

Differentiated Instruction in a Public Junior High School: EFL Teachers' Perception and Practices

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Abstract

This qualitative case study was conducted in one of public junior high school in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The study was aimed to explore the English teachers' practices in differentiated instruction (DI) and their perception toward the curriculum policy. The data were collected through open-ended questionnaire and interview. The participants were EFL teachers who have implemented DI. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings elucidate English teachers' implementation, revealing three overarching themes: planning, implementation, and evaluation. In the planning phase, identification, curriculum analysis, and preparation emerged as crucial aspects. The implementation stage highlighted variations in teaching materials, guidance provision, and variation in evaluation. Evaluation encompassed assessment processes, learning outcomes, and reflective practices. The second result showed the teachers' misconception regarding the implementation of DI, namely, chaos class and concern about fairness. The teachers found the challenges in implementing DI, namely determine assessment, class management and need extra time to allocate the DI. However, the implementation of DI gave the advantages in learning English, such as students' engagement, understanding in learning and building inclusive environment. For the better quality of DI, the teachers need several supports from the policy makers.

Keywords: Differentiated Instruction, EFL Teachers' Perception, Teaching Approach

1. Introduction

President Joko Widodo's second term of office (term 2019 to 2024), "Freedom of Learning" was born in the field of education. Through the Minister of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, President Jokowi directed teachers to implement differentiated learning since the Merdeka Curriculum began to be implemented. Every policy change certainly receives a variety of responses, including agreement and disagreement, advantages and disadvantages, as well as challenges faced by interested parties, especially educators who drive this policy in order to successfully achieve the goals of the new curriculum. One of the aspects of the Merdeka Curriculum is the presence of differentiated instruction in the classroom that recognizes students' individual differences and provides learning experiences that suit their needs and interests. However, this learning model has not been fully implemented by teachers in schools. The implementation of differentiated instruction since 1999 to accommodate difference of students' characteristics (Tomlinson, 2017).

In LMS Module 2.1 PGP (Faiz & Faridah, 2022) differentiated instruction is a set of reasonable actions made by the teacher that is oriented to the needs of students. Differentiated instruction, at its most basic level, is "shaking up" classroom routines to give students more opportunities to absorb knowledge, understand it, and communicate what they have learned. In other words, differentiated classrooms offer several ways for students to absorb material, process information or understand it, and create products (Tomlinson, 2017). Therefore, efforts to modify the classroom learning process to suit each student's unique learning needs are known as differentiated education techniques. These modifications are related to students' readiness to achieve higher learning outcomes, learning profiles and interests (Herwina, 2021).

Saleh (2021) stated that by administering a reading comprehension skills questionnaire and a pre-post EFL reading comprehension test to obtain data, the findings show that DI strategies help develop students' EFL reading comprehension skills. Zens (2021) stated that students are motivated to complete their work. Based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that most of the previous research was about the influence of applying DI in the context of learning reading skills and motivation (La Sunra et al., 2020; Saiful & Triyono, 2018; Al-Husban & Tawalbeh, 2023).

Sometimes teachers misunderstand how to implement differentiated instruction. This difficulty arises from the need to tailor assessments to accommodate diverse learning needs and abilities among students. EFL teachers struggle to develop assessments that accurately reflect each student's progress while aligning with different instructional strategies used in the classroom (Mahmud, Idul, & Sarmadani, 2024). Assessments also stem from diagnostic tests that reveal differences in students' abilities and readiness. The greater the diversity of the

classroom, the more preparation is required before instruction (Suwastini, Rinawati, & Jayantini., 2021; Masbara, Abduh, & Iskandar, 2024). However, teachers often fail to conduct structured pre-assessments. Assessing every student in a large class is difficult for teachers (Danley & Williams, 2020). The policy for the implementation of differentiated instruction in classrooms is something new for teachers in Indonesia. As something newly emphasized since the curriculum change, there are certainly different interpretations, including misconceptions about its implementation. Therefore, researchers want to find out EFL' teachers practice the differentiated instructions and studied the perceptions of English teachers toward the curriculum policy.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This research utilized qualitative methods and case study design. Yin (2018) stated that studies of school innovation, the use of new curricula, or new educational technologies are typical examples of the application of this approach. In addition, there are phenomena that center on personal experiences, beliefs, and perceptions in case studies (Sokolowski, p. 67, in Absor, 2007). This was ideal for research that looks at the implementation of differentiated instruction by the EFL teachers and their perception towards the curriculum policy.

2.2 Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted in February 2023 in one of junior high schools in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Purposive sampling was used by researchers to select participants. Researchers deliberately select people and locations to discover or understand a key phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). The subjects are selected based on the following criteria: a) They are English teacher; b) They have implemented the differentiated instruction; c) They are teachers at the object research. The reason researchers chose the schools as an object of this research, because it was a school that fully implements Merdeka Curriculum. Besides that, the researcher had preliminarily observed the school; therefore, researcher had connection already to do a research there. The totals of participants are two EFL teachers.

2.3 Data Collection Method

The researchers employed qualitative questionnaire and interview method. An open-ended questionnaire was used to collect the EFL teachers' perception towards the differentiated instruction. Researchers conducted direct interview to gain the data of English teachers' practices in implementing differentiated instruction. The researchers then transcribe and type the data into a computer file for analysis (Creswell, 2012).

2.4 Data Analysis Technique

After organizing the data, the researchers used thematic techniq to analyze the data. Thematic analysis was used to code data inductively from different kinds of evidence. Thematic analysis involves the searching across a data set – be that some interviews or focus group, or a range of texts- to find repeated patterns of meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2021). Six steps of thematic analysis were adapted from Braun and Clarke (2021): a) Reading transcript documents of the interviews; b) performing initial coding; c) searching for themes; d) reviewing and connecting themes; e) identifying global themes; f) and creating a storyline. This process of data analysis assisted the researchers to locate the participants' quotes appropriately in the findings of this research.

2.5 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations are essential in conducting any research in the social sciences, such as this research; Wellington in Absor (2016) states that this is an important component of all research. "Ethical issues cannot be ignored as they relate to the integrity of the research and the scientific disciplines involved," Bryman said in support of this claim. Therefore, this research was conducted in an ethical manner. Before obtaining research data, permission from the relevant institutions was obtained. The Makassar State University Postgraduate Study Program (PPs) oversees several administrative processes and authorizes official letters addressed to local government offices for approval. With the approval of the director of PPs Makassar State University, researchers could obtain the desired data and then approach the school principal. Once the principal has given his approval and the research strategy has been thoroughly discussed and agreed upon, the researchers began collecting data using questionnaires and interviews. A consent form from the subject was required before interviews can begin for this study. Additionally, this consent form makes clear that the information will only be used for this research and was recorded and maintained securely

3. Results

3.1 The Stages of Differentiated Instruction by the Teachers

Table 1. The Stages of Differentiated Instruction by the Teachers

Themes	Codes
Planning	Identification; curriculum analysis; preparation
Implementation	Variation of teaching materials; variation in providing guidance
Evaluation	Process assessment; assessment of learning outcomes; reflection

3.1.1 Planning

a. Identification

In identifying learning readiness, participants admitted to asking trigger questions at the beginning of learning to find out students' initial knowledge.

"To identify these, I don't follow a structured approach. I rely on observation and a bit of initial diagnosis. Since differentiated instruction has been recently implemented, just in the past one or two years, I already had prior knowledge about my students," (T02, February 24th 2024).

This indicates a more informal but intuitive method of assessing student characteristics. The teacher's previous knowledge was obtained from the results of observations made while the participants were teaching starting before differentiated learning was implemented.

b. Curriculum Analysis

The teacher analyzes the curriculum before preparing the teaching module, therefore the teacher is able to determine the method to be used. In this section, the teacher analyzes learning outcomes according to the student's phase as specified in the curriculum.

"In the Merdeka curriculum, I start with learning outcomes. Firstly, I analyze the learning outcomes to see what competencies will be achieved and what the scope of the material is, in terms of content or concepts. This then becomes the learning objective. So, these learning objectives are then derived into an analysis of goals," (T01, February 17th 2024).

c. Preparation

Developing a teaching module that accommodates different learning needs is crucial in differentiated instruction. Both teachers emphasize the importance of preparing teaching materials tailored to students' needs and preferences.

T01 mentions preparing teaching materials and applications, gathering various sources such as books, modules, and materials from subject teacher meetings:

"What I prepare is the teaching materials first, the applications I use in class. Also, assessment instruments in class to assess the learning process of the students," (T01, February 17th 2024).

3.1.2 Implementation

a. Variation of teaching materials

Using various media to present material is essential for accommodating different learning preferences and styles. Both teachers employ diverse media to engage students and enhance learning experiences.

T01 mentions using videos, PowerPoint presentations, and PDFs to present materials in class:

"The presentation of materials in class is also varied, such as videos, PowerPoint, or PDFs from existing teaching modules," (T01, February 17th 2024).

b. Variation in providing guidance

Differentiated instruction often involves providing individualized support and guidance to students based on their specific needs. While not explicitly labeled as "providing special guidance," both teachers mention strategies for supporting students who require additional assistance.

T01 mentions providing continuous support to struggling students throughout the learning process:

"For students who are struggling, I provide continuous support throughout the process until they produce a product," (T01, February 17th 2024).

This indicates a commitment to offering personalized assistance to students who may require extra support.

3.1.3 Evaluation

a. Process assessment

T01 highlights the importance of being attentive and engaging with students to gauge their enthusiasm and motivation:

"In the classroom, I actively engage in providing guidance and activities to students, so I'm not passive. Then I have to be sensitive to my students, because some may seem unmotivated or lethargic, so I approach them and ask why they aren't enthusiastic, inviting them to share," (T01, February 17th 2024).

Observation plays a crucial role in understanding students' needs and adapting instruction accordingly within differentiated instruction. Both teachers emphasize the significance of actively observing students during the learning process.

b. Assessment of learning outcomes

Collaborative assessment, encompassing attitudes, knowledge, and skills, promotes peer learning and a comprehensive evaluation of student progress within differentiated instruction. Although not explicitly labeled, both teachers indirectly reference collaborative assessment practices in their instructional approaches.

T01 indicates the integration of peer feedback as part of the assessment process:

"For written work, I usually post them on the wall, and classmates give feedback through sticky notes," (T02, February 24th 2024).

This suggests a collaborative assessment approach where students provide feedback to their peers, contributing to a holistic evaluation of attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

c. Reflection

Reflection, both on the learning process and outcomes, fosters metacognitive awareness and continuous improvement within differentiated instruction. Both teachers emphasize the value of reflection as part of their instructional practices.

T01 discusses providing opportunities for reflection at the end of lessons:

"I provide reflection at the end of the lesson... Or I also ask them to write on paper without writing their names because usually, children are shy about writing their names," (T01, February 17th 2024).

This indicates a structured approach to facilitating reflection on the learning process, encouraging students to express their thoughts and feelings anonymously.

3.2 The English Teachers' Perception on the Differentiated Instruction Curriculum Policy

Table 2. The English Teachers' Perception

Themes	Codes
EFL teachers' misconception on the implementation of differentiated instruction	Chaos class; concern about fairness;
Challenges in implementing differentiated instruction	Determine Assessment; class management; need extra time
The advantage of differentiated instruction	Students' engagement; building inclusive environment; students' understanding in learning
The needed things for the improvement of the differentiated instruction process in the future	Financial and facilities support; stronger commitment in supporting equality and inclusivity; need for adequate training and resources

3.2.1 EFL Teachers' Misconception

a. Chaos in class

T01 describes any misconceptions faced by teachers regarding the potential chaos or disorder in the classroom due to implementing Differentiated Instruction.

"Yes, there is a misconception in Differentiated Instruction. The misconception I first experienced in Differentiated Instruction is individual learning. Differentiated Instruction will cause chaos in the class because each will solve their problems individually" (T01, February 17th 2024).

The teacher initially held a misconception that implementing Differentiated Instruction would lead to chaos in the classroom due to individualized learning. However, after implementing it, they realized that differentiated instruction involves forming homogeneous groups and tailoring learning to individual needs, which actually promotes organization and engagement.

b. Concern about fairness

This code relates to any concerns or considerations teachers have regarding the fairness and equality of implementing Differentiated Instruction in the classroom.

"Before implementing Differentiated Instruction, one misconception I might have experienced is that it might be more difficult or time-consuming to plan and implement customized learning for individual students. I might also have worried that students would feel unfair if one student received a different approach than others, or that all students should receive the same learning experience to ensure equality" (T02, February 17th 2024).

This indicates that, initially, the teacher was concerned that implementing Differentiated Instruction might lead to unfairness if students received different approaches. However, after implementation, they discovered that tailored learning experiences actually promote fairness by allowing each student to reach their full potential based on their individual needs.

3.2.2 The Challenges

a. Determine assessment

This code refers to the diverse range of characteristics, including understanding level, thinking ability, skills, learning styles, confidence level, and concentration level, present among students in the classroom.

"Challenges in determining assessments are teachers' difficulty in determining the assessment model used because of the heterogeneity of students in the class related to students' understanding level, thinking ability, skills, learning styles, confidence level, and concentration level," (T01, February 17th 2024).

The teacher highlights the heterogeneity of students in the classroom, emphasizing the wide range of characteristics that teachers must consider when designing assessments. This diversity underscores the need for differentiated approaches to accommodate the varied needs and abilities of students effectively.

b. Class management

Obstacles encountered during the actual implementation process, such as maintaining flexibility and ensuring equitable support for all students. T02 mentions challenges in implementing the Differentiated Instruction model and the need for flexibility.

"Implementing the Differentiated Instruction model also poses a challenge as it requires flexibility and skills in leading a dynamic class," (T02, February 24th 2024).

This indicates the necessity of maintaining flexibility in class management to accommodate diverse student needs and instructional approaches.

c. Need extra time

This code indicates any challenges or obstacles teachers face due to the need for additional time or resources in implementing Differentiated Instruction.

"Challenges in developing teaching modules: One of the challenges I face is developing teaching modules that encompass various levels of complexity and learning styles of students. This requires extra time and effort to design materials that can adapt to the individual needs of students," (T02, February 17th 2024).

The teacher identifies a challenge in developing teaching modules tailored to the diverse needs of students. This requires additional time and effort, indicating a need for extended preparation to ensure effective differentiation and support for individualized learning experiences.

3.2.3 The Advantages

a. Students' engagement

This code refers to the level of active involvement and participation displayed by students during the learning process, particularly in the context of differentiated instruction.

"After implementing Differentiated Instruction, I assess the students' learning outcomes based on their attitudes, knowledge, and skills during the learning process. This assessment encompasses various aspects such as critical thinking skills, creativity, and teamwork," (T02, February 24th 2024).

This highlights the multifaceted impact of Differentiated Instruction on student development, emphasizing its role in fostering not only academic growth but also the cultivation of essential skills and positive attitudes towards learning.

b. Building inclusive environment

This code pertains to the efforts made by teachers to create a learning environment that is welcoming, supportive, and accommodating of all students, including those with diverse needs and backgrounds.

"Yes, I fully agree to implement inclusive classes in schools. Because the implementation of inclusive classes allows students with special needs to learn in the same environment as their peers. This can help reduce differences and promote greater social inclusion among students," (T01, February 17th 2024).

The teacher expresses support for implementing inclusive classes in schools, emphasizing the importance of creating an inclusive learning environment where students with special needs can learn alongside their peers. This approach fosters social inclusion and reduces disparities among students, contributing to a more supportive and equitable learning environment.

c. Students' understanding in learning

This code pertains to the level of comprehension, assimilation, and mastery of subject matter or learning objectives demonstrated by students within the framework of differentiated instruction.

"Before differentiation, I saw that some participants had difficulty understanding certain materials, while others felt bored because they felt the material was too easy. After implementing Differentiated Instruction, I see that the level of understanding of the material has increased overall because the material is tailored to the mastery level of the participants," (T01, February 17th 2024).

The teacher highlights the improvement in students' understanding of the material following the implementation of differentiated instruction. By adjusting the material to suit the mastery level of each student, differentiated instruction effectively addresses individual learning needs and enhances overall comprehension and engagement in learning activities.

3.2.4 The Needed Things

a. Financial and facilities support

This code indicates the provision of financial resources to support the implementation of differentiated instruction (DI) effectively in the classroom.

"I hope policymakers can provide adequate financial support for teacher training, curriculum development, and provision of support resources, such as diverse teaching materials and supporting learning technology," (T01, February 17th 2024).

The teacher expresses the need for policymakers to allocate sufficient financial support for various aspects related to DI implementation, including teacher training, curriculum development, and procurement of resources, underlining the importance of financial backing in enhancing teaching practices.

b. Stronger commitment in supporting equality and inclusivity

This code denotes a heightened dedication to promoting equality and inclusivity in educational settings, particularly in the context of implementing differentiated instruction (DI).

"I hope all policymakers and responsible parties have a strong commitment to justice and inclusion in education. This includes ensuring that all students have equal access to quality education and supporting an inclusive learning environment for all," (T01, February 17th 2024).

The teacher emphasizes the importance of policymakers and responsible parties demonstrating a strong commitment to fostering justice and inclusion in education, highlighting the need for equitable access to quality education and the creation of inclusive learning environments conducive to student success.

c. Need for adequate training and resources

This code indicates the necessity for comprehensive training programs and sufficient resources to support teachers in effectively implementing differentiated instruction (DI) in the classroom.

"Increase education budget allocation and training for teachers so they can develop differentiated skills. Provide intensive and continuous training to teachers about Differentiated Instruction models," (T01, February 17th 2024).

The teacher highlights the need for increased education budget allocation and continuous training programs to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge for implementing DI effectively, underscoring the importance of ongoing professional development in enhancing teaching practices.

4. Discussion

4.1 The Stages of Differentiated Instruction by the Teachers at SMPN 6 Sengkang

4.1.1 Planning

In the planning stage, teachers do three steps, namely identification, curriculum analysis, and preparation. Teachers identify and understand their students to tailor instruction by previous meeting or in the past year using the previous knowledge about their students. Teacher's previous knowledge about the students refers to the teachers' understanding of the backgrounds, interests, learning styles, and prior knowledge of the students in their class. This knowledge helps the teacher personalize instruction to better meet the needs of individual students. Understanding students' backgrounds, interests, and learning styles allows teachers to adapt their teaching methods and content to make learning more relevant and engaging for their students. Observation ability plays an important role in teachers' teaching (Li, 2022). However, they admitted that they did not carry out initial identification of students in a structured manner, other than relying on the teacher's previous general knowledge about students and trigger questions.

Diagnostic assessments provide valuable insights into students' prior knowledge and misconceptions, enabling teachers to tailor instruction to meet their needs effectively. However, the teachers did not conduct the diagnostic assessment properly; they only use their previous knowledge about their students. They need experts who can conduct this step to analyze students' learning style, interest, and psychology. It indicates that the teacher requires training of diagnostic skills. Training and fostering teachers' diagnostic skills seems highly relevant for the valid assignment of grades and for student progress (Brunner, Anders, Hachfeld, & Krauss, 2013)

The next step is analysis of learning outcomes. This involves evaluating the expected learning objectives or outcomes of the curriculum. It assesses whether the curriculum is aligned with educational standards and goals and determines the effectiveness of instructional methods in achieving those outcomes. Identifying important content areas and activities that curriculum specialists perform is an integral link to establishing a framework for program development, training, and evaluation (Linda, 1994). The teachers revolve around evaluating the curriculum to ensure it effectively supports student learning. The analysis of learning outcomes helps teachers determine if the curriculum adequately addresses the knowledge and skills students are expected to acquire. By assessing the alignment between the curriculum and desired learning outcomes, teachers can identify areas for improvement and make adjustments to enhance the effectiveness of instruction.

The last step in planning is preparation. The teachers focus on the preparatory phase of instruction, encompassing various aspects such as assessment, curriculum design, and selection of teaching materials.

Developing teaching modules helps organize instructional content and activities in a structured manner, promoting coherence and clarity in teaching. Assessment instruments and teaching materials ensures that resources chosen are suitable for supporting instruction and engaging students in meaningful learning experiences the validated instrument is useful for practice-based teacher education programs (Matsumoto & Ramirez, 2020). These instruments and teaching materials are concluded in teaching modules.

4.1.2 Implementation

Differentiated instruction is an educational approach that tailors teaching methods and content to accommodate diverse learning needs within a classroom. This approach is designed to improve cognitive and academic outcomes for all learners by providing a variety of instructional strategies, content, and assessment methods that cater to individual student needs (Amalia, Rasyad, & Gunawan, 2023).

The implementation of differentiated learning involves a series of careful and detailed stages to ensure that the individual needs of each student are optimally met. This stage includes variations in teaching materials and guidance provided. In summary, differentiated instruction allows teachers to meet learners where they are and offer challenging and appropriate options for them to achieve success (Ireh

& Ibeneme, 2011).

Firstly, variations in teaching materials allow teachers to present material with different approaches, according to students' learning styles. Husnia, Nur, & Abduh (2023) stated that students exhibit diverse learning styles, each with different category preferences. This suggests that students are capable of learning in multiple ways. Essentially, a student doesn't have just one preferred style. These learning style preferences reveal how effectively students grasp lessons in various contexts. Nonetheless, it is believed that every student develops a unique approach to learning, and no single learning style is considered superior to the others.

There are variations in teaching materials, namely, source, media, and level of difficulty. Differentiated instruction involves selecting a variety of materials to present content. This can include textbooks, online resources, multimedia presentations, hands-on activities, etc. In addition, teachers may utilize technology such as videos, interactive websites, or educational apps to present material. This allows for a more engaging and dynamic learning experience, catering to various learning styles. Material should be adjusted to match the readiness level of students. It indicates that the regulation of material development needs particular attention (Nurjaman et al, 2021). This means providing both remedial and advanced content to meet the needs of students who may be working below or above grade level.

Secondly, variations in providing guidance allow for teaching to be tailored to students' levels of understanding, both individually and in groups. The teachers highlighted group formation and providing special guidance as variation in providing guidance. Students may be grouped based on their readiness level, interests, or learning preferences. According to Collins et al (2018), the students placed in similar ability groups, regardless of ability level placement, will perform better than they would in normal heterogeneous classes. Grouping allows for targeted instruction and peer collaboration, which can enhance learning outcomes.

4.1.3 Evaluation

In differentiated instruction, evaluation is an important stage that allows teachers to evaluate student learning progress holistically. Assessment is a powerful parallel concern for teachers attempting to formulate and reformulate strategies that will produce explicit learning goals (Cohen, 2004). Based on teachers' practices, this evaluation stage consists of three main components: assessment process, evaluation of learning outcomes, and learning reflection. In the context of differentiated learning, evaluation plays an important role in ensuring that each student can achieve their learning potential optimally. Learning evaluation plays a crucial role in understanding students' development, improving the quality of learning, identifying students' needs, adjusting learning strategies, and achieving learning objectives optimally (Fuadiy, 2021).

First, process assessment involves various methods such as direct observation, giving quizzes, and group work. Assessment is important since it might improve learning and teaching process itself (Brown et al., 2014). Observations allow teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of student learning progress directly, while giving quizzes can provide an overview of an individual's understanding of certain material (Ibrahim et al., 2024). Group work, on the other hand, provides opportunities for students to collaborate, communicate, and learn from each other, while allowing teachers to observe group dynamics and individual contributions (Rosmayanti, 2024).

Second, evaluation of learning outcomes is related to the achievement of learning objectives, both in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It involves collaborative assessment of the attitudes, knowledge and skills set out in the curriculum. This collaborative assessment can involve students in evaluating each other, allowing them to develop a deeper understanding of the course material and strengthening their own assessment skills. Assessment and evaluation are crucial for determining whether teachers are, in fact, gaining the content, skills, and characters necessary to meet institute standards for student learning (Qamar, 2015).

Finally, reflection is a key stage in the learning process. Reflection is a technique for aiding and reinforcing learning used in education and professional development (Moon, 1999). This includes reflection on the learning process that occurs, such as what learning strategies are effective and how students respond to them. In addition, reflection also involves evaluation of learning outcomes, which allows students to consider their achievement of learning objectives and identify areas for improvement. By in-depth reflection on the learning process and outcomes, students can develop a better understanding of themselves as learners and take concrete steps to improve their abilities in the future.

4.2 English Teachers Perceptions on the Implementation of Differentiated Instruction in Merdeka Curriculum

4.2.1 EFL Teachers' Misconception on the Implementation of Differentiated Instruction

The policy for the implementation of differentiated instruction in classrooms is something new for teachers in Indonesia. This approach has long been mentioned by Tomlinson, however, as something newly emphasized since the curriculum change, there are certainly different interpretations, including misconceptions about its implementation.

Differentiated instruction is defined as an approach aimed at accommodating diversity in the classroom, so that their potential can be maximized (Ortega et al., 2018; Tomlinson, 1999). This diversity includes differences in age, gender, students' abilities, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, family backgrounds, personality differences, and others (Ginja & Chen, 2020). Teachers' initial knowledge has various perceptions, they see differentiated instruction as difficult to implement because it has to meet the needs of each individual student.

The first misconception about the implementation of differentiated instruction is that teachers worry that the classroom will become chaotic because they have to guide each student in detail. For example, when a teacher teaches material to one student, other students will

shout for help as well. In addition, each student tries to prioritize their own problems, which can cause the class to become noisy. However, after implementing it, they realized that Differentiated Instruction involves forming homogeneous groups and tailoring learning to individual needs, which actually promotes organization and engagement.

The second misconception is that differentiated instruction creates unfairness in teaching. The teachers stress that altering learning based on students' availability and learning capacities will make negative points of view among students that the educator is giving uncommon treatment, for case within the appraisal prepare (Tulbure, 2011). Students with higher capacities may see themselves as being distraught when getting more troublesome questions than students with lower capacities. Students may see treatment to diverse inclinations and reasonableness as favoritism, indeed in spite of the fact that the distinctive treatment was based on the require examination (Karadag & Yasar, 2010). Therefore, teachers need to provide students with a basic understanding of the purpose of differentiated instruction, that fairness does not mean being the same and equal, but fairness means giving an attitude tailored to the needs of each individual.

4.2.2 Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Instruction

In the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), implementing differentiated instruction presents several challenges for teachers. They face various obstacles including accurately assessing students, effective classroom management, and allocating additional time and resources. In an effort to meet the diverse learning needs of students, EFL teachers must adapt to different instructional strategies while maintaining an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Firstly, assessment determination was a challenge for teachers in evaluating students' progress and understanding within various instructional frameworks. This difficulty arises from the need to tailor assessments to accommodate diverse learning needs and abilities among students. EFL teachers struggle to develop assessments that accurately reflect each student's progress while aligning with different instructional strategies used in the classroom (Takarroucht, 2022; Meldawati et al., 2023; Gunawan et al., 2024). Assessments also stem from diagnostic tests that reveal differences in students' abilities and readiness (Ibrahim et al., 2023; Masbara et al., 2024). The greater the diversity of the classroom, the more preparation is required before instruction (Suwastini et al., 2021). However, teachers often fail to conduct structured pre-assessments. Assessing every student in a large class is difficult for teachers (Danley & Williams, 2020).

Secondly, class management was suggested the difficulty teachers face in maintaining a conducive learning environment while implementing different instructions. Managing a classroom where students are engaged in different tasks or working at varying paces can be demanding. EFL teachers may find it challenging to effectively monitor and support students' learning while addressing individual needs and ensuring overall classroom discipline and organization. Students require extra instruction to extend their understanding, causing the learning handle to be time-consuming in separated instruction. For case, students in center grades ought to be given more progressed applications, which may take time to settle (Tomlinson, 2014).

Instructors accept it is more challenging to execute separated instruction in an expansive course for a few reasons. In a classroom with numerous students, the instructor has to survey the finest procedures for distinctive students, hence, the more the students; the longer the evaluation will be (Turner, Solis, & Kincade, 2017). A separated classroom may require the educator to move around, particularly for hesitant and bashful students (Suwastini et al., 2021; Begum, 2019; Sada et al., 2023). Giving individualized consideration to each understudy may raise concerns of favoritism and favoritism among instructors. These issues gotten to be more articulated in bigger and more different classes, especially when classroom space is confined. Actualizing personalized exercises for each understudy may require the instructor to explore the classroom broadly, which can be challenging in cramped quarters with a tall student-to-space proportion (Rehman & Perveen, 2021; Mirawati et al., 2022).

Thirdly, require additional time was shown the request for additional time and assets required to viably execute separated instruction. EFL instructors may confront imperatives in terms of time accessible for arranging, arrangement, and conveyance of separated lessons. Separated instruction has been found time-consuming (Shareefa et al., 2019). It is expressed that the instructors require additional time in planning, conducting, and evaluating the usage of significant, separated instruction (Endal et al., 2013; Karadag & Yasar, 2010; Sari et al., 2020). When executing and planning separated instruction, instructors experienced the foremost significant challenges and impediments within the shape of a need of arranging and guidelines time (Aftab, 2016).

They were incapable to coordinated subject instruction into their standard classroom methods due to their need of understanding, time imperatives, and intelligently lesson arrangement (Chien, 2015). Distributing additional time for giving extra back, criticism, and appraisal to students with differing learning needs can be challenging inside the imperatives of a normal classroom setting. Commonsense challenges, such as deficiently time or assets, or the additional planning required, may have ruined instructors from actualizing vital alterations to their classroom instruction (Sougari & Mavroudi, 2019; Widiati et al., 2023). The limitation of time is especially tricky in Separated Instruction (DI), as important learning frequently requires adequate time (Porta & Todd, 2022).

4.2.3 The Advantage of Differentiated Instruction

The implementation of differentiated learning has become a significant debate in the world of education, particularly concerning teacher readiness and supporting facilities. Understanding how this approach affects students, teachers, and the overall learning environment is a key to evaluating its success. By considering the associated benefits and challenges, research has uncovered the multiple impacts that arise from differentiated learning. By deepening our understanding of the implications of differentiated learning, we can develop more effective strategies to meet the diverse learning needs among students and ensure equity in access to quality education. Differentiated

instruction has been trusted to advantage mixed-ability classrooms at all education level (Magableh & Abdullah, 2020; Halil et al., 2024).

The primary advantage of separated instruction is understudy engagement and dynamic interest in learning exercises. This shows that when instructors tailor instruction to meet the different needs and interests of students (Celik, 2019), they gotten to be more locked in and persuaded to memorize. Separated instruction includes agreeable learning that improves students' collaborative aptitudes and inspiration to take part in learning as portion of a bunch (Ismajli & Imami-Morina, 2018). It permits students to connect with their peers (Mitsi, 2017).

The second advantage is building an inclusive environment. This appears that separated instruction contributes to making a comprehensive classroom environment where all students feel esteemed and regarded. The inviting environment in a separated lesson can cultivate a loose environment that bolsters the advancement of conducive teacher-student connections (Aftab, 2016; Lavania & Nor, 2020). By pleasing distinctive learning styles, capacities, and foundations, instructors cultivate a sense of possession among students, which is pivotal for their generally scholarly and social advancement. When students feel welcome, they can communicate way better with the educator, revealing their foundations, preparation, and learning profiles (Ginja & Chen, 2020). Further, the research on differentiated instruction has benefitted students in Taiwan EFL contexts (Puspitasari, Weng, & Hsieh, 2020); phenomenological analysis on different types of instruction provided positive impacts on writing classs (Rungwaraphong, 2021) and the use of digital platform such as facebook for formal differentiated instruction can benefit cognitive aspects of English language learners (Alam, & Mizan, 2019).

In conclusion, separated instruction emphatically impacts students' understanding and dominance of substance. Separated instruction has been considered to optimize the students' learning prepare, driving to superior accomplishment (Danley & Williams, 2020). Chen & Chen (2018) found that students treated with separated instruction accomplished superior scores than those who were not. When instruction is custom fitted to the person needs and inclinations of students, they are superior able to get it complex concepts and make associations between unused information and earlier information. Kotob and Abadi (2019) found that low-achieving EFL students advantage from this differentiated instruction, such as the increment in test comes about, driving to an enhancement in students' accomplishments. Tomlinson (2000) moreover states that separated instruction can maximize students' accomplishment by giving reasonable learning strategies that construct students' comfortable learning.

4.2.4 The Needed Things for the Improvement of the Differentiated Instruction Process in the Future

The benefits of implementing differentiated instruction have been thoroughly discussed and substantiated (Tomlinson, 2000). Nevertheless, along with these benefits, there arise certain challenges stemming from the fundamental tenets of differentiated learning: accommodating the diverse characteristics of each student (Suwastini et al., 2021). At the administrative level within schools, the adoption of differentiated instruction should be aligned with the support from both the school administration and parents (Siam & Al-Natour, 2016; Suwastini et al., 2021).

Firstly, "Financial and facilities support" signifies the importance of adequate funding to sustain and enhance differentiated instruction initiatives within educational settings. This support is crucial for teachers' welfare and affects work morale. Facilities support includes access to technology (Nur, Widodo, & Putro, 2023), flexible classroom layouts, and other resources (Djamdjuri et al., 2021) that facilitate diverse instructional approaches and accommodate varying learning needs.

Secondly, "Stronger commitment in supporting equality and inclusivity" emphasizes the need for a steadfast commitment from educational stakeholders to promote equality and inclusivity in the implementation of differentiated instruction. This entails prioritizing policies and practices that address the diverse needs of students and ensure equitable access to quality education for all learners.

Thirdly, "Need for adequate training and resources" highlights the necessity of providing teachers with comprehensive training and access to resources to effectively implement differentiated instruction strategies. Professional development programs should focus on equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to differentiate instruction based on students' individual needs and learning styles.

They call for support from policy makers and stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of Differentiated Instruction effectively. There is a need for support of differentiated instruction in vocational contexts (Suparto, Lao, & Salim, 2023), Islamic higher education of EFL contexts (Abduh et al., 2020; Farida, Supardi, & Muchtar, 2023), and language and business contexts (Suprayogi, Luckyardi, Kurnia, & Khairusy, 2024). The teachers in this study were grateful because their school is one that has adequate facilities. However, not all schools have the opportunity to utilize the facilities, because the facilities are inadequate. Many factors cause limitations in implementing differentiated learning as a whole, for example inadequate facilities to accommodate all students' learning styles, constraints on costs for preparing various teaching materials and media, human resources that are still less competent, especially in determining initial assessments to obtain data on student characteristics and preparing diverse and structured assessments, as well as the number of students in one class being so large, that teachers need additional time and energy during the process of implementing differentiated learning.

4.3 Suggestion

The limitation of this study is the researchers did not conduct in-depth interviews regarding the benefits of differentiated learning on student learning outcomes which could be influenced by various other aspects. Apart from that, researchers also did not document records of student learning outcomes and did not explore students' perception. Therefore, the suggestion to future researchers is to explore concrete evidence that shows significant changes in students after teachers implement differentiated learning. Continue research on teachers' perceptions and practices in implementing differentiated instruction in various contexts, including the curriculum.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the teachers recognize the significance of separated instruction to meet the shifted learning needs of their understudies, moving past conventional strategies to tailor instructing based on students' availability, interface, and learning profiles. In spite of the need of a organized approach to beginning understudy appraisal and challenges such as module improvement, classroom administration, and inclusivity, teachers illustrate flexibility by collaborating, remaining adaptable, and utilizing accessible assets, driving to positive impacts on understudy engagement and certainty

In any case, they emphasize the require for master direction in understudy evaluation and call for approach back to progress usage. Whereas a public junior high school benefits from satisfactory offices, many schools face limitations due to inadequate resources, high costs, and large class sizes, which hinder the complete application of differentiated learning. Teachers advocate for way better offices, preparing, and organized appraisal apparatuses to upgrade separated instruction and inclusivity in all instructive settings.

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Authors' contributions

A. Padauleng, Prof. Amirullah Abduh and Samtidar were responsible for designing the research. A. Padauleng, Besse Darmawati, and Achmad Rosidi handled instruments of data collection and did analysis. Abu Muslim and Mujizatullah processed the collected data and reporting. Abd. Kadir Massoweang and Ridwan drafted the discussion and edited the manuscript. Prof. Amirullah Abduh and Samtidar provided revisions on the research findings and discussion. All authors have read and approved the manuscript.

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