

## **Implementing Differentiated Instruction in an EFL Classroom: A Study of Grade VIII Students at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar**

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### **Abstract**

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is essential in Indonesian EFL classrooms to address diverse student needs under the Merdeka Curriculum. The purpose of this study is to describe the implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, identify the challenges faced by teachers during the implementation process, and formulate strategies used to overcome these obstacles. This study used qualitative methods with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The research procedure included conducting non-cognitive diagnostic assessments, analyzing student needs, preparing differentiated lesson plans, conducting classroom learning, and collecting data on teacher and student perceptions through semi-structured interviews. The research subjects included two English teachers and seventh and eighth grade students selected based on variations in academic ability to illustrate the diversity of learning needs. The results showed that teachers had implemented Differentiated Instruction through content, process, and product differentiation, particularly by providing materials of varying levels of difficulty, grouping based on ability, and using a variety of learning media. The main challenges in implementing DI included time constraints, the complexity of classroom management, and administrative burdens. Teachers overcame these obstacles through flexible strategies, creativity in preparing materials, the use of technology, and the creation of a supportive learning environment. Students generally showed positive perceptions, feeling more helped because the tasks were tailored to their abilities and interests, and more motivated to be actively involved in learning.

**Keywords:** Differentiated Instruction, English as a Foreign Language, Differentiated Learning

### **Introduction**

Facing the challenges of 21st century education, the Merdeka Curriculum was introduced as an effort to create more adaptive and relevant learning for students. Since its implementation in 2021 and widespread adoption in 2023, this curriculum has become a milestone in education reform because it offers a flexible, inclusive, and contextual system (Kemdikbud, 2023). Teachers are given the space to innovate in developing competencies and character in accordance with the

Pancasila Student Profile (Aulia & Ratri, 2025). Learning includes differentiated intracurricular activities, co-curricular projects to strengthen character traits such as collaboration and critical thinking, and extracurricular activities based on student interests (Sianturi, 2025). Rooted in the philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara, this curriculum emphasizes character development and independence. Therefore, the diversity of student abilities in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum requires a responsive approach, such as Differentiated Instruction.

The integration of Differentiated Instruction (DI) is an important solution to the challenges of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia, such as large class sizes, varying levels of proficiency, and limited resources. Traditional uniform methods often reduce student engagement, while DI offers flexible strategies tailored to individual needs (Nurlankyzy & Elmira, 2023). In practice, advanced students can use authentic texts, while beginners receive simplified materials (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2023). Differentiation is carried out through adjustments to content, process, and product, but its implementation is still hampered by a lack of teacher training, technological limitations, and large class sizes (Amelia, 2024). To overcome these obstacles, formative assessment is key in mapping students' readiness, interests, and learning preferences, supported by the use of technology and collaborative strategies such as peer learning. Without the right approach, many students find it difficult to engage and benefit optimally from English language learning.

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is an effective approach to accommodate student diversity in EFL classrooms. DI emphasizes that each student has different needs, abilities, and learning preferences, so teachers need to vary the material, teaching strategies, and assessments (Kholid et al., 2024). This approach is important in the Indonesian context, where classrooms are highly heterogeneous, as it allows for more inclusive learning and helps students overcome differences in ability and learning styles (Suryati & Ratih, 2023). Proficient students can be given higher challenges, while students who need support receive simplified materials or guidance. However, the implementation of DI requires careful planning, professional training for teachers, the availability of school resources, and policy support in order to be effective and sustainable in EFL learning in Indonesia.

The selection of differentiated learning topics is based on the fact that each child has different potential and learning styles, so they need to be served according to their individual needs. This is in line with Tomlinson and Imbeau (2023) view, which emphasizes the importance of helping all students maximize their capacity as learners through differentiated learning. In addition, a clear implementation design is needed because in practice, teachers still face difficulties in planning and implementing differentiated learning effectively in the classroom.

Previous studies on differentiated teaching in the EFL context have made important contributions, but each has limitations that leave room for further research. The study by Suwastini et al (2021) emphasizes the theoretical basis of differentiated instruction and outlines the importance of accommodating student uniqueness, but does not discuss how this concept is actually applied in Indonesian EFL classrooms, especially in relation to teacher adaptation strategies in diverse learning situations. The research by Barlian et al (2023) examines the implementation of differentiated learning in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, but its scope is limited to the application of content, process, product, and learning environment components without exploring in depth how teachers overcome limitations such as pedagogical competence

and infrastructure, and without touching on the variations in other school contexts in Indonesia. Meanwhile, Agung's research shows that differentiation of content, process, and product can improve student learning outcomes, but the focus is only on the junior high school level and on improving learning outcomes, not on the dynamics of implementation, challenges, and teacher strategies in various EFL classroom contexts.

From these three studies, it appears that there has been no study that provides a comprehensive picture of how differentiated instruction is actually implemented in Indonesian EFL classrooms, including how teachers adapt their strategies to diverse classroom conditions, overcome practical obstacles, and utilize technology and innovative approaches. Thus, this study is needed to fill this gap by providing a more holistic analysis of actual practices, challenges, adaptations, and the effectiveness of DI implementation in various Indonesian EFL classrooms.

The purpose of this study is to describe the implementation of Differentiated Instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, identify the challenges encountered during its implementation, and explore the strategies used to overcome these challenges.

## **Method**

In this study, the authors employed a qualitative research method, which focused on exploring processes and meanings rather than relying on numerical measurements or statistical procedures to quantify relationships. This research was conducted at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar, which was located on Ngarjosari, Popongan, Kec. Karanganyar, Karanganyar Regency, Central Java. SMPIT MTA Karanganyar was an Islamic integrated junior high school that served students with diverse academic abilities and learning characteristics. This research was conducted from December 2024 to early May 2025. The target population of this study was the Grade VIII girls' class at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar, which consisted of 32 female students.

The research procedure consisted of several steps that were carried out systematically. The author began by constructing a research plan, followed by administering a non-cognitive diagnostic test to gather initial data about the learners. The results of this diagnostic test were analyzed to identify students' needs and characteristics. Based on these findings, the author constructed a lesson plan and implemented the lesson in the classroom while conducting observations throughout the process. After the lesson, interviews and questionnaires were conducted to obtain additional insights. Finally, all collected data were compiled and analyzed to produce the research findings.

This research utilized qualitative data obtained through observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Observation involved systematically watching and recording the actions and behaviors of the research participants. The researcher, along with a collaborator, observed student activities and monitored the progress of teaching and learning within the classroom. Interviews, which were conducted as face-to-face interactions, were designed to gather insights into participants' feelings, opinions, and ideas during the research process. The researcher interviewed both students and the collaborator to explore their experiences during the study, including the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented actions. The data collected from the interviews were transcribed into narrative text, providing a detailed account of the participants' perspectives.

## Results and Discussion

### Result

#### The Implementation of Differentiated Instruction in English Language Learning

The implementation of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in English language teaching at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar was investigated through interviews with English teachers to gain a deeper understanding of how DI was applied across multiple dimensions. These interviews revealed teachers' conceptual understanding of DI, their planning and classroom strategies, as well as its perceived impact on student learning. The findings indicated that teachers adapted instruction to accommodate students' diverse abilities, learning styles, and levels of readiness. One teacher commented,

*"I define Differentiated Instruction as a learning technique that tailors resources and procedures to students' needs and characteristics. I learned this from training and workshops, as well as through my teaching experience."*

When creating lesson plans, teacher stated,

*"I usually differentiate the material, methods, and learning media to suit the different abilities of students."*

Regarding the most frequently used technique of differentiation, teacher stated,

*"I more often apply content differentiation by providing texts of varying levels of difficulty for students according to their abilities."*

Teachers at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar demonstrated an understanding of the concept of Differentiated Instruction and applied it effectively in English language learning. They tailored the curriculum, teaching methods, and learning resources to meet students' needs. Teachers also utilized initial assessments to classify students according to their abilities and interests. This approach proved effective in encouraging active learning and supported the development of students' English language skills. Teachers employed a variety of approaches to identify students' needs, including diagnostic assessments, classroom observations, and ongoing evaluations of students' participation and performance during learning activities.

*"I conduct pre-tests and observations during lessons to identify students' abilities and learning styles."*

The learning tactics employed also based on the students' skill levels. A professor adds,

*"Students with higher abilities are grouped together, while those with I group students based on their abilities and interests so that the learning process can run effectively and all students are actively involved."*

The learning tactics employed are also based on the students' skill levels. teacher disclosed,

*"Students with high talents are given tough work, while students who are still struggling are offered assistance and simpler materials "*

The interview results suggested that teachers at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar implemented Differentiated Instruction comprehensively, with a focus on tailoring learning materials and instructional approaches to students' needs. The most important aspect was the differentiation of content and learning processes, followed by the adjustment of learning product complexity according to students' abilities to accommodate learner diversity. A supportive learning environment was also created through a positive instructional approach, allowing students to feel comfortable participating actively in classroom activities. The implementation of this approach demonstrated teachers' capacity to establish an inclusive and responsive classroom environment that accommodated students' diverse learning styles and ability levels.

### **Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Instruction.**

According to the research findings, the primary challenge in adopting Differentiated Instruction at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar was time constraints and the complexity of classroom management. Teachers experienced difficulties in designing diverse learning activities within a single session, as students worked on different tasks or projects based on their individual abilities. This finding was consistent with a teacher's comment, which mentioned that managing multiple learning activities simultaneously required additional preparation time and careful classroom organization,

*"The biggest challenge is managing time effectively. Differentiated activities require more preparation and classroom management because students work on different tasks at once."*

According to the interview results, time constraints and classroom management were critical factors influencing the effectiveness of Differentiated Instruction implementation. Teachers needed strong organizational skills and adaptable teaching strategies to implement differentiated learning effectively while maintaining student engagement.

One of the most challenging aspects of adopting Differentiated Instruction in English lessons was the limited amount of time available within a single class period. Teachers reported that the allocated time was often insufficient to carry out all the varied learning activities designed to address students' individual needs.

This is consistent with the teacher's comment, which says:

*"Yes, definitely. I often have to simplify the activities or divide them into two meetings. Sometimes I also prepare materials beforehand to save time"*

Administrative workloads limited the effectiveness of Differentiated Instruction implementation, as teachers were frequently required to balance students' academic needs with

various administrative demands. As a result, institutional support in the form of simplified administrative procedures was considered essential, as it enabled teachers to optimize their efforts in implementing learning that was tailored to students' individual needs.

### **Teacher Strategies for Overcoming Obstacles to Implement Differentiated Instruction**

Interviews with several English teachers at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar revealed that teachers employed a variety of strategies to overcome obstacles in implementing Differentiated Instruction (DI). They modified their teaching methods, learning materials, and instructional approaches to accommodate diverse student characteristics. Teachers made consistent efforts to ensure that every student was actively engaged in the learning process according to their individual skills. A teacher commented,

*"When I find it difficult to deal with differences in student abilities, I usually prepare several versions of activities some simple and some more complex so that all students can remain engaged."*

These findings demonstrate that teacher flexibility is critical to ensuring the efficiency of DI implementation in diverse settings.

In addition to flexibility, teachers' inventiveness is critical to the success of DI adoption. Teachers strive to design a variety of learning activities that are engaging and relevant to their students' interests. A teacher commented,

*"I often create my own worksheets or use language games modified from the internet so that students don't get bored quickly and continue to feel challenged."*

Based on this statement, it is apparent that teachers employ their creativity to make educational materials more contextual and engaging. This is consistent with the core idea of DI, which is to deliver learning experiences that are tailored to the requirements and learning styles of each individual.

The use of technology is also critical in facilitating the implementation of Differentiated Instruction. A number of teachers use digital platforms to personalize learning activities to their students' ability. One teacher stated,

*"I use services like Google Classroom and Quizizz to provide different tasks based on students' aptitude levels. As a result, pupils can study at their own speed."*

This statement demonstrates how technology may assist teachers differentiate content and learning processes while also allowing students to learn independently.

Teachers employ a variety of tactics to keep students motivated when implementing new learning methods, such as prizes, a positive learning environment, and engaging activities. A teacher commented,

*"I always give small rewards, such as praise or stars, to encourage students to stay motivated even though the tasks are different."*

This demonstrates that expressing gratitude is an excellent method to preserve kids' excitement for studying and foster an inclusive classroom atmosphere. As a result, pupils remain motivated even when assigned activities of different difficulty.

Teachers evaluate the success of Differentiated Instruction based not just on academic results, but also on non-cognitive factors such as involvement, motivation, and language skill development. Teacher commented,

*"I see the success of DI not from test scores, but from how actively students participate in discussions and dare to use English in class."*

This statement demonstrates that indices of DI performance prioritize student interaction and individual growth. DI is considered successful when students become more confident, active, and interested in the subject.

Furthermore, teachers reported considerable changes in students' ability and motivation once DI was introduced for some time. One teacher noted,

*"After several months of applying DI, I saw that kids were more active in asking questions and confident in speaking English. They got more eager to participate in class."*

According to this assertion, the application of DI not only enhanced academic achievement but also increased students' emotional engagement and motivation to learn.

Teachers submitted suggestions for improving the implementation of DI at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar. A teacher commented:

*"I hope the school can provide more training and time for collaboration between teachers, because implementing DI requires careful planning and team support."*

This notion demonstrated the significance of institutional support in the successful implementation of Differentiated Instruction. Continuous training, regular collaboration among teachers, and the provision of adequate learning resources were considered essential in enhancing the systematic and sustainable application of DI.

The findings of this study indicated that teachers' strategies for overcoming barriers to Differentiated Instruction implementation at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar included instructional creativity, the use of technology, collaboration among teachers, and the promotion of independent learning initiatives. The implementation of DI had a significant impact on students' motivation and learning abilities, resulting in a more flexible and inclusive learning environment. The success of DI implementation was heavily dependent on school support, ongoing professional development, and teachers' willingness to continue innovating in order to create learning experiences that were tailored to students' needs.

### **Student Perceptions of Differentiated Instruction**

Interviews with students at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar showed that most students were aware of differences in instructional treatment during English language learning. They understood that teachers did not assign the same tasks to all students but tailored assignments according to each student's abilities and interests. One student revealed that teachers often provided different types of exercises based on students' levels of understanding, which helped them learn more effectively. A student said:

*"Teachers usually give different exercises; students who understand quickly are asked to write dialogues, while those who still have difficulties are given vocabulary exercises first."*

This statement indicated that students understood the application of Differentiated Instruction in the classroom and perceived this approach as fair and beneficial. Some students also felt that the learning activities provided by the teacher were appropriate for their ability levels, which made the learning material easier to understand because the tasks were tailored to each student's level of understanding. One student commented,

"I think the tasks given by the teacher are appropriate for my abilities. If I don't understand something, I am usually given easier tasks until I understand."

These data showed that the implementation of Differentiated Instruction allowed students to learn gradually and increased their confidence in understanding English. Students held different views regarding the learning activities they found most helpful in learning English. Some students preferred group discussions because these activities made them more engaged and less bored. One student said this in an interview.

"I like learning through group discussions the most, because we can help each other if someone doesn't understand."

These findings indicated that collaborative activities were an important element of Differentiated Instruction that students appreciated, as such activities allowed them to learn from their peers and enhanced their communication skills. Regarding their feelings about receiving different assignments, most students did not feel uncomfortable or embarrassed; instead, they felt supported because the assignments matched their learning needs. This response showed that students accepted differentiation positively as a natural part of the learning process. One student stated,

"The advantage is that learning becomes easier because it is tailored to our abilities, but classes can take longer because the assignments are different."

This statement shows that students can critically evaluate the application of DI, considering both the benefits and problems of its use.

In addition, most students stated that techniques tailored to each student increased their motivation. They felt valued and more enthusiastic about learning because the teacher recognized their strengths. One student stated,

"I became more enthusiastic after the teacher recognized my abilities. If something is difficult, I am given appropriate exercises; if I succeed, I am offered other tasks."

According to the interview findings, Differentiated Instruction (DI) not only improved students' understanding but also enhanced their intrinsic motivation in learning English. Students expressed the hope that future learning activities would be more varied and engaging, including practical exercises and the use of interactive media rather than focusing solely on theoretical instruction. This response indicated that students preferred creative learning activities that were relevant to their daily lives and involved active participation, in line with the principles of Differentiated Instruction.



Overall, students demonstrated a positive attitude toward the implementation of DI, as this strategy personalized learning activities according to individual abilities, increased motivation, and created a fun and supportive classroom environment. Despite challenges such as differences in learning pace and time management, students perceived this approach as fairer and more effective than uniform learning applied to all students.

## **Discussion**

### **Implementation of Differentiated Instruction in English Language Learning at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar**

The implementation of differentiated instruction (DI) in English language learning at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar shows that teachers understand the concept of DI and are able to apply it according to the classroom context. Teachers adapt teaching materials, methods, and media to the talents, interests, personalities, and learning styles of students, so that each student has the opportunity to learn according to their abilities and needs. To assess learning outcomes more accurately, teachers also offer projects with different levels of difficulty according to each student's abilities (Riyanita et al., 2024).

In addition to understanding the concept of DI, the teachers' lesson planning reflects a systematic approach. They conduct initial assessments to identify students' starting abilities and group them based on observation and evaluation results. This helps teachers choose suitable methods and activities for each group. According to interviews, high-ability students receive more challenging tasks, while those needing support are given additional materials and guidance. Thus, differentiated instruction becomes a bridge to accommodate students' diverse learning styles (Pande Nyoman et al., 2022). This strategy broadens the learning process and allows each learner to develop according to their capacities.

The use of DI at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar is particularly visible in terms of content differentiation and learning process. Teachers assign different levels of difficulty to the subject so that students can learn according to their capacities. Furthermore, teachers use a variety of tactics, including group discussions, projects, and individual exercises, to ensure that every student has the opportunity to engage fully. By gathering information from several sources before to, during, and after instruction, instructors may assess the needs and progress of students in differentiated learning (Sofiana et al., 2024). However, some teachers reported that some pupils felt puzzled or uncomfortable when given different activities than their peers. To address this, teachers stressed that the task differences were not a form of comparison, but rather an adjustment to allow each student to learn in the most effective manner for them.

The interviews revealed that applying Differentiated Instruction (DI) increased students' motivation and engagement in learning English because they felt more confident participating in activities suited to their abilities. Appropriate task design that balances challenge and support is essential for addressing students' readiness to learn, and teachers were able to create a supportive environment in which students felt safe to make mistakes and appreciated for their efforts (Tundreng, 2025). The findings show that teachers at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar have effectively implemented DI by personalizing instruction, conducting ongoing assessments, and fostering an inclusive classroom climate. Although challenges remain, such as time management and limited training, DI has contributed positively to students' motivation, participation, and learning

outcomes. The ability to relate lessons to students' real-life experiences is also important for successful differentiated learning, and with continued school support, DI is expected to further enhance the flexibility and engagement of English learning for all students (Azzahra, 2024). The adoption of DI is projected to continue to evolve with the school's support and teacher participation, making the English learning experience more flexible, engaging, and fun for all students.

### **Difficulties in Executing Differentiated Instruction at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar**

The study indicates that the main challenges in implementing Differentiated Instruction (DI) at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar are time limitations and the complexity of classroom management. Teachers struggle to design and implement multiple learning activities in one session because students have diverse needs, abilities, and levels of understanding. Class size, physical learning environment, and limited resources further complicate the process, making teachers' ability to organize activities and maintain learning focus essential (Anggraeni & Yusviranty, 2024). Time constraints also hinder DI application, as differentiation requires additional explanation, supervision, and assessment. Lack of preparation time, students' preference for traditional methods, diverse classroom characteristics, and behavior management issues contribute to these difficulties (Gibbs, 2023). Teachers often simplify or divide activities to fit the available time, showing that practical time restrictions remain a persistent barrier. Administrative demands also affect DI effectiveness, as teachers must balance instructional planning with tasks such as assessment, reporting, and documentation. Heavy workloads, large classes, limited resources, and insufficient training in adaptive practices reduce teachers' freedom to design differentiated activities, leading some to streamline DI practices to remain manageable within the constraints of time and energy (Adare et al., 2023).

The findings of this study indicate that instructors' organizational and adaptability skills are essential for addressing the problems of adopting differentiated instruction (DI). Teachers who can manage their time, create goals, and come up with effective ways to teach are better at using varied ways of learning for each student. Instructors feel less stressed when they work in supportive circumstances, including when instructors work together and the school communicates well with them. In this situation, teachers are not only responsible for helping students learn, but they are also responsible for managing the classroom and making sure that student needs are met while still using the resources that are available. Along with the significance of stakeholder engagement and assistance in overcoming these obstacles, it is underlined that instructors must receive professional training in order to execute differentiated teaching successfully (Sun & Yusof, 2024).

Implementing Differentiated Instruction at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar is hard for more than just technological reasons. It's also hard for structural and institutional reasons. During their training, aspiring instructors were not given enough opportunity to practice inclusive didactics and were not given enough advice on the subject (Schwab & Woltran, 2023). The school needs to help make the system work better because of time limits, the difficulty of managing a classroom, and a lot of paperwork. Teachers can do DI better if they get more training, have less paperwork to do, and if schools make rules that encourage new ways of learning. With enough

help, teachers may spend more time creating a variety of relevant learning activities that meet the requirements of their students. This will help them reach the key goals of differentiated learning more effectively.

### **Teacher Strategies for Overcoming Challenges in Implementing Differentiated Instruction at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar**

The results of the study show that English teachers at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar implement various adaptation strategies in differentiated teaching by adjusting methods, materials, and learning activities to suit the needs of each student. This flexibility allows teachers to maintain learning interest while managing the pace, variety of activities, and tasks. Strong support from the school environment, including distance learning facilities, also helps to overcome challenges.

In addition to flexibility, teacher creativity also plays an important role. Teachers develop interesting and contextual teaching materials, modify language games, create worksheets, and apply interactive methods to increase engagement. This creativity helps overcome differences in student abilities and improves understanding and learning outcomes (Napitupulu et al., 2023). Technology has proven to be very helpful in the implementation of Differentiated Instruction. Teachers utilize Google Classroom, Quizizz, and other digital media to assign tasks according to students' ability levels and monitor their learning progress. The integration of technology allows students to learn anytime, at their own pace, and increases engagement, especially for those who are more comfortable with digital tools (Sianturi, 2025)

In addition, teachers maintain student motivation through new methods, technology, and emotional support. By providing appreciation, tasks that match their abilities, and a comfortable learning environment, students become more confident and less anxious. Teachers who believe in their students' potential use structured materials to organize learning activities that encourage intrinsic motivation (Grecu, 2022).

Research shows that flexibility, innovation, use of technology, and a supportive classroom environment are key strategies for overcoming the challenges of implementing Differentiated Instruction. The success of DI also requires school support in the form of ongoing training, teacher collaboration, and supportive leadership. With this support, teachers can continue to develop methods that meet student needs, improve learning outcomes and motivation, and create inclusive classrooms for all.

### **Student Perspectives on the Application of Differentiated Instruction in English Language Learning**

The study findings show that students at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar have a strong understanding of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in English language learning. They realize that teachers adapt their teaching according to each student's abilities and interests, making learning more fair, meaningful, and less stressful. Students feel that the tasks given are at the right level of difficulty but still manageable, and they appreciate being able to choose activities that suit their abilities and comfort levels. This approach puts students at the center of the learning process, allowing them to develop at their own pace, build confidence, and learn in a supportive and friendly classroom environment (Mardhatillah & Suharyadi, 2023).

The results of this study also show that students consider group discussions and collaborative projects to be the most effective learning methods, as they enable social interaction, peer support, and better understanding of the material. Collaborative activities also make classes more enjoyable and help students appreciate the diverse skills within the group. This is in line with the findings Aulia and Ratri (2025) that DI has succeeded in creating a culture of collaboration and responsibility, as well as supporting the optimal development of students' potential.

Most students are open to alternative learning methods and believe that differences in assignments and teaching help them learn more effectively according to their individual abilities. Although these techniques sometimes take longer, they still consider DI to be fairer and more useful than traditional methods, as it increases motivation, engagement, and self-confidence (Rahmani, 2024). Students also want more diverse, creative learning that uses engaging media so they can explore their own abilities. Overall, differentiated instruction not only improves learning outcomes, but also creates a more meaningful and empathetic educational experience for students (Ningtyas & Lestari, 2024)

## **Conclusion**

This study highlights the significance of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in enhancing English language learning at SMPIT MTA Karanganyar. The findings demonstrated that DI was implemented effectively, with teachers showing a strong understanding of how to adapt learning content, processes, and products to students' readiness, interests, and learning styles. The integration of digital tools, such as Google Classroom and Quizizz, further supported the differentiation process by increasing students' motivation, engagement, and confidence in learning English. The study also identified key challenges in implementing DI, including time constraints, classroom management complexity, limited learning resources, and administrative workloads. Despite these obstacles, teachers employed adaptive strategies such as designing tiered tasks, incorporating interactive activities, utilizing digital technology, and providing positive reinforcement. These strategies contributed to the creation of an inclusive, student-centered learning environment.

Overall, this research is significant in demonstrating that, although Differentiated Instruction requires careful planning and institutional support, it can effectively address student diversity and improve learning outcomes. The findings provide valuable insights for teachers, schools, and policymakers seeking to implement DI more systematically and sustainably in English language education.

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