

EXPLORING ENGLISH TEACHER'S EXPERIENCES IN ASSESSMENT ENGLISH LEARNING AT A MADRASAH TSANAWIYAH NEGERI IN SOUTH SULAWESI

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Abstract

This study explores the rich experience of one English teacher in assessing and measuring English language learning at MTS Negeri Gowa, looked into from the lenses of Simon Borg's (2003) Teacher Cognition Theory. The research aimed to find out how teacher's beliefs, knowledge, and context influence the assessment practice. Through qualitative research design, data were gathered through classroom observation of a daily English exam and an in-depth semi-structured interview with the English teacher. Findings reveal a sophisticated dual belief system to blend summative and formative assessment, robust pedagogical content knowledge in developing varied assessment, and adaptive strategies to counter contextual issues like digital cheating. The empathic teaching style of the instructor with regard to academic dishonesty and her use of multimodal assessments were particularly noteworthy. The research concludes that the instructor effectively blends theoretical assessment principles with practical, learner-centered approaches, with relevant implications for enhancing English language assessment in comparable Indonesian EFL contexts. Whether these robust strategies have a long-term impact on student learning outcomes could be investigated in subsequent research.

Keywords: English Language Assessment, Digital Assessment, EFL.

INTRODUCTION

Assessment and evaluation are natural components of the learning and instruction process not just as a means to gauge student achievement, but also as a means of refining teaching methodologies. For English foreign language instruction, accurate assessment is a key component in identifying learners' proficiency level, feeding back into pedagogical choices, and promoting learner development. Notwithstanding, the majority of English teachers, particularly those in inclusive schools such as Indonesian Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Islamic junior high schools), are finding it challenging to develop, administer, and score legitimate and feasible assessments.

The education system in Indonesia is gradually evolving towards a competency-based curriculum that emphasizes student-centered learning and authentic assessment. This shift necessitates English teachers to adopt diverse assessment approaches that align with teaching goals and are responsive to the various needs of students. This actual application is somewhat restricted, though. Several studies have reported this practice-theory gap. For instance, Aprianti and Suhartono (2021) reported that teachers over rely on summative tests and have poor knowledge of formative assessment. Correspondingly,

Fauziati (2017) noted that most English teachers in Islamic schools concentrate more on the study of grammar and reading while allocating less time for oral and listening tests because of insufficient resources and time. Additionally, Astuti (2016) researched that there was minimal use of digital assessment tools even though they were increasingly available owing to limited training and infrastructure.

While these studies offer valuable insights into various assessment issues in Indonesian schools, particularly secondary levels, they generalize to other kinds of schools or are concentrated mostly on urban and secular schools. Less understood are the ways that assessment in public Islamic junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri) is conceptualized and implemented, with contextual issues such as religious curriculum integration, resource limitation, and diverse student populations creating particular assessment issues.

This research seeks to address that gap by investigating assessment practice through the lens of Simon Borg's (2003) Teacher Cognition Theory that identifies the impact of teachers' beliefs, experience, and professional context on teaching practice. According to Borg, teachers' practice is not solely a result of professional training but also of individual experience, school culture, and reflective thought. In an exploration of how one English teacher at MTs Negeri Gowa, a South Sulawesi Islamic junior middle school, plans and administers tests in the classroom, this research attempts to illuminate how theoretical test principles are negotiated and adapted within a specific madrasah context.

Data were collected from the classroom observation and semi-structured interview with the teacher by employing 15 guiding questions. The observation was on final test class assessment practice of 7th grade. The methodological approach facilitates enriching insights into strategies applied, challenges encountered, and the decision-making processes of the teacher in assessment and evaluation.

The worth of this study is that it has the potential to inform and inspire prospective English teachers and teacher education institutions. In recording real practices and voices, the study offers an evidence-based account of assessment in a typical madrasah setting. The study also offers applied know-how on coping with daily issues such as learner readiness, fairness in marking, classroom constraints, the use of digital technology, and catch-up processes.

The overall purpose of this study is to examine the daily life of English teacher of English examination and assessment at a Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri in South Sulawesi. Specifically, the study aimed at the following: (1) day-to-day practice of classroom-based English assessment, (2) problems that the teacher faced when implementing such assessment, and (3) steps taken to make the practice effective and equitable. These findings will contribute to the growing literature on language testing in Indonesian educational environments and serve as a useful resource for teacher training institutions, particularly within Islamic school environments.

METHOD

This study will adopt a qualitative descriptive research design appropriate to explore complex phenomena in their real-life contexts. This is chosen as the authentic experience, perception, and strategy of an English teacher in assessing and evaluating students' language learning, especially in the context of a Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri in South

Sulawesi. The qualitative approach will also fit the theoretical view of Teacher Cognition Theory by Borg (2003), who puts a lot of emphasis on the beliefs, knowledge, and personal experience of teachers as determining their classroom practice.

The field study was carried out at MTs Negeri Gowa, one of the state Islamic junior high schools in the Gowa Regency of South Sulawesi Province. The respondent of this case study was a female English teacher who taught Grade 7 students. The teacher was selected purposively, based on her teaching experience, accessibility, and willingness to participate in the research. Grade 7 students were the focus of the classroom observation; however, no direct interaction or data collection was conducted with the students themselves.

Data collection was conducted using two primary methods, namely classroom observation and a semi-structured interview. The observation was made on the last day of daily assessment on a 7th-grade English class. The observation was intended to record and note the real-time assessment practices of the teacher, classroom management strategies, and student interactions. Some of the key behaviours noted were: preparation of students, providing the test link to the students, maintaining tasks for students, classroom monitoring, assisting students where necessary, managing incidents, reminding them of the remaining time, monitoring the previous assignments, and giving credit or remediation based on their performance. These behaviours were taken as field notes to process later for thematic analysis.

Immediately after the observation, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the English teacher. The questions were 15 open-ended ones aimed at knowing the teacher's conceptions about assessment and evaluation, the types and instruments used, challenges, and follow-up strategies. The interview was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to help the participant understand it and maximize comfort. It lasted about 20 minutes. Audio recording of the session was done with the permission of the teacher and transcribed for later analytical analysis.

Formally, the school administrator and the instructor sanctioned a formal letter of permission before conducting any data collection. All the procedures followed were very confidential and professional to the participants.

The collected qualitative data both from observation notes and interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. This involved identifying recurring patterns, categories, and key themes that reflected the teacher's assessment practices, challenges, and strategic responses. The themes were derived inductively from the data while also being interpreted in light of Borg's Teacher Cognition Theory. The aim was to generate a rich, contextualized understanding of how assessment is conceptualized and operationalized in a real classroom setting.

Overall, the methodological framework of this study ensured that the data captured not only reflected surface-level behaviours but also provided insight into the teacher's underlying beliefs and reflections on English language assessment. This comprehensive approach contributes to a deeper understanding of language assessment practices in Indonesian Islamic junior high schools and their implications for teacher development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The qualitative data gathered through observations of an English daily test assessment and an in-depth semi-structured interview with the English teacher at MTS

Negeri Gowa offer rich insights into the multifaceted experiences of an English teacher in assessing and evaluating English language learning. This section delves into the findings, interpreting them through the theoretical lens of Simon Borg's (2003) Teacher Cognition Theory. This theory posits that teachers' actions are not merely rote applications of methods but are deeply influenced by their beliefs, knowledge, and the context in which they operate. We will analyze the teacher's practices, the challenges encountered, and the strategies employed, comparing them with existing literature and highlighting unique contextual nuances

RESULTS

The data collected from the classroom observation and the semi-structured interview provided direct insights into the teacher's assessment practices and underlying cognitions.

1. Teacher's Cognitive Framework: Beliefs Guiding Assessment Practices

The teacher's definition of assessment and evaluation reveals a dual perspective. She defines assessment as "a way to determine how well students understand the material taught by the teacher," emphasizing its role in measuring learning outcomes. The main purpose is "to evaluate student achievement and to identify whether they have successfully understood the material." However, she adds a crucial dimension: "It also serves as a reflection tool for teachers to assess the effectiveness of their teaching methods and to make improvements if needed."

This dual belief system was consistently observed in practice. During the final daily test assessment for first-grade students, the teacher actively monitored the classroom by "sitting, standing, and moving around." She also provided immediate assistance to "students who were having problems." Post-assessment, she explicitly stated providing "remedial work or additional questions to students who do not achieve the standard score" and "giving praise to students who achieve or exceed the standard score." This aligns with her stated post-assessment actions of providing "remedial tasks to students who have not met the required standard, while enrichment tasks are provided to those who performed well."

2. Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Assessment Design and Implementation

The teacher's approach to assessment design demonstrates a strong pedagogical content knowledge. She employs "initial assessment, daily summative, mid-semester, and end-of-semester assessments." Initial assessments are conducted "to understand students' background knowledge and characteristics."

Assessment instruments are prepared based on "the material and learning objectives" with questions created at "varying levels of difficulty, including basic, intermediate, and HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills)." She uses "Lesson plans (RPP) as a reference" to ensure alignment.

The interview data highlighted the significant integration of digital platforms for assessment. The teacher explicitly mentioned using "Google Forms, Quizizz, and Kahoot" to facilitate digital assessments, making them "more engaging and efficient." The

observation report confirmed this by noting the teacher's action to "send question links to students," indicating a routine use of digital assessment in her classroom.

3. Knowledge of Learners and Contextual Assessment Adaptation

The teacher's assessment methods for specific language skills are adapted to student needs and the context:

- **Speaking Skills:** Evaluated through "dialogue activities." Students can choose to "perform dialogues in front of the class or record videos of conversations with peers." Examples are provided beforehand.
- **Writing Skills:** Assessed through "sentence construction, text completion, or writing based on pictures." Criteria include "word accuracy, sentence structure, grammar, and legibility." A common issue is "spelling mistakes due to students writing words as they sound rather than using correct spelling."
- **Reading Skills:** Focuses on "pronunciation and punctuation" through "reading estafet" Students "often read too fast and ignore proper intonation."
- **Listening Skills:** Students listen to an audio recording and "write down the words they hear." The challenge is their "unfamiliarity with the sounds of English."
- **Grammar and Vocabulary Skills:** Grammar is assessed "according to the class level" (e.g., simple present tense for Grade 7) through sentence construction or answering questions. Vocabulary is evaluated based on "context accuracy and correct spelling."

The teacher also uses "alternatives to testing" such as "describing one's home," where students "may choose to write, present orally, or create a video tour." This aims to give students "the freedom to express what they've learned in ways that suit their learning style and preference."

4. Self-Regulatory Cognition: Monitoring, Feedback, and Remediation

After collecting assessment results, the teacher implements immediate follow-up actions. As mentioned, remedial tasks are given to students below standard, and enrichment tasks for those who performed well. The observation also noted the teacher "monitoring the previous assignments" and reminding students about them.

Feedback is "always provided," either "directly, in their notebooks, or through verbal encouragement such as "Good" or "Very Good."" The teacher believes feedback "motivates students and lets them know their efforts are appreciated."

Follow-up actions include remedial and enrichment activities, and teachers "may also use small rewards like candies to motivate students." The goal is "to keep students encouraged and engaged without being overly strict or intimidating."

5. Challenges and Adaptive Strategies

The biggest challenge identified is "cheating during digital assessments." To overcome this, the teacher uses "initial assessments [to] identify students' real abilities." If a student's result is suspicious, the teacher follows up with "individual questioning done

discreetly to protect the student's self-esteem." Observations further supported this by noting the teacher's active "monitoring students" and "reprimanding noisy students" during the test. The teacher also "remind students of the remaining time" and "give advice to students in working on questions."

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study offer a rich understanding of an English teacher's assessment experiences at a Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri in South Sulawesi, effectively illuminating the interplay between the teacher's beliefs, experiences, and professional context, as theorized by Simon Borg (2003).

Teacher's Cognitive Framework: Beliefs Guiding Assessment Practices

The teacher's definition of assessment as a means to **"determine how well students understand the material"** and a **"reflection tool for teachers"** clearly indicates a belief in the dual purpose of assessment – both summative and formative. This belief directly translates into practices such as providing remedial and enrichment tasks and using assessment results to improve teaching methods. This aligns with Borg's (2003) idea that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning significantly shape their classroom practices. This dual belief system, balancing summative evaluation with formative feedback, is a common finding in teacher cognition research, as educators often grapple with the various demands placed on assessment (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998; Earl, 2013). The teacher's cognitive framework appears to integrate both "assessment of learning" and "assessment for learning," a more sophisticated understanding than mere measurement, directly addressing the practice-theory gap regarding formative assessment mentioned in the introduction (Aprianti & Suhartono, 2021).

This dual belief system was consistently reinforced by the observed classroom practices. During the daily test, the teacher's active monitoring of students by "duduk, berdiri dan berkeliling" (sitting, standing, and moving around) was not merely about proctoring; it was about observing student engagement and identifying struggles in real-time. Her immediate assistance to students "yang mengalami masalah" (who had problems) directly reflects a belief that assessment is an opportunity to support learning, not just to catch errors. Furthermore, the explicit statement about giving "remedial berupa pengerjaan ulang atau tugas soal tambahan kepada siswa yang tidak mencapai nilai standar" (remedial in the form of redoing tasks or additional questions to students who did not meet the standard) underscores her commitment to using assessment data to facilitate further learning. This proactive, interventionist approach is a direct manifestation of a teacher who cognitively prioritizes student progress over mere score recording.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Assessment Design and Implementation

The teacher's responses concerning the types of assessments used and the preparation of instruments showcase her pedagogical content knowledge – the interwoven understanding of subject matter and effective teaching methods. Her use of "initial assessment, daily summative, mid-semester, and end-of-semester assessments" demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the different stages and purposes of assessment throughout a learning cycle. The initial assessment, conducted "to understand students' background knowledge and characteristics," is a clear indicator of her cognitive

grasp of diagnostic assessment's importance. This aligns with research emphasizing the value of pre-assessment in tailoring instruction to student needs (e.g., Popham, 2011).

The meticulous process of designing assessment instruments based on "the material and learning objectives" and the creation of "questions at varying levels of difficulty, including basic, intermediate, and HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills)" reflects a high degree of assessment literacy. This indicates a cognitive understanding of how to construct valid and reliable assessments that truly measure diverse cognitive abilities. The teacher's adherence to "Lesson plans (RPP) as a reference" further highlights her cognitive commitment to alignment between curriculum, instruction, and assessment, a fundamental principle of effective educational design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

The integration of digital platforms such as Google Forms, Quizizz, and Kahoot for assessment implementation is a significant aspect of her pedagogical knowledge in the current educational landscape. This demonstrates a cognitive flexibility and willingness to adapt to technological advancements, likely driven by a perceived increase in efficiency and student engagement. In the observed daily test, the digital format was evident, indicating its routine use. This adoption of educational technology for assessment is a widespread trend globally, recognized for its potential to provide immediate feedback and streamline data collection (e.g., Levy, 2009; Vrasidas & Glass, 2005). The teacher's comfort and reliance on these tools suggest that they have become integral to her assessment "toolkit." This contrasts positively with Astuti's (2016) findings that digital assessment tools were minimally used due to limited training and infrastructure, suggesting an evolving landscape in this specific madrasah, perhaps indicative of greater access or teacher initiative.

Knowledge of Learners and Contextual Assessment Adaptation

A crucial element of teacher cognition is the knowledge of learners and the ability to adapt practices to the specific educational context. The teacher's responses regarding the evaluation of specific English language skills (speaking, writing, reading, listening, grammar, and vocabulary) vividly illustrate this. Her approach to speaking assessment, through "dialogue activities" where students could choose to "perform dialogues in front of the class or record videos of conversations with peers," reveals a cognitive awareness of individual student preferences and potentially a desire to reduce performance anxiety. Providing choices empowers students and acknowledges diverse learning styles, a principle strongly advocated in differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2014). This flexibility is particularly valuable in a context like a Madrasah Tsanawiyah, where students may have varying levels of confidence and exposure to English.

The challenges she identified in assessing reading and listening skills provide further evidence of her deep contextual knowledge. Her observation that students "often read too fast and ignore proper intonation" and their "unfamiliarity with the sounds of English" during listening tasks are common difficulties faced by EFL learners in Indonesia, often stemming from limited authentic input and reliance on written forms of English. This awareness directly informs her assessment focus on pronunciation and intonation for reading, and dictation-like tasks for listening, which target specific phonological and phonemic awareness. This demonstrates a cognitive ability to diagnose specific learning

difficulties pertinent to her students. This also sheds light on Fauziati's (2017) observation that less time is allocated to oral and listening tests due to insufficient resources; while this teacher *does* assess these, the underlying challenges highlight why they might be more difficult to integrate extensively and effectively.

Similarly, her insights into writing challenges, such as "spelling mistakes due to students writing words as they sound rather than using correct spelling," and her strategy for assessing grammar "according to the class level," highlight her nuanced understanding of interlanguage development and the developmental stages of language acquisition. This adaptive approach, where assessment criteria are tailored to the students' current proficiency level, is indicative of a teacher who cognitively aligns her expectations with the reality of her learners' progress.

Self-Regulatory Cognition: Monitoring, Feedback, and Remediation

Borg (2003) emphasizes the importance of teachers' self-regulatory cognition, which involves their ability to monitor their own teaching effectiveness, reflect on outcomes, and adjust their practices accordingly. The teacher's actions after collecting assessment results are prime examples of this. Her immediate provision of "remedial tasks to students who have not met the required standard" and "enrichment tasks to those who performed well" demonstrates a strong commitment to formative feedback and differentiation. This immediate follow-up aligns perfectly with the principles of effective feedback, where interventions are timely and targeted to individual needs (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The observation data explicitly noted these follow-up actions, confirming their routine implementation. This directly counters Aprianti and Suhartono's (2021) finding of poor knowledge of formative assessment among teachers, as this teacher clearly demonstrates robust formative practices.

Furthermore, the teacher's strategy for addressing suspected cheating during digital assessments offers a fascinating glimpse into her sophisticated self-regulatory cognition, imbued with ethical considerations. Her decision to "re-verify through additional questioning" but to do so "discreetly to protect the student's self-esteem" is particularly insightful. This is not just a technical response to academic dishonesty; it's a pedagogically sensitive and ethically informed cognitive decision. It suggests a belief that preserving a student's dignity and fostering trust is as important as maintaining assessment integrity. This nuanced approach, prioritizing the student-teacher relationship, reflects a highly developed interpersonal aspect of her teacher cognition, moving beyond purely academic concerns to encompass the holistic well-being of the student.

The teacher's consistent provision of feedback, whether "directly, in their notebooks, or through verbal encouragement such as "Good" or "Very Good,"" further underscores her self-regulatory practices. She recognizes that "Feedback motivates students and lets them know their efforts are appreciated." This deliberate act of positive reinforcement and clear communication about performance demonstrates a cognitive understanding of motivation and its impact on learning. The use of "small rewards like candies to motivate students" as a follow-up action, though seemingly minor, reinforces this proactive approach to maintaining student engagement and a positive learning environment, even beyond the formal assessment event.

Challenges and Adaptive Strategies: The Practical Application of Teacher Cognition

The interview question regarding the biggest challenge faced in the English learning assessment process yielded a highly relevant and contemporary issue: cheating during digital assessments. This highlights a widespread challenge for educators who are increasingly integrating technology into their classrooms. This issue brings into sharp focus the practical dilemmas that teachers' cognition must navigate when theory meets reality.

The teacher's strategies to overcome this challenge, namely using "initial assessments [to] help identify students' real abilities" and following up with "individual questioning done discreetly," are prime examples of adaptive expertise. These are not solutions found in a textbook but are practical, context-specific responses developed through experience and reflection. Her cognitive process here involves identifying a problem, hypothesizing its source (e.g., student reliance on external resources during digital tests), and devising a multi-pronged, ethically sound solution. This demonstrates a dynamic and responsive teacher cognition. The teacher's active monitoring and guidance during the observed test further illustrate her proactive approach to maintaining assessment integrity and a focused environment.

Beyond direct cheating, the teacher's willingness to use "alternatives to testing" such as "describing one's home" where students could "write, present orally, or create a video tour" further showcases her cognitive flexibility and commitment to authentic assessment. This approach moves beyond the limitations of traditional, often restrictive, test formats. By offering choices in how students demonstrate their understanding, she taps into diverse intelligences and learning preferences, making the assessment process more inclusive and potentially more valid as it allows students to perform in ways that best suit them. This strategy reflects a cognitive belief that assessment should be a demonstration of learning, not just a test of recall, and that different students thrive in different assessment modalities. This aligns with contemporary assessment trends that advocate for performance-based and portfolio assessments (e.g., Brown, 2004).

Critical Analysis, Hypotheses, and Potential Explanations

Interpreting these findings through Teacher Cognition Theory allows for a critical analysis of the teacher's practices and the formulation of hypotheses regarding the underlying cognitive processes.

Hypothesis 1: The teacher's integrated approach to assessment—simultaneously emphasizing summative measurement and formative support—is a result of her nuanced interpretation of national educational goals and her personal pedagogical philosophy.

- **Critical Analysis:** The teacher explicitly defined assessment with both summative (measuring understanding, achievement) and formative (teacher reflection, improvement, student remedial/enrichment) purposes. This dual function was evident in both her interview responses and the observed practices. It suggests that she doesn't see these two functions as separate but rather as complementary

aspects of a holistic assessment process. This stands in contrast to previous findings of an over-reliance on summative assessments (Aprianti & Suhartono, 2021).

- **Potential Explanations:**

- **Influence of Curriculum and Policy:** While national curricula often mandate summative assessments, recent reforms or teacher training programs in Indonesia might have increasingly emphasized formative assessment principles. The teacher's cognitive framework could be integrating these diverse policy messages.
- **Personal Professional Development:** Her ongoing learning, through formal training or informal reflection, might have led her to a deeper understanding of how assessment can serve multiple purposes effectively.
- **Adaptive Expertise in Context:** Operating within a madrasah environment, where holistic student development might be highly valued, the teacher may cognitively prioritize a more supportive and developmental assessment approach while still meeting official reporting requirements. This could lead to a strategic blending of assessment types.

Hypothesis 2: The teacher's reliance on digital assessment tools for efficiency and basic engagement might indicate a pragmatic, rather than solely transformative, integration of technology in assessment.

- **Critical Analysis:** The teacher effectively uses readily available digital platforms (Google Forms, Quizizz, Kahoot) for administering tests and collecting results. This indicates an embrace of technology, contrasting with Astuti's (2016) findings. However, the identified challenge of cheating suggests that the pedagogical design within these digital tools might still be traditional (e.g., multiple-choice, direct answer), rather than leveraging technology for more complex, authentic, or interactive assessment forms that are harder to cheat on. Her solutions to cheating (initial assessment, individual questioning) are external to the digital tool itself.

- **Potential Explanations:**

- **Tool Limitations vs. Pedagogical Intent:** The chosen applications, while efficient, may inherently limit the types of questions or tasks that can be administered, thus shaping the teacher's assessment design within the digital environment.
- **Time and Resource Constraints:** Developing truly transformative digital assessments (e.g., simulations, complex performance tasks with embedded scoring) requires significant time, technical skill, and resources, which may be limited in her context. The current tools offer a practical balance of ease of use and immediate benefit.
- **Evolution of Digital Literacy:** While the teacher is comfortable using digital tools, her deeper "digital assessment literacy"—understanding how technology can fundamentally reshape what and how we assess beyond mere automation—might still be developing.

Hypothesis 3: The teacher's highly empathetic and discreet handling of sensitive issues like cheating is rooted in a strong affective component of her teacher cognition, prioritizing student psychological safety and long-term relationships over immediate disciplinary action.

- **Critical Analysis:** Her decision to address suspected cheating "discreetly to protect the student's self-esteem" is a powerful indicator of her values beyond mere academic compliance. This suggests a teacher who believes in fostering a supportive and trusting relationship with students, even in challenging circumstances. This emotional intelligence and ethical consideration are integral to her cognitive decision-making processes. This goes beyond typical classroom management and into the realm of a deeply humanistic teaching philosophy, reflecting the emphasis on moral development common in madrasah education.
- **Potential Explanations:**
 - **Cultural Context of Madrasah:** The values emphasized in a madrasah environment, often focusing on character building, moral development, and community, could significantly influence the teacher's cognitive prioritization of student well-being and positive interpersonal relations.
 - **Personal Empathy and Teaching Experience:** The teacher's personal disposition, coupled with years of experience, might have taught her that public humiliation or overly strict disciplinary measures can be counterproductive to long-term learning and student engagement.
 - **Belief in Growth Mindset:** She might cognitively operate from a growth mindset, believing that students can learn from mistakes and that a supportive environment is crucial for this growth, even in the context of academic dishonesty.

Hypothesis 4: The teacher's practical focus on foundational language skills (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) in assessment, particularly for Grade 7, reflects a cognitive conviction that a strong linguistic base is paramount for subsequent communicative competence.

- **Critical Analysis:** While the teacher assesses speaking and writing, her detailed explanations for reading and listening challenges, as well as grammar and vocabulary assessment, suggest a strong emphasis on accuracy in these foundational elements. The difficulties identified (e.g., spelling, pronunciation, unfamiliar sounds) also point to a focus on the building blocks of language. This aligns with a traditional-to-communicative continuum often seen in EFL contexts, and it suggests a practical response to the inherent challenges of teaching English in Indonesia where exposure might be limited.
- **Potential Explanations:**
 - **Curriculum Directives:** The Grade 7 curriculum in Indonesia might explicitly mandate a strong emphasis on foundational linguistic components before fully progressing to advanced communicative tasks.

- **Perceived Student Proficiency Levels:** The teacher's assessment of the general proficiency level of incoming Grade 7 students might lead her to cognitively prioritize reinforcing fundamental skills to ensure a solid base.
- **Teacher's Own Language Learning Experience:** Her own journey of learning English might have instilled a strong belief in the necessity of mastering foundational elements before achieving fluency, thus shaping her pedagogical and assessment priorities.

Hypothesis 5: The teacher's extensive use of verbal and direct feedback, coupled with tangible rewards (candies), indicates a cognitive preference for immediate, concrete reinforcement to maintain student motivation, potentially in a context where abstract rewards are less impactful.

- **Critical Analysis:** The teacher consistently provides direct feedback and uses small, tangible rewards. This suggests a cognitive understanding of what works immediately to motivate her students. While more sophisticated feedback models exist, her approach is practical and effective in her context. This also demonstrates a teacher actively working to "keep students encouraged and engaged without being overly strict or intimidating."
- **Potential Explanations:**
 - **Student Age and Developmental Stage:** For Grade 7 students, immediate and tangible rewards, alongside direct verbal feedback, might be cognitively perceived as more impactful and motivating than delayed or abstract forms of feedback.
 - **Classroom Dynamics and Practicality:** In a busy classroom, direct, quick feedback and simple rewards are efficient and manageable. The teacher might cognitively prioritize practicality in her day-to-day interactions.
 - **Cultural Norms:** In some Indonesian educational contexts, direct praise and small material rewards are a commonly accepted and effective way to acknowledge and encourage effort, influencing the teacher's cognitive choice of motivational strategies. This reflects a culturally sensitive pedagogical approach.

The exploration of these hypotheses underscores the complex interplay within the teacher's cognitive framework, where beliefs, knowledge, and contextual factors constantly shape and redefine assessment practices. The teacher at MTS Negeri Gowa serves as a compelling case study, illustrating how an educator navigates the practicalities and challenges of assessment while maintaining a student-centered and ethically informed pedagogical approach. This study provides valuable evidence of how teachers "negotiate and adapt" theoretical test principles within the unique context of an Indonesian madrasah.

CONCLUSION

This study, situated in Simon Borg's (2003) Teacher Cognition Theory, provides a lengthy description of an English teacher's assessment and evaluation practices at MTS Negeri Gowa. The findings in this study show that the cognitive system of the teacher uses a double belief system that is intricate, successfully merging both summative assessment (assessment of learning) and formative assessment (assessment for learning). This is evident in her expressed purpose of assessment—to measure student learning and knowledge while simultaneously serving as a tool of teacher reflection and classroom planning. This two-way perspective is consistently present in her observed behaviors in class, which span from interactive real-time monitoring of student engagement, immediate intervention to struggling students, to standard provision of remedial and enrichment activities following assessments. Her content pedagogic knowledge is also demonstrated through a clear awareness of different types of assessment, meticulous creation of instruments appropriate to the learning objectives and different cognitive levels, and a remarkable use of digital assessment tools for efficiency and motivation, as indicators of a modern language assessment practice.

Moreover, the teacher demonstrates that she has a good awareness of her students and their contextual specificities as Indonesian EFL learners. This can be seen in her adaptable test approaches to various language skills, such as offering options for speech tests to reduce stress, and her explicit focus on components like pronunciation, intonation, and spelling to overcome common difficulties observed in reading, listening, and writing. Her self-regulated mind is a primary strength, characterized by a strong emphasis on timely feedback, differentiation, and an highly empathetic response to sensitive issues like academic dishonesty. Her unobtrusive and relationship-focused style of responding to suspected cheating indicates a cognitive priority on student psychological safety and long-term trust over rapid disciplinary response. This sophisticated and responsive form of assessment, in the face of challenges posed by modernity such as technological cheating, demonstrates a responsive professional practice grounded in profound pedagogical insight and an awareness of the particular requirements of her pupils.

SUGGESTIONS

Given these results, it is recommended that educational institutions, especially Indonesia's madrasahs, continue to encourage and cultivate such integrated and flexible teacher cognition in measurement. Professional development initiatives should direct their efforts towards strengthening teachers' "digital assessment literacy" by investigating more revolutionary applications of technology beyond lower-level administration, maybe including strategies for crafting assessments that are innately more difficult to cheat on and provide more insightful diagnostic information. Further, on the basis of demonstrated value in the teacher's empathic and contextually sensitive approaches, future professional learning may emphasize the affective and ethical dimensions of measurement, where teachers are encouraged to prioritize students' happiness and harmonious teacher-student relationships, especially when discussing challenging topics. Lastly, the effective practices of this teacher, namely combining previous and new assessment modalities and providing

unique feedback and remediation, would be an ideal pattern to other English language teachers in similar EFL settings.

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