

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In the educational sector, ensuring the achievement and success of the curriculum is critical. As such, the curriculum evolves over time and adapts to the specific needs of each country's educational system (Sa'dullah, 2023). In Indonesia, numerous curriculum changes and improvements have been implemented to enhance the quality of education. These changes present significant challenges for both educators and students, as adapting to a new curriculum is often a complex process (Darmayani & Amelia, 2023). Educators are therefore expected to develop a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum and respond to any changes with professional competence (Hidayah et al., 2022).

Indonesia has experienced several curriculum revisions, the latest being the *Emancipated Curriculum*. On December 10, 2019, the Minister of Education, Nadiem Makarim, updated the 2013 curriculum to create this new curriculum. Its implementation is grounded in the principles of *new paradigm learning* (Sari et al., 2023). The philosophy of this new paradigm emphasizes deeper thinking and the ability to perceive relationships from a broad and comprehensive perspective. Both educators and learners are expected to fully comprehend the principles of this paradigm. However, this does not imply that it is entirely new, but rather that it requires continuous monitoring and evaluation (Annisa, 2023).

Teachers have often been viewed merely as administrators of education and learning. In the Emancipated Curriculum, however, the fundamental paradigm

teachers and student must embrace is the spirit of freedom in the learning process (Retnaningrum et al., 2023). The new paradigm of the Emancipated Curriculum is built upon five fundamental principles including 1) Personalizing student learning to match their developmental stage and achievement level, 2) Emphasizing the development of student capabilities with a focus on lifelong learning, 3) Ensuring a holistic learning process that fosters both competence and character, 4) Creating meaningful learning experiences that are contextual, culturally relevant, and involve parents and the community, 5) Focusing on continuous learning and preparing students for the future (Sari et al., 2023).

The new paradigm in the Emancipated Curriculum focuses on student-centered learning based on individual needs, also known as *differentiated instruction* (Lindner & Schwab, 2020). This approach is beneficial in encouraging adaptability, behavioral development, and creativity (Sari et al., 2023). Introduced by (Tomlinson, 1995), differentiated instruction recognizes the diverse needs of students. According to Tomlinson (2001), it involves not only varying content but also adapting the learning process to enable students to achieve their goals more effectively. This means that understanding student diversity in both content and process is essential, without losing sight of the learning objectives. These differences often necessitate diverse assessments tailored to each student's needs.

As a component of the curriculum, teaching and assessment are closely connected and both play a vital role in shaping the educational process and its outcomes. Assessments provide valuable insights into students' current abilities and serve as a guide for teachers in planning future instruction (Panizzon, 2020).

Furthermore, assessments offer students constructive feedback and opportunities for self-improvement (Abdulla, 2019). When assessment is aligned with learning objectives, the learning process is more likely to follow those objectives, making the learning experience more effective and meaningful (Paramartha et al., 2021). However, even within the framework of differentiated instruction, students are often expected to reach the same learning outcomes, despite their diverse knowledge background (Noman & Kaur, 2020). For example, traditional assessments such as tests remain the most commonly used technique by teachers, regardless of the competencies being assessed (Dewi, 2014). Standardized assessments can undermine the goals of differentiated instruction, which aims to evaluate students based on their individual capabilities rather than through uniform evaluation methods.

Differentiated instruction helps students demonstrate their understanding in ways aligned with their interests, readiness, and preferred learning styles (Tomlinson, 2004). Since students may engage with different content and processes, differentiated assessments are essential to accurately measure learning progress (Noman & Kaur, 2020). This requires teachers to first understand each student's abilities. Similarly, differentiated assessment allows for tailoring assessments to the interests and needs of each learner (Jung & Guskey, 2010).

Teachers' perceptions significantly shape the design and implementation of assessment in differentiated instruction. These perceptions influence how teachers assess student progress, provide feedback, and adapt teaching strategies to meet diverse student needs. This study explores English teachers' perceptions

of assessment in the context of differentiated instruction, focusing on SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja. The school was selected due to its accessibility and the lack of previous studies on this topic in this setting. Preliminary observations indicated that English teachers at the school have implemented differentiated instruction in their classrooms. This provides an opportunity to gain deeper insights into their assessment practices within differentiated instruction. However, the study also revealed considerable variation in how these teachers apply differentiated instruction, which influences their assessment strategies and the challenges they face.

This existing condition aligns with previous research. For instance, Suwastini et al. (2021) found that teachers interpret differentiated instruction differently due to varying experiences, views, and training. Such inconsistencies affect the quality of individualized education, emphasizing the need for ongoing professional development and collaboration. Teachers generally view differentiated instruction as valuable for addressing student needs, with differentiated assessment as a key tool for evaluating diverse learning processes and outcomes. Similarly, Arsyad and Suadiyatno (2024) studied teachers' perceptions of differentiated assessment in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Since differentiated assessment is closely related to the assessment used in differentiated instruction, this study provides key insights into how teachers perceive and implement assessment strategies tailored to diverse student needs. The study identifies both opportunities (improved academic achievement and fairness) and challenges (traditional pedagogical methods and resource limitations) in applying differentiated assessment. These insights are crucial for

understanding the factors that shape teachers' perspectives on assessment within differentiated instruction and offer guidance on addressing contextual challenges, developing practical solutions, and enhancing professional development.

The diverse perspectives among teachers result in varying assessment practices within differentiated instruction, creating a gap between theory and its application. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how teachers' perceptions influence assessment practices within differentiated instruction and the challenges they encounter. By addressing these issues, the research aims to enhance the understanding and practical implementation of differentiated instruction and assessment to better support student diversity.

## **1.2 Problem identification**

Based on preliminary observations at SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja, the school has implemented the Emancipated Curriculum in its learning activities. The observations reveal that English teachers in the school have adopted differentiated instruction. It also revealed a disparity in how teachers perceive and apply differentiated instruction, particularly in the context of assessment. This raises important questions about how teachers perceive differentiated instruction influence their approach on the way they conduct the assessment and the challenges they might face. Understanding these perceptions is essential, as they can act as either facilitators or barriers to effective implementation. Additionally, identifying the challenges teachers face in this process is also critical for developing strategies to support them in adopting differentiated

instruction more effectively. These results from the preliminary observations led to the decision to conduct this research, which focuses on exploring English teachers' perception of assessment in differentiated instruction at SMPN 1 Singaraja, as well as the challenges they encounter.

### **1.3 Research Limitation**

To generate focus research, the limitations are adjusted based on teachers' practices and perceptions of assessment in differentiated instruction. The context of assessment practice is limited to the assessment use in differentiated instruction class. The perception in this study is limited to the perception of the teachers and the challenges. And the school observed is limited to SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Based on the research background that has been specified and the preliminary observations that have been established, this study develops three questions, which are as follows:

1. How do English teachers in SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja assess the students in differentiated instruction?
2. How do English teachers in SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja perceive the assessment in differentiated instruction?
3. What are the challenges faced by English teachers SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja while assessing students in differentiated instruction?

### 1.5 Research Objectives

There are three objectives in this research, as follows:

1. To investigate how the English teachers at SMP 1 Singaraja assess students in differentiated instruction.
2. To investigate how the English teachers perceive the assessment in differentiated instruction.
3. To investigate the challenges faced by the English teachers in assessing students in differentiated instruction.

### 1.6 Significant of the Research

- **Theoretical Significance**

The result of this research is expected to provide knowledge and information about teachers' perception in the context of assessment, specifically assessment in differentiated instruction. The result of this study is intended to provide a firmer empirical basis to support the conclusions and understandings proposed by experts and prior scholars in this field. Thus, the result of this study is to make a substantial contribution to our understanding of differentiated instruction, as well as how teachers contribute their perspectives in order to impact the assessment of differentiated instruction and its implementation in the classroom.

- **Practical Significance**

- 1. For English Teachers**

By conducting this research, it is intended that the result can be used to help provide a broader picture and better understanding to English teachers regarding the use of differentiated instruction in the classroom.

- 2. For Head Master**

By conducting this research, it was expected that the head master would be able to use the result of this research as feedback and conduct such a review to improve the quality of the school while providing implementation of differentiation instruction.

- 3. For Educational Institution**

By conducting this research, it is expected that educational institutions can gain valuable insights to design professional development programs that support teachers in implementing assessment within differentiated instruction effectively.

- 4. For Future Researchers**

By conducting this research, it was expected that the other researchers would be able to use the result of this research as a source of information as well as a reference for future research related to the field of teacher perception and differentiation instruction.