How can teachers assess reading skills of generation Z learners in German language class?

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Abstract. Generation Z is a digital native generation who has unique characteristics on the daily basis includes reading. In order to assess their reading skills correctly, teachers need to take these characteristics into consideration. This paper aims to describe the process in developing an instrument to assess reading skills of Generation Z learners in German language class. This study used developmental method. The developed instrument has not only good quality but also consists of texts that are suitable for German learners of Generation Z. This instrument can be used as an example in assessing German learners’ reading skills in the 21st century.

1. Introduction
Reading is considered one of the most important skills for the learners in both academic and interpersonal context [1, 2]. Through reading, learners should be able to understand texts’ topic in order to get ideas, knowledge, and information [3, 4]. In German as a foreign language subject, reading skill is elaborated in an international standard for the German language.

The standard is known as CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Language). This standard consists of six levels, such as basic user (A1 & A2), the independent user (B1 & B2) and proficient user (C1 & C2) [5]. Each level has different reading complexity. Learners need to acquire the reading competences based on their German language level in order to achieve successful reading. In achieving successful reading, there are two main supporting factors: text and learners [6, 7].

Text is a meaningful written expression that consists of language elements as a communication medium between writer and readers or learners [8]. This input needs to be comprehensible for the learners, so they can get new knowledge [9]. Especially in learning foreign language context, such as German as a foreign language, the texts are authentic materials [10]. Moreover, each text has different text readability. Readability is a complex interaction between all language elements and content in a written material that affects learners’ ability to understand the text [11, 12].

In German language reading, learners or readers need to use their cognitive and affective ability. Learners factors that support reading comprehension are cognitive ability [13, 14]), motivation [15, 16], reading strategy [17, 18], learning style [19], personality [20] and prior knowledge [21, 22]. Furthermore, learners in German language class can be divided into some group based on their generation. There are some generations named silent generation, baby boomers, generation X, generation Y and generation Z. Learners at a university that take German as foreign language right now are generation Z because they were born on 1995 [23]. Generation Z is also called digital native generation. They have been using internet since they were a baby. They have good visualization ability. It means that reading with visual media or visualization can help them to understand German texts [24].
Learners prefer online reading with gadget rather than paper-based-material, then they like colorful reading materials with pictures [24]. These characteristics are only found in generation Z learners. In reality, it’s difficult for teachers to make good test instrument [25]. This paper aims to describe the development process of a test instrument for reading skill in German as foreign language class of generation Z learners.

2. Method
This research is a development research. The development model in this research is a test combination of ALTE [24] and Grotjahn & Kleppin [25]. In this research, there are ten stages that have been done. The stages are determining the test objectives, gathering relevant theories, collecting texts, creating a blueprint, item writing, expert reviewing, doing revision, doing trial and doing try out.

3. Results
The result of this research is an instrument test for German as a foreign language subject in level B2 of generation Z learners. This test is developed to measure German learners’ reading skill. The test items consist of subjective and objective items. There are texts on the test. Those texts have different readability. Text readability is important in foreign language class, where texts are authentic materials [10]. Readability is a complex interaction between all language elements and content in a written material that affects readers understanding [26]. Besides trial, the readability of texts in the test was calculated with a formula. This Flesch formula was accessed online at www.leichlesbar.ch. This website and formula can measure readability index of a German text [27]. Table 1 below shows the readability index of each text and table 2 shows the Flesch Readability Criteria as follows:

| No | Text | Readability |
|----|------|-------------|
| 1  | 1    | 85          |
| 2  | 2    | 64          |
| 3  | 3    | 61          |
| 4  | 4    | 34          |
| 5  | 5    | 20          |
| 6  | 6    | 58          |
| 7  | 7    | 48          |
| 8  | 8    | 80          |
| 9  | 9    | 70          |
| 10 | 10   | 77          |
| 11 | 11   | 83          |
| 12 | 12   | 65          |
| 13 | 13   | 45          |
| 14 | 14   | 61          |
| 15 | 15   | 39          |

| No | Index | Criteria                  |
|----|-------|---------------------------|
| 1  | 81-100| extremely easy (extrem leicht) |
| 2  | 71-80 | Very easy (sehr leicht)   |
| 3  | 61-70 | Easy (leicht)             |
| 4  | 41-60 | Moderate (durchschnittlich) |
| 5  | 31-40 | Little difficult (etwas schwierig) |
| 6  | 21-30 | Difficult (schwierig)     |
| 7  | 0-20  | Very difficult (sehr schwierig) |

Table 1. Text Readability

Table 2. Flesch Readability Criteria
The texts on this test have different readability from easy until very difficult. The purpose is giving students with low reading achievement chance to answer the test and differentiating students’ reading ability effectively.

The example of text with very easy readability (85) and its items:

Struktur eines Briefes
Wie heißt das Teil des Briefes?
(11). _____________
(12). _____________
(13). _____________
(14). _____________
(15). _____________

The example of text with moderate readability (48) and its items:

A. Schlechtere Karrierechancen für Frauen
B. Bundesregierung gibt Ratschläge zur personlichen Sicherheit
C. Unerfüllte Berufsträume
D. Maschinen übernehmen unsere Arbeit
E. Bewerben aber richtig
F. Typisch weibliche Eigenschaften
G. Wie sicher ist mein Arbeitsplatz?
H. Gute Einfälle sind gefragt
I. Angst vor der Zukunft
J. Ratgeber für eine gute Ausbildung

Table 3. The example of text

| Text | Theme |
|------|-------|
| 21   |       |
| 22   |       |
| 23   |       |
| 24   |       |
| 25   |       |

The example of text with very difficult readability (8) and its items:

Lesen Sie zuerst die 10 Situationen und dann die Anzeigen. Welche Anzeige passt zu welcher Situation? Sie können jede Anzeige nur einmal verwenden. Es ist auch möglich, dass Sie keine passende Anzeige nicht finden können. Wenn es keine richtige Antwort gibt, schreiben Sie einfach "x".

56. Zum Geburtstag möchten Sie Ihrem Vater eine schicke Jacke kaufen.
57. Sie singen gern und möchten am Samstagabend Ihr Können vor Publikum zeigen.
58. Eine Freundin will in Weiß heiraten, aber sie möchte das Kleid nicht kaufen.
59. Sie möchten mitten in der Stadt im Freien etwas trinken.
60. Ein Freund, 20, sucht eine neue Hose zum Ausgehen. Er hat nicht viel Geld.
61. Ihre Tochter braucht eine neue Kinderbrille. Sie soll billig sein, weil sie ihre Brille ständig verliert.
62. Eine nicht ganz schlanke Freundin sucht einen preiswerten Rock.
63. Sie möchten am Sonntag in einem Biergarten zu Mittagessen gehen.
64. Sie brauchen gute Sportbrille. Die Qualität muss stimmen, dafür darf sie auch ruhig etwas kosten.
65. Sie möchten gleichzeitig gute Musik hören und etwas für Menschen in Not tun.

Table 4. Entry

| Situation | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 62 | 63 | 64 | 65 |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Anzeige   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

After all of the items were developed, try out has been held. Then the results were analyzed in order to know test’s validity, reliability, item difficulty, item discrimination and distractors’ function as shown figure 1.
Figure 1. Function Analysis

The validity was measured with point biserial [28]. The analysis result shows that the developed test is valid. Then, test reliability was assessed with KR 20, because the items are dichotomous [29]. The reliability index is 0.920. Furthermore, each item was also analyzed. The distractors also can do its function properly.

4. Conclusion

The test that has been developed in this research is a test for German as a foreign language subject in level B2 with target learners teenager that are considered as generation Z. Moreover, this test is intended to measure learners’ reading skill. The development model is a combination of test developmental model of ALTE and Grotjahn & Kleppin. The items were developed based on the generation Z learners’ characteristics. There are 65 items with subjective and objective types.
This study concludes that the test has good readability. It can be seen from trials result and readability measuring formula (Flesch formula). Moreover, the test also has good validity, reliability and items. Expert judgment and point biserial were conducted in order to test validity. The reliability index is 0.920. The developed test’s strengths are: appropriate with CEFR, suitable with generation Z characteristics, the test has good texts (readability), the test has good items, the test has good validity, reliability, distractors.

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