

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the introductory elements of the study, encompassing the background of the research, identification of the problem, scope and limitations, formulation of research questions and objectives, the significance of the study, and the operational definitions of key terms.

#### **2.1.1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND**

Assessment is widely recognized as an integral part of the teaching and learning process because it provides crucial information that helps teachers understand students' progress and supports decision-making related to instruction. Heritage (2010) emphasizes that assessment is not merely the act of recording scores or determining final grades; rather, it is a continuous process that helps teachers identify students' strengths and weaknesses, adjust instructional strategies, and support students in moving toward the intended learning goals. Effective assessment practices therefore contribute significantly to the quality of instruction, the pace of learning, and the development of students' overall competencies.

In English as foreign language (EFL) contexts, such as Indonesia, assessment holds an especially important role because language learning is cumulative and multidimensional. Students develop various skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) over time, and teachers need systematic ways to monitor this development. Despite this, several studies indicate that classroom assessment practices in Indonesia remain dominated by traditional testing formats, with a strong emphasis on summative assessment (Alfian et al., 2022). Many teachers rely on paper-based multiple-choice tests or short written responses, which primarily measure lower-order thinking skills and do not provide space for meaningful feedback or student self-reflection.

These concerns become more visible when viewed alongside Indonesia's performance in international literacy assessments. The Programme for

International Student Assessment (PISA) has consistently shown that Indonesian students perform below the OECD average in reading literacy. In PISA 2022, Indonesia remained in the lower group of participating countries, with students struggling to interpret and evaluate information from various types of texts (OECD, 2023). Even more concerning, Indonesian students demonstrated limited ability to deal with complex, inferential, and evaluative reading tasks, skills that are essential in English learning and in navigating diverse information sources. The recurring pattern across PISA cycles (2009, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2022) highlights systemic issues related to literacy instruction, learning engagement, and assessment design across schools nationwide.

The urgency to strengthen literacy skills is further emphasized by the shifting definitions of literacy in the 21st century. UNESCO (2017) and Warlick (2004) describe literacy not merely as the ability to decode written texts but as the ability to access, understand, analyze, evaluate, and create information across multiple modes and media. Today's literacy includes digital literacy, multimodal literacy, and critical literacy, which require learners to navigate online platforms, interpret visual and audiovisual texts, and critically engage with information in online spaces. Thus, English literacy becomes a complex competence that blends reading comprehension, vocabulary development, critical thinking, and digital navigation skills. This evolution of literacy calls for assessment practices that reflect modern learning demands rather than traditional pen-and-paper tests.

To address these concerns, several studies have focused on the development of literacy-based assessment instrument that aim to integrate literacy more effectively into English instruction. For example, Padmadewi & Artini (2017) and Artini et al. (2021) have proposed models and designed assessment tools for grades 7 to 9 students. These tools attempt to embed literacy skills into assessment process. However, these instruments were mostly developed in limited settings. This gap represents a significant area for further research and serves as the entry point for the present study. It underscores the need for further studies that explore such instruments in real teaching contexts. This gap forms

the basis for the present study which seeks to contribute to this underexplored area by examining the implementation of literacy-based assessment in English classrooms.

Alongside pedagogical changes, the rise of technology in education, particularly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has transformed the way teachers design and deliver instruction. Many schools, including those in rural and semi-urban areas, became more familiar with digital tools such as Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and Google Forms. This trend has given rise to blended learning (BL), a model that combines face-to-face teaching with online learning components. In the context of this study, blended learning refers specifically to a blended English literacy-based assessment-for-learning, where teachers integrate literacy tasks and formative assessment activities across both physical and digital platforms. This blended assessment design enables flexible participation, allows timely feedback, encourages digital literacy development, and supports continuous engagement with English texts (Allen et al., 2007; Sejdiu, 2014).

When literacy-based assessment is embedded within blended learning environments, it can create opportunities for both cognitive growth (language competency) and affective development (students' attitudes). English language competency defined by Brown (2007) as the mastery of four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) that enables learners to communicate effectively in real contexts. Campos (2017) emphasizes the need to give students opportunities to apply their language skills in meaningful contexts. Equally important are students' attitudes, which refer to their emotional responses and mental tendencies related to learning. A positive attitude can foster motivation and engagement, while the opposite can hinder progress (Kumaravadielu, 2006a; Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011a). Research has shown that learning methods and environments influence student attitudes. For instance, Getie (2020) found that students' attitudes are shaped by how learning activities are implemented, and Kaharuddin (2020) argues that online materials and activities can positively impact student motivation and learning attitudes.

While previous studies have developed tools and explored the benefits of both assessment for learning and blended learning, the combined use of literacy-based assessment-for-learning instrument in a blended environment and its effect on both students' competency and attitude remain unexamined. Responding to this gap, Mirawati (2022) developed a blended English literacy-based assessment instrument for Grade 8 students in Semester 1, which integrates literacy-focused assessment tasks in a blended learning format. However, there has been no research conducted to examine how effective the instrument actually is when applied in real classroom settings.

This research, therefore, aims to fill the mentioned gap by investigating the implementation of Mirawati's blended English literacy-based assessment instrument in a real classroom setting. This study is designed to explore not only the feasibility of integrating this instrument into teaching practices but its potential impact on students' English language competency and their attitudes toward learning the language. By focusing on both cognitive and affective outcomes, this research aims to provide a more holistic understanding of how literacy-based assessment can influence language learning in a blended learning environment. The chosen context of this study, SMP Negeri 3 Gianyar, offers a relevant and realistic environment for conducting such research. The school has begun incorporating technology-supported assessment, with teachers using WhatsApp to deliver instructions and Google Forms to collect student responses. The school also shows an openness to adopting innovative assessment practices and has adequate facilities to support blended learning. However, despite these promising conditions, the school has not yet evaluated whether blended literacy-based formative assessment truly benefits students' English development. Conducting research in this context therefore provides valuable insights for both the school and the wider educational community in Bali and Indonesia.



### 2.1.2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Studies indicate that the actual implementation of assessment practices in Indonesian schools remains heavily oriented toward assessment of learning, with limited emphasis on assessment for learning (AfL), which emphasizes formative feedback, student participation, and continuous monitoring of learning progress (Alfian et al., 2022). As a result, many students do not receive sufficient opportunities to reflect on their learning, develop literacy-related skills, or engage in assessment activities that support deeper comprehension and skill development.

Although innovative assessment instruments have been developed, such as the literacy-based tools designed by Artini et al. (2021) and the blended literacy-based assessment-for-learning instrument created by Mirawati (2022) these instruments have largely been conceptualized and introduced without being systematically tested in real classroom contexts. The limited implementation of such instruments in authentic instructional settings leaves a gap in understanding how these tools function in environments where student diversity, classroom dynamics, and school infrastructure may influence their effectiveness.

At the same time, blended learning has shown considerable potential to improve student engagement, learning attitudes, and academic performance (Sejdiu, 2014). Blended environments offer flexibility, facilitate timely feedback, and support differentiated, student-centered learning experiences. However, the integration of blended learning with literacy-based assessment-for-learning remains underexplored, especially within Indonesian junior high school settings, where teachers are still adapting to digital tools and literacy-focused pedagogies. The absence of empirical studies examining the combined use of blended learning and literacy-based AfL results in a theoretical and practical gap that needs to be addressed.

Therefore, this study seeks to respond to these gaps by implementing the blended English literacy-based assessment-for-learning instrument developed by Mirawati (2022) and evaluating its effect on students' English language

competency and their attitudes toward learning English. By situating this instrument within an authentic instructional context, the present research aims to bridge the gap between instrument development and classroom application, providing empirical evidence on its feasibility and effectiveness in supporting both cognitive and affective student outcomes.

### **2.1.3. RESEARCH LIMITATION**

The limitation of this study is only on finding out the effect of the implementation of blended English literacy-based assessment-for-learning instrument which was developed by Mirawati (2022) towards students' English competency and attitudes towards learning English. From this instrument, the focus of this study is only on the effect of the assessment-for-learning instrument. Furthermore, the population of this study will be limited to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in SMP Negeri 3 Gianyar.

### **2.1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the problems issued previously, this study presents questions to answer, as follows:

1. Is there any significant effect of a blended English literacy-based assessment-for-learning instrument on students' English language competency in grade 8 semester 1 in SMPN 3 Gianyar?
2. Is there any significant effect of the instrument on students' attitudes in grade 8 semester 1 in SMPN 3 Gianyar?
3. Is there any simultaneous effect of the instrument on students' English language competency and attitudes in grade 8 semester 1 in SMPN 3 Gianyar?

### **2.1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Based on the previous questions, the purposes of this study are:

1. to investigate the significant effect of the instrument on students' English language competency in grade 8 semester 1.
2. to investigate the significant effect the instrument on students' attitudes in grade 8 semester 1.
3. to investigate the simultaneous effect of the instrument on students' English language competency and attitudes in grade 8 semester 1.

## **2.1.6. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCES**

This study provides both theoretical and practical significance which are expected to be able to improve the quality of this topic and English learning.

### **1.6.1. Theoretical significance**

The findings contribute to the body of knowledge on formative assessment, literacy-based assessment, and blended learning by providing empirical evidence on how these three elements interact within an EFL classroom. While previous studies have largely focused on developing literacy-based assessment instruments, this study extends the literature by evaluating the actual classroom implementation of a blended literacy-based assessment-for-learning instrument (Mirawati, 2022). The results offer theoretical support for the use of blended platforms as spaces for literacy engagement and formative feedback, reinforcing the idea that blended environments can enhance both cognitive and affective learning outcomes.

### **1.6.2. Practical significances**

The practical significance of this study is addressed to various parties including teachers, researchers, the English Language Education Post-Graduate Program, and students.

#### **a) Significance for teachers**

For English teachers, the study offers a concrete example of how blended literacy-based assessment-for-learning can be integrated into daily instructional practices. The procedures, platforms used

(WhatsApp and Google Forms), and sample tasks from the instrument provide a practical model that teachers can adapt to support students' literacy development. The findings also show how blended formative assessment can improve students' English competency and attitudes toward learning English, encouraging teachers to incorporate more reflective, feedback-based, and literacy-oriented activities in blended learning environment into their classes.

b) Significances for schools

For schools, especially SMP Negeri 3 Gianyar, this research provides evidence-based evaluation of an innovative assessment model that aligns with current educational demands, including the integration of digital tools and literacy strengthening programs. The results can support school programs related to literacy, digital learning environments, and assessment reform. Additionally, the study highlights the readiness and feasibility of implementing blended literacy-based assessment within existing school infrastructures.

c) Significance for Future Researchers

For other researchers, this study addresses a gap between instrument development and classroom implementation. The methodological approach (quasi-experimental design with MANOVA) offers a replicable model for examining the impact of blended literacy-based assessment in different contexts, grade levels, or subject areas. Future research may further refine the instrument, explore longitudinal impacts, or expand its use across various learning environments.

d) Significance for Policy and Curriculum Development

The study provides empirical insights that may support educational stakeholders in promoting assessment practices that align with literacy and blended learning initiatives. As national



education policies increasingly emphasize literacy strengthening and digital competence, the findings of this research may serve as a reference for designing literacy-oriented assessment strategies that work effectively in real classroom contexts.

e) Significances for students

If the result of this study can be implemented at schools in the future, students can have the opportunity to use the English language more often and in more contextual situations. It will develop their competency in.

f) Significances for the English Language Education Post-Graduate program

This study result could add up for the research references or learning sources for the English Language Education Post-Graduate program.

## **2.1.7. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

The main terminologies which are presented in this thesis are distributed into conceptual and operational definitions as follows.

### **1.7.1. Conceptual Definition**

a) Assessment-for-learning

According to Dubec (2019), assessment for learning focuses on the teaching of metacognitive to students to evaluate their own learning and to make adjustments for their learning whose assessed aspects are students' understanding of their learning, the learning strategy used in the teaching and learning process, and the mechanism by which students adjust their learning.

b) English language competency

Brown (2007) states that competence refers to the knowledge of language aspects understood and how those aspects are used those aspects include four skills of language which are listening, reading, speaking, and writing

c) Attitude

As stated by Kumaravadielu (2006), attitude is a crucial component of the affective domain, which encompasses emotional and psychological factors influencing learning. This means that students' attitudes significantly shape how they engage with classroom environments, respond to instructional activities, and participate in the overall learning process. A positive attitude can foster motivation and persistence, while a negative one may hinder progress and involvement.

d) Blended Learning

Allen et al. (2007) describe blended learning as an instructional approach in which approximately 30% to 79% of learning activities combine online coursework with face-to-face interaction. In this model, online components may include content delivery, virtual discussions, or other technology-mediated tasks, while in-person sessions provide direct engagement and classroom-based support.

e) Blended English Literacy-Based Assessment

According to Padmadewi et al. (2022), blended English literacy-based assessment refers to an assessment approach that integrates literacy-focused English instruction within a blended learning environment. The process involves guiding students through literacy activities supported by digital platforms, enabling flexible communication and interaction throughout the learning experience.

### 1.7.2. Operational Definition

a) Blended English Literacy-Based Assessment-for-Learning Instrument

In this study, blended English literacy-based assessment-for-learning refers to a formative assessment model that integrates literacy-focused assessment tasks within both face-to-face and online learning environments. The instrument developed by

Mirawati (2022) is used as the main assessment tool. It consists of literacy-oriented tasks that require students to access, comprehend, analyze, evaluate, and respond to English texts through multimodal formats.

Operationally, the blended component is implemented through:

- Face-to-face classroom activities, where students' complete literacy tasks, engage in discussions, and receive direct feedback; and
- Online platforms, specifically WhatsApp and Google Forms, where students complete supplementary literacy tasks, submit responses, and receive timely feedback from the teacher.

Thus, in the context of this research, blended literacy-based AfL represents a continuous assessment process that combines digital tools and in-person instruction to promote literacy engagement, encourage self-monitoring, and provide formative feedback throughout the learning process.

b) English language competency

English language competency in this study refers to students' ability to use English across the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as defined by Brown (2007).

Operationally, competency is represented by students' post-test scores obtained after the treatment (blended literacy-based assessment-for-learning instrument). Higher scores indicate a higher level of English language competency.

c) Attitude

In this study, attitudes toward learning English refer to students' evaluative tendencies toward English learning, consisting of three components:

- Cognitive: students' beliefs and perceptions about English learning (e.g., usefulness, difficulty).

- Affective: students' feelings or emotional responses toward English learning (e.g., enjoyment, anxiety, interest).
- Behavioural: students' tendencies to take action, such as participation, effort, and willingness to engage in activities.

Operationally, attitude is expressed through post-test attitude scores, with higher scores representing more positive attitudes toward learning English.

d) Blended Learning

Blended learning is a combination between online and face-to-face instruction in teaching and learning situation. The blended environment in this study is supported by two platforms:

- WhatsApp, used for sharing instructions, clarifying tasks, and conducting short literacy-based discussions;
- Google Forms, used for delivering online literacy tasks, collecting student responses, and providing immediate feedback.

These platforms are selected based on their accessibility, familiarity to students, and relevance to the blended AfL model by Mirawati (2022).

e) Semester1 Grade 8 Students

This term refers to students who are formally registered as Grade 8 learners at SMP Negeri 3 Gianyar during the first semester of the academic year. These students represent the population to whom the instrument is originally designed to be applied.