

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

The Emancipated Curriculum is a new curriculum implemented by the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture as part of the government's movement to transform education and create superior quality human resources with the Pancasila Student Profile (Kemendikbud, 2021). This curriculum emphasizes essential materials, learners' competency, and character development while allowing teachers to choose instructional approaches that consider their students' different learning needs and preferences (Dinana et al., 2024). Differentiated instruction is a strategy intended to accommodate students' differences in learning (Tomlinson, 2001). The Emancipated Curriculum and differentiated instruction share a commonality in that they both offer teachers the flexibility to employ diverse instructional approaches to cater to the needs of all students (Dinana et al., 2024). Students have differences in interests, skills, needs, and learning styles. Teachers should consider these individual differences before implementing differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction will lead teachers to differentiated assessment. Assessment is an element that cannot be separated from learning. Assessments are essential to provide information and improve teachers' teaching and student learning processes (Cowie & Bell, 1999). Differentiated assessment aims to achieve the learning outcomes relative to the students' differences in learning (Koshy, 2013). The teachers are required to implement the differentiated assessment in the learning process.

However, several problems remain in implementing differentiated assessment in schools, especially junior high schools. The researcher conducted preliminary observations at a junior high school in Buleleng Regency, precisely in Sukasada. Preliminary observation was conducted using interviews with a teacher and students as well as observations. From the results of preliminary observations, it is known that the school has implemented the Emancipated Curriculum in grades 7 and 8. Then, several results were obtained based on observations and interviews with students and teachers. First is how the teacher determines the student's needs, characteristics, abilities, and learning styles before teaching them. The teacher carried out a diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the lesson, but the diagnostic assessment was carried out only to measure students' cognitive level or abilities. Diagnostic assessments given by teachers cannot be used to determine student characteristics, needs, and learning styles, which are essential in preparing differentiated instruction and assessment. The teacher only assumes the student's learning style based on learning activities in class. However, there was no follow-up regarding the results of the diagnostic assessment carried out by the teacher. The teacher still has not implemented differentiated instruction. Next is regarding the differentiated assessment. The teacher's understanding of differentiated assessment is still lacking. The teacher has never implemented differentiated assessment in English learning activities. The assessments carried out by teachers are still monotonous, and only paper-based assessments (worksheets) and oral assessments are used. Next is regarding the learning method used by the teacher. In the learning process, teachers only use problem-based learning and discovery learning. The teacher has never implemented project-based learning. However, in the process, the

implementation of 21st-century learning has not been optimal. The teacher still experiences obstacles in its implementation.

In implementing the Emancipated curriculum, the model of assessment that teachers must carry out is diagnostic assessment. Diagnostic assessment is an initial assessment that teachers have to carry out to find out the students' characteristics, learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses in language learning, which can be done at the beginning of the learning process (Farhady & Selcuk, 2022). In an Emancipated curriculum, differentiated instruction is one of the effective strategies used to accommodate students' different characteristics, needs, and learning styles (Halimah, 2023). Differentiated instruction is an approach teachers take by adapting materials, methods, and assessments according to student's learning needs and preferences (Tomlinson, 2017). Differentiated instruction has to be combined with differentiated assessment. Because the learning instructions and the characteristics, the needs, and the learning styles of students are different, the assessments conducted cannot be the same. Ideally, instructions and assessments should be tailored to meet student's individual needs (Ihalon & C, 2022).

In designing and implementing differentiated assessments based on the student's learning styles, teachers can consider and analyze students' learning styles based on VARK theory (Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, Kinesthetic) (Ronaldy et al., 2023). The VARK learning style model categorizes students according to their preferred sensory modality for information acquisition (Fleming & Mills, 1992).

The teaching method that is very relevant and suitable for implementation in the emancipated curriculum is the 21st-century learning method. 21st-century learning method emphasizes students' ability to think critically, be proficient in communication, be able to collaborate with friends and have high creativity (Indarta et al., 2022). Also, the 21st-century learning method emphasizes student-centered learning. The 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning method, which emphasizes student-centered learning, aligns with the Emancipated curriculum concept, which focuses on student-centered learning and allows students to develop their thoughts in acquiring knowledge. Utilizing technology is possible when learning with this method, and teachers are also expected to integrate technology in the Emancipated Curriculum. Indarta et al. (2022) state that there are several learning methods in 21st-century learning that teachers can use, such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, and discovery learning.

Hence, this research aims to develop a differentiated assessment instrument for 7th-grade junior high school students in English lessons. It can help teachers assess students' abilities optimally based on their learning styles and 21st-century learning methods. Through this research, it is expected that the development of this product can assist educators improve the implementation of differentiated assessments in Emancipated Curriculum that can measure students' ability optimally, especially for grade 7 junior high school. The researcher will develop a differentiated assessment because an Emancipated curriculum requires the teachers to implement differentiated instruction in the learning process to facilitate each student's different characteristics and learning styles, so the assessment also needs to be differentiated based on the student's learning styles.

Besides, there is limited research on developing differentiated assessments for 7th-grade students based on learning styles and 21st-century learning methods.

## 1.2 Research Problem Identification

Based on the preliminary observations through observation of learning activities and interviews with teachers and students, several problems were encountered regarding implementing assessment based on the Emancipated Curriculum at the 7th-grade junior high school level at one junior high school in Sukasada, Buleleng Bali. Some of these problems are described below.

1. The teacher only implemented discovery and problem-based learning in the learning process. Also, the teacher cannot optimally implement 21st-century learning methods in the teaching and learning process because the teacher finds them difficult to implement, especially project-based learning in grade 7.
2. The teacher has not been able to accommodate students with different learning styles, needs, and characteristics with differentiated and varied learning and assessment. The teacher still uses monotonous assessments such as written and oral tests.
3. The teacher found it challenging to implement differentiated instruction and differentiated assessment in the learning process, which requires the teacher to prepare various learning media, learning material, assessment instruments, and learning methods.
4. In carrying out the assessment, the teacher only focuses on assessing students' cognitive abilities. Assessments to train students' performance and skills are still not optimal. Besides that, teachers focus more on results and are still less than optimal in assessing students in the learning process.

### 1.3 Problem Limitation

The limitation of the research is to developing the differentiated assessment instrument in Emancipated Curriculum, especially for English language learning in 7th-grade junior high school in Buleleng Regency for the 2023/2024 academic year. Hence, the research has a better focus. The assessment instrument developed refers to the Emancipated Curriculum, learning styles (visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic), and 21st-century learning methods, including problem-based, project-based, and discovery learning.

### 1.4 Research Question

Several research questions for this research can be developed based on the research background and problem identification, including:

1. What are the needs of students and teacher for designing and developing differentiated assessment instruments for English subjects based on the Emancipated Curriculum for assessing 7th-grade junior high school students?
2. How to design and develop differentiated assessment instruments for English subjects based on the Emancipated Curriculum for assessing 7<sup>th</sup>-grade junior high school students?
3. How is the quality of the developed differentiated assessment instrument based on the Emancipated Curriculum for assessing 7<sup>th</sup>-grade junior high school students?

### 1.5 Research Objectives

The aim of this research is as follows:

1. To determine the needs of students and teacher for designing and developing differentiated assessments for English subjects in the Emancipated Curriculum for assessing 7th-grade junior high school students.
2. To design and develop differentiated assessments for English subjects in the Emancipated Curriculum for assessing 7th-grade junior high school students.
3. To determine the quality of the developed differentiated assessment in the Emancipated Curriculum for assessing 7th-grade junior high school students.

### **1.6 The Expected Specification of the Product**

The expected specifications of the product in this research are described below.

1. Developing the differentiated assessment instrument based on learning styles is expected to help teachers accommodate students with different learning styles with appropriate assessments that can evaluate students' skills and performances optimally and equally during the learning process to successfully achieve the learning objectives.
2. The development of the differentiated assessment instrument, combined with the 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning methods, namely problem-based learning, project-based learning, and discovery learning, is expected to assist teachers provide meaningful assessments that can effectively train students' skills and performances during the learning process to improve students' 4C skills (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity).

## 1.7 Research Significances

There are two research significances of this research, these are:

### 1. Theoretical Significance

This research is expected to serve as a valuable reference for researchers undertaking similar studies. This research makes a positive contribution to the process of increasing knowledge and skills, particularly in developing differentiated assessment instruments in Emancipated Curriculum, especially in assessing students' knowledge in English subjects.

### 2. Practical Significance

#### - To the students:

This research is anticipated to aid pupils in enhancing their performance, English skills and help them have a pleasant experience in learning English in the Emancipated Curriculum using differentiated assessment instruments.

#### - To the teachers:

This research is anticipated to help teachers assess students' English skills using differentiated assessment instruments in the Emancipated Curriculum.

#### - To the other researchers:

For other researchers, this research is anticipated to serve as a valuable reference and guidance for undertaking comparable studies on the creation of differentiated assessment tools in the Emancipated Curriculum.



## 1.8 Assumption and the Limitation of the Development

The assumptions and limitations of developing differentiated assessment instruments are described below.

1. The developed product is related to differentiated assessment based on the needs of 7<sup>th</sup>-grade junior high school teachers and students at SMPN 1 Sukasada, located in Buleleng Bali. So, the product will be used to assess the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students at SMPN 1 Sukasada, particularly in the second semester.
2. The developed differentiated assessment instruments can and need to be improved in accordance with the demands of education and the curriculum.

## 1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Four significant key terms are used in this research, including the definition of differentiated assessment, assessment instrument, learning styles, and 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning method. The definitions of the key terms are divided into conceptual and operational definition. The definitions of the key terms are explained below.

### 1. Conceptual Definition

A conceptual definition is a definition based on the theory by experts. The conceptual definition of each key term is explained below.

#### a. Differentiated Assessment

Differentiated assessment enables students with diverse academic backgrounds to effectively demonstrate their learning. Teachers can gather data on students' development during the learning session by employing a range of instruments and strategies (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). Differentiated assessment is an educational framework that provides

flexibility to students regarding the types of assessment items they complete and the level of knowledge and skill development they acquire. It aims to accommodate student differences (Varsavsky & Rayner, 2013).

b. Assessment Instrument

An assessment instrument is any device, tool, or method that is used to obtain information and measure variables that are associated with the performance, skills, knowledge, or abilities of individuals or groups (Popham, 2009). An assessment instrument can also be defined as a tool or device utilized to assess or evaluate individuals' knowledge, skills, attitudes, or other attributes, which can be in different formats, including tests, surveys, questionnaires, observational checklists, or performance assessments. These devices are specifically created to gather data that can be examined to make well-informed decisions regarding individuals' capabilities, advancement, or requirements (Association et al., 2014).

c. Learning Styles

Learning style pertains to the preferred method by which an individual assimilates, analyzes, understands, and memorizes information. Experts assert that individuals can exhibit a wide range of learning styles, which encompass preferences such as visual (perceiving through sight), auditory (perceiving through hearing), reading/writing (relying on text-based materials), and kinesthetic (relying on physical activities) (Pashler et al., 2008).

d. 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Learning Method

The 21st-century learning technique refers to educational approaches and strategies that equip students with the skills and information they need to succeed in modern society. These strategies emphasize the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, collaboration, digital literacy, and adaptability. They frequently incorporate technology and prioritize equipping students for a swiftly evolving, interconnected, and knowledge-abundant society (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Several learning methods included in 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning methods are problem-based learning, project-based learning, and discovery learning.

## 2. Operational Definition

An operational definition is a procedural definition that is used in this research. The operational definition of each key term is explained below.

### a. Differentiated Assessment

Differentiated assessment is a process of evaluation using diverse or various types of assessment that can provide students with different learning styles a chance to be assessed based on their learning style during the learning process. In differentiated assessment, the teacher gathers information regarding the students' learning improvement through several ways based on students' learning styles. In this research, the differentiated assessment instrument is carried out with the second semester of seventh-grade junior high school English topics. This assessment is based on learning style combined with 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning method.

### b. Assessment Instrument

An assessment instrument is an instrument or tool the teacher uses to gather information or data regarding the students' learning improvement, ability, and knowledge during the learning process. It can help the teacher to assess the students optimally easily.

c. Learning Styles

Every student has a different learning style. Learning style is students' tendency to obtain and process information in the learning process. This tendency is how students obtain and understand the learning material, which can be through visual objects, audio, reading texts, or carrying out certain activities. So, the developed product consists of several types of assessment and various ways for the teacher to conduct the assessment process based on students' learning styles.

d. 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Learning Method

21st-century learning methods are learning models that can be applied in implementing an Emancipated curriculum, where the learning process focuses on student-centered learning and helps students improve their 4C skills. In this research, the 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning methods used in the learning process are problem-based learning, project-based learning, and discovery learning.

