

Development Of A Diagnostic Instrument Based On Teaching At The Right Level For Assessing Elementary School Students' Reading Ability

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Abstract

This study aims to develop a diagnostic instrument for reading ability based on Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) to map the reading abilities of primary school pupils according to their proficiency levels. The development of this instrument was prompted by the limitations of existing reading assessments, which remain general in nature and are therefore unable to identify variations in pupils' reading abilities as a basis for designing differentiated learning. This study employed the Research and Development (R&D) method, adapting the Borg and Gall model up to the limited pilot test stage, which involved 38 pupils in Years 1 and 2 of primary school. Research data were obtained through validation by linguists, TaRL assessment experts and education practitioners, pupil response questionnaires, and the results of reading ability mapping, and were subsequently analysed using descriptive statistics. The novelty of this research lies in the development of a diagnostic instrument designed based on reading ability levels within the TaRL approach, which has undergone a process of validation and practical testing prior to implementation. The research findings indicate that the instrument meets the validity criteria, is highly practical, and is capable of systematically mapping pupils' reading abilities from beginner level to paragraph level. These findings suggest that the instrument developed is suitable for use as a diagnostic assessment tool to support the identification of reading abilities and to form the basis for the design of differentiated learning tailored to the learning needs of primary school pupils.

Keywords: TaRL, Diagnostic Instruments, Reading Skills, Students, Elementary School



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1. INTRODUCTION

Reading skills among primary school pupils play a vital role as they form the cornerstone of literacy development and underpin academic success at subsequent stages of education (Phillips Galloway & Uccelli, 2019). Reading is not merely about recognising letters and words but also involves the processes of understanding, interpreting, and processing information obtained from various reading materials (Tunmer & Hoover, 2019). Through strong reading skills, pupils can broaden their knowledge, develop critical thinking skills, and comprehend learning materials more effectively (Yulian, 2021). The 2022 PISA results show that Indonesian students' reading literacy skills remain below the OECD average. These findings are consistent with the results of the National Assessment, which indicate that some elementary school students have not yet achieved the minimum reading literacy competency (Earlyanti & Sandy, 2026). This situation underscores the need for more innovative and effective teaching approaches to improve students' reading skills starting in elementary school (Condie & Pomerantz, 2020). Strengthening reading skills from an early age needs to be carried out optimally so that students have a strong foundation in literacy to support academic success in the next stage of education (Teale et al., 2018).

Although reading skills play a vital role in supporting pupils' academic success, in reality

there are still various issues relating to low reading proficiency among primary school pupils (Ozensoy, 2021). This is evident from the fact that there are still pupils who experience difficulties in understanding the content of a text, identifying key information, and interpreting the meaning contained within a text (Deane, 2020). There is also a gap in reading ability among pupils, with some possessing fairly good literacy skills whilst others remain at a basic reading stage that has not yet developed optimally (Salsabila et al., 2024). This situation presents a distinct challenge in the delivery of teaching and learning in primary schools, particularly in efforts to improve pupils' basic literacy skills (Suwanto et al., 2022). More serious attention and the implementation of effective and innovative learning strategies are required to address these issues so that pupils' reading skills can develop more evenly and optimally (Mustofa et al., 2024).

In order to address the various issues related to low reading proficiency among primary school pupils, strategic measures are required that can accurately identify pupils' initial literacy levels (Loopoo & Balfour, 2021). One such measure is the implementation of diagnostic assessment within the learning process (Iskak et al., 2023). Diagnostic assessment plays a vital role in primary education as it serves to determine pupils' initial abilities whilst more accurately identifying the various difficulties they encounter in reading activities (Fan et al., 2021). Through the implementation of diagnostic assessment, teachers can gain a more comprehensive picture of each student's reading ability, covering aspects such as reading fluency, comprehension of the text's content, and the ability to interpret information within the text (Harding et al., 2015). This information can then be utilised as a basis for teachers to design learning strategies that are more appropriate, targeted, and aligned with students' learning needs (Bhardwaj et al., 2025). Although diagnostic assessments have been widely used in education, the available instruments are still not optimal for identifying students' reading difficulties in depth. The instruments used tend to focus on final reading outcomes, so the information obtained does not provide a comprehensive picture of students' literacy profiles. This situation highlights the need to develop diagnostic assessment instruments that are more accurate, systematic, and tailored to the characteristics of elementary school students, to serve as a basis for making appropriate instructional decisions.

The Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach is a literacy learning strategy based on the principle of differentiation, namely the adaptation of the learning process to pupils' actual ability levels rather than solely on the basis of age or formal educational level (Rahmawati et al., 2024). This approach begins with the implementation of a diagnostic assessment to identify students' literacy competence levels, which are then used as the basis for homogeneous grouping based on ability level (Csapó & Molnár, 2019). The implementation of TaRL is particularly relevant in addressing the heterogeneity of literacy abilities within the classroom, thereby enabling learning to proceed more effectively, inclusively, and adaptively in response to individual characteristics (Putri & Muldash, 2024). This approach also promotes increased active participation, learning motivation, and accelerated mastery of basic literacy competencies among learners (Muhardini, 2023). The success of implementing the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach depends on the accuracy of diagnostic assessments in identifying students' initial abilities. The availability of valid and reliable diagnostic assessment tools is essential for generating accurate information about students' reading abilities. This information is then used as the basis for grouping students and designing instruction tailored to their learning needs.

A number of previous studies have examined TaRL, including (Mustafa et al., 2024; Sefriyana et al., 2025; Supratman et al., 2025; Jazuli, 2022; Marzoan et al., 2026; Adil et al., 2022; Aryanti & Muthamainah, 2024; Susanti et al., 2024; Rasheed et al., 2023). Mustafa et al (2024) explain that the development of diagnostic instruments based on the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach is a crucial aspect in improving the accuracy of reading ability assessment in primary school pupils. The application of TaRL principles in instrument development enables the mapping of reading ability based on pupils' actual levels, ranging from letter recognition to paragraph comprehension, thereby providing a strong foundation

for designing targeted learning interventions. These findings indicate that the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach has the potential to support the development of diagnostic assessment instruments for reading skills. Previous research has focused more on mapping students' literacy skills based on competency levels, while aspects of instrument quality such as validity, reliability, and suitability for elementary school students have not been thoroughly investigated. This situation highlights the need to develop diagnostic assessment instruments that are not only based on TaRL but also possess adequate measurement quality to generate accurate information and support targeted instruction.

Suleman & Idayanti (2024) explain that the TaRL approach to the development of diagnostic instruments is a fundamental requirement for measuring pupils' reading abilities accurately, systematically and contextually. Nggada & Alibe (2025) state that TaRL-based diagnostic instruments are designed to comprehensively identify students' literacy competence levels, ranging from letter recognition and vocabulary comprehension to the ability to understand texts of varying levels of complexity. Muhajang et al (2025) reveal that TaRL-based assessment results are used as a basis for grouping students according to their ability levels, whilst also serving as a reference for designing targeted, standardised and adaptive learning interventions that are relevant to learners' needs.

Although the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach has demonstrated its effectiveness in improving pupils' literacy skills, there remains a research gap regarding the development of diagnostic instruments specifically designed based on this approach, particularly in the context of primary education. The assessment instruments used in previous studies are generally still of a general nature and have not yet been fully capable of accommodating variations in pupils' literacy levels in a specific and systematic manner. This study introduces an innovation through the development of a more adaptive and contextual diagnostic instrument for reading ability, which is expected to measure students' literacy achievements more accurately and support the more optimal implementation of TaRL in the learning process.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a research and development (R&D) project aimed at developing and refining diagnostic instruments based on Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) through systematic and scientifically sound procedures (Yantoro et al., 2025). The data used in this study include quantitative and qualitative data obtained through expert validation instruments by both language experts and TaRL experts to assess the product's feasibility, as well as a user response questionnaire to measure the instrument's practicality. The pilot test was conducted on a limited scale in two classes: first-grade and second-grade students at Muhammadiyah Boarding School (MBS) in Mataram. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to determine the validity and practicality of the developed instrument. The Borg and Gall model was modified to align with the research objectives, which focused on the initial development of a diagnostic assessment instrument for reading ability based on Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL). This study only covered the preliminary study, planning, initial product development, expert validation, product revision, and limited pilot testing phases. The phases of large-scale field testing, operational revision, implementation, and product dissemination have not yet been carried out because the research was aimed at producing an instrument that meets the criteria of validity and practicality as a basis for further development. The development procedure adapted a modified Borg and Gall model and was carried out in stages, including a preliminary study, planning, initial product development, expert validation, product revision, and limited testing until a diagnostic instrument was obtained that met the criteria for validity and practicality for use in assessing students' reading (Jamaludin et al., 2024). As shown in Figure 1 below:

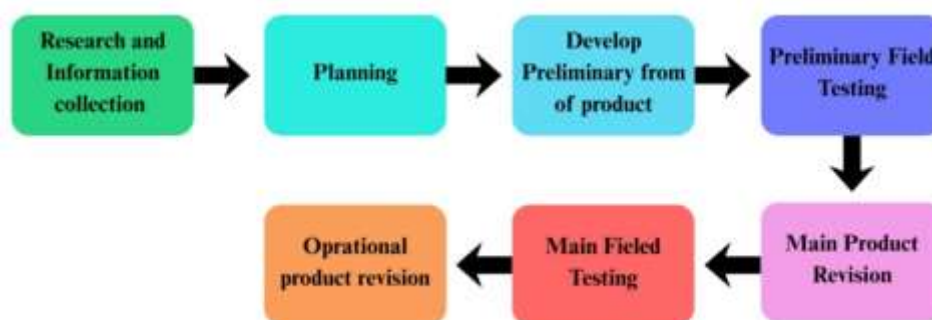


Figure 1 Research Flowchart (Borg and Gall 1983)

Figure 1 illustrates the stages of research development based on the Borg and Gall model (Purba, 2024). The research began with a preliminary study involving a literature review and needs analysis to identify the characteristics and specifications of the instrument to be developed. The planning phase included formulating development objectives, developing indicators, and creating an instrument rubric in accordance with reading proficiency levels within the TaRL approach. Next, a preliminary draft of the instrument was prepared and tested on a limited scale to gather feedback regarding readability, clarity of instructions, and ease of use. The results of this pilot test were used as the basis for revising the instrument before conducting a field test with elementary school students to gather data on the instrument's practicality. The data obtained were then utilized in the product refinement process to produce a diagnostic instrument that meets the criteria for validity and practicality. This study was limited to the revision stage of the operational product; therefore, the subsequent stages in the Borg and Gall model were not carried out.

The research subjects consisted of 38 elementary school students, including 21 first-graders and 17 second-graders. The study was conducted at an elementary school selected based on its suitability for the purpose of instrument development. Subjects were selected using purposive sampling, taking into account the students' prior knowledge, level of participation in learning, and characteristics relevant to the product testing requirements.

Product validity data was obtained through an evaluation conducted by three validators: a linguist, an expert in Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)-based assessment, and an elementary school practitioner/teacher. The aspects evaluated by the linguist included readability, sentence structure, word choice, paragraph coherence, and compliance with Indonesian language rules. The TaRL assessment expert's validation covered the appropriateness of the reading proficiency level, the clarity of the instrument items, the accuracy of the questions, the measurability of the instrument, and alignment with TaRL principles. Meanwhile, practitioners/teachers assessed the clarity of the instructions, contextual appropriateness, time efficiency during administration, ease of administration, and the usefulness of the assessment results for learning. The validation results were analysed by calculating the scores awarded by each validator, which were then converted into percentages using the following formula:

$$\text{Final Mark} = \frac{\text{Score Obtained}}{\text{Maximum Score}} \times 100 \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Formulas are presented consistently to facilitate understanding of the data analysis process. A product is deemed to meet the eligibility criteria if it achieves the minimum validity category based on the experts' assessment. Subsequently, the quantitative data obtained is classified into validity categories with reference to the established criteria, as presented in Table 1 below (Margaretha et al., 2022):

Table 1	
Quantitative data obtained	
Calculation	Criteria
80 <NV≤ 100	Highly Valid
60 <NV≤ 80	Valid
40 <NV≤ 60	Moderately Valid
20 <NV≤ 40	Less Valid
0 <NV≤ 20	Invalid

The tables are presented systematically to ensure consistency and improve the readability of the data. Once the product has been validated, the next step is to assess its practicality based on students' feedback following its use in the classroom.

Data on practicality was obtained through a student feedback questionnaire administered following the implementation of the product. Data analysis was carried out by calculating the average score for each indicator, which was then converted into a percentage to determine the product's level of practicality. The calculation used the following formula:

Table 2	
Student Response Criteria	
Score Range	Practicality Criteria
0 <P ≤ 20	Not Practical
20 <P ≤ 40	Somewhat Impractical
40 <P ≤ 60	Fairly Practical
60 <P ≤ 80	Practical
80 <P ≤ 100	Very Practical

In this study, the maximum score used was 3, in accordance with the rating scale on the student response questionnaire which consists of 10 statements covering aspects such as understanding the instructions, ease of use of the instrument, ease of recognizing letters, words, sentences, and reading passages, comprehension of the content, appeal of the material, efficiency in completing the task, and interest in using the instrument again. The teacher observation sheet was used to assess the implementation of the instrument in the classroom, including students' ease in understanding instructions, their independence in completing tasks, the appropriateness of time allocation, and their level of engagement and enthusiasm during the implementation process. All data obtained were then analyzed by converting them into percentages, which were subsequently interpreted based on predetermined practicality criteria to objectively describe the product's ease of use, comprehensibility, and appeal in the context of reading instruction in elementary school.

3. RESULT

Data on the results of validity, practicality and reading ability assessment tests. This research and development project has produced a diagnostic tool based on. This activity aimed to collect initial data through observation and interviews with class teachers to gain an understanding of how reading assessments are conducted in primary schools. The results of the preliminary study indicated that pupils' reading abilities remain heterogeneous and have not yet been systematically mapped. The assessment instruments used tend to be general in nature and are therefore unable to group pupils according to their reading ability levels. This situation has led to suboptimal learning processes, as teachers have not been able to fully adapt their teaching strategies to the needs and characteristics of their pupils. These findings suggest a link between the limitations of the assessment instruments and the low accuracy in identifying pupils' reading abilities.

Based on this, a diagnostic instrument was developed to map students' reading abilities according to competency levels within the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach. The prototype was developed by taking into account linguistic aspects, gradations of difficulty, and the developmental characteristics of elementary school students so that it could gradually accommodate differences in reading ability. The prototype then underwent a validation process by linguists, TaRL assessment experts, and education practitioners to evaluate the appropriateness of its content, linguistic aspects, and ease of use. Recommendations obtained from the validation process were used as the basis for refinement prior to field testing, ensuring that the resulting instrument possesses a higher level of clarity, appropriateness, and practicality in supporting the diagnostic assessment of elementary school students' reading abilities. The resulting product is presented in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2 TaRL-based diagnostic tools

Figure 2 shows a diagnostic instrument designed in a tiered structure comprising four consecutive levels of reading ability. The results of the product validation by experts are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3
Expert Validation Results

Name	Expert	Average Score	Criteria
Dr.Irma Setiawan, M.Pd	Languange Expert	63,75%	Valid
Dewi Rohiani, M.Pd	TaRL Asessment Expert	71,25%	Valid
Kamaladini, S.Pd	Practitioner	71,25%	Valid
	Average	68,75%	Valid

Following the validation phase, the research proceeded to the usability testing phase to assess the ease of use of the diagnostic tool developed. This usability testing was conducted

with primary school pupils divided into two groups: Year 1 pupils and Year 2 pupils. The inclusion of both groups aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the product's usability across different year groups.

Practicality data was obtained through a student feedback questionnaire following the use of a diagnostic instrument based on Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL). The data collected was then analysed to determine the level of practicality of the developed product. The results of the practicality data analysis for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are presented in the table below.

Table 4
Data on the Practicality of Year 1 Pupils' Products

Aspect	Indicator	Average Pupil Response	Criteria
Clarity of Instructions	1	2,95	Very Practical
Ease of Use	2	3	Very Practical
	8	3	Very Practical
Readability	3	2,86	Very Practical
	4	2,76	Very Practical
	5	2,57	Very Practical
Engaging Content	6	2,62	Very Practical
Content Comprehension	7	2,67	Very Practical
Time Efficiency	9	3	Very Practical
Motivation and Interest	10	2,95	Very Practical
Total		28,38	
Average		2,84	Very Practical
%		94,60	

Table 4 shows that the results of the practicality test for the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)-based diagnostic instrument among Year 1 pupils fell into the 'very practical' category, with an average score of 2.84 and a percentage of 94.60%. All indicators across every aspect of the assessment including clarity of instructions, ease of use, readability, and motivation and interest fall within the 'highly practical' category. This indicates that the developed instrument is highly user-friendly and is well understood by pupils. The results of the practicality test for Year 2 pupils are presented in Table 5 below:

Table 5
Data on the Practicality of Year 2 Pupils' Products

Aspect	Indicator	Average Pupil Response	Criteria
Clarity of Instructions	1	2,94	Very Practical
Ease of Use	2	3	Very Practical
	8	2,76	Very Practical
Readability	3	2,94	Very Practical
	4	2,88	Very Practical
	5	2,88	Very Practical
Engaging Content	6	2,88	Very Practical
Content Comprehension	7	2,76	Very Practical
Time Efficiency	9	2,71	Very Practical
Motivation and Interest	10	2,82	Very Practical
Total		28,57	Very Practical

Average	2,86	Very Practical
%	95,23	

Table 5 shows that the results of the instrument's practicality test for Year 2 pupils also fell into the 'very practical' category, with an average score of 2.86 and a percentage of 95.23%. All aspects of the assessment were

classified as 'very practical', indicating that the instrument has an excellent level of applicability and ease of use for Year 2 pupils. The results of the summary of pupils' reading ability mapping are presented in Table 6 below:

Table 6
Summary of the Results of the Reading Ability Assessment for Year 1 Pupils

No	Reading Ability Level	Number of Pupils	Percentage
1	Paragraph	8	38,10%
2	Word	4	19,05%
3	Syllable	4	19,05%
4	Leter	3	14,29%
5	Beginner	2	9,52%

Table 6 shows the results of the reading ability assessment of the 21 Year 1 pupils, revealing a distribution of abilities across various levels. The majority of pupils are at the paragraph level, namely 8 pupils (38.10%). Furthermore, there are 4 pupils (19.05%) each at the word and syllable levels, 3 pupils (14.29%), whilst 2 pupils (9.52%) are at the beginner level. These data indicate that the reading ability of Year 1 pupils spans all levels, ranging from the basic level to higher levels. The results of the mapping of Year 2 pupils' reading ability are presented in Table 7:

Table 7
Summary of the Results of the Reading Ability Assessment for Year 2 Pupils

No	Reading Ability Level	Number of Pupils	Percentage
1	Paragraph	14	82,35%
2	Word	1	5,88%
3	Syllable	1	5,88%
4	Leter	1	5,88%
5	Beginner	0	0%

Table 7 presents the results of the reading ability assessment for the 17 Year 2 pupils; the majority of pupils, namely 14 pupils (82.35%), are at the paragraph level. Furthermore, one pupil each (5.88%) is at the word, syllable and letter levels, whilst no pupils are at the beginner level. These data indicate that the distribution of reading ability among Year 2 pupils is dominated by the paragraph level, with a small proportion of pupils still at lower reading ability levels.

4. DISCUSSION

This study produced a diagnostic instrument based on Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), specifically designed as an assessment tool for the reading abilities of primary school pupils. As shown in Figure 1, the instrument is structured in stages, ranging from letters, words and sentences to paragraphs, in line with the developmental stages of reading ability.

This structure enables teachers to obtain more accurate information regarding each pupil's reading ability level, so that the assessment results can be used as a basis for designing learning activities tailored to the pupils' learning needs.

The development of a tiered assessment instrument is based on the stages of reading ability development, which progress gradually from the mastery of basic competencies towards more complex skills. Through this structure, the instrument not only provides information on pupils' reading achievement but is also able to identify each individual's ability level as a basis for designing appropriate learning interventions. These findings are consistent with the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) principle, which emphasises the importance of tailoring learning to pupils' actual abilities. The results of this study are supported by the findings of Sefriyana et al. (2025), who noted that TaRL-based diagnostic assessment plays a crucial role in mapping pupils' literacy skills as a foundation for designing more targeted learning. Previous research has focused more on the application of the TaRL approach in the learning process, whereas this study contributes by developing a diagnostic instrument that meets the criteria of validity and practicality, thereby enabling a more systematic mapping of pupils' reading abilities.

In terms of validity, the diagnostic instrument developed has met the eligibility criteria established on the basis of assessments by linguists, TaRL assessment experts, and education practitioners. The results indicate that the instrument is appropriate in terms of language, content and application in learning, and is therefore suitable for use as a diagnostic assessment tool for the reading skills of primary school pupils. This finding is supported by the research of Yantoro et al. (2025), which emphasises that validity is a key prerequisite in the development of TaRL-based assessment instruments. Unlike that study, the validation process in this research involved validators from various fields of expertise, ensuring that the quality of the instrument was evaluated more comprehensively before its application to pupils.

The validity achieved is the result of a systematic development process involving needs analysis, instrument design, expert validation, product revision and limited pilot testing. The involvement of validators with diverse expertise enabled each component of the instrument to be thoroughly evaluated, ensuring that the final product is appropriate in terms of content, language and feasibility in the learning context. The validation process not only ensures the instrument's suitability but also reinforces its potential as an assessment tool that supports the implementation of Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)-based learning in primary schools.

From a practicality perspective, the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)-based diagnostic instrument demonstrated excellent usability based on the results of trials conducted with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. These findings indicate that the instrument is easy to understand, easy to use, and appropriate for the developmental characteristics of primary school pupils. This practicality suggests that the instrument is not only suitable for use as a diagnostic assessment tool but can also be effectively applied in learning activities. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Larenas et al. (2021), who stated that assessment instruments designed in accordance with learners' characteristics are easier to implement in learning. However, this study not only demonstrates the ease of use of the instrument but also proves that the assessment results are capable of providing diagnostic information that can be utilised as a basis for designing differentiated learning in accordance with the principles of Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL).

The high level of practicality indicates that the instrument has been designed with due regard for the developmental characteristics of primary school pupils, in terms of language, the presentation of material and the sequence of assessment activities. The use of clear instructions, simple language and the gradual presentation of tasks enables pupils to complete each stage of the assessment independently. As well as making things easier for pupils, this instrument also helps teachers to carry out initial assessments more efficiently. The information generated can be used to identify pupils' learning needs and serves as a basis for determining learning strategies appropriate to each pupil's reading ability. Thus, the instrument's practicality is reflected not only in its ease of use but also in its ability to support data-driven decision-making in learning.

The results of the reading ability assessment show that the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)-based diagnostic tool is capable of clearly identifying variations in pupils' reading abilities at each year group level. The majority of Year 2 pupils have achieved a higher reading level than Year 1 pupils, whilst the reading abilities of Year 1 pupils are still spread across several levels. This pattern suggests that the development of reading ability occurs gradually but does not always align with year group progression. These findings indicate that there is still a diversity of reading abilities within a single class, meaning that a uniform approach to teaching may not fully meet the learning needs of every pupil.

The diversity in reading abilities successfully mapped using this instrument underscores the importance of conducting diagnostic assessments before the learning process begins. Information regarding each pupil's ability level provides teachers with a more objective basis for forming learning groups, selecting materials, and determining learning strategies that are tailored to the pupils' needs. These findings are consistent with the research by Akdi & Belamhitou (2024), which states that mapping reading ability through the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach enables teachers to provide more targeted learning interventions. However, previous research has focused more on the implementation of the TaRL approach in teaching, whereas this study expands on that by developing a diagnostic instrument that has been validated and tested for practicality, thereby enabling a more systematic mapping of reading ability as the basis for designing differentiated learning.

The difference in the distribution of reading ability between Year 1 and Year 2 pupils also indicates that the instrument developed has good sensitivity in distinguishing reading ability levels at each stage of development. This capability enables teachers to identify pupils who still require intensive support, as well as those who are ready to progress to a higher level of learning. The instrument serves not only as a tool for evaluating learning outcomes but also as a diagnostic tool that supports the planning of more adaptive learning interventions. The results of this study expand upon the findings of Irnawati & Ilmiah (2026), which emphasise the importance of mapping reading ability in the implementation of Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL). Whilst previous research has focused more on the effectiveness of the TaRL approach in improving reading ability, this study contributes to the development of an instrument capable of producing a detailed profile of pupils' reading ability prior to the implementation of learning interventions.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)-based diagnostic instrument meets the criteria for validity and practicality and is capable of mapping pupils' reading abilities in accordance with their level of competence. The information generated provides a more objective basis for teachers in designing differentiated learning and determining the form of intervention that suits pupils' learning needs. The main contribution of this research lies in the development of a diagnostic instrument for reading ability that not only meets the criteria for suitability as an assessment tool but is also capable of producing a mapping of reading ability that can be directly utilised in the implementation of Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)-based learning. Consequently, the instrument developed acts as a link between the assessment process and decision-making regarding learning, thereby supporting the delivery of instruction that is more adaptive, targeted, and oriented towards the actual abilities of each pupil.

5. CONCLUSION

The Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)-based diagnostic instrument developed through this research has met the criteria for validity and practicality, making it suitable for use as an assessment tool for primary school pupils. The validation process, carried out by linguists, TaRL assessment experts and education practitioners, demonstrated that the instrument meets linguistic requirements, aligns with TaRL assessment principles and is easy to implement in the classroom. The results of the practicality test also showed that the instrument is easy for pupils to understand and use, thereby supporting the effective implementation of reading assessment within the context of primary school learning.

The results of the reading ability assessment indicate that the instrument is capable of

systematically identifying variations in pupils' reading abilities in accordance with the proficiency levels outlined in the TaRL approach. The information generated provides a basis for teachers to group pupils according to their actual abilities, organise differentiated learning, and design more targeted interventions. The instrument developed serves not only as a measure of reading ability but also as a diagnostic assessment tool that supports data-driven decision-making in learning. The main contribution of this study lies in the development of a TaRL-based diagnostic instrument that not only meets the criteria for validity as an assessment tool but is also capable of producing a mapping of reading abilities that can be directly utilised in lesson planning. Further research is recommended to test the effectiveness of the instrument through an experimental research design involving a larger number of subjects and a more diverse range of school characteristics, as well as to develop the instrument for different year groups and broader aspects of literacy.

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