



The diagnostic assessment strategy in the Merdeka Curriculum for Indonesian language learning in 7th grade at Junior High School

Rindu Refoina Pertiwi¹, Rustam²

rindurefoina09@gmail.com

^{1,2}Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Universitas Jambi, Jambi

Received: 2024-09-06 Accepted:2024-09-25

DOI: 10.2456/ideas.v12i2.5572

Abstract

This research aims to evaluate diagnostic assessment strategies that are effective in improving understanding of Indonesian language material in junior high school students. Diagnostic assessments are used as a tool to identify specific difficulties experienced by students in understanding the material contained in Indonesian language learning. In each cycle, diagnostic assessments are carried out through written tests and interviews, the results of which are analyzed to design appropriate learning interventions. The research results show that the application of diagnostic assessment strategies significantly increases students' ability to understand the material. In addition, students show an increase in motivation and interest in learning Indonesian. These findings indicate that diagnostic assessments are not only useful in identifying learning difficulties, but also effective in designing learning strategies that are adaptive and responsive to student needs.

Keywords: *Diagnostic Assessment; Indonesian Language Learning; Learning Strategies*

Introduction

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum is a new breakthrough in education aimed at encouraging all students to actively participate in their learning process. The role of teachers in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is not limited to just teaching materials, which often seem like mere knowledge transfer to students. Teachers also educate, guide, and shape the character, attitude, and mindset of students. Additionally, teachers must understand how to help students develop and optimize

their own abilities. Teachers should also be able to create a conducive classroom environment that fosters meaningful and effective learning, tailored to the needs of the students. For this reason, it is necessary to change the learning process by using diagnostic assessments.

Diagnostic assessment is an evaluation process carried out to identify students' strengths and weaknesses before or during the learning process. Through diagnostic assessment, teachers can obtain accurate information about students' initial abilities, allowing them to design learning strategies tailored to each student's needs. The application of diagnostic assessment is expected to improve students' understanding of Indonesian language learning material and optimize their learning outcomes.

In more detail, diagnostic assessment has several objectives. Non-cognitive diagnostic assessment aims to gather information about students' psychological and socio-emotional well-being, study habits at home, family conditions, friendships, as well as their learning styles, character, and interests. Meanwhile, cognitive diagnostic assessment aims to obtain information about students' knowledge levels regarding the subject matter (Nasution, 2022).

Overall, diagnostic assessment plays a crucial role in creating a more focused, effective, and personalized Indonesian language learning process that aligns with the needs of each student. Diagnostic assessments help monitor students' progress continuously. By conducting these assessments regularly, teachers can adjust the teaching materials based on students' development. This enables learning to evolve continuously according to the needs of students at each stage.

Diagnostic assessments are conducted at the beginning of the learning process to determine the extent of students' understanding of the material to be taught. In the context of Indonesian language learning, this assessment can help teachers identify students' difficulties, such as challenges in understanding grammar rules, spelling, reading, writing, or speaking skills. With this information, teachers can adjust their teaching methods to meet the individual needs of the students.

This research aims to explore and develop effective diagnostic assessment strategies to improve the understanding of 7th-grade students at SMPN 19 Kota Jambi in Indonesian language learning. The study will examine various diagnostic assessment methods that can be applied, as well as measure their effectiveness in enhancing students' comprehension. Additionally, this research will investigate the

role of teachers in implementing diagnostic assessment strategies and how the results of these assessments can be used to design more effective learning activities.

This study is expected to make a significant contribution to improving the quality of Indonesian language learning at SMPN 19 Kota Jambi. The results of this research are hoped to serve as a reference for teachers in designing and implementing more effective learning strategies that align with students' needs, thereby improving students' overall understanding and learning outcomes.

Method

This research was conducted at SMPN 19 Kota Jambi and employed a qualitative descriptive research design. This type of research allows for detailed and in-depth presentation of data based on existing facts and theories (Nurmalasari & Erdiantoro, 2020). The study used a case study approach, meaning it was carried out by referring to phenomena while considering scientific facts in a comparative, holistic, and comprehensive manner (Rahardjo, 2017).

The data and sources of data consisted of events, informants, document analysis, and field notes. The event refers to the process of Indonesian language learning taking place in the 7th-grade classroom. The informants were Indonesian language teachers. Document analysis included teaching modules and assessment tools. Field notes were based on the observations made by the researcher during the research process in the field.

The sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling, where the researcher selects samples based on certain considerations (Etikan, 2016). The samples included the Indonesian language teacher and three students based on their assessment achievements: high, medium, and low, relative to the minimum mastery criteria.

The data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and field notes. To test the validity of the data, the study employed triangulation of data sources and theory, aiming to compare various data and theories from different sources to obtain more valid data (Alfansyur & Mariyani, 2020). The data analysis technique used was Miles & Huberman's interactive model analysis, which follows the flow of data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing (Latifah & Supena, 2021). The three stages are as follows:

1. Data Reduction

Data reduction is the process of summarizing, selecting essential aspects, focusing on what is important, identifying themes and patterns, and discarding unnecessary information obtained from the field. In this stage, the researcher selects data relevant to the research objectives and focus, and groups them accordingly. Here, the researcher highlights the key findings during the observation.

2. Data Presentation

Data presentation can be in the form of brief descriptions, diagrams of relationships between categories, or narrative text. Presenting the data allows for easier understanding of what is happening and helps plan what to do next based on the insights gained. In this stage, the researcher presents the observation data in written or narrative text form.

3. Conclusion Drawing (Verification)

Conclusion drawing is the final analysis stage, following data reduction and presentation, where the data is concluded descriptively as a research report. This is the final step, where the existing data is summarized.

Results

Assessment Planning

Findings in assessment planning reveal that there are at least two key actions teachers take when planning assessments: understanding learning outcomes and developing the assessment itself. According to assessment and learning guidelines, in order to create a lesson, particularly an assessment, teachers must first understand the learning outcomes (Anggraena et al., 2022). Additionally, Prideaux (2003) notes that in this process, teachers must also understand the needs of their students. Based on interview results, teachers explained that diagnostic assessment planning always focuses on specific skills to be developed, such as speaking skills. This means that the planned assessment helps teachers identify students' weaknesses in the particular skills being targeted.

The planned assessments are generally simple but effective in extracting key information about students' readiness and abilities. This can be seen from short tests, such as writing simple sentences or verbally explaining something. Research findings indicate that diagnostic assessment planning is not just about designing questions or tasks but also considering the age, ability, and learning objectives of the students. Once the type and format of the assessment are determined, the

teacher must formulate clear assessment criteria. These criteria serve as a reference for evaluating students' abilities. In planning assessments, the criteria must be relevant to the competencies being measured and communicated to students at the beginning of the learning process so that they understand the expectations. According to interview results, teachers often include criteria such as the correct use of vocabulary, clarity of ideas, sentence structure, and proper grammar use.

Assessment planning is a crucial process that ensures that the assessments not only accurately measure students' abilities but also provide guidance for teachers in designing more effective learning strategies. With thorough planning, assessments can offer valuable insights for monitoring student progress, identifying learning difficulties, and adjusting instructional strategies to meet students' needs.

Assesment Implementation

In the context of learning assessment, the process typically begins with diagnostic assessment. According to teaching modules, diagnostic assessment is an integral part of the learning process. However, when examined further from a practical perspective, it becomes clear that diagnostic assessments are proportionally designed. Suwandi (2017) states that an assessment should encompass types, purposes, benefits, strategies, and results. Another opinion suggests that diagnostic assessment must be capable of identifying students to project classroom homogeneity and student heterogeneity, which can serve as a foundation for teachers to create personalized and individualized assessments (Csapó & Molnár, 2019).

During implementation, the assessment instruments used must align with what has been planned. The instruments used by teachers include written questions, project assignments, oral assessments, observations, and task evaluations:

- **Written Instruments:** These include multiple-choice questions, essays, or short answers completed by students.
- **Observation Instruments:** In some assessments, such as speaking skills

assessments, teachers use observation rubrics to record students' performance.

- **Projects or Portfolios:** Students are required to submit long-term assignments, such as creative works, which will be evaluated based on specific criteria.

Based on interview findings, in speaking skills assessment, teachers observe and evaluate students' abilities using rubrics that include aspects such as fluency, intonation, and clarity of speech. Teachers correct students' assessment results, provide feedback to those who have not yet achieved competency, and plan remedial actions for students who score below the standard.

Once assessment results are collected, teachers must conduct an analysis to understand student achievements. From the assessment results, teachers can evaluate whether learning objectives have been met and whether follow-up actions, such as remedial or enrichment activities, are needed:

- **Result Analysis:** Assessment results need to be analyzed to identify general trends in student achievement, pinpoint areas that require further attention, and determine the next steps in learning.
- **Feedback:** Teachers must also provide feedback to students based on the assessment results. This feedback helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas for improvement.

Effective assessment implementation requires thorough planning, strict supervision, and valid and reliable assessment instruments. This process must be carried out fairly and in a timely manner, ensuring that the assessment results provide useful information to enhance the learning process. Additionally, the assessment results serve as the basis for follow-up actions, such as providing feedback, planning remedial activities, or offering enrichment to students who have mastered the material well.

Assessment Challenges

Based on the initial observations and interviews, it was found that teachers faced challenges in implementing the assessment process, particularly due to limited experience with the new curriculum and a lack of comprehensive references for creating assessments. This finding aligns with previous studies, which state that the primary obstacles for teachers in implementing the Kurikulum

Merdeka are limited experience (Damayanti et al., 2022) and a lack of standard references (Susilowati, 2022). These challenges are understandable, given that the Kurikulum Merdeka has only recently been introduced. The school involved in this study has the status of "mandiri berubah," meaning it is in its first year of implementing the new curriculum.

During the assessment process, various obstacles can affect the effectiveness and accuracy of the evaluations. One of the main challenges is the diversity in students' abilities, which often makes it difficult to design assessments that are suitable for all individuals in a class. This can lead to some students finding the assessments too easy, while others struggle, resulting in inaccurate assessment outcomes. Another issue is the limited time available; a busy schedule can cause assessments to be conducted hastily, reducing their overall quality.

The difficulty in designing appropriate assessment instruments also poses a challenge. If the instruments are not valid or reliable, the results may not accurately reflect students' abilities, which can negatively impact the planning of future lessons. Thus, ensuring that the assessment tools are carefully designed and properly implemented is crucial for achieving valid and reliable results, which in turn supports effective teaching and learning processes.

Conclusion

Based on the exposure to field findings and previous research, it can be concluded that the strategies for implementing assessments are as follows: (1) First, assessment planning is a process for teachers to understand fundamental principles and determine the types of assessments. In this stage, teachers develop assessment criteria that align with the needs. (2) Second, assessment planning involves creating assessment tools included in the teaching modules. (3) Third, challenges in assessment within the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Planning, execution, and handling assessment obstacles are three crucial aspects of an effective evaluation process.

Thorough planning ensures that assessments are designed to measure student competencies clearly and in accordance with learning objectives. Careful and fair execution, with attention to supervision and use of instruments, helps students demonstrate their abilities optimally. Meanwhile, identifying and addressing obstacles such as differences in student abilities, time constraints, and

assessment issues are crucial for maintaining assessment accuracy and fairness. These three aspects must be managed well to ensure that assessments support student development and achieve learning objectives effectively.

References

- Alfansyur, A., & Mariyani. (2020). Seni Mengelola Data : Penerapan Triangulasi Teknik, Sumber Dan Waktu Pada Penelitian Pendidikan Sosial. *HISTORIS : Jurnal Kajian, Penelitian & Pengembangan Pendidikan Sejarah*, 5(2), 146–150.
- Anggraena, A., Siregar, N., & Damayanti, E. (2022). *Panduan Pembelajaran dan Asesmen Kurikulum Merdeka*. Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, Indonesia.
- Csapó, B., & Molnár, G. (2019). Online Diagnostic Assessment in Support of Personalized Teaching and Learning: The eDia System. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 1522. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01522>
- Ermiyanto, B., I. B. S., and A. Ilyas. "Asesmen Diagnostik Gaya Belajar Peserta Didik Kelas VII Di SMPN 4 Padang Panjang." *MANAZHIM* 5, no. 1 (2023): 166–77. <https://doi.org/10.36088/manazhim.v5i1.2845>.
- Dwi Damayanti, A., Nidaul Jannah, A., & Agustin, N. (2022). Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia Di SMP Muhammadiyah19 Sawangan. *Seminar Nasional Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 41–48. <https://jurnal.umj.ac.id/index.php/SAMASTA/Article/View/41-48>
- Husnaini, H. (2022). Development of Self Esteem-Oriented Micro Teaching Materials for IAIN Palopo English Education Students. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 10(1), 538-560.
- Husnaini, H., Yahya, A., & Putri, N. I. W. (2023). The Efficacy of the Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) Method on the Speaking Skill of the English Learners Community (ELC) Students. *EDULANGUE*, 6(1), 45-61.
- Laulita, Ulfa, Marzoan, and Fitriani Rahayu. "Analisis Kesiapan Guru Dalam Mengimplementasikan Asesmen Diagnostik Pada Kurikulum Merdeka" 5, no. 2 (2022): 1–17.
- Masruddin, M., & Nasriandi, N. (2022). Lexical and Syntactical Errors Performed by Junior High School Student in Writing Descriptive Text. *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 10(1),

1094-1100.

- Nasution, A. (2022). Asesmen Diagnostik dalam Kurikulum Merdeka: Implementasi dan Tantangan. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*, 45(2), 121-134.
- Nurmalasari, Y., & Erdiantoro, R. (2020). Metode Penelitian Deskriptif Kualitatif Dalam Perspektif Bimbingan Dan Konseling. *Quanta*, 4(1), 44-51. <https://doi.org/10.22460/Q.V1i1p1-10.497>
- Prideaux, D. (2003). ABC of Learning and Teaching in Medicine: Curriculum Design. *BMJ*, 326(7383), 268-270. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.326.7383.268>
- Sayifuddin, H. W. S. (2016). Tingkat Kesiapan Guru Dalam Sistem Penilaian Autentik Pada Mata Pelajaran Produktif Dengan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Teknik*, 2(3), 248-255.
- Suwandi, S. (2017). Model-Model Asesmen dalam Pembelajaran (M. Rohmadi, Ed.; 1st ed.). Yuma Pustaka.
- Suwandi, S. (2017). Asesmen Pendidikan: Teori, Strategi, dan Aplikasi. Pustaka Pelajar.