

Aligning Learning Outcomes, Instructional Practices, and Assessment in Japanese Writing Education: A Comparative Study of *Sakubun* Courses Across Indonesian Universities

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this study was to examine the alignment between learning outcomes, teaching practices, and assessments implemented in sakubun courses at universities in Indonesia. **Method:** A qualitative comparative approach was used as the research method. The study was conducted at UNJ, Undiksha, and UNNES. Data were collected through document analysis, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns of alignment and teaching practices across institutions. **Results:** The findings revealed varying patterns of alignment, ranging from relatively strong alignment supported by structured instruction and integrated assessment to weaker alignment characterized by limited scaffolding and inconsistent feedback. Furthermore, variations in student competency, challenges in maintaining authenticity in writing in the context of AI use, and imbalances in instructional support emerged as significant contextual factors. This study contributes to the literature by expanding the concept of constructive alignment beyond a static framework toward a more adaptive and context-sensitive model for teaching foreign language writing in higher education. **Novelty:** This study extends the concept of constructive alignment beyond a static framework by positioning feedback as its central adaptive mechanism in response to learner diversity, AI-mediated writing, and the unique pedagogical demands of Sakubun, where linguistic accuracy, cultural appropriateness, and recursive writing development require a more dynamic instructional model than conventional Western-oriented writing frameworks. By employing a cross-institutional comparative design across three Indonesian universities, the study also generates transferable insights into systemic alignment patterns, moving beyond a localized case study toward a context-sensitive model for Japanese writing instruction in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of higher education, the quality of learning can be measured by the successful achievement of learning objectives aligned with the learning process and student skill attainment (Bowering et al., 2017; Vugteveen et al., 2025). As in foreign language learning, learning outcomes are not solely oriented toward linguistic mastery, but also toward contextually appropriate, reflective, and sustainable communication skills. Therefore, it is understandable that the implementation of the learning and teaching process must incorporate an approach that can lead to effective learning (Cong-Lem, 2025; Wang & Rasool, 2025). One approach that can be used is the constructive alignment approach, which emphasizes alignment between learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks (Hristov et al., 2023a; Liu et al., 2012; Yassin & Yassin, 2026). Recent studies in foreign language curriculum have further reconceptualized constructive alignment as a dynamic framework that integrates

formative feedback, learner autonomy, authentic language use, and digital technologies to support meaningful language development. This approach is particularly relevant in the 21st-century education era, focusing on higher-order thinking skills, self-reflection, and the integration of technology into learning (Herlinawati et al., 2024; Romanowski et al., 2024). Constructive alignment has become a widely adopted framework for curriculum design in higher education because it promotes coherence across instructional components while encouraging students to engage in deep and meaningful learning (Zhao et al., 2023). Even the CA approach in university teaching is designed to encourage students to adopt a deep learning approach, which supports meaningful learning (Ducange et al., 2022; Hamdoun, 2023; Stamov Roßnagel et al., 2021). From this perspective, constructive alignment offers a valuable framework for analyzing not only the presence of learning outcomes, instructional activities, and assessments, but also the extent to which these elements function together cohesively to facilitate significant learning.

From this phenomenon, meaningful learning is also a crucial part of writing (Sakubun) learning, as it requires not only mastery of appropriate grammar and vocabulary, but also critical thinking skills, organizing ideas, adapting to cultural contexts, and written communication (Menggo et al., 2022; Rismorlita & Philiyanti, 2023; Runtuwarouw et al., 2026). However, the achievement of meaningful learning in Sakubun classes has not been fully achieved or reached the ideal conditions for Japanese writing instruction. The implementation of Sakubun learning in higher education still faces various challenges. Despite the application of the constructive framework, developing writing in a foreign language remains complex because it requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, communicative competence, cultural awareness, and ongoing formative assessment. This challenge becomes even more pronounced in Japanese writing (Sakubun), where students are expected not only to produce grammatically accurate text but also to express ideas appropriately within Japanese sociocultural conventions. These features render Sakubun highly pertinent for exploring constructive alignment, as the enhancement of writing skills relies on the consistency between students' expected outcomes, the support they receive in improving their writing, and the evaluation of their performance.

Several previous studies have examined Japanese writing instruction in terms of method effectiveness, students' attitude, rubric-based assessment, and the use of technology in evaluation (Agustine et al., 2021; Asli et al., 2024; Colina et al., 2025; Kusrini et al., 2020a, 2020b; Li et al., 2025; Matsumoto & Okamoto, 2003; Miyazoe, 2025; Rose, 2019; Shadiev & Wang, 2022; TANDO, 2024), but they have focused on only one specific aspect. While these studies offer valuable perspectives on specific aspects of Japanese writing instruction, they fail to adequately clarify how learning outcomes, teaching activities, assessment, and feedback are interconnected as a cohesive learning system. Of these studies, approaches capable of comprehensively describing the interrelationships between learning components within a complete system have not been widely studied, particularly cross-institutional comparative studies that identify patterns of learning alignment and formulate ideal models for sakubun learning. This indicates a research gap in understanding how constructive alignment is implemented in the context of Japanese writing instruction in higher education.

The research gap identified reinforces the urgency of this study, given the importance of improving the quality of Japanese language study program graduates, who are not only linguistically competent but also able to think critically, reflectively, and adapt to global developments. Without alignment between objectives, learning processes, and assessments, learning risks being ineffective and unable to produce optimal learning outcomes. Therefore, a study is needed that can provide a comprehensive overview of the actual conditions of sakubun learning, while also providing a basis for formulating more targeted and sustainable improvements to the learning system. In the context of Indonesian higher education, this necessity is especially significant as Japanese language education programs can vary in their curriculum implementation, teaching methods, evaluation processes, and student learning environments. Analyzing these variations among institutions can thus uncover how constructive alignment is implemented in reality and which aspects need additional enhancement.

Initial observational analysis of several Japanese language education study programs in Indonesia, such as at Jakarta State University (UNJ), Semarang State University (UNNES), and Ganesha University of Education (Undiksha), indicates variations in the formulation of learning objectives, implementation of learning activities, and assessment systems used. In some cases, learning objectives have been well formulated, but not fully supported by relevant learning activities or a consistent assessment system (Ajjawi et al., 2020, 2024; Anchunda & Kaewurai, 2025; Barthakur et al., 2022; Ponomariovienė & Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė, 2025; Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2024). On the other hand, there are also obstacles such as limited variety of learning methods, inconsistent feedback, differences in student ability levels, and challenges in maintaining the authenticity of work in the era of technology and artificial intelligence.

The observations revealed significant variation in the formulation of learning outcomes, teaching implementation, and assessment practices. In some cases, well-defined learning outcomes were not consistently supported by teaching activities or assessment systems. Other challenges included limited teaching variation, inconsistent feedback practices, differences in student ability, and growing concerns about the authenticity of student writing in the era of artificial intelligence. These contextual issues reinforce the need for a systematic investigation of constructive alignment across institutional environments. Collectively, these contextual factors suggest the necessity to view Sakubun learning not as separate instructional elements, but as a cohesive system where learning results, teaching methods, assessments, and feedback aim toward shared educational objectives.

Therefore, this study is a cross-institutional comparative approach that integrates sakubun learning analysis within a constructive alignment framework. The study not only describes the learning situation or student achievement in writing skills, but also the harmony or alignment between learning objectives, learning activities, and assessments, and produces a synthesis toward an ideal sakubun learning model at the university level.

Thus, this research intends to: (1) examine the correlation among learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment practices in Sakubun education at chosen Indonesian universities; (2) uncover institutional differences and major obstacles impacting the execution of constructive alignment, especially concerning feedback, teaching methods, student diversity, and writing authenticity; and (3) consolidate the results into an optimal Sakubun learning model founded on constructive alignment. By pursuing these goals, the research adds to the discourse on constructive alignment in foreign language writing

education and offers practical guidance for enhancing the design and execution of Japanese writing instruction in Indonesian universities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a comparative approach. The strengths of this methodology, such as its ability to offer contextual depth and a holistic perspective, were explored, while challenges such as limited generalizability and potential researcher bias were addressed, along with practical mitigation strategies (Cypress, 2018; Hammarberg et al., 2016; Lim, 2025). The comparative design was chosen to identify patterns, similarities, and differences in teaching implementation, and to generate insights into an ideal learning model based on the principles of constructive alignment (Kallio et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2025). Thus, the study explored the alignment between learning outcomes, teaching practices, and assessments in Japanese writing (sakubun) courses across various universities.

This study was conducted at three Indonesian universities offering Japanese language education programs: Jakarta State University (UNJ), Semarang State University (UNNES), and Ganesha University of Education (Undiksha). Participants consisted of lecturers teaching sakubun courses at each institution. They were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in curriculum implementation, teaching practices, and assessment processes in sakubun classes. The criteria for selecting participants are (1) currently or have recently taught a sakubun course, (2) be directly involved in planning or implementing sakubun learning and assessment activities, and (3) understand the course syllabus, RPS, and assessment procedures implemented at their respective institutions. These criteria were applied consistently across all three universities to ensure that participants could provide relevant information for comparative analysis of learning outcomes, teaching practices and assessment.

Data were collected through 1) analysis of course-related documents, including syllabi, semester lesson plans (RPS), and assessment rubrics, to examine expected learning outcomes and alignment with the learning and assessment design. 2) Structured questionnaires were administered to obtain comparable data on teaching practices, assessment methods, and perceived challenges in sakubun teaching. 3) In-depth interviews were conducted with lecturers to explore their perspectives on teaching strategies, feedback practices, alignment issues, and challenges in implementing sakubun learning.

The instruments used in this study included: 1) a document analysis checklist based on the components of constructive alignment (learning outcomes, teaching activities, assessment tasks), 2) an interview guide focusing on five key aspects: achievement of learning outcomes, instructional alignment, assessment practices, feedback mechanisms, and instructional challenges. To enhance the triangulation process, the analysis of data was organized around the identical fundamental dimensions of constructive alignment. Results from the document analysis were initially documented for each institution and then cross-checked with pertinent statements in the interview transcripts. Any consistencies, discrepancies, or absent information recognized between the documents and interview narratives were recorded in a comparative matrix and considered during the later interpretation. This process of cross-verification aided in differentiating between the documented curriculum design and the actual implementation as reported.

Data were analyzed using qualitative comparative analysis through the following steps: 1) Data reduction: organizing and selecting relevant data from documents, questionnaires, and interviews. 2) Data presentation: presenting data in a comparative matrix across institutions to identify alignment patterns. 3) Comparative analysis: examining similarities and differences in the implementation of learning outcomes, instructional practices, and assessments. 4) Interpretation using a theoretical framework. Data were interpreted using constructive alignment theory and Bloom's Taxonomy to evaluate the depth of cognitive engagement and coherence of instructional design. 5) Synthesis: developing a conceptual model of the ideal sakubun learning design based on the identified alignment patterns. Comparative analysis emphasizes identifying relative coherence between expected learning outcomes, teaching practices, assessment, and feedback across participating institutions. Therefore, interpretation is conducted through iterative thematic analysis and triangulation of the data obtained. Triangulation occurred by contrasting evidence from the three data sources at the institutional level. Evidence from documents was viewed as data pertaining to the intended instructional and evaluation strategies, while responses from questionnaires and interviews were utilized to explore reported teaching methods and perceived difficulties. When consistency among sources was identified, the pattern was kept as supporting evidence; conversely, in instances of inconsistency, the researcher reexamined the pertinent documents and interview excerpts to determine if the discrepancy indicated a gap between the intended design and the reported execution. This is done to ensure consistency and credibility in the comparison between institutions.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, this study employed 1) data triangulation (documents, questionnaires, interviews), 2) source triangulation (participants from three universities), 3) member checking to confirm the accuracy of interview data, and 4) peer discussion to enhance analytical rigor. In particular, the findings from the document analysis were verified with the interview transcripts concerning learning outcomes, learning activities, assessment methods, and feedback. Discrepancies were not instantly classified as errors; rather, they were investigated as possibly significant differences between the intended curriculum design and the actual classroom implementation. These methods reinforced the reliability and validity of the comparative interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Alignment between Learning Outcomes and Assessment

From the three institutions of UNJ, UNNES, and Undiksha, it was found that the learning outcomes for the Sakubun course align with recognized frameworks such as the JF Standards. This means that students' writing skills are well-structured and incorporate academic writing concepts. The alignment patterns presented in the following tables represent qualitative comparative interpretations derived from triangulated evidence across multiple data sources, rather than numerical measurements.

Table 1. Alignment between Learning Outcomes and Assessment in Sakubun Courses

Institution	Learning Outcomes (ILO)	Assessment Practices (AT)	Alignment Level	Key Issues
UNJ	Clearly defined; aligned with JF Standard	Rubric-based (content, grammar, vocabulary, organization, coherence)	High	Minor challenges in feedback depth
Undiksha	Clearly defined; level-based outcomes	Rubric-based; consistent evaluation	Moderate-High	Student proficiency variation
UNNES	General outcomes; less integrated with dokkai	Similar rubric but less effective implementation	Moderate-Low	Weak syllabus integration; limited feedback

As presented in Table 1, the three organizations showed varying degrees of alignment between desired learning outcomes and assessment methods. UNJ exhibited the most significant alignment, as its rubric criteria were strongly linked to the specified learning outcomes. Undiksha exhibited moderate-to-high alignment via distinctly outlined, level-specific outcomes and fairly uniform rubric-based evaluation. UNNES exhibited relatively weaker alignment, mainly due to the limited integration of reading (dokkai) and writing (sakubun), and feedback was not applied as consistently. These patterns are also reflected in Figure 1, which provides a visual comparison of the relative alignment levels across the three institutions.

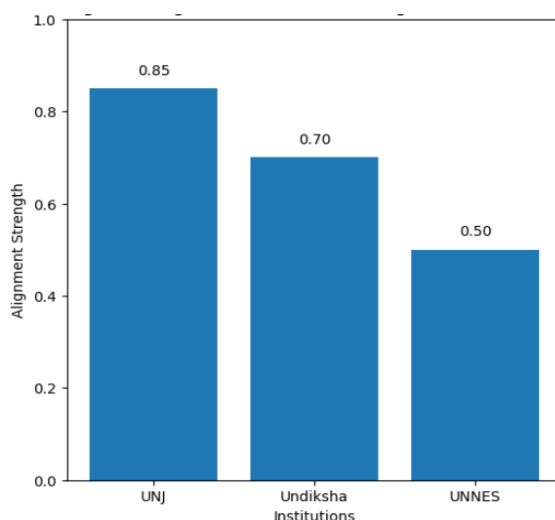


Figure 1. Degree of Alignment between Learning Outcomes and Assessment across Institutions

Figure 1 illustrates that the alignment pattern creates a continuum instead of just a basic aligned-misaligned dichotomy. The visual comparison emphasizes the greater coherence seen at UNJ, the moderate position of Undiksha, and the relatively lower alignment at UNNES. The qualitative distinctions illustrated in the figure should hence be understood as relative levels obtained from the triangulated results instead of as numerical values.

The comparison between institutions also shows that alignment was affected by three contextual factors: integration of curriculum, variations in student capabilities, and the uniformity of feedback application. Specifically, UNJ utilized various feedback layers from lecturers, peers, and self-reflection, while Undiksha mainly depended on lecturer feedback, and UNNES exhibited less uniform feedback practices. These variations

suggest that alignment relies on both the official connection between learning outcomes and assessment, as well as the integration of feedback in the learning process.

In summary, the results presented here show that constructive alignment functions through the interplay of three aspects: (1) structural coherence among learning objectives, teaching strategies, and evaluation; (2) active processes by which feedback facilitates improvement and comprehension; and (3) contextual elements, involving student variability, curriculum cohesiveness, and technological advancements.

2. Alignment between Learning Outcomes and Practice

Data analysis found that overall, teaching practices at the three universities had similar learning outcomes for the final learning outcomes.

Table 2. Cross-Institutional Alignment between Learning Outcomes and Teaching Practices with Instructional Indicators in Sakubun Courses

Institution	Learning Outcomes (ILO)	Teaching Practices (TLA)	Alignment Level	Instructional Indicators	Key Issues
UNJ	Clearly defined; aligned with JF Standard	Structured input → guided writing → <i>happyou</i> → peer discussion	High	Structured input (strong)Scaffolding (strong)Peer interaction (strong)Integration (<i>dokkai-sakubun</i>) (moderate)	Minor need for deeper individualized feedback
Undiksha	Level-based outcomes	Structured exercises (Marugoto-based), guided practice	Moderate–High	Structured input (moderate)Scaffolding (moderate)Peer interaction (limited)Integration (limited)	Student proficiency gap (vocabulary, kanji)
UNNES	General outcomes; less integrated	Thematic writing tasks; limited scaffolding	Moderate–Low	Structured input (limited)Scaffolding (limited)Peer interaction (limited)Integration (absent)	Weak integration; limited variation and feedback

Table 2 shows that the three institutions aimed to enhance students' Japanese writing skills, but varied in how much their instructional activities aligned with those objectives. UNJ exhibited the clearest progression, transitioning from structured input to guided writing, *sakubun-happyou*, and peer discussion. Undiksha used organized activities and supervised practice, though variations in students' vocabulary and kanji skills influenced execution. UNNES focused primarily on thematic writing assignments, featuring less scaffolding, limited peer collaboration, and minimal incorporation of reading activities.

Instead of reiterating the alignment levels presented in Table 2, these results emphasize the educational methods that explain the institutional variations. The findings indicate that alignment improves when learning outcomes are converted into incremental teaching phases that offer students clear input, supervised practice, chances for interaction, and opportunities to implement and contemplate their writing. The comparison suggests that student skill level is a significant contextual factor. At Undiksha, variations in vocabulary and kanji proficiency limited the execution of otherwise organized tasks. At UNNES, restricted scaffolding and variation in instruction seemed to offer fewer chances to tackle disparities in students' writing skills.

Consequently, aligning learning outcomes with teaching methods necessitates both curricular consistency and instructional adjustments to meet learner requirements.

3. Alignment between Teaching and Assessment Practices

The data analysis found that teaching and assessment practices are most effective when feedback mechanisms are consistently embedded in the learning process.

Table 3. Alignment between Teaching Practices and Assessment with Feedback Mechanisms in Sakubun Courses

Institution	Teaching Practices (TLA)	Assessment Practices (AT)	Feedback Mechanism	Alignment Level	Key Issues
UNJ	Structured writing, presentation (<i>happyou</i>), peer discussion	Rubric-based; includes process & product	Lecturer + peer + self-assessment (partially integrated)	High	Self-assessment not yet systematically formalized
Undiksha	Structured exercises; guided instruction	Lecturer-led, consistent evaluation	Lecturer-centered feedback	Moderate-High	Limited peer & self-assessment
UNNES	Thematic writing; limited variation	Relevant criteria but inconsistent implementation	Irregular feedback due to time constraints	Moderate-Low	Weak feedback consistency; limited integration

As indicated in Table 3, the primary difference among the institutions pertained to how feedback was integrated into the connection between teaching and assessment. At UNJ, organized writing, presentation (*happyou*), peer conversation, and rubric-focused evaluation were linked through instructor, peer, and some self-assessment. Undiksha kept a fairly uniform approach to lecturer-led assessment, yet feedback largely remained focused on the teacher. At UNNES, pertinent evaluation criteria existed, but the application of feedback was not as consistent.

These results suggest that merely having assessment criteria does not ensure proper alignment. Alignment is more effective when evaluation produces feedback that is then utilized to enhance and refine student writing. The institutional comparison indicates that feedback serves as a link between instructional activities and assessment instead of being an independent assessment element. The findings also indicate that each institution possesses a distinct area that needs enhancement. At UNJ, the primary requirement pertains to a more systematic incorporation of self-evaluation. At Undiksha, increased implementation of peer and self-assessment may enhance the reflective aspect of learning. At UNNES, enhancing the reliability and continuity of feedback is essential since inconsistent feedback diminishes the link between writing tasks and future progress.

4. Cross-Institutional Patterns and Emerging Issues

Analysis of the overall data revealed common patterns and critical issues across the three universities.

Table 4. Cross-Institutional Patterns and Emerging Issues in Sakubun Learning

Key Pattern/ Issue	UNJ	Undiksha	UNNES	Cross-Institutional Insight
Feedback Implementation	Multi-layered (lecturer, peer, partial self); relatively consistent	Lecturer-centered; consistent but less reflective	Inconsistent due to time constraints	Feedback recognized as essential, but varies in depth and consistency
Student Competence Variation	Moderate variation; manageable with structured support	High variation (vocabulary, kanji) affecting learning outcomes	Moderate-high variation with limited support	Student proficiency significantly influences alignment effectiveness
Writing Authenticity (AI Use)	Emerging concern; requires monitoring	Emerging concern; limited control strategies	More pronounced in online tasks	AI use creates challenges in ensuring originality across contexts
Student Performance Imbalance	Focus tends toward high-performing students	Similar tendency; limited differentiation strategies	More visible gap due to weaker scaffolding	Lower-performing students receive less targeted instructional support

Table 4 consolidates the institutional findings by emphasizing four key issues that span the three alignment dimensions: execution of feedback, variations in student competence, authenticity of writing in relation to AI-assisted writing, and disparities in support for underperforming students. Instead of representing distinct problems, these issues influence the level of alignment attained within each institutional context. Initially, feedback surfaced as a crucial yet inconsistently applied element. UNJ utilized a more complex feedback framework, while Undiksha stayed mainly lecturer-focused and UNNES exhibited more variability. Secondly, variations in vocabulary and kanji knowledge impacted students' capacity to engage completely in writing tasks, highlighting the necessity for tailored instructional assistance. Third, the growing reliance on AI-assisted writing has raised worries regarding the genuineness of texts generated by students, especially in assignments completed outside monitored classroom environments. Fourth, variations between higher- and lower-performing students indicated that those with lower proficiency might need more specific support.

Collectively, these trends suggest that the success of constructive alignment is influenced by both instructional design and contextual factors. Alignment is not a fixed connection between learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment; it is an evolving process that necessitates ongoing adjustments to learner diversity, feedback requirements, curriculum incorporation, and technological advancements. The comprehensive results endorse the idea of successful Sakubun learning as a fluid, feedback-oriented alignment framework. In this framework, structural integrity serves as the basis, feedback acts as the link between teaching elements, and contextual elements influence the system's implementation effectiveness.

Drawing from this synthesis, a conceptual framework was created to illustrate the connections between learning outcomes, instructional methods, evaluations, feedback systems, and contextual elements recognized at the three universities. Instead of illustrating a straightforward instructional order, the model portrays these components

as interconnected parts within a fluid learning environment. Figure 1 displays the suggested model.

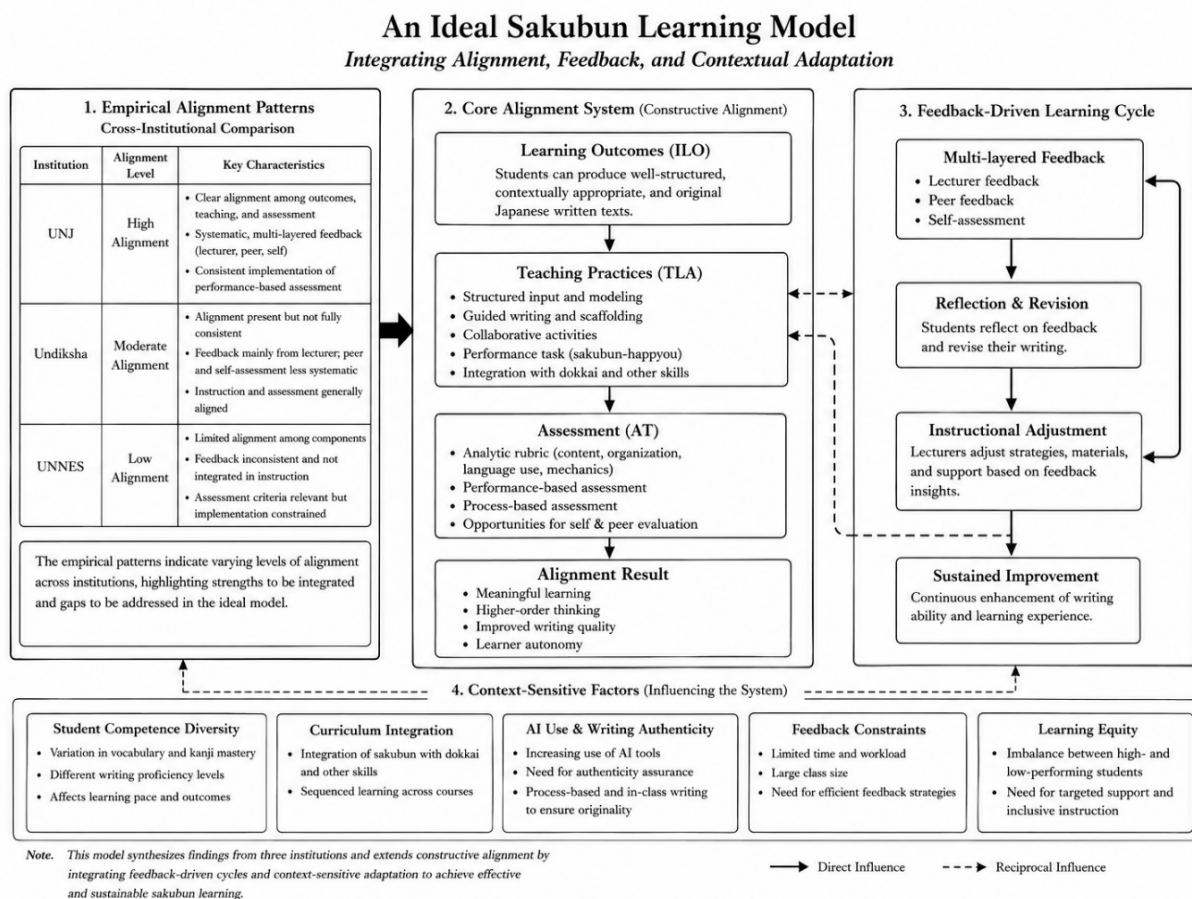


Figure 2. Dynamic Feedback-Driven Constructive Alignment Model for Sakubun Learning

As shown in Figure 2, successful Sakubun teaching relies on the interplay between learning objectives, instructional methods, evaluation, responses, and the wider educational environment. Learning outcomes serve as the foundation for designing instructional activities and assessments, while teaching methods convert these outcomes into structured, cooperative, and advancing writing experiences. Evaluation is integrated into the educational process to track progress and offer proof for enhancing instruction. Feedback links these elements by facilitating revision via lecturer, peer, and self-feedback. The model additionally includes contextual elements, such as variations in students' backgrounds and skills, curriculum execution, and AI-supported writing, which necessitate that instructors adjust their teaching choices while ensuring coherence throughout the educational process.

Discussion

The results of this study provide evidence that the implementation of Sakubun learning at three universities reflects alignment between learning outcomes, teaching practices, and assessment. This evidence reinforces the assumption that constructive alignment is not only an instructional design principle but also an epistemic infrastructure that can support coherence and equity, thus making learning more meaningful (Hristov et al., 2023b; Pazicni et al., 2025; E. Pereira et al., 2024; Rifan & Latif, 2025). In higher education,

achieving coherence between Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) is crucial for effective outcomes-based education and accreditation compliance (Derouich, 2025). However, the results indicate that alignment in practice is not only structural but also highly dependent on instructional implementation and contextual conditions.

This aligns with findings at the State University of Jakarta, which confirmed that aligned teaching and assessment contribute to effective learning. This means that the assessment process for learning outcomes is part of a continuous learning process and is carried out from the beginning to the end of the course (Bara & Bara, 2023). The integration of sakubun-happyou, peer discussions, and structured scaffolding at UNJ reflects these principles, demonstrating how alignment can support higher-order thinking and learner autonomy. Meanwhile, at Undiksha and UNNES, the learning framework, integration, and consistency of feedback were poorly aligned, reducing learning effectiveness. The dominance of lecturer-centered feedback at Undiksha and the inconsistency of feedback at UNNES indicate that alignment cannot be maintained without a systematic feedback mechanism.

Importantly, these distinctions should not be seen solely as differences in lecturer dedication or instructional quality. Instead, varying feedback delivery might indicate disparities in how feedback is systematically incorporated into the course framework. When feedback delivery depends largely on the lecturer's initiative, its execution can be greatly affected by personal teaching methods, available teaching time, class size, and chances for students to participate in iterative writing and revisions. In the same way, inconsistency in feedback may occur if assessment is seen mainly as a concluding phase instead of an ongoing part of the writing process. These conditions can result in a disparity between the anticipated learning results and the feedback students truly obtain while honing their writing abilities. Consequently, these results indicate that the sustainability of feedback consistency is more probable when it is incorporated as a deliberate aspect of constructive alignment, rather than relying solely on the teaching choices of individual instructors.

Effective learning depends on the quality of feedback and students' ability to use it for self-regulation (Fatima et al., 2022; Nicol & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006; Van Der Linden et al., 2023). This is relevant to other research findings that feedback is perceived as more relevant, effective, and positive by students assessed using student-centered methods compared to those assessed using traditional methods (D. Pereira et al., 2016). The main research findings indicate that feedback is a central dynamic mechanism in learning activities. Previous studies have emphasized formative assessment (Carless, 2015), but this study provides a broader perspective regarding multi-layered feedback, involving lecturers, peers, and self-assessment. Thus, these findings provide an understanding that a feedback-based learning cycle has a positive impact on learning outcomes. This finding aligns with Feedback Literacy, which emphasizes the active role of students in engaging with feedback (Carless & Boud, 2018). While previous research focused on the effectiveness of feedback, this study highlights its role in maintaining coherence across learning components.

Nevertheless, feedback literacy cannot progress effectively if chances to receive feedback are inconsistent or if the feedback tends to be one-sided. Students need multiple chances to understand feedback, improve their writing, and assess if those improvements have solved the highlighted problems. From this viewpoint, the inconsistency of

feedback at UNNES and the lecturer-centered approach to feedback at Undiksha might impede the growth of feedback literacy; this occurs as students have limited structured chances to not only receive feedback but also to engage with and assess it actively. Consequently, these results broaden the idea of feedback literacy by showing that student agency relies on teaching conditions that allow for feedback to be effectively used, delivered consistently, and associated with future writing assignments.

From the perspective of contemporary second language acquisition (SLA) writing research, writing in an alphabetic language, Sakubun, directs learners to simultaneously integrate linguistic and cognitive processes, including kanji acquisition, vocabulary selection, grammatical accuracy, and discourse organization. Thus, the writing activity becomes more complex because students can use cognitive resources not only to express ideas but also to manage character selection and linguistic accuracy. Consequently, effective Sakubun instruction depends on teaching practices. Thus, the adaptive alignment found at the three universities reflects appropriate curriculum design and addresses the unique challenges of Japanese as a foreign language.

The findings of this study also indicate that variations in student competency are a factor influencing the effectiveness of alignment in the learning process. Differences in vocabulary and kanji mastery significantly impact students' ability to achieve learning outcomes, particularly at Undiksha and UNNES. These findings suggest that linguistic proficiency plays a role in the development of second- or foreign-language writing (Crossley, 2020; Kramsch, 2016). This also aligns with research on differentiated learning, which suggests that instructional strategies must adapt to the diverse needs of learners to ensure equitable learning outcomes (Tomlinson, 2014). Therefore, it can be concluded that alignment is necessary in adaptive learning strategies to improve low student learning outcomes.

Another important finding of this study is the need for teaching and learning that directs students to maintain the authenticity of their writing amidst the advancement of various digital applications that can be useful in assisting writing development. This means that the inappropriate use of digital applications such as AI and others can impact academic integrity and the validation of student writing assessments. Previous studies have shown that AI poses a challenge to writing learning and performance alignment in student learning activities. Nevertheless, when considering foreign language acquisition, the difficulties caused by AI-assisted writing go beyond just concerns of academic honesty. Generative AI may reduce the degree to which texts submitted by students represent the individual's linguistic processes, choices, and language growth path. In second or foreign language composition, these processes are essential as learners gain proficiency by repeatedly having chances to create meaning, choose language forms, identify gaps in their language understanding, obtain feedback, and edit their writing. As a result, when AI produces most of the text's material, the apparent end result might not sufficiently reflect the learner's true second language (L2) proficiency or the cognitive and linguistic processes that support the growth of that proficiency.

This matter has immediate consequences for understanding "constructive alignment" in Sakubun (Japanese writing) teaching. If the goal of learning objectives is to enhance Japanese writing skills, but the main evaluation focuses on an AI-assisted output, a possible discrepancy occurs between the intended learning outcomes and the actual assessment criteria. AI-assisted writing may diminish chances for "noticing" (recognizing language elements), producing output (language creation), practicing self-

regulation, and interacting with feedback especially when students depend on AI-generated text without assessing or editing it critically. On the other hand, when AI is utilized openly as an assistive tool such as generating options that students need to assess, amend, defend, and improve it can enhance a learning process abundant in feedback instead of simply replacing language production tasks. Therefore, the educational concern is not simply if AI should be allowed or banned, but instead how its implementation can be structured to keep learners cognitively and linguistically involved in activities that foster the enhancement of foreign language skills.

This study shows that process-based assessment, in-class writing, and reflective assignments are essential for maintaining authenticity, thus extending alignment theory into the context of digital disruption (Gierl et al., 2014; Karatay & Karatay, 2024; Sharples, 2022). Consequently, these results indicate that Sakubun evaluations that incorporate AI should focus more on the writing process encompassing drafting, revision records, self-reflection, verbal reasoning for language decisions, and feedback application rather than just the finished written outcome. These practices can retain evidence of language usage created by learners while allowing the controlled application of AI to aid—rather than substitute—the foreign language acquisition process.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: The study concluded that effective Sakubun learning is influenced by the alignment of learning outcomes, teaching practices, and assessments, which include consistent and dynamically layered feedback mechanisms. The three universities exhibited distinct and varied alignment patterns. The university with the strongest alignment had structured instruction, integrated assessment, and active feedback practices. Conversely, weaker alignment stemmed from limited support, inconsistent feedback, and a lack of instructional integration.

Implication: These results present three actionable implications for educators: (1) coordinating learning outcomes, teaching strategies, and evaluation within a unified writing approach; (2) incorporating instructor, peer, and self-evaluation to ensure ongoing feedback; and (3) customizing scaffolding and differentiated instruction to meet varied student learning requirements. Digital media can be used to enhance writing practices and feedback provision, whereas process-oriented activities can preserve genuine contexts in writing in Japanese. Universities must foster the creation of a cohesive Sakubun (composition) curriculum at the institutional level, connecting learning outcomes, teaching, evaluation, and feedback.

Limitation: This research is confined to three universities in Indonesia and primarily centers on the views of lecturers and recorded teaching and evaluation methods. As a result, the results do not include student viewpoints or offer proof of lasting changes in the evolution of students' writing abilities. Additionally, the swiftly increasing application of artificial intelligence (AI) in writing tasks signifies a contextual evolution that wasn't thoroughly investigated in this research.

Future Research: Future studies ought to include a wider variety of institutions and integrate student viewpoints to reinforce the empirical basis of the suggested model. Longitudinal research and mixed-method approaches are required to investigate how constructive alignment and feedback affect the progression of students' writing abilities over time. Experimental or quasi-experimental research might be carried out to additionally assess the efficacy of different alignment-focused learning methods in

Sakubun teaching. Additional studies should investigate evaluation methods that incorporate AI's role and foster student feedback literacy, while also assessing the implementation of the suggested framework in various cultural and disciplinary settings.

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