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Improving students' achievements on application letter material through differentiated instruction learning

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ABSTRACT

Differentiated instruction is a series of learning activities that provide opportunities for students to explore their potential, adapting their interests and learning profiles. Differentiated instruction is an effort conducted by teacher to adapt learning content, learning processes and products that they can produce according to their readiness, interests, talents and learning profile. In this activity, students are expected to be able to be involved in learning activities related to least 3 aspects such as readiness, interests and student profile. Students' ability to learn English at 12 IPA 3 SMAN 1 Batam in the 2023/2024 academic year is relatively low. This is classroom action research which consists of two cycles. It used quantitative research methods in the form of written tests and qualitative research methods using observation sheets and self-reflection sheets. The results are students' achievement of learning completeness from the initial pre-cycle conditions obtained from 36.36% to 74.25% in cycle I and in cycle II 93.33%.



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Introduction

English language learning at the Senior High School level needs to be improved and may be the way for students in the future to achieve the goals they dream of (Dewi: 2014). If students can master the language that is mostly used all over the world, it is possible for them to be able to play their role and have the prospect careers in the future. The ability to master English is very important for individual because good skills can facilitate them to receive and convey what they need in life. So, English is expected to be mastered well since they are in school.

English is important language for students in today's life as a means of communication (Rao: 2019), such as connecting widely with people all over the world, by sending emails, replying to and sending personal letters, writing essays or making reports as school assignments, explaining how and why something occurs. There are experiences challenges or obstacles in enriching English skills. Sometimes the aims of learning do not match expectations as planned. In every learning and teaching process, obstacles are sometimes able to be faced by teachers and learners. There are students whose motivations are lacking because earning English is not met their needs (Tambunan: 2016). Unpredicted, sometimes they are interested in English learning and in other days they are boring. This can influence their target that they should master at the end of the learning session.

Some students are not confident in using English because they are worried that they might make mistakes (Palupi: 2021). Even though they are high school students, they are confused to express their ideas both written

and spoken according to English rules. In fact, some of them have been learning English since they were in kindergarten and elementary school and some others take additional classes at English courses. This means they should have been introduced and trained to use English well both in writing and speaking.

In fact, most of them still do not know how to use English properly. Not only weak in mastering English, but they also do not have enough self-confidence and motivation related to Al Jarf (2022). A teacher is expected to be creative in implementing methods, strategies, media, and approach in his/her learning so that students' learning outcomes can be improved. The teacher is suggested to recognize and realize the consequences as well of having diverse students. Then, the learning implemented in class is not monotonous. The teacher is also suggested to manage various models, media, strategies, and approaches such as content, processes, and measurement of learning outcomes through various products produced by students.

Learning should accommodate interests all students so that each student is able to provide their best performance in learning. For this reason, teacher must be able to differentiate learning in class, with In other words, teachers must be able to differentiate learning to be able to meet the needs of all students, to recover or speed up instructions, and to provide learning opportunities for all students. According to Arviana (2014).

This is what underlies the need for learning that supports students' needs by implementing differentiated instruction in English learning. Learning is adapted to current developments where the teacher is not the only person who will determine the success of students in acquiring knowledge, but the teacher is also obliged to listen to suggestions, voices, ideas and student choices so that students feel that the learning activity or program is appropriate implemented in the classroom. There will be a sense of ownership in order to build up the student agency.

According to Carol Ann Tomlinson (2000), Learning Differentiated (hereinafter Differentiated Learning) or it could also be called Differentiated Instruction is an effort to adapt the learning process in classes, to meet each individual's learning needs. Differentiated learning is a series reasonable decisions (common sense) made by the teacher oriented to student needs. Learning Differentiation must be rooted in meeting needs student learning and how teachers respond to needs that study.

Differentiation was originally coined by Tomlinson in 1999.

Tomlinson said that teachers can use this differentiated learning with lots of different activities to satisfy all student needs. However, this differentiation itself has existed since ancient times. Ki Hajar Dewantara, Indonesia's first Minister of Education, who had an idea namely education that respects differences characteristics of each child. In his book *Pusara* (1940), Ki Hajar Dewantara stated that it is not good to standardize things that are not necessary or cannot be standardized. He argued differences in ability, talent and expertise should be facilitated wisely. This principle is the same and in lie with Differentiation learning.

According to Ismajji (2018) *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*, he opens up new views on other ways in study. He always used the phrase "One size does not fit all which means that one way of learning or learning will not be suitable or suitable for all. Differentiated instruction views that learners must be seen individually individual, even though the learner is grouped into a class according to age but in fact they are different terms of learning readiness, interests and learning styles. Starting of this diversity, teachers should accommodate and differentiate.

Widiati et al (2015:34-41) explained that application letter is one of the important letter in the English subject especially for vocational high school. Application letter was written usually to apply for employment. Application letter is one of the topics for 12 year students. The teacher facilitates them to write a good cover letter in order to improve their writing ability. Mastering English writing skill is crucial for students today. Students do not only use verbal communication to communicate with each other, they too use non-verbal communication according Wijaya (2021). Therefore, they should realize that the most important discovery in human history is writing. Because writing can provide a relatively permanent record of providing information, expressing opinions, beliefs, feelings, arguments, explanations, theories. Apart from that, the importance of writing skills greatly determines students' achievement in learning English measured from productive abilities, especially writing abilities according Pysarchyk (2015). This makes Writing skills as an indicator that can be used to measure students' English abilities.

Unfortunately, students' writing abilities are still far from satisfactory. At SMAN 1 Batam where the students are learning English as a foreign language, there are many difficulties which was identified in the process of learning and teaching writing. Such as lack of student motivation and lack of vocabulary, students tend to feel difficulty in composing good and correct sentences and in using grammar, students also often feel bored when learning to write, this is due to the method The learning presented is not interesting and seems monotonous.

The teacher is hoped as creative as possible to manage English writing class in school to increase students skills (Maley:2018)

Student is different to each other. There are several characteristics in terms of aspects, interests, learning profiles and readiness in mastering English material, so various strategies, models, techniques, media or learning approaches are required which can be managed out as an effort to improve English learning outcomes.

The main data of this research is taken from class 12 IPA 3 of SMAN 1 Batam for the 2023/2024 academic year. It was found that students' competency was still relative poor in formative and summative assessments as well as reflection activities. Data was taken after students completed job application letter assessments before the teacher carried out a differentiated instructed learning process in their class regarding theories, concepts related to English language job application letter (application letter) material. Differentiated instruction in English learning provides chance and opportunities for students to explore students' talents, interests, potency and learning profiles. As stated by education expert Tomlinson (2001), "Differentiated instruction in learning is all the efforts made by educators to adapt learning content, learning processes and products that they can produce according to their readiness, interests, talents and learning profile." In this activity, students are expected to be able to attend and be fully involved in the learning activities facilitated by their teacher.

Method

A good development of teachers focuses on the ability to carry out classroom action research (CAR) to manage learners learning and teaching in school. That is the most significant and valuable research, CAR because it will expose the direction of teaching development. For the sustainability of education, teacher development is the main core. It is important to encourage the teacher both knowledge, skills, and readiness of the teacher-as-learner (Mirke, Cakula, & Tzivian, 2019). Therefore, classroom action research is one of the critical development methods of teaching and teacher professional (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Rutherford & Lovorn, 2018; Impedovo & FerreirsMeyers, 2019; Pipere, Veisson, & SalÓte, 2015; Fedosejeva, BoËe, Romanova, Ivanova, & Iliko, 2018; Heasly, Lindner, Iliko, & SalÓte, 2020). This research was carried out in the 1st semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, conducted from the beginning of August to October 2023. The subject of this research was students of class 12 IPA 3 at SMAN 1 Batam, consisting of 45 students. The object of research is objective written tests and essays, observations of fellow teachers. Students' self-reflection on students' active learning. Data collection techniques use written tests, observation, and reflection. Data were analyzed descriptively and presented in the form of tables and graphs.

Results and Discussions

Based on the implementation of actions during 2 cycles carried out in more than 8 meetings, data were obtained that students' learning activity has increased. Increasing learning activity is known by implementing a differentiated instruction in English learning class. The results of observations regarding the implementation differentiated instruction in English learning can be shown in the following diagram:

Table I <Comparison of Observation Results of Student Learning Activeness Using the Differentiated Learning Model, cycle I and cycle II>

Student Learning Activeness in Differentiated instruction English Learning	
Cycle I	Cycle II
74.25%	93.33%
Good	Very good

Based on the table above, the percentage of observation results of students' active learning using the Differentiated instruction English Learning in cycle I was still 74.25% in the good category, while in cycle II it reached 82.79% in the very good category. The results of observations of student learning activity using Differentiated instruction English Learning increased from cycle I to cycle II by 9.54%. The increase in student learning activity is known from the results of student evaluations in cycles I and II as Table 2.

Based on Table 2, it is known that students' learning outcomes in learning English on job application letter material through the application of differentiated learning have increased. The average student score increased from cycle I by 74.25 to 93.33 in cycle II. Based on this data, it is known that there were 33 students who had passed the KKM (Minimum Completeness Criteria) in cycle I out of the total number of students with a percentage of 74.25%. In cycle II there was an increase reaching 93.33% consisting of 45 students who had passed the KKM. Achievement of classical learning outcomes in cycle II has reached the success indicator because students experience individual learning completeness ≥ 88.05 .

Table 2 <Data from Student Evaluation Results for Cycles I and II>

Value Description	Cycle	
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Total	3161.79	3958
Average	72.02	88.05
Highest score	86.25	98
Completed	33	42
Not completed	12	3
Percentage of completion	74.25%	93.33%

The results of observations of teacher activities using the differentiated learning model in cycle I and cycle II are presented in table 3 below.

Table 3 <Comparison of Observation Results of Teacher Activities implementing Differentiated Instruction in English Learning Cycle I and Cycle II>

Teacher Activities Through Differentiated Instruction in English Language Learning			
Cycle 1		Cycle 2	
Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 1	Meeting 2
81.25%	87.50%	100%	100%

The results of observing teacher skills in cycle I, meeting I, obtained a percentage of 81.25% with good criteria. In cycle I, meeting II, the score increased to 87.50% with very good criteria. Cycle II, meeting I obtained a percentage of 100% with very good and good criteria. In cycle II, meeting II obtained very good criteria results. The teacher's skills from cycle I, meeting I to cycle I, meeting II experienced an increase in percentage because at the end of the lesson the teacher had experienced completeness in all the descriptors. The use of a Differentiated instruction in English Learning becomes more meaningful, fun, and creates student activity because the differentiated learning model involves students playing an active role in finding answers to problems through independent and group thinking processes. Differentiated instruction in English Learning emphasizes students being active mentally and physically.

The mental activities carried out through Differentiated instruction in English Learning is able to make learning meaningful and enjoyable so that it is easy for students to remember. Differentiated instruction in English Learning can increase student activity, this is supported by the opinion of Thomlinson (2001) who states that the advantage of differentiated instructed in learning is that it can increase student learning activity, both cognitively and physically.

When viewed from the results of observations, students' activities in learning English through Differentiated instruction in English Learning experience an increase in each cycle. In cycles I, meetings I and II, the average percentage of student activity was 70.96% and 76.98%, which were included in the good category. Incycle II, meetings I and II, the average percentage of student activity was 81.02% and 86.20%, including in the good and very good categories.

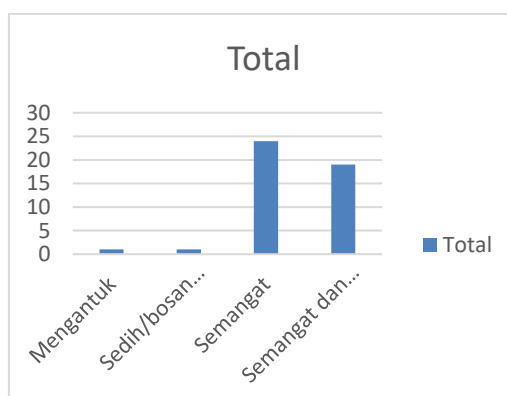


Figure 1 <Reflection Results at the End of Learning The Role of Students Regarding the Feelings of Students during the Lesson>

From the Figure 1, only 1 out of 45 students or 2% answered that s/he was sleepy. Then 1 out of 45 students or 2% answered that s/he and bored. Meanwhile 24 out of 45 students or 53% answered enthusiastically. And 19 out of 45 students or 45% answered enthusiastic and optimistic.

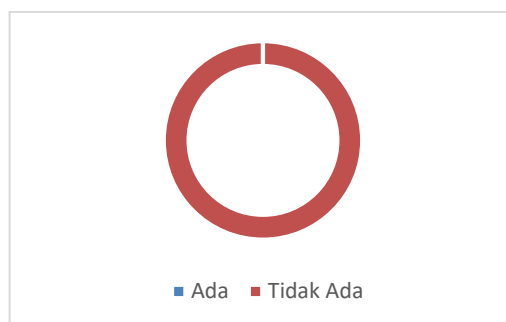


Figure 2 <Results of Final Reflection 2 Learning Learners' Roles Regarding Uninteresting Things during the Learning Process>

From the Figure 2, it can be concluded that 45 out of 45 students stated that there was nothing uninteresting during the teaching and learning process (PBM). This indicates that learning is very interesting for educators to carry out with their students in class.

Conclusions

Based on the results of research that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the implementation of differentiated instruction in English learning at class 12 IPA 3 SMAN 1 Batam can improve student learning outcomes/results. The average percentage of learning activeness are in poor category and increase good category in cycle I. The application of differentiated instruction English learning class in cycle I had several shortcomings, so improvements needed to be made to cycle II. The improvements made include providing reinforcement to students to be more confident in expressing opinions and answering questions, encouraging students to pay much more attention to anyone who is expressing an opinion, motivating students to be active by giving praise or awards to students, providing opportunities for students to freely express their opinions. Teacher is more intensive in guiding students. Researcher/teacher held discussions regarding learning steps that had not been implemented. After the improvements were implemented, there was an increase in cycle II in the form of the average percentage of student activity increase to very good category.

Researcher provides several suggestions as follows: (1) for schools, school should provide guidance to teachers to use varied learning models, for example differentiated instruction in English learning class, so that they can create active and enjoyable learning for students to achieve optimal learning goals that are centered and meet students' learning needs, (2) for teachers, teachers should use differentiated instruction English learning class as a variation of learning models as well as to increase students' participation. Teachers should be innovative and creative in providing motivation and enthusiasm for students to be active in learning, (3) for future researchers, they should conduct more in-depth studies on the application of differentiated instruction in English learning class and develop it further so that they can better increase students' active learning.

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