

**TEACHING ENGLISH TO THE LOW AND HIGH ACHIEVERS OF 7TH
GRADE AT AN ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PALEMBANG**

A THESIS

By

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FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

UNIVERSITAS SRIWIJAYA

2024

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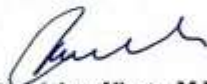
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Certify that data thesis entitled "Teaching English to The Low and High Achievers of 7th Grade at Islamic Junior High School Palembang" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by the Ministry of Education Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education.

Therefore, I deserve to face the court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

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MOTTO:

"Keep smiling, because life is a beautiful thing and there's so much to smile about." - Marilyn Monroe

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to:

My beloved parents papa (Aswan) mama (Mikasriah), brothers (Andri and Yogi),
and my big family.

Thank you for your sustainable prayer on me.

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In the name of Allah S.W.T., the most gracious and merciful. First of all the author would like to thanks to Allah, who has given strength, patience, and healthy to complete the composition of this thesis titled "Teaching English to The Low and High Achievers of 7th Grade at Islamic Junior High School Palembang” This thesis is completed as part of the requirements for obtaining a Magister’s degree in English Language Education within the Magister’s Program of Language Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University. The author would like to thank everyone who helped throughout the process of developing this thesis. Especially to her amazing advisors, Machdalena Vianty, M.Pd., M.Ed., Ed.D., and Dr. Ismail Petrus, M.A., for their advice, suggestions, patience, and support in directing and refining this thesis. The author also would like to convey her gratitude to all the lecturers within the Magister Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University, as well as the Head of the Language and Arts Department and the Dean of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University, for their valuable support and counsel. Furthermore, sincere thanks to the English teacher and vice principal of Al Fahd Islamic Junior High School. The author also expressed appreciation to her family, Mr. Aswan and Mrs. Mikasriah as the author's parents who motivated her to continue her studies to the master's degree and my friends in the English Language Education 2022 cohort. Finally, I expect that this thesis will be useful and beneficial to students, teachers, and the future researcher who interested in conducting this study.

Palembang,

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Teaching English to The Low and High Achievers of 7th Grade at Islamic Junior High School Palembang

ABSTRACT

This research examined the implementation of differentiated learning applied to students of low and high ability in the classroom, the challenges and solutions given by the teacher at a private junior high school in Palembang, South Sumatera, Indonesia. This research used a qualitative case study as its research design. Data was collected through interviews with a teacher of English and the school principal, observation, and document review. The findings revealed that the teacher of English has implemented differentiated learning aligned with school policy, and the learning plan made is appropriate based on government policy. In the implementation process, the teacher assigned a topic to the students and then allowed them to explore it based on their interests. The teacher groups students based on their abilities. Even though differentiated learning has been well implemented in this school, there are several challenges faced by the teacher, such as a lack of enthusiasm from students with low abilities. The teacher should be well prepared to implement this approach. The solutions are that the teacher should warm up the learning atmosphere in the classroom so that it can attract students's learning interest and talent, then they should have thorough preparation and consistency and be supported by training related to this approach.

Keywords: Teaching English, mixed ability, Differentiated learning

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the formulation of the problems, the objectives, and the significance of study.

1.1 Background

English is used to communicate with people from or with a background in other languages because, as we all know, it has become the most frequently used language on earth. According to Rohmah (2005), English is a global language because it is now spoken by many worldwide as their first, second, and third language. English is becoming a vital communication and information exchange tool in today's globalized society. As a result, learning English is essential for Indonesians in the age of globalization if they do not want to be seen as outdated by other people. To compete in the global era, especially in the Asian community, mastering English, the most widely spoken language globally, is undoubtedly one of the most crucial assets. It can open doors for the association to expand worldwide (Handayani, 2016). Therefore, English is now frequently taught in formal and informal settings at all educational levels, including elementary school, junior high, senior high, and university. Thus, English is a language that everyone can quickly learn, both in school and through courses. English is a compulsory subject taught at the junior high school level by the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 26 of 2006. Alongside other topics like Indonesian language and mathematics, English is an absolute from secondary school through college (Santoso, 2014). Although the national education minister's 2013 curriculum excluded English classes from elementary schools, this does not mean that English courses cannot still be offered in schools. Outside of the regular curriculum, English instruction is still permitted in schools (Maduwu, 2016). Along with this, teaching English is not only done at a high level but also a low level for young learners.

Teaching English to Young Learners is an activity that teaches a foreign language at a young age. Young learners from the first year of formal schooling (5 or 6) to 11 or 12 are considered young. Linse (2006) defines young learners as

youngsters between the ages of 5 and 12. In the meantime, Ersoz (2007) divides young learners into three subcategories: very young learners, young learners, and orderly or late young learners. Very young learners are between the ages of 3-6 years old; young learners are between the ages of 7-9 years old; and older or late young learners are between the ages of 10–12. Thus, grade 1 elementary school students to grade 7 Junior High School can be classified as young learners because the age range of Junior High Students is 12–15 years old. Therefore, teaching English to young learners and teenagers or adults is different because young learners have different characteristics in terms of their cognitive level, interests, needs, and academic achievement. On the other hand, Cheema (2021) defines academic achievement as the achievements or grades of students at school.

Similarly, Gizem (2020) describes it as an indicator of performance, which precedes educational activities in the school evaluation process. In this case, performance indicators can be considered as students' scores in the final activity. So, academic achievement is students' performance in various disciplines or particular fields of study. It is categorized as low, medium, or high achievement (Cheng, 2019). Low achievement refers to students' performance below expected standards, while average performance shows mid-level performance aligned with standards. On the other hand, high achievement indicates performance that ranges above the standard (Jamillah, 2016). This Research only focuses on low and high-achievers.

Students come to the different academic abilities. Therefore, a teacher must engage students in learning so that each of them can understand the material easily; in addition, a teacher must also play a significant role in class and should know their student's has learning styles, interests, and achievements. The currently established curriculum is the Merdeka curriculum. Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that enables students to study quietly, relax, have fun, be stress-free, and be pressure-free, allowing them to show their talent naturally. The Merdeka curriculum focuses on freedom and creative thinking. This school is designed to support each school in creating generations of lifelong learners with the same personality as Pancasila students. For the success of all that was required, the role of a teacher was required,

which is in line with the opinion (Nurul, 2020, p. 26.) that "the teacher is the main subject who plays an expected role and can be a driving force to take action that gives positive things to students." One of the very effective learning approaches to meet the expectations of students' learning needs is differentiated learning. Differentiated Learning is Learning can accommodate the learning needs of each student. The teacher facilitates students according to their learning needs. Every student has different learning needs. They can not be given the same treatment. When differentiated learning is implemented, teachers must consider reasonable actions during the learning process (Aliveya, 2017).

Some studies prove that differentiated learning can help students in the learning process. Abdul et al. (2022) explore a case of teaching with a differentiated instruction approach at a Junior High School in Eastern County, Taiwan. The result of this Research is that a well-planned lesson for differentiated instruction would help mixed-ability students get most of the lessons. Furthermore, it can also enhance the student's engagement during the lesson in the classroom. It is necessary to have an in-depth analysis to investigate the way behind the issue and to realize the way out or find a resolution to confirm the concern.

In its practice the teacher did not teach the students at separate times and rooms with students with different achievements, and this Research is crucial because it facilitates teachers to understand their students better and observe students with different interests, learning needs, and achievements. This has been proven by a previous study by Tri (2023). This Research aims to analyze the teachers' strategies for teaching English using differentiated learning. The result of this Research is that the strategies used by the teachers to accommodate needs come from the content, process, and product. The content, process, and product should differ based on the student's needs but on the same topic. The reason why the researcher chose Junior High School students is because Junior High School students grade seven are still categorized as young learners based on the expert above. Furthermore, this Islamic Junior High School implements the Merdeka Curriculum, and the researcher is one of the teachers who teach at the school. As

described above, the title of this Research is Teaching English to Low and High Achievers at Islamic Junior High School.

1.2 Formulation of the Problems

According to the research background, the problems of the Research are formulated in the research questions:

1. How is Differentiated Learning applied in a mixed-ability classroom comparing low and high achievers at Al Fahd Islamic Junior High School Palembang?
2. What challenges do the English teacher at Al Fahd Islamic Junior High School encounter when teaching English in a mixed-ability classroom?
3. How do the English teachers overcome the challenges?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

Regarding the problems above, the objectives of the Research are as follows:

1. To find out the differentiated learning applied in a mixed ability classroom comparing low and high achievers at Al Fahd Islamic Junior High School Palembang
2. To find out the challenges the English teacher at Al Fahd Islamic Junior High School encounters when teaching English in the mixed ability classroom
3. To find out the way English teachers overcome the challenges.

1.4 Significance of the Research

The results of this study are expected to contribute to teaching English to the 7th grade students who are low and high achievers who apply to this school; the findings guide those who want to explore English teaching at the Junior High School level at different achievement levels. This study is related to questions in line with established field conditions, recent educational trends, and the proposed curriculum.

Based on this study, the researchers gained much experience, such as how to teach English in general according to the teacher and how the teacher treats the students in different ways. The researcher expected people to take as much knowledge as possible and then be able to match these ideas to teaching and learning life. Hopefully, more people will realize the importance of English language education for Young learners.

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