

Developing Authentic Assessment for Differentiated English Learning at SMPN 3 Banyuwangi

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop and examine the feasibility of the authentic assessment to support differentiated learning instruction in English classrooms at SMPN 3 Banyuwangi. In this study, the researcher only uses 3 phases of ADDIE, namely: analysis, design, and development phase. Two types of authentic assessments were developed: video project and infographic project assessments, along with their rubrics., namely: video project assessment, and infographic project assessments and its rubrics. The validation results showed scores of 80.42% from experts and 99.41% from English teachers. In a small group trial, researcher used 6 students as respondents, and from the result of students' evaluation 97,226% for video project assessment and 86,67% for infographic project assessment. From the students' evaluation known as the video and infographic. The evaluation results after the small group trial show that the assessment products studyers have made are very feasible. So, the authentic assessment products, in the form of video project assessments and infographic project assessments, along with their rubrics, can be used in the learning activities.

Keywords: *Differentiated Learning Instruction; Authentic Assessment*

A. Introduction

Since Indonesian Independence was proclaimed in 1945, the curriculum in Indonesia has undergone several revisions to improve the quality of education and respond to societal changes (Anwar, 2020). In the last decade, Indonesian education has implemented the 2013 Curriculum and, more recently, the Merdeka Curriculum (Althaf & Romanti, 2020). The Merdeka Curriculum, officially implemented in the 2022/2023 academic year depending on school readiness, emphasizes student-centered learning and the development of students' interests and talents through flexible learning approaches (Rahayu et al., 2022). One of its main goals is to create active learning environments that support students' potential development (Achmad et al., 2022).

To support these objectives, the Merdeka Curriculum encourages teachers to implement differentiated learning instruction. Differentiated learning is an instructional

approach that adapts learning activities to students' readiness, interests, and learning styles (Tomlinson, 2014). Through differentiated instruction, teachers are expected to provide more flexible learning experiences that accommodate students' diverse needs (Digna & Widyasari, 2023). The implementation of differentiated learning can be conducted through differentiation of content, process, and product (Tomlinson, 2014). Content differentiation allows teachers to provide materials with varying difficulty levels, process differentiation focuses on the use of diverse learning strategies, while product differentiation gives students opportunities to demonstrate understanding in various forms such as presentations, videos, posters, or projects (Digna & Widyasari, 2023).

In addition to differentiated instruction, assessment also plays an important role in the success of learning implementation. Assessment is essential in English Language Teaching (ELT) because it helps teachers measure students' progress, evaluate learning effectiveness, and provide feedback for improvement (Jannati, 2015). In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, assessment should not only measure students' cognitive achievement but also assess students' ability to apply knowledge in meaningful contexts. The ideal form of assessment is regulated in Permendikbudristek Number 17 of 2021 concerning National Assessment, which emphasizes fairness, validity, reliability, literacy, and numeracy competencies.

One assessment approach that aligns with the principles of differentiated learning and the Merdeka Curriculum is authentic assessment. Authentic assessment evaluates students' abilities through meaningful tasks that reflect real-life situations (Abduh, 2019). Unlike traditional or non-authentic assessments that mainly focus on memorization and structured testing, authentic assessment emphasizes students' performance, creativity, problem-solving skills, and communication abilities (Rustaman, 2006). Authentic assessment can be implemented through performance tasks, projects, portfolios, and written products that are closely related to students' real experiences (Sugiri & Priatmoko, 2020). Furthermore, authentic assessment should fulfill the principles of validity, reliability, fairness, transparency, and practicality (Jamrus & Razali, 2019).

However, despite the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and differentiated learning instruction in many schools, the integration of authentic assessment that truly accommodates students' differences remains limited. Based on

preliminary observations conducted at SMPN 3 Banyuwangi, teachers had implemented differentiated instruction and authentic assessment in several English learning activities. Nevertheless, the assessments given to students were still relatively uniform, with limited variation in learning products and simple scoring rubrics. Most students received the same type of assessment regardless of their interests, learning styles, or abilities. In addition, teachers often provided unclear assessment instructions and lacked detailed rubrics aligned with learning objectives.

Previous studies have widely discussed differentiated learning instruction and authentic assessment separately (Digna & Widyasari, 2023; Jamrus & Razali, 2019). However, limited studies specifically focus on developing authentic assessment models integrated with differentiated product assessment in English learning, particularly for procedural text materials in junior high schools implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. This condition indicates a research gap regarding how authentic assessment can be designed to accommodate students' diverse characteristics while maintaining assessment validity and effectiveness.

Therefore, this research aims to develop differentiated authentic assessment innovations for teaching procedural texts in English classes under the Merdeka Curriculum. The study focuses on providing various product assessment options and developing more detailed scoring rubrics that align with students' learning needs and instructional objectives. It is expected that the developed assessment can support more inclusive, meaningful, and student-centered English learning.

B. Research Method

This study employs a Study and Development (RnD) approach using the ADDIE model, consisting of analysis, design, and development phases. The RnD approach was selected as it allows for the systematic development and testing of authentic assessment tools tailored for differentiated learning instruction, which is the primary focus of this study (Sugiono, 2013). This approach is well-suited for creating new educational products and evaluating their feasibility, particularly in the context of classroom assessments.

The study was conducted at SMPN 3 Banyuwangi, located in Singotrunan Village, Banyuwangi District, East Java, Indonesia. The study took place during the academic year 2023-2024, aligning with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum

in the school. This location was selected because of the school's adoption of differentiated learning instruction and its readiness to incorporate innovative assessment methods into its educational practices.

The population for this study consisted of Grade 7 students at SMPN 3 Banyuwangi, with a focus on class 7A, which includes 30 students. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a smaller group for the trial phase, comprising 6 students (4 female and 2 male). This small group was chosen to evaluate the developed assessment tools in a manageable setting and to gather detailed feedback for further refinement. The selection of this sample size was based on the practical need for in-depth feedback while ensuring that the results could be generalized to a broader student population within the school.

Data collection instruments included questionnaires for needs analysis, expert validation, teacher validation, and student evaluation. The needs analysis questionnaire was used to assess the existing assessment practices and the preferences of both teachers and students regarding assessment methods. The expert and teacher validation questionnaires aimed to measure the quality and relevance of the developed authentic assessments. These instruments were designed using a Likert scale to quantify responses, with scores ranging from "very good" to "very bad." The validity of these instruments was ensured through expert reviews and pilot testing, while reliability was established by consistent feedback across different respondents.

Data collection was carried out using a combination of documentation, interviews, and questionnaires. Documentation was used to analyze the existing teaching modules and assessment practices in use at SMPN 3 Banyuwangi. Interviews with teachers provided qualitative insights into their experience with differentiated learning and assessment methods. The questionnaires were distributed to teachers, experts, and students to gather quantitative data on the feasibility and effectiveness of the authentic assessments. These steps were followed systematically to ensure comprehensive data collection that reflected the perspectives of all stakeholders involved.

For data analysis, descriptive statistical methods were applied to the results of the questionnaires. The analysis focused on calculating average scores and categorizing the assessments based on feasibility and effectiveness. Data from the expert and teacher

validation questionnaires were analyzed to determine whether the developed assessment tools met the required standards for implementation in the classroom. Student evaluation data were analyzed to assess the impact of the authentic assessments on student engagement and learning outcomes. These analyses helped determine the overall feasibility of the assessment tools and provided actionable insights for further refinement.

C. Research Finding and Discussion

This study aimed to develop authentic assessment tools for differentiated learning instruction in an English classroom at SMPN 3 Banyuwangi, focusing on procedural texts. The study employed the ADDIE model, covering the analysis, design, and development phases. The findings highlight the feasibility and effectiveness of differentiated authentic assessments in supporting student engagement and learning.

The needs analysis revealed that teachers had implemented several forms of authentic assessment, such as posters, mock-ups, and short stories. However, the assessments were still generally uniform and had not fully accommodated students' diverse interests and learning preferences. Most students were assessed using the same format regardless of their learning styles or abilities. At the same time, students expressed interest in more creative and collaborative assessments that allowed them to demonstrate their understanding in different ways. These findings indicate that differentiated assessment practices were still limited, especially in teaching procedural texts.

The developed assessment tools consisted of video project and infographic project assessments. The validation results from experts and English teachers demonstrated that the developed tools were highly feasible for classroom implementation. The expert validation score reached 4.021, while the English teacher validation score was 4.97, both categorized as "very feasible." These results suggest that the assessment tools were considered appropriate in terms of content, language, instructions, and alignment with learning objectives. Feedback from validators mainly focused on improving rubric clarity and strengthening the connection between assessment indicators and instructional goals. After revision, the assessment rubrics became more detailed and measurable, which improved the quality of the assessment instruments.

The small group trial also showed positive responses from students. The video project assessment received an overall score of 4.861, categorized as "very feasible."

Students rated the assessment highly in terms of clarity, visualization, collaboration, and its impact on learning. Similarly, the infographic project assessment obtained an overall score of 4.242, which also fell into the “very feasible” category. Although the language attribute aspect received a slightly lower score compared to other indicators, students still considered the assessment understandable and useful.

These findings indicate that differentiated authentic assessments can increase students’ engagement and participation in English learning. Students appeared more motivated when they were given opportunities to choose assessment formats that matched their interests and abilities. The option to complete either a video project or infographic project encouraged creativity, collaboration, and active learning. This supports the argument of Fauzia and Hadikusuma Ramadan (2023) that differentiated learning enhances students’ motivation because learners are given greater autonomy and flexibility in demonstrating their understanding.

In addition, the findings confirm that authentic assessment is not only useful for measuring learning outcomes but also for creating meaningful learning experiences. Students were able to connect classroom learning with real-world tasks through project-based assessments. This result is consistent with previous studies stating that authentic assessment improves student engagement and learning motivation (Ardianti & Mauludin, 2017; Anjarsari & Febriani, 2022).

Another important finding is that although differentiated instruction has been widely discussed in educational theory (Tomlinson, 2014), its implementation in classroom assessment remains limited, particularly in Indonesian EFL contexts. This study contributes by providing a practical example of how differentiated learning instruction can be integrated with authentic assessment in English classrooms. The developed assessment tools demonstrate that differentiated authentic assessment is feasible, applicable, and beneficial for supporting student-centered learning under the Merdeka Curriculum.

Research Discussion

The development and validation of authentic assessment tools for differentiated learning instruction showed positive results, indicating that the developed assessments were feasible, relevant, and appropriate for English learning in SMPN 3 Banyuwangi.

Both expert validators and students gave high evaluation scores, suggesting that the assessments successfully supported students' engagement and accommodated diverse learning needs.

The findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasize the effectiveness of authentic assessment in improving student participation and meaningful learning experiences (Abduh, 2019; Rustaman, 2006). In this study, students showed strong interest in video and infographic projects because these assessments allowed them to express their creativity and collaborate with peers. This result supports the theory of differentiated learning proposed by Tomlinson (2014), which states that students learn more effectively when instruction and assessment are adjusted to their interests, readiness, and learning preferences. The positive student responses occurred because the assessments provided flexibility and choice, enabling students to demonstrate their understanding in ways that suited their abilities.

The high validation scores from experts and teachers also indicate that the developed assessment tools fulfilled important principles of authentic assessment, particularly validity, practicality, and transparency (Jamrus & Razali, 2019). The experts highlighted that the use of detailed rubrics helped clarify assessment expectations and made the scoring process more objective. This finding supports Damayanti et al. (2017), who argued that authentic assessment should provide clear criteria connected to real-world learning tasks. The improvements made during the revision process, especially in rubric alignment with learning objectives, contributed to the high feasibility scores because teachers found the assessment easier to implement and evaluate.

Compared to traditional assessments commonly used in Indonesian classrooms, the differentiated authentic assessments developed in this study created a more student-centered learning environment. Previous studies reported that conventional assessments often focus only on memorization and uniform testing formats (Rustaman, 2006). In contrast, the current study found that students became more active and motivated when they were allowed to choose assessment products, such as videos or infographics. This happened because students felt more involved in the learning process and had opportunities to connect the learning material with their creativity and personal interests. These findings align with Fauzia and Hadikusuma Ramadan (2023), who explained that

differentiated learning increases students' motivation and engagement by providing meaningful learning choices.

This study also extends previous research by integrating differentiated learning instruction with authentic assessment in the context of procedural text learning in Indonesian EFL classrooms. While earlier studies separately discussed differentiated learning (Tomlinson, 2014) and authentic assessment (Damayanti et al., 2017), limited research has examined how both approaches can be combined in classroom assessment practices. The findings suggest that the integration of differentiated instruction and authentic assessment can help teachers create more inclusive assessments that accommodate students' different learning characteristics.

In conclusion, the results demonstrate that differentiated authentic assessment is effective in supporting student engagement, creativity, collaboration, and meaningful learning. The positive outcomes occurred because the assessments provided flexibility, clear evaluation criteria, and opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding in authentic ways. Therefore, this study contributes practical insights for teachers who aim to implement student-centered assessment practices under the Merdeka Curriculum.

D. Conclusion

This study successfully developed and validated authentic assessment tools for differentiated learning instruction in an English classroom at SMPN 3 Banyuwangi. The findings indicate that both video project and infographic project assessments were highly feasible, receiving positive feedback from experts, teachers, and students. These assessments effectively supported differentiated learning by accommodating students' diverse needs and preferences, enhancing their engagement and learning outcomes. The study contributes to the literature by combining differentiated learning with authentic assessment, offering a practical model for implementation in Indonesian classrooms.

While the study provides valuable insights, it is limited by the small sample size and the focus on a single school. Future studies should explore the long-term impact of authentic assessments in diverse classrooms and across different subjects. Additionally, expanding the sample size and examining the role of technology in supporting authentic assessments could further enrich the findings and provide broader applicability to various educational contexts.

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