



## Assessment Model in Indonesian Language Learning Based on The Merdeka Curriculum at Junior High School in Banyuwangi Regency

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**Abstract:** This study aims to describe the types, forms, functions, and assessment techniques of Indonesian teachers based on the Merdeka Curriculum, as well as the obstacles encountered in its implementation. This study used a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The research was carried out across six junior high schools within the Banyuwangi Regency. The participants of this study were Indonesian junior high school teachers. Information was gathered from primary and secondary sources. Primary data stemmed from observations and interviews, whereas secondary data encompassed assessment-related documents. Data analysis was performed using Milles and Huberman flow analysis techniques in three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The findings of the research reveal the existence of two distinct assessment approaches in Indonesian language education within Banyuwangi Regency's junior high schools: formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative assessments included those at the beginning and during learning. Most teachers use written test techniques to diagnose students' cognition using the rubric as an instrument. Meanwhile, the teacher used questionnaires, interviews, and observations to diagnose students' noncognition. Formative assessment during learning is conducted using a variety of techniques and instruments adapted to the achievement elements of learning in Indonesian language. Summative assessments were carried out by the majority of teachers at the end of each chapter, midterm, and end of the semester using a written test technique. This research has implications for school stakeholders, teachers, and future researchers.

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## Introduction

Assessments play an important role in learning. Harsiati (2013) stated that from the point of view of learning as a system, assessment functions as a reflection of the success of planning and the process of implementing learning. One way to maintain the continuity of education properly is to assess or evaluate learning (Mansir & Alamin, 2022). According to Phafiandita et al. (2022), the purpose of learning assessment is to collect data and information about the students' learning abilities, evaluate the extent to which the learning program is functioning, and determine whether the educational goals and knowledge development are taking place as intended. According to Anggraena et al. (2022), assessment plays a vital role as a fundamental element within the learning journey. The assessment aims to notify students about how well the mastery of the material has been taught by the teacher (Poerwanti, 2012).

Assessment is an important activity that is comprehensive, because it includes all aspects of assessment. In conducting the assessment, the teacher must adjust the goals and consider the correct instrument. Comprehensive assessment entails a thorough evaluation that



encompasses multiple aspects of students' acquisition, including knowledge, comprehension, skills, and attitudes. Alternatively, it may also refer to the assessment tool used (Triyoso, 2013). Kotzebue et al. (2021) explain that the curriculum and assessment are based on a combination of various aspects: orientation to classroom learning practices, guidelines for planning progress in education, and interdisciplinary concretization, as well as specific subject levels. All aspects of the assessment were considered and analyzed using various methods and techniques.

The Merdeka Curriculum was implemented concurrently in the Banyuwangi Regency from the 2022-2023 academic year onwards. Of the three implementation options (Merdeka Belajar, Merdeka Berubah, and Merdeka Berbagi), junior high schools in the Banyuwangi Regency are in the Merdeka Berubah stage because they are adequately prepared to implement the Merdeka Curriculum by adjusting to learning from the Merdeka Mengajar platform. All junior high school teachers in the region have undergone training on the Merdeka Curriculum's implementation (IKM), through both the In-House Training (IHT) activities organized by the District Education Office for each sub-rayon and school, and independent training through the Merdeka Mengajar platform.

The Merdeka Curriculum is a study program that enables students to demonstrate their natural talents by providing learning designs with diverse intracurricular opportunities in a calm, relaxed, stress-free, and pressure-free environment (Rahayu et al., 2022; Prameswari, 2020). The Merdeka Curriculum is identified as the new paradigm of learning implemented through student-centered learning practices (Kasman & Lubis, 2022; Sopiensyah & Masruroh, 2021). This new paradigm initiates the learning process with learning outcome mapping, lesson plan preparation, and assessments, leading to achieving the expected competencies. This new curriculum provides teachers with the flexibility to compile and execute the learning process (Faiz et al., 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum represents an educational framework that offers a wide array of intra-curricular learning possibilities, simultaneously streamlining content to grant students ample time for delving into concepts and enhancing their skills (Balitbang and Books of the Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). The Merdeka Curriculum brings significant changes as compared to the 2013 Curriculum, by designing learning content considering the condition of students (stage of development, relevance, and needs) to make it more meaningful. Furthermore, the main focus of Merdeka Curriculum is to build the character of lifelong learners and enhance learning approaches, which are holistic, comprehensive, and diverse. Despite having lower skill abilities, students indulge in various concepts and principles (Sartika et al., 2022).

Assessment principles in the Merdeka Curriculum are designed to consider the students' developmental stages and level of achievement. Assessment stands as a crucial element within the process of learning (Anggraena et al., 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum places notable emphasis on the significance of melding learning and assessment, particularly formative assessment, into a cohesive learning cycle. Principles of learning and assessment are evident in the formulation of instructional strategies that align with students' levels of achievement or the corresponding teaching phase. Ritonga (2023) suggested that teachers should design assessments using various assignments, instruments, and techniques that align with learning objectives. Therefore, teachers need to compile reports related to student learning developments in a concise way so that people know and students can understand them well. In addition, teachers need to hold discussions with students' parents in terms of feedback that students have not been able to complete regularly.

The Merdeka Curriculum's assessment framework incorporates both formative and summative assessments. The objective of formative assessments is to gather feedback and



information from both educators and students, with the intention of improving the learning process. (Standards, Curriculum, and Education Assessment Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Republic of Indonesia, 2022). Formative assessments comprise both assessments at the inception of learning and those that take place during learning. Diagnostic assessment is commonly employed as a formative assessment tool at the beginning of the learning process. Its purpose is to ascertain the learning requirements and the preparedness of students to engage with instructional materials, ensuring the attainment of the desired learning goals. Thus, formative assessments are used to assess learning readiness as feedback in improving the quality of learning and are not used as a determinant of grades, class decisions, graduation, or other important decisions. Formative assessments can be performed using various methods and techniques. Formative assessments need to be carried out by teachers to support learning; however, these assessments can become an additional workload for teachers (Ifenthaler et al., 2021). Summative assessment entails the evaluation of the ultimate outcomes achieved at the conclusion of a predetermined learning phase. Conversely, formative assessment entails ongoing evaluation conducted throughout the learning journey to facilitate and enhance the learning process. Summative assessment is employed to appraise the attainment of predefined learning objectives and to report the outcomes of the learning process. (Pellegrino et al., 2001). Digital learning environments can be used to facilitate formative assessment (Bayrak, 2021; Cukusic et al., 2014). Both formative and summative assessments are conducted by educators, who carefully adhere to the stages of assessment, including planning, implementation, processing assessment outcomes, and subsequently employing and following up on the assessment data. Based on the results of the assessment, the teacher can determine the steps or efforts that must be taken to improve the quality of the learning processes and outcomes, schools, parents, and students, as well as the policies of the education office or government. In addition, the results of the assessment were used by the teacher to formulate follow-up actions in the form of enrichment and remedial activities.

Based on observation results, the assessment of Indonesian language learning in the Merdeka Curriculum has received little attention because its implementation is still new. Most of the research related to the assessment of Indonesian language learning was carried out in the 2013 Curriculum. Other studies of learning assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum are limited. Studies related to learning assessment, in general, have been carried out, including an analysis of the principles of assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum (Ritonga, 2023), self-assessment activities in IEFL classes (Kumar et al., 2023), the Digital Competencies for Teaching in Science Education (DiKoLAN) framework as a foundation for self-evaluation (Kotzebue et al., 2021), language learner self-assessment (Butler et al., 2023), deep programmed assessment of overall learning and practice (Warm et al., 2022), formative assessment based on higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) (Wiyaka et al., 2020), authentic assessment of digital learning (Lim et al., 2022), and investigations of self-assessment in higher education (Ifenthaler et al., 2021).

Based on this urgency, it is important to conduct this research to determine which assessment model is relevant to the demands of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum for Indonesian junior high school subjects. The purpose of this study is to describe the types, forms of instruments, functions, and assessment techniques carried out by Indonesian language learning teachers based on the Merdeka Curriculum in junior high schools in Banyuwangi Regency, as well as the obstacles encountered in implementing them.



## Research Method

This study used a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The qualitative method is the most appropriate method used for this research because it describes the Indonesian language learning assessment model as the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the constraints encountered in its implementation. The assessment model includes the types, forms of instruments, functions, and assessment techniques carried out by Indonesian language teachers based on the Merdeka Curriculum at the junior high school level. The types of assessments to be described are formative and summative. The form of the instrument is related to the instrument used by the teacher; for example, in the form of rubrics, checklists, anecdotal notes, or developmental charts (continuum). Assessment techniques are related to the techniques used by teachers in both formative and summative assessments, such as observation, performance, projects, tests, and assignments.

This research was conducted in the Banyuwangi Regency. Six schools were sampled: SMPN 1 Purwoharjo, SMPN 1 Cluring, SMPN 1 Muncar, SMPN 2 Glenmore, SMPN 1 Genteng, and SMPN 1 Sempu. The choice of the six schools was predicated on the geographical diversity they represented, encompassing urban, suburban, coastal, plantation, and forest proximate locations. The aim was to determine the characteristics of the assessment model implemented in each school. The data in this study were in the form of verbal and contextual data. Data sources were obtained from interviews with Indonesian teachers for grades VII and VIII as well as studies on learning assessment documents. In order to align with the simultaneous implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum during the 2022/2023 academic year in Banyuwangi Regency junior high schools, Indonesian language instructors teaching grades VII and VIII were selected. Context data were obtained from the results of observations of differentiated Indonesian language learning. Data were collected through interview instruments, observation sheets, and documents. As a key instrument, the researcher used tools in the form of interview guides, observation sheet instruments, and document overview guidelines. The use of these tools was intended to facilitate data collection. Data analysis was performed using Milles and Huberman flow analysis techniques. The analysis process can be performed in three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2018).

## Results and Discussion

The model for assessing the learning of the Indonesian language based on the Merdeka Curriculum at junior high schools in Banyuwangi Regency can be analyzed in terms of the types, forms, functions, techniques, and constraints of the instruments used. In the Merdeka Curriculum, Indonesian language instructors perform two kinds of evaluations: formative assessments and summative assessments.

### Formative Assessment

Teachers employ formative assessments as feedback to enhance the learning process. Two formative assessments were conducted by the teachers. At the beginning of the learning process, an initial formative assessment is conducted. Additionally, formative assessments are implemented during the learning process. A diagnostic assessment is the term often used to describe a formative assessment conducted at the start of the learning process.

### Formative Assessment in Early Learning (Diagnostic)

According to the findings of this study, teachers conduct diagnostic assessments that include cognitive and non-cognitive diagnostic measures. Teachers conduct cognitive diagnostic assessments to gather information about students' initial understanding of the material to be studied, whereas non-cognitive diagnostic assessments are used to explore



students' learning needs in the form of their interests, potentials, preferences, and learning styles. Based on the formative assessment, teachers should modify their implementation plan for learning and create learning differentiation to meet the needs of students (Anggraena, 2022). The teacher used the data from the two diagnostic assessments to plan differentiated Indonesian language lessons appropriate for each student's learning needs.

#### 1) Cognitive diagnostic assessment

Teachers conducted cognitive diagnostic assessments as feedback to adapt learning to learning needs or students' initial competencies towards learning objectives. This is consistent with the findings of Beckmann and Minnaert's (2018) research, which asserts that the purpose of cognitive diagnostic assessment is to identify and intervene in students' knowledge of instructional materials. The findings of this study explain that teachers can learn based on cognitive diagnostics to determine students' cognitive competence for a particular material. Therefore, cognitive diagnostic assessments can be implemented in a varied and flexible manner. Cognitive diagnostic assessments are usually conducted at the beginning of the semester or before starting materials that require accurate information about students' competence and their initial understanding of the teaching material.

The techniques used by teachers in this assessment were diverse. The teacher adjusted the technique according to the objectives and characteristics of the materials to be studied. For example, before studying fantasy story texts, the prerequisite competency is that students must possess descriptive text competence. Educators utilize a greater number of written tests, employing formats like multiple-choice questions or descriptive prompts, for the purpose of facilitating easier analysis. However, the number of questions is small. The average teacher provides 5-10 multiple choice questions, while 3-5 items provide descriptive questions. In addition to written tests, teachers usually use oral tests in the form of questions on apperception or other activities before learning that students can directly answer.

#### 2) Non-cognitive diagnostic assessment

Non-cognitive diagnostic assessments are conducted by teachers to obtain comprehensive and detailed information about family conditions or background, interests, preferences, and other student learning needs. This information is used by the teacher as support for students' learning readiness. This aligns with Tomlinson's (2014) view that teachers work daily to find ways to reach out to individual learners at their varied points of readiness, interest, and learning preference. Teachers often use simple questionnaires, observations, and interviews to conduct non-cognitive diagnostic assessments. The questionnaire given by the teacher is usually an electronic questionnaire using the Google Form application, in which students must fill out their gadgets. In addition to electronic questionnaires, some teachers provide conventional questionnaire forms (question paper sheets). Here's an instance of a noncognitive diagnostic assessment administered by an instructor before the commencement of learning.

The teacher also employed observation techniques, including direct observations of students' homes (home visits). The Banyuwangi District Education Office held a home visit program for all teachers in each school. The teacher visits the homes of all the new students at the start of the school year. With the home-visit program, teachers can see the condition of their students and their home environments more closely and realistically. Home visits were carried out by all teachers to collect data related to environmental conditions, background, interest in learning, and the potential obstacles faced by students in learning. The instrument used during the home visit was in the form of checklists and notes. During the home visit activity, the teacher also conducted interviews with the students and their parents. Interviews were conducted to obtain information closely related to the daily lives of students and their



family environments. This information was recorded by a home-visit officer using note-taking instruments.

Furthermore, information on the results of home visits was reported in the form of an electronic report that could be accessed by all the teachers and staff at the school. Electronic home-visit reports help teachers obtain information about their students. After diagnostic data were obtained, the teacher analyzed the data to map the interests, preferences, learning types, and learning needs of each student. After mapping, the teacher followed up on the mapping results by preparing a differentiated learning plan. This includes not only the stage of preparing content, processes, and products in learning but also the stage of creating assessment instruments and their indicators. Differentiation strategies were implemented to accommodate the potential and diversity of each student. Teachers implement the differentiation strategy in the form of content or educational material differentiation, differentiation of the learning process, and differentiation of products or learning outcomes.

### **Formative Assessment During Learning**

According to the study's findings, the teacher conducted evaluations during learning by assessing attitudes, knowledge, and skills. This information is relevant to the idea proposed by Anggraena et al. (2022) that this evaluation occurred during the learning process. Therefore, this evaluation is included as a learning assessment (assessment as learning to determine the students' interests, motivation, and character in learning) and a learning improvement assessment (assessment that aims to enhance learning). Here's an explanation of assessing during learning.

#### 1) Assessment of attitude

The teacher planned the attitude assessment. This can be observed in the assessment planning documents. Based on the research findings, an assessment plan was prepared within a single material scope. Attitude was assessed through observation. The teacher conducted an attitude assessment based on the assessment rubric. Aside from utilizing an observation tool in the shape of an assessment rubric, the teacher also engaged in assessment by making anecdotal notes when students displayed exceptional attitudes during a lesson.

#### 2) Assessment of Knowledge

An evaluation of students' cognitive comprehension was carried out to gather information throughout the learning process. Typically, teachers establish learning goals, forms, and techniques for evaluating students' knowledge. At the onset of the learning process, the teacher elucidated the learning objectives and assessment criteria that the students were anticipated to accomplish. This assessment was performed according to the set learning objectives. Approaches commonly employed by instructors for teaching Indonesian language include written assessments presented as multiple-choice questions, descriptions, or brief answers. Oral tests were performed.

Teachers use different media to assess knowledge, such as utilizing gadgets through various applications and media images. Applications that are often used by Indonesian language teachers in knowledge assessment are Quizziz, Google Forms, and Wordwall. The assessment's results serve as feedback and a benchmark for the learning process by the teacher. It is through such feedback that obstacles, advantages, and disadvantages arising during learning can be addressed.

#### 3) Assessment of Skills

Assessment of skills carried out by Indonesian language teachers is a performance approach. The assessment procedures were customized to achieve the learning objectives of Capaian Pembelajaran and the different aptitudes connected with Indonesian language, including listening, speaking, presenting, reading, viewing, and writing. The listening ability



tests are readied by the instructor after considering the procedure and outcome evaluations. Nevertheless, little attention has been paid by teachers to the assessment of the process. Most teachers give priority to outcome assessment. The teacher assesses the process through self-evaluation. The evaluation of results is done through peer assessment and performance techniques.

The assessment Elements of listening skills require students to master the receptive skills of the various spoken discourses heard. The teacher conducted a listening assessment according to the micro- and macro-indicators of listening skills in the learning phase. Listening assessment is closely related to cognitive assessment. Listening is a cognitive assessment task. An example of an assessment carried out by the teacher in the listening element of Class VII is a written test with an audio listening stimulus of a descriptive text. The evaluation was carried out to gauge the students' grasp of the information presented in the audio.

Elements of speaking skills require students to master speaking skills. Conditioning is needed so that students can demonstrate speaking skills in various contexts adapted to the constructs of speaking skills, namely verbal productiveness and performance in nature. Examples of assessments carried out by the teacher of speaking elements in Class VII are presentations and discussions. Peer assessment is a widely used technique. Students are assigned to assess peer presentations; for example, presenting procedures using an electronic device verbally with assessment instruments provided by the teacher.

In order to effectively develop reading and viewing skills, students must read according to their own learning phase and individual characteristics. Teachers often teach elements of reading skills in their lessons. Reading comprehension was the key element of reading skill in Phase D. A descriptive text is given to Class VII students as a stimulus for written tests on reading comprehension. Typically, teachers adjust the theme of the descriptive text to align with local wisdom or existing regional potential. For example, at SMPN 1 Muncar, where the potential area is the sea, the descriptive text provided is sea-themed, namely Muncar Harbor, the sacred activities of Muncar's sea picking, the Muncar fish market, and others. Understanding of the content or information in the students' description text was measured using a written test, either multiple choices or descriptions.

In the writing assessment, the instrument was adapted to the constructs and indicators of writing ability, according to the students' learning phase. The forms of assessment of writing skills carried out by the teacher are quite varied; namely, tests of elements of writing ability (the form of the test is intended to reveal linguistic abilities or theories about writing), writing of form reproduction (writing assessment resulting from a certain stimulus, then used as material in writing), and production writing (a form of assessment produced without any stimulus, but arranged based on a particular purpose, section, form, or type of essay). However, few teachers have conducted all the three forms of assessment. Teachers often give production-writing assignments without providing a stimulus. This is due to the teachers' lack of understanding of the constructs and indicators of writing skills and appropriate assessment techniques. The assessments of writing skills typically take the shape of a written exam that incorporates self-assessment and peer-assessment methods. This technique is commonly used by teachers to assess the effectiveness of the assessment time.

In addition to the four elements of language skills above, there is one aspect of learning Indonesian: literary appreciation. Literary appreciation skills include listening to, speaking, reading, and writing literature. Literary appreciation skills are carried out using various techniques and forms, according to the learning objectives of learning achievements. Literary appreciation skills are not only carried out by teachers in face-to-face classroom



learning but also by teachers who use electronic media. Several teachers have used several applications in the assessment of literary appreciation, one of which is the flipped application. Students can upload videos that can be accessed by teachers and other students. Thus, teachers and other students can provide comments, responses, and video assessments.

### **Summative Assessment**

The teacher's implementation of summative assessment guaranteed the attainment of overarching learning objectives. A summative assessment can be administered after learning concludes, such as at the end of a unit of material, the end of a semester, or the end of a phase (Anggraena, et al., 2022; Kasman & Lubis, 2022). Many educators employ summative assessment at the conclusion of the learning process. Some teachers implement summative assessments for two or more learning objectives at the same time, depending on teacher and school policy considerations. Educators utilize summative assessment to compute grades at the culmination of the semester, school year, and/or academic level. These assessments are relevant to the concepts being taught.

The results reveal that there is a similarity in the timing of summative assessments in every school, to be administered both mid-semester and end-of-semester. An assessment administered at mid-semester is commonly known as a midterm summative assessment, while the one given at the end of semester is typically referred to as a summative assessment. Schools that implement this usually carry out summative assessments according to the schedule of PTS (assessment at middle semester) and PAS/PAT (assessment at the end of semester/year) grades VIII and IX (which apply the 2013 curriculum) and are carried out simultaneously. With this policy, teachers find it difficult to vary forms and techniques of assessment. Teachers also do not have sufficient time to follow the results of this summative assessment. Some schools fully surrender the time for carrying out this assessment to their respective teachers.

### **Constraints in Assessment**

The execution of the Merdeka Curriculum varied across different schools. This greatly influenced the assessment model implemented by each junior high school in the Banyuwangi Regency. The obstacles that emerged in the assessment focused more on the aspects of teacher competence and school policies.

#### **1) Teacher Competence**

The results indicate that most Indonesian language educators lack a comprehensive grasp of the core principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. This deficiency in understanding encompasses aspects such as (1) the capacity to interpret Indonesian Language Learning Outcomes in accordance with different levels and phases, and (2) discernment of the distinctions between formative and summative assessments, as well as their respective functions, (3) understanding of the concept of differentiated learning, (4) understanding of the level of thinking in the preparation of questions and (4) understanding of constructs, micro indicators and macro indicators on the four language skills and appreciation of literature is still lacking. These findings are supported by the research findings of Zulaikha et al. (2022); Rahayu & Rossari, (2021); and Nurulaeni & Rahma, (2022). According to their study, teachers face challenges in choosing the suitable form and type of assessment to achieve learning objectives because they lack a full understanding of Merdeka Curriculum-based evaluations.

#### **2) School Policy**

Challenges encountered in assessing Indonesian language learning within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum are interconnected with school policies. These challenges encompass issues such as (1) incomplete comprehension of the Merdeka Curriculum concept



among school stakeholders, (2) inadequate school facilities, and (3) learning supervision activities that have not been maximized. Several previous studies have shown that obstacles faced by teachers in assessment are related to teacher competency; however, obstacles related to school policies have not yet been thoroughly researched.

### Conclusion

The results of this study conclude that the evaluation of Indonesian language learning in Banyuwangi Regency's junior high schools using the Merdeka Curriculum incorporates both formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment serves to provide feedback for enhancing the learning journey, while summative assessment appraises the accomplishment of learning goals. The instructor undertakes two formative assessments within the course of learning: an initial diagnostic assessment at the outset and a continuous assessment. Evaluations conducted during the learning process encompass the appraisal of attitudes, knowledge, and skills. The forms and assessment techniques used by teachers vary according to the learning objectives and elements of their language skills. The teacher administers summative assessment upon completion of a specific topic or multiple topics simultaneously. Summative assessment is part of calculating the value of the report card. Obstacles that commonly occur in the assessment of learning Indonesian are related to two factors: the teacher's competency in assessment and the Independent Curriculum, as well as constraints related to school policies.

### Recommendation

Based on the results obtained in this study, the following key recommendations for ; (1) future researchers should conduct deeper research on other aspects of the Merdeka Curriculum, both at the regional and national levels; (2) teachers and school stakeholders need to increase competence in the concept of the Merdeka Curriculum through self-development programs and maximize learning supervision activities; and (3) teachers can improve formative and summative assessments using various techniques and instruments.

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