

Determination of the Assessment System for German Language Learning Based on the Merdeka Curriculum in West Seram and Central Maluku

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Abstract

This research aims to evaluate the assessment system for German language learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum in the West Seram and Central Maluku regions. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. The findings indicate a contradiction where 65% of teachers perceive the current assessment quality as inadequate, yet the same percentage also believe it meets educational needs, highlighting a disparity between perception and practice. The study recommends adopting a more comprehensive, competency-based assessment model to better align with the Merdeka Curriculum. The current assessments are predominantly focused on cognitive aspects, lacking integration of speaking and listening skills. This study identifies challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, including limited resources and varying teacher understanding. Proposed recommendations include the adoption of a more comprehensive competency-based assessment system, authentic assessments, performance rubrics, and portfolios to document student progress. It is hoped that the results of this research will enhance the quality of German language learning and effectively support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keywords: *German Language Assessment, Merdeka Curriculum, Competency-Based Evaluation, Authentic Assessment*

Introduction

The quality of education has become a primary focus in the development of the Indonesian educational system, particularly with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This curriculum aims to provide flexibility for students to develop their potential, necessitating a more relevant and adaptive assessment system that can holistically measure language skills, especially in foreign languages like German. In regions such as Central Maluku and West Seram, the teaching of German faces unique challenges, including limited resources, the availability of competent teachers, and diverse cultural backgrounds among students.

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The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes competency-based assessments that encompass attitudes, knowledge, and skills, highlighting the need for an assessment system that aligns with both the curriculum's demands and local educational contexts. According to educational theories, such as Constructivism, learning is an active process where students construct their understanding and knowledge of the world through experiences and reflecting on those experiences. This theory supports the idea that assessments should not only evaluate cognitive understanding but also practical skills and attitudes towards the subject matter.

Furthermore, the principles of Authentic Assessment suggest that evaluations should be reflective of real-world tasks and challenges, allowing students to demonstrate their competencies in meaningful contexts. This approach is particularly relevant in language learning, where the ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations is paramount. Additionally, formative assessment theories emphasize the importance of ongoing feedback and adjustments in teaching strategies to enhance student learning outcomes. As Wilman (2023) notes, effective assessment practices should be designed to accommodate diverse learning needs and reflect the developmental stages of students, ensuring that learning becomes meaningful and enjoyable.

Moreover, Haryati (2023) emphasizes that the Merdeka Curriculum encourages teachers to utilize various teaching methods to help students develop competencies, indicating that assessment should also adapt to these diverse methodologies. Similarly, according to research, the assessment system in the Merdeka Curriculum is designed to measure not only cognitive understanding but also practical skills and attitudes, which is crucial for language learning. Lastly, experts argue that the transition from traditional assessment methods to more holistic approaches is essential for fostering a learning environment that prioritizes student engagement and real-world application.

In addition, the role of teacher training and professional development is critical in the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. As highlighted by Marantika and Tomasouw (2024), ongoing professional development for teachers is necessary to equip them with the skills and knowledge to effectively assess student competencies in a dynamic educational landscape. When using assessment as learning in the classroom, peer and self-assessment are effective approaches to enhance learning (Tomasouw and Marantika., 2023). This is particularly important in regions like Central Maluku and West Seram, where teachers may face additional challenges due to geographical and socio-economic factors.

This research aims to evaluate the assessment system for German language learning under the Merdeka Curriculum in Central Maluku and West Seram. It addresses limitations in current assessment practices, such as over-reliance on cognitive testing, and varying levels of teacher readiness. By identifying these challenges, the study proposes a model that enhances assessment quality and supports the implementation of competency-based, authentic learning in the classroom.

Method

The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive approach, aimed at obtaining detailed, objective, and in-depth information regarding the implementation of the assessment system and German language learning using the Merdeka Curriculum. The research is conducted in two high schools: SMAN 1 in West Seram and SMAN 23 in Central Maluku, involving a sample of 30 German language teachers from SBB and 50 teachers from SMAN 23 Malteng. The study spans from July to August 2024.

Prior to the main research, a field study was conducted to gather data and information about the conditions and atmosphere of German language learning in the schools. This initial phase included observations and interviews with teachers to understand the existing assessment practices and challenges they face. Following this, a questionnaire was developed containing statements related to the components of assessment and German language learning. Coordination with the schools and German language teachers was

essential for determining the sample and discussing the materials used in teaching German. The research also involved the preparation of instruments and their application in the classroom.

The research procedure followed four experiential learning stages adapted to German language instruction: (1) Concrete Experience, (2) Reflective Observation, (3) Abstract Conceptualization, and (4) Active Experimentation. These phases were applied during data collection and classroom observations. The sample consisted of 80 German language teachers selected through purposive sampling from two public high schools. Instrument validation was carried out through expert consultation and pilot testing.

Additionally, the research aims to address issues such as the limitations of assessment instruments, the adaptation of the assessment system to meet the characteristics and needs of students in the region, and the involvement and response of students to the assessment system. The data analysis techniques employed in this research include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

Moreover, the research emphasizes the importance of triangulation to enhance the validity of the findings. This involves cross-verifying data from multiple sources, such as interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the assessment practices in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum. The findings will be used to propose a model of assessment that aligns with the curriculum's goals and effectively supports German language learning in the targeted regions.

In summary, this qualitative descriptive research method provides a robust framework for exploring the complexities of assessment in language education, particularly in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, and aims to contribute valuable insights for educators and policymakers.

Results

The research aims to determine a relevant and applicable assessment system for German language learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum in Central Maluku and SBB Ambon. Through this research, it is hoped that a model of assessment can be formulated that not only improves the quality of German language learning but also effectively supports the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. To obtain accurate data, the research employs several data collection techniques, including interviews, document reviews, and questionnaires.

Results of Interviews with Teachers:

1. Teachers Do Not Understand Assessment Techniques in the Merdeka Curriculum:

The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes more diverse assessments focused on character development, skills, and students' conceptual understanding. Assessment is not limited to exams or written tests but also includes authentic assessments, observations, portfolio assessments, and project assessments. Teachers who do not understand these assessment techniques find it challenging to choose appropriate methods or to implement assessments according to the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. This can hinder the effective application of the curriculum.

2. Teachers Explain That Assessments Conducted Are Adaptations from the 2013 Curriculum:

Assessments in the 2013 Curriculum tend to focus more on test-based assessments that measure students' knowledge and cognitive competencies. Although there are aspects of affective and psychomotor assessments, the emphasis remains on cognitive aspects. Adjusting to the Merdeka Curriculum requires a paradigm shift in assessment. The Merdeka Curriculum encourages more holistic assessments focused on individual development, not just academic results. Therefore, if teachers continue to rely on assessment methods from

the 2013 Curriculum, they may not fully capture students' development in line with the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum.

3. Teachers Have Difficulty Developing Learning Assessments:

Developing assessments that align with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum requires a deep understanding of the learning objectives to be achieved, as well as ways to assess students' competencies in various aspects, including attitudes, skills, and knowledge. Additionally, teachers need to develop assessment tools that can reflect students' abilities in more realistic contexts, such as projects, portfolios, and collaborative tasks. This process requires creativity and skills in designing appropriate assessments, as well as the ability to analyze assessment results comprehensively. Difficulties in developing assessments may stem from a lack of experience or training in using the new and more complex assessment techniques proposed by the Merdeka Curriculum. Overall, the challenges faced by teachers reflect the difficulties in transitioning from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum, which requires changes in how teachers view and implement learning assessments. Teachers need adequate training and support to understand and implement assessment techniques that align with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Results of Document Review on Teaching Modules:

1. Same Assessment Techniques in All Teaching Modules:

In the reviewed teaching modules, it was found that all sessions (from the first to the last) included the same assessment techniques. This may indicate a lack of variation in the assessment approaches used by teachers. Good assessments should accommodate various techniques that align with learning objectives and student needs. For example, if there are different learning objectives for each session, the assessment techniques should also vary (e.g., project-based assessments, written tests, portfolios, or affective assessments). Using the same assessment techniques in every session could lead to a lack of diversity in evaluating students' skills and understanding, and it does not provide a complete picture of their competency achievements.

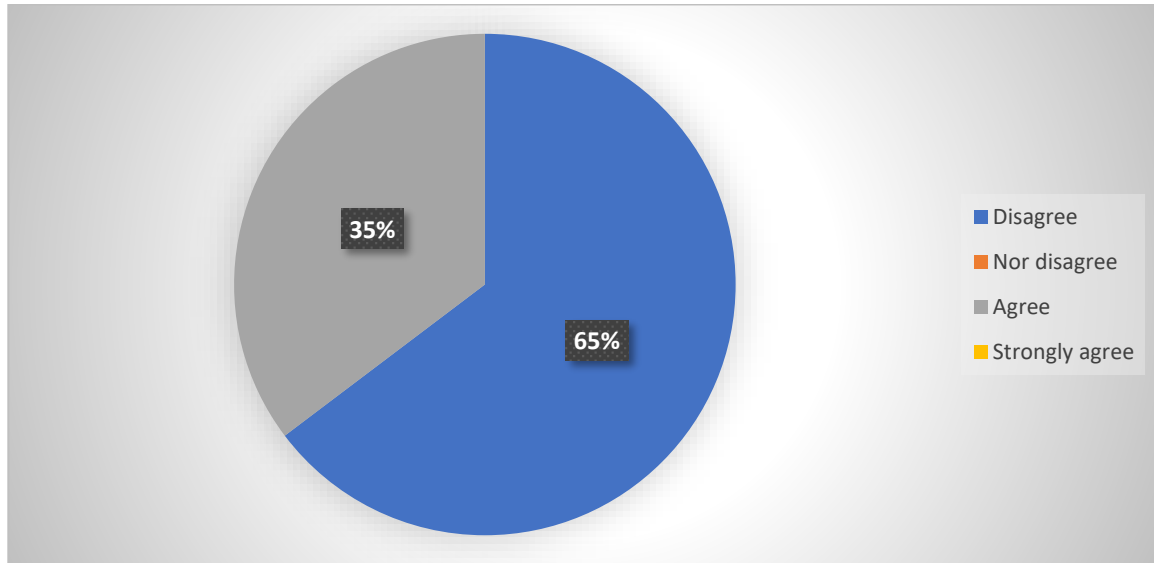
2. No Examples of Assessments Used by Teachers:

This finding indicates that in the available teaching modules, there are no examples of assessments or assessment instruments used by teachers to measure learning outcomes. In developing effective curricula and teaching modules, it is crucial to provide clear and relevant assessment examples. This helps teachers better understand how to implement the intended assessment techniques and provides guidance in designing or using appropriate assessment tools. Without examples of assessments, teachers find it challenging to create assessment instruments that align with the competencies they aim to achieve. This can also affect the uniformity and quality of assessments conducted in the classroom.

Results of the Questionnaire:

1. Curriculum Suitability

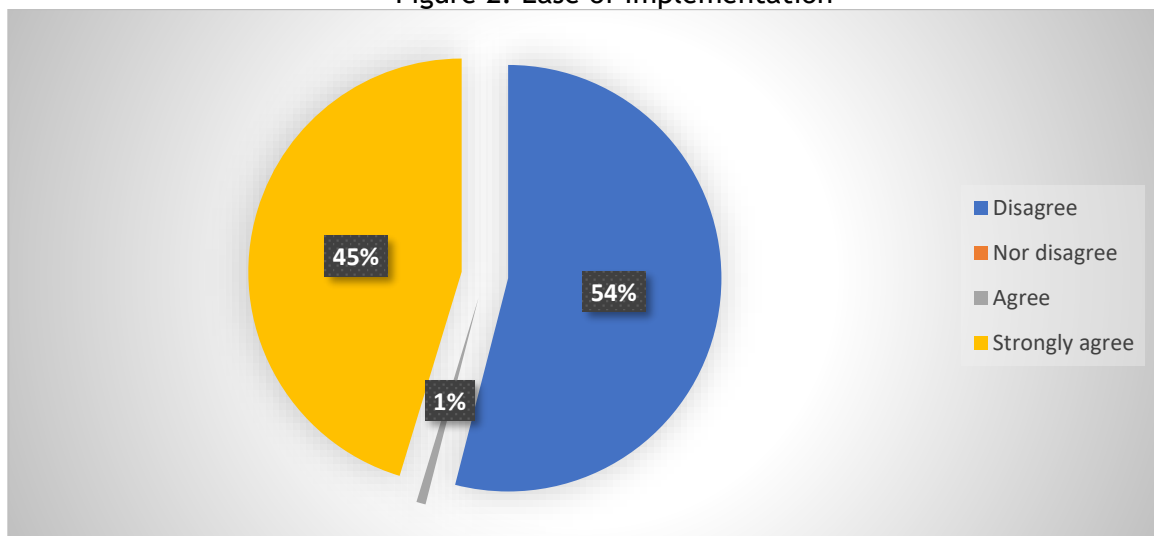
Figure 1. Curriculum Suitability



From the questionnaire regarding the suitability of assessments with curriculum indicators, it was found that 65% of teachers disagreed, while 35% agreed regarding the use of assessments in the learning process adjusted to the curriculum. This reflects a discrepancy in perception or understanding between teachers and the policies or guidelines of the curriculum that should be applied.

2. Ease of Implementation

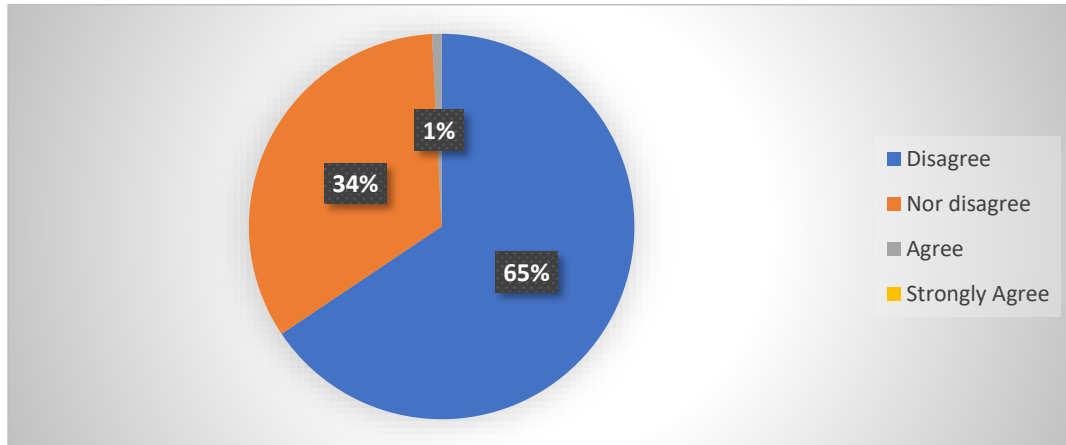
Figure 2. Ease of Implementation



The questionnaire results showed that 54% of teachers disagreed regarding the ease of implementing assessments according to the existing indicators, while 45% strongly agreed, and 1% agreed. This indicates significant difficulties experienced by most teachers in implementing assessment techniques adjusted to the curriculum or applicable educational policies.

3. Quality of Assessment

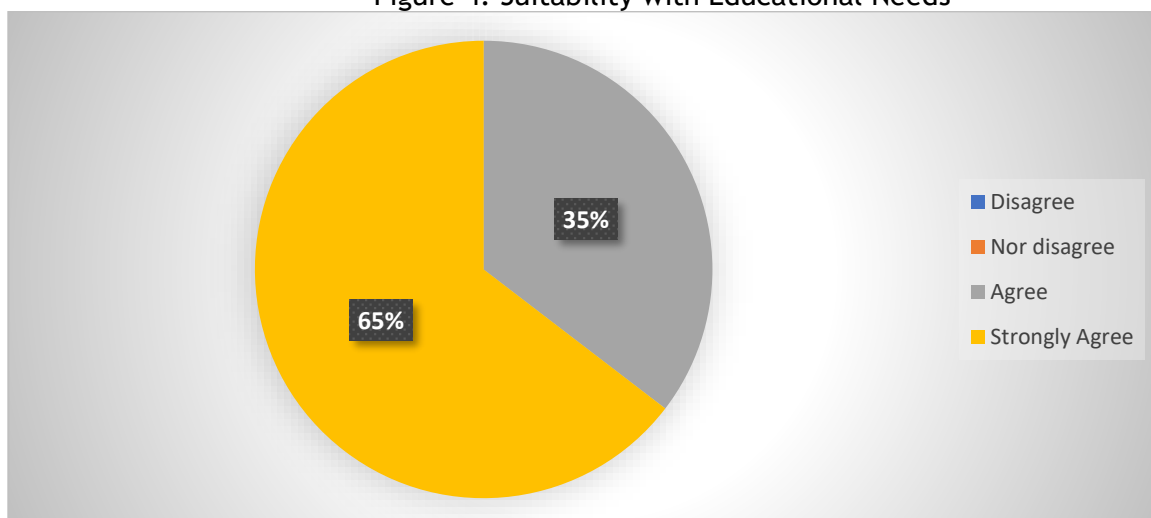
Figure 3. Quality of Assessment



According to the questionnaire data, 65% of teachers disagreed, 34% nor disagreed, and 1% agreed regarding the assessment's alignment with quality indicators. This illustrates significant discrepancies in perception or concerns among teachers regarding the quality of assessments applied in learning. Assessments that align with the curriculum and quality indicators are expected to provide a clear and accurate picture of student achievements; however, the majority of teachers feel that the assessments in place do not meet the expected quality standards.

4. Suitability with Educational Needs:

Figure 4. Suitability with Educational Needs



From the questionnaire results, it was observed that 65% of teachers strongly agreed and 35% agreed with the assessments being suitable for educational needs, even though they used the 2013 Curriculum and implemented the Merdeka Curriculum. This indicates that many teachers feel that the assessments they conduct can adapt to students' educational needs. This suggests that despite the differences in the curricula used (the more structured 2013 Curriculum and the more flexible, student-centered Merdeka Curriculum), the assessments they apply are still considered relevant and aligned with current educational needs.

Discussion

The research on the assessment system for German language learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum in Central Maluku and West Seram highlights several critical challenges and opportunities for improvement. The study utilized qualitative methods, including questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis, to gather insights from teachers and assess the current state of assessments. A significant finding is that 65% of teachers perceive the quality of existing assessments as inadequate, despite acknowledging that these assessments meet educational needs. The contradiction between teachers' perception of assessment quality and their belief in its relevance suggests cognitive dissonance or inadequate training. Teachers may equate familiarity with relevance, hence justifying outdated practices. The findings support the need for a paradigm shift, emphasizing that without structured professional development, implementation of Merdeka Curriculum assessments will remain superficial.

One of the primary issues identified is the predominant focus on cognitive aspects of assessment, which often overlooks essential skills such as speaking and listening. This narrow approach contradicts the holistic goals of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes a comprehensive development of student competencies, including critical thinking and effective communication. The research indicates that many teachers are still relying on traditional assessment methods from the previous 2013 Curriculum, which limits their ability to implement the diverse and reflective assessment techniques advocated by the Merdeka Curriculum.

Furthermore, the study reveals that teachers face significant challenges in developing assessments that align with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. Many lack the necessary training and resources to create effective assessment tools that reflect a competency-based approach. This gap in understanding and skill contributes to the ineffective implementation of the curriculum, resulting in suboptimal student learning outcomes. The research advocates for a shift towards a more comprehensive competency-based assessment system that includes authentic assessments, performance rubrics, and portfolios to document student progress effectively.

Additionally, the findings underscore the need for ongoing professional development and support for teachers to facilitate their transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum. Training programs should focus on equipping educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement diverse and effective assessment techniques that align with the curriculum's goals. By addressing these challenges and implementing the recommended strategies, the quality of German language education in Central Maluku and SBB can be significantly improved, ultimately benefiting students' educational experiences and outcomes.

Conclusion

The research on the assessment system for German language learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum in Central Maluku and West Seram reveals significant challenges and opportunities for improvement in educational practices. The findings indicate that a substantial number of teachers perceive the quality of existing assessments as inadequate, despite recognizing their relevance to educational needs. This highlights a disconnect between teachers' perceptions and the effectiveness of current assessment methods, which predominantly focus on cognitive aspects while neglecting essential skills such as speaking and listening. The study underscores the necessity for a shift towards a more comprehensive competency-based assessment system that incorporates authentic assessments, performance rubrics, and portfolios to better document student progress and foster holistic development. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the critical need for ongoing professional development and support for teachers to facilitate their transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum. By addressing these challenges and implementing the recommended strategies, the quality of German language education can

be significantly enhanced, ultimately benefiting students' learning experiences and outcomes in the region. This research provides a foundational basis for redesigning assessment practices in foreign language education within the Merdeka Curriculum. Its broader implications suggest that similar reforms are necessary across subjects, and underscore the urgency of national policies that prioritize continuous teacher training in assessment design.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research on the assessment system for German language learning under the Merdeka Curriculum in Central Maluku and West Seram, several key recommendations are proposed:

1. Adopt a Competency-Based Assessment System: Schools should implement a more comprehensive assessment framework that emphasizes competency-based evaluations. This includes integrating authentic assessments, performance rubrics, and portfolios to provide a holistic view of student progress and skills beyond cognitive understanding.

2. Enhance Teacher Training and Professional Development: Ongoing training programs should be established to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement the Merdeka Curriculum. This training should focus on innovative assessment methods and the development of practical skills in teaching German.

3. Develop Technical Guidelines for Assessment: To address the lack of clarity and consistency in assessment practices, it is essential to create detailed technical guidelines that align with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. These guidelines should assist teachers in designing assessments that accurately reflect student competencies.

4. Encourage Collaborative Learning and Sharing of Best Practices: Schools should foster a collaborative environment where teachers can share experiences and strategies related to assessment practices. This could involve workshops, peer observations, and collaborative planning sessions to enhance the overall quality of language education.

5. Utilize Technology in Assessment: Incorporating technology into the assessment process can enhance engagement and provide diverse methods for evaluating student performance. Digital tools can facilitate authentic assessments and allow for more interactive and flexible learning experiences.

By implementing these recommendations, the quality of German language education in Central Maluku and SBB can be significantly improved, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes for students.

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