

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

The implementation of the Emancipated Curriculum is one of the Independent Learning policies which aims to encourage teachers to adopt new learning paradigms to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process, as a form of commitment to student-centered learning (Apandi, 2023). In the Emancipated Curriculum implemented in Indonesia, assessment has a very important and crucial role in supporting the learning process which focuses on developing student competencies. Assessment is an important component of curriculum tools used to measure and assess the level of competency achieved (Shadri et al., 2023). In the Emancipated Curriculum, assessment is designed to provide constructive feedback, so that it can help teachers and students in monitoring learning developments in a complete and comprehensive manner. Assessment is not only used to make reports or assess student achievement, but also functions as a means of collecting and analyzing information to identify student learning needs and support the achievement of learning outcomes (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). Implementation involves careful planning, consistent implementation, in-depth analysis of results, and transparent reporting to ensure that each student gets the guidance needed to reach their maximum potential. In the emancipated curriculum, teachers apply more authentic assessments than traditional assessments. Because teachers assess students' skills in real life context. This helps students develop critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration, and provides more meaningful feedback (Marwa et

al., 2024). Traditional assessments are still used, but are more limited to summative evaluations such as written tests. The combination of the two provides a more complete picture of student progress.

Assessment plays a crucial role in learning activities. In the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), assessment is very important to assess the extent of student learning progress and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching strategies used by teachers. Assessment also serves as a means for teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, while helping students understand their learning progress more clearly (Dashti, 2019). Conceptually, assessment is defined as a systematic and continuous process or activity to collect information about the process and results of student learning in order to make decisions based on predetermined criteria and considerations (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). Assessment plays a role in helping teachers assess students' development in various aspects of English language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and understanding of grammar. Through this assessment process, teachers can review the extent to which the teaching strategies implemented have been effective, so that they can be used as a basis for making improvements and innovations in the English learning process.

In this case, teachers use various concepts or approach in the form of assessment as learning (AaL), assessment for learning (AfL), and assessment of learning (AoL). Assessment as learning is an assessment where students are actively involved in the assessment process to deepen their understanding of the learning material. Assessment is not just a complement to teaching and learning, but offers a process where student involvement in assessment can be part of learning, namely

assessment as learning (Dann, 2014). Assessment as Learning (AaL) emphasizes active student participation in the assessment process, by considering assessment as part of the learning process itself (Yin et al., 2022). Through this approach, students are encouraged to monitor and assess their own learning progress, set learning goals, and design strategies to achieve them. Students are also trained to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, then take corrective steps to improve learning outcomes. In this case, the teacher acts as a facilitator who helps set learning goals, provides reflection tools, provides constructive feedback, and creates a classroom environment that supports collaborative learning. Assessment as Learning generally uses methods such as reflective journals, portfolios, self-assessment, peer assessment, and assessment rubrics to help students understand assessment criteria and improve the quality of their work. Therefore, AaL is of paramount value to students because it requires students to be responsible for their learning (Yin et al., 2022).

Then assessment for learning is assessment that occurs at every stage of the learning process, with effective feedback used to improve students' performance (Johnson, 2024). Assessment for learning serves as a means of providing feedback to students during the learning process. The goal is to support and strengthen students' learning processes on an ongoing basis. In this approach, students are actively involved by utilizing feedback to deepen their understanding, reflect on themselves, and contribute to class discussions. With this assessment, the learning process is more responsive and adaptive to students' needs, so that they can achieve optimal learning outcomes. Teachers act as facilitators who provide constructive feedback, ask leading questions, and use a variety of assessment strategies such as

classroom observations and formative quizzes. From a teacher's perspective, this can be as simple as observing class discussions, asking questions, and reviewing student work in progress (Steele, 2019). In this context, teachers apply methods such as formative feedback, classroom observation, and open-ended questions to assess students' understanding and adjust their teaching approaches. Assessment for Learning (AfL) plays an important role because it encourages the development of students' metacognitive abilities and helps them become more active in managing their own learning process (Johnson, 2024).

And assessment of learning is conducted at the end of a learning period to evaluate the extent to which students have achieved the set goals. This assessment aims to determine the achievement of student learning outcomes after they have completed the learning process, and is summative with a focus on giving grades (Atmanegara, 2024). Assessment of learning is also known as summative assessment, which summarizes and reports student achievement at a specific point in time (Febriana et al., 2023). So the assessment used to determine final grades, graduation, or promotion to the next level. This assessment provides teachers, students, and other parties with important information about student achievement levels. In assessment of learning, students take tests or exams to demonstrate their understanding, while teachers act as evaluators who design assessment tools, correct, provide grades, and report results. In this case, teachers use methods such as standard tests, final exams, projects and final assignments. So the goal is to measure what students have learned and achieved (Salam & Al-Salahat, 2024). Assessment of learning can determine student achievement, make educational decisions, and provide accountability.

In the learning process the teacher can do various function of assessments. There are three function of assessments that teachers usually carry out to assess students, namely diagnostic assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments. Diagnostic assessment is a type of assessment carried out by teachers at the beginning of the learning process to determine students' knowledge, skills and readiness before starting new material. The purpose of diagnosis is to pinpoint individual students' strengths and, more importantly, weaknesses on the attributes that the student has not yet fully mastered (Fan et al., 2021). So, this is done to obtain information about students' initial conditions, including their strengths and weaknesses. Simply put, diagnosis is the teacher's concern of what has gone wrong (Kunnan & Jang, 2009). With this, teachers can design learning strategies that are more effective and appropriate to students' needs and abilities. The methods used in diagnostic assessment include initial tests, interviews, interest surveys and direct observation. From the results of the diagnostic assessment, teachers can adjust the curriculum, provide more targeted guidance, and ensure that all students have a strong foundation to start a new learning process. Diagnostic assessment in the language classroom has an important role in providing rapid and quality feedback for remedial work that will enhance learning (Alderson et al., 2014). This assessment is very important in ensuring that learning is inclusive and responsive to the diversity of student needs.

Formative assessment is a type of assessment carried out by teachers on students on an ongoing basis during the learning process. Formative assessments inform teachers about whether the students have learned and they have an indicator qualification for how the teachers should plan their next lessons (Ozan & Kincal,



2018). One of the most important components of formative assessment is feedback that helps to provide evidence on student learning (Karaman, 2021). Formative assessment can take a great variety of forms. It can be written or verbal, formal or informal and can be delivered by the teacher, peers, outside collaborators or oneself (Higgins et al., 2015). The information from formative assessment can be used to help teachers decide on appropriate instructional actions to enhance students' learning (Mahendra et al., 2021). This can help teachers monitor student learning progress, identify difficulties faced, and improve the learning process. The methods used in formative assessment are short quizzes, class discussions, daily assignments, reflection journals, and observations. With this, teachers can adjust their teaching methods to be more effective and in accordance with student needs. In addition, feedback provided by teachers allows students to know where to improve and direct their learning efforts better. So, formative assessment is very important as a tool to improve the quality of learning and ensure optimal achievement of competencies.

Summative assessment is a type of assessment carried out at the end of a learning period, such as the end of a semester or the end of a learning unit, to evaluate the extent to which students have achieved the specified competencies. Formative assessments, also known as assessment for learning, are used for enhancing students' learning and the development of self-regulated learning practices (Broadbent et al., 2017). The aim is to assess students' overall learning outcomes and determine their level of mastery of the material that has been taught. Methods used in summative assessment include final exams, final projects, presentations, and written reports. These assessments provide a comprehensive

picture of student achievement and are often used to determine final or passing grades. In addition, the results of summative assessments can provide important information for teachers and educational institutions regarding the effectiveness of learning programs that have been implemented, so that they can be used for planning and developing curriculum in the future. Summative assessments, although important, should be supplemented with formative assessments to provide a more comprehensive picture of student learning progress.

The three assessment functions described above have an important role in monitoring student progress. However, its implementation often faces major challenges, especially in accommodating the diversity of abilities, learning styles, and individual needs of students. In this context, assessment with differentiated learning becomes a relevant and effective approach. Assessment with differentiated learning is an assessment approach designed to meet the individual learning needs of students by considering their differences in abilities, interests, learning styles, and backgrounds (Chapman & King, 2005). This approach ensures that each student has the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and skills in the way that is most appropriate for them. Differentiated learning as a process to ensure that what students learn, how they learn it, and how students demonstrate what they have learned are in accordance with the level of readiness, interests, and learning styles that students prefer (Noman & Kaur, 2014). In the same way, differentiated assessment is the practice of teachers to adjust their assessments in the classroom according to the desires and needs of their diverse individual students (Jung & Guskey, 2010).

These assessments are more emphasized and more flexible in the emancipated curriculum compared to the previous curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum (Pouw, 2023). Diagnostic assessments in the 2013 curriculum are used to measure student readiness that focuses on standards, while in the emancipated curriculum used to determine student needs so that teachers can adjust to learning methods. Formative assessments in the 2013 curriculum are used to measure student progress that focuses on standards (using written tests), while in the emancipated curriculum the assessments are more diverse and continuous, focusing more on student growth and development (using discussions, projects, skill-based assignments) (Nuning, 2022). Summative assessments in the 2013 curriculum are used to assess overall student learning outcomes using objective tests or exams, while in the emancipated curriculum the assessments are more holistic or competency-based, not only using written tests but also using projects, portfolios or student performance. Differentiated assessments in the 2013 curriculum have not been implemented properly because the assessments are more uniform and have predetermined standards, while in the emancipated curriculum the assessments are more differentiated, the assessments are adjusted to the needs and potential of individual students. Teachers also have the freedom to choose the teaching tools they use (Pratycia et al., 2023).

Therefore, the researcher wants to conduct a more in-depth study of the assessment strategy with differentiated instruction used by teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja. The researcher wants to know the assessment strategies used by EFL teachers and the challenges they face in implementing their strategies. In the preliminary data obtained during the initial observation, the teacher stated that SMP



Negeri 1 Singaraja implemented differentiation instruction in its learning process. The teacher adjusts the teaching method to suit the needs, interests, and learning abilities of students. Students have different learning styles that affect how they learn. Students have different academic abilities, some are quick to grasp the material and some need extra time and help. Their learning interests also vary, such as reading, drawing, or technology, which affects their enthusiasm for learning. Students have different learning styles, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, so adjustments are needed to make it easier for them to understand the material. Diverse social and cultural backgrounds also affect how students think and interact. Emotional and psychological conditions play a role, where students who feel safe and motivated are more focused, while those who are under pressure have difficulty concentrating. In addition, language differences, especially for students whose school language is not their primary language at home, require adjustments in learning.

In this case, the teachers use several ways to implement differentiated instruction. First, content adjustment, which is providing different materials according to students' abilities so that everyone can understand the lesson. Second, process adjustment, which is using various learning methods or ways, such as discussions or projects, according to students' learning styles and interests. Third, product adjustment, which is giving students choices on how they show their learning outcomes, for example through writing, presentations, or other creative works. In the learning process, teachers usually pay special attention to students with less ability. However, in their assessments, teachers do not always implement differentiated assessment. In this case, it was found that the assessment practices

implemented by teachers already reflect Assessment as Learning, Assessment for Learning, and Assessment of Learning. Teachers use Assessment as Learning and Assessment for Learning as diagnostic and formative assessments, which help them understand students' learning needs and adjust teaching strategies. Meanwhile, Assessment of Learning functions more as a summative assessment, which is used to measure students' final achievement. This initial observation shows that in implementing differentiated instruction, teachers do not always implement differentiated assessment. Sometimes implementing differentiated assessment, sometimes not implementing differentiated assessment. Based on the emancipated curriculum, differentiated instruction must be adjusted to differentiated assessment. Therefore, further analysis is needed regarding this problem.

In this case, there are several previous studies related to English teacher assessment strategies. In research conducted by Alnatour et al. (2020), showed that the use of modern assessment strategies by English teachers in the EFL context is still low, with the dominance of traditional methods such as written tests and multiple choice. There were no significant differences based on gender, experience, or academic qualifications. There is a need for mandatory training, provision of practical examples, further research, and policy and resource support to increase the use of modern assessment strategies. In research conducted by Saefurrohman & Susiloningtyas (2022), it shows that most teachers in Banyumas used reading assessment strategies that encouraged students to develop their own ideas and provide comments. Other strategies used included measuring comprehension through writing or speaking tasks, the Four Corners game, and the use of response cards and hand signals. The results showed that active participation-based strategies

were used more often than passive strategies. Then in research conducted by Research Naraghizadeh et al. (2023), shows that teachers view alternative assessment positively and recognize its benefits in improving teaching practices. The importance of alternative assessments in capturing communication skills and suggests that teachers can increase their understanding of these strategies through further training. The literature review included in this study highlights positive perceptions of alternative assessment methods among EFL teachers, who use these strategies for formative assessment and tracking student progress. In research conducted by Estaji & Kardoust (2021), it shows that various assessment strategies are used for different language skills, and teachers spend a lot of time in assessment. This study compares assessment practices in Iran with other ESL and EFL environments, highlighting differences and similarities. These findings aim to raise awareness among teachers about their assessment practices and facilitate comparisons across different educational contexts.

In addition, in research conducted by Samaie & Valizadeh (2023), showed that Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions and strategies to reduce the gap between teaching, assessment, and learning, using Earl's framework. Teachers implement various strategies such as stress reduction, assessment before, during, and after teaching, and providing feedback to improve the relationship between these components. In research conducted by Almeida (2022), it how that data analysis includes demographic information and an action research model. Themes focus on student recognition and classroom management, with a summary provided. The discussion covers the teaching and assessment process, teachers' understanding of dynamic assessment, and the effectiveness of dynamic assessment in EFL teaching

practice. This research uses diagrams for visualization and discusses the coding methods used. Then, research conducted by Sa'diyah (2020), showed that EFL teachers use various alternative assessment methods in assessing EFL students' speaking skills, such as peer assessment, observation, role play, presentation, and discussion. These strategies aim to increase student participation and provide a more authentic learning experience. However, teachers face challenges such as students' poor pronunciation and grammar, limited vocabulary, and lack of time to assess all students thoroughly.

Even though the assessment in the emancipated curriculum has been implemented, there are still several challenges that teachers face in implementing assessment strategies for students (Khoirin et al., 2023). Challenges faced include limited resources, not all schools have adequate resources, such as technology for more sophisticated assessments or a lack of teachers in the school to provide individualized assessments (Zuariah et al., 2024). One of the challenges faced in the assessment process is time constraints, which often prevent teachers from providing comprehensive and in-depth assessments. Teachers often do not have enough time to assess various aspects of student abilities, even though this is very important. In addition, differences in individual needs and learning styles are also obstacles. Students have diverse learning characteristics, and it is not easy for teachers to adjust assessment strategies to suit their individual needs, especially in classes with a large number of students and varying levels of ability. Another challenge is dealing with anxiety and pressure felt by students, because some of them feel stressed or anxious when facing the assessment process. This can affect their performance and make the assessment results not reflect the student's true

potential. Then, the quality of the questions and assessment tasks, composing questions and assessment tasks that are adequate, relevant and challenging is not an easy thing. Questions that are too easy or too difficult can produce inaccurate assessment results. The last is a deep understanding of assessment standards, teachers must have a deep understanding of the applicable assessment standards, both in terms of language abilities and other skills that want to be evaluated. Not having enough understanding can lead to inconsistent or invalid assessments (Astuti et al., 2024).

Based on previous research that has been described above, there has been no research that discusses assessment strategies in differentiated instruction. In previous studies, researchers only discussed assessment strategies in general, in this study will be focused on assessment strategies with the context of differentiated instruction in the emancipation curriculum. This is important to study in order to find out whether teachers have implemented assessment strategies with a differentiated context.

Therefore, this study aims to examine in more depth the assessment strategy with differentiated instruction used by EFL teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja and the challenges they face in implementing it. This study will explore whether teachers have implemented the assessment strategy with differentiated instruction effectively in accordance with the principles of Assessment as Learning, Assessment for Learning, and Assessment of Learning.

## **1.2 Problem Identification**

Based on the background that has been explained, there are several main problems that can be identified related to assessment strategies for English as a



Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and their challenges in the Emancipation Curriculum in Indonesia, especially at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja. Assessment is not just a grade given by teachers to students at the end of learning. However, assessment is more than that, assessment can be done before learning, during learning, and at the end of learning. Teachers use various strategies to carry out the assessment. However, sometimes teachers encounter several challenges in implementing it. Based on the initial data obtained during the initial observation, the teacher stated that SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja implemented assessment with differentiated instruction in its learning process. Teachers do different things to students, because in the learning process teachers usually pay special attention to students who have less ability. In the assessment, it was found that the assessment practices implemented by teachers already reflected Assessment as Learning, Assessment for Learning, and Assessment of Learning. Teachers use Assessment as Learning and Assessment for Learning as diagnostic and formative assessments. While Assessment of Learning functions more as a summative assessment.

This initial observation shows that assessment with differentiated learning is considered feasible to be implemented by teachers. However, in implementing the assessment, teachers face challenges, especially in adjusting the assessment strategy to the large number of students and different levels of understanding in one class, so that implementing an assessment that suits the needs of each student is still a challenge. Therefore, this study aims to examine in more depth the assessment strategy with differentiated instruction used by EFL teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja and the challenges they face in implementing it. This study will investigate whether teachers have implemented assessment strategies with

differentiated instruction effectively in accordance with the principles of Assessment as Learning, Assessment for Learning, and Assessment for Learning.

### **1.3 Limitation of Study**

Based on the problem formulation described above, this research will focus on the assessment strategies with differentiated contexts used by English teachers and the challenges teachers face in implementing their assessment strategies. In this case, the context will be limited to the assessment strategies of English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja. This research will use descriptive qualitative methods, data will be collected through interviews and observations. This can be influenced by participants' willingness to provide honest and accurate responses, as well as the researcher's interpretation of qualitative data.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

According to the background, this research focuses on two research questions as follow:

- 1.4.1 What are the English teachers' assessment strategies within differentiated instruction employed in teaching and learning process at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja?
- 1.4.2 What are the challenges of teachers in employing the assessment strategies within differentiated instruction at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja?

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

There are two objectives in this research as follow:

- 1.5.1 To describe the English teachers' assessment strategies within differentiated instruction employed in teaching and learning process at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja.
- 1.5.2 To describe the challenges of teachers in employing the assessment strategies within differentiated instruction at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja.

## **1.6 Research Significance**

### **1.6.1 Theoretical Significance**

Researchers hope that this research can increase knowledge about teacher differentiated assessment strategies in the classroom learning process by providing theory, information and data about teacher differentiated assessment strategies and the challenges faced in implementing differentiated assessment strategies. This research is also expected to support the empiricism of research by experts and previous researchers.

### **1.6.2 Practical Significance**

#### **1.6.2.1 For English Teachers**

This research is expected to provide more knowledge to English teachers about the various assessment strategies carried out by an English teacher in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. With this, teachers can choose the right strategy for conducting assessments in class.

#### 1.6.2.2 For Educational Institutions

This research provides a broad and in-depth understanding of English teachers' assessment strategies. By understanding English teachers' assessment strategies in the teaching and learning process and the challenges in implementing these assessment strategies, educational institutions can design appropriate assessment strategies, involving students in every assessment process, in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum.

#### 1.6.2.3 For Other Researchers

The researcher hopes that this research can be used by other researchers as a reference in their research on English teachers' assessment strategies in the learning process.

