

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Differentiated Instruction of Merdeka Curriculum

Students are part of learning that has heterogeneity one another. Teaching them means understanding their needs as well. The problem of students' low motivation, lack of interest, and boredom during learning is critical to be concerned since it affects students' competence achievement. Differentiated learning is developed and recommended to respond to the needs of learners in learning that can vary, to create relevant learning (Lubis, 2023).

Differentiated Instruction (DI), which is also called Differentiated Learning, is a learning approach that gives students the freedom to learn comfortably, according to their potential, uniqueness, and conditions, so that children feel comfortable in the learning climate created by the teacher (Digna & Widyasari, 2023). DI is one of the characteristics highlighted in the Merdeka curriculum. The Merdeka curriculum is an attempt to raise the standard of education in Indonesia in response to contemporary demands (Fitriyani et al., 2023). It is expected that the curriculum can mitigate learning loss during the pandemic of Covid-19. The concept of DI in the Merdeka curriculum is adopted from the theory of multiple intelligence by Howard Gardner, or in Indonesian referred to as compound intelligence. Intelligence contains a person's ability to solve real problems in various situations (Digna & Widyasari, 2023).

When used effectively, the Merdeka curriculum supports differentiated learning as a tactic used by educators to give students the room they need to grow into independent, creative, talented, and interested generations. Teachers can use differentiated learning as a strategy to help students' characters be more diverse (Syarifuddin & Nasir, 2023). Moreover, as stated by Hidayati and Sujarwati (2023) that the context of differentiated learning strategy is a method that can help teachers in facilitating effective classroom management that would facilitate students' diversity in learning and put students at the core and center of the learning process.

When talking further about DI, the concepts of the strategy are defined into three types: content, process, and product (Tomlinson, 2014).

Content refers to the essential knowledge or skills that educators want their students to acquire from a specific course, as well as the resources or methods that give them access to that knowledge. Process refers to the set of activities created to make sure students apply critical thinking abilities to comprehend, apply, and transfer fundamental knowledge and understandings. Products serve as tools for students to extend and demonstrate what they have learned (Tomlinson, 2014). DI believes that students vary in readiness, interest, and learning profile.

2.1.1. The Process of DI Differentiates Teaching Aspects

Four closely related chronological differentiation stages can be identified from the perspective of skills: A teacher prepares a lesson based on his planning for the lesson period and the evaluation of the previous lesson. Because of this preparation, the teacher can address each student's unique needs during the lesson. It is possible to identify various constituent differentiation skills within each of these stages. The temporal relationship between horizontally adjacent constituent skills suggests that they can be executed sequentially, concurrently, or in any order. Apart from that, subject-matter knowledge and knowledge about the students are the two kinds of knowledge that are necessary to be able to differentiate (Geel et al., 2019).

2.1.2. The Complexity of Differentiated Instruction

The process of DI implementation has several complexity and efforts. According to study by Geel et al. (2019), the lesson's content (goal and topic), group composition (diversity, number of grades, and students with special education needs), school support (collaboration and facilities), curriculum material (remedial suggestions and materials), and data on student achievement and progress (information richness, availability, and usefulness) are the following complexity factors in DI that have been identified. Moreover, Maulana et al., (2015) emphasized the intricacy of DI, noted that it takes time to develop competencies for DI effectively, and stated that fundamental teaching abilities are thought to be a requirement.

2.1.3. The Components of Differentiated Instruction

DI program has crucial components that are required to be concerned to conduct it effectively. A study by Langelaan et al. (2024) identified them as follows:

a. Active learning

Practice in design, simulated-based learning, classroom practice, and classroom inquiry were distinguished. Differentiated lesson plans with tailored instruction based on readiness, interest, or learning profile were created by preservice teachers.

b. Feedback and Reflection

The most common feature observed in programs designed to cultivate teacher attitudes was reflection. This was true for studies that focused only on changing attitudes as well as those that trained attitudes in addition to other competencies.

c. Collaboration

Collaborating with peers was most frequently observed in DI skill development programs. Based on the idea that teacher-learning communities improve teacher DI practice, the program's goal is to encourage teachers to collaborate in a structured manner.

d. Content Focus

Giving teachers the chance to become more knowledgeable about navigating the language of their students' cultures, determining the needs of their students, and enhancing their language use and communication skills is essential.

e. Models and Modelling

Teacher educators provide an example of instruction by utilizing techniques and games like line-up games, group discussions, and organized field experiences that preservice teachers can apply in their own future employment.

f. Coaching and Expert

According to aforementioned theories above, Differentiated Instruction is an innovative strategy to meet students' diversity background to reach learning objectives.

2.1.4. Diagnostic Test of DI

Assessments in differentiated classrooms are continual and diagnostic. It gives teachers daily information about students' interests, learning styles, and readiness for specific concepts and abilities. These educators view evaluation as a tool to be used today to determine how to change instruction for tomorrow, not as a way to determine what students learned (or didn't learn) at the end of a unit (Tomlinson, 2014). Diagnostic tests are able to identify students' understanding and difficulties in understanding the concepts taught in class (Asnawi et al., 2023).

In diagnostic test, students can create classroom rules, participate in the governing process based on those rules, and offer diagnostic information. When a job or piece of content is too difficult or too easy, when learning is engaging (or not), when they need assistance, and when they're ready to work independently, students can communicate these things to teachers. The teacher discovers a variety of student needs and traits after performing first observations or diagnostic testing (Anggraeny & Dewi, 2023; Tomlinson, 2014). Similarly, Lee (2015) formulates the stages of diagnostic assessment as follows:

- a. Assessing each participant's unique strengths and weaknesses
- b. Giving clear instructions on how to resolve the troublesome area
- c. Making recommendations for more effective lesson plans and recognizing the positive aspects of the students' work
- d. Giving step-by-step, personalized, and thorough diagnostic feedback
- e. Making summative judgments

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages to performing diagnostic tests prior to DI implementation. For example, the diagnostic test instrument designed for visual learning styles only addresses one dimension or one dominating factor, making it unidimensional. Furthermore, diagnostic exams can assist in guiding students' programs for self-improvement. Test results can reveal details about a student's potential, interests, or skills. This can serve as a foundation for creating extracurricular activities or career counseling tailored to the interests and abilities of the students (Asnawi et al., 2023).

In implementing Differentiated Instruction, some steps need to be managed by teachers. According to Tomlinson (2014), the stages of DI consist of pre-

assessing students on upcoming concepts or skills through a diagnostic test, introducing new concepts or topics to the students, modelling some ways to think about skills involved, instructing students to work in small heterogeneous groups on exploratory task, conducting class to come together to share ideas and pose questions, at the end of the lesson day, instructing students to complete a quick formative assessment. Figure 2.1. below depicts the instructional pattern in a differentiated classroom as mirror images of a wavy line, wherein students initially convene as a collective to commence a study, subsequently disperse to engage in small group or individual learning, reconvene to share insights and strategies for further exploration, and repeat this cycle of collaboration and independent work.

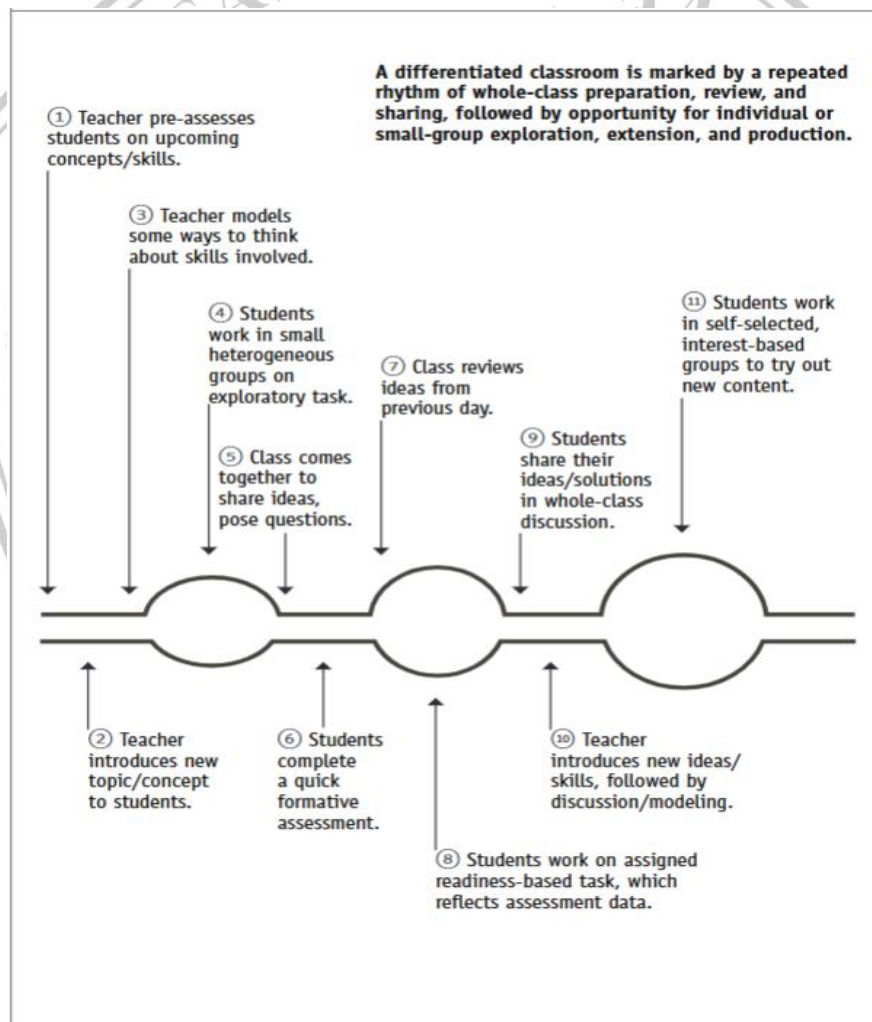


Figure 2.1. The Flow of Instruction in a Differentiated Classroom

2.2. Differentiated Instruction for Teaching English to Junior High School

Students

The use of Differentiated Instruction in English classroom of junior high school level has been investigated by some studies. Pranajaya et al. (2022) examined the distinction of Merdeka curriculum in Madrasah (Islamic Junior High Schools) through DI and P5-PPRA. It is discovered that lesson planning comprises 1) Creating the scope, learning objectives, or Madrasah curriculum according to the Madrasah Operational Curriculum Development Guidelines. Madrasah plan, deliver, and assess all learning in order to ensure that learning outcomes are attained in a methodical, consistent, and quantifiable way. This is made possible by the way that curriculum or subject matter is designed and organized, as well as by the learning objectives. The department's authority to create lesson plans or instructional modules. It is in accordance with the study conducted by Prasetyanto and Sakti (2023) which analyzed the implementation of learning differentiates on implementing P5 activities in one of the vocational high school. It was discovered that the P5 activities were modified to fit the seven themes that the Ministry of Education and Culture had established. In this P5 activity, the following project outcomes are on display: (1) posters; (2) short stories; (3) poetry musical; (4) songs; (5) vlogs; (6) dramas; and (7) academic writing.

According to a study conducted by Suryati et al. (2023), in differentiated instruction, the teacher used terms related to interests, preferences, and talents to refer to the various characters. It is imperative for educators to be aware of their students' interests, preferences, and talents. The instructor clarified that he gathered the data beforehand in order to differentiate instruction in the classroom. However, most of the students provided positive evaluations of their interactions and learned that when teachers employed DI strategies in their classes, they could overcome their learning obstacles. These findings all point to the necessity of aligning DI strategies across all classroom activities (Astuti et al., 2023). Finally, Halim et al. (2023) discovered that the content used in teaching English using DI at junior high school was the school book in accordance with the national curriculum. The learning then continued with three major themes and a few smaller, segmented

activities during the process stage: establishing the knowledge (determining what the students know and do not know), introducing the new knowledge, and assessing. Finally, through the authentic assessment of their portfolios, which were collected at the end of class, the students' work could still be produced and made available.

2.3. Benefits and Challenges of Teaching English with DI

Teaching English using Differentiated Instruction has some benefits and challenges. According to Ayuningtyas et al. (2023), benefits of differentiated instruction include improved learning outcomes, student-teacher engagement, language proficiency, and student cooperation and collaboration. Since the students receive assistance according to their preferred method of learning, which may have an impact on their motivation to learn, the overall learning outcomes have increased. Given that the teacher will support and guide the students' learning needs, DI is also advantageous for improving student-teacher engagement. Reading, listening, speaking, and writing are all areas of language skills that can benefit from DI. The final advantage in an offline setting stems from students' ability to collaborate, as they are placed in groups according to similar abilities, which helps them feel at ease in the learning environment. In addition to this, the advantages of DI in an online setting are comparable to those of offline learning, particularly with regard to language proficiency.

On the other hand, besides its benefits, DI also has challenges during its implementation. A study by Suryati et al. (2023) found that there are several challenges faced by both teachers and students:

1. Preparing and creating the learning process over a prolonged period of time

The teacher first assessed the needs and learning preferences of the class during the preparatory phase. In order to meet the needs of the students in the classroom, teachers must adapt and create lesson plans that take into account the media, models, and teaching strategies that are appropriate for the material being covered.

2. Insufficient assistance from other educators

Since it was something new and still needed to be explored, other teachers' support in exchanging experiences in the classroom was crucial in making the teacher feel better if more teachers adopted it.

However, Komang et al. (2021) states in their study that rather than viewing students' differences as a threat to classroom management, teachers will see them as a challenge that can be turned into an opportunity. A teacher will continue to learn in an endless process that will enhance their teaching experience if they consistently try what works best for a given student. Having reviewed the theories from the studies above, it can be summarized that DI has been widely implemented in teaching system and its benefits dominate its challenges.

2.4. Potential Obstacles of DI Implementation in Language Learning

Apart from the increasing attention on DI implementation due to its potential to address the diverse needs, abilities, and students' learning styles, several studies have highlighted possible obstacles to its implementation in language learning classrooms. Schwab and Woltran (2023) conducted a thorough literature review to investigate the main barriers to the successful implementation of DI in and out of schools. The significant barrier refers to the education system. Firstly, teachers already face substantial workloads, and the added responsibility of constant differentiation, along with the requisite time and resources to execute it effectively while addressing both curricular requirements and individual student needs, may be regarded as onerous. The second obstacle is that diverse approaches invariably require an extra time investment from educators. Moreover, both the implementation and the planning of diversified teaching techniques provide significant challenges for educators.

Meanwhile, according to Tomlinson (2001), the major obstacle in DI implementation is the fear of losing control of student behavior. Educators who differentiate education often assert that they demonstrate greater leadership in their classrooms, not diminished leadership. In contrast to educators who employ a singular pedagogical method, those who differentiate instruction must oversee and regulate multiple activities concurrently. They must assist students in establishing behavioural guidelines, provide and oversee specific instructions for activities, and manage the progression of events in each educational experience. Effective differentiated classrooms incorporate intentional student mobility and deliberate

student discourse. This research on the obstacles of DI implementation must continue to identify a broader range of troubles encountered by teachers.

2.5. Multiple Intelligence Theory in Language Learning

The theory of Multiple Intelligences has been well-known since Howard Gardner introduced it in 1983. The theory posits that individuals possess various types of intelligence, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic intelligence. The MI theory also has significant implications for language learning. Its belief in the different intelligences owned by the students leads educators to recognize and accommodate diverse ways students learn and process information. This approach then leads to the implementation of more effective teaching strategies to cater to individual strengths and preferences in language learning.

Previous research has investigated the positive correlation between MI profiles and their preferred language-learning strategies. For instance, a study by Alizadeh et al. (2014) that examined the relationship between EFL students' multiple intelligence development and their writing performances through questionnaire assessment. The study's findings indicate a positive correlation between MI and the quality of female learners' writing. The research indicates that English educators should acknowledge the significance of multiple intelligences in the educational process and implement more effective activities to enhance the foreign language writing skills of learners with diverse intelligences.

Another study was conducted by Dolati and Tahriri (2017) that investigated whether there are differences among EFL instructors of various intelligence types in terms of the types of activities that they implement in their classes. The research examined three consecutive sessions of each class along with the associated activities. The findings indicated that only educators with logical-mathematical intelligence were affected by their predominant intelligence type, whereas other intelligence types did not significantly influence the activities conducted in the classroom. The findings of this study may serve as a stimulus for educators possessing logical-mathematical intelligence to be cognizant of their predominant

intelligence type, ensuring it does not influence their teaching methods or compel them to employ activities aligned solely with their dominant intellect.

Multiple Intelligence has also been proven to be able to be increased through several practical techniques. A study by Oktarina et al. (2021) assessed the efficacy of integrated blended learning on students' various intelligences and character during the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings indicate that STEM-integrated blended learning effectively enhances students' multiple intelligences and character education, as seen by improvements in average scores and impact size values. Furthermore, MI application in language teaching can facilitate a faster learning experience. A study by Taheri et al. (2019) examined the correlation between cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, and language achievement among learners. The study's results indicated a substantial association between linguistic achievement and cognitive intelligence while showing a nonsignificant relationship with overall emotional intelligence. Of the 15 subcategories of emotional intelligence, just three—interpersonal relationships, optimism, and problem-solving—demonstrated a substantial correlation with linguistic achievement.

While there are many benefits to using Multiple Intelligences (MI) in language learning, several challenges persist in putting it into practice. Many teachers may not fully grasp MI theory or find it difficult to modify their teaching methods to accommodate it. Furthermore, classrooms often lack the necessary infrastructure to support various learning styles (Eslit, 2023). To overcome these obstacles, continuous teacher training and proper resource distribution are essential to create an inclusive educational setting that recognizes all types of intelligence.

In conclusion, incorporating Multiple Intelligences into language learning not only improves educational results but also encourages a more inclusive classroom environment. By acknowledging and appreciating the distinct intelligences of every student, teachers can design customized learning experiences that enhance engagement and success in language acquisition. Ongoing research and practical implementation of MI theory will be essential in addressing current challenges and maximizing its potential in educational contexts.