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DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASD STUDENTS IN AN EFL CLASS

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the implementation of Differentiated Instructions (DI) for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) students in an EFL class and investigate the teachers' views on the use of DI in an EFL class. This study employed a qualitative method and used an observation and interview checklist as the research instruments. Conducted in a private inclusive elementary school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, this study involved three classes, i.e., grade 2, grade 3, and grade 6, and two English teachers who have experience teaching ASD students in an inclusive classroom setting. The observation and interview showed that DI was implemented in two ways, i.e., the English teachers designed different assessments for ASD students, and 2) the English teachers provided extra assistance for ASD students. The findings indicated that DI helped ASD students accomplish all in-class English assignments, and it helped ASD students follow the language of instructions in the English class. At the end of the article, implications and contributions for both in- and pre-service English teachers who teach ASD students in an inclusive class are offered.

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INTRODUCTION

Singal (2016) claimed that 57 million children in 2011 were out of school, most of whom were special needs children. This phenomenon shows that students with special needs might face some challenges in education compared to regular children (Ryan & Quinlan, 2017; Stafford, 2017; Valvi et al., 2020). With special needs or not, all students need the education to experience positive, successful social interactions with students, teachers, and others (Simeonsson et al., 2001). In other words, all children, both regular and special needs, need the education to acquire knowledge and life skills to support their life in society.

Since the students' needs and abilities in the classroom are various, especially in inclusive schools (where regular students learn in the same class with special needs students), the teacher may implement Differentiated Instructions (henceforth DI) in teaching (Kurniawati, 2020). Endal et al. (2013) define DI as "a process in teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the same class." (p. 3). In other words, DI may help students burgeon their potential by considering students' needs, abilities, and learning styles. Implementing DI requires teachers' participation and schools and the whole environment (Endal et al., 2013).

In addition, Jahan et al. (2017) explained DI is "the practice of evolving and adapting instruction, developing, modifying and using materials, and conducting different student based on assessments to meet the learning needs of individuals, especially in a diverse classroom." To support the implementation of DI, Tomlinson (2001) argued there are classroom elements that teachers need to consider in applying DI: 1) content; 2) process; and 3) products (quoted in Jahan et al., 2017). Content focuses on differentiating the information that the students will achieve in the learning process. Furthermore, the process emphasizes determining the classroom activities to help the students master the content. Third, products are the climax in the learning process where the students need to the extent or apply what they have got from the materials. Each element is designed based on three characteristics of the students with disabilities, i.e., 1) readiness, 2) interests, and 3) process (Tomlinson, 2001).

Educating students with special needs, especially Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) students, may challenge some teachers in the classroom activities. Some teachers who do not have basic skills for this kind of student may find teaching difficult. Baxter et al. (2015) and Roberts and Williams (2016) stated that "children who are given the diagnostic label of ASD will experience a severe impairment in their reciprocal social interactions" (p. 2), where this case somehow adds more challenges for the teachers. Moreover, Roberts and Williams (2016) stated that children with ASD may have problems in speech and language delay, learning difficulties, and hearing impairment. Furthermore, Norwich (1994) in Morley et al. (2005)

stated that "teacher's attitudes towards the inclusion of children with SEN (Special Education Needs) can have a considerable impact on their educational experiences" (p. 4), that means by teaching the autistics, the teacher may have a new beneficial educational experience. Padmadewi and Artini (2017) claimed that in Indonesia, many schools and teachers have limited material development and teaching skills to cope with the autistic students. As this limitation occurs, teachers may find it difficult to have some teaching strategies to deal with the autistic students. In conclusion, educating ASD students may be challenging as teachers receive limited knowledge and teaching skills about how to design teaching instruction for ASD students in regular classes.

Many previous studies have discussed DI for ASD students (Aftab, 2015; Block & Zeman, 1996; Cha & Ahn, 2014; Endal et al., 2013; Morley et al., 2005; Robertson et al., 2003). The findings of the studies previously mentioned explained the planning, design, and implementation of DI in education. Additionally, some previous studies were also conducted to discuss the implementation of DI for ASD students in English class (Jahan et al., 2017; Padmadewi & Artini, 2017; Park & Thomas, 2012). Jahan et al. (2017) claimed that English teachers urgently need assistance in teaching special needs students. Park and Thomas (2012) found that English teachers barely consider learners' backgrounds appropriate in English classes in Saudi Arabia. Differential materials for the special needs students were one of the biggest challenges for the English teachers, and they did not have enough training in implementing DI. Furthermore, Padmadewi and Artini (2017) investigated the implementation of DI in English class through visual media as ASD students tended to be visual learners.

Related to the methods, some previous studies about the implementation of DI used qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Qualitative methods by using interviews can be found in Cha and Ahn (2014), Endal et al. (2013), Marlina and Efrina (2019), Morley et al. (2005), Padmadewi and Artini (2017), and Park and Thomas (2012). Further, quantitative methods can be found in Aftab (2015) and Jahan et al. (2017). Additionally, some other studies used mixed methods, such as in Shareefa et al. (2019), Robertson et al. (2003), and Siam and Al-Natour (2016). Unlike previously conducted qualitative studies that used interviews as the research instruments, this qualitative study gathered the data from the class observations and interviews with the teachers.

Additionally, previous studies also investigated the implementation of DI at a different educational level. In preschoolers, there was a study conducted by Machů (2015). Cha and Ahn (2014), Padmadewi and Artini (2017), and Tomlinson (2000) investigated the implementation of DI in elementary schools. Additionally, in high schools, there were studies

conducted by Aftab (2015) and Block and Zeman (1996), Endal et al. (2013), and Marlina and Efrina (2019). In higher education, some studies about DI in English classes were researched by Kurniawati (2020), Kurniawati et al. (2019), and Subekti, 2020). Therefore, this study was conducted in a private elementary school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, as there were limited studies about the implementation of DI in English classes for elementary school students.

Hence, it can be said that many previous studies investigated DI implementation. Yet, there were limited studies that investigated DI implementation in an English class. Therefore, this study was conducted to explore the implementation of DI in teaching students with autism in English classes. Additionally, this study aimed to investigate the English teachers' perspectives in implementing DI.

METHOD

Research Design

This study applied qualitative methods by using observations and interviews. In Cohen et al. (2007), it was stated that qualitative research has the job of "making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions" (p. 461). That means the qualitative methods seek the participants' point of view, not generalizing the result of the data. Additionally, qualitative methods focused on the smaller number than quantitative methods, yet the data that would be collected were rich and detailed (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, qualitative methods were chosen because this study wanted to seek in-depth data from reality.

To interpret and construct data from participants, the researchers applied the interpretivism paradigm to seek the participants' experiences and perceptions (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Moreover, the interviews in this study were aimed to seek meaningful data from the various viewpoints of the teachers, as it is acceptable in interpretivism to have different points of view from different individuals (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Research Participants

The participants in this study were three elementary students and two English teachers. Elementary school was chosen because learners have a chance to grow up and become a part of the nation (Kapur, 2018a). In other words, students in elementary school started to build their habits to become themselves. The school for this study was one of the private schools in Yogyakarta. This school is also one of the inclusive schools that applies an international curriculum. The main reason why this school was chosen was because of the number of special needs students there. There were 16 special needs students, from a total of 105 students. The

special needs students included those who had ASD, down syndrome, dyslexia, speech delay, and slow learners. More specifically, there are 4 ASD students placed in grade 1, grade 2, grade 3, and grade 6. The students became the participants during the observation, and the English teachers were the participants during the observations and interviews. This school makes its inclusiveness not only from the autistic and general students, but also from the other aspects, such as the students' gender balance, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and economics. Since the students are studying in many aspects of inclusiveness, they are taught that they are unique and special.

Research Instruments

This study used an observations checklist and interviews guideline with the English teachers. The observations in this study aimed to find the frequency of DI that the teachers used. Further, the teachers' interviews aimed to expose their subjective opinions about the autistic students' participation in class (Dornyei, 2007). Moreover, Dornyei (2007) also stated that "interview is a social, interpersonal encounter, not merely a data collection exercise" (p. 361) that meant the interviews in this study were not aimed to generalize the perspective of the teachers, yet, it was aimed to see the different point of view in teaching students with autism. Furthermore, the interviews focused on the teachers' views and experiences in their teaching in inclusive classes. Thus, the interviews were used to make sure some things that the researcher got from the observation.

The observations were done in English classes in grade 2, grade 3, and grade 6. These grades were chosen because those classes had at least one ASD student in each class. The observations were done on purpose as it allowed me to collect data naturally based on the actual situation (Cohen et al., 2007). Moreover, the observations enabled me to get the data "directly at what is taking place rather than relying on second-hand accounts" (Cohen et al., 2007: 396). Through the observations checklist, there were 22 items in total. The items were adapted from Tomlinson (2000). From 22 items, they were divided into four aspects: 1) Content (6 items); 2) Process (7 items); 3) Products (6 items); and Learning environment (3 items). There were a checklist box and note box in the observation checklist, which aimed to investigate some phenomena during the observations.

Furthermore, the interviews with two English teachers were collected after observing their classes to get in-depth data. Cohen et al. (2007) claimed interviews as an "interpretation of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their point of view" (p. 461). This meant the interviews were used to get the theoretical opinion from the

participants. Moreover, Laing (1967) in Cohen et al. (2007) also stated that the interviews tended to be more intersubjective, not merely subjective or objective. This meant that even though the interviews were subjective, they still needed to be objective. The data collected through interviews should be based on a real-life situation, not merely an opinion. The interviews checklist had 14 questions. The first seven questions were aimed to investigate the ASD students' participation in the classroom. Further, the other seven questions were aimed to investigate the implementation of DI delivered by the teachers.

Data Collection and Analysis

Dornyei (2007) commented that social phenomena observed should occur naturally, without any manipulations. First of all, the researcher collected data through observations. The observations were done in English classes with special needs students by sticking to the observation checklist. The observations were conducted during February – April 2020 (two months). Interviews with the English teachers were done right after the class observations. As interviews were one of the instruments used to gain personal opinions (Dornyei, 2007), results from the interviews answered the research question one with reliable data. In analyzing the data, the researchers followed the steps proposed by Cohen et al. (2007) about data analysis. First, the results of interviews and observations were respectively transcribed and narrated. Secondly, the data was coded. Thirdly, themes were generated from the codes in transcriptions and narrations. Fourthly, the results of the analysis were verified by consulting the themes to the English teacher participants. Finally, the researchers reported the results of the analysis.

Ethical Consideration

To get permission from the school, the researchers first asked the school principal to interview some English teachers and observe some classes with ASD students. Greene and Hogan (2005) stated that it is essential to give consent forms to the participants before the interviews to give them a chance to choose whether they agree to participate in the study. It was suggested that the consent forms were delivered verbally and written about the study, its implications, and its impact (Greene & Hogan, 2005). The written consent forms were given to the English teachers, and the students would be verbally informed about the consent form through their teachers.

Since the school had its research institution, it issued the permission letter, not the school principal. Then, the permission letter was delivered to the school principal, the English teacher, and the homeroom teacher. The letter contains some agreements about classes that could be observed and the teachers of each class. Before performing the interviews, the school informed

the English teachers about them. Further, the consent forms for the interviews were given to the English teacher right before the interviews began. During interviews and observation, to keep the participants' identities confidential, all the names of both the English teachers and ASD students involved in this study would be mentioned as pseudonyms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The interviews were done with two English teachers, Rose (English teacher for grades 6) and Illa (English teacher for grades 1 and 3), with 3 and 4 years of experience teaching ASD. Both teachers agreed that they had never learned about dealing with special needs students nor ASD students when they were in college. The observations with 4 English classes were done: once for Grade 6, twice for Grade 3, and once for Grade 1). The ASD students were Ben (Grade 6, ASD low spectrum), Andy (Grade 3, ASD low spectrum), and Jonathan (Grade 1, ASD high spectrum).

Research question 1: To what extent do teachers employ DI in teaching students with autism in English class?

Based on the observations and the interviews conducted, these two themes were generated; 1) the English teachers designed different assessments for ASD students, and 2) the English teachers provided extra assistance for ASD students, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Emerging Themes for Research Question 1

Theme 1	The English teachers designed different assessments for ASD students
Theme 2	The English teachers provided assistance for ASD students

Theme 1: Different assessments in English class were given based on the ASD students' ability

From the observation, Ben, Andy, and Jonathan got different worksheets from the other students. It could be seen from these observation reports:

Observation in Ben's case:

> After explaining and giving the examples, the English teacher then distributed the worksheets to the students. In Ben's worksheets, he had to fill in the blanks using "either … or" or "neither … nor", with simplified sentences, for example, "Rabbit eats either carrot or grass." On the other hand, the other students got a more complex one, "Sunny likes sweeties. She often eats either candy or ice cream." [Ben/01]

Observation in Andy's case:

> The English teacher continued the lesson by asking the students to fill in the blank into a piece of paper. Then, the English teacher showed the questions in the PowerPoint slide, and each slide consisted of 5 questions. Afterward, the English teacher asked Andy to write only three answers out of 5. She said, "It's ok, Andy, you don't need to write all the answers. Just write 3 of them." At first, Andy still did not get it and tried to write all the answers in a full sentence: "This pair of socks are smelly." Meanwhile, what the English teacher actually asked Andy was to write "smelly" only. Then, she reminded Andy once again, "Andy, you don't need to write the full sentence. Just write only three answers on your paper." [Andy/02]

Observation in Jonathan's case:

> The English teacher asked the students to make a role play as a seller and a buyer. As Jonathan seemed still upset after being forced to join the role play, he was excluded from this activity. Then, when his other friends were busy playing a role, Jonathan suddenly stood up and watched his friends. Seeing this, the paraprofessional tried to approach him and asked him to sit down on his chair. He obeyed, and the paraprofessional attempted to make him repeat the conversation between the seller and the buyer: "What do you like to buy?" "I want to buy a banana, milk, and bread." "How much do you need?" [Jonathan/01]

Based on the observation reports presented above, it could be seen that the ASD students got a different level of worksheets to check their understanding of the materials presented by the teachers. In Ben's case, he got a separate worksheet with simplified questions. In Andy's case, he got a different worksheet, as seen from the first observation. As from the second observation, the English teacher gave him the same questions as the other students but reduced the number of questions for him to answer. Moreover, in Jonathan's case, he did not get a worksheet, but he got a different task. From the observations, other students performed the role play with their peers, but Jonathan only repeated the simplified conversations between the seller and the buyer with the paraprofessional.

The findings presented above were supported by the interviews with the English teachers, Rose and Illa. From the interviews, Rose and Illa said they had three different levels of worksheets for the students: high, medium, low. The level represented the students' ability. For the leveling, the teachers had some considerations before deciding the worksheets' level for ASD students, as Rose commented:

> "First, we [the teachers] need to see the ASD students' ability by doing observation and need analysis. After that, we discussed some matters related to the worksheets' level that will be given to the ASD students." [Rose]

Additionally, both English teachers agreed to treat ASD students differently because they are "special." Rose commented:

> "I gave him different tasks, of course. In this school, we [the teachers] have three different levels of worksheets: high, middle, and low. For Ben, I gave him the low level." [Rose]

The findings presented above are in line with the previous study conducted by Tomlinson (2001). He asserted that some students could handle such complex materials, but others might need more time to process the information from the teachers. As seen from the observations, the ASD students got a simplified worksheet. Moreover, from the observation reports and the English teachers' testimony, it could be seen that Ben, Andy, and Jonathan got different treatments in terms of the worksheets. These findings were aligned with Tomlinson's (2000) theory that stated the ASD students needed special treatments to understand the materials. In addition, Santrock (2018) also commented that the ASD students had complexity in understanding the materials. Therefore, it was entirely understandable that ASD students were given simplified worksheets to understand the materials easily.

In addition, as reported by the observation results and also the interviews with English teachers related to the modification of the worksheets, it was the teachers' responsibility to adjust the assessments so that the ASD students could understand the materials better (Otanjac, 2016; Park & Thomas, 2012). As seen from the observation results, DI implementation was supported by Tomlinson's (2001) theory. Tomlinson (2001) claimed that the differentiation in the "Content" and "Process" elements containing some information that were differentiated by the teacher and also classroom activities. This theory justified the results of the observations that the ASD students somehow got a less complex worksheet. In Andy's case, specifically, he got simplified materials where he only had to make a sentence from certain words while the other friends had to make their own poem. In other words, the differentiations occurred in the classroom towards the ASD students lead to the positive effect where they were able to follow the lesson.

Theme 2: The English teachers provided extra assistance for ASD students

From the observation in Ben, Andy, and Jonathan's class, the English teachers played an extra role as a paraprofessional or someone who provided additional assistance. They guided ASD students during each teaching and learning activity. 2 teachers in each class were

observed. When one teacher acted as a paraprofessional for ASD students, the other handled the whole class to run the class activities. It can be seen from the observation that the English teacher, who was a paraprofessional providing extra assistance for ASD students, helped the ASD students to stay focused during the class, calmed the ASD students in a stressful situation, provided behavioral support, re-explained the topic to ASD students, and assisted the ASD students in doing the assignments. The observation reports would be presented as follow:

Observation in Ben's case:

> … When Rose distributed the worksheets, the paraprofessional also helped him finish the task by guiding Ben to find the correct answers. She said, "Is it 'either' or 'neither' that comes with 'or'?". When Ben got it wrong by writing "neither" in his worksheets, the paraprofessional helped him by asking, "Are you sure this is the correct answer?" and Ben said, "No." so the paraprofessional asked again, "Then what is the correct answer?" "Either?" Ben asked, "Yes. Write it down." The paraprofessional replied. [Ben/01]

Observation in Andy's case:

> … In doing the worksheets, the paraprofessional guides him to find the correct answers by pointing and saying, "How do you say 'wall'?", after Andy said "wall," the paraprofessional continued, "Which one of these that has the same sound as 'wall'?" then Andy was able to point at "small." After some questions, Andy could finish his worksheets by filling out all the questions. [Andy/01]

Observation in Jonathan's case:

> … When Jonathan finished his worksheets, the paraprofessional asked for some pictures used during the role play. She tried to ask Jonathan to do the role-play. She said, "Jonathan, I want to buy a banana. Which one is the banana?" Jonathan saw the pictures on the table and gave the banana picture to her. After that, the paraprofessional asked him, "Jonathan, which one of these pictures that you want?" and he pointed at the bread without saying a word. The paraprofessional then asked him, "What is this?" but he did not answer, so the paraprofessional tried to give him a clue by saying, "Bre… ?" then Jonathan said, "Bread." [Jonathan/01]

From the observation reports presented above, it could be seen that the English teacher, who is also the paraprofessional, had a different portion in helping the ASD students. In Ben's case, the teacher helped him stay focused in doing his worksheets. In Andy's case, the teacher not only helped him in staying focused but also in finishing his assignments. Further, Jonathan's teacher seemed to help him a lot in making him understand the materials presented by the teachers and doing the role play.

The English teacher who acted as a paraprofessional represented DI in terms of differentiating the "Content" of instruction, as stated by Tomlinson (2001). Teachers could provide additional guidance through the older grade students, teachers, schools, technologies, or communities. In this case, the "additional guidance" given resembled the assistance from the teacher, who also acted as a paraprofessional. The observation shows that the paraprofessionals had a significant role in the ASD students' learning process. The presence of the paraprofessionals made them understand the materials and finish the assignments. They also provided extra guidance for the ASD students during the class.

Further, Robertson et al. (2003) stated that "the paraprofessionals' role was to help to keep the students focused on the task, to provide any accommodations or modifications necessary, to help increase their understanding and minimize any social/academic frustration" (p. 126). This statement corresponds to the observation in Ben, Andy, and Jonathan's classes. In their classes, they got helped by their teacher, who was also a paraprofessional for them. The paraprofessional helped them stay focused in the classroom and also to do the assignments.

In addition, from the interviews, both Illa and Rose commented that by having their partner as the paraprofessional for the ASD students, the ASD students were able to follow mostly all class activities. Illa and Rose commented:

> "I think we, in this school, are lucky because there are two teachers in a class. When I get a turn to teach in front of the class, my partner will help me to assist the ASD students. She will act as a paraprofessional for ASD students to help me deal with both Andy and Jonathan." [Illa]

> "Based on my experience with Ben, he could stay focused and follow all class activities when my teacher-partner assisted him from beginning till the end of the English lesson. If not, I don't know how he will follow the class" [Rose]

Based on the excerpts stated above, it could be seen that the teacher who also played a role as a paraprofessional had an essential role in helping ASD students' academic performance. As the ASD students found it hard to understand the materials (Santrock, 2018), the presence of a teacher who acted as a paraprofessional could help them learn. English teachers who at the same time served as paraprofessionals were an example of DI in the "Process" stage, as posited by Tomlinson (2001). During the teaching and learning process, ASD students received extra assistance from their teacher in completing classwork, understanding the topics, behaving properly, calming them in stressful situations, and encouraging social interactions with their friends (Padmadewi and Artini's, 2017).

In summary, the DI implementation delivered by the English teachers for the ASD student was considered successful to a certain extent. From the results of observations and interviews,

it can be seen that the English teachers implemented DI both to regular treatments (the presence of the paraprofessional) and assessments. As seen from Tomlinson (2001), the teachers have made differentiation in the "Content" and "Process" criteria. Thus, the DI implementation in Rose's and Illa's class helped ASD students in learning.

Research question 2: What are the teachers' views on the use of DI in the English class?

Based on the interviews done with Rose and Illa, these two themes were generated. The first theme was DI helped ASD students in accomplishing all in-class English assignments. The second theme was DI helped ASD students follow the language of instructions in English class.

Table 2. Emerging Themes for Research Question 2

Theme 1	DI helped ASD students in accomplishing all in-class English assignments
Theme 2	DI helped ASD students follow the language of instructions in English class

Theme 1: DI helped ASD students accomplish all in-class English assignments

Illa and Rose claimed that using DI in their classes helped ASD students to finish their tasks without being left behind. They commented:

> "As I give them [Andy and Jonathan] simplified worksheets, they are able to finish it. I also try to create the level of difficulties in my students' level of ability, so they will able to finish it, and they would not think that the worksheets were too easy." [Illa]

> "Since I give him [Ben] the different worksheets, he could finish it at his best, in which he did not skip any numbers, and the scores are pretty good. So, I think DI works really well in my class." [Rose]

To be more specific, Illa and Rose gave examples of how different the worksheets that they gave to their ASD students in English class:

> "For Jonathan, I usually give him pictures that he has to match; meanwhile, the other students may have short-answered questions or even role play. For Andy, if the other students have to make a poem, he will have to match the rhyming words." [Illa]

> "In English class, for example, reading, if the other students will have a passage with open-ended questions, Ben will have a passage with multiple choice or matching." [Rose]

Regarding the testimony from the English teachers stated above, it can be concluded that ASD students could finish the worksheets because they were simplified. These findings were aligned with Otanjac's (2016) theory which stated that it was the teachers' responsibility to simplify or even modify the instructions and the worksheets. Further, in Tomlinson's (2001)

"Readiness" characteristic of planning a lesson, he stated that teachers had to be ready to keep in mind that every student had a different level of readiness. Thus it is hoped that teachers create such differentiations. Since Illa and Rose realized that Ben, Jonathan, and Andy had different starting points, they tried to modify and simplify the worksheets given to the ASD students. In addition, Jahan et al. (2017) claimed that one of the benefits of DI was to gain students' achievements. This theory was aligned with the excerpts as the ASD students could do their worksheets that represented their achievement.

Moreover, seen from the observation results, implementing DI for ASD students helped them understand and do the in-class assignments. These findings were aligned with Valiandes' (2015) study. Valiandes (2015) showed that by implementing DI in a mixed ability classroom, students participated more actively in the learning process and worked at their own speed. This study, therefore, justified the findings that Andy, Jonathan, and Ben could finish their in-class assignments. In conclusion, giving DI to the ASD students helped them complete their assignments given in class.

Theme 2: DI helped ASD students follow the language of instructions in English class.

From the interviews with both English teachers, Illa and Rose stated that giving DI to the ASD students helped them follow the lessons. They commented:

> "Most of the time, the paraprofessional helps me by repeating the instructions for Andy and Jonathan. As I have other students to take care of, the paraprofessional helped me a lot … when I was explaining, but Andy or Jonathan did not focus. I usually will call their names and say, 'Andy, or Jonathan, what are you doing?" [Illa]

> "When he [Ben] was off task, I usually ask the paraprofessional's help, and then, the paraprofessional will sit next to him and usually say something like, 'How far have you been?' and the paraprofessional will sit there until he finishes." [Rose]

Based on the excerpts, the ASD students were able to follow the activities in the classroom with the help of the paraprofessionals, who helped and facilitated them during the class activities. As Tomlinson (2001) proposed, the presence of the paraprofessional was one of the DI in the "Content" criteria. Therefore, through the paraprofessional, the ASD students could follow the language of instructions in English class. According to Santrock (2018), one of the characteristics of ASD students was learning difficulties. Therefore, English teachers need to be aware of any kinds of ASD students' needs. Through repeating instructions, getting their attention, and reminding them to stay on task, the English teachers realized that it was part of their responsibilities to handle ASD students (Robertson et al., 2003). Further, by giving help

to the ASD students through differentiation, the English teachers had fulfilled one of their roles in the classroom, where they had to ensure that all the students achieved the same goals (Morley et al., 2005). In addition, the findings from excerpts were aligned with Tomlinson's (2000) theory that special needs students, specifically ASD students, need special treatments so that they would understand the lessons.

Additionally, from the results of the interviews, it was found that ASD students could follow the lessons when they understood the language of the instructions. These findings aligned with Ernest et al.'s (2011) study that DI helped students improve and gain other skills. In Ernest et al.'s (2011) study, the implementation of DI in reading class had helped students with ASD gain their reading skills. Seen from how the paraprofessional helped Jonathan, Andy, and Ben follow the language of instructions in the class, it could be said that DI positively impacted them. In other words, DI could help ASD students follow the language of instructions, and it helped them understand the lesson.

CONCLUSION

DI as a teaching method for students with different abilities who learn with the other students in the same class has long been implemented in some schools. However, in Indonesia, teachers who have implemented this method in their English class are not many This study found that the English teachers used DI by designing different assessments for ASD students and providing extra assistance. Moreover, towards implementing DI in English class, teachers perceived that DI helped ASD students accomplish all in-class English assignments. It helped ASD students follow the language of instructions in English class.

These findings have several implications and contributions for the in-service and pre-service English teachers. Hopefully, for the in-service English teachers, this study provides them with more insights related to the implementation of DI in the instructional design. For instance, this study found that differentiating the worksheets' level helped ASD students understand the materials and finish them. Therefore, they were not left behind. Furthermore, for the in-service teachers, this study found that homeroom teachers could play a role as paraprofessionals to assist the ASD students. Therefore, the findings give some insights into the homeroom teachers who act as English teachers and paraprofessionals who help ASD students.

In addition, for the pre-service English teachers, some implications can be considered. Firstly, the pre-service teachers gain their insights in dealing with ASD students, as this study propose how DI helped ASD students in the class, for example, by giving different level of

worksheets. Secondly, the English pre-service teachers can reflect on some phenomena in this study and evaluate the best treatment for ASD students in an inclusive education context. Lastly, the English pre-service teachers could consider DI one of the methods used to teach ASD students.

Further, this study provides some contributions for research in English language education. It added more literature related to the implementation of DI in English class, as there is limited literature in the English Education field. Moreover, this study shows that DI can be implemented in English classes to teach ASD students. It indicates that DI is not limited to certain subjects but can be implemented in English class and other subjects.

Some recommendations can be conducted for further studies based on the results of this study. Firstly, further studies are recommended to investigate more about the effectiveness of DI used in the classroom. Second, further studies might investigate other methods that can be used to teach ASD students instead of DI. Additionally, further studies might elaborate more about the treatments suitable for the ASD students in English class, besides the presence of the paraprofessionals. Lastly, further studies might investigate how English teachers design the teaching instructions in an inclusive education context. Further studies might refer to Nordlund (2003) as the framework to design DI for ASD students.

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