



## **IMPROVING THE COMPETENCE OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS THROUGH THE USE OF THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNING COMMUNITY (KOMBEL) IN SOPPENG REGENCY**

### **ASESMENT DIAGNOSTIK DALAM PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA INDONESIA (STUDI KASUS DI SMP NEGERI 1 WATAN SOPPENG KECAMATAN LALABATA KABUPATEN SOPPENG)**

**Asriani<sup>1</sup>, Syahrudin<sup>2</sup>, Aliem Bahri<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Magister Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar

<sup>1</sup> asrianispendu@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, syahrudin@unismuh.ac.id<sup>2</sup>, aliembahri@unismuh.ac.id<sup>3</sup>

\*email Koresponden: [asrianispendu@gmail.com](mailto:asrianispendu@gmail.com)

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#### **Abstract**

This study aims to describe the implementation of diagnostic assessments in Indonesian language learning at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng, Lalabata District, Soppeng Regency, as well as identify the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing diagnostic assessments in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum. This study also examines the factors that affect the success of the implementation of diagnostic assessments in the school. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. Data was collected through observations, interviews, and questionnaires to the teachers and students involved. Data analysis was carried out thematically to obtain a holistic picture of the implementation of diagnostic assessments. The results of the study show that the implementation of diagnostic assessments at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng is in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum, although there are still some challenges. The main obstacles faced by teachers include the diversity of students' abilities, limited facilities and infrastructure, and teachers' inadequate understanding of diagnostic assessments. Factors that affect the implementation of diagnostic assessments include teacher readiness, school support, large number of students, and the diversity of student learning styles. This study suggests that more intensive training for teachers be carried out and the improvement of facilities that support diagnostic assessments so that the implementation of assessments is more effective and in accordance with the needs of students.

**Keywords:** Diagnostic Assessment, Indonesian Learning, Independent Curriculum, Challenges, Influencing Factors



### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pelaksanaan asesmen diagnostik dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng, Kecamatan Lalabata, Kabupaten Soppeng, serta mengidentifikasi hambatan-hambatan yang dihadapi oleh guru dalam mengimplementasikan asesmen diagnostik sesuai dengan prinsip Kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian ini juga mengkaji faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi keberhasilan pelaksanaan asesmen diagnostik di sekolah tersebut. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan angket kepada guru dan siswa yang terlibat. Analisis data dilakukan secara tematik untuk memperoleh gambaran holistik mengenai pelaksanaan asesmen diagnostik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan asesmen diagnostik di SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng sudah sesuai dengan prinsip Kurikulum Merdeka, meskipun masih terdapat beberapa tantangan. Hambatan utama yang dihadapi guru meliputi keberagaman kemampuan siswa, keterbatasan sarana dan prasarana, serta pemahaman guru yang belum sepenuhnya memadai tentang asesmen diagnostik. Faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pelaksanaan asesmen diagnostik antara lain kesiapan guru, dukungan sekolah, jumlah siswa yang besar, serta keberagaman gaya belajar siswa. Penelitian ini menyarankan agar dilakukan pelatihan yang lebih intensif bagi guru dan peningkatan fasilitas yang mendukung asesmen diagnostik agar implementasi asesmen lebih efektif dan sesuai dengan kebutuhan siswa.

**Kata Kunci :** Asesmen Diagnostik, Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia, Kurikulum Merdeka, Tantangan, Faktor Pengaruh

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia has a very important role in preparing the younger generation to face the challenges of an increasingly complex era. One of the crucial aspects of education is assessment, which is used to assess the extent of students' ability to master the competencies that have been determined. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, assessments not only function as a tool for evaluating learning outcomes, but also as a means to identify the needs and problems of students in the early stages of learning, known as diagnostic assessments (Sugiarto, 2023).

Diagnostic assessment is a type of assessment that is carried out before or at the beginning of learning to find out the initial condition of students. With this assessment, teachers can get an idea of the basic abilities that students have, their strengths and weaknesses, and their readiness to participate in future learning. In the context of Indonesian learning, diagnostic assessments are very important, considering the importance of language skills that must be mastered by students at the junior high school level (Maryani, 2023).

Indonesian language learning in junior high school has a very strategic goal, namely to develop four main skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills are very important, not only to support the success of Indonesian learning itself, but also to support students' understanding of various other subjects. Therefore, diagnostic assessments in Indonesian learning can help identify the extent to which students master these skills from the start, as well as design more effective interventions (Laila et al., 2024).



Although diagnostic assessments have many benefits, their application in learning in Indonesia, especially in junior high schools, still faces various challenges. One of the obstacles that is often found is the diversity of students' abilities in one class. Students with different backgrounds, both in terms of academic ability and learning characteristics, often cause teachers to have difficulty in designing assessments that suit the needs of all students. It becomes more complex when the number of students in a class is large enough, which makes it difficult for teachers to pay individual attention (Firdaus et al., 2024).

At SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng, Lalabata District, Soppeng Regency, the implementation of diagnostic assessments has been carried out in accordance with the guidelines of the Independent Curriculum, but not without obstacles. The results of the observations showed that although teachers made efforts to implement diagnostic assessments, they faced difficulties in determining the right instruments and in classifying students based on their learning style or profile. This causes assessment results to not always reflect the real abilities of students, which ultimately reduces learning effectiveness (Azis & Lubis, 2023).

In addition to issues related to instruments and student diversity, one of the factors that affect the success of diagnostic assessments is teacher competence. Many teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng feel that they do not fully understand the concept and purpose of diagnostic assessment, as well as how to implement it effectively. This shows that training and professional development for teachers are needed to improve their understanding and skills in carrying out diagnostic assessments in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum (Rahman et al., 2023).

Another obstacle is the limited facilities and facilities that support the implementation of diagnostic assessments. In many cases, schools in areas such as SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng face challenges in providing adequate facilities, both in print and digital media. Limited technological devices and internet access can hinder teachers from using applications or devices that are needed to collect, analyze, and provide more effective feedback to students (Nugroho et al., 2023).

Thus, to optimize the implementation of diagnostic assessments, support from various parties is needed, be it from schools, the government, or the community. Schools need to provide adequate facilities to support the implementation of assessments, while the government needs to provide training for teachers so that they can master the latest technology in the implementation of assessments. Collaboration between teachers, students, and parents is also important to ensure that assessment results can be translated into more personalized learning steps that are tailored to students' needs (Ministry of Education, 2022).

Based on the background of these problems, this study aims to describe how the implementation of diagnostic assessments is carried out in Indonesian language learning at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng, as well as identify the obstacles faced by teachers. This study will also examine the factors that affect the implementation of diagnostic assessments, which are expected to provide recommendations to improve the quality of diagnostic assessments in Indonesian language learning, especially at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng (Juniardi, 2023).

This research is important to contribute to the development of education, especially in terms of the implementation of diagnostic assessments as part of the Independent Curriculum. By understanding the challenges and factors that affect the implementation of assessments, it is hoped that schools can improve the quality of learning that is more adaptive and responsive



to student needs, as well as provide a deeper understanding of the importance of diagnostic assessments in Indonesian learning in junior high school (Melia & Mukhlis, 2023).

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The main purpose of this study is to describe the implementation of diagnostic assessments in Indonesian language learning at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng, as well as identify the challenges faced by teachers and the factors that affect the assessment implementation process. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being researched by exploring the experiences, perceptions, and practices applied by teachers in the classroom (Creswell, 2018).

Data is collected using several techniques to ensure a comprehensive analysis related to the implementation of diagnostic assessments. The main data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Observations were made to examine the real practices implemented by teachers during the implementation of diagnostic assessments, including the use of assessment tools and how teachers respond to students' learning needs. Interviews were conducted with Indonesian teachers to explore their perceptions of the challenges and benefits of implementing diagnostic assessments. In addition, questionnaires were also distributed to teachers and students to collect data on their experiences and views on the assessment process.

The selection of SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng as the location of the research was based on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the school and the readiness of the school to participate in this research. This school is one of the leading schools in Lalabata District, Soppeng Regency, and was chosen as a case study to examine the implementation of diagnostic assessments at the junior high school level. The participants in the study consisted of Indonesian teachers, school administrators, and 7th and 8th grade students. The collected data is then analyzed using thematic analysis, where data from observations, interviews, and questionnaires are grouped into relevant themes to identify key patterns and issues related to the implementation of diagnostic assessments and the factors influencing them.

This study also uses triangulation techniques, which are utilizing various data sources to increase the validity of findings. The triangulation process allows researchers to verify data obtained from different sources, so that the conclusions drawn become stronger and more trustworthy. With this qualitative approach, this study aims to provide an in-depth and contextual understanding of the diagnostic assessment process in Indonesian language learning at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng.

Data analysis was carried out with a thematic analysis approach, where data from observations, interviews, and questionnaires were grouped into relevant themes. Thematic analysis is very effective for identifying patterns and meanings in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Each theme is analysed to see how it contributes to the overall understanding of the research question, with a primary focus on the challenges faced by teachers and the factors influencing the successful implementation of diagnostic assessments.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to describe the implementation of diagnostic assessments in Indonesian language learning at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng, as well as identify the obstacles faced by



teachers in its implementation. Based on the results of observations, interviews, and questionnaires, this study discusses three main aspects, namely the implementation of diagnostic assessments, the obstacles faced, and the factors that affect the success of the implementation of the assessment at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng.

a) **Implementation of Diagnostic Assessment in Indonesian Language Learning at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng**

The implementation of diagnostic assessments at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng in Indonesian language learning has been carried out in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum. Teachers at this school use diagnostic assessments to identify students' initial abilities, including their understanding of Indonesian materials. This assessment is carried out before starting learning to determine students' readiness to face the material to be taught, as well as to design learning that is more in line with students' needs.

In practice, this diagnostic assessment is carried out by various methods, such as written and oral tests, as well as discussion activities that aim to evaluate students' basic skills in Indonesian, such as reading, writing, and comprehension texts. However, even though it has been carried out in accordance with the guidelines of the Independent Curriculum, the observation results show that teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng still face several challenges in utilizing the assessment results to the maximum to design more appropriate and effective learning.

b) **Obstacles in the Implementation of Diagnostic Assessments**

Several significant obstacles were found in the implementation of diagnostic assessments at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng. One of the main obstacles is the diversity of students' abilities in one class. Teachers have difficulty designing assessment instruments that can cover the entire range of students' abilities, from students with high to lower abilities. This makes the assessment results less reflective of the students' overall abilities, so teachers have difficulty designing learning that is fully responsive to the needs of all students.

In addition, time constraints are a big challenge in conducting in-depth diagnostic assessments. Given the large number of students in each class, teachers do not have enough time to give their full attention to each student and interpret the results of the assessment individually. In addition, many teachers do not fully understand the concept and application of diagnostic assessments well. This limited understanding has an impact on the accuracy of the assessment instruments used, as well as the implementation of sub-optimal follow-ups. In addition, the limited facilities of both print-based and digital learning facilities are also a significant inhibiting factor in the implementation of effective diagnostic assessments.

c) **Factors Affecting the Implementation of Diagnostic Assessments**

Several factors also affect the implementation of diagnostic assessments at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng. First, teacher readiness plays a very important role in the success of diagnostic assessments. Teachers who have a strong understanding of diagnostic assessments will be better able to design appropriate instruments and follow up on assessment results with more appropriate learning steps. However, many teachers need further training to better understand diagnostic assessments and their application in the Independent Curriculum.





Second, school support has a great effect on the smooth implementation of diagnostic assessments. The availability of adequate facilities, such as comfortable classrooms, learning technology devices, and stable internet access, will greatly assist teachers in implementing diagnostic assessments better. In addition, administrative support in providing time for the implementation of the assessment and its follow-up is also important to ensure that the assessment can be carried out optimally.

Third, the large number of students and the diversity of students' learning styles and abilities are challenges in the implementation of effective diagnostic assessments. The larger the number of students in a class, the more difficult it is for teachers to provide personalized attention and feedback to each student. Therefore, a more individualized approach to learning and differentiation of assessments is indispensable to address this problem.

Another factor that affects the success of diagnostic assessments is the motivation and learning profile of students. Students who are highly motivated and understand their learning style will be more active in taking assessments and providing more accurate results. Therefore, a deeper understanding of students' characteristics, such as their learning style and motivation levels, is needed to improve the effectiveness of diagnostic assessments.

## Discussion

The implementation of diagnostic assessments in Indonesian learning at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng has shown significant efforts in identifying the needs of students before starting learning, in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum. Diagnostic assessments carried out by teachers aim to determine the level of students' readiness to face the material to be taught and to design more effective learning strategies. This is in line with the view of Sugiarto (2023) who states that diagnostic assessments are an important first step to understand students' strengths and weaknesses in the learning process.

However, even though the diagnostic assessment at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng has been carried out well, the results of observations and interviews show that there are several obstacles that need to be considered. One of the main challenges found is the diversity of students' abilities in one class. This diversity causes teachers to have difficulty in designing assessment instruments that can fairly cover all students' abilities. Some previous studies have also shown that differences in students' abilities in one class are often a challenge in the application of effective diagnostic assessments (Rahman et al., 2023). Therefore, a more differentiated approach to assessment and a more flexible use of assessment instruments need to be considered to address this issue.

Another obstacle is the limited time available to carry out diagnostic assessments. The large number of students in each class makes it difficult for teachers to give enough individual attention to all students. This results in the feedback provided not always optimal and does not reflect the student's overall ability. These findings are in line with the research of Laila et al. (2024) who stated that limited time for the implementation of assessments can hinder its effectiveness, especially when the number of students in the class is quite large. Therefore, it is important to plan the time better and provide more opportunities for more in-depth assessments, so that teachers can provide more constructive feedback.

One of the factors that affect the success of the implementation of diagnostic assessments is the competence of teachers. Most teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng already



understand the importance of diagnostic assessment, but they still need more intensive training in terms of the preparation of appropriate assessment instruments and the use of technology in assessment. Previous research has shown that teachers' lack of understanding of the concept of diagnostic assessment can hinder the application of these assessments in learning (Melia & Mukhlis, 2023). Therefore, further training on diagnostic assessment techniques, as well as the use of digital-based assessment tools, will greatly help improve the quality of assessment implementation in this school.

Support from schools also plays an important role in the success of diagnostic assessments. Adequate facilities, such as conducive classrooms, learning technology devices, and stable internet access, are needed to support the implementation of diagnostic assessments. The limitations of facilities and infrastructure found at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng, especially in terms of digital media, are one of the obstacles that need to be overcome so that assessments can be carried out more effectively. Research by Sugiarto et al. (2023) revealed that adequate facility support greatly affects the quality of diagnostic assessments conducted in schools.

In addition, motivation and student learning profile are also factors that affect the results of diagnostic assessments. Students who have high motivation to learn and understand their learning style tend to be more involved in assessments and provide more accurate results. These findings are in line with the research of Nugroho et al. (2023), who stated that an understanding of students' learning styles can increase the effectiveness of diagnostic assessments, as assessments can be tailored to the learning characteristics and needs of each student.

Overall, the implementation of diagnostic assessments at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng is in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum, but there are still challenges that need to be overcome, especially in terms of the diversity of students' abilities, time constraints, and teachers' understanding of diagnostic assessments. To overcome these challenges, there needs to be increased training for teachers, improvements in learning facilities, and a more differentiated approach to assessment. Thus, diagnostic assessments can be applied more effectively to support Indonesian learning that is more adaptive and responsive to the needs of students.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng, it can be concluded that the implementation of diagnostic assessments in Indonesian learning is in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum. This assessment is carried out to find out the initial condition of students, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and design more appropriate and effective learning strategies. However, there are several challenges that need to be overcome to optimize the implementation of diagnostic assessments.

The main obstacle found in this study is the diversity of students' abilities in one class which causes difficulties in designing assessment instruments that can fairly cover all student skill ranges. In addition, the limited time available for the implementation of assessments and the limitations of facilities such as digital learning facilities are also factors that affect the effectiveness of diagnostic assessments. Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng also still need further training in terms of preparing appropriate assessment instruments and using technology in assessment.

In addition, the factors of teacher readiness, school support, and student motivation and learning style are key factors in the successful implementation of diagnostic assessments. The



readiness of teachers in designing and interpreting assessment results, as well as facility support from the school, greatly affects the effectiveness of the assessment implementation. Students who have high motivation to learn and understand their learning style also tend to provide more accurate assessment results that reflect their abilities in real terms.

Therefore, to optimize the implementation of diagnostic assessments at SMP Negeri 1 Watansoppeng, it is recommended that training for teachers be increased related to techniques and the use of diagnostic assessments more effectively. In addition, there is a need to improve learning facilities, especially in terms of digital media and internet access, to support the implementation of more effective diagnostic assessments. With these efforts, it is hoped that diagnostic assessments can function optimally in supporting Indonesian learning that is more adaptive and responsive to student needs.

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