Fourth, if the reading material proves to be tedious or too complicated, it is not necessary to finish it; instead, we can find alternative readings that are more engaging and suited to our level of ability.

Previous research has explored *tadoku* in the context of Japanese as a foreign language. Online *tadoku* has become increasingly popular, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic period. The use of online materials for *tadoku* offers several advantages, such as the availability of a wide range of reading materials (Srisurapanon & Sasaki, 2021; Yokoyama, 2021), durability (they do not deteriorate easily), the ability to access them from anywhere with an internet connection (Sakuta, 2021; Nakagawa & Azuma, 2024), and the fact that many reading materials are available for free without the need for purchase (Nakagawa & Azuma, 2024). Nakagawa and Azuma (2024) reported the results of their study on the *tadoku* club, which utilized the online platform Online Tadoku Library, implemented in Germany in 2023. Some participants of this online platform expressed complaints due to occasional internet connection issues, which caused delays in accessing the reading materials. However, the online *tadoku* activity received positive feedback from the participants, who found the reading process more enjoyable and noted that Kanji characters were no longer a daunting challenge when engaging in reading with the *tadoku* method.

The findings of Nakagawa and Azuma (2024) align with those of Nagano (2024), despite the *tadoku* in Nagano's study being conducted offline with 13 advanced Japanese learners from various countries. Nagano utilized 490 volumes of books across multiple genres, ranging from graded readers to authentic texts, including children's storybooks, picture books, *manga*, and other types of literature. The results of this study revealed a noticeable change in the learners' attitudes,

as they became more comfortable reading Kanji and encountering new vocabulary in the text after engaging in a series of *tadoku* activities in the classroom.

The above studies provide insights into the effectiveness of *tadoku* in Japanese language learning for foreign learners, particularly in reducing fear and reluctance to start reading due to the challenges posed by Kanji and new vocabulary. Therefore, the researcher intends to implement *tadoku* for learners in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies, this research implements *tadoku* in a third-semester lower-intermediate-level Japanese grammar course at a university in Indonesia. This activity is mandatory for all students who have completed the Minna no Nihongo Beginner II book, demonstrating proficiency equivalent to JLPT N5 and N4, and are enrolled in the course. The *tadoku* activity is conducted offline using graded readers for Japanese language learners. Graded readers are written in such a way that the vocabulary of the target language appears repeatedly, helping learners acquire new words indirectly (Nakano, 2023). According to Nation and Ming-Tzu (1999), since graded readers are books written or adapted for second or foreign language learners, the book authors control the use of vocabulary and grammar, as well as adjust the text length in accordance with the vocabulary and grammar used. This research aims to examine students' responses to the implementation of *tadoku* using graded readers integrated into the grammar course.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore learners' perspectives on the impact of *tadoku* activities on enhancing interest in and habits of reading Japanese texts. The participants are Japanese language learners at the higher education level, specifically those at the lower intermediate level with Japanese proficiency equivalent to N5 or N4.

The reading materials used are graded readers specifically designed for Japanese language learners, including the Japanese Graded Readers series published by NPO Tadoku Supporters and the Taishukan Japanese Readers series. NPO Japanese Graded Readers series begins with level "Starter" (easiest), followed by level 0, level 1, level 2, level 3, and level 4. The Taishukan Japanese Readers series comprises six reading levels ranging from level 0 to level 5. The contents of these readings are diverse, ranging from short stories and novels (fiction) to non-fiction texts, including general knowledge about Japanese culture and biographies of notable Japanese figures.

The research was conducted over a ten-week period and was integrated into the grammar course. The *tadoku* activity was conducted at the beginning of each class for 30 minutes. The implementation of *tadoku* in the classroom is intended to engage all students—both those who already have a habit of reading and enjoy it and those who do not. Furthermore, previous studies have demonstrated that classroom-based extensive

reading enables learners to engage with accessible texts, which, when practiced regularly, can enhance reading speed, comprehension, and vocabulary (Robb & Ewert, 2024).

Students were free to choose reading materials that they preferred. After reading, students completed a report on the material they chose, noting the level of difficulty they encountered and their impressions of the book. There was also a session where students summarized the content of their reading to ensure they understood the material they had selected.

This study employed non-structured participatory observation to monitor students' behavior during *tadoku* activities conducted in class. The purpose of the observation was to identify any behavioral changes in students toward *tadoku* over time. Observations were conducted continuously throughout the activity, which took place ten times over the course of one semester. Upon completion of the *tadoku* sessions, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed to the students. The questionnaire was designed to explore students' perceptions of *tadoku*, including their feelings during the activity, the perceived adequacy of its duration, and the benefits they experienced in terms of Japanese language development and reading motivation. To gain deeper insights into aspects not captured by the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a select group of students. Interview participants were chosen randomly to minimize bias and to capture a broader range of perspectives.

During the observation phase, notable student behaviors were recorded, including tendencies such as repeatedly choosing books at the same reading level, the degree of enthusiasm displayed during *tadoku*, and other relevant behavioral patterns. The questionnaire responses were analyzed using an inductive approach. Students' written answers were coded and categorized into recurring themes that emerged from the data. To enhance the validity of the findings, data from observations and questionnaires were compared with the results of the semi-structured interviews. This triangulation allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of students' experiences and attitudes toward *tadoku*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the students' responses to the *tadoku* activity conducted during classroom sessions. After the *tadoku* activity was conducted for eight weeks, 42 students completed a questionnaire regarding their opinions about the *tadoku* activity held in class. The results of this study indicate a positive response from students toward the *tadoku* activity in Japanese language learning. According to the questionnaire results, 100% of students reported enjoying the *tadoku* activity.

Based on the data collected through the questionnaire, students expressed a variety of reasons

for enjoying the *tadoku* activity. These responses were then classified into four main categories, as shown in Table 1: (A) impressions of the *tadoku* activity itself, (B) impressions of the reading materials, (C) perceived benefits of *tadoku* for Japanese language learning, and (D) its role in enhancing students' interest in reading Japanese texts. The following discussion will focus on these four categories to examine how *tadoku* contributes to fostering students' confidence and interest in reading Japanese texts.

Table 1 Reasons for Liking Tadoku

Category	Reasons for liking <i>tadoku</i>	Number of comments
(A) Tadoku activity	Refreshing, entertaining, and enjoyable learning activity	5
	Physical books (non-digital)	2
(B) Reading material provided	Interesting content	8
	Illustrated books	4
	New information about Japan	8
(C) Language skills	Increased familiarity with Japanese texts, reading speed, and fluency	13
	Expanding vocabulary in Japanese	6
	Practicing new grammar structures through reading	2
	Practicing reading Kanji	7
(D) Interest in reading	Enhancing interest and motivation in reading Japanese texts	8

This section begins by examining category A, which is students' opinions and impressions of the *tadoku* activity itself. In terms of duration and quality, the majority of students (61.9%) felt that the allotted time was sufficient. Some students expressed that the time provided was just right and could be effectively utilized, as reflected in responses such as, "It is enough; the rest we can read on our own (outside of class)," and "It's enough. It doesn't need to be longer or shorter." However, a few students felt that the current duration was adequate for starting the learning process, although some would prefer more time for reading, as expressed in, "I think it's enough, but I would actually like to do two books per session if possible."

However, a number of students (30.2%) also felt that the duration was insufficient. They hoped that the allocated time could be extended or implemented outside of class. Some respondents stated, "It's still not enough, I hope it could be extended," and "It is not enough; I wish it could be held outside the classroom as well." There were also suggestions for longer reading sessions, such as the recommendation, "If possible, the

reading time could be extended so that we can read other books as well."

Additionally, 7.14% of students provided suggestions to improve the effectiveness of *tadoku*. They recommended that this activity could be conducted before class starts and that students be provided with a broader selection of books, as reflected in statements like, "I hope *tadoku* could be implemented before each lesson (for all courses)," and "Please provide more books."

Overall, although the majority of students feel that the duration and quality of *tadoku* are sufficient, some students still express a desire for extended time or additional sessions to maximize their participation in this reading activity. However, the time limitations for the *tadoku* sessions in this study are related to the allocation of time for teaching grammar content, as outlined in the course syllabus. Therefore, extending the *tadoku* sessions for students who wish to participate should be considered a separate activity outside the course.

Moreover, the limitation on reading time was also due to the restricted number of reading materials provided for offline activities. The researcher imposed a time limit to ensure the activity could be conducted continuously throughout the semester, preventing participants from running out of reading materials before the end of the semester. As explained in the previous section, several prior studies have highlighted the advantages of *tadoku* in Japanese language learning using online materials (which are more abundant, diverse, and accessible from anywhere with an internet connection) (Srisurapanon & Sasaki, 2021; Yokoyama, 2021; Sakuta, 2021; Nakagawa & Azuma, 2024). However, the findings of this study indicate that the majority of learners preferred the offline method using printed books, as this format is more comfortable to read, less straining on the eyes, and enables learners to focus better on the reading activity by avoiding the temptation to open other applications—a common distraction when using online media. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Bui (2021), who reported that 90.5% of his respondents agreed that they are easily distracted by the vast amount of information on the internet. Therefore, Bui (2021) suggests that to prevent distractions while reading online materials, one should close social media pages or even disconnect from Wi-Fi. The following comment, derived from an interview, represents this preference.

"I personally prefer reading physical Japanese books or texts. The reason is that it doesn't make me feel dizzy, and when it's in physical form, it feels more like 'reading a book'. Also, sometimes when I come across sentences or vocabulary I don't know, I can immediately mark them with a pencil and take notes. And sometimes, when I read online, I get distracted by other apps." (Student 28)

"I prefer physical books, because when I'm on my phone, I often get distracted. That's why I

prefer buying books and *manga*.” (Student 01)

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the limited availability of reading materials will pose a significant challenge if the *tadoku* activity is implemented over an extended period in a university outside of Japan. To address this issue, a mixed-method approach (using both online and printed materials) may be employed as a potential solution.

As shown in Table 1, five students gave positive feedback on the *tadoku* activity held during the first 30 minutes of the Grammar course. They appreciated it as a refreshing break from their busy schedules, a source of entertainment and stress relief, and an enjoyable learning method that offered new insights without boredom. Below are some comments that represent these views.

“I really like it! Because this is also a form of entertainment in between busy student activities. hehe. So, this is learning in a fun way.” (Student 28)

“It's a refreshing activity.” (Student 17)

“I like it because it's fun.” (Student 26)

“You can gain new knowledge in a way that is not boring.” (Student 32)

These comments illustrate that *tadoku* successfully created an enjoyable and refreshing learning experience for the students. This supports the principle of *tadoku*, or extensive reading, which emphasizes reading for pleasure (Day & Bamford, 2002; Awano et al., as cited in Yokoyama, 2021).

While the previous section focused on students' general impressions of the *tadoku* activity (category A), the following section highlights their specific responses to the reading materials provided for the activity (category B). As shown in Table 1, the comments of 20 students highlight the quality of the graded readers as a key factor in their enjoyment of *tadoku*. The following analysis examines the role of graded readers in enhancing students' confidence and interest in reading Japanese texts, as reflected in their comments.

The research data includes several student comments highlighting the appeal of graded readers used in the *tadoku* activity. One key feature frequently mentioned was the use of illustrations and color in the books. All the graded readers provided were visually engaging, featuring colorful images that captured students' attention and stimulated their interest in reading. These visual elements played a crucial role in sustaining motivation and facilitating comprehension. The illustrations not only made the reading experience more enjoyable but also helped students infer the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary, allowing them to follow the storyline even when encountering unknown words. The following statements represent these opinions.

“The books being read contain visual images,

making them enjoyable and not boring to read.” (Student 08)

“I really like it because the *tadoku* books provided are very interesting, and the images are also very appealing. Moreover, the words are easy to understand.” (Student 31)

“Yes, I really like it because all the books are fun, and the vocabulary is easy. Plus, the illustrations are also great and engaging.” (Student 30)

Based on the opinions above, it is evident that students found the texts they read to be composed of easy vocabulary. The series of graded readers used consists of various levels, allowing students to choose books that match their proficiency. This helps them feel more confident and motivated to read. These findings support the research by Mohar (2024), which explains that beginner learners of Japanese prefer reading graded readers over children's storybooks. Although Mohar states that the reasons for this preference have not yet been conclusively determined, he links this finding to Nation's research, which highlights the difficulty English language learners face in understanding children's storybooks due to the low frequency of vocabulary used in such books (Mohar, 2024). In contrast, the vocabulary used in graded readers published by Taishukan and NPO is described by the publishers as controlled and aligned with vocabulary frequently encountered in JLPT exams. According to these claims, such alignment may help students comprehend the reading material, as it corresponds to the level of Japanese language typically studied at university. Furthermore, the use of Kanji characters allows learners to infer the meaning of a word by paying attention to its context within the sentence. Rothville (2024) reveals that the characteristics of Kanji provide Japanese language learners with more clues to understand unfamiliar words, whether during reading activities or vocabulary tests, compared to English learners who encounter unknown words.

These findings suggest that using graded readers can help reduce students' anxiety when reading Japanese texts. According to Moradi & Ghabanchi (2025), students who feel anxious while reading—such as worrying about misunderstanding the content—tend to struggle with using complex reading strategies. In contrast, students with lower anxiety are more able to apply advanced strategies, like reflecting on how they read, checking their understanding, and adjusting their reading methods as needed.

Therefore, using Japanese graded readers is likely to support students in developing metacognitive reading strategies, which involve being aware of and managing their thinking during reading. This allows learners to concentrate more fully on understanding the text.

The data collected in this study also revealed responses related to the topic of graded readers. The diversity of available topics, including fiction (short stories and fairy tales), Japanese culture, horror, and

others, has piqued students' interest in reading. This wide range of topics allows students the freedom to read according to their interests. Below are a few statements that reflect this sentiment.

"I enjoy (*tadoku*) because the books provided are varied and fun to read. Sometimes they make me happy, even to the point of making me cry." (Student 24)

"I like it because the books are very interesting, and they make me curious about the content of the book." (Student 12)

This section focuses on category C, which highlights the perceived benefits of using graded readers in Japanese language learning as reported by students. As indicated in Table 1, a total of 28 comments emphasize the contribution of *tadoku* to the learning process. Reported benefits include a reduction in learners' anxiety toward reading Japanese texts—initially perceived as difficult—facilitated by increased exposure, as well as gains in reading speed, vocabulary development, and an enhanced understanding of grammatical structures in context. The specific advantages identified by students are discussed in detail below.

First, thirteen students noted that *tadoku* increased their familiarity with Japanese texts and enhanced their reading speed, helping them overcome initial hesitation and become more comfortable with the material. Sample comments include:

"I have become accustomed to reading Kanji and Hiragana." (Students 32)

"I have become familiar with Japanese texts." (Student 36)

"I have grown more comfortable recognizing Japanese writing." (Student 38)

Some learners also reported improvements in reading fluency and an ability to adapt to the vertical writing system (*tategaki*), which differs from the horizontal writing (*yokogaki*) common in most textbooks. These findings are evident in the following comments.

"Since I generally enjoy reading, this activity also helps me improve my fluency in reading Japanese texts." (Student 11)

"Reading the Japanese version helps train my reading speed and refresh my memory of Kanji I have previously learned." (Student 41)

"I usually read horizontally (*yokogaki*), whereas the books present the text vertically (*tategaki*). This helps me practice reading in the *tategaki* format." (Student 42)

The second benefit of *tadoku* in learning Japanese, as expressed by the students, is that graded readers significantly contribute to the development of their vocabulary and Kanji knowledge. They noted

exposure to new words and Kanji characters, many of which had not been introduced in the formal Japanese language courses they had previously taken. This suggests that a graded reader can effectively support the natural expansion of learners' lexical and character knowledge through contextual reading. The following comments illustrate this finding.

"It helps in learning Japanese, as the books contain words I didn't know or had forgotten, so I can look them up again and remember them." (Student 08)

"I understand a bit of new vocabulary; even though I forget how to pronounce it, when I see or read it, I recognize the word." (Student 12)

Finally, some learners reported benefits in understanding grammar usage. They felt graded readers helped deepen their grasp of grammar structures, as shown in these comments:

"Yes, because it expands my knowledge about Japan and Japanese grammar (*bunpou*)." (Student 36)

"I really like *tadoku* because I've learned a lot of grammar that I had never encountered before." (Student 13)

Unfortunately, this research was unable to measure the effectiveness of students' comprehension of the reading content or the accuracy of their understanding of Japanese grammar, as the measurement of their understanding relied on self-assessment, which is inherently subjective. Furthermore, the students are allowed to choose the books they want to read, which could result in students picking easier titles. Consequently, the methodology utilized in this study is not applicable for assessing the efficacy of *tadoku* in enhancing learners' proficiency in the Japanese language. Nonetheless, *tadoku* with graded readers has been demonstrated to be a pleasant strategy for learners to enhance their knowledge of Japanese vocabulary and grammar, as well as to train their speed and fluency in reading Japanese texts. This finding also suggests that graded readers can serve as a means to reduce learners' anxiety and enhance their motivation to engage with Japanese reading materials.

This section discusses category D, which examines the role of *tadoku*, using graded readers, in enhancing students' interest in reading Japanese texts. As indicated in Table 1, eight student comments emphasize the positive influence of *tadoku* on their reading motivation. These responses suggest that *tadoku* plays a meaningful role in shaping learners' attitudes toward reading in Japanese. In addition to improving reading fluency, the use of graded readers was reported to stimulate greater interest and willingness to engage with Japanese texts. This indicates that *tadoku* supports not only language development but also encourages a more positive orientation toward reading in the target language. The

comment below reflects this finding.

“In addition to improving my reading skills and comprehension of Japanese texts, I have also, indirectly, cultivated a love for reading.” (Student 35)

Based on the analysis of the research data, two factors may influence the positive change in their attitudes toward reading Japanese texts. The first is the *tadoku* method, which promotes extended reading and emphasizes reading for enjoyment while ignoring parts that are not understood. For Japanese language learners, particularly those whose native language does not utilize the Kanji system, the complex writing system of the language often presents a significant challenge (Abdullah et al., 2022; Tamaoka, as cited in Rothville & Skalicky, 2025). Unfamiliarity with new Kanji and vocabulary in the text also contributes to reading anxiety (Safira et al., 2023). Students perceive the *tadoku* method as reducing their reading anxiety because it allows them to ignore vocabulary or Kanji they have not yet learned.

“I have become more fluent in reading Japanese text with the method I learned, which is reading Japanese text by simply looking at it without reading letter by letter.” (Students 40)

“What I feel is that I can understand the book I am reading, and I feel happy.” (Student 14)

The statement above indicates that the *tadoku* method is a beneficial reading strategy for learners, as it allows them to continue reading without worrying about parts they do not understand. In this way, the *tadoku* method is perceived to reduce reading anxiety. This finding aligns with Nagano’s (2024) research, which suggests that students are less concerned about unknown Kanji or vocabulary and feel satisfied when they can understand the content of the text they are reading.

The second factor that may influence the increased interest in reading Japanese texts using the *tadoku* method is the content of the graded readers. The *tadoku* method, which utilizes graded readers, has been found to stimulate students' curiosity. Lestari (2022) stated that during extensive reading, students engage with a range of simplified texts across various genres, including both fiction and non-fiction. Consequently, in addition to enhancing their language proficiency, they also acquire the information presented in these texts, commonly referred to as the content. When reading non-fiction, they gain knowledge relevant to the specific field covered in the material. Since graded readers present texts within a meaningful context, they also convey the culture associated with the topics discussed in the material. The following comment demonstrates that the use of graded readers enhances their curiosity and motivates them to explore other titles and to read more.

“I really enjoy it because with *tadoku*, I have become more interested in reading other Japanese storybooks.” (Student 15)

“I can practice reading, learn new vocabulary, and gain insight into Japanese cultures through picture books.” (Student 20)

“I want to read more books beyond the *tadoku* activity.” (Student 01)

From the presentation of the research data analysis above, it is clear that the *tadoku* activity not only helps improve students' language knowledge but also contributes to an increased interest in reading Japanese texts, as well as reducing anxiety related to unfamiliar vocabulary or Kanji.

As mentioned in the introduction, reading comprehension among learners in Indonesia is not solely influenced by limitations in language understanding, but also by generally low reading habits. The study by Pham (2021) reveals a strong positive correlation between reading habits and reading comprehension, suggesting that students achieve better reading comprehension when they consistently maintain reading habits, and vice versa. Research on reading habits should also explore factors such as the frequency of reading, the times at which reading occurs, the types of materials read, and the reasons behind their reading (Abang Yusof, 2021). However, this study does not provide data that meets these indicators. Therefore, while this research demonstrates the effectiveness of *tadoku* in increasing reading interest, there is insufficient evidence to show that *tadoku* can directly improve reading habits among Japanese language learners in Indonesia. Nevertheless, *tadoku* can be considered an essential first step in developing reading habits.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the limitations, the present study offers several valuable insights. The *tadoku* method, also known as extensive reading, has proven to be an effective approach for enhancing reading interest among Japanese language learners. Based on the analysis of student responses, the activity received highly positive feedback. Many students reported an increase in their reading interest and a greater appreciation for the Japanese language. The method's primary benefits include increased reading interest, as students found that *tadoku* made reading in Japanese less intimidating. The freedom to choose texts that align with their personal interests made the learning process more enjoyable. Additionally, *tadoku* successfully reduced students' anxiety when encountering unfamiliar Kanji or vocabulary, providing a more relaxed reading experience. The availability of diverse materials, particularly graded readers with illustrations and varied themes, enabled students to select readings tailored to their proficiency level, thereby further enhancing the learning experience.

The implementation of the *tadoku* method also resulted in higher motivation to read more Japanese texts. Students felt more motivated to continue reading, which contributed to greater engagement with the language. Furthermore, the method helped reduce learning anxiety, making students feel more confident and comfortable while reading, thus fostering a more positive and sustainable learning experience. Overall, the *tadoku* method shows significant potential to transform how students engage with the Japanese language, making it an effective strategy for increasing reading interest.

Tadoku, which emphasizes reading for pleasure and uses materials tailored to learners' proficiency levels, can indeed motivate students to become more engaged and enjoy the reading process. However, a strong interest in reading does not always correlate with a consistent reading habit. Developing a reading habit requires establishing routines and discipline, which are often influenced by external factors such as the social environment, support from educational institutions, and long-term motivation. Therefore, while *tadoku* can increase reading interest, additional efforts are necessary to motivate learners to engage in regular reading over an extended period.

Further research is needed to investigate whether the *tadoku* method, when applied in the educational context in Indonesia, can significantly influence the reading habits of Japanese language learners.

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