

Between Imagination and Information: Exploring the Assessment Practices of Literary and Non- Literary Texts on Reading Skills

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ABSTRACT

Reading skills in literary and non-literary texts play a crucial role in shaping students' comprehensive literacy competence. This study aims to explore assessment practices implemented by Indonesian language teachers at the senior high school level, focusing on various aspects including assessment goals, implementation timing, assessed components, instruments, indicators, techniques, and challenges in evaluating students' reading abilities for both literary and non-literary texts. A qualitative descriptive-exploratory method was employed, with data collected through questionnaires involving 60 teacher respondents. The findings reveal that teachers possess an adequate understanding of the functions of literary and non-literary texts in instruction and apply diverse assessment approaches—ranging from objective test items to interpretive tasks and presentations. Literary texts are predominantly assessed reflectively and interpretively, while non-literary texts are evaluated using analytical and logical methods. Nevertheless, teachers still encounter several challenges, such as limited time, a lack of valid and reliable instruments, the absence of operational technical guidelines, and difficulties in assessing higher-order thinking skills. These findings highlight the need for systematic support in reading assessment, such as ongoing professional training, genre-based instrument development, and teacher collaboration within learning communities. This study emphasizes the importance of a systematic and collaborative approach to improving reading assessment practices to align with curricular demands and the goals of literacy development.

Keywords: Assessment, Reading, Literary, Non-Literary, Texts

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INTRODUCTION

Reading proficiency is a fundamental aspect of education that serves as the foundation for students' overall development. It is not merely a basic academic competency, but also a critical skill that must be assessed accurately and meaningfully. Meaningful assessment is essential because it ensures that reading evaluation reflects real-life literacy demands, enabling students to apply the skills they acquire beyond classroom settings (Prastikawati, 2020). Reading ability extends beyond word recognition; it involves a deep understanding of the information presented across various types of texts (Dai, 2024a, 2024b; Gunawan, 2022). In the context of secondary education, particularly in the teaching of Indonesian language, the assessment of reading proficiency serves as a key indicator for measuring students' success in understanding and reflecting on texts. Reading skills also play a crucial role in shaping critical thinking patterns that support students' performance across various subject areas (Fan, 2023; Pandey, 2023). Students with strong critical thinking skills tend to demonstrate higher levels of reading comprehension, as they are able to analyze, synthesize, reduce, and evaluate the information they encounter (Hidayati et al., 2020; Nugrahanto et al., 2023; Paige et al., 2024).

Furthermore, reading literacy has been increasingly influenced by changes in text formats encountered by students today. The integration of multimodal texts—such as digital, visual, and interactive materials—has become indispensable for improving students' literacy proficiency, yet its potential remains underexplored within classroom-based assessment practices (Saputra et al., 2024). However, emerging challenges in literacy education also intersect with academic integrity. As highlighted by Adiyani et al. (2025) evaluating originality and ethical reading–writing practices has become increasingly complex due to the widespread use of paraphrasing tools and artificial intelligence in students' academic work. This complexity underscores the need for reading assessments that not only measure comprehension, but also encourage responsible and authentic engagement with texts. In addition, reading enables students to adapt to increasingly complex and diverse academic demands, supporting academic success by broadening their knowledge and enhancing their ability to think logically and analytically (de Oliveira et al., 2023; Ghani et al., 2022; I. Arbis, 2025; Pandey, 2023; Zhou, 2024). Therefore, it is not only the development of reading skills that matters, but also the implementation of an assessment system that is valid, fair, and aligned with the characteristics of the text.

Mastery of reading skills at the senior high school level is essential, particularly in the context of Indonesian language learning, as it serves as the foundation for comprehending both literary and non-literary texts (Fan, 2023; Potaša, 2024). Furthermore, the development of reading skills contributes significantly to enhancing critical thinking abilities, which are crucial for

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academic success and daily life (Anaktototy & Lesnussa, 2022; Arifin, 2020; Marwan et al., 2024; Medranda-Morales et al., 2023; Poulíková et al., 2024). Reading literacy has been recognized as a key competence underpinning students' lifelong learning and civic participation. Large-scale international assessments such as PISA and PIRLS emphasize not only literal comprehension but also higher-order skills such as interpretation, evaluation, and reflection across diverse text types (Mullis & Martin, 2019; OECD, 2019). These assessments highlight that effective reading instruction and assessment practices are crucial indicators of educational quality and equity across nations (Ho & Gan, 2023; Sulis et al., 2020). However, compared to countries that have systematically aligned classroom assessments with international literacy frameworks, Indonesia continues to face challenges in integrating reading literacy outcomes, particularly for both literary and informational texts into classroom-based evaluation. Thus, strengthening students' reading competence from an early stage is not only vital for improving instructional quality and critical thinking but also for aligning national practices with global literacy standards that support students' intellectual and personal development.

Literature plays a vital role in education, particularly in language learning. It not only serves as a medium for introducing diverse cultural values but also supports the development of critical thinking through in-depth textual analysis (Julia & Jeyanthi, 2024; Luukka, 2023; Naji et al., 2019). Literature is not merely a form of entertainment, but a pedagogical tool that engages students with cultural, historical, and human dimensions (Levine, 2022; Pandey, 2023; Pan, 2024). In this regard, literature-based instruction can enhance reading skills while equipping students with broader cultural awareness and a deeper understanding of social contexts (Hossain, 2024; Julia & Jeyanthi, 2024; Tsang et al., 2023). However, existing reading assessments in Indonesian schools tend to focus predominantly on linguistic and cognitive aspects, such as vocabulary recognition and literal comprehension, while students' interpretative and affective engagement with literary texts often remains unassessed (Pani & Handayani, 2024; Sukenti et al., 2021; Sultan et al., 2023). This limited perspective results in an incomplete understanding of students' reading competence. Therefore, there is a need for a more integrative assessment framework that evaluates not only linguistic comprehension but also students' ability to interpret cultural values, emotional resonance, and the underlying messages conveyed through literary works.

A literary genre is a creative work that employs language as its primary medium, emphasizing aesthetic, imaginative, and expressive functions, employing distinctive and creative language to convey specific messages, values, or meanings (Van Luxemburg et al., 1992). In literary studies, a literary text is regarded as the result of an interaction between internal aspects (such as structure, style, and theme) and external aspects (such as social, cultural,

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and ideological contexts) that shape the meaning and function of the work. Furthermore, a literary text can also serve as a medium for understanding cultural values, tolerance, and the social dynamics of a community. Literary genres such as poetry, prose, and drama present distinct challenges in reading comprehension. Poetry often involves symbolism and stylistic devices that require deep interpretation, whereas prose emphasizes character development and narrative structure. In contrast, drama combines dialogue and action, demanding readers to engage in more complex interpretive processes related to theatrical context (Blohm et al., 2022; Erniwati et al., 2023; Levine, 2022; Sheehan et al., 2007). Students' ability to understand these genres is greatly influenced by the reading strategies employed and how the texts are assessed. However, reading proficiency in literary genres remains relatively low, as evidenced by students' difficulties in mastering vocabulary, making inferences, identifying figurative language, and analyzing narrative elements (Erniwati et al., 2023; Munibi, 2023; Pardomuan Hutabarat et al., 2025). Moreover, students' expectations of different genres also affect their comprehension; for example, global text cohesion appears to benefit expository texts more than literary ones, and students with lower reading abilities tend to benefit more from this cohesion (Schmitz et al., 2017). This aligns with findings by Tabullo & Chiófalo (2024) which indicate that literary texts have a stronger impact on improving comprehension of both narrative and expository texts compared to popular fiction genres. Therefore, reading assessment must take into account the specific characteristics of each literary genre to ensure fair and comprehensive evaluation. Teachers should introduce students to a variety of literary genres so they can learn distinct strategies for approaching different types of texts.

While literary texts emphasize aesthetic and interpretive aspects, non-literary texts focus on factual, logical, and systematic presentation of information. These texts are commonly used to deliver information, explain phenomena, or persuade readers, rather than to evoke aesthetic or emotional experiences (Cherkashyna & Paramonov, 2021; Kovacic et al., 2023; Pllana, 2020; Watkins & Knapp, 2005). The main characteristics of non-literary texts include the use of verifiable information presented logically and clearly. Such texts avoid ambiguous language and symbolism, instead favoring denotative and straightforward expressions (Al-Ma'ruf et al., 2024; Pllana, 2020; Watkins & Knapp, 2005). Each genre within non-literary texts—such as reports, expositions, procedures, explanations, and arguments—has a distinctive structure and social function in communication. These features are crucial for developing students' reading and writing skills, as they help learners recognize the communicative purpose of texts and how information is organized (Kovacic et al., 2023; Watkins & Knapp, 2005). For instance, report texts are used to systematically classify and describe phenomena, while exposition texts aim to present logical arguments to persuade readers. Through engagement with such texts, students learn to identify text structures,

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understand cause-effect relationships, and distinguish between facts and opinions. The reading strategies for these texts differ from those used for literary works, placing greater emphasis on identifying main ideas, drawing logical conclusions, and analyzing data and information (Hollis, 2023; Khatib & Alizadeh, 2012). Nevertheless, the teaching and assessment of non-literary reading skills often receive less attention than literary texts, despite the fact that non-literary texts are more prevalent in students' daily lives.

Within this context, the genre-based approach serves as the primary conceptual framework of this study. This approach posits that each text type possesses a distinct structure and social purpose, thereby requiring specific reading strategies and assessment methods. To ensure theoretical coherence with broader assessment principles, this study also incorporates key concepts from educational assessment theory, particularly validity, reliability, and the distinction between formative and summative functions (Brown, 2004; Nitko & Brookhart, 2011). In this regard, genre-based pedagogy informs not only how reading tasks are designed but also how they are evaluated, validity ensures that the assessment tasks genuinely measure students' comprehension of different text types; reliability emphasizes consistency in scoring across genres; and formative use of genre-based assessment allows teachers to provide targeted feedback to improve students' interpretive and analytical reading skills. By integrating genre theory with broader assessment constructs, this study establishes a more comprehensive and theoretically grounded basis for developing reading assessment instruments.

Based on a review of previous studies, several research gaps have been identified in the development of reading assessment for literary and non-literary texts. First, most existing research focuses on the effectiveness of literary or non-literary texts in enhancing reading comprehension (Nurrohmah et al., 2015) yet few studies have explored assessment models designed to evaluate both types of texts comprehensively. Second, studies on reading assessment are generally conducted separately for literary and non-literary texts, with limited efforts to develop integrated instruments within a unified and coherent framework (Bauer et al., 2022; Lee & Goldman, 2015; Maharani et al., 2023; Sheehan et al., 2007). Third, many studies highlight final outcomes—such as comprehension scores or the effectiveness of teaching methods—without thoroughly analyzing the specific skills needed to comprehend each text type (Kovacic et al., 2023; Lee & Goldman, 2015). Fourth, there remains a lack of research focused on developing or adapting reading assessment tools suited to the Indonesian educational context in terms of content, language, and student characteristics. Fifth, there is limited research that explicitly connects differences in reading strategies for literary and non-literary texts with fair and valid assessment systems. Sixth, most studies tend to generalize reading assessment without differentiating the unique approaches required for various genres, even though each text genre

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has its own communicative structure, purpose, and method of meaning delivery.

In response to these gaps, the present study aims to explore the current practices of reading assessment for literary and non-literary texts conducted by senior high school Indonesian language teachers. The study seeks to contribute to the development of a more accurate, equitable, and genre-based reading assessment system that aligns with curriculum goals and the broader educational context in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive–qualitative design to investigate and gain an in-depth understanding of the assessment practices of reading skills in literary and non-literary texts at the senior high school level in Bandung City (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Yin, 2016). Although exploratory in nature, the study primarily adopts a descriptive orientation, focusing on mapping and interpreting teachers’ current practices of reading assessment through questionnaire data. The use of open-ended items in the questionnaire allowed participants to elaborate on their experiences and perceptions, thereby providing qualitative depth despite the study’s reliance on a single primary instrument. A total of 60 Bahasa Indonesia teachers from both public and private senior high schools were involved in this study to ensure diverse perspectives. Of the 60 Bahasa Indonesia teachers involved in this study, 37 were from public senior high schools and 23 were from private senior high schools, ensuring balanced representation and allowing for meaningful comparison of assessment practices across different institutional contexts.

The primary research instrument was a questionnaire consisting of both open- and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions allowed participants to describe their experiences in more detail, while closed-ended questions facilitated the collection of structured data for quantitative analysis. The questionnaire was developed based on key indicators derived from reading assessment theories and the genre-based approach. It covered various aspects, including teachers’ understanding of reading assessment for literary and non-literary texts, the influence of genre on assessment, teachers’ perceptions of assessment practices, techniques used, and challenges encountered during the assessment process. Prior to its administration, the questionnaire was validated by reading assessment experts to ensure the relevance of each item to the research focus. The validation process involved expert discussions and alignment of indicators with the national reading competence standards for Bahasa Indonesia instruction at the senior high school level.

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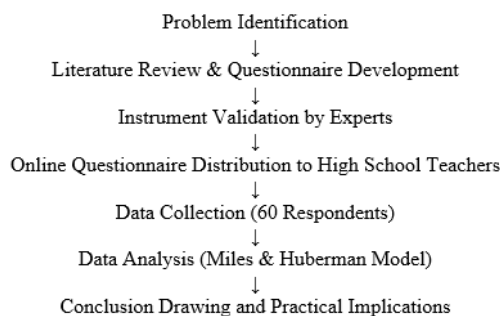
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The collected data were analyzed using the data analysis model by Miles et al. (2014) which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, the qualitative responses were coded manually using inductive thematic analysis. Initial codes were generated based on recurring ideas and patterns emerging from the data, which were then grouped into broader themes reflecting teachers' assessment practices, challenges, and strategies. To ensure the credibility of the analysis, the coding results were cross-checked by two independent reviewers, and discrepancies were discussed until consensus was reached. The inter-coder agreement process helped strengthen the reliability and confirmability of the thematic findings. In the data reduction stage, relevant data were selected, filtered, and organized based on the research focus. The data display stage involved organizing the data into narratives, frequency tables, or thematic categories to facilitate pattern identification. The final stage, conclusion drawing, aimed to identify trends, common challenges, and teacher strategies for assessing reading skills in both literary and non-literary texts.

The general process of this research is illustrated in the following procedural diagram.

Figure 1:

Research Procedure for Assessing Reading Skills in Literary and Non-Literary Texts



This research adhered to ethical research principles, including ensuring participant confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, and clearly communicating the research objectives. All participation was conducted online. By employing this method, the study aims to provide empirical insights into the current practices of reading assessment that consider the distinct characteristics of literary and non-literary genres, while also reinforcing the integration of a genre-based approach in reading instruction and assessment in Bahasa Indonesia classrooms at the senior high school level.

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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study employed a questionnaire method involving teachers from 18 schools with varying statuses, including both public and private institutions. This variation provided a diverse picture of the implementation of reading assessment practices for literary and non-literary texts, as each type of school faces different conditions, challenges, and opportunities. The majority of respondents were female (39 teachers), while male respondents numbered only 12, with an age range between 26 and 56 years. This composition reflects diversity in teaching experience, ranging from 4 to 36 years. In addition, most participants held a master's degree, which supports their intellectual capacity to understand the concepts of reading assessment for both literary and non-literary texts. The presentation of the questionnaire results in this section outlines the key findings related to current practices, differences in text types, and the challenges teachers face in assessing students' reading abilities, as expressed in the responses collected from senior high school Indonesian language teachers.

1. Literary and Non-Literary Texts in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum

To understand the practice of reading assessment in schools, it is essential to examine how literary and non-literary texts are positioned within the prevailing curriculum frameworks. The differing approaches of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum in presenting genre-based materials directly affect the teaching and assessment strategies adopted by teachers in the classroom. Therefore, mapping the types of texts and their orientation in both curricula is crucial as a foundation for analyzing reading assessment practices in schools.

In the 2013 Curriculum, Bahasa Indonesia instruction classifies literary and non-literary texts separately through specifically formulated basic competencies (Kompetensi Dasar/KD). This curriculum adopts an instructional and textual approach, aiming for students to master various text types technically, for example by producing texts based on their structure and linguistic features. A total of 22 types of texts are included for study from Grade X to XII. Literary texts are covered in specific competencies with emphasis on intrinsic elements, text structure, and the values embedded within. Six literary genres are explicitly stated in the competencies. Meanwhile, non-literary texts are taught in separate competencies focusing on their structure, linguistic features, and communicative functions. Sixteen types of non-literary texts are identified in the 2013 Curriculum. The distribution of both literary and non-literary texts can be seen in Table 1.

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In contrast, the Merdeka Curriculum adopts a more holistic and contextual whole-text approach. Literary and non-literary texts are no longer rigidly separated but are used in a balanced manner to build literacy competence, language skills, as well as critical, creative, and imaginative thinking aligned with students' developmental phases. Literary texts are utilized to foster empathy, cultural understanding, and aesthetic sensitivity. Meanwhile, non-literary texts are aimed at developing the ability to express ideas logically and argumentatively. This approach aligns material presentation with student development and promotes project-based and experiential learning.

The Merdeka Curriculum also emphasizes 21st-century skills—such as digital literacy, collaboration, and communication—through reading and writing activities based on authentic texts. A review of the Bahasa Indonesia learning outcomes for Phase E (Grade X) and Phase F (Grades XI and XII) reveals a selection of literary and non-literary texts used by teachers. Compared to the 2013 Curriculum, the Merdeka Curriculum does not prioritize quantity of text types but instead emphasizes the function of texts in developing students' critical, creative, and reflective literacy. As such, text selection in the Merdeka Curriculum supports a more meaningful, contextual, and holistic learning experience. The distribution of text types in the Merdeka Curriculum is presented in Table 1.

Table 1:
Scope of Indonesian Language Texts for Senior High School

2013 Curriculum		Merdeka Curriculum	
Literary Texts	Non-Literary Texts	Literary Texts	Non-Literary Texts
1. Hikayat/ Folktales	1. Observation Report Text	1. Recount Text	1. Descriptive Text
2. Poetry	2. Expository Text	2. Narrative Text	2. Report Text
3. Short Story	3. Anecdote Text	3. Poetry	3. Explanatory Text
4. Drama	4. Negotiation Text	4. Short Story	4. Expository Text
5. Novel	5. Debate Text	5. Novel	5. Discussion Text
6. Historical Narrative Text	6. Biography	6. Drama	6. Response Text
	7. Procedure Text		
	8. Explanatory Text		
	9. Speech Text		
	10. Proposal		
	11. Scientific Paper		
	12. Review Text		
	13. Job Application Letter		

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14. Editorial Text

15. Article

16. Essay

The fundamental difference between Indonesian language instruction in the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum lies not only in the number of text types, but also in the learning orientation, presentation structure, and the intended student competency outcomes. The 2013 Curriculum emphasizes the technical and structural aspects of text-based instruction. This approach tends to focus on content mastery and technical language skills, with assessment systems that are standardized and administrative in nature (Bulan, Suryaman, & Mardiah, 2020; Bulan, Suryaman, Nurhasanah, et al., 2020; Manurung et al., 2024). In contrast, the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes meaning-based learning and social relevance, making it more contextual and adaptive to students' needs. It provides greater room for exploration, creativity, and content adaptation based on students' interests, and encourages project-based learning and authentic experiences (Manurung et al., 2024; Rintaningrum et al., 2023; Wibowo et al., 2023; Zebua et al., 2025). This orientation is reflected in the use of various text types, both literary and non-literary, as media to build literacy competencies aligned with contemporary challenges (Manurung et al., 2024; Rintaningrum et al., 2023; Zebua et al., 2025). In other words, text utilization in the Merdeka Curriculum is not solely academic, but also reflective and affective.

These curricular differences directly influence the assessment strategies employed by teachers to evaluate students' reading abilities. However, in practice, teachers' adaptation to the Merdeka Curriculum is shaped not only by curricular orientation but also by systemic factors such as limited professional training, resource disparities across schools, and administrative expectations rooted in the previous curriculum. As a result, many teachers continue to rely on standardized assessment methods despite the curriculum's emphasis on authentic and formative evaluation. This suggests that curriculum reform alone does not automatically transform classroom assessment practices; sustained teacher development and institutional support are essential to bridge the gap between policy intent and pedagogical implementation

2. Implementation of Literary Text Reading Assessment

The assessment of students' ability to read literary texts reflects teachers' understanding of the function of literature in developing students' literacy skills in the classroom. The following questionnaire results illustrate the diversity of assessment objectives, timing, types of texts used, and the approaches and instruments implemented by teachers.

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Of the 60 teachers surveyed, 42 teachers reported that the objectives of assessing students' literary reading abilities are highly varied, indicating a comprehensive approach to literature instruction. The assessments aim to evaluate students' understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic elements of literary works, enhance appreciation of linguistic beauty, and develop critical, imaginative, reflective, and expressive thinking—core goals in literary text reading assessment. These findings support previous studies that underscore literature's role in fostering empathy and character development through aesthetic and emotional experiences (Bauer et al., 2022; Erniwati et al., 2023; Hamimed, 2021). Several teachers also emphasized the importance of assessment as a tool to cultivate empathy, values, and humanitarian insights derived from reading literary texts (24 out of 60 teachers). In addition, assessment is used to integrate language skills holistically (reading, writing, listening, speaking) (36 out of 60 teachers) and as preparation for school-based assessments and national exams (24 out of teachers). This aligns with research showing that literature learning and assessment can foster students' empathy, humanitarian values, and social awareness (Porto & Zembylas, 2020; Numanee et al., 2020; Hahn, 2020; Alatawi & Harshan, 2023; Gao, 2019). Through reading and discussing literary works, students are able to understand others' perspectives, experiences, and emotions, thereby developing empathy and social solidarity. Furthermore, literature-based assessment is also effective for integrating language skills holistically, as literature learning involves reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities in an integrated manner (Subhayni et al., 2019; Al-Jiboury, 2024). This practice is also relevant as preparation for both school-based and national assessments, where critical thinking, analysis, and integrated language skills are highly required (Costa & Silva, 2015; Subhayni et al., 2019; Al-Jiboury, 2024).

Teachers provided feedback to students in both oral and written forms. Feedback was delivered either immediately after the assessment or at the end of an instructional period. This indicates that literary reading assessment functions not only as an evaluation tool but also as an integral part of a reflective and educational learning process (Maharani et al., 2023).

Reading assessments of literary texts are routinely implemented by Indonesian language teachers at the senior high school level, typically conducted during the literature genre teaching phase. Of the 60 teacher respondents, 12 (20%) stated that assessment is performed annually, while 48 (80%) conduct it after specific learning moments, such as post-literary appreciation activities or upon completion of relevant instructional content. This finding illustrates the flexibility of schools and teachers in determining assessment schedules. Furthermore, teachers expressed professional awareness of the importance of fostering critical and appreciative reading competencies through literature (Anaktototy & Lesnussa, 2022; Arifin, 2020).

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Based on the results of the questionnaire administered to 60 Indonesian language teachers at the senior high school level, this study found that the proportion of literary genres taught in the classroom varies; most teachers generally teach two to three types of genres, with poetry being the least frequently taught literary genre. This pattern reflects broader curricular tendencies: for example, research by Aulia et al. (2024) indicates that while fiction, nonfiction, and poetry are included in English textbooks used in Indonesian senior high schools, the term “literary” or “sastra” is rarely mentioned explicitly, and genres like narrative and recount are more dominant. Similar findings were reported in international studies, which show that narrative fiction is often favored over other genres such as poetry (Dost, 2025; Nissen et al., 2021). Dost (2025), for instance, observed that genres like reports and arguments tend to receive the most emphasis, leaving genres such as narratives and poems underrepresented. This alignment between classroom practices and textbook content suggests a systemic bias towards certain genres, despite the pedagogical value of diversity in genre exposure. One possible explanation for the limited use of poetry is that some teachers perceive it as abstract, difficult to assess objectively, or less relevant to standardized testing, which discourages its inclusion in classroom practice. Such concerns were echoed by several respondents who noted that poetry was “time-consuming” and “difficult to score without subjectivity”. These findings point to a missed opportunity, as poetry has the potential to enrich students' aesthetic and emotional literacy, critical interpretation skills, and creative engagement. Thus, despite the importance of genre diversity for developing well-rounded literacy, the actual implementation in classrooms remains narrowly focused. This study highlights the need for teacher training programs and curriculum policies that promote balanced representation of genres, particularly those that are currently marginalized, such as poetry, to support holistic reading competencies in students.

In selecting and utilizing literary texts, teachers demonstrate a high degree of flexibility, drawing on various sources—including government-issued textbooks, supplementary texts from other publishers, anthologies, online sources such as blogs and social media, and even texts written by students or adapted by teachers themselves. Some teachers modify texts from online media, adjusting difficulty levels or selecting specific excerpts. This demonstrates both the adaptability and creativity of teachers in tailoring learning materials and ensuring the relevance and accessibility of texts for students, as also reported by Maharani et al., 2023.

In terms of assessment format, teachers employ a range of methods such as multiple-choice questions, short and long answer items, project-based assessments, portfolio assessments, and peer assessments. Some teachers reported not using formal tests, opting instead for reading assignments linked to class activities like discussions.

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The cognitive levels targeted by teachers also vary. While levels C-1 (remembering) to C-4 (analyzing) are most commonly assessed, levels C-5 (evaluating) and C-6 (creating) remain challenging for teachers to address through assessment instruments. This suggests that teachers are generally more comfortable evaluating factual knowledge and analysis but encounter difficulties when assessing higher-order thinking skills, such as connecting texts to personal experiences or producing derivative creative works.

The aspects assessed are also diverse. Teachers evaluate not only students' understanding of plot, characters, and themes, but also their ability to interpret implicit meanings, extract moral messages, compare texts, provide personal responses, and appreciate literary style. These findings indicate that some teachers are making efforts to develop assessment instruments that promote deep interpretation and reflective thinking, although not all are fully able to implement Bloom's taxonomy comprehensively.

Thus, these findings address the research question regarding the forms and strategies of literary text reading assessment used by teachers. Beyond identifying patterns in actual classroom practices, the findings also highlight areas in need of improvement, particularly in the development of evaluative and creative assessment tools based on literary texts. These conclusions align with previous studies that emphasize the critical role of teachers in fostering authentic and meaningful aesthetic literacy experiences for students (Arifin, 2020; Maharani et al., 2023)

3. Implementation of Non-Literary Text Reading Assessment

The assessment of non-literary text reading skills possesses distinct characteristics, requiring appropriate strategies and the selection of instruments that align with instructional goals. Based on questionnaire data, teachers conduct assessments of students' non-literary reading abilities with a variety of objectives, many of which reflect a focus on higher-order cognitive skills. The most common objective is to assess students' ability to identify main ideas and key information, followed by the ability to analyze information and data, and to evaluate the accuracy and relevance of information presented in texts. Some teachers also emphasized the importance of evaluating students' ability to interpret the author's purpose or intended meaning, indicating efforts to foster critical reading skills and deep comprehension of non-literary texts.

The assessment of non-literary reading ability is implemented flexibly and aligned with different stages of instruction—whether after each lesson, at the end of a unit, during student presentations, or at the end of the academic year. This flexibility demonstrates that assessment is not always formal or separated from instruction, but often integrated into classroom learning activities (Bulan, Suryaman, & Mardiah, 2020; Bulan, Suryaman,

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Nurhasanah, et al., 2020). It also reflects the integration of assessment as part of the instructional process. Teachers also reported evaluating a wide range of non-literary text types reflected in the curriculum, such as descriptive texts, scientific reports, explanatory texts, argumentative texts, discussions, procedures, speeches, editorials, essays/critiques, biographies, news articles, and reviews (Cherkashyna & Paramonov, 2021; Dai, 2024a; Gunawan, 2022; Watkins & Knapp, 2005). This diversity demonstrates teachers' flexibility in selecting texts based on instructional goals and targeted competencies (Mendhakar, 2022; Pan, 2024; Schmitz et al., 2017). and reflects autonomy in tailoring materials to student needs.

When selecting or composing texts, teachers consider several factors, such as text complexity, relevance to subject content, student interest and needs, text availability, learning goals, and real-life or current societal issues. Additionally, genre diversity is also a key consideration. These practices show that teachers aim to make assessments more meaningful by aligning texts with students' abilities and classroom context. In sourcing non-literary texts, teachers use textbooks, articles from print and online media, self-written materials, and popular nonfiction books (Cherkashyna & Paramonov, 2021). This combination of official, digital, and independently sourced materials indicates that teachers are adapting to resource limitations while incorporating contextual and up-to-date materials. Most teachers stated that online texts used for assessment are usually modified in advance. Modifications include adjusting reading difficulty, altering text structure or format, and shortening texts to fit available time. These actions demonstrate teachers' awareness of the importance of adapting materials to suit students' abilities and classroom conditions. Such adjustments reflect teachers' pedagogical sensitivity to student needs (Cherkashyna & Paramonov, 2021; Gunawan, 2022).

To assess student understanding, teachers employ various formats that reflect adaptive and differentiated approaches. Assessment methods include multiple-choice and open-ended questions, written analysis, presentations, and assignments targeting different cognitive levels—ranging from C-1 (remembering) to C-4 (analyzing). The emphasis on C-4 indicates a tendency to promote higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in reading comprehension assessments. This reflects an effort to enhance critical thinking, although implementation is not yet uniform Arifin (2020) dan Poulíková et al. (2024). Assessment indicators used by teachers include identifying main ideas, understanding text structure, drawing conclusions, evaluating arguments, linking content to real-life contexts, and comparing texts. These indicators aim to provide a comprehensive picture of students' reading comprehension, covering both literal understanding and critical thinking abilities.

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The majority of teachers reported that they provide feedback to students following reading assessments. Feedback may be oral or written, delivered individually or in groups, and provided either immediately after the assessment, a week later, or at the end of the instructional period. This pattern suggests that assessment is viewed as part of a continuous and reflective learning process rather than merely a measurement tool. However, the findings also reveal challenges. Of the 60 teacher respondents, 50 (83.3%) acknowledged difficulties in designing questions that target the C-5 (evaluating) and C-6 (creating) levels. The main challenges reported were the lack of training in constructing HOTS-oriented items and the limited availability of contextual question examples in textbooks. These findings highlight the need to strengthen teachers' competencies in critical literacy assessment (Pan, 2024; Poulíková et al., 2024).

Teachers' assessment practices for non-literary texts show positive development, although disparities remain in the implementation of higher-order cognitive levels. This aligns with the findings of Kovacic et al. (2023) who argue that evaluating arguments and assessing information remains a global challenge in literacy education.

4. Differences in Text Types and Their Impact on Reading Assessment

The differing characteristics of literary and non-literary texts not only affect how they are read, but also directly influence the assessment strategies and approaches employed by Indonesian language teachers in the classroom (Cherkashyna & Paramonov, 2021; Dai, 2024a; Lee & Goldman, 2015). These differences have a tangible impact on how teachers design and implement reading assessments. Questionnaire results reveal that 90% of respondents acknowledge that they adapt the form, purpose, and assessment indicators based on the genre of the text being taught. This indicates a strong sense of professional awareness among teachers regarding the fundamental distinctions between literary and non-literary texts.

Of the 60 teacher respondents, 48 (80%) reported that reading assessment is not conducted in isolation but integrated with other language skills, particularly writing. Meanwhile, 12 (20%) respondents stated that reading assessment is integrated with speaking and listening skills. This finding reflects teachers' understanding that reading is inherently connected to creative interpretation, discussion, and students' personal expression, factors that indirectly influence the assessment methods and instruments they employ (Bulan, Suryaman, Nurhasanah, et al., 2020; Watkins & Knapp, 2005).

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Table 2:
Assessment Techniques Used for Literary Texts (N = 60)

No	Assessment Technique	Frequency	Percentage
1	Essay / Reflective writing	36	60
2	Oral presentation or discussion	12	20
3	Performance-based assessment (role play, project)	31	51,67
4	Multiple-choice test	40	66,67
5	Peer/self-assessment	10	16,67
6	Portfolio or journal	20	33,33

Source: Questionnaire results from senior high school Bahasa Indonesia teachers, Bandung City (2025)
 Note: Respondents could select multiple techniques

Literary texts contribute to the development of students' critical, aesthetic, and reflective thinking skills. Respondents agreed that literary texts help students interpret meaning deeply, evaluate values, and understand conflicts and diverse perspectives. For instance, one teacher stated in the questionnaire: "Poetry assessment cannot rely solely on objective tests; it must allow for students' personal and interpretive responses."

As shown in Table 2, teachers primarily use essay-based, performance-based, and reflective techniques when assessing literary texts. Poetry assessments focus on sensitivity to language and symbolic meaning, prose assessments emphasize comprehension and narrative structure analysis, while drama assessments are often oral or performance-based. These findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the importance of genre-specific rubrics in assessing reading comprehension of literary works (Bauer et al., 2022; Lee & Goldman, 2015; Maharani et al., 2023).

Table 3:
Assessment Techniques Used for Non-Literary Texts (N = 60)

No	Assessment Technique	Frequency	Percentage
1	Multiple-choice questions	50	83.0
2	Analytical essay questions	35	58.3
3	Performance-based assessment	7	11.7
4	Oral discussion	6	10.0
5	Portfolio or project work	4	6.7

Source: Questionnaire results, 2025

In contrast, non-literary texts are more often assessed through factual, logical, and objective information-based approaches. Teachers noted that such texts help students develop skills such as understanding factual content, distinguishing between main and supporting ideas, engaging in critical analysis of text content and structure, and evaluating the accuracy of information (Kovacic et al., 2023). Furthermore, non-literary texts enhance

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students' interest in informative reading and expand their academic and technical vocabulary.

By reading and being assessed on non-literary texts, students also improve their ability to summarize and interpret information. As shown in Table 3, the most frequently used assessment techniques for non-literary texts are multiple-choice and analytical essay questions (83% and 58.3%, respectively). These results confirm that teachers favor assessment formats that are objective and efficient for measuring factual comprehension and logical reasoning.

Table 4:
Aspects of Reading Comprehension Emphasized by Teachers (N = 60)

Aspect of Reading Comprehension	Literary Texts (%)	Non-Literary Texts (%)
Understanding factual content / story elements	100	80
Interpreting implicit meaning or symbols	60	20
Evaluating moral values / argument quality	80	40
Analyzing structure and language features	60	60
Reflecting personal response / experience	60	40
Appreciating aesthetic and stylistic qualities	80	–
Comparing with other texts	80	–
Drawing conclusions	–	80
Relating text to real-life context	–	20

As shown in Table 4, literary text assessments emphasize interpretive, reflective, and evaluative dimensions—students' ability to infer meanings, appreciate aesthetics, and express personal responses—while non-literary text assessments prioritize factual understanding, structural analysis, and logical evaluation. These quantitative patterns align with the principles of genre-based assessment, which assert that evaluation must consider the communicative purpose and structural characteristics of each text.

These findings affirm that differences in the characteristics of literary and non-literary texts affect not only the reading skills being developed but also the types of assessment instruments, indicators, and strategies employed by teachers (Lee & Goldman, 2015; Watkins & Knapp, 2005). This aligns with the principles of genre-based assessment, which emphasize that assessment should take into account the social function and contextual structure of texts (Martin & Rose, 2008). Therefore, effective reading assessment must be tailored not only to the learners' level but also to the inherent nature and purpose of each text genre.

Thus, teachers consciously differentiate their assessment strategies based on the genre of text being taught. Literary texts are assessed through more interpretive and reflective approaches, while non-literary texts are

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evaluated using more objective and analytical methods. The implication of these findings is the urgent need to develop genre-based reading assessment instruments that accommodate text complexity, the unique characteristics of each genre, and the pedagogical goals of reading instruction. Such development will not only enhance the construct validity of reading assessments but also provide more meaningful and engaging learning experiences for students in Indonesian language classrooms.

5. Challenges and Implications of Reading Assessment in Schools

Teachers face various challenges in assessing students' reading abilities, both for literary and non-literary texts. In the context of literary texts, the main challenge identified by 92% of respondents is the difficulty of objectively measuring students' deep understanding or interpretation. This challenge arises because literary assessment often involves subjective and multiple interpretations of meaning, symbolism, and implicit messages in literary works (Bauer et al., 2022; Hamimed, 2021; Lee & Goldman, 2015). One teacher noted in the questionnaire: "Sometimes students offer a great interpretation, but because it doesn't align with the expected answer, their score ends up being low." Additional challenges include students' low interest in literary texts, limited class time, lack of appropriate reading assessment instruments, and the perception that literary assessment is not a priority in schools.

In the context of non-literary texts, the dominant issue is the variation in students' abilities to understand factual and implicit information. Other challenges include limited instructional time, difficulty in constructing questions that effectively assess critical thinking skills, and challenges in providing effective feedback. Respondents also pointed to resource limitations, such as the lack of relevant reading materials and the large number of students to be assessed within a short period. The absence of adequate training and technical guidelines for reading assessment, as well as unclear and non-operational assessment indicators in classroom practice, further complicate the evaluation of non-literary reading comprehension.

To address these challenges, teachers expressed a need for various forms of support to improve the quality of reading assessments for both literary and non-literary texts. The most desired support includes training on reading assessment techniques. In addition, teachers require accessible, ready-to-use examples of validated assessment instruments, access to quality literary and non-literary texts appropriate for different grade levels, and platforms that facilitate the assessment process. Equally important, teachers need dedicated time for collaboratively designing and reflecting on assessment practices through professional learning communities, allowing them to share and develop best practices.

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These findings emphasize that improving the quality of reading assessment should not rest solely on individual teachers, but must be supported by a structured, continuous, and responsive system. Government bodies, educational institutions, and curriculum developers must collaborate to provide resources, training, and reflective spaces for teachers.

As a strategic implication, it is crucial to develop valid and reliable reading assessment instruments that take into account the distinct characteristics of different text genres and the diverse profiles of students. Reading assessment should not be uniform but should align with the cognitive skills targeted in instruction—such as analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. Without systematic intervention, these challenges may hinder the achievement of the primary goal of reading instruction: to develop students into critical, reflective, and literate readers—both culturally and informationally. As a direction for future research, this study opens opportunities for developing community-based teacher training models focused on the design and validation of genre-based reading assessment instruments.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify the assessment practices of reading comprehension for literary and non-literary texts conducted by Indonesian language teachers at the senior high school level. The findings reveal that reading assessments for literary and non-literary texts are not implemented uniformly; instead, they are adapted to the characteristics of each text type and aligned with instructional goals. This reflects teachers' pedagogical awareness in fostering meaningful reading skills. Literary texts are assessed using more interpretative, reflective, and affective approaches, whereas non-literary texts are evaluated through more objective, logical, and analytical methods. Teachers tend to integrate reading assessment with other language skills and tailor the format, instruments, and reading materials to the specific context of their classrooms. However, both technical and pedagogical challenges—such as limited instructional time, lack of valid assessment tools, insufficient training, and the wide variation in student abilities—remain significant barriers to effective reading assessment implementation. These findings contribute to the development of genre-based reading assessment frameworks and reinforce the urgency of reflective-critical approaches in Indonesian language instruction. The study underscores the need to strengthen teacher capacity through professional development, access to contextualized reading materials, and systemic support to promote fair, accurate, and educative assessment practices. As a practical implication, it is necessary to develop assessment instruments that accommodate the diversity of text genres, emphasize higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), and are feasible for classroom implementation. Future research may focus on the

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design and trial of project-based reading assessment instruments or the effectiveness of reflective assessment training programs in enhancing the quality of reading instruction in schools.

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