



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GAME-BASED ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING THROUGH SQUIGABE IN THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of Squigabe (Squid Game Teks Berita), a form of game-based assessment designed to support Indonesian language learning within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the research analyzes how Squigabe functions as an assessment aligned with the principles of assessment for learning, an assessment approach that not only measures outcomes but also actively and reflectively supports the learning process. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation of junior high school students' learning activities on news text material. The findings reveal that the application of the game-based assessment Squigabe effectively enhances students' learning motivation, active engagement, and understanding of the structure and content of news texts. Moreover, game elements such as challenges, levels, and narrative structures proved effective in creating a fun, collaborative, and contextual classroom environment. These findings indicate that assessment can be designed in a creative and humanistic manner while serving as an integral part of a student-centered learning process. This study contributes to innovative assessment practices in Indonesian language education that are relevant to the demands of 21st-century learning.

Keywords: assessment for learning; game-based; Squigabe; Indonesian language; Merdeka Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Educational development in the 21st century demands a fundamental shift in learning paradigms. The orientation of education is no longer limited to academic achievement such as grades and scores, but extends to broader aspects, including character building, enhancement of critical thinking, creativity development, improvement of collaboration skills, as well as mastery of students' social and emotional competencies (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). In this context, educational institutions are ideally expected to function not merely as providers of information and knowledge, but as spaces that holistically and sustainably nurture human development.

In response to these needs and challenges, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology introduced the *Merdeka Curriculum* as a curriculum policy that emphasizes contextual, flexible, and student-centered learning (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The *Merdeka Curriculum* aims to create a learning process that is relevant to real life, encourages students to become independent and reflective individuals, and fosters character development through the *Pancasila Student Profile* framework. In practice, this

curriculum places students as the central agents of learning, granting them space to grow according to their interests, talents, and individual needs.

However, the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum* in schools has not yet fully aligned with the ideals it promotes. Many educators continue to adopt conventional teacher-centered approaches, including in the implementation of learning evaluation. In the context of Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) instruction, this can be observed in learning patterns that are often one-directional, theoretical, and lacking in active student engagement (Suyanto, 2017). Topics such as news texts, which have great potential to develop students' critical literacy, are often taught procedurally, with a focus on rote memorization and minimal connection to real-life situations.

This condition highlights the need for more serious attention to the role of evaluation in the learning process. Evaluation, which has long been perceived primarily as a tool to assess learning outcomes (assessment of learning), should be broadened to serve as an integral part of the learning process itself (assessment for learning). The principle of assessment for learning (AfL) positions evaluation as an ongoing activity throughout the learning process, not merely at its conclusion. Its purpose is to provide constructive feedback so that students can understand what they have mastered and identify areas for improvement to enhance their learning outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Sadler, 1989). This type of evaluation is formative in nature, facilitates reflection, and actively involves students in more meaningful learning.

Unfortunately, the implementation of AfL in practice remains suboptimal. Evaluation in Bahasa Indonesia learning tends to be monotonous, dominated by multiple-choice questions, essays, or conventional writing assignments that lack variety. Such evaluation models not only limit students' creativity but also fail to reflect their full potential both cognitively and affectively. In fact, 21st century learning calls for approaches that are collaborative, contextual, enjoyable, and capable of fostering positive social relationships among students.

One strategy that can address these challenges is the use of game-based assessment. This evaluation approach incorporates game elements such as challenges, scores, levels, and narratives to create a more engaging, healthily competitive atmosphere that enhances student motivation to learn (Deterding et al., 2011; Kapp, 2012). Research has shown that gamification in educational contexts can increase student engagement, foster a spirit of learning, and create a more interactive and enjoyable classroom environment (Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa, 2014).

For example, Yustina and Yahfizham (2023) demonstrated that adapting elements of the popular game "Squid Game" in mathematics learning successfully increased students' enthusiasm and participation. Games such as "Red Light–Green Light," "Marbles," and "Stepping Stone," when educationally modified, have proven effective in creating learning experiences that are not only fun but also meaningful. Silmia and Mubarok (2025) also found that gamification tailored to student needs increased engagement by up to 89% across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Moreover, Mulyani (2024) reported that using the Quizizz app in formative evaluation boosted learning motivation, especially when applied within adaptive assessment strategies. Similar findings were presented by Prasetya & Kadir (2024), who observed that the use of Wordwall in BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia for Foreign Speakers) Level 3 assessments significantly improved material comprehension and classroom interactivity. A study by Daryanes & Ririen (2020) further revealed that Kahoot facilitated cognitive



engagement in over 80% of university students due to its fast-paced, competitive, and enjoyable format.

Building on this foundation, the present study implements Squigabe (Squid Game Berita Text) as a game-based assessment for learning method in Bahasa Indonesia instruction for junior high school students. Squigabe is an evaluative activity packaged in a fun game format, combining digital media such as Canva and Zep Quiz with non-digital media such as the Dalgona and Dakji games. Evaluation is conducted through interactive and collaborative activities. For instance, the Dalgona game is used to assess mastery of standard and non-standard words, Dakji to analyze direct and indirect speech, and the Zep Quiz digital quiz to assess real-time comprehension of news text structure.

What distinguishes Squigabe from conventional evaluations is its competitive environment infused with values of cooperation, empathy, and compassion among students. Evaluation is no longer an individualistic or stressful experience but becomes a meaningful and humanistic learning journey. These values align with the dimensions of the *Pancasila Student Profile*, positioning evaluation not only as a cognitive measurement tool but also as a character-building experience (Sari, 2023).

Therefore, this study aims to describe the implementation of assessment for learning through Squigabe in the context of Bahasa Indonesia news text learning. The focus includes the form of evaluation implementation, student responses, and its contribution to improving learning motivation, material comprehension, and students' social-emotional skills. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide a concrete illustration of evaluation practices that not only assess outcomes but also support an active, enjoyable, and character-building learning process.

METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at providing an in-depth depiction of a phenomenon based on data collected naturally in the field. According to Creswell (2014), this approach emphasizes the exploration of meaning through observation, interviews, and documentation within real-life contexts. In this case, the method is used to describe the implementation process of Squigabe (Squid Game Berita Text) as a form of game-based assessment in Indonesian language learning, in alignment with the principles of the *Merdeka Curriculum*.

Research Subjects and Setting

This study was conducted at a public junior high school in Jakarta. The research participants consisted of seventh grade students who were engaged in Indonesian language learning focused on news text material. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, meaning they were deliberately chosen based on their active involvement in the game-based evaluation process. The study was carried out over two learning sessions, each lasting 2×40 minutes.

Research Procedure

The study was carried out through several stages. In the planning stage, the researcher designed the Squigabe evaluation tools by integrating digital media, such as Canva and Zep Quiz, with nondigital games, such as dalgona and dakji. These tools were tailored to align with the learning outcome indicators of the news text material as outlined in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. In the implementation stage, Squigabe was applied over several learning sessions with varied game-based activities in each session designed to

comprehensively assess students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. The observation and documentation stage involved direct classroom observations, during which the researcher took notes on student engagement, enthusiasm, and the types of social interactions that emerged. Supporting data were gathered through photographs, videos, and field notes. Finally, in the interview stage, semi-structured interviews were conducted with both students and the teacher to gain deeper insights into their perceptions and experiences throughout the Squigabe-based assessment process.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using several methods. Participant observation was conducted to observe students' learning activities, expressions of engagement, and forms of social interaction during the implementation of Squigabe. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with selected students and the teacher to gather their perspectives on the game-based assessment. Additionally, documentation was collected, including photographs, video recordings, and samples of students' work produced during the assessment activities.

Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study included observation sheets for documenting student activities, interview guidelines for both students and the teacher, assessment rubrics aligned with the learning outcomes, and student reflection templates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The implementation of Squigabe (Squid Game Berita Text) as a game-based assessment in the learning of Indonesian news texts for Grade VII students at a junior high school resulted in an evaluation process that not only assessed students' learning outcomes but also fostered an active, reflective, and enjoyable learning experience. The evaluation was carried out through several game stages designed to be contextual and humanistic, namely Dalgona, Dakji, Zep Quiz, and Group Reflection. All of these stages were developed in accordance with the spirit of assessment for learning (AfL), where evaluation functions as an integral part of learning, providing formative feedback and encouraging continuous improvement in the learning process (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Sadler, 1989).

The Squigabe evaluation took place over a single meeting (2 × 40 minutes). In the preceding session, the teacher first equipped students through self-directed learning activities using Interactive Multimedia Learning (MPI) based on Canva. The Dalgona, Dakji, and Zep Quiz stages were implemented sequentially in the second session, which lasted for 80 minutes and included observation, discussion, and group reflection. This schedule allowed students to gradually build understanding, reflect on the process, and actively correct their mistakes.

Dalgona Evaluation: Measuring Vocabulary Mastery

The evaluation began with the Dalgona game, aimed at assessing students' ability to distinguish between standard and nonstandard vocabulary. Each small team received a paper dalgona card containing five mixed vocabulary items. The students' task was to select and circle the standard words, then submit their answers to the teacher for



assessment. If the answers were correct, they earned points and were allowed to "tear" the dalgona according to the given pattern.

From an assessment for learning (AfL) perspective, this activity encouraged students to engage in discussion, peer correction, and collaborative meaning-making. The teacher also provided positive feedback after each challenge, enabling students to understand their mistakes and how to correct them.

Observations showed that students were actively discussing to confirm their choices. This activity not only sharpened their language knowledge but also fostered teamwork and emotional engagement in the assessment process. The teacher noted increased participation, especially from students who were typically passive during conventional assessments.

"Playing Dalgona helped me memorize standard words like 'apotek' instead of 'apotik.'" (P2)

Dakji Evaluation: Assessing Sentence Comprehension

The Dakji game was used to evaluate students' understanding of direct and indirect sentences. Students competed in teams to flip the dakji, and the winners earned the right to answer evaluation questions. The questions focused on identifying and using direct or indirect speech in news texts.

The game was lively, engaging both physical and cognitive aspects, and fostered strong social interaction among participants. Students appeared enthusiastic, demonstrated sportsmanship, and showed a deep understanding of the material.

This activity aligns with assessment for learning (AfL) principles, as it allows students to learn through direct experience and receive feedback from both peers and the teacher. By combining physical and cognitive challenges, the evaluation facilitated active engagement and provided opportunities for real-time critical thinking.

"I finally understood how to tell direct sentences apart because during the dakji game, I had to answer quickly. It kind of stuck automatically." (P1)

Zep Quiz Evaluation: Testing Comprehensive Understanding

The next stage of evaluation was conducted using the Zep Quiz application in the form of a digital quiz designed to resemble the Red Light, Green Light game. This evaluation tested students' comprehensive understanding of the structure and content of news texts. Each group competed to answer questions within a limited time frame, with speed and accuracy as key scoring criteria.

The quiz results indicated an improvement in students' understanding of news text structures (headline, lead, body, and conclusion). Additionally, the teacher observed that most students showed high enthusiasm throughout the session and did not feel pressured as they typically would during formal evaluations.

In accordance with the principles of assessment for learning (AfL), students were able to see their results immediately, reflect on their mistakes, and compare their answers with their teammates. This process not only measured learning outcomes but also guided students to learn openly from their errors.

"I liked the Zep Quiz because I could see my score right away, so I knew what I got wrong." (P5)

Group Reflection: Evaluating Character and Learning Process

After all stages of evaluation were completed, the teacher facilitated a group reflection session. Students were asked to share their experiences during Squigabe, including their feelings, challenges, and contributions within the group. This reflection

became an essential part of the evaluation as it assessed students' affective, social, and self-awareness aspects.

This reflection lies at the heart of assessment for learning, as it promotes metacognitive awareness. Students learned to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and how they could improve their learning process moving forward (Sadler, 1989). The reflection also reinforced the values of mutual cooperation and empathy, which are key goals of the evaluation.

Most students expressed that they felt more confident in sharing their opinions, more caring toward their peers, and more enthusiastic about learning Indonesian. The teacher provided reinforcement through verbal affirmations, open-ended questions, and appreciation for the positive values demonstrated during the game.

"The reflection helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses in learning." (P8)

Table 1 Student Reflections

Participant Code	Reflection Statement	Learning Implication
P1	"Zep Quiz turned learning into a fun competition that wasn't boring."	Digital evaluation accelerates feedback
P3	"Playing together helped us see who still didn't understand."	Evaluation fosters collaboration and empathy

Impact on Learning Outcomes

Based on the recap of evaluation results from all game sessions, students' learning achievements showed a significant improvement. Most students obtained good scores in both mastery of news text content and critical thinking skills. This improvement was reflected not only in the final quiz results but also through observations during the game processes, which revealed a deeper understanding of text structure and content.

The teacher provided positive feedback in the classroom, both in the form of verbal praise, written notes of appreciation, and the awarding of character points. This feedback was given immediately after students completed each challenge, making the evaluation feel more personal and constructive. The teacher also encouraged students to reflect on their achievements and identify effective learning strategies used during the games. This feedback was not presented as a final judgment, but as guidance for further learning, in alignment with the characteristics of Assessment for Learning (AfL) (Black & Wiliam, 2009).

The classroom atmosphere also became more open and participatory. Students showed increased self-confidence, greater willingness to express their opinions, and more active engagement in asking questions or responding to evaluation tasks. Several previously passive students began participating actively in group discussions and demonstrated a healthy sense of competition.

**Table 2 Summary of Activity Impact**

Evaluative Activity	Evaluative Activity	Observed Impact	Behavioral Examples
<i>Dalgona</i>	Standard/Non-standard word	Active discussion, increased accuracy	Asking friends; discussing terminology
<i>Dakji</i>	Direct/indirect speech	Increased sportsmanship and courage	Giving turns to teammates
<i>Zep Quiz</i>	News text structure	Focus, quick reflection	Trying to be the fastest; correcting mistakes
Refleksi Bersama	Affective and social domains	Improved empathy, self-confidence	Sharing impressions voluntarily

Table 3 Interview Results

Participant Code	Key Statement	Relation to AfL
P2	“Playing Dalgona helped me memorize standard words like ‘apotek’, not ‘apotik’.”	Shows improved memory through immediate feedback
P5	“I liked the Zep Quiz because I could see my score right away, so I knew my mistakes.”	AfL supports reflection and self-correction
G1	“The reflection helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses in learning.”	AfL fosters self-awareness for continuous improvement

Table 4 Recap of Squigabe Evaluation Observation

Observed Aspect	Skor Maks	Rata-rata	Keterangan
Team participation	5	4.7	Very high
Enthusiasm during the game	5	4.8	Very high
Understanding during group discussion	5	4.5	High
Ability to answer Zep Quiz	5	4.3	High (some still inconsistent)
Empathy & mutual support	5	4.9	Very high

Discussion

The implementation of Squigabe as a game-based assessment in learning Indonesian news texts demonstrates that evaluation can be designed to be enjoyable, contextual, and student-centered. The findings of this study show that Squigabe functions not only as a tool to measure learning outcomes but also as an integral part of the learning process itself, in line with the principles of assessment for learning (AfL). Assessment occurs throughout the learning process not merely at the end and serves to provide formative feedback that enables students to reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Sadler, 1989). This is evident in every stage of the game Dalgona, Dakji, and Zep Quiz which not only assess knowledge but also foster social interaction and learning awareness.

The Dalgona game, for instance, does not merely measure mastery of standard and non-standard words, but also encourages group discussions and collaboration. Students become more active and engaged because the assessment is embedded in enjoyable activities. Similarly, the Dakji game allows students to apply quick thinking and understand sentence structures in a practical way. This game provides opportunities for both physical and cognitive participation, which are crucial in active learning. The digital quiz Zep Quiz, which resembles the "Red Light, Green Light" challenge, offers an interactive digital evaluation experience, requiring quick thinking and providing immediate feedback, allowing students to correct their mistakes in real time.

Reflection activities at the end of the learning sessions further reinforce the value of assessment as a means of personal development. Many students expressed that they became more aware of their learning styles, felt more confident, and better understood the importance of collaboration and empathy throughout the learning process. The teacher provided both verbal and non-verbal feedback, contributing to a supportive and inclusive learning environment. This type of feedback is one of the essential components in AfL practices, as it builds students' confidence and provides constructive learning guidance (Janssen, Kirschner, Erkens, Kirschner, & Paas, 2010).

This study also reinforces previous research findings related to gamification and game-based learning. Deterding et al. (2011) and Kapp (2012) state that game elements such as challenges, narratives, scores, and levels have the potential to create a more interactive learning environment. Meanwhile, Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa (2014) add that gamification can foster intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement in learning. In the context of Squigabe, this is reflected in the high level of student enthusiasm, the collaborative classroom atmosphere, and the emergence of values such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong), empathy, and responsibility within groups.

The students' interviews and reflections revealed that they did not feel pressured to complete a test, but rather enjoyed the evaluation process as part of a learning adventure. Statements such as "playing Dalgona helped me memorize standard words" or "the reflection helped me identify my strengths and weaknesses in learning" serve as concrete evidence that Squigabe not only tests cognition but also fosters deeper learning awareness. This aligns with Schunk's (2012) perspective, which emphasizes the importance of assessment that encourages participation and reflection as part of constructing meaningful learning.

In addition, the integration of digital and non-digital media in Squigabe proves that 21st-century learning must be both adaptive and creative. As a digital medium, Zep Quiz has been shown to provide ease of instant and transparent evaluation. This finding supports the studies of Mulyani (2024) and Prasetia & Kadir (2024), which demonstrate the effectiveness of digital tools such as Quizizz and Wordwall in boosting learning motivation. Likewise, the use of adapted traditional games like Dakji and Dalgona within local contexts presents a learning experience that is culturally rooted, while also being contextual and meaningful.

By combining these elements, Squigabe shapes a holistic and transformative evaluation process. Assessment is no longer perceived as intimidating or boring but becomes a learning space that stimulates critical thinking, collaboration, and deep understanding of the material. This process aligns with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum, which positions students as active subjects of learning and supports the realization of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).



CONCLUSION

The implementation of Squigabe as a game-based assessment in Indonesian language learning under the Merdeka Curriculum has proven effective in realizing the principles of assessment for learning (AfL). This type of assessment not only functions to measure students' learning outcomes but also serves as an integral part of the learning process through active engagement, formative feedback, and reflection. The findings indicate that game elements such as Dalgona, Dakji, and Zep Quiz successfully enhance students' motivation, participation, and comprehension of news text material. Furthermore, the integration of digital media with traditional games fosters a collaborative, contextual, and enjoyable learning environment, in line with the values of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profile). Squigabe demonstrates that evaluation can be designed in a humanistic, interactive, and transformative manner, turning assessment into a meaningful learning experience. This study provides a concrete contribution to innovative assessment practices that are student-centered and aligned with the demands of 21st-century learning.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express deepest gratitude to Prof. Dr. Endry Boeriswati, M.Pd. and Dr. Asep Supriyana, S.S., M.Pd., as the lecturers of the Learning Evaluation course, for their guidance and academic direction throughout the research process. Sincere thanks are also extended to N. Lia Marliana, M.Phil. (Ling)., Ph.D., as the Coordinator of the Master's Program in Indonesian Language Education, for her administrative and academic support, as well as to Dr. Reni Nur Eriyani, M.Pd. for her valuable input regarding the content and direction of this study.

The author also wishes to express heartfelt appreciation to her beloved family: Dadan Ramdani Saleh, a husband who has continuously provided moral support and motivation; Aksara Renjana Choirunnisa, a precious daughter who has been the source of strength and inspiration; and her parents and extended family, who have always offered prayers and warmth in every step. Additionally, sincere thanks go to the school principal, fellow teachers, and students of SMPN 284 Jakarta. Without their support, this research would not have been completed successfully.

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