

**ENGLISH TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN APPLYING
DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION IN THE MERDEKA
CURRICULUM**

A THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The curriculum is a guideline for designing, implementing and evaluating the results of learning activities. Suryana (2014) argues that Curriculum is an organized framework that describes content, the learning process to help children achieve curriculum goals, what teachers do to help children achieve goals, and the context in which teaching and learning occurs. In addition, Beauchamp (1968) argued that the curriculum is a written document whose content contains subjects that will be taught to students through various subjects, choice of disciplines, problem formulation.

The Merdeka curriculum is a new policy from the Indonesian government which aims to provide flexibility and autonomy to schools and teachers in designing student-centered learning (Kemendikbud, 2021). This curriculum emphasizes developing student character and competence, as well as providing space for students to learn according to their interests, talents and abilities (Darmadi, 2022). In practice, Differentiated Instruction involves modifications in various aspects of teaching, such as content, process, product, and learning environment. Hall, et.al (2003) assert that differentiated instruction is a method of designing and delivering instruction to best reach each student." This

includes adjusting teaching materials, teaching methods, and the ways students demonstrate their understanding of the material. This approach is highly aligned with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which provides flexibility for teachers to develop student-centered learning.

However, despite the theoretical support for Differentiated Instruction, its implementation in the field, particularly in the context of Indonesian education, faces various challenges. According to Subban (2006), The challenge for teachers is to manage a classroom that is inherently diverse in abilities, interests, and backgrounds. Teachers in Indonesia, especially at the high school level, often encounter difficulties in applying this approach due to limited resources, lack of training, and high workload.

This research aims to explore the strategies of English teachers in high schools in applying Differentiated Instruction under the Merdeka Curriculum. These strategies encompass various aspects such as planning, execution, and evaluation of learning. According to Hattie (2009), Effective teaching requires teachers to be adaptive and responsive to students' needs and backgrounds. In this context, a deep understanding of how teachers implement Differentiated Instruction can provide valuable insights to improve teaching and learning effectiveness.

Furthermore, this study seeks to identify the challenges faced by teachers and the strategies they use to overcome these obstacles. Gregory and Chapman (2007) note that Differentiated instruction requires a great deal of planning and effort on the part of the teacher. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of Differentiated Instruction practices in Indonesian high schools, particularly in English subjects. As such, the findings of this research can offer concrete recommendations to support the effective and efficient implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

1.2 Formulation of the Problems

The Problem to be discussed in this research are as follows:

1. How did english teachers apply Differentiated Instruction (DI) in the merdeka curriculum?
2. What were the challenges faced by english teachers in applying Differentiated Instruction in the Merdeka Curriculum?

1.3 Operational Definition

The researcher provides the following definitions of this study:

1. Differentiated Instruction : Allison & Wood (2021) argue that differentiated learning is a student-centered teaching approach where teachers tailor instruction to the ways students learn, what they are interested in, and how they develop. Tomlinson (2001) stated that the implementation of Differentiated Instruction involves

three key approaches or strategies: differentiation of process, content, and product. These strategies are highly contextualized to teaching practices in Indonesia, for instance, by assigning reading comprehension tasks tailored to students' abilities and interests.

2. Merdeka Curriculum : Kemendikbud Ristek (2021) states that the Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that provides learning freedom to students, teachers, and schools.
3. Teachers' strategies : a set of approaches used by teachers to create a supportive learning environment that guides students toward educational goals. According to them, Teaching strategies are the patterns of teacher's actions designed to facilitate students' learning in specific ways (Joyce & Weil, 1986).

1.4 Aims of the Research

This research aims to find out what the strategies of English teachers are when using Differentiated Instruction in the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, this research also aims to explore the challenges teachers face in applying Differentiation Instruction.

1.5 Significance of the Research

1. Theoretical significance: This research contributes and supports Differentiated Instruction Theory by Carol Ann Tomlinson (2001) related to differentiated Instruction problems

2. Empirical Significance: This research provides insight and increases practical knowledge for teachers in applying Differentiated Instruction in the classroom.
3. Practical Significance: This research can be used as an information provider for readers about a study that examines the strategies of English teachers when using Differentiated Instruction in Merdeka curriculum. In addition, the findings can guide professional development for English teachers or the design of Differentiated Instruction resources.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of Findings

Based on the findings presented in Chapter IV, this study has identified the strategies used by English teachers in applying differentiated instruction within the Merdeka Curriculum. The study revealed that teachers employed three primary differentiation strategies.

First, Content Differentiation. Teachers tailored learning materials based on students' interests, abilities, and learning styles. Through initial assessments, they provided varied content to match students' preferences, ensuring better engagement and comprehension. The second is Process Differentiation. Different instructional approaches were used to accommodate diverse learning styles. Teachers implemented strategies such as Project-Based Learning (PBL), Discovery Learning, and audiovisual aids to cater to students with different needs. The third is Product Differentiation. Students were given the flexibility to demonstrate their understanding through various outputs, such as essays, videos, infographics, presentations, and role-plays. This approach allowed students to express their knowledge in a way that aligned with their strengths and interests.

This study also highlights challenges such as limited preparation time, diverse material needs, and classroom management. Despite these,

differentiated instruction enhances student engagement and learning outcomes. When implemented effectively, it meets diverse needs, fosters active learning, and supports the Merdeka Curriculum's goals.

5.2 Recommendation

Researcher provide several recommendation for readers and future researchers, including the following :

1. English Teachers

In this research, it is recommended that English teachers adapt their teaching strategies to suit the needs of their students. In learning, there is no absolute right or wrong strategy. A good strategy is one that enables students to achieve learning objectives while being oriented toward their individual needs.

2. Further Research

In further research, it is expected that there will be more references and participants relevant to the research topic on the strategies used by English teachers in implementing differentiated instruction as part of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Additionally, further studies should explore the strategies teachers use based on students' needs, interests, and abilities to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

