# How Do English Teachers Prepare Diagnostic Assessments for Students? Insight from Teachers' Experiences in an Indonesian Remote Island

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## 1. Introduction

Evaluation is a vital need in the world of teaching and learning. An evaluation consists of measurement and assessment activities. According to Ugodulunwa (2008), assessment involves the evaluation of an individual's behavior, and the outcomes are used to inform decisions related to the individual, the curriculum, instructional methods, or a program. Assessment can also be described as the process of collecting and recording information about an individual's knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and convictions, which serves as a basis for making judgments or evaluations.

In general, there are two popular kinds of assessment carried out by teachers in schools that are still considered as traditional assessment models namely the formative assessments and summative assessments. Jang and Wagner (2014) state that the traditional assessment is not suitable to provide certain information needed to help learners. Traditional assessment does not provide any special kinds of feedback to be shown to the learners in order to help them solve their problems. Besides, many teachers often do not like to make a test. They also find difficulties when preparing a test such as they feel confused about how to standardize the test. Teachers sometimes do not feel sure of what the tests actually trying to assess (Rovikasari et al, 2020). Therefore, the needs toward another kind of assessment become very important in order to understand the student's problems that have not been solved.

By the rise of Merdeka Curriculum lately, another kind of assessment had been used again to support the teaching and learning. It is called diagnostic assessment. This diagnostic assessment becomes an obligation to do in teaching along with the two other assessments, formative and summative. It is related to the statement from Kemdikbud (2020) that there must be a diagnostic assessment at the beginning of learning in the Merdeka Curriculum. The implementation of diagnostic assessment to be an important part in Merdeka Curriculum shows that Indonesian government especially the Ministry of Education really put their serious attention to improve teaching and learning in relation to the variety of student's learning needs.

A diagnostic assessment aims to determine the skills of students, their level of knowledge, and their understanding in the beginning of learning, lesson or a unit. In other words, it functions to know the prior knowledge or prior skills of students. This assessment will test the students based on what they already understand and then allow the teacher to make an adjustment to the curriculum that suits the students' need. Diagnostic assessment can also function to build the strengths of students, clarify their miscomprehensions or misunderstanding, arrange the curriculum to meet the variety of students' need, and introduce new ideas or concept. (Rovikasari et al, 2020).

Several studies show that diagnostic assessment improves learning outcomes. Rovikasari et al (2020) conducted a study and found that the implementation of the diagnostic test in the form of multiple choice questions is very useful for teachers. They concluded that implementing a diagnostic assessment at the beginning of learning can create a powerful contribution to the learning improvement. Nikmard and Tavassoli (2020) reported enhanced reading skills in EFL students due to diagnostic assessments. Oviedo and González (2013) observed substantial progress in a dyslexic boy's reading and writing skills after diagnostic assessment. Sun and Suzuki (2013) highlighted the positive feedback from teachers using cognitive diagnostic assessments.

Meanwhile, Indonesian government had built their effort to integrate the diagnostic assessment along with formative and summative assessment as the main part in the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum to improve Indonesian education system. As Iskak et al (2023) said in their research entitled, "Implementation of Diagnostic Assessment as One of the Steps to Improve Learning in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum" that in the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum there are three assessments that need to be applied namely diagnostic assessment, formative assessment and summative assessment. The diagnostic assessment itself is an assessment that is specifically applied to identify the students' strengths and weaknesses, the competencies, that will end up in creating a learning design based on student competencies and conditions. (Kemdikbud in Iskak et al, 2023).

Furthermore, the use of diagnostic assessment is important to support the implementation of differentiated learning in Merdeka Curriculum. A differentiated learning or differentiated instruction is a learning strategy used in Merdeka Curriculum that accommodate the various need of students to be turned to meaningful learning. According to Tomlinson in Andini (2016), differentiated learning is a learning that creates a diverse class by providing opportunities to obtain content or information, process ideas and improve the result of each student so that they will learn more effectively. In short, teacher should first know the different need of their students before conducting a learning. Teacher needs a kind of assessment to map those various need in class. Therefore, the diagnostic assessment is obligated to do before implementing the differentiated learning.

Besides that, the implementation of Merdeka Curiculum is being accelerated lately especially in Eastern Indonesia. In the researcher's region in Banggai Kepulauan Central Sulawesi, the implementation of Merdeka Curiculum continuous to be driven. Even, the Ministry of Education has several times given quotas for the Guru Penggerak Program to train teachers in Banggai Kepulauan as their preparation for the implementation of Merdeka

Curriculum. Some schools in this district had already implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in the teaching and learning.

Based on those matters above, the researcher is highly interested in investigating the preparation of diagnostic assessment by several English teachers in the schools that have implemented Merdeka Curriculum in Banggai Kepulauan, Central Sulawesi. This study aims to reveal all the activities done by the English teacher in preparing the implementation of diagnostic assessment.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Assessment

Assessment is the process of collecting various types of information to create a comprehensive overview reflecting the achievement of goals and objectives (Magno, 2010). In the same point of view, Kazemi and Tavassoli (2020) stated that assessment is an ongoing process that functions to examine how well students meet the achievements or expectations of a particular teaching program. It means that an assessment aims to know the information of students in order to be analyzed for improving teaching and learning. Assessment can also be described as the process of collecting and recording information about an individual's knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and convictions, which serves as a basis for making judgments or evaluations. It is in line with the statement of Ugodulunwa (2008), assessment involves the evaluation of an individual's behavior, and the outcomes are used to inform decisions related to the individual, the curriculum, instructional methods, or a program.

Generally, assessment is divided into three types namely diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment. These three types of assessments actually are based on their function and also on the time they are carried out. A diagnostic assessment will identify students' strengths and weaknesses to support learning and guide instruction. It begins by recognizing challenges through exercises or tests and then addresses these issues (Nikmard and Tavassoli, 2020; Rovikasari et al, 2020). Meanwhile, a formative assessment actively involves students in their learning, fostering higher-order thinking skills. It uses information gathered during the process to identify learning needs and modify teaching methods (Looney, 2011; Hasanuddin and Talib, 2017). Then, a summative assessment will evaluate overall student performance at the end of a learning process, often for purposes like certification or admission to higher education (Looney, 2011; Hasanuddin and Talib, 2017).

### 2.2. Diagnostic assessment

According to Jang and Wagner (2014) diagnostic assessment is basically aims at determining learners' strengths and weaknesses as the information that become target of improvement in the further instruction. In agreement with that, Suryadi & Husna in Iskak et al (2023) stated that diagnostic assessment has aims at identifying the students' competencies, strengths, and weaknesses. Then, the results of this assessment can be used as guidance in planning a learning that is suitable for students' need. In another view, diagnostic assessments focus on both strengths and weaknesses in students' knowledge (Guduru and Bommanaboina, 2021; Kazemi and Tavassoli, 2020).

Diagnostic assessment is divided into two kinds namely the cognitive diagnostic assessment (CDA) and non-cognitive diagnostic assessment. Cognitive Diagnostic Assessment (CDA) functions to test children's learning skills and describes students' cognitive strengths and weaknesses related to processing skills and knowledge structure (Lee & Sawaki, 2009; Leighton & Gierl, 2007). It is regularly conducted at the beginning of new material or subjects (Kemdikbud, 2020). Meanwhile, a non-cognitive Diagnostic Assessment measures students' emotional and psychological aspects, including their interests, hobbies, and social or emotional factors (Tiraswati, 2020; Andini, 2016). It helps teachers design learning based on students' profiles and psychosocial conditions (Peters et al, 2020).

### 2.3. Stages of diagnostic assessment implementation

There are three stages of the diagnostic assessment implementation in the Merdeka Curriculum. Every stage will describe several activities to do to make sure that the process of diagnostic assessment runs well.

#### 2.3.1. Preparation stage

Several steps are involved in the preparation stage, including scheduling, identifying assessment materials aligned with basic competencies, and compiling simple questions. The questions typically consist of ten items: two aligned with the current class level, six from one grade below, and two from two grades below (Kemdikbud, 2020b). Non-cognitive assessments are conducted at the beginning of the year, while cognitive assessments are conducted periodically to monitor knowledge development. Preparing diagnostic assessments involves validating and revising questions through expert analysis and trials to ensure standardization. Non-cognitive assessments

focus on students' interests, learning profiles, and conditions, while cognitive assessments relate to specific subjects (Nurlaelina, 2018).

### 2.3.2. Implementation stage

In carrying out the noncognitive diagnostic assessments, subject teachers can collaborate with counseling guidance teachers or homeroom teachers, while the cognitive diagnostic assessment should be conducted by subject teachers occasionally. It is because the objective is to find out the former competence and the student's development (Darwati, 2023). The cognitive diagnostic assessment can be carried out by checklists, pretests, measurements based on curriculum, and entry slips.

### 2.3.3. Follow up stage

In the follow up stage, the results of diagnostic assessments are analyzed using guidelines, mapping students' learning needs to create appropriate strategies based on interests, conditions, abilities, and profiles (Iskak et al, 2023). Students are grouped based on their average class grades: those at the average follow the standard learning phase, those below the average receive assistance, and those above the average engage in enrichment activities (Kemdikbud, 2020b). Daily or semester test analyses can also serve as diagnostic tests to identify students needing remedial assessments and additional learning (Nurlaelina, 2018).

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Research design

This study used a qualitative case study approach (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative approach is defined as a method of investigation aimed at comprehending a social or human issue by constructing an intricate, comprehensive portrayal using language, presenting detailed perspectives of participants, and conducted in a natural setting (Creswell, 2014). Meanwhile, a case study is research focused on a particular case to be observed and analyzed comprehensively. Yin (2002) states that the case study research method is the right strategy to use in a study that uses the research questions of how and why, has little time to control the events under study, and focuses the research on contemporary phenomena. Therefore, a qualitative case study approach is the examination of a phenomenon or a case within real life event.

### 3.2. Subject and location of the research

The research was conducted from February to March 2024 at schools that implement Merdeka Curriculum, especially in English teaching and learning. The participants in this research were three English teachers from two remote junior high schools, chosen through purposive sampling method and used data saturation theory.

In qualitative research, the number of participants interviewed has no conditions, but data collection will be stopped if it reaches expected saturation (Baker & Edwards, 2012). Saturation is a condition where all the participants answer or show similar content and pattern. This research expected saturation achieved in a total of 3 participants. The participants were selected and determined by considering their expertise and knowledge regarding the implementation of diagnostic assessments in Merdeka Curriculum.

### 3.3. Instruments and procedures of data collection

The data in this research were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. In the interview, the participants were asked several questions related to the preparation of the diagnostics assessment. The interview also was recorded and then transcribed. Meanwhile, the observation and documentation were conducted together at once. The researcher observed and checked the documents related to the assessment, like the schedule of the assessment, syllabus, and the assessment instruments.

### 3.4. Data analysis

The technique of data analysis used in this research is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a way of analyzing data popularly introduced by Braun & Clarke (2006), whose function is to identify patterns or discover themes from the data obtained by researchers. There were several activities done in this research based on steps of thematic analysis, such as knowing the data very well, organizing the data by coding and generating them to some themes, and analyzing and writing the final data.

## 4. Results

After collecting the data from three respondents and having analyzed them, the researcher showed the finding of the data in three themes related to the preparation of diagnostic assessments by the three English teachers as follows:

4.1.  Scheduling diagnostic assessment

In terms of setting the schedule of assessment, the researcher presented the findings from the interview with the English teachers as follows:

> Extract 1
> "…For the cognitive diagnostic assessment in my own subject, English, the schedule is every time before the next lesson at the beginning of each chapter, it means that next week I will teach it or I will go to chapter 2, today is the last day for chapter 1 so today I will carry out a cognitive diagnostic assessment." (The researcher's translation)

Extract 1 above shows that the first teacher determined the implementation of the cognitive diagnosis assessment based on the completion of learning material. Every time after finishing one material or one chapter and are about to enter a new chapter, a diagnostic assessment will be conducted. This is also in line with what was conveyed by the second and the third teacher in the following two different extracts.

> Extract 2
> "Yes sir. For example, the material, if we come to the new material, I will inform the students that I will carry out a diagnostic assessment about the material we will study next." (The researcher's translation)

> Extract 3
> "…I just usually do an assessment when I finish one KD, when I enter the new KD I will first assess it according to the knowledge I want to know, their prior knowledge. After that, the next assessment will be if I have new material that is still in the same KD but I consider it new material" (The researcher's translation)

Extract 2 and extract 3 above show that in general the schedule for carrying out cognitive diagnostic assessments carried out by the second teacher and third teacher will be determined when they want to enter new material or new KD (*Kompetensi Dasar*/Basic Competencies). So that students indirectly understand that before entering new material there will be a diagnostic assessment, as expressed by the third teacher in the extract below.

> Extract 4
> "Yes, at the beginning, I used to inform them, but because it has become a habit, they already know, oh, we have done the daily tests, we have done the practice, it means that at the end of the lesson we will be told that later we will enter a new KD, a new chapter, which means they will know that there will be an assessment regarding readiness to learn new material" (The researcher's translation)

Extract 4 above shows that both teachers and students have understood that cognitive diagnostic assessments are always carried out after the end of a material or when entering new material. So that all students will prepare themselves for the implementation of the assessment. Differently, non-cognitive assessments also have specific implementation schedule which are always carried out at the beginning of the school year or at the start of a new semester. For the first teacher, the non-cognitive diagnostic assessment was carried out when entering the new semester, as shown in the results of the researcher's interview with the first teacher below.

> Extract 5
> "Yes, ee because we use this non-cognitive diagnostic assessment for all subjects or who teach at that level and all homeroom teachers and guidance counselors who have duties and responsibilities at that level, so we agreed that we would carry it out at the beginning of the previous semester before all teachers start the learning process." (The researcher's translation)

Extract 5 above shows that the results of non-cognitive diagnostic assessments are not only needed by first teacher as subject teacher but are also needed by homeroom teachers and also guidance and counseling teachers. Therefore, the schedule for implementing the diagnostic assessment at the first teacher school was agreed to be held at the beginning of the semester.

Therefore, the interview result from extract 1 to extract 5 shows that each of the English teachers has the schedule of diagnostic assessment implementation and it vary according to the type of the diagnostic assessment itself. The cognitive diagnostic assessment is carried out before entering a new material, new basic competency, or new chapter, while the non-cognitive diagnostic assessment is carried out at the beginning of the semester.

In addition, this difference schedule of the diagnostic assessment implementation is due to the purpose of each type of diagnostic assessment. For example, non-cognitive diagnostic assessments are specifically used to find out the background of students' conditions both physically and psychologically, as expressed by the third teacher in the following interview result.

Extract 6
"…for the non-cognitive, it is to see students' talents and interests and learning profiles so that we can treat them according to their interests and learning profiles." (The researcher's translation)

From the explanation of the the  third teacher in extract 6 above, the aim of carrying out non-cognitive diagnostic assessments is to determine students' interests or talents which will be a benchmark for fulfilling each of their learning needs. In fact, this non-cognitive diagnostic assessment covers broader matters related to the student's condition or what is known as the student profile, as explained by the first teacher in the extract below.

Extract 7
"For our non-cognitive assessment, we chose several indicators that were very important for us to capture. We have to know, for example, the students personal data and then the condition of their family, whether they have intact parents, whether they have father or mother, or whether they live with a father and stepmother. We also capture how far their home from school and what kind of vehicle they used to get to school. Then we also capture their carrying capacity at home, for example whether they had a device that they could use when they had a task, for example a phone, or laptop. For the English subject they have a dictionary or not, for mathematics they have a calculator, at home. That's what we're going to capture. So that later in the learning process there will be no judgment, for example if we give an online assignment and there are students who do not carry it out, we are already angry, but we don't know their carrying capacity at home, in fact, they have no data credit and so on." (The researcher's translation)

From the explanation in the extract above, the first teacher shows that the non-cognitive diagnostic assessment includes complex matters related to the student's condition, especially when outside of school. This assessment plays an important role in knowing students' readiness to learn and what kind of treatment that is suitable for each student who has a different background. The second teacher also expressed the same thoughts regarding the purpose of non-cognitive diagnostic assessments which specifically focus on finding out students' psychological conditions, as captured in the following data of interview.

Extract 8
"…the non-diagnostic is more about the student's behavior, the student's emotions." (The researcher's translation)

From the results of the interview, it can be seen that the third teacher also understands the purpose of non-cognitive diagnostic assessment (she calls it non-diagnostic) which functions to determine student behaviour so that it can be understood by the teacher and then adjusted to their learning needs in class.
Meanwhile, the aim of implementing cognitive diagnostic assessments in general focuses on students' mastery of the material and their knowledge. This is as explained by the second teacher in the interview conducted by the researcher below.

Extract 9
"Diagnostic assessment is more about students' abilities, for example in the field of study it is students' knowledge about the learning they are given, their initial abilities regarding a material." (The researcher's translation)

From the extract above, the second teacher concludes that the purpose of the cognitive diagnostic assessment is to determine the students' initial abilities which will later become preparation for the next material. The third teacher also explained similar view in the following extract.

Extract 10
"…in my opinion eee cognitive diagnostic assessment is eee carried out to see the learning readiness of each individual student which then becomes a reference eee for us as teachers to prepare learning that suits the eee student's needs,.." (The researcher's translation)

The extract above shows that learning readiness is the main goal that teachers want to know, resulting in the implementation of diagnostic assessments. In the extract, the third teacher emphasizes the importance of seeing the learning readiness of each student through a cognitive diagnostic assessment so that the learning later is in accordance with the needs of students in the class.
Therefore, from the data presented in extract 6 to extract 10, it can be concluded that each type of diagnostic assessment serves different purpose. The non-cognitive diagnostic assessment aims to know the students' interest, condition, and behavior, while the cognitive diagnostic assessment focuses on finding out the students' prior knowledge and their readiness in learning. To know the readiness of students in learning, one thing that teacher should do is to identify the assessment material that will be tested on students.

4.2. Identifying material for the assessment

In the researcher's interview with the first teacher, she revealed her preparations regarding identifying assessment materials before she carried out the diagnostic assessment as outlined in the following extract.

> Extract 11
> "…for the cognitive assessment for my own subjects, I did the preparation, namely reviewing basic competencies as in the 2013 curriculum and in the independent curriculum, I studied CP and ATP in relation to the material that will be taught, which will be the target and that is what I will highlight in the instrument in cognitive assessment. That is the preparation" (The researcher's translation)

From extract 11 above, it can be seen that the first teacher carried out a review of Basic Competencies related to the material to be taught. This activity aims to map the students' abilities based on competency targets, whether they have been achieved or not. The third teacher and the second teacher also emphasized the same thing regarding the process of identifying assessment materials as stated in extract 12 and extract 13 below.

> Extract 12
> "Ee regarding the material, e I, the material that I will teach, the learning objectives, so we refer to the objectives. So I refer to the learning objectives first …" (The researcher's translation)

> Extract 13
> "I will adjust the material that I will present, I will adjust, for example, what material I will provide, so I will give students an assessment regarding diagnostic assessment according to my material. So from the diagnostic assessment I can find out the student's abilities and I can know where I need to develop in the material" (The researcher's translation)

The two extracts above show that adjustments to assessment materials and learning materials need to be carefully considered. The suitability of the material can be seen in the basic competencies or learning objectives as stated by the first teacher and the third teacher. Based on the results of the interviews in extracts 11 to 13, it can be concluded that the three English teachers identified assessment materials that were in accordance with basic competencies as well as learning targets or objectives for the material that would be taught later.

These interview results were also emphasized by the result of observation and documentation which show that all the English teacher had a syllabus that present the Basic Competency of students' learning. After the material identification process is complete, the teacher creates questions that will be tested during the assessment.

4.3. Compiling questions/assessment instruments

Compiling questions for assessment is the third activity which is still included in the diagnostic assessment preparation stage. These assessment questions have several rules to be considered in accordance with the statement of the Ministry of Education and Culture, including that they must be simple questions and not in large quantities. In the researcher's interview with the first teacher, she talked about the number of questions that are appropriate for a diagnostic assessment as seen in the following extract.

> Extract 14
> "For cognitive diagnostic assessments, basically the questions must be representative with KD or TP, so there is no need for a large number of questions, the important thing is that they are representative. Meanwhile, non-cognitive diagnostic assessments must also have representative instruments that capture interest, talent, potential, learning style, learning environment at home (supporting system). The range of questions can be 1 – 20 numbers for each type of assessment." (The researcher's translation)

The extract above shows that the assessment questions that will be created do not have to be large in number and must represent the TP or KD or the material to be studied. According to the first teacher, the maximum range that can be made is 20 question numbers.

Regarding the questions for the assessment, the researcher had observed and seen each of the English teacher's questions or their assessment instruments. The first teacher's diagnostic assessment questions, were simple and easy to understand and also accompanied by colored pictures or illustrations so that the questions look interesting. These questions are also created based on the material to be taught, adjusted to the basic competencies of that material. This first teacher assessment question was also created on the *Google Form* page with a total of 10 questions.

The example of the assessment questions from the first teacher can be seen on the following figures.



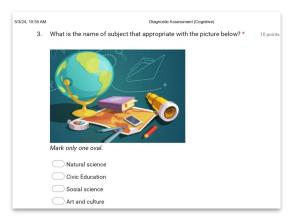Figure 1. The first page of diagnostic assessment question from 1st teacher.



Figure 2. The second page of diagnostic assessment question from 1st teacher.

Meanwhile, the assessment questions made by the second teacher looked a little complicated. The number of questions is also greater, namely 20 questions. But, the best thing about these questions is that they are very consistent and in accordance with the material or basic competencies for the material that will be taught later. The example of the assessment questions from the second teacher can be seen on the figure 3 below.
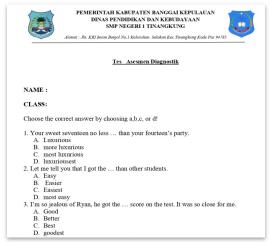


Figure 3. The first page of diagnostic assessment question from 2nd teacher

For the third teacher, the assessment questions look slightly different. The questions are made in the form of written essays and only consist of 5 questions. At first glance this question looks simple but requires time to think and a little analysis to answer the question. The example of the assessment questions from the third teacher can be seen on the following figure.

Figure 3. The first page of diagnostic assessment question from 2nd teacher

Meanwhile, the assessment questions made by the second teacher looked a little complicated. The number of questions is also greater, namely 20 questions. But, the best thing about these questions is that they are very consistent and in accordance with the material or basic competencies for the material that will be taught later. For the third teacher, the assessment questions look slightly different. The questions are made in the form of written essays and only consist of 5 questions. At first glance this question looks simple but requires time to think and a little analysis to answer the question.

From the results of the interview in extract 14 as well as the results of observation and documentation, in general the diagnostic assessment questions of the English teachers were made in written form although they vary slightly, for example some are in multiple choice form and another in essay form. Apart from that, there were also those who use different media of assessment, for example the first teacher used the Google Form feature on a Google learning account or it could be said to be an internet-based diagnostic assessment. The difficulty level of the questions made by the English teachers is not too difficult and looks simple with the number of questions still in the normal range, namely 1-20 questions.

## 5. Discussion

In the preparation stage of diagnostic assessment in Junior High School in Banggai Kepulauan, the English teacher did several activities as shown in the findings. Firstly, the English teachers had a schedule of the implementation of diagnostic assessment. It is important to create a review of the preparation such as the time to prepare the diagnostic assessment questions and the time or schedule of the diagnostic assessment (Iskak et al, 2023). Based on the finding, the cognitive diagnostic assessment is always conducted after the end of a material or chapter. Meanwhile, the non-cognitive diagnostic assessment is conducted at the beginning of the school year or at the start of a new semester. This is in accordance with the statement of Kemendikbud (2020a), Aisyah et al (2023), and Purwati et al (2023) that cognitive diagnostic assessments can be carried out routinely, such as periodic cognitive assessments at the beginning of learning, at the end of learning when the teacher explains and discusses topics, and at other times.

Furthermore, based on data, the time of the assessment implementation also depends on the kinds of the diagnostic assessment itself which serves different purposes. It is aligned with Azis and Lubis (2023) who stated that designing assessments tailored to the function of the assessment, by giving freedom in determining the technique and when the assessment is carried out. The non-cognitive diagnostic assessment aims to know the students' interest, condition, and behavior. (Purwati et al, 2023), (Aisyah et al, 2023). Meanwhile, the cognitive diagnostic assessment focuses on finding out the students' prior knowledge and their readiness in learning. This is in line with Alderson in Jang and Wagner (2014) and Nasution (2021) who stated that diagnostic assessment has aim to identify the level of knowledge the students reached or the competency achieved as the benchmark to prepare the next learning. Therefore, the non-cognitive diagnostic assessment can be conducted once in a semester and the cognitive diagnostic assessment should be conducted periodically, or every time before coming to a new chapter of material. (Iskak et al, 2023).

Secondly, the finding shows that in the preparation stage the English teachers did not forget to identify the assessment material before compiling questions for the diagnostic assessment. This activity aims to ensure that the questions shared in the assessment or test are suitable with the material that will be taught in the next meeting. It is aligned with (Iskak et al, 2023) and Azis and Lubis (2023) who stated that material identification is part of the diagnostic assessment implementation procedure which is carried out before creating assessment questions.

The last activity in the preparation stage of diagnostic assessment is compiling questions. Based on the findings, the English teachers created several questions to be used in the assessment. However, what needs to be underlined here is the special criteria in creating questions for the assessment. The criteria are related to the numbers of questions and the difficulty level. The findings show that the English teachers created simple and understandable questions. This is aligned with Nurlaelina (2018) who stated that diagnostic assessment questions should be easily comprehensible and utilize standardized language. Then, two of the English teachers created ten questions and one other created twenty questions. According to Kemdikbud (2020b), the questions for diagnostic assessment generally consist of ten questions. It can be concluded that in general, the questions made by the English teacher are still in the criteria of good diagnostic assessment question.

## 6. Conclusions

There are several key aspects to reveal regarding the preparation of diagnostics assessment in Junior High Schools in Banggai Kepulauan. The English teachers prepared a diagnostic assessment by doing three important activities namely scheduling, identifying materials, and compiling questions for the assessment. English teachers carefully scheduled the implementation of both cognitive and non-cognitive diagnostic assessments. Cognitive diagnostic assessments were consistently conducted at the end of each material or chapter, while non-cognitive assessments were scheduled at the beginning of the school year or semester. This practice aligns with educational guidelines and ensures regular assessment of student learning and readiness. Furthermore, teachers identified relevant assessment materials before compiling questions. This step ensured that the diagnostic questions were aligned with upcoming instructional content, enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of the assessments. After that, teachers created diagnostic questions with an emphasis on simplicity and comprehensibility, adhering to established criteria for good diagnostic questions. Teachers also utilized technology such as *Google forms* to help provide questions for carrying out the diagnostic assessments. It enhanced efficiency in administering, scoring, and analyzing assessments, supporting paperless operations and immediate feedback.

**Declaration of conflicting interest**
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this work.

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