

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Education was continuously evolving to meet students' diverse needs, especially in English language learning. One instructional approach that has gained attention is differentiated learning, which allowed teachers should alter material, methods, and education goals based on their students' preparedness, interests, and learning styles. Differentiated instruction was a method that allowed teachers to plan ahead to meet the requirements from everyone in school (Onyishi & Sefotho, 2020).

According to (Purwowidodo, 2023), learning enables students to engage in the learning process more effectively, promoting better understanding and retention of language skills. However, despite its potential, differentiated learning has not been widely implemented in many classrooms in Indonesia. In line (Fitriah & Widiyono, 2023), Differentiated learning is not new, its use in teaching and learning activities remains limited.

Speaking is still a difficult skill for many kids to master when using differentiated learning. According to Muzammil (2015), Speaking is one of the skills or abilities in English that allows us to convey our views, remark on them, reject other people's perspectives if they vary from ours, and ask and answer questions. However, (Marzuqi, 2019) speaking skills are productive language skills used to express orally thoughts and feelings.

To improve students' speaking skills, the use of differentiated learning is essential, especially in the independent curriculum, which emphasizes meeting

individual learning needs and improving communication skills in English. In phase D, grade VIII students are supposed to be able to articulate their opinions and plans orally in formal and informal situations using simple sentence structures, including tenses such as future tense. Differentiated learning allows teachers to customize their approach based on students' abilities, interests and learning styles, making it more effective in encouraging students to express their opinions, answer questions and speak using future tense. This is in line with the learning objectives that are the focus of this study, namely the ability to speak, convey concepts, and explain answers with the right sentence structure.

At SMP Negeri 003 Tanjungpinang, several challenges have been observed in the English learning process, particularly in developing students' speaking skills. First, students have not been adequately exposed to differentiated learning, making it difficult for them to experience personalized instruction that matches their learning needs. Traditional, one-size-fits-all teaching methods often failed to accommodate students with varying language proficiencies. Until now, there are still many teachers who think differentiated learning is difficult to implement well (Rejeki et al., 2023).

Teachers play a critical role in effectively using differentiated learning.. According to Herwina (2021) in Solikhin et al. (2023), highlights that teachers had to analyze students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles to design instructional activities that maximize learning outcomes. By incorporating personalized learning paths, teachers create an inclusive environment where students develop their speaking skills at their own pace while receiving adequate support and guidance.

Second, students' speaking skills remain a concern. Many students encounter difficulties in fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary when attempting to communicate in English. This issue is partly due to the limited opportunities for interactive and adaptive speaking exercises in the classroom. According to Husni & Saputri (2023), One of the causes of students' speaking difficulties is the lack of understanding in English pronunciation, absence of words and also not comprehending the structure of English well.

The researchers chose to use differentiated learning because previous research has shown that this approach can have an effect on students' English language skills. In research conducted by (Afriliani, 2020) Differentiated learning is a solution to the needs of students that is in accordance with the reading ability of students in supporting their understanding in learning. differentiated instruction was found to have a significant effect on students' writing skills and motivation in English learning. Furthermore (Ghazali, 2024), The study employed a quasi-experimental design with a control and treatment group, indicating that students taught with differentiated instruction had higher writing scores and were more motivated than those in the control group. This research lends support to the use of varied learning as an effective strategy for meeting the unique learning demands of learners.

The reason for choosing this research title is based on the relevance of the problem, namely the low speaking skill among junior high school students which is an urgent problem to overcome, as well as the need for innovation in English language teaching. Traditional teaching methods that are still widely used have not

been able to accommodate the different learning styles of students, so the application of differentiated learning is expected to increase participation, confidence, and language fluency. In addition, SMP Negeri 003 Tanjungpinang has diverse student characteristics, making this school a representative location to test the effectiveness of innovative teaching strategies. Thus, this research is expected to make practical and theoretical contributions in developing more effective English language learning strategies that suit students' needs. This study aimed to investigate the impact of differentiated learning on the speaking skills of eighth-grade students. Given the existing challenges and potential benefits of this instructional approach, the research explores how differentiated learning influences students' fluency, accuracy in speaking English. The findings of this study are expected to contribute valuable insights for educators seeking to enhance language instruction through innovative and student-centered teaching methods.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

The researcher found the following problems based on the research background:

1. Students have not been exposed to differentiated learning.
2. Teachers have struggled to implement differentiated learning effectively.
3. Teachers have not fully understood how to apply differentiated learning in the classroom.
4. Students have difficulties in speaking.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

In this research, the researcher will focused on the effect of differentiated learning on student's speaking skill at SMPN 003 Tanjungpinang.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the limitations of the problem mentioned above, the researcher formulates the research question “Is there any significant effect of differentiated learning on students' speaking skill 8th grade of SMPN 3 Tanjungpinang?”

1.5 Research Objective

Based on the research question above, the goal of this study is to know whether the differentiated learning has a significant effect on students' speaking skills 8th grade of SMP Negeri 3 Tanjungpinang.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

The study's findings were expected to have both theoretical and practical applications.:

1. Theoretically

This study can provide readers with insights into the effect of differentiated learning in students' speaking ability and can be a reference for future research.

2. Practically

Practically, the results of this research will make an important benefit to the instructor, students, and other research.

1) For Students

The researcher aims to help students' response to speaking English. By meeting their individual learning needs, students were expected to experience a more engaging and inclusive learning environment.

2) For Teachers

The findings will help teachers design and implement effective differentiated techniques for learning tailored to the unique needs of their students. It will also provide practical insights into how the Kurikulum Merdeka can be used to enhance students' speaking skills in English.

3) For Researcher

This study will serve as a reference for researchers interested in exploring differentiated learning, especially in the context of English language teaching. It opens up opportunities for further investigation into its application across different educational levels, subjects, and cultural contexts.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Differentiated Learning

An strategy that customizes teaching tactics to match the different needs, interests, and learning styles of pupils.

2. Speaking Skill

Speaking ability is the capacity to speak English to engage and exchange ideas, experiences, interests, views, and points of view with instructors, classmates, and others in a variety of familiar formal and casual settings.

3. Simple future tense

Simple Future Tense is used to express plans, predictions, promises, or spontaneous decisions about the future.

4. Kurikulum Merdeka

A curriculum that gives schools and teachers the freedom to customize Learning techniques are tailored to the requirements, interests, and skills of the learners.

