



The Implementation of Teaching English Using Differentiated Instruction in Senior High School during Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRAK

Sejumlah besar guru mengadopsi instruksi pengajaran satu ukuran untuk semua untuk semua siswa. Namun, keragaman karakteristik siswa seharusnya memerlukan strategi pengajaran yang dapat memenuhi berbagai kemampuan campuran di kelas. Penelitian ini difokuskan untuk menganalisis pelaksanaan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dan menyelidiki tantangan yang dihadapi guru dalam menerapkan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dalam mengajar selama pandemi Covid-19 di SMA. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif yang dibantu dengan observasi dan wawancara. Peneliti, lembar observasi, pedoman wawancara, dan dokumen digunakan sebagai instrumen untuk memperoleh data. Partisipan penelitian terdiri dari peneliti, seorang guru bahasa Inggris, dan tiga puluh enam siswa dari kelas PBB 1. Data penelitian dianalisis melalui komponen model interaktif analisis data yang mencakup tiga kegiatan bersamaan seperti kondensasi data, data display, dan penarikan kesimpulan dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi bersifat parsial. Guru membedakan konten, proses, dan produk sesuai dengan minat dan profil belajar siswa. Namun, perbedaan berdasarkan tingkat kesiapan siswa tidak terlihat. Guru hanya menggunakan eLearning, Zoom Video Conference, dan grup WhatsApp, seperti yang biasa dilakukan guru dalam pembelajaran online. Dalam menggunakan pembelajaran diferensiasi, guru menghadapi tantangan terkait dengan partisipasi siswa dalam kelas virtual, jumlah siswa yang banyak, kurangnya waktu untuk perencanaan, dan aktivitas kelompok dalam pembelajaran yang terbatas.

ABSTRACT

A large number of teachers are adopting one-size-fits-all teaching instruction for all students. However, the diversity of student characteristics should require teaching strategies that can meet various mixed abilities in the classroom. The study focused on analyzing the implementation of differentiated instruction and investigating the challenges encountered by the teacher in implementing differentiated instruction in teaching during the pandemic of Covid-19 in Senior High School. This research uses a descriptive qualitative research design assisted by observation and an interview. The researcher, observation sheet, interview guide, and documents were used as instruments to obtain the data. The participants of the study consisted of the researcher, an English teacher, and thirty-six students from class PBB 1. The data of the study were analyzed through components of the data analysis interactive model which included three concurrent activities such as data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings showed the implementation of differentiated instruction was partial. The teacher differentiated content, process, and product by following students' interests and learning profiles. However, the differentiation based on student readiness levels was not visible. The teacher only used eLearning, Zoom Video Conference, and WhatsApp groups, similar to how teachers commonly conducted online learning. In using differentiated instruction, the teacher encountered challenges associated with students' participation in a virtual class, a large number of students, a lack of time for planning, and group activities in learning that were limited.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English is an important language to be mastered (Ilyosovna, 2020; Oktaviani & Fauzan, 2017). As an international language that has been used worldwide, nowadays, billions of people from different countries use English to communicate with each other (Uddiniyah & Silfia, 2019). Teaching English to Senior High School students will provide them with a view of various progress that happens in the world (Nishanthi, 2018). For example, the development of technology, science, and culture (Yulfi & Aalayina, 2021). Since many of the latest scientific discoveries are documented in English, and there are large numbers of books that are written in English (Tillayeva, 2020), learning English enables students to access broader sources of information. Previous research shows the significance of learning English. The effect of language learning strategies on proficiency, attitudes, and school achievement (Habók & Magyar, 2018). Moreover, the proposed ways of teaching used by teachers have a

significant effect on students' learning outcomes (Sutarto et al., 2020). Implementing various ways of teaching English has a positive impact on the student's achievement in learning English. (Ismail, 2019; Kotob & Arnouss, 2019; Sandra & Kurniawati, 2020). An English language class is made up of students who are all diverse, they come from various backgrounds and cultures that vary in their interests, readiness, needs, and development (de Graaf et al., 2019; Putri et al., 2020). It is not new to believe that pupils learn in a variety of ways (Gorghiu et al., 2015; Magableh & Abdullah, 2020). An English class has accelerated learners, struggling ones, the talented, the disabled, the auditory, the visual, the reading/writing, and the kinesthetic learners. Students from multiple backgrounds try to learn languages and their behavior. The ones with advanced learning abilities sit next to the students who might struggle with using the language. That diversity of students' characteristics demands teaching strategies that can cater to the various mixability in a classroom (Moosa & Shareefa, 2019). Therefore, researchers and policy-makers need teachers to embrace diversity and adapt their instruction to the diverse learning process based on the needs of students in their class. However, a significant number of teachers adopt one-size-fits-all teaching instruction for all students (Alsubaie, 2020).

Differentiated instruction is one of the teaching approaches that enable students to learn in various ways based on their valuable individual differences (Bondie et al., 2019; Tanjung & Ashadi, 2019). Differentiated instruction is the adaptation of curriculum components in the parts of content, process, and product and refers to the needs of students according to their interests, readiness, and learning profiles (Ismail, 2019; Kotob & Arnouss, 2019; Tomlinson, 2017). The process can be done by the teachers in their classes whenever they want, during the individual learners, small groups, or whole course. Moreover, differentiated instruction happens in the teaching and learning activity for students of differing characteristics in the same class (Endal et al., 2013; Sandra & Kurniawati, 2020). The researchers further explain that differentiation implies the aims of schools that should maximize the capabilities of each student. Differentiated instruction is a bridge to meet each of the students' diversity to increase their learning (Benjamin & Aguilar, 2020). The usefulness of differentiated instruction in enhancing EFL Secondary School Students' reading comprehension skills has been studied by the previous researcher that investigate the impact of using the differentiated instruction strategy on students' achievement in an intermediate school course and their attitudes. The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the groups for the benefit of the empiric group that taught via DI. The results also revealed positive attitudes towards the strategy used (Alsalmi et al., 2021). It is also supported by another researcher investigating the effectiveness of Differentiated Instruction (DI) in improving reading comprehension skills in the EFL secondary stage in Bahrain (Saleh, 2021). Results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the EFL reading comprehension test. The findings indicated that the DI strategies helped to develop students' EFL reading comprehension skills.

The learning process during the pandemic of Covid-19, which was conducted in a virtual classroom, is different from the learning process, which is usually done in the classroom (Alchamdani et al., 2020; Efriana, 2021; Puspitasari, 2020). When the research was conducted, the Ministry of Education and Culture implemented a learning policy known as learning from home to prevent the spread of Covid-19 (Ariyanti, 2020; Tesar, 2020). Learning from home enables students to conduct a distance learning system using online learning (Efriana, 2021). Unfortunately, the contribution of online learning causes students to be less enthusiastic about participating, especially when the teachers adopt one-size-fits-all teaching instruction for all students (Chakraborty, 2021; Moore et al., 2011). Implementing differentiated instruction is considered essential, as it has been discussed in module 2.1 of the motivator teacher program (Faiz et al., 2022). It is a teacher training program which is established by the Ministry of Education and Culture to improve teachers' performance to edify education in Indonesia by creating student-centered learning and leading to a better education ecosystem. In *Sekolah Menengah Atas Negeri 1 Ubud*, an English teacher who teaches tenth-grade students has implemented differentiated instruction in teaching through online learning. Primarily, it was observed based on the characteristics of differentiated instruction which distinguished it from traditional teaching, to seek to know how differentiated instruction is implemented in the classroom generally. An English teacher in SMAN 1 Ubud used various ways of teaching the students during distance learning. The teacher was aware of her student's different needs and considered it in designing the way how she taught students to maximize their potential. Therefore, based on the background, this study focused on analyzing the implementation of differentiated instruction in teaching English during the Covid-19 pandemic in a specific context qualitatively.

2. METHOD

The descriptive qualitative research design was the research method used in the study, in which the researcher described, explained, and interpreted the situation that was happening. The research was conducted at SMAN 1 Ubud. It is a public high school. The participants of the study consisted of the researcher, an English teacher, and thirty-six students from class IBB 1. In collecting the data, the researcher used observation sheets as guidance in observing the implementation of differentiated instruction, while to collect the data about challenges

that were encountered by the teacher in implementing differentiated instruction during the pandemic, the researcher referred to an interview guide. Besides, some documents were also used to support the data that was gained. The data of the study were analyzed through components of the data analysis interactive model which included three concurrent activities such as data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1984). On the other hand, four criteria to refine the concept of trustworthiness were used to maintain the trustworthiness of the data (Creswell, 2012).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The research findings and discussion concern analyzing how the teacher implemented differentiated instruction in teaching biography text during the pandemic of Covid-19 at SMAN 1 Ubud. It also investigated challenges that were encountered by the teacher in implementing differentiated instruction in teaching biography text during the pandemic of Covid-19 at SMAN 1 Ubud.

The Implementation of Differentiated Instruction

Observation and interviews were managed to collect the data for the study. The result of the observation showed the implementation of differentiated instruction was partial. The differentiated instruction was not fully implemented. Besides, there was no variation in the use of technology in teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. The teacher only used eLearning, Zoom Video Conference, and WhatsApp groups to support the teaching and learning activities. It was similar to the ways teachers commonly conducted online learning during the pandemic of Covid-19. There was no special use of technology to assist students in carrying out various learning activities, like working in a group that shared similar readiness levels. The teacher has implemented differentiated instruction partially in teaching biography during the pandemic of covid-19. When differing students' content based on their different interests, the teacher provided students with various examples of biography texts of several famous figures in the areas of sport, science, art, and entertainment. In providing various support mechanisms, the teacher referred to students' interests. Various biography graphic organizers could cater to students' different interests in the area of entertainment consisting of actors/actresses, sports consisting of athletes, writing consisting of authors, science consisting of inventors, and music consisting of musicians. There was also a biography graphic organizer of the person in history, trailblazer, and young activist. On the other hand, in differing content based on students learning profiles, the teacher used several media such as PowerPoint, videos, and documents or text to provide students with many ways to access the materials.

In implementing differentiated instruction in terms of process, the teacher already varied the process based on student's interests and learning profiles. When practicing writing a biography text, the teacher assisted students in their writing using a biography graphic organizer, which included various areas such as a biography graphic organizer about athletes, actors, actresses, athletes, authors, inventors, musicians, the person in history, trailblazers, or young activists. The students could choose the graphic based on their interests. Moreover, referring to the differentiation process based on students' learning profiles. Furthermore, the teacher also differentiated products under students' interests and learning profiles. The teacher provided students with an opportunity to take ownership of their product by allowing students to choose who they wanted to create their biography. It could be based on the area that they were interested in. Students who were interested in badminton might choose an athlete from the area to create their biography about, or students who were interested in fashion could choose their favorite designer as a figure to create a biography. On the other hand, the teacher also varied the product based on students' diverse needs in terms of learning profiles, especially students' learning styles, by supporting students to choose various forms in submitting the product of their learning. Students who were kinesthetic learners might prefer to submit a video in which it could show their gestures and body movements while recounting the biography of their favorite figure, or students who were reading/writing learners might prefer to submit their product in the form of written text, document, or PowerPoint. Students were allowed to choose how they liked to create their product. They could submit text, PowerPoint, video, voice recorder, or whatever form they found best to demonstrate what they had already learned. In contrast, implementing differentiated instruction on the product by students' readiness levels was not visible. There were no moments in which the teacher divided students into a group with similar readiness levels to choose the product that differed from the other group. There was no product with various levels of complexity intended explicitly for certain students following their readiness level in learning. In teaching biography, the differentiated student's product based on their readiness still was not visible.

The Challenges Encountered by the Teacher in Implementing Differentiated Instruction

In teaching biography text using differentiated instruction during the Covid-19 pandemic, several challenges were encountered by the teacher. The teaching and learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic prevented the teacher and students from meeting face-to-face in the classroom, raising issues that were mainly

associated with students' participation, a large number of students, lack of time for planning and group activities in learning, limited. It was classified by three components of differentiated instruction such as content, process, and product. The challenge that the teacher encountered related to the content of learning was mainly associated with a shift from traditional teaching in which students' diverse need was not taken into consideration when designing the content. When referring to the implementation of differentiated instruction, the teacher tried to come up with various content catering to students' diverse needs. However, the teacher faced a challenge in planning the content for students. The teacher needed more time to prepare the content to meet students' needs.

Based on the result of the interview session it is found that the teacher needed more time to design the content since the teacher needed to consider students' characteristics. The teacher was difficult to find and prepare different topics based on students' various interests with different forms of content that could cater to students learning styles, whereas the time was limited. The teacher was still trying to adapt the way to design, find and provide content based on the data about students' needs which was gained from pre-assessment data. It led to challenges encountered by the teacher related to the process of learning associated with students' participation and group activities in learning which were limited. In virtual class, the teacher needed extra work to make students focus during the learning process since several factors affected students' participation, such as students who helped their parents at home by doing housework, students who felt shy to participate, students who needed many reminders from the teacher to submit their task, and the use of technology in learning which was still confusing for some students.

Moreover providing students with a chance to work in a group was still a challenge for the teacher because of the virtual meeting in which the teacher found it quite challenging to organize students in some groups who share similar readiness levels. The skills of managing the classroom played a significant role related to the challenges that the teacher encountered during the process. Teachers are required to have equipped classroom management skills to handle diversity in the classroom, like handling all students from various readiness levels. Also, teachers must be able to increase student participation and engagement in the learning process. On the other hand, the teacher also encountered a challenge in the process of organizing guidelines for different forms of students' products. The teacher needed more time to organize different types of rubric assessments based on how the students were expected to submit them. The teacher is still adapting because, in a traditional classroom, the teacher provided a rubric assessment only for the written form of the product. Generally, if seeing the challenges that were encountered by the teacher in implementing differentiated instruction to teach biography recount text during the Covid-19 pandemic from the beginning of pre-assessment to the end of the unit related to conducting a summative assessment, it was mainly about a large number of students and lack time for planning.

Discussion

The Implementation of Differentiated Instruction

In implementing differentiated instruction, teachers may adapt curriculum components in the parts of content, process, and product, referring to students' interest, readiness, and learning profiles, in implementing differentiated instruction, the teacher already modified the content, process, and product based on student's interest and learning profile which only focused on students' learning style (Tomlinson, 2017). However, the adaptation of curriculum components under students' readiness levels still was not visible. Learning profiles relate to how students learn best. Students who learned best through reading and writing could read various biography texts on the eLearning and the link given by the teacher. Visual learners could learn by accessing videos with illustrations to help them observe and connect what is written in the video. Filling in a biography graphic organizer while watching the video could benefit the kinesthetic learner. The auditory learner could watch a video that contained explanations they could listen to. In contrast, differing students' content based on readiness level was not visible. The readiness level is used by the teacher in differentiating the components of learning, the goal is to push students a bit beyond their comfort zone (Tomlinson, 2001). Moreover differing content based on students' readiness, teachers may differentiate the content by using major concepts and generalizations. The teacher did vary the video in which there was some complex, more complex, and most complex videos. Nevertheless, the teacher did not give a specific guideline for students about which content should be accessed by who based on their diverse needs in terms of readiness level.

Differentiating processes based on students' learning profiles, generally meaning encouraging students to make sense of an idea in a preferred way of learning (Ginja & Chen, 2020). When learning simple past tense as used in writing a biography, students' task was to share their past experiences. The students were required to share the activities that they did yesterday before the class, from the moment they woke up in the morning until they slept at night. In submitting the task, students could choose how they preferred to submit it. In line with previous research that states when differing students' processes are based on their learning profiles, the teacher still only focused on differentiating the learning style (Tomlinson, 2017). However, on the contrary, the implementation of differentiated instruction on processes based on students' readiness levels was not visible. Differentiating process based on students' readiness level refers to matching the task's complexity based on materials and support to a

student's current level of knowledge, understanding, and skill (Moosa & Shareefa, 2019). In the process of making sense of the idea they just learned, the teacher did not design any activities in which students work with a different task based on their readiness level.

The Challenges Encountered by the Teacher in Implementing Differentiated Instruction

Planning for differentiation takes much time, especially in designing the tasks and the content (Magableh & Abdullah, 2020). Moreover, during the pandemic of Covid-19, the interaction between the teacher and students was limited since they only met in a virtual class (Benjamin & Aguilar, 2020). It is in line with previous research that highlighted the factors that involved students in the study which related to the factors influencing the implementation of differentiated instruction (Lavania & Mohamad Nor, 2021). In that state varying students' activities to work in groups or with pairs in virtual class is also quite challenging for the teacher.

The teacher's challenge was dealing with a large number of students in each class. There are similar findings in their research which was focused on examining teacher educators' self-efficacy and perceived practices of differentiated instruction (Zelalem et al., 2022). A large number of students caused the teacher to need more time to prepare, implement, and assess students in all classes that were taught. The teacher was lack of time to facilitate each student, which caused the use of differentiated instruction might not be optimal. Other research focused on the issues faced by teachers in implementing differentiated instruction. This study explores the obstacles impeding the application of differentiated instruction (Al-Shaboul et al., 2021). The study targeted all early childhood teachers. The results showed no statistically significant differences among the respondents in the degree of application of differentiated instruction due to training and qualifications. However, statistically significant differences were detected in relevance to years of experience, grade, and the subject being taught. The study also found an agreement among teachers on the obstacles they face during their application of differentiated instruction, most notably the teaching load, class size, and time. Differentiated instruction is an approach designed with different variations to meet the different characteristics of students. It is a bridge to meet each of the students' diversity to increase their learning. Thus, it is important for all teachers, especially English language teachers, to implement differentiated instruction during the teaching and learning process to maximize each student's learning potential. On the other hand, the study was focused in analyzed the implementation of differentiated instruction. Considering the differentiation of curriculum components based on students' readiness levels was not visible, the other researchers who are interested in analyzing the implementation of differentiated instruction may conduct research that explores the differentiation of curriculum components by students' readiness levels.

4. CONCLUSION

The result of this study found that English teacher at SMAN 1 Ubud distinguishes content, processes, and products according to the diverse needs of students in terms of interests and learning profiles. However, the differentiation of those three curriculums component based on students' readiness levels was not visible. There were no specific guidelines for students to access the content based on their level of readiness, there was no variety of activities that were designed by students' levels, and the teacher also did not require students to submit different kinds of products that could show different challenge for students based on their level of readiness. Besides, there was no special use of technology. It was similar to the ways teachers commonly conducted online learning. The teacher encountered several challenges. Generally, it was associated with students' participation, a large number of students, and a lack of time for planning and group activities in learning that was limited.

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