

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents introductory explanation of the research. Mainly it discusses background of the research that shows the problem found in the classroom when a teacher could not maximize each of the student' learning because of various students' learning needs and characteristics. Moreover, the phenomenon leads to the demand of teacher to provide high quality learning accommodation both for struggling learners and advance learners in the classroom to be the successful learners based on their learning profile, interest, and readiness. Furthermore, this chapter covers the explanation of background and rationale of the research, statements of the problems, reason for choosing the topic, the scope of the research, research questions, the aims of the research, significance of the research, site and participants, methodology of the research, research design, data collection techniques of the research, data analysis, the definition of terms, and organization of the thesis.

1.1 Background and Rationale of the Research

English is a compulsory subject in secondary schools. The aim of English as a Foreign Language teaching in the school is to develop students' communicative skills (BNSP, 2007). The students are expected to have good oral proficiency. Having a good oral proficiency is very important as it is the students' most effective way of being able to communicate. Oral skills, realistically would be important skills that students would need both in academic and daily real-life situation (BNSP, 2007) However, a nuisance fact has found, many Indonesian students had found speak in English is not easy. Many Indonesian had low level of oral proficiency (Rahmatunnisa and Maulana, 2012; Syafryadin, 2013). This fact is also found in a classroom in a junior high school in Sumedang. The classroom consisted of 24 students. Based on some interview and observation in one semester, all the students found speak in English difficult. They faced

different difficulties. More specifically, they were some struggling and advance learners who had different level and difficulties of oral proficiency. Actually, there has been much research findings discussed method and approach utilized to improve students' oral proficiency, but rarely found the research talked about what root problems are. The root problem lies in assumption that the approach and method had been implemented might not successfully accommodate each of the students' learning characteristics and needs, so that the students might not have effective learning yet.

In a classroom there are various students with different prior knowledge, interest, learning preferences, passions, learning styles, readiness, and potentials (Kyriacou, 2007). Each of the aspects brings different influence to the students' learning (Tomlinson, 2005). How the students learn would be affected by the how the differences accommodated by the teachers. It is believed that each student has his or her own experience in learning. It can be argued that classroom is not a simply a group of students who are taught together. There are many aspects should be considered there. Classroom is a complex world, which contains various students with different prior knowledge, experience, habits, etc. (Tomlinson, 1995).

It is stated by Nuthall (2007) that basically in a classroom how students learn is influenced by three worlds i.e. the public world of the teacher, the highly influential world of peers, and the student's own private world and experiences. These three worlds lead the teachers to consider not only how well the approach is used in the classroom, but also how students' learning characteristics is met with the instruction. To meet the students' learning needs and characteristics, there are several aspects to consider: first, teachers should be a great teacher who facilitates students' learning effectively. Second, teachers should understand a lot what the students feel: teachers consider what the students have experienced, what they expect, and what they need personally. Thirdly, teachers need to provide learning

environment that greater the possibility of students to learn effectively through interacting not only with teachers but also with their peers.

Different prior knowledge means different learning starting point, different interest means different learning topic, different preferences and passions mean different object to study, different learning styles means different thing to do, different readiness level means different learning material types and complexity (Tomlinson, 1995). This way, the differences might affect the students' learning quality in the classroom.

It can be argued that to have maximum learning teachers need to consider the uniqueness of each student. Each of the student' prior knowledge (readiness), preferences (interest), and learning profile become key factors that might determine the quality of students' learning (Tomlinson, 2001; Harmer, 2001). However, it is assumed that in typical classroom in Indonesia, these differences were not recognized well yet (Bachrudin Musthafa, Personal communication, 2th of August 2013). It is explained by Musthafa (Bachrudin Musthafa, Personal communication, 4th of July 2013), that both of struggling learners and advance learners got similar instruction in their classroom.

Students' learning characteristics and needs are various and unique by themselves (Tomlinson, 2001; Kyrlicou, 2007). Moreover, Ellis and Girard stated that every child is a unique individual who brings a unique set of experiences and understanding to each new learning situation and gradually construct his or her own view of the world. (Ellis and Girard, 2002). These differences might affect their own learning profile. The various characteristics mean that each of the students has his or her own learning needs. Teachers can facilitate the learning process by attending to those differences when planning and carrying out the instruction.

Finally, it is believed that varying the instruction based on students' needs and characteristics might support development each of the students more maximally. According to Richard and Rodger, (2001) these differences also enable the students to become more well-rounded individuals and more successful learners in general, since each of them know more their own characteristics and needs. Moreover, as stated by Chritison (1997:9 cited in Richard and Rodger 2001: 120) that the more awareness students have of their own intelligences and how they work, the more they will know how to use that intelligences to access the necessary information and knowledge from a lesson. Teaching is not merely about transferring as much as possible knowledge and skills, but it is about maximizing students' potential and learning achievement as best as the students can achieve (Rejeki, 2009). Teaching is a great responsibility because teaching means inspiring and educating the students. In the classroom, teachers have great roles and responsibilities. The teachers have roles and responsibilities as the facilitator, controller, prompter, and learning resource for the students (Harmer, 2001). Teaching is a complex process that requires careful organization for its success (Woodward, 2001; Nunan, 2002). There are many aspects should be taken into account. It starts from planning the lesson plan well, organizing the learning activities effectively, and assessing students' learning achievement comprehensively (Woodward, 2001; Nunan, 2002).

It is commonly believed that effective teaching deals with the approach, method and technique applied by teachers in the classroom (Kyricou, 2007). The more effective the methods and techniques are, the more opportunity the students have for effective learning (Woodward, 2001). In effective learning, each student may get the same opportunity to be the successful learners (Border and Chism, 1992).

All the reasons put teachers as the profession that plays important roles in education and requires a continuous professional development (Hartiyana, 2008). It requires teachers to be competent pedagogically, academically, socially, and

personally. In the other words, teachers need to have a good pedagogic competence, academic competence, social competence, and personal competence. These competencies should be kept-updated, developed, and improved. The updated competencies and professionalism would not influence the students' learning if the teachers might not maximally accommodate and develop each of the students' potential. More specifically, in the pedagogical competence, a teacher is really required to be able to know well the students' characteristics and needs.

All the unique learning characteristics and needs of each student should have been developed and fulfilled well by their teachers. However, in fact in reality, mostly in the classroom all the unique students' learning characteristics and needs are not developed and fulfilled maximally yet, since often times in the classroom the teachers might only provide a few activities in the classroom (Hartiyana, 2008). Some teachers see their students similarly. As stated by Koeze (Koeze, 2007), that some teachers see the classroom as whole entities and do not account for the variances in the level of readiness with which students enter the room may either over challenge or under –challenge the learners. The uniqueness, the diversity of the students' learning might be neglected by the teachers. This way, the opportunity of students to reach maximum learning achievement might be not easy to reach (Rejeki, 2009). Teaching and learning seemed to be daily ritual when students only have to do what is instructed by the teachers without knowing why they should do that (Masitoh, 2008).

How teachers defined what learning is and how teachers implement the teaching in the classroom would influence the students success, therefore, teachers should have an effective teaching in their classrooms. According to Kyriacou (2007), effective teaching is defined as the successful process of teachers to bring about the desired students learning by some educational activity. Moreover, Nancy and Border (1991, cited in Rejeki 2009) stated that effective teaching can be defined as the way of teacher in giving the same opportunity to each student to

be the successful learners. From the definitions, it is obviously seen that there are three main variables of effective teaching i.e. the teachers, the students, and the learning activity itself. It means that the students' learning characteristics and needs should be known well by the teachers, and then the teachers should develop various instructions to fulfill the needs. Then, when the teachers provide instructions that meet students' learning characteristics and needs means that the effective learning is more easily achieved (Rejeki, 2009).

In the meantime, in relation to how teachers should facilitate and scaffold the students learning, Tomlinson (2005) stated, that teachers should facilitate each of the students so that personally the students would have similar opportunity to be successful learners. Each student has similar opportunity to reach best level of his or her own learning. The way of how teachers should vary their instruction based on the students' characteristics and needs is called Differentiated Instruction. The term 'Differentiated Instruction' according to Tomlinson (2005) refers to a systematic approach to planning curriculum and instruction for academically diverse learners. In line with that, Tomlinson and McTighe (2006, cited in Powell and Powell, 2010, p: 202), that the primary goal is ensuring that teachers focus on process and procedures that ensure effective learning for varied individuals. It means that teachers need to plan various approach that students need to learn, how they will learn it, and or how they can show what they have learned as maximum as possible.

In the other words, it can be argued that the definition of differentiated instruction is any teaching techniques employ by the teachers which is based on each of his or her students' characteristics personally. In differentiated classroom teachers provide specific ways for each individual to learn as deep as possible and

as quick as possible without assuming one students' road map for learning is identical to anyone else's.(Tomlinson, 1995).

According to Tomlinson (1999, p: 2), in differentiated classrooms, teachers begin from where students are, not from the front of curriculum guide. The teachers accept and build upon the principle that teachers must be ready to engage students in instruction through different learning modalities. It seems that Differentiated Instruction is not widely used yet by all classroom settings in Indonesia. It can be observed that most of students in Indonesia get similar learning activity in their classroom. Both of struggling learners and advance learners get similar instruction in their classroom (Bachrudin Musthafa, personal Communication, 4th of July 2013). In essence, the definition of Differentiated Instruction is a method of teaching that is really based on students' needs and characteristics. In the implementation of Differentiated Instruction in the classroom leads the teachers to differentiate their teaching content, products, and process. Consequently, the instruction in the classroom would be greatly various (Tomlinson, 1995). Main aspects that will always hold by the teachers in implementing the Differentiated Instruction are: what should be differentiated, how to differentiate, and why should be differentiated.

Differentiated Instruction is indicated by the modification of three concepts of a lesson plan: content, process, and product. Content refers to what the students need to learn and how they might access the information they need. According to Powell and Powell (2010), content is principle and concept focused. In the meantime, Process refers to what activities the students are involved in to make sense of the content or to master the content presented (Powell and Powell, 2010). Then, the final concept- Product refers to the learning outcomes (ibid).

In regard to improve the students' learning achievement and some facts found in some literatures about the Differentiated instruction, this research is aimed at finding what would happen in the classroom when the students learn with Differentiated instruction. This research would determine if Differentiated

Instruction have an impact on students' oral proficiency. More specifically, it would determine if Differentiated Instruction can maximize students' oral proficiency more effectively. This research also would discover how important and beneficial it is to facilitate students with Differentiated Instruction. More specifically this research also would seek how the students respond to the Differentiated Instruction. Besides, this research also would find information if there are any problems or shortcomings found in the implementation of the differentiated instruction.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

In daily teaching practices it is found that the students might not reach the maximum learning quality and achievement easily yet. In the classroom there are two main types of students, the struggling learners and the advance learner (Tomlinson, 2001). They are called the mixed-ability classroom. It is a problem, when it is implemented 'the easy learning', perhaps the struggling learners would find the learning activity is fun and meaningful. But different with the advance learners, they would find it is boring, not interesting, and not meaningful, since they have already mastered more than what is taught. This way, the risk of having less or not effective learning not only belongs to the struggling learners, but also the advance learners. When the advance learners do not feel learn something because they have mastered it or have already known it means that they are as failure as the struggling learners who do not achieve anything because the learning is too difficult for them. It can be said that when teachers do not give what is needed by each of the learners types means that the learning is not effective. This is what has been found in the classroom. The teaching and learning oftentimes seemed so boring for the advance learners and too challenging for the struggling learners. Therefore, they found it was not learning, but just doing what is instructed by the teacher without getting any meaning. This phenomenon can be proved by their low motivation of learning and low learning achievement.

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1.3 Reason for Choosing the Topic

Students of class X of a Junior high school had low level of oral proficiency. Each of the students had their own difficulty of oral proficiency. Some students had problem to pronounce the words correctly, some other had problem to speak fluently and had limited vocabulary. Each of the students had their own learning needs of oral proficiency. The students are not alike. They are different. They have their own prior knowledge, hobbies, interest, learning style, etc. This research would choose the Differentiated Instruction as the method to be used as a way to improve students' oral proficiency, which has been adapted, so that the application would suit the context of English as Foreign Language in Indonesian classroom settings.

1.4 The Scope of the Research

The research would cover how teacher implemented the differentiated instruction, how the differentiated instruction may improve the students' learning. This research would focus on implementing some learning strategies of Differentiated Instruction and investigating its affect to the students' oral proficiency i.e. in the aspect of comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

1.5 Research questions

There are two research questions to be discovered in this research i.e.:

1. What happens when students learn English with differentiated instruction?
2. Can Differentiated Instruction optimize students' learning achievement?

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1.6 The Aims of the Research

The research was aimed at finding some information. First, finding the information of what would happen when students of a Junior High School learn English with a Differentiated Instruction. Second, this research is aimed at finding the information whether Differentiated Instruction might maximize students' learning achievement.

1.7 Significance of the Research

There are several reasons make this research significant. First, practically, In essence, for students, this research is expected to be beneficial to improve their oral proficiency. Second, theoretically, there has not been much research about the implementation of Differentiated Instruction in Indonesia, therefore, hopefully, this research might contribute to the development of English teaching and learning, which based on students' differences: learning style, prior knowledge, interest, and readiness level, so that the learning suit the students' learning characteristics and needs. Third, professionally, this research is expected to lead teachers to challenge all students by providing materials and tasks on the standard at varying degrees of scaffolding through multiple instructional activities.

1.8 Site and Participants

The site for the study was junior high school students. The participants were the second graders of a junior high school in Sumedang. The classroom consists of 24 students. There were 12 boys and 12 girls. They were 13-14 years old students. They have different learning characteristics and needs: learning styles, readiness, and interest.

1.9 The Definition of Terms

The clearer the research finding and ideas to communicate, the better the research is. As stated by Wilkinson (1991, cited in Cresswell, 2003), that a good researcher

would communicate his or her research findings accurately and precisely. Therefore, in consideration of the need for precision and similar understanding of seeing what this research is all about, below are explained some key term definitions:

1. The term 'Differentiated instruction' refers to the way of the teachers to differentiate the content, process, product, affect of their instruction (Tomlinson, 2005)
2. Content: What teacher wants to each students to know by the end of unit (Tomlinson, 2005; Koeze, 2007)
3. Process: The way in which the teacher designs activities to ensure the students learn the content and the way students come to understand the knowledge, understanding, and skills essential to a topic (Tomlinson, 2005; Koeze, 2007)
4. Product: What the students create to demonstrate their understanding of the content. (Tomlinson, 2005; Koeze, 2007)
5. Readiness Level: Students' entry point relative to particular understanding or skill (Tomlinson, 1999; Koeze, 2007).
6. Interest: Interest is what a student enjoys learning about, thinking about, and doing.(Tomlinson, 2005)
7. Learning styles: Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetics. (Tomlinson, 2005;2011)
8. Tiered Assignment: Varied levels of activities to ensure that students explore ideas at level that builds on their prior knowledge and prompts continued growth. (Tomlinson, 1995)
9. Compacting: The process of assessing what students knows about material to be studied and what the student still needs to master, planning for learning what is not known and excuses student from what is known, and planning for freed-up time to be spent in enriched study. (Tomlinson, 1995)

10. Flexible Grouping: The ways of both teacher and students select work group (heterogeneous/homogenous), which is based on their readiness or interest. (Tomlinson, 1995)
11. Varying questions: How teacher varies the sorts of question based on the students' readiness, interest, and learning styles. (Tomlinson, 1995)
12. Effective Instruction: Instruction that motivates students to learn, affirms the presence of validity of diverse learning style and maximizes the climate or conditions for learning in the classroom. (Nancy and Border, 1991, cited in Rejeki, 2009)
13. Oral Proficiency: The speaking and listening skills. (McKay, 2006)
14. Students: The eighth graders of a Junior High School in Sumedang.
15. Rubric of assessment: Comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar.

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The chapters were presented as follows:

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter covers the background and the rationale of the research, the scope of the research, statement of the problems, the reason for choosing the topic,

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research questions, aims of the research, significance of the research, site and respondent of the research, the purpose of the research, significance of the research, and clarification of the terms used in the research.

1 Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

This chapter discusses theories related to the problems studied that present the literature review of the topic. More specifically, it encompasses the definition of the Differentiated Instruction, learning philosophy that bases the implementation of the Differentiated Instruction, the elements of the differentiation, learning environments that supports the differentiation, the characteristics of the students, learning styles in Differentiated Instruction, some strategies of Differentiated Instruction, theories about language learning skills and its relation to the Differentiated Instruction, and some findings of related researches.

2 Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter elaborates methodology of the research that covers research design, site and respondent of the research, data collection techniques, procedure of the conducting the research, questions, and stages of the research, detailed procedure of the research, and data analysis method.

3 Chapter 4: Research Findings and Discussions

This chapter presents the research finding which is followed by discussion of those findings.

4 Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter presents the conclusion of the research. This chapter also covers some recommendations of the implementation of the Differentiated Instruction.