

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Assessment is one of the most critical components of language teaching and learning, especially in classrooms with young learners. Assessment is needed to examine young learners' progress and the learning process, as well as primary education incorporating their various skills, requirements, and learning styles. Teachers are also determined how to measure students' language learning outcomes. Assessment guides for teachers, students, and parents in constructing effective learning techniques, therefore teachers must be literate in language assessment in terms of how to create good tests or knowing which methods are appropriate for assessing student learning (Nurdiana, 2020; Siregar et al., 2020). Based on a preliminary interview, some elementary schools in Buleleng have used assessments based on the concept of the latest curriculum, namely the *Merdeka* Curriculum or Emancipated Curriculum.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology established the *Merdeka* Curriculum, or Emancipated Curriculum, in 2022. The concept of emancipated learning means providing different initial assessments called diagnostic assessments. Diagnostic assessment is designed to guide everyday teaching by evaluating students. This allows teachers to adapt their teaching strategies and plan formative and

summative assessments. These assessments provide feedback to both students and teachers, encouraging efforts to enhance learning outcomes while monitoring the learning process. Additionally, they document student achievements and assess how well students have met learning objectives (Ahmed et al., 2019; Tomlinson, 1999, 2001). Assessment can be divided into four elements: (1) content, which refers to what students need to learn and how they will access the knowledge, ideas, and skills, (2) process, which involves how students will understand and master the knowledge, ideas, and skills, (3) product, which is the way students will demonstrate what they have learned in a summative manner, (4) learning environment, which encompasses the personal, social, and physical arrangements in the classroom (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). The result of preliminary interview is the implementation of the Emancipated curriculum in some elementary schools has not been evenly distributed, but some teachers already carry out diagnostic assessments to determine students' abilities. As for formative and summative assessments, teachers always carry them out to determine students' learning progress and summarize students' achievements at the end to determine whether they are following the learning objectives. However, teachers do not fully conduct the learning process based on differentiated learning after knowing students' abilities.

Differentiated learning is a method that tailors learning techniques, materials, and activities to match each student's needs, interests, and abilities. This aligns with the principle of the Emancipated Curriculum, which states that learning should be designed with consideration for

students' developmental stages, achievement levels, learning needs, and diverse characteristics, this ensures that learning is both meaningful and enjoyable for students (Anggraena et al., 2022; Lutfu et al., 2024). In implementing differentiated learning based on the interview, elementary school teachers are still adapting, and there are difficulties, such as teachers having to prepare different materials, teaching materials, and learning processes based on student's abilities and needs, which require much time. In contrast, the time allocation for English lessons is only 70 minutes a week. Thus, teachers do not clearly know the abilities and needs of students, which refer to students' learning styles.

The learning styles are the ways in which students use one or more senses to comprehend or retain what they learn. It is a personal characteristic and a preferred method for collecting, organizing, and processing information (Fleming, 2001). In this study, the researcher utilized Fleming's (2001) VARK model, which identifies four primary learning styles: visual, auditory, read/write, and kinaesthetic.

Several studies have examined assessments. In the context of the emancipated curriculum, the results of research by Arlen et al. (2023) state that the assessment implemented based on the emancipated curriculum is slightly different because there is a diagnostic assessment that is carried out at the beginning of the learning process to determine the basic abilities of students. Diagnostic assessment becomes the basis for teachers in planning the learning that will be done. However, this is not in line with reality because the research results by Pantiwati et al. (2023) show that teachers

generally implement summative and formative assessments, while the implementation of diagnostic assessments is still very minimal. In implementing differentiated assessment, appropriate assessment instruments are needed. The research results by Cristiana et al. (2023); Sudeni et al. (2022) only focus on rubric assessment instruments which can only be used in formative and summative assessments. Thus, no recommended assessment instruments are compatible with continuous assessment or differentiated assessment in these studies.

From several previous studies, this research also focuses on designing and developing assessment instruments. However, no research has developed assessment instruments that can be optimally implemented based on students' different learning styles. This is important to fill the gap because in implementing the Emancipated Curriculum, different assessments are needed based on student's learning styles and provide optimal implementation based on the Emancipated Curriculum. Based on these issues, this research aims to help teachers with problems assessing students based on different needs and learning styles, especially in 5th-grade elementary school students, by developing differentiated assessments aimed at elementary school students in English language learning. Nevertheless, several problems in elementary schools in Buleleng were identified through initial interviews: (1) the implementation of the Emancipated Curriculum has not been evenly distributed, (2) teachers have difficulty preparing differentiated materials, teaching materials, learning media, and learning methods based on the student's needs and learning styles, (3) assessment

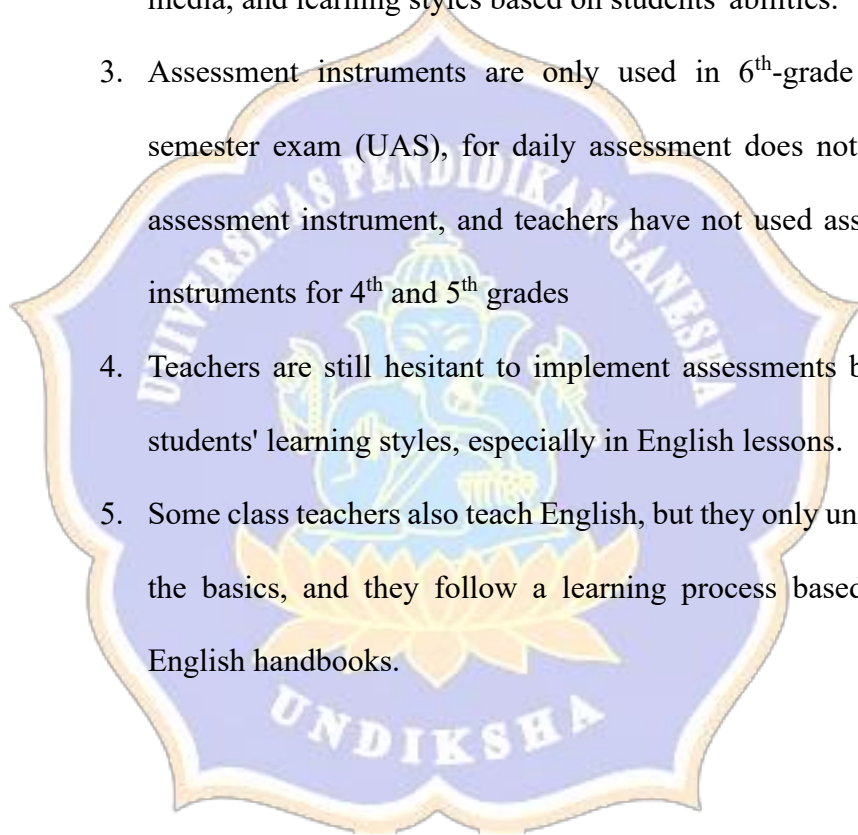
instruments are only used in 6th-grade end-of-semester exam (UAS) and for daily assessment does not use the assessment instrument, (4) teachers are still difficult about implementing assessments based on the student's learning styles, especially in English lessons, (5) and some class teachers also teach English only understand the basics of English, and they only followed learning process based on the English handbooks. These problems impact student's ability to acquire English knowledge and master English skills based on their learning styles, so students do not achieve learning objectives optimally. Thus, differentiated assessment does not work well.

Based on the problems found in the preliminary interview, the researcher assisted teachers in designing and developing differentiated instrument assessments. This research focuses on designing and developing differentiated assessment instruments for 5th-grade elementary school students based on topics in the second semester and adapted to students' learning styles. This study used the ADDE model from Richey & Klein's (2007) theory to design and develop differentiated assessment instruments. Researchers must follow each stage so that the instrument assessment designed and developed gets good results. Therefore, this study aims to produce differentiated assessment instruments product to assist teachers in assessing 5th-grade students in semester two. Through this research, the developed product is expected to help improve the implementation and development of assessment instruments, especially in elementary schools.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the research background, several problems can be identified:

1. The implementation of the Emancipated curriculum has not been evenly distributed and is carried out in stages.
2. Teachers find it difficult because differentiated learning requires them to prepare different materials, teaching materials, learning media, and learning styles based on students' abilities.
3. Assessment instruments are only used in 6th-grade end-of-semester exam (UAS), for daily assessment does not use the assessment instrument, and teachers have not used assessment instruments for 4th and 5th grades
4. Teachers are still hesitant to implement assessments based on students' learning styles, especially in English lessons.
5. Some class teachers also teach English, but they only understand the basics, and they follow a learning process based on the English handbooks.



1.3 Problem Limitation

This research is limited to the design and development of differentiated assessment instruments in the Emancipated Curriculum and teachers' responses regarding the products developed to assess 5th grades of second-semester elementary school students that can be used in English language learning. The differentiated assessment instrument to be developed is adapted to the four main learning styles of students: auditory, visual, read/write, and kinaesthetic.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the background and problem identification, the research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. What are the needs of students and teachers for developing differentiated assessments based on learning styles, especially for English language subjects in the Emancipated curriculum for assessing 5th-grade elementary school students?
2. How to develop differentiated assessment in English language subjects in the Emancipated curriculum based on learning styles for assessing 5th-grade elementary school students?
3. How is the quality of developing differentiated assessment in the emancipated curriculum based on learning styles for assessing 5th-grade elementary school students?

1.5 Research Objective

Based on the research questions, the research objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the needs of students and teachers in designing assessment instruments in English subjects based on learning styles to assess 5th-grade elementary school students.
2. To develop an English subject assessment instrument based on learning styles to assess 5th-grade elementary school students.
3. To determine the quality of differentiated assessment instruments designed based on learning styles to assess 5th-grade elementary school students.

1.6 Research Signification

There are two significances of this research:

1. Theoretical Significance

This research is expected to guide other researchers in developing assessments for young learners, especially differentiated assessments for elementary school students. It is also expected to make a positive contribution to progress in the field of science in developing assessments for learners.

2. Practical Significance

- a. For Teacher

From this research, differentiated assessment instruments are expected to assist and facilitate teachers' learning to use assessment

instruments tailored to student's learning styles to assess students, especially in English subjects.

b. For Student

This research is expected to improve students' experiences learning English by using learning styles that are adapted to learning activities.

c. For other researchers

This research is expected to provide additional valuable information as a reference for future researchers conducting similar research that provides assessment instruments at different levels or classes.

