

THE STRATEGIES OF TEACHING ENGLISH USING DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN SEKOLAH PENGGERAK IN NORTH TAPANULI ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025

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ABSTRACT

Differentiated Learning is the process of tailoring lessons to meet each student's interests, needs, and strengths, the goal of this research is to analyze the teachers' strategies and obstacles in using differentiated learning in Sekolah penggerak. The subjects were four teachers from the Sekolah Penggerak namely SMP Negeri 4 Pahae Julu and SMP Negeri 2 Siatas Barita in North Tapanuli in North Sumatra. Interviews, observation, and documentation were applied to collect the data. Qualitative descriptive was the type of approach used in this study. The data was analyzed using triangulation consisting of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Strategies used by the teachers to accommodate the students' needs were the differentiated content, process, and product by mapping the students' needs based on the students' readiness, interests and learning profiles. Thus, this research concludes that the strategies in differentiated learning in class were effective and could help the students to understand the material according to the student's needs. For further research, the researcher might scrutinize the effectiveness of differentiated learning in teaching English for student outcomes and the schools, the obstacles in teaching using differentiated learning were, that the teachers should facilitate workshops or training about differentiated learning.

Keywords: strategy; differentiated learning; mobilizing schools

1. Introduction

English is not a strange subject in schools, therefore it should be included as a compulsory subject in the curriculum (Halliwell, S. 1992) Teaching English to Junior High School students will provide them with a view of various progress that is happening in the world (Nishanthi, 2018). Such as the development of technology, science, and culture (Yulfi & Aalayina, 2021), learning English enables students to access broader sources of information. The effect of language learning strategies on proficiency, attitudes, and school achievement (Habók & Magyar, 2018). Moreover, the proposed teaching methods used by teachers significantly affect students' learning outcomes (Sutarto et al., 2020). The diversity of students' characteristics demands teaching strategies that cater to the various mixability in a classroom (Moosa & Shareefa, 2019). The potential of students will be able to develop if directed properly. To be able to develop the potential of each student, the teacher needs to do differentiated learning.

Differentiated learning is a curriculum modification where each child can learn in a class with different abilities. Differentiated learning is a strategy or pattern of developing and implementing learning in schools that are developed to facilitate the optimization of the development of the potential or different competencies of each child in a class through differentiated content,

differentiated processes, and differentiated products, which are developed by mapping of their readiness, interests and learning styles to achieve the same minimum learning objectives or competencies. This differentiated learning is carried out by paying attention to the different needs of each student and does not mean that the teaching is based on the principle of one teacher with one student only. As stated by (Eikeland & Ohna, 2022), differentiated learning mixes all the differences of learners to obtain information, create ideas, and express what learners learn. Differentiated learning adjusts students' interests, readiness, and learning profiles to create improved learning outcomes.

Sekolah Penggerak Program (The Mobilizing School Program) focuses on holistic learning outcomes by creating a Pancasila student profile. The transformation process in *Sekolah Penggerak* as mentioned by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Dhawan, 2020), is learning that can create comfort, security, inclusiveness, and pleasure for students and is also student-centered so that they can achieve learning outcomes that are above the expected level. Learning in *Sekolah Penggerak* in the process of their activities is designed by prioritizing differentiation also referred to as differentiated learning. The *Sekolah Penggerak* Program is a catalyst for achieving the vision of Indonesian education, with one of its objectives being to guarantee equal access to high-quality education through a program to build the skills of school principals who can guide educational units in achieving high standards of learning. This refers to educational institutions that place a strong emphasis on achieving the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profile), which starts with having good human resources, especially to principals and teachers. Since teachers' creativity is the most essential factor in learning, one of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology is concerned with creating a Merdeka Curriculum that eventually launched the *Sekolah Penggerak* Program. The learning process in *Sekolah Penggerak* which is conducted through the differentiated learning process, uses strategies, namely differentiated content, differentiated process, and differentiated product, all of those strategies based on students' readiness, interest, and learning profiles.

Differentiated learning with its principles must apply to all subjects, especially in teaching English subjects in junior high schools which often experience problems. English is rarely considered difficult by students. According to the theory of cognitive development presented by (Kurniawan et al., 2018), junior high school age (11- 14 years) is a stage of concrete thinking in which junior high school students more easily and quickly understand such things that are concrete than abstract. The ability of each student to understand English subject matter will certainly be more visible than the difference in students' ability to understand other subject matter (Li & Schoenfeld, 2019). This difference requires teachers to be able to take teaching actions according to the needs of each student and this is achieved by applying differentiated learning (Haelermans, 2022); (Adare et al., 2023).

Carol A. Tomlinson, wrote in his book entitled *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms* (2nd edition; 2001) is about something teaching that pays attention to individual student differences. Then this became known as the name differentiated instruction or differentiated learning.

In differentiated learning, the teacher teaches the material while paying attention to students' level of readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Teachers can also modify lesson content, learning process, product, or outcome of the learning taught in which students learn. Through this learning process, it is hoped that can serve students according to their circumstances. Process Differentiated learning can be implemented by schools to liberate. There are three strategies for differentiated learning in teaching namely:

The Content differentiation includes what students learn. Content related to, curriculum and learning materials. In this aspect, teachers modify the curriculum and materials learning based on the student's learning style and disability condition. Learning materials are adapted to the student's conditions and abilities. Generally, teachers are unable to control specific curriculum content

(which cannot be understood by all children) based on student learning styles and adapting the material learning based on the type of disability you have. In learning differentiation There are 2 ways to create different lesson content, namely: a) Adjusting what the teacher will teach or what the teacher will learn to students based on the student's level of readiness and interest and b) Adjusting how the content to be taught or studied will be delivered by the teacher or obtained by students based on their respective learning profiles student.

The process differentiation is how students process ideas and information. How the students interact with the material and how those interactions become part of that determine student learning choices. Because of the many different styles and choices of learning demonstrated by students, the class must be modified in such a way that different learning needs can be accommodated well. Gregory & Chapman (2002) state that the modified learning process is: - Activating learning. Learning activities are focused on material learned, connecting material that has not been mastered, giving opportunities to students to find out why the material being studied is important, and explaining what students do after learning. - Activity Study. Engaging activity learning Activity grouping. Both individual and group learning activities must be planned as part of the learning process.

Product differentiation is how the students demonstrate what they have learned. Usually, products are the result of learning to demonstrate ability students' knowledge, skills, and understanding after completing unit lessons or even after discussing the subject matter for 1 semester. Product differentiation can be said an assessment and needs to be graded as the learning product enables the teacher to assess the material that students have mastered and provide the next material. Student learning profile also determines what kind of learning outcomes will be assessed.

The differentiated learning strategies are flexible learning and not rigid, which can be assured by using differentiated learning strategies that can create students who are competent in various aspects, then teachers implement differentiated learning by mapping students' needs based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profile. The basic principle and the best reason why differentiated learning is a necessity there are no stupid students, so this strategy can accommodate the students' needs and the students can prove their competencies but teachers who have implemented differentiated learning strategies are based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Additionally, no student is left behind to master the subject matter, but what exists is that each student needs time in different ways to master the lessons.

The learning process is still monotonous using learning methods that's all. Teachers are not creative in making learning media, so they learn only using the lecture method. Apart from that, the assessment process is carried out by the teacher only to assess cognitive aspects. This background is interesting to discuss in this research, so researchers made research entitled "Implementation of differentiated learning in the curriculum independent in English subjects. The general aim of this research is to determine the implementation of learning differentiated in the independent curriculum in English subjects. Meanwhile, the goal specifically to get an overview/information and analyze about: The strategies of differentiated learning in teaching English in Sekolah Penggerak (mobilizing schools), Barriers (obstacles) to using differentiated learning strategies in Sekolah penggerak in learning English subjects, Differentiated learning solutions in an independent curriculum in subjects English

2. Method

This research uses qualitative research methods with a descriptive format. Method Qualitative is a method used to research the natural conditions of objects where the researcher is the key instrument, who does not try to look for the influence of variables certain to other variables. According to Sugiyono (2016, p. 15), qualitative methods are used to obtain in-depth data, data that contains meaning. Sugiyono (2012) explained further the reasons for using qualitative methods. This is because the problem is not yet clear, holistic, complex, dynamic, and full of meaning. According to Arikunto (2005), descriptive research was intended to collect information regarding the status or existing phenomenon, namely what the phenomena were at the time the research was conducted. There was also a research design used in this research starting from the stage observations and findings of problems in the field which were then used as the focus of the study. Then formulate

research on the focus of the next research. Researchers surveyed the research location to collect data through interviews and documentation directly.

Participants or data sources in this research using purposive sampling technique (purposive sampling). Source determination data with a purposive sample was carried out by selecting people from Sekolah penggerak Program (Mobilizing Schools Programs) to be interviewed for certain considerations and goals (Sugiyono, 2012, p. 54). Based on the problem research on differentiated learning strategies in mobilizing schools to teach English subjects, then the participants or data sources in this research are four English teachers selected from two Sekolah Penggerak (Mobilizing Schools) in North Tapanuli, namely SMP Negeri 4 Pahae Julu and SMP Negeri 2 Siatas Barita.

Data collection used in this research is through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. According to Arikunto (2013), Observation is a way to gather data by watching people, and events, or noting physical characteristics in their natural setting. Observations can be overt (subjects know they are being observed) or covert (do not know they are being watched) (Reinharz, S. (2011)). Observations were made when the English teacher taught in class and the researcher observed how the teachers applied differentiated learning strategies in teaching English. An interview is a method used to obtain answers from respondents utilizing question and answer. The important emphasis of this interview technique is Researchers could dig deeper into the required data. In this research, the interview method was used to obtain data by digging for information and seeking information or explanations from informants related to the strategies of differentiated learning in teaching English subjects in Sekolah Penggerak namely SMP Negeri 4 Pahae Julu and SMP Negeri 2 Siatas barita in North Tapanuli. North Sumatera. The interview technique used in this research is a structured interview using interview guidelines in the form of questions that have been prepared by the researcher. Meanwhile, documentation studies were carried out as a complement to research data utilizing collecting documents from trusted sources. There are also types of documents Collected photos of research subjects while teaching, during interviews, and Lesson plans (differentiated learning plans) (Sugiyono 2016).

Apart from that, researchers also used triangulation techniques, namely a data collection technique that combines various existing techniques and data sources. In this research, researchers used source triangulation namely collecting data from one informant to other informants who are also involved in differentiated learning strategies. After obtaining field data, it is carried out data analysis which aims to find important things learn and understand them answer research questions, and formulate research conclusions. Data analysis techniques used in this research is the Miles & Huberman model data analysis (Sugiyono, 2016). These included, 1) data reduction, namely the process of summarizing data and selecting the main and important things; 2) presentation of data (data display) in the form short narrative description; and 3) drawing conclusions (conclusion drawing) of the results research that can answer the problem formulation so that implications can be obtained as well suggestions that can be used by related parties (Sugiyono, 2016).

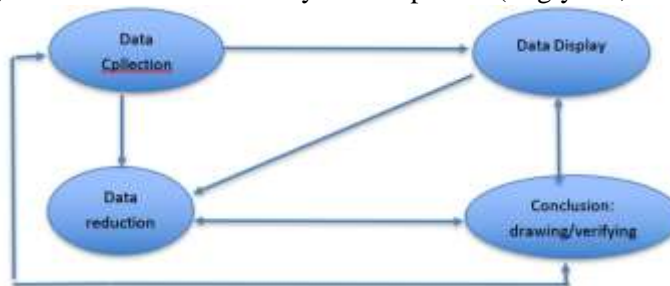


Figure 1. Data Analysis Technique

3. Result/s and Discussion

Differentiated learning is an accomplishment of learning that supports students designed, implemented, and assessed to meet individual student needs pay attention to readiness to learn (readiness), interest in learning (learning interest), and learning profile (learning profiles).

Differentiated learning must be rooted in meeting the needs of students' learning and how teachers respond to learning needs. With the findings obtained by researchers during this research, it is possible it was concluded that the implementation of differentiated learning in the independent curriculum in English subjects has been done well.

The results of research on the implementation of differentiated learning of Sekolah Penggerak programs at SMP Negeri 4 Pahae Julu and SMP Negeri 2 Siatas Barita in North Tapanuli in English subjects in junior high schools are described in this section. The elaboration of the research data consisted of the Differentiated learning steps of the Sekolah Penggerak program in English subjects in junior high; The strategies of differentiated learning in teaching English of the Sekolah Penggerak program at SMP Negeri 4 Pahae Julu and SMP Negeri 2 Siatas Barita in North Tapanuli in English subjects in junior high schools have been running effectively.

The researcher conducted this research for about 1 month, starting with the submission of an observation permitted to conduct a preliminary study at SMP Negeri 4 Pahae Julu and SMP Negeri 2 Siatas Barita in North Tapanuli, until then the research permission was received by the principal. Initial observations were made to find out directly and clearly about the picture at SMP Negeri 4 Pahae Julu and SMP Negeri 2 Siatas Barita in North Tapanuli, and then interviews were conducted to find out the initial picture and focus of the research. After the initial observation was completed and the research proposal was completed, the researcher applied for research permission to conduct research periodically.

The description of the data was obtained by starting to find English teachers as research subjects who would be used as informants in interviews through the recommendation of the principal. The research focused only on the formulation of research problems, namely the differentiated learning strategies in teaching English of the Sekolah Penggerak program at the junior high school level; and factors impeding the implementation of differentiated learning of Sekolah Penggerak programs in teaching English subjects in junior high schools level. The description of the research results on differentiated learning at SMP Negeri 4 Pahae Julu and SMP Negeri 2 Siatas Barita in North Tapanuli could be divided into three. This division was based on the purpose of this study, which is to analyze the strategies, and factors obstacles to the methods of teaching English through differentiated learning.

Differentiated learning strategies in *Sekolah penggerak* in teaching English were carried out in three stages, namely: a) Initial stage. At this stage, the English teachers planned by making Lesson plans (teaching Modules), and teachers also carried out diagnostic assessments to find out students' interests, ways of learning, and learning styles to be able to determine the mapping of students and adjust materials and methods of learning that would be carried out in the classroom. Apart from that, teachers also did it Curriculum analysis to determine the materials that were given to students. At this meeting, the English teacher decided to teach the material recount text. b) *Implementation Stage* At the implementation stage, the teacher carried out differentiated learning using 3 strategies, namely differentiated content, process, and product. In terms of content, teachers adapted the materials to suit students' interests and learning styles with the results of the diagnostic assessment. In differentiated learning, there are 2 ways to create different lesson content, namely a) Adapting what was taught by the teachers or what students learned based on their level of readiness and student interests and b) Adjusting how the content was taught or studied which were delivered by the teachers or obtained by the student based on the learning profile owned by each student. Strategies that were implemented by teachers To be able to differentiate the content that will be studied by students are: a) Using varied materials, b) Using Learning Contracts, c) Providing mini-learning, d) Presenting material in various modes of learning, and e) Providing various supporting systems. In this case, the teacher carried out differentiated learning by adapting learning materials based on students' level of readiness and interest. Starting with providing an icebreaker before learning begins. When students were ready to learn and interest in learning emerged, then the teacher started to provide material easily. The activities carried out by this student are not given a quantitative assessment in the form

of numbers, but a qualitative assessment in the form of feedback notes regarding attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are still lacking and need to be corrected/improved by students. Activities that are carried out must meet the criteria as an activity that: a. well, namely activities that use students' information skills. b. different in regarding the level of difficulty and how to achieve it. Meaningful activities What students do in the classroom had to be also differentiated based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profile. In terms of process, the teacher carries out the learning process by dividing students into several groups to be able to discuss with their classmates. For Some students who have a slow learning style, the teacher comes to the students' desks to carry out independent learning. Meanwhile, for students who learned quickly, the teacher provided additional material at a higher level than his friends. During the learning process, the teacher creates a conducive and enjoyable learning environment. Created a comfortable environment by arranging student seating well in groups, pairs, or independently. In terms of products, teachers asked students to create text procedures in groups and then practice them in front of the class. This aims to train students' courage and independence in class. Apart from that, it also trained students to be more confident. Values The profile of Pancasila students can be seen in this activity: c) *Evaluation Stage* At this stage, the teacher evaluates the products that have been worked on by the teacher-student. Implementation of differentiated learning in content, processes, and products, as well as final evaluation, and ongoing feedback, is obtained. From every learning process differentiated improvements in process and content choices, as well as goal evaluation continuous learning is carried out. Student evaluations also provide information that can be used to continue to understand student profiles.

Obstacles in implementing the strategies of differentiated learning in teaching English at Sekolah penggerak. Implementation of differentiated learning in the independent curriculum in subjects English experiences several obstacles, including:

a. Teachers' Capability

Teachers' ability to understand the strategies of differentiated learning in teaching English at Sekolah Penggerak is still far from expectation. Therefore differentiated learning is required to be socialized intensively. To facilitate the teachers in training differentiated learning on offline learning or online learning, especially by the government. So the teachers will experience evading obstacles when teachers do not master digital literacy because of information sources and learning resources connected to an application called the independent teaching platform. This is a big task for teachers to be able to carry out the adaptation process changing times. Teachers must be able to keep up with current developments all digital.

b. Facilities

Facilities and infrastructure become obstacles for teachers when holding learning activities As we all know, competencies that must be mastered by students in English subjects are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. So an English laboratory is very necessary so that the process of teaching activities can run smoothly. *The Solutions for implementing differentiated learning in an independent curriculum in subjects English.*

There are solutions to the obstacles faced in the implementation of differentiated learning in the independent curriculum in English subjects, including:

a. Teacher Ability

Schools strive to improve teacher competency by carrying out outreach activities about the strategies of differentiated learning and facilitating teachers so that can take part in education and training activities, outreach, and seminars regarding increasing teacher professionalism both in the school environment and outside school.

b. Facilities and infrastructure

The school's efforts to improve school infrastructure are: by consulting with the Head of education office. aside from that coordinate with the school committee so they can find solutions together.

4. Conclusion

The results of the data collected through interviews, observations, and document studies allow researchers to conduct regarding the strategies of differentiated learning in teaching English at Sekolah Penggerak, namely SMP Negeri 4 Pahae Julu and SMP Negeri 2 Siatas Barita in North Tapanuli, it can be concluded that the implementation of differentiated learning has started to be carried out in English subjects. The learning process is carried out with three stages, namely: 1) Initial stage, at this stage the teacher carries out curriculum analysis and assessment diagnostics to be able to map students' interests and learning styles. 2) Implementation stage, In this stage the teacher carries out learning by paying attention to three strategies, namely differentiated content, process, and product through mapping students based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. 3) Evaluation stage, In this stage the teacher evaluates the product produced by students. Teachers carry out formative and summative tests to determine actions to continue and improve in the next learning process.

The research results show that learning strategies are deeply differentiated in Sekolah Penggerak for English subjects at SMP Negeri 4 Pahae Mulu and SMP Negeri 2 Siatas Barita have started It was done well even though it encountered several obstacles. So with that in mind It is hoped that this research can help future researchers in conducting research related to differentiated learning strategies in driving schools. This research is not perfect so it needs to be made more effective in conducting the next research.

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