

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

Nowadays, English language has become an essential and crucial in human's life. This phenomenon can be seen in various aspects, such as education, technology, business, entertainment, etc. Basically, English is used by people as a tool of communication or interaction in daily activities (Dewi, 2025). In addition, English also becomes a very crucial and important in education aspect, so learning English is necessarily important to people from every age (Ngakan., 2022).

Furthermore, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a branch of educational fields that learn about English as a second language (Islam & Puspitaningsari, 2024). It might be difficult and challenging in learning English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia. It is caused by English is not a mother tongue for many Indonesian people (Ayuningtyas., 2023). On the other hand, it is also caused by the different dialect or accents in each word between English and Indonesian language (Mardhatillah & Suharyadi, 2023). This problem commonly happened in many educational institutions in Indonesia. In addition, English learning in many educational institutions is not always successful. Many students in Indonesia are still face many challenges in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Basically, the success of EFL learnings are caused by the innovative and effective learning methods and strategy (Mega et al., 2019). Learning methods and strategies become very important and essential things in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Kusuma, 2022). According to Puspitasari (2024),

learning strategy is a basic factor in influence or pursue students in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Nguyen & Terry, 2017). In addition, a good learning strategy or method also can develop the students' competency and ability in EFL learning (Setiyadi et al., 2016). Therefore, students who still have a lack of learning method and strategy will have many difficulties and challenges in learning EFL (Bhujangga, 2024).

Learning strategy in EFL learning process has been explored and investigated by many researchers around the world (Kusuma, 2023). It is stated that motivation is the cause of students' achievements and success in education field (Kumarian & Mohd Rashid, 2023). Not all students learn in the same way or at the same teaching technique, sometimes teaching methods may fail to engage and motivate some students, especially for those who struggle or lack in interest.

The basic purpose of Differentiated Instruction is to engage the student's motivation during the learning process. Hence, teachers are required to be able to fulfil the students' needs because each student has different needs and competencies (Mardhatillah & Suharyadi, 2023). The lack of student's interest, skills, and ability throughout the EFL learning is caused by the boring and monotonous learning methods. Students are fill not interest and do not care with the materials given by the teachers at school (Ilmi, 2021). For instance, teacher only gives long speech or explanations to the students throughout the lesson (Art, 2025).

There are three important things in implementing Differentiated Instruction, such as students' preparation, students' needs, and students' learning style (Rofiqoh, 2024). There are three things that need to be considered in Differentiated Instruction, such as the content of learning, the process of gathering information, the process of gathering information, exploring ideas and concepts, and the product, especially the way students express what they have learned in the learning process (Undiksha, 2022). By having learning process that involves students, the teacher indirectly encourages students' learning motivation to achieve learning goals. Through this method, students will be more motivated to take part in a series of learning activities carried out in the classroom (Almira Rahma Damayanti, 2024).

Moreover, throughout the learning process, students' perceptions become a crucial and essential thing because it is related to how students can receive a material or subject from their teacher (Vygotsky, 1978). If students have positive and proper perceptions, they will easily catch and understand knowledge from their teachers (Rini, 2024). In addition, students who have positive perceptions, they will be more responsive, adaptive, and supportive during the learning process. Students' perspective has strong correlation with Differentiated Instructions. Students that have good perspectives or perceptions while study, they will be more easily to understand and mastery something (Sihotang, 2023). Thus, they will be much easier to learn and understand a skill deeply. It is because that through Differentiated Instructions, students are required to learn a new thing beside of their own skills.

Based on the preliminary observation in SD Negeri 1 Banjar Jawa that have been done previously, it showed that the EFL teacher used interactive, innovative, and effective learning strategy, which known as Differentiated Instructions. In order to support this learning strategy, the teachers are usually used group works, peers, and implement a game or ice breaking during the EFL learning process. The teacher focused to the students' backgrounds during the learning process. For instance, the teacher divided the students on group based on their skills, ability, interests, or even weakness.

Additionally, the grade 5 students at SD Negeri 1 Banjar Jawa indicate that many of them are feel satisfied by implementing and learning EFL through this strategy. The students feel that through this learning strategy, it makes them feel confident, effective, efficient, and interactive during the EFL learning process. Further, it able to improve the positive and good perceptions of the grade 5 students. For instance, during an English lesson, the teacher divides students into groups based on their language proficiency. One group is asked to write simple sentences using vocabulary words, while another group is asked to create a short dialogue. The teacher's intention is to provide tasks that match students' readiness levels, so everyone can learn English easily and effectively.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, investigating the implementation of Differentiated Instruction becomes increasingly important because classrooms consist of students with different readiness levels, learning preferences, interests, and competencies. Although teachers often apply various teaching strategies in the classroom, not all strategies are able to accommodate students' diversity effectively. As a result, some students may achieve learning

objectives successfully, while others continue to experience difficulties in understanding the materials. Therefore, it is important to find out how Differentiated Instruction is implemented in the classroom because the success of this strategy depends not only on its theoretical concept but also on how teachers apply it in real teaching practices. Examining its implementation can provide a clearer understanding of how teachers adjust content, learning processes, and learning products to meet students' diverse needs, particularly in EFL learning contexts.

This is where Differentiated Instructions come into a role. Differentiated Instruction is an strategy that tailors teaching methods, content, and assessments to meet the diverse needs of students (Saputri, 2023). Differentiated Instruction known as one of teaching strategy by differentiating the competencies or skills that the students have during the learning process. Ruri (2024) also argues that Differentiated Instructions known as a teaching strategy that focused to improve students' ability in one or two aspects or competencies. In addition, differentiated instruction defines as a learning method which focus on student's ability, competencies, and skills in a subject or the others (Aziz & Andanty, 2024). By using Differentiated Instruction as a learning strategy, teachers or instructors are easily understood about students' needs, ability, and skills (Artini & Padmadewi, 2022). Moreover, teachers also can strengthen the student's perception, skills, ability, and knowledge during the learning process (Tajik, 2023).

Furthermore, there is still a research gap regarding the implementation of Differentiated Instruction in elementary school EFL classrooms, especially in Indonesian educational settings. Previous studies have predominantly focused on

the effectiveness of Differentiated Instruction in improving students' achievement in one of the English skills. Most researchers have investigated whether Differentiated Instruction can positively affect students' academic performance and classroom participation. However, limited studies have explored how this strategy is actually implemented by teachers in real classroom situations and how students perceive its implementation during the learning process. As a result, there is still insufficient information regarding the practical application of Differentiated Instruction in EFL classrooms, particularly at the elementary school level where students possess highly diverse learning characteristics, abilities, interests, and readiness levels.

This gap can be identified in a study entitled “**Differentiated Instruction: Challenges and Opportunities in EFL Classroom**” conducted by Mardhatillah & Suharyadi (2023). The study mainly focused on identifying the challenges, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses of Differentiated Instruction as a learning strategy in EFL classrooms. Although the findings contributed valuable insights regarding the advantages and obstacles of implementing Differentiated Instruction, the study did not specifically investigate how the strategy was implemented in detail during the teaching and learning process. Moreover, the research did not examine students' perceptions toward the implementation of Differentiated Instruction, which is an important aspect in evaluating the effectiveness and acceptance of a learning strategy from the learners' perspective.

In addition, studies that specifically investigate the implementation of Differentiated Instruction in elementary schools and its relationship with students' perceptions in EFL learning remain limited. For instance, a study conducted by

Sihotang et al., (2023) and entitled “**Student Perceptions on Problem Based Learning (PBL) in Learning to Speak English of Tenth-Grade at SMA Swasta Masehi GBKP Berastagi**” focused on students’ perceptions toward the implementation of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in English speaking classes. The study was limited to speaking skills and was conducted at the tenth-grade level of senior high school students. Therefore, the context, participants, educational level, and learning strategy investigated in the study are different from the present research. While the study provides important information regarding students’ perceptions in English learning, it does not address students’ perceptions toward Differentiated Instruction, particularly in elementary school EFL settings.

Furthermore, elementary school students have different cognitive, social, emotional, and learning characteristics compared to secondary school students. Therefore, findings obtained from senior high school contexts cannot be directly generalized to elementary school learners. This condition indicates the necessity of conducting further research that specifically investigates how Differentiated Instruction is implemented in elementary school EFL classrooms and how students perceive the implementation of the strategy. Understanding students’ perceptions is important because positive perceptions can influence students’ motivation, participation, engagement, and overall learning experiences during classroom instruction.

According to the explanation above, it can be found that the urgency of this research is also supported by the current educational phenomenon in which many students still face challenges in learning English due to differences in learning abilities, interests, and learning styles. Conventional teaching methods that treat

students uniformly often fail to address these differences, resulting in low participation and motivation, as well as the limited understanding of learning materials. Consequently, identifying the implementation of Differentiated Instruction is essential because it can provide empirical evidence regarding how teachers accommodate students' diverse characteristics and create a more inclusive learning environment. Another strong reason why Differentiated Instruction can solve the existing problems in EFL learning is that it promotes student-centered learning. Many of the problems identified in the phenomenon, such as low motivation, lack of participation, boredom, and difficulties in understanding English materials, are often caused by learning activities that do not correspond to students' characteristics. Through Differentiated Instruction, teachers can provide various learning activities and tasks that accommodate different levels of proficiency and learning preferences. Consequently, students are more likely to feel motivated, confident, and supported throughout the learning process. This strategy also creates equal opportunities for students with different abilities to achieve learning objectives successfully.

Therefore, the implementation of Differentiated Instruction is very suitable and can be applied for elementary school students, especially in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It aims to implement and engage the students' interests, perceptions, skills, and ability during EFL learning process (Adhiwiguna, 2023). Moreover, students also can express themselves based on student's need, ability, competency, and skills. According to those explanations, it is very important to implement this research.

## 1.2 Identification of Problems

According to the background above, there are several problems found in EFL learning process in SD Negeri 1 Banjar Jawa, such as:

1. The teacher is not ready in implementing Differentiated Instruction during the EFL learning process, especially in the grade 5<sup>th</sup>.
2. There is a mismatch between Teacher's Intentionan Students' Interpretation
3. The students are not ready in implementing Differentiated Instruction as a learning strategy in EFL learning process.
4. The students did not show their significant improvement or progress in EFL.
5. There are various challenges while creating an interactive and active Differentiated Learning' atmosphere.

## 1.3 Limitation of Study

There are many elementary schools in Buleleng Regency, Singaraja city. However, the researcher just uses SD Negeri 1 Banjar Jawa as the location of this research. The researcher just focused on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in SD Negeri 1 Banjar Jawa as the research subjects. Hence, it just focused on the implementation of Differentiated Instruction based on process/strategies and students' perception during EFL learning.

## 1.4 Research Questions

Based on the background explanation above, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How is differentiated instructions implemented in grade 5<sup>th</sup> of SD Negeri 1 Banjar Jawa?
2. How is the students' perception toward the implementation of differentiated instructions in grade 5<sup>th</sup> of SD Negeri 1 Banjar Jawa?

### **1.5 Research Objectives**

Based on the research questions, there are several purposes or objectives in this research. The objectives of this research are explained as follows:

1. To find out and investigate the process of Differentiated Instruction in grade 5<sup>th</sup> of SD Negeri 1 Banjar Jawa.
2. To identify the students' perception in implementing Differentiated Instruction in EFL learning process.

### **1.6 Research Significances**

The results of this research are expected to be able to give useful insights and benefits both in theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the results of this research are expected to be able to answer all the research formulations. In addition, practically, this research can give practical benefits in the field of education especially for English Language Education department.

#### **1.6.1 Theoretical Significance**

This research is expected to be able to answer all the research questions. In addition, this research also expected to be able to give significant and positive contributions to university, school, and other parties related to how learning method

can affect students' perception and outcomes during the EFL learning process, especially in the implementation of Differentiated Instruction.

Moreover, this research also expected to be able to give additional knowledge and insights related to Differentiated Instruction' theory. The researcher hopes that this research can give significant motivational impacts for students especially in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

### **1.6.2 Practical Significance**

#### **a. For Students**

This research can be used to develop the students' perception in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) especially through Differentiated Instruction. When students are fun and interest in learning EFL through Differentiated Instruction (an appropriate and effective method), students will build their perception in learning EFL based on their interests, skills, and ability.

#### **b. For Teachers**

This research can be used by teachers to gain references and information related to how to teach and improve students' skills in learning EFL. Hence, students can get good achievement, easily understand, and feel fun in learning EFL. Teachers also can understand about how learning strategy is very crucial and important for students' performance and achievement.

## **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

### **1.7.1 Differentiated Instruction**

Differentiated Instruction known as a learning method that grouping the students based on their characteristics (Lailatulhasanah, 2024). Saputri et al., (2023) stated that through Differentiated Instruction, teachers can know and understand about students' need, competency, skills, and ability. Differentiated Instruction is a learning strategy that conduct a learning process based on students' characteristics to reach best achievements.

### **1.7.2 EFL (English as a Foreign Language)**

According to Tajik et al., (2023), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a knowledge or subject related to English learning through practice, theory, and research. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) also can be defined as a learning subject that can increase students' knowledge and ability in English, especially for several aspects such as speaking, reading, writing, and listening (Azimah & Sujannah, 2024). From the definition above, it can be concluded that EFL is a subject that learn about English and it fulfil the 4 aspects of English learning, such as speaking, reading, writing, and listening.