

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Merdeka Curriculum

The *Merdeka Curriculum* (Indonesia's national curriculum reform program that promotes independent and flexible learning) was introduced by the Indonesian Ministry of Education to encourage student-centered approaches, flexibility in teaching, and adaptation to students' diverse needs. The curriculum plays a crucial role in education as a guideline for shaping students' knowledge, skills, and character. As science and technology continue to evolve, the education system must adapt to create a learning environment that is more relevant to contemporary needs . To address this challenge, Indonesia has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum as an effort to enhance the quality of learning by making it more flexible, student-centered, and encouraging creativity and innovation in the teaching and learning process. The Merdeka Curriculum provides schools and educators with the freedom to design teaching methods and learning materials that align with students' and potential. Moreover, this curriculum emphasizes a project-based approach to enhance 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. By reducing overly dense material and allowing more room for exploration, students are expected to gain a deeper understanding of concepts and develop skills that are relevant to the real world.

a. Definition merdeka curriculum

The existence of the Merdeka Curriculum, which enhances the previous curriculum, offers hope for the restoration of students' learning by taking into account the importance of learning and each student's individuality. This curriculum has at least three benefits, including: First, it focuses on the core of learning and essential material so that there is a more meaningful deepening and development of competencies; second, there is independence for teachers and students; teachers are free to teach according to the achievements and development of students; and third, it gives teachers and students opportunities to engage in independent learning so that they can explore every topic and subtopic; and finally, it is designed to help students develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. location and time, also included is a Project on the Independent Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum is an improvement of the previous curriculum, aimed at enhancing the quality of learning by better accommodating each student's needs. This curriculum has several advantages, such as emphasizing core subjects for deeper understanding, providing teachers with the flexibility to teach according to students' development, and encouraging students to learn independently while developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Additionally, this curriculum includes more contextual learning projects(Fauzan et al., 2023).

b.Characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum was introduced in response to the need for a more adaptive education system focused on strengthening student competencies as part of a learning reform initiative, the Merdeka Curriculum was created as a more flexible framework for curricula, placing Special emphasis on content critical to student competences and character development (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). The following are the main traits of this curriculum that help the recovery of learning, according to the government: Three things are prioritized: (1) project-based learning for the improvement of soft skills and proper character; (2) subject-Specific focus; and (3) a focus on the improvement of critical thinking. It is crucial that students have ample time to study core competences like literacy and numeracy in-depth and that teachers can differentiate instruction based on student performance.(Muhammad Rafi Zidan & Zaitun Qamariah, 2023)

c.Curriculum Implementation

in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, several stages must be followed to ensure that educational goals are achieved optimally. This process is designed to ensure that learning aligns with the expected educational vision and mission. According to BSKAP of the Ministry of Education and Culture, there are three main stages in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

1. The stage of planning During the planning phase, objectives that were in keeping with the educational unit's vision and mission were stated. There are other processes, such as creating instructional materials.

2. The phase of implementation. Planning is included in the implementation process with several motives in order for each person involved to carry out activities ideally in accordance with their unique roles, tasks, and responsibilities. The use of Pancasila student profiles, student-centered learning, integrating assessments into learning, and teaching in accordance with student growth phases are only a few of the distinctive features. The main purposes of Profil *Pelajar Pancasila* are to maintain noble values and morals of the nation, readiness to become a citizen of the world, the embodiment social justice, as well as the achievement of competence 21st century ((R. A. Rizki & Fahkrunisa, 2022)

3. The evaluation stage involves assessing anything in accordance with Specific standards that will yield the necessary data or information set (Aisyah, 2022).

Planning, implementation, and evaluation in the Merdeka Curriculum are not merely formal stages but concrete steps to create a more flexible and relevant education for students. With a more open approach, teachers are no longer confined by rigid rules as in previous curricula but are given the freedom to adjust teaching methods to meet their students' needs .Students are

also not just passive objects in the classroom; instead, they have greater opportunities to explore and develop their own understanding. Furthermore, evaluation in the Merdeka Curriculum is not solely focused on numerical scores but also considers students' character development and skills. This ensures that education is no longer just about academics but also about preparing students for the real world. Therefore, to ensure the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, it is essential to have teachers who are not only capable of delivering material but also able to inspire, guide, and become agents of change within the educational environment. To meet this need, the government has introduced the *Guru Penggerak* program as part of its national education transformation strategy.

B. Guru penggerak

Guru Penggerak (literally “driving teacher”) is a government program aimed at developing teacher leadership, creativity, and innovation in order to improve the quality of education. Teachers in this program are expected to implement effective and adaptable teaching strategies. In supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum—which emphasizes student-centered learning, flexibility, and character development—the role of *Guru Penggerak* becomes highly significant. *Guru Penggerak* are key figures in ensuring that the philosophy of the Merdeka Curriculum can be translated into real practice in schools. The improvement of education quality does

not only depend on curricula and policies but also on the role of teachers as the main facilitators in the learning process. Teachers are not only responsible for teaching but also for guiding, inspiring, and creating a conducive learning environment for students' development. In an effort to enhance teachers' competence and leadership, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), launched the Guru Penggerak program. This program aims to develop teachers who not only possess excellent teaching skills but also serve as agents of change, driving innovation and collaboration in the field of education.

A Guru Penggerak is a teacher who is capable of implementing student-centered learning, enabling students to develop their abilities, think critically, and enhance their creativity. As a driving force, the teacher serves as a motivator in the learning process. (Sijabat et al., 2022)

To carry out the role of a Guru Penggerak, prospective participants must meet several requirements and undergo a series of systematically designed training sessions. Some of the key competencies that prospective Guru Penggerak must possess include a deep understanding of essential materials summarized in the following six modules: (Hamid H Lubis et al., 2022) (Hamid H Lubis et al., 2022)

1. Mentoring Guru Penggerak and the Future of Indonesia
2. Liberating Education

3. Leadership Toward Educational Transformation
4. Empowering Communication in Mentorship Roles
5. Coaching
6. Reflecting on Learning for Mentor Candidates

All of these learning materials are structured within the Merdeka cycle, which begins with Self-Reflection, followed by Concept Exploration, Collaboration Space, Guided Reflection, Contextual Demonstration, Understanding Elaboration, Inter-Material Connection, and concludes with Real-Action Implementation (Sekretariat GTK, 2021).

After meeting the criteria and undergoing training, Guru Penggerak holds several crucial roles in improving the quality of education in schools and their communities. The following are the key roles of Guru Penggerak in education .(Surahman et al., 2022)

a. Facilitating Learning Communities – Guru Penggerak serves as a driving force in teacher learning communities within schools and their surrounding areas. One of their primary roles is to mentor fellow teachers, fostering positive changes, particularly in teaching quality and teachers' professional development.

b. Training Fellow Teachers – Guru Penggerak is reSponsible for guiding fellow teachers in developing student-centered learning. They help teachers design and manage engaging learning experiences, ensuring that students are motivated to learn and explore their talents and abilities.

c. Being an Agent of Change – Guru Penggerak plays a crucial role in enhancing student leadership in schools, encouraging students to take an active role in their learning journey.

d. Creating Collaborative Spaces – Guru Penggerak must foster discussions and collaborations with fellow teachers and stakeholders, both within and outside the school environment, to enhance the quality of education.

e. Guiding the Learning Process – As learning facilitators, Guru Penggerak creates a comfortable and conducive learning environment. By fostering a positive atmosphere, students are encouraged to become critical thinkers, creative individuals, and compassionate and tolerant members of society.

f. Continuous Professional Development – Guru Penggerak must actively engage in lifelong learning to enhance their competencies and stay relevant in the ever-evolving educational landscape.

g. Acting as Motivators – Teachers serve as role models and sources of inspiration, guiding students toward positive character and behavioral development. Through their influence, Guru Penggerak helps shape a generation of knowledgeable, skilled, and morally upright individuals who contribute to national progress.

The Guru Penggerak program is designed to develop teachers as leaders in learning, applying educational models that

support students' holistic development. According to Ministerial Regulation No. 26 of 2022 on Guru Penggerak Education, this program is implemented with the principles of professionalism, transparency, accountability, openness, collaboration, and sustainability .(Umboh et al., 2023)

C. Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated learning is important to facilitate students in creating a conducive learning environment that suits each students's unique abilities and needs(Febriani, et al.,2024). Every student has unique skills, passions, and learning preferences. A teacher must modify their teaching strategies in a classroom full of different student types in order to make sure that every student learns efficiently. Adapting the content, techniques, and exercises to each student's needs is known as "differentiated instruction." Considering the possibility of varying learning styles and comprehension levels, the aim is for every student to learn effectively.

a. Definition differentiated instruction

Differentiated learning seeks to meet students' learning needs (study readiness, interests, and learning profiles) (Sari et al., 2023). Learning profiles, interests, and readiness to learn are the three main aspects of differentiated learning, a teaching strategy that is adapted to each student's needs . To maximize each student's potential, the learning experience should be matched to their skills, interests, and preferred method of

learning. This is in line with Tomlinson's (2001) theory, which states that differentiated instruction can better accommodate students' individual learning needs. According to Morgan (2014 in Ummah, 2019), differentiated learning is a way of teaching adapted to the characteristics of students with a variety of talents, interests, and learning styles. A teaching strategy known as differentiated learning is adapted to the unique needs of each student, who has a variety of skills, passions, and learning preferences. Considering each student's unique characteristics, this method seeks to offer them interesting and productive learning opportunities. According to Tomlinson, 2000 in Ummah, 2019). The purpose of differentiation is to maximize each student's learning potential within the limitations of the curriculum by adapting education to match their needs. Interests, readiness, and learning styles are all part of this process. To address these challenges, especially in teaching methods, innovation in education is needed.

A teaching strategy known as differentiated learning is adapted to each student's needs, including their learning preferences, interests, and readiness for learning. In order to help each student realize their greatest potential, the learning experience should be customized according to their interests and skill levels. This method recognizes that every student learns differently and that customized instruction is necessary to increase learning effectiveness and relevance.

b. Process of differentiated instruction

According to pattern teacher according to Marlina (2019 in sari et al., 2023) , The relationship between the four components in distributed learning includes the following: **Content Differentiation** The content or material referred to are the learning concepts that the teacher will teach to the students.(Kumalasari & Barriyah, 2024 in (S. N. Rizki & Ningsih, 2024).Difference in Content. The concept of "content" describes the educational materials that students get. In this case, the instructor modifies the curriculum and course materials to accommodate each student's unique learning preferences and needs . To put it another way, the content taught is customized to fit the needs of each learner, based on their abilities, interests, or preferred method of information processing. Process difference related to how students process the information they are given and produce a final product. This process includes how students participate with the content they are learning and how their participation influences their learning outcomes. In this situation, the instructor can offer a variety of methods or techniques that let students consume the information in the way that works best for them, like project-based learning, group discussions, or practical exercises. Difference of Product. Student-produced outcomes or products are referred to as product differentiation. In this situation, students are allowed to produce products according to their skills, interests, and talents. This gives students a chance to

show their originality and creativity while providing their learning objectives, whether through written assignments, presentations, or other projects. Differentiating the learning environment is creating an atmosphere that accommodates and supports each student's unique characteristics. In order for every student to feel comfortable and at comfortable during the learning process, teachers have to create a welcoming and flexible environment. The use suitable technology, classroom setups that accommodate various learning styles, or even flexibility in how students relate with the subject material and one another could all fall under this category. All things considered, the goal of these four differentiation strategies is to provide a more inclusive educational environment that is customized according to the needs of each student. Teachers can make the learning process more efficient by taking into account variations in learning styles, abilities, interests, and situations. With this method, every student may learn how they study best and realize their greatest potential. Teachers serve as facilitators, modifying their methods and ideas to give every student, regardless of differences, an equal chance to succeed in their educational path. According to tomlison 2014 in Hockett, 2018) there are several process for students :

Readiness the concept of "readiness" describes how close students are to meeting their established learning goals and how

prepared they are to go to the following phase in the learning process.

Interest refers to the various factors that motivate students to learn, whether related to their personal interests or situational factors around them. Tomlinson (2001 in Kamal, 2019: 93)) explains that considering students' interests in learning involves aligning what the school offers with their personal desire to learn. This includes (a) helping students in identifying and increasing their motivation to study; (b) illustrating the links among every aspect of learning; and (c) using well-known concepts or abilities as a means of helping students in understanding unfamiliar or less recognized topics. Learning objectives also seek to identify students' interests and passions, including pastimes, particular subjects, or life events that have influenced their choices. Students' emotional connection or link with the subject matter or learning environment is another aspect of interest that might motivate them to be more excited about the educational process. These elements—internal and external—are essential for encouraging students' enthusiasm and involvement in their education.

Learning profile refers to how students prefer to learn, influenced by various factors such as thinking styles, intelligence preferences, cultural background, and even gender. Every student approaches learning differently, including how they acquire knowledge, what strategies work best for them, and what setting

they are most comfortable in. For example, some kids may learn better through hands-on (kinesthetic) or auditory methods, while others may prefer visual learning with pictures and diagrams. Students' interactions with the subject and their peers might also be influenced by their emotional or social intelligence. Furthermore, because cultural background and gender are related to the beliefs and experiences that students bring to the classroom, they may influence students' learning preferences. Teachers may create more individualized and inclusive learning experiences that cater to each student's requirements by having a better understanding of their learning profiles.

c. The Importance of Differentiated Learning in the Classroom

The Importance of Differentiated Learning in the Classroom According to (Tucker, 2011 in Danuri S.B. Waluyo Sugiman Y.L. Sukestiyarn, 2023) there are three points the importance of differentiated learning in the classroom :

1. Students were given the opportunity to explore deeper learning through differentiated learning challenges. However, it also offers help to kids who are at a lower level and those who have learning difficulties, whether they are recognized or not.
2. It gives students the chance to tutor other students. This supports individuals who are still having difficulty while helping students who have mastered the content in solidifying their understanding. Teachers use this kind of interactive learning approach to capitalize on students' skills in the classroom.

3. Teachers are aware that a one-size-fits-all teaching strategy does not satisfy the needs of all or the majority of students, much like how different clothes sizes in stores do not necessarily fit every client. We must acknowledge that the curriculum can become boring, confusing, or even overpowering if we don't make an effort to modify education to meet the unique requirements of every student. The secret to reaching every student is differentiated learning.

d. .Implementation of differentiation instruction

In a book titled differentiation strategies : and examples grades 6-12. There are several ways to implementing differentiation class (Hockett, 2018 in : 9)

1. creating standards and learning objective (KUDs)

Identifying what students need to learn is the first stage in lesson planning. KUDs , which stand for Know (Knowing), Understand (Understanding), and Do (Doing), are what these are known as. Teachers must therefore consider what they want the students to know, understand, and be able to do following the class. Teachers also need to make sure that these learning goals are in line with the set standards , such the relevant curriculum. The lesson will remain on topic and fulfill learning objectives in this way.

2. collection students informations

Teachers have to know the situation of their students before they can teach. As an example, if they possess the fundamental information they need and how prepared they are to learn new

content. Since students will be more motivated to study when the lesson matches their interests, teachers must also be aware of what interests their students. Teachers should also be aware of the learning styles of their students. While some students prefer hands-on practice, others like talking or discussing, and yet others prefer learning through visuals. This helps educators in selecting the best teaching strategies for each kid.

3. setting up the lesson plan

Teachers must develop a clear lesson plan after knowing the goals and the characteristics of the students. This implies that educators should arrange the learning activities in a certain order, beginning with the simplest and working their way up to more challenging assignments. A well-organized sequence makes it easier for students to absorb the content and minimizes confusion. To ensure that students learn in a systematic and efficient manner, every activity in the session should complement the goal to be met.

4. Adapting Instruction To Various Students Types

By adapting their teaching strategies to each student's unique needs and talents, teachers can implement differentiated learning. For example, teachers can give challenges or more challenging questions to kids who get things up faster. Teachers, on the other hand, can provide additional explanations or help to students who struggle. To make sure that every student learns in a way that works for them, teachers may also use a range of instructional

strategies, including pictures, videos, and hands -on activities. Teachers can give students written assignments, presentations, or projects as means to show what they've learned for exams.

5. Creating Assignments and Differentiated Learning Experiences

Creating tasks and learning experiences that are suited to the needs of the students is the first step. This means educators design resources and exercises that support learning according to each student's aptitudes and preferred methods . For example, students who pick things up quickly can be given more difficult assignments, while students who want more assistance can be given simpler explanations or different ways to help them learn the content, like pictures or videos. All students can benefit from a learning experience that is tailored to their individual needs in this way.

6.Mechanisms for Lesson Planning (Classroom Management)

Teachers must plan how to conduct the classroom during the lesson after creating the assignments and activities. This covers time management, setting up activities to function well, and allocating each student's attention fairly. All students ability to remain fully engaged in the learning process must be guaranteed by their teachers. This also entails organizing the classroom, establishing ground rules, and figuring out how to promote cooperation in both group and individual projects.

7. Putting the Lesson into Practice and Analyzing Student Learning Data

Following preparation, the instructor gives the

lesson according with the plan. The teacher has to monitor and evaluate student learning throughout the lesson to see if they understand the subject matter. Examining student work or reSponses to see how effectively they have understood the material is known as evaluating learning evidence. Teachers can assess students using a variety of techniques, including talks, assignments, tests, and direct observation. This assessment is crucial in order for the instructor to ascertain whether the techniques of instruction are working or need to be modified.

C. Teacher's Perception

a. definition of perception

According to Machfoedz (2011:41 in Yurita, 2016) perception is “the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting information to find meaning.” This means that perception is not just passively receiving information, but also involves an active process where an individual selects what information is considered important, organizes it, and interprets it to give meaning.

According to Matsumoto & Juang in Latif, 2021), perception is the process of gathering information about the world through the senses we have. In this view, sensation is the primary basis for the perceptual process. Through our senses (sight, hearing, touch, etc.), we collect information about the surrounding environment, and this information is then processed to form our perception of the world.

Meanwhile, according to Slameto (2015:102 in Vinni, 2021) perception is "a process involving the entry of information into the human brain." This emphasizes the physical and cognitive aspects of perception, where information received by our senses is transmitted and processed by the brain for understanding. In this sense, perception functions as the way our brain processes the sensory data it receives.

According to Bimo Walgito (in Karmila, 2020) perception is a process that starts with sensation, which is the reception of stimuli by an individual through sensory organs, also known as the sensory process. In other words, perception begins with the physical process of receiving stimuli through our senses, which is then processed and interpreted to form a perception of an object or event.

In conclusion, perception is a complex process that involves the collection, organization, and interpretation of information received through our senses. Starting with the reception of stimuli through the senses, this information is actively processed by the brain to give meaning or interpretation. Perception is not only passive, but also involves cognitive elements where individuals select and organize information to form their views or understanding of the world around them. This process plays an essential role in how we interpret and understand our environment.

Perception, in the context of teachers, refers to their views, beliefs, and attitudes towards the learning process, including how they understand their role in supporting students' development. This perception includes the teacher's understanding of various factors that influence the success of learning, such as teaching methods, student needs, and how teachers interact with them. This perception is crucial because it can affect the approaches and strategies teachers use in creating effective learning experiences.

b. Factors that influence perception.

Various factors influence perception. According to Walgito (2018:54 in Li, 2019), an individual's perception is influenced by two main factors as follows:

- 1) Internal Factors: What exists within the individual.
- 2) External Factors: The stimulus itself and the environmental factors in which the perception occurs. Additionally, perception is also influenced by various factors, including mood, past experiences, inner impulses within the individual, such as: memory, motivation, attention, intelligence, and expectations.

Internal factors include everything within the individual, such as physical, mental, and emotional conditions. This aspect is very important because each individual has uniqueness in how they think and respond to the stimuli they receive. For example, a person with a tendency to think positively will have a different perception of the same situation compared to someone who tends

to think negatively. Internal factors also include memory, which allows a person to link past experiences with the current situation, as well as motivation, which drives the individual to respond to or ignore certain stimuli. Furthermore, intelligence and attention also play a key role in how an individual processes and interprets the information they receive.

Meanwhile, external factors relate to the stimuli or external influences that affect an individual's perception. These external factors can include information received, the social environment, and the situation or context in which the perception is formed. A different physical environment, such as light, sound, or temperature, can affect how someone responds to stimuli. Similarly, social conditions, such as cultural norms and interactions with others, shape perceptions of certain events. In this case, external stimuli can affect an individual's focus of attention and guide how they assign meaning to what is happening around them.

In addition to these two main factors, there are also other factors that contribute to shaping perception, such as mood or emotional conditions, which affect how an individual evaluates a situation. A person who is anxious or angry may focus more on the negative aspects of an event, whereas an individual who is happy will tend to see the positive side of the situation. Past experiences also have a significant influence on shaping perception, as previous experiences provide references for

individuals to assess similar situations in the future. Inner drives within the individual, such as hopes or life goals, can also affect perception, as these guide the individual to pay more attention to stimuli that are relevant to their needs or objectives. All of these factors work together to shape a unique and personal perception of the world around us.

c. Indicator of perception

As mentioned earlier, an individual is not exposed to just one stimulus but many that come from the surrounding environment. However, not all of these stimuli capture the individual's attention to be assessed or perceived. According to Walgito (2010: 102-104 in Wardana et al., 2018), perception has the following indicators:

1. Absorption of external stimuli or objects. The stimulus or object is received and absorbed by the senses, either individually or together. The result of this absorption through the senses will create an image, response, or impression in the brain.
2. Understanding or comprehension of the object. After the brain forms images, these images are then organized, classified, and interpreted, forming an understanding or comprehension of the object.
3. Evaluation or judgment of the individual towards the object. After forming an understanding or comprehension, the individual forms a judgment. The individual compares the new understanding with their own criteria or norms subjectively. An

individual's judgment may differ even when the object is the same. Therefore, perception is very individual.

In short, perception involves the process of selecting, processing, and evaluating information received through the senses. Each person absorbs stimuli from the environment, organizes and interprets that information, and then provides a subjective evaluation based on personal norms and criteria. This makes perception unique and can vary between individuals, even when the object being observed is the same.

E. English Foreign Language

In recent years, experts in the field of language instruction have been engaging in an ongoing debate regarding the concept of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The varying interpretations and definitions surrounding EFL have led to a deeper understanding of how this concept applies to different educational systems and cultural contexts around the world. According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), EFL refers to the teaching and learning of English in countries where English is not the primary language Spoken by the general population. In these settings, students often do not have daily exposure to English, which can severely limit their opportunities to practice and improve their language skills beyond the classroom. This lack of immersion in English-Speaking environments can present significant barriers for students, as language acquisition is often

accelerated through consistent real-world interactions and exposure to native Speakers.

Richards and Schmidt's definition highlights a crucial aspect of EFL: the role of the classroom as the primary context for language learning. Since these students do not have access to English media or communities in their daily lives, the responsibility for their language development largely falls on the teacher and the structured environment of the classroom. This can make the teaching of English in EFL contexts particularly challenging. Teachers must find creative and effective ways to engage students, creating simulated language experiences that allow students to practice and apply what they learn in a controlled yet authentic way. For many students, especially in rural or less developed regions, English may be entirely absent from their everyday lives, making their academic success in this language even more dependent on the effectiveness of classroom instruction.

Similarly, Crystal (2012) offers a complementary definition of EFL, describing it as the study of English by non-native Speakers in countries where English is not the official language. Crystal's perspective emphasizes the global importance of English and its role in education and professional development. In many countries, English is taught as a subject in schools and may be mandatory for students who wish to pursue further education, particularly in higher education institutions or

in international contexts. For instance, students aspiring to study at English-Speaking universities or seeking employment in multinational corporations may need a strong command of English in order to meet academic or professional requirements. Crystal notes that although English may not be the primary language spoken in these countries, its utility in academic and professional spheres has made it a critical subject of study for many students. This raises questions about how effectively the education system can prepare students for the challenges of using English in global contexts.

In addition to these definitions, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) provide a more comparative view of EFL, distinguishing it from the concept of English as a Second Language (ESL). EFL, they argue, is taught in countries where English is not the dominant language, whereas ESL refers to the teaching of English in countries where English is the primary language, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, or Canada. While ESL students are often immersed in an environment where English is spoken regularly, EFL students do not have the same luxury. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson point out that EFL students face particular difficulties due to their lack of exposure to English-language media, which serves as a natural learning tool for ESL students. Without access to English-language television, movies, books, or even casual conversations with native speakers, EFL students have fewer opportunities to

practice their language skills in real-life situations. This lack of exposure limits their ability to fully understand and engage with the nuances of the language, which can hinder their language development.

Despite these challenges, there is broad consensus among experts that EFL refers to the process of teaching and learning English in non-English-Speaking countries. In such contexts, students face a range of challenges that students in English-Speaking countries may not experience. These challenges include not only limited access to authentic English-language resources, but also a lack of immediate application for the language skills they are acquiring. Students in EFL situations may struggle to see the practical value of learning English if they do not have immediate opportunities to use the language in their daily lives. Therefore, it becomes crucial for educators in these settings to provide Specialized instruction that accommodates the unique needs of these learners.

To address the Specific challenges EFL students face, it is important for language programs to incorporate strategies that focus on increasing students' exposure to the language and providing opportunities for real-world language practice. For example, teachers might incorporate multimedia resources, such as English-language films or online materials, to help students engage with authentic English content. Additionally, fostering an interactive classroom environment that simulates real-life

communication can help bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical language use. It is also beneficial for teachers to encourage students to engage with the English language outside the classroom, whether through extracurricular activities, digital platforms, or interaction with English-Speaking peers. In conclusion, although the definition of EFL may vary slightly depending on the scholar, the fundamental agreement is that it refers to the teaching and learning of English in countries where English is not the primary language Spoken. Students in these contexts face unique challenges, such as limited exposure to the language and few opportunities to practice outside of formal learning environments. As such, Specialized instructional methods and resources are essential for helping these students improve their language skills. With the right support, EFL students can overcome these challenges and gain the proficiency needed to succeed in academic and professional settings where English plays a key role. The development of effective EFL programs is crucial not only for language acquisition, but also for empowering students to participate in a globally interconnected world.

E. Previous Study

In this section, various previous studies relevant to the topic being researched will be discussed. The purpose of this discussion is to provide an overview of the development of research that has been conducted, identify existing gaps, and

highlight the relevance of the results of these studies to the ongoing research.

First, research conducted by Yuniawati (2024), entitled *EFL Teachers' Voices in Differentiated Instruction*, focuses on the challenges and strategies of EFL teachers in implementing differentiated instruction, including professional development . The study highlights the perSpectives of EFL teachers on how differentiated instruction should be implemented and explores different educational approaches, assessment methods , and classroom management strategies used to meet diverse student learning needs . The findings reveal the struggles EFL teachers face in balancing standard curriculum demands with the Specific needs of their students. Moreover, the study emphasizes the significance of professional development in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement differentiated instruction (Yuniawati, 2024). This study shares similarities with the current research in terms of its focus on EFL teachers and differentiated learning. However, it differs in its research methodology and its more Specific level of analysis compared to previous studies, which generally examined EFL teachers' perspectives as a whole.

Second, research conducted by Manoj Chandra Hand (2020), *Examining Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Differentiated Practices, Student Engagement, and Teacher Qualities*, aims to compare students' and teachers' perceptions of

differentiated practices, student engagement, and the qualities of an effective teacher. The study involved 802 students and 867 teachers from Northern Sydney government schools in Australia, utilizing a convergent parallel mixed methods design, including online questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. Significant differences were found between students' and teachers' perceptions of differentiated instruction, highlighting the need for a shared understanding to foster optimal learning and teaching processes (Chandra Handa, 2020). This study shares similarities with the current research in its focus on EFL teachers and differentiated learning. However, the key difference lies in its subject focus, as it examines the comparison between teachers' and students' perceptions, whereas the current study focuses solely on teachers' perspectives.

Third, research conducted by Kathryn Gibbs (2022), *Voices in Practice: Challenges to Implementing Differentiated Instruction*, investigates the challenges faced by teachers and school leaders in implementing differentiated instruction in an Australian secondary school. Using a small-scale study with semi-structured interviews, the research identified major barriers, including time constraints, student behavior issues, and limited school resources. Additionally, the study found that experienced teachers were often reluctant to adopt differentiated instruction, and teacher education courses lacked clarity on DI as a comprehensive teaching framework. The study highlights the

need for further research to address these barriers and ensure the effective implementation of differentiated instruction (Gibbs, 2023). This research is similar to the current study in its focus on EFL teachers and differentiated learning. However, it differs in its research methodology and in its broader examination of systemic barriers, such as time limitations and constraints within the education system, which affect both teachers and school leaders.

Fourth, research conducted by (Nurhayati & , Langlang Handayani, 2020), Fourth, research conducted by Nurhayati and Langlang Handayani (2020), *Differentiated Instruction in English Lessons: Teacher Challenges*, discusses the challenges teachers face in implementing differentiated instruction within the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia. The study explores how the shift from the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum has posed significant challenges in the Indonesian education system. Using a qualitative approach, data was collected through observations and interviews with eighth-grade English teachers at MTs Negeri 8 Banyuwangi. The findings reveal several challenges, such as limited learning facilities, students' lack of motivation, and difficulties in stabilizing the implementation of differentiated instruction. To overcome these issues, teachers have employed strategies like technology-based learning and adapting learning materials to be more relevant to students' daily lives. The study concludes that, despite existing barriers, the right

strategies and adequate support can enhance the effectiveness of differentiated instruction (Nurhayati & Handayani, 2020). This research aligns with the current study in its focus on EFL teachers and differentiated learning. However, it differs in its research methodology and its Specific focus on the Merdeka Curriculum and the limitations of educational facilities in Indonesia.

No	Researcher And Tittle	Results	Similarity	Difference
1	Yuniawati (2024) - <i>EFL Teachers' Voices in Differentiated Instruction</i>	Focuses on the challenges and strategies of EFL teachers in implementing differentiated instruction, including professional development needs .	Focus on EFL teachers, differentiated learning.	1.Research methodology 2.More Specific in the level of research, whereas previous studies focused on the general perspective of EFL teachers.
2	Manoj Chandra Hand (2020) - <i>Examining Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Differentiated Practices,</i>	Highlights the differing perceptions of students and teachers regarding differentiated practices and the qualities of	Focus on EFL teachers, differentiated learning.	1.Different subject 2.More focused on the perceptions of teachers,whereas previous studies focused on the comparison between the

	<i>Student Engagement, and Teacher Qualities</i>	an effective teacher.		perceptions of teachers and students.
3	Kathryn Gibbs (2022) - <i>Voices in Practice: Challenges to Implementing Differentiated Instruction</i>	Identifies barriers faced by teachers and school leaders in implementing differentiated instruction in secondary schools, including time constraints and resistance.	Focus on EFL teachers, differentiated learning.	1.Different research methodology 2.The focus of this study is to explore how factors such as barriers in the education system and time limitations can affect performance and experiences in schools, both from the perspective of teachers and school leaders.
4	Nurhayati & Langlang Handayani (2020) - <i>Differentiated Instruction in English Lessons: Teacher Challenges</i>	Discusses challenges teachers face with differentiated instruction in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia,	Focus on EFL teachers, differentiated learning	1.Research Methodology 2.Focus on the context of the Merdeka Curriculum and the limitations of facilities in Indonesia.

		along with strategies for overcoming these challenges.		
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Table 3.1 The Strengths And Weaknesses Of Previous Studies And The Current Research.

This research offers a new approach by examining a different perspective from previous studies. The main focus of this study is to analyze the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers regarding the implementation of differentiated instruction in the classroom. This study will explore how teachers at SMKN 4 Kepahiang perceive and implement a teaching approach that is tailored to meet the individual needs of students. The primary goal is to gain a deeper understanding of how teachers feel about and apply this strategy in their daily practice. In the ever-evolving educational context, the application of differentiated instruction presents an exciting new opportunity to be explored, particularly in the teaching of English. The methodology used in this study also sets it apart. This research adopts a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The researcher uses interviews and surveys to further explore the understanding and experiences of teachers in applying differentiated instruction in

the EFL classroom, aiming to obtain a more comprehensive and meaningful perspective.

