

Innovative Assessment Practices Among English Teachers in Rural Senior High Schools in Bima

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ABSTRACT

Innovative assessment has become an important concern in English language teaching. Nevertheless, there is limited knowledge regarding how English teachers understand and adapt innovative assessment practices in rural senior high school contexts, particularly in Bima. This study aims to explore English teachers' perceptions and reported practices of innovative assessment in rural senior high schools. The data for this qualitative case study were collected through semi-structured interviews with three English teachers who had experience teaching English in rural school contexts. Based on the thematic analysis of the data, this study revealed that the teachers understood innovative assessment as a creative, meaningful, contextual, and student-centered approach to assessing English learning. Their reported practices showed that innovative assessment was implemented through authentic, performance-based, technology-supported, and locally relevant activities. However, its implementation was shaped by students' limited English proficiency and confidence, classroom constraints, limited facilities, and insufficient professional training. The teachers responded to these challenges by adapting assessment tasks to students' needs, using supportive feedback, collaborative work, familiar contexts, and available resources. These findings contribute to a more contextual understanding of how innovative assessment is interpreted and adapted in rural English classrooms theoretically and practically.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Published September 8th 2026



KEYWORDS

Innovative Assessment, English Language Teaching, Rural Schools, Teacher Practices, Kurikulum Merdeka.

ARTICLE LICENCE

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1. Introduction

In English Language Teaching, assessment is not only used to measure students' achievement but also to support learning, guide instruction, and inform teachers' classroom (Ali & Mjenda, 2024; Ha et al., 2021; Rasyid et al., 2024). In contemporary ELT, assessment has shifted from traditional paper-based testing toward more authentic, student-centered, and innovative forms of assessment, such as performance-based assessment, project-based assessment, portfolio assessment, peer assessment, self-assessment, formative feedback, and technology-enhanced assessment (Chang et al., 2024; Islami et al., 2025; Lakew et al., 2025; Prihandoko et al., 2021; Aswad et al., 2019). These assessment forms are relevant because English competence cannot be fully measured through written tests alone; students also need opportunities to demonstrate how they use English in meaningful and communicative contexts (Chang et al., 2024; Daud et al., 2023; Said et al., 2019; Andini et al., 2026)

In Indonesia, current educational reform has increased the expectation that assessment should become more flexible, contextual, and student-centered. Recent research has also shown growing attention to innovation in teaching, assessment, and technology within Indonesian English language education (Islami et al., 2025). In disadvantaged and remote regions, however, educational innovation must also address persistent issues of access and equity (Wulandari et al., 2023). At the teacher level, adequate language assessment literacy is necessary for designing and implementing appropriate assessment practices, yet senior high school English teachers may still require further professional support in this area (Chang et al., 2024). Teachers' understanding of classroom assessment also affects how they select and use assessment procedures in practice. Moreover, language assessment teacher education can strengthen teachers' confidence, competence, and agency as assessors, although limited institutional support and resources may restrict the application of their knowledge (Estaji, 2024; Prihandoko et al., 2019). In the Indonesian senior high school context, Rasyid et al., (2024) found that English language assessment practices are shaped by national policy-related, institution-related,

and student-teacher-related factors. Taken together, these findings suggest that assessment reform depends not only on curriculum expectations but also on teachers' assessment knowledge, professional agency, institutional support, and classroom conditions.

The implementation of innovative assessment is more challenging in rural schools. Daud et al., (2023) found that authentic assessment in rural high schools is constrained by limited resources, students' varied abilities, and demanding assessment procedures. Mariyam et al., (2025) also reported problems related to limited facilities, low student motivation, and insufficient professional support in rural ELT contexts. Similarly, Rasyid et al., (2024) identified barriers such as inadequate facilities, diverse student proficiency, limited assessment literacy, and insufficient professional development. At the policy level, unequal access to educational resources remains a concern in Indonesia's 3T regions (Wulandari et al., 2023). Therefore, innovative assessment in rural schools needs to be adapted to local classroom conditions rather than directly copied from well-resourced contexts.

This issue is particularly relevant in Bima, where English learning is influenced by students' linguistic background, local language use, and socio-cultural environment. (Idris, 2016) shows that language learning in Bima is connected to globalization, language policy, and students' identity construction in a multilingual community. For many students in rural Bima, English may be perceived as a distant foreign language with limited use in daily communication, especially when students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom (Mariyam et al., 2025). This condition requires teachers to design assessment activities that are not only innovative but also meaningful, accessible, and connected to students' local realities.

Several studies have discussed English teachers' assessment practices, language assessment literacy, authentic assessment, technology-supported learning, and rural English teaching (Ali & Mjenda, 2024; Annamalai et al., 2023; Chang et al., 2024; Daud et al., 2023; Mariyam et al., 2025; Rasyid et al., 2024). However, limited attention has been given to how English teachers in rural senior high schools in Bima perceive and implement innovative assessment under the current curriculum. Existing studies have not sufficiently explained how teachers in this local context carry out innovative assessment in daily English classes, what challenges they face, and what strategies they use to overcome those challenges.

Based on this gap, this study aims to explore English teachers' practices of innovative assessment in rural senior high schools in Bima. Specifically, it investigates teachers' perceptions of innovative assessment, how they describe and document its implementation in English classes, and the challenges and strategies involved in its implementation. The findings are expected to provide contextual insights for English teachers, schools, curriculum developers, and future researchers in developing more meaningful, inclusive, and locally responsive assessment practices in rural ELT contexts.

Based on this, this study will answer the following questions: What do English teachers in rural Bima think about innovative assessment under the new curriculum? How do English teachers describe their implementation of innovative assessment in their English classes? and What are the biggest challenges they face in implementing innovative assessment, and how do they try to overcome them?

1.1 Innovative Assessment in English Language Teaching

Assessment in English Language Teaching is no longer understood only as a tool to measure students' achievement, but also as a process to support learning, guide instruction, and provide feedback for improvement (Ali & Mjenda, 2024; Ha et al., 2021). In this sense, innovative assessment refers to assessment practices that move beyond conventional written tests and allow students to demonstrate their English ability through meaningful, contextual, and performance-based tasks. These practices may include authentic assessment, project-based assessment, portfolio assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, formative feedback, rubrics, reflection, and technology-enhanced assessment (Abosalem, 2016; Islami et al., 2025; Lakew et al., 2025). Such assessment is relevant in ELT because language competence cannot be fully measured through grammar-based or paper-based tests alone; students also need opportunities to use English for communication, interaction, problem-solving, and real-life purposes (Chang et al., 2024; Daud et al., 2023).

In this study, innovative assessment is defined as an adaptive, meaningful, and student-centered assessment practice that goes beyond conventional written tests. It includes authentic, contextual, collaborative, reflective, performance-based, and technology-supported activities that allow students to demonstrate their English ability more practically. Therefore, innovative assessment is not understood only as the use of digital tools, but as teachers' effort to design assessment that is relevant to students' needs, classroom realities, and rural learning contexts.

In Indonesia, the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka has strengthened the need for more flexible, contextual, and student-centered assessment practices. However, assessment reform does not always run smoothly because classroom practices are often shaped by policy demands, school conditions, teacher readiness, and students' learning needs (Alfian et al., 2022; Rasyid et al., 2024; Wulandari et al., 2023). Therefore, innovative assessment should not only be viewed as a curriculum expectation, but also as a classroom practice that depends on teachers' understanding, creativity, and contextual adaptation.

1.2 Teachers' Assessment Literacy and Classroom Practices

Teachers play a central role in implementing innovative assessment because they design assessment tasks, provide feedback, interpret students' performance, and make instructional decisions. Studies on language assessment literacy show that teachers need sufficient knowledge and professional training to design valid, fair, and meaningful assessments (Chang et al., 2024; Estaji, 2024). Similarly, (Ha et al., 2021) found that teachers' beliefs and assessment practices in EFL classrooms are not always fully aligned, which suggests that what teachers believe about assessment may differ from what they can actually implement in class.

In the Indonesian senior high school context, Rasyid et al., (2024) found that English language assessment is shaped by national policy-related issues, institution-related issues, and student-teacher-related issues. Their study reported several challenges faced by EFL teachers, such as limited learning resources, inadequate facilities, large class size, students' diverse proficiency, low English proficiency, low motivation, inadequate assessment literacy, limited professional development, and limited English teaching hours. They also identified leadership support, better facilities, systematic professional training, assessment rubrics, varied assessment methods, and teachers' commitment as prospective solutions for improving English language assessment practices. These findings are relevant to this study because they show that assessment implementation depends not only on teachers' knowledge, but also on institutional support, student readiness, and classroom realities.

1.3 Innovative Assessment in Rural ELT Contexts

The implementation of innovative assessment becomes more complex in rural English teaching contexts. Rural schools often face challenges related to limited facilities, unstable internet access, limited professional support, students' low motivation, and unequal learning opportunities (Mariyam et al., 2025; Wulandari et al., 2023). Daud et al., (2023) found that authentic assessment in rural-area high schools is difficult to implement because teachers must negotiate curriculum demands, students' needs, and limited educational resources. Similarly, Mariyam et al., (2025) highlight that English teachers in Indonesian rural schools face pedagogical and contextual challenges that affect English teaching and learning.

These studies show that rural English teachers often carry a double responsibility. They are expected to implement innovative assessment, but at the same time they must adjust assessment tasks to students' proficiency, motivation, facilities, and local learning conditions. Compared with urban or well-resourced schools, rural schools may require more adaptive, contextual, and sometimes low-tech assessment practices. Therefore, studying rural teachers' actual practices is important to understand how innovation is implemented in real classroom situations.

1.4 Technology, Local Context, and Assessment Adaptation

Technology-enhanced assessment is often associated with innovation because digital tools can support interaction, feedback, collaboration, and student engagement. However, technology-based assessment requires students' readiness, motivation, and self-regulated learning ability (Annamalai et al., 2023). In rural contexts, digital assessment may be limited by unequal access to facilities and internet connectivity (Mariyam et al., 2025; Wulandari et al., 2023). Therefore, innovation in rural ELT should not always be understood as the use of advanced digital tools. It may also appear in simpler forms, such as contextual tasks, oral performance, group projects, rubrics, peer feedback, or locally relevant classroom activities.

The local context of Bima is also important because English learning is influenced by students' linguistic background, local language use, and socio-cultural identity. Idris, (2016) shows that language learning in Bima is connected to globalization, language policy, and identity construction in a multilingual school community. This suggests that English learning in Bima cannot be separated from students' everyday use of Indonesian and local languages. Therefore, innovative assessment in rural Bima needs to be contextual, accessible, and culturally responsive so that students can connect English learning with their local experiences.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach using a multiple case study design. A case study is appropriate because it allows the researcher to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are closely connected (Yin, 2003). In this study, the phenomenon refers to English teachers' practices of innovative assessment under Kurikulum Merdeka, while the context refers to rural senior high schools in Bima. As Creswell and Creswell (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) explain, case study research involves an in-depth investigation of a specific case, such as a program, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Therefore, a multiple case study design was used to explore teachers' perceptions, reported assessment practices, challenges, and strategies across different rural school contexts. The research was conducted three rural senior high schools in Bima, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. These schools were selected because they have implemented Kurikulum Merdeka and represent rural educational settings where English teachers are expected to apply innovative assessment practices. The participants consisted of three English teachers who teach English at the senior high school level, have experience with Kurikulum Merdeka, have used or attempted to use innovative assessment, and are willing to participate voluntarily. The participants were selected through purposive sampling because they must meet specific criteria relevant to the research focus (Yin, 2016).

The selection of three participants was appropriate for this qualitative case study because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding rather than to generalize the findings. The participants were selected through purposive sampling because they taught English at the senior high school level, had experience using or attempting to use innovative assessment, and represented rural school contexts in Bima. Although the number of participants was limited, their experiences provided relevant contextual information about how innovative assessment was understood and adapted in rural English classrooms. This contextual description was expected to support the transferability of the findings. This contextual description was expected to support the transferability of the findings. To protect their identities, the teachers will be coded as T-1, T-2, and so forth.

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were used as the main technique because interviews allow researchers to obtain detailed information about participants' experiences, opinions, and meanings (Ary et al., 2014). This type of interview is suitable because it provides guiding questions while still allowing follow-up questions based on participants' responses (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The interviews were focused on teachers' perceptions of innovative assessment, their reported assessment practices, and the challenges and strategies they experience in implementing it. Each interview was conducted individually in Indonesian or English, depending on the participants' preference, and were audio-recorded with their permission. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis because it helps researchers identify, organize, and interpret patterns or themes in qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis involved transcribing interviews, reading the data repeatedly, coding important ideas, grouping similar codes into categories, developing themes, and interpreting the findings based on the research questions and relevant literature. To ensure trustworthiness, this study used member checking and comparison across participants. Member checking was conducted by asking participants to verify the interview transcripts or the summary of findings to confirm whether the researcher's interpretation reflected their actual views and experiences (Merriam, 1998; Silverman, 2006). In addition, the researcher compared the responses from T-1, T-2, and T-3 to identify similarities and differences in their perceptions, reported practices, challenges, and strategies. This process helped strengthen the credibility of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Teachers' Understanding of Innovative Assessment

The first theme concerns teachers' understanding of innovative assessment in English language teaching. The interview data show that the participants generally understood innovative assessment as an approach that moves beyond traditional paper-based tests. They associated it with creativity, meaningful tasks, contextual learning, students' real abilities, and the use of various assessment formats.

T-1 viewed innovative assessment as a way to obtain deeper information about students' abilities. She stated:

Data 1

"Innovative should be related to replacing traditional assessment in order to get a comprehensive or deep insight of learners' capabilities." (T-1)

This excerpt shows that T-1 understood innovative assessment as a more comprehensive way to assess students' capabilities. However, she did not see it as fully replacing traditional assessment. Instead, she believed that traditional and innovative assessment could be combined depending on classroom needs.

T-2 described innovative assessment as a creative shift from traditional assessment to more varied and interactive practices. She explained:

Data 2

"Innovative assessment means you move forward from traditional assessment to be creative. You may use many creative sources. You may adapt from technology or interactive apps like Wayground and WordWall." (T-2)

This statement indicates that T-2 associated innovative assessment with creativity, technology, and interactive learning. She connected it with the use of digital tools, games, quizzes, projects, performance, and reflection to assess students' learning more actively.

Similarly, T-3 understood innovative assessment as assessment that is connected to real-life and meaningful tasks. She stated:

Data 3

"For me, innovative assessment means measuring students' ability through real, meaningful tasks, not just paper tasks. It is an assessment that looks like real life." (T-3)

This excerpt shows that T-3 emphasized the authentic nature of innovative assessment. She believed that assessment should not only measure students' memory through written tests, but also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their English ability through meaningful and process-based activities.

Overall, the findings suggest that the teachers understood innovative assessment as a more creative, contextual, meaningful, and student-centered form of assessment. While T-1 emphasized comprehensive understanding of students' capabilities, T-2 highlighted creativity and interactive tools, and T-3 stressed real-life tasks. These views indicate that innovative assessment was perceived not only as a new assessment format, but also as a way to make English assessment more relevant to students' learning experiences.

3.2 Teachers' Reported Practices of Innovative Assessment

The second theme concerns the teachers' reported practices of innovative assessment in English classes. The interview data show that the participants used various forms of assessment, including authentic assessment, project-based tasks, peer assessment, reflection, performance assessment, and digital-based activities. These practices were generally designed to make assessment more meaningful, interactive, and connected to students' learning contexts.

T-1 reported that she had used collaborative assessment, authentic assessment, and peer assessment in her English classes. She explained:

Data 4

"Sometimes I do collaborative assessment. Sometimes I do authentic assessment and peer assessment." (T-1)

In her practice, authentic assessment was mostly used in speaking activities. She assessed students through speaking tests, discussions, vocabulary recall, pronunciation, stress, and memorization. This shows that T-1's assessment practice focused on students' actual use of English, particularly in oral performance and vocabulary development.

T-2 also reported using several forms of innovative assessment, especially digital and contextual activities. She stated:

Data 5

"I always use Wayground and WordWall to do some games and quizzes to assess my students' understanding along the teaching and learning process." (T-2)

This excerpt indicates that T-2 used digital tools not only to make learning more enjoyable, but also to check students' understanding during the learning process. In addition, she used contextual assessment activities related to

students' real-life background. For example, because she taught assistant nursing and caregiver students at the school, she connected assessment tasks with nursing-related dialogues and vocabulary. She also asked students to work with topics close to their daily lives, such as pain, traditional food, and local cultural products.

T-3 reported using project-based assessment, performance tasks, and digital tools in her English classes. She explained:

Data 6

"The first one is project-based. They made a poster and posted it on their social media, making tourism brochures for writing, and performance like debate, drama, and narrative text." (T-3)

This statement shows that T-3 used assessment tasks that allowed students to produce, perform, and present their work. Her practices included posters, tourism brochures, debates, drama, narrative text performances, quizzes, Google Forms, and Canva. She also connected assessment with local culture by asking students to perform local stories or legend such as La Hila and Wadu Ntanda Rahi.

Overall, the findings show that the teachers implemented innovative assessment in different but related ways. T-1 emphasized authentic assessment, speaking performance, and peer assessment; T-2 highlighted digital games, contextual tasks, and vocationally relevant assessment; while T-3 used project-based, performance-based, digital, and culture-based assessment. These practices suggest that innovative assessment in rural English classes was not limited to technology use, but also included contextual, collaborative, and performance-oriented activities that were adapted to students' needs and classroom conditions.

3.3 Challenges in Implementing Innovative Assessment

The third theme concerns the challenges teachers faced in implementing innovative assessment in English classes. The interview data show that the participants experienced several difficulties related to rubric design, students' English proficiency, motivation and confidence, time management, class size, facilities, internet access, and limited training. These challenges influenced the way teachers designed, conducted, and adjusted their assessment practices.

T-1 reported that one of her main challenges was designing clear and detailed assessment rubrics. She explained:

Data 7

"Sometimes I had already designed the rubrics, but in fact, when I did that one in the class, it needs to be more detailed." (T-1)

This excerpt shows that T-1 found rubric development challenging, especially when assessing speaking performance. She explained that general criteria such as fluency were not enough because teachers needed to specify what kind of fluency was being assessed. In addition, T-1 also faced challenges in conducting collaborative assessment because teachers had different schedules and activities.

T-2 emphasized students' lack of confidence as the main challenge in implementing innovative assessment. She stated:

Data 8

"The main challenge is students' lack of confidence. It really impacts students' capability to perform in front of the class." (T-2)

This statement indicates that students' affective factors influenced the assessment process. T-2 explained that many students were afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. Their low English proficiency also affected their confidence and willingness to perform speaking tasks, dialogues, or other performance-based assessments. Besides student-related challenges, T-2 also mentioned large class size, unstable internet connection, limited access to digital facilities, and insufficient training on innovative assessment.

Similarly, T-3 reported challenges related to time management, class size, students' preparation, and individual feedback. She stated:

Data 9

"The first one is managing time. Sometimes I cannot manage the time well because the students are really crowded, around 36 students. Then, students do not prepare well for the assessment, and sometimes it is hard to give them individual feedback." (T-3)

This excerpt shows that implementing innovative assessment requires more time and classroom management. For T-3, assessing many students in one class was difficult because project-based, performance-based, and process-based assessments required preparation, monitoring, and feedback. She also explained that students' different proficiency levels required her to differentiate assessment tasks and group students strategically.

Overall, the findings suggest that the challenges of implementing innovative assessment in rural English classrooms were multidimensional. T-1 highlighted difficulties in rubric design and collaborative scheduling, T-2 emphasized students' low confidence, low proficiency, large classes, unstable internet, and limited training, while T-3 pointed to time management, class size, students' preparation, and feedback. These findings indicate that innovative assessment in rural schools is not only a matter of using new assessment formats, but also requires teacher readiness, student readiness, sufficient time, supportive facilities, and practical professional development.

3.4 Teachers' Strategies to Overcome Assessment Challenges

The fourth theme concerns the strategies teachers used to overcome challenges in implementing innovative assessment. The interview data show that the participants did not simply apply innovative assessment as an ideal concept. Instead, they adapted their assessment practices based on students' English proficiency, motivation, confidence, facilities, internet access, and classroom conditions.

T-1 explained that she revised and improved her assessment rubrics based on reflection after teaching. She stated:

Data 10

"I usually try to be more precise and detailed in making the rubrics, not just take it from the internet, but develop or improve based on my students' needs." (T-1)

This excerpt shows that T-1 responded to assessment challenges by making her rubrics more specific and suitable for her students. She also tried to solve the problem of collaborative assessment by adjusting schedules with other teachers before conducting joint assessment activities. For limited facilities, especially the absence of a language laboratory, she used her own speaker to support listening assessment.

T-2 emphasized the importance of creating a comfortable classroom atmosphere and simplifying assessment tasks. She explained:

Data 11

"We may simplify the tasks, and maybe we can allow the students to use Indonesian and English when they perform." (T-2)

This statement indicates that T-2 adapted assessment to students' low confidence and low English proficiency. Instead of forcing students to perform perfectly in English, she allowed flexible language use and focused on building students' confidence. She also used rewards, praise, simple words, pictures, videos, music, and pair or group activities to make students more comfortable during assessment.

T-3 also used adaptive strategies, especially in managing time and supporting students with different proficiency levels. She stated:

Data 12

"I do the assessment not only in one day. I do the assessment in several meetings to make sure everyone is assessed." (T-3)

This excerpt shows that T-3 adjusted the assessment schedule to deal with large classes and limited time. She also grouped students with different English proficiency levels so that stronger students could help their peers. When students had low proficiency, she translated materials or questions before assessment. When facilities or internet access were limited, she switched the assessment activity or used available tools.

In addition to classroom-level strategies, the participants also emphasized the need for stronger support from schools, fellow teachers, and the government. T-1 stated that teachers need more training, seminars, and active MGMP forums to help them understand how to implement innovative assessment more effectively. She explained:

Data 13

"It is better for the government to conduct many trainings, symposiums, or seminars on how to do innovative assessment for teachers. Our school also needs to make MGMP more active because we need to support each other and share." (T-1)

Similarly, T-2 expected more practical workshops on innovative assessment, especially for English teachers, as well as more digital facilities such as IFP to support classroom assessment. T-3 also mentioned the need for support from both the school and the government, especially in her region. These statements indicate that teachers' strategies are not only individual efforts but also depend on institutional and policy-level support.

Overall, the findings show that the teachers' strategies were adaptive, practical, and context sensitive. T-1 focused on improving rubrics, using available personal resources, and expecting stronger professional support. T-2 emphasized emotional support, simplified tasks, bilingual flexibility, varied media, and the need for more practical training and facilities. T-3 managed assessment time, used mixed-ability grouping, translated instructions, adjusted activities when facilities were limited, and expected support from the school and government. These strategies indicate that innovative assessment in rural English classrooms requires flexibility, teacher initiative, collaborative support, and stronger institutional and government involvement rather than strict dependence on advanced technology or ideal facilities.

3.5 Cross-Case Analysis of Teachers' Innovative Assessment Practices

To strengthen the analysis across cases, the findings from the three participants were compared based on the main themes of the study. The comparison shows both shared patterns and unique characteristics in teachers' perceptions, reported practices, challenges, and strategies in implementing innovative assessment.

Main Theme	T-1	T-2	T-3	Cross-Case Pattern
Teachers' understanding of innovative assessment	Viewed innovative assessment as a way to obtain deeper insight into students' capabilities and as an improvement from traditional assessment.	Viewed innovative assessment as creative assessment that moves beyond traditional assessment and may involve technology, games, projects, and reflection.	Viewed innovative assessment as real-life and meaningful assessment, not limited to paper-based tasks.	All teachers understood innovative assessment as different from traditional written tests. However, T-1 emphasized comprehensive assessment, T-2 emphasized creativity and technology, while T-3 emphasized authenticity and real-life tasks.
Reported practices of innovative assessment	Used authentic assessment, collaborative assessment, peer assessment, speaking assessment, vocabulary assessment, and simple contextual writing tasks.	Used interactive applications such as Wayground and WordWall, group work, dialogue, reflection, contextual tasks related to nursing/caregiver contexts, and digital media.	Used project-based assessment, posters, tourism brochures, debate, drama, narrative text, Quizizz, Canva, Google Forms, and local cultural topics.	All teachers reported using more than one form of innovative assessment. Their practices included authentic, contextual, collaborative, performance-based, and technology-supported assessment.
Challenges in implementing innovative assessment	Faced difficulty in designing detailed rubrics, matching schedules for	Faced students' low confidence, low proficiency, unstable internet, limited digital	Faced time management problems, crowded class, students' lack	The common challenges were students' low proficiency, low confidence or motivation,

	collaborative assessment, students' limited vocabulary, limited time, big classes, lack of language laboratory, and limited training.	facilities, large class size, time management issues, and insufficient practical training.	of preparation, difficulty giving individual feedback, different proficiency levels, and limited access to facilities when used by other teachers.	time constraints, large class size, limited facilities, and lack of specific training. T-1 uniquely emphasized rubric complexity, T-2 emphasized confidence and facility access, while T-3 emphasized time and feedback.
Strategies to overcome challenges	Improved rubrics based on reflection and students' needs, adjusted schedules for collaborative assessment, used Kahoot as a warmer, and used personal resources such as a speaker for listening assessment.	Simplified tasks, created a comfortable classroom atmosphere, allowed flexible use of Indonesian and English, used praise and rewards, used varied media, and prepared offline materials.	Conducted assessment over several meetings, used mixed-ability grouping, translated materials or questions, switched assessment activities when facilities were limited, and used available tools.	All teachers adapted assessment to classroom realities. Their strategies were practical and context-sensitive, including simplifying tasks, using supportive feedback, grouping students, adjusting time, and using available resources.
Support needed	Needed government training, seminars, symposiums, and more active MGMP forums for sharing and collaboration.	Needed practical workshops, sharing sessions among English teachers, more digital facilities, and stronger school support.	Needed support from school and government, especially in the local region.	All teachers expected stronger institutional and government support. Professional training, active teacher forums, and better facilities were viewed as necessary to sustain innovative assessment.

The cross-case comparison indicates that the three teachers shared similar understandings of innovative assessment as a more meaningful and student-centered form of assessment. However, each teacher showed different emphases depending on their teaching experience and school context. T-1 focused more on the need to combine traditional and innovative assessment and highlighted the complexity of rubrics. T-2 emphasized creativity, technology, students' confidence, and the need for a comfortable classroom atmosphere. Meanwhile, T-3 showed stronger attention to project-based and performance-based assessment, local context, time management, and feedback. These similarities and differences suggest that innovative assessment in rural English classrooms is not implemented in one fixed way. Instead, it is shaped by teachers' beliefs, students' proficiency, available facilities, and contextual limitations in each school.

3.6 Discussion

The findings of this study show that English teachers in rural senior high schools in Bima understood innovative assessment as a creative, meaningful, contextual, and student-centered approach to assessing English learning. This understanding indicates that the teachers did not view assessment merely as a tool for measuring final achievement, but also as a process to support learning and capture students' abilities in more varied ways. This is consistent with the view that assessment, teaching, and curriculum are closely connected in supporting student learning (Rasyid et al., 2024). From the perspective of assessment literacy, the teachers showed practical awareness of the need to align assessment with learning objectives, classroom activities, and students' language use. However, their understanding of innovative assessment was not always supported by sufficient formal training. This suggests that teachers' assessment literacy was developed more through teaching experience, self-learning, peer discussion, and classroom reflection than through systematic professional development.

The teachers' reported practices also show that innovative assessment in rural Bima was shaped by local classroom realities. The participants used authentic tasks, speaking performance, project-based assessment, peer assessment, reflection, digital quizzes, and locally relevant activities. These practices reflect the movement from conventional tests toward performance-based and meaningful assessment, which allows students to demonstrate their abilities through more authentic tasks (Abosalem, 2016; Daud, 2023). However, in this study, such practices were not implemented as fixed models copied from curriculum documents or urban school contexts. Instead, the teachers adapted them to students' English proficiency, confidence, motivation, and available resources. In Bima, where students may have limited exposure to English outside the classroom and often use Indonesian or local languages in daily communication, assessment activities need to be familiar, accessible, and connected to students' lived experiences. This supports the sociocultural view that learning and assessment are shaped by students' social, cultural, and linguistic environments.

The challenges found in this study reflect the interaction between assessment literacy, institutional conditions, and rural sociocultural context. Students' low English proficiency, limited vocabulary, low confidence, and low motivation were not simply individual learner problems. These challenges were related to the broader rural learning ecology, where English is often not used in everyday communication and students may have fewer opportunities to practice English outside school. Similar challenges were reported by Mariyam et al., (2025), who found that rural English teachers face pedagogical and contextual barriers in teaching English. Rasyid et al., (2024) also identified student-related, teacher-related, institution-related, and policy-related issues as major challenges in English language assessment. Therefore, students' hesitation to speak English or participate in performance-based assessment can be interpreted as the result of limited linguistic exposure, fear of making mistakes, and unfamiliarity with English as a communicative tool.

The findings further show the importance of teacher agency in implementing innovative assessment. Although the teachers faced limited facilities, unstable internet access, large class size, limited time, and lack of specific training, they still attempted to adapt their assessment practices. They simplified tasks, used group work, gave supportive feedback, allowed flexible language use, used available digital tools, prepared alternative offline activities, and adjusted assessment schedules. These strategies show that teachers were not passive implementers of curriculum policy. Instead, they acted as agents who interpreted curriculum expectations and modified assessment practices according to their students' needs and school conditions. This finding is related to Estaji's (2024) argument that teachers' assessment agency is important in shaping how teachers understand and enact assessment practices in their professional contexts.

At the same time, the findings suggest that teacher agency has limits when it is not supported by institutional and policy-level support. The participants expected more practical training, active MGMP forums, better facilities, and stronger support from schools and the government. This finding supports Rasyid et al., (2024), who emphasized the need for leadership support, better facilities, professional training, assessment rubrics, varied assessment methods, and teachers' commitment to improve English language assessment practices. In the context of this study, teachers needed professional development that did not only explain curriculum concepts theoretically, but also provided practical guidance on designing rubrics, conducting performance-based assessment, giving feedback, using digital and non-digital assessment tools, and adapting assessment for mixed-proficiency classrooms.

Overall, this study argues that innovative assessment in rural senior high schools in Bima is best understood as an adaptive sociocultural practice. It is shaped by teachers' assessment literacy, teacher agency, students' linguistic background, classroom conditions, and institutional support. The contribution of this study lies in showing that innovation in assessment does not always mean using advanced technology or complex assessment models. In rural Bima, innovation may appear in simpler but meaningful forms, such as contextual topics, oral performance, peer support, reflective activities, local cultural content, and flexible assessment strategies. Therefore, innovative assessment in rural ELT should be designed not only to meet curriculum expectations, but also to respond to students' realities and the sociocultural conditions of the local classroom.

Thus, the contribution of this study lies in its explanation of how rural Bima's sociocultural and educational conditions shape teachers' innovative assessment practices, particularly through the need for contextual tasks, flexible language use, supportive feedback, and locally relevant assessment activities.

4. Conclusion

This study explored English teachers' perceptions and reported practices of innovative assessment in rural senior high schools. The findings show that the teachers understood innovative assessment as a creative, contextual, and student-centered practice that goes beyond conventional written tests. In practice, innovative assessment was adapted

through authentic, interactive, technology-supported, and locally relevant activities that allowed students to demonstrate their English ability more meaningfully.

The study also found that innovative assessment in rural classrooms was shaped by students' limited English proficiency, low confidence, classroom constraints, limited facilities, and insufficient professional training. These conditions required teachers to adapt their assessment practices through simplified tasks, familiar contexts, supportive feedback, group work, and available resources. Conceptually, this study contributes to the understanding of innovative assessment as an adaptive and context-sensitive practice rather than a fixed model. In rural ELT contexts, innovation does not always depend on advanced technology, but can emerge through realistic assessment practices that respond to students' needs, local culture, and school conditions.

This study is limited to three English teachers and relies on interview data only. Future research is recommended to involve more participants and include classroom observation or document analysis to provide a richer understanding of how innovative assessment is implemented in rural English classrooms.

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