The Implementation of the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) Approach through Differentiated Instruction to Improve Narrative Text Learning Outcomes among Grade XI-8 Students at SMAN 17 Surabaya

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Abstract: This study aims to describe the effectiveness of implementing differentiated instruction through the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach to improve Narrative Text learning outcomes among Grade XI-8 students at SMAN 17 Surabaya. The research method employed was Classroom Action Research (CAR) conducted in two cycles, involving 23 students as subjects. Data were collected through diagnostic assessment, observation, and student reflection. The results showed an increase in the average student score from 53.91 (pre-test) to 85.22 (post-test). As many as 60.87% of students experienced a very significant improvement, 17.39% significant, 13.04% moderate, and only 8.7% showed no improvement. The implementation of TaRL-based differentiated instruction proved effective in meeting diverse learning needs, increasing motivation, participation, and student achievement in Narrative Text material. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of continuous assessment and adaptive teaching strategies to optimize students' potential.

Keyword: differentiated instruction; Teaching at The Right Level; learning outcomes; narrative text; classroom action research

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important aspect of human life because it transforms a nation into a more advanced society. Education serves as a means to shape a generation that is intelligent and possesses good character. Through education, the potential of each individual can develop, enabling them to live better lives and become educated cognitively, affectively, and psychomotorically (Yuono, Toharudin, and Nurpratiwiningsih, 2023). Education plays a crucial role in preparing and developing skilled human resources capable of competing at the global level. Additionally, education functions to prepare competent workers who can compete to achieve maximum achievement.

However, the implementation of education still applies a uniform learning system that treats all students equally without considering their diverse abilities and characteristics (Mauizdati, 2020). During the learning process, teachers seem to provide instruction as if addressing only one student, even though there are approximately 20-35 students in a class, each with unique traits, characteristics, and diverse abilities (Munawir, 2021).

Meanwhile, each student has a unique developmental stage, requiring different approaches. According to Iskandar (2021), education must recognize that each student is a unique individual with diverse characters, meaning that uniformity in learning implementation without differentiating interests, talents, learning profiles, readiness, and backgrounds must be considered and balanced to accommodate such diversity.

One effort to address this issue is to use the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) learning approach, which can be implemented through differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction is a set of teaching practices that consider the needs of students (Fitra, 2022). According to Maulida et al. (2023), differentiated instruction is a learning model aimed at adjusting teaching and learning activities in the classroom to meet the learning needs of each student. The adjustments in the learning process relate to students' learning profiles, interests, and readiness to achieve improved learning outcomes (Herwina, 2021).

The implementation of differentiated instruction needs to be carried out with an understanding of student diversity. Teachers must consistently apply differentiated instruction so that students' abilities can develop optimally. Differentiated instruction can be conducted by designing learning experiences tailored to students' learning needs through grouping. Differentiated instruction can be applied in three ways: 1) content differentiation, which relates to the learning materials used or given to students according to their abilities, readiness, interests, and learning profiles; 2) process differentiation, which involves the activities carried out during learning; and 3) product differentiation, which considers the students' work outcomes (Swandewi, 2021).

Based on the initial diagnostic test results on Narrative Text, it was found that class XI-8 had a low average knowledge score of 51.91. Five students achieved mastery, while 18 students did not meet the mastery criteria. One of the problems faced by students was their low motivation to participate in the learning process. During group discussions, only a few students actively contributed to completing the Student Worksheet (LKPD), while most others appeared relaxed and showed low interest. To address this problem, one step that can be taken is to apply the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach. Febriani & Shalihah (2023) explain that the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach is a

learning method that focuses on students' ability levels rather than their grade levels. Therefore, the researcher conducted a study by implementing differentiated instruction through the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach using group discussion methods on the Narrative Text material.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method employed in this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR), which aims to obtain data and information regarding the outcomes of implementing differentiated instruction using the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach in the English subject, specifically on Narrative Text material. CAR was chosen because it allows the researcher to directly intervene in the classroom, monitor the learning process, and systematically and continuously evaluate changes in students' attitudes and learning outcomes (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Arikunto, 2015).

The CAR was conducted in cycles consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Data collection techniques included assessments, observations, and student reflections, which support the validity and depth of data analysis (Creswell, 2016; Mills, 2014).
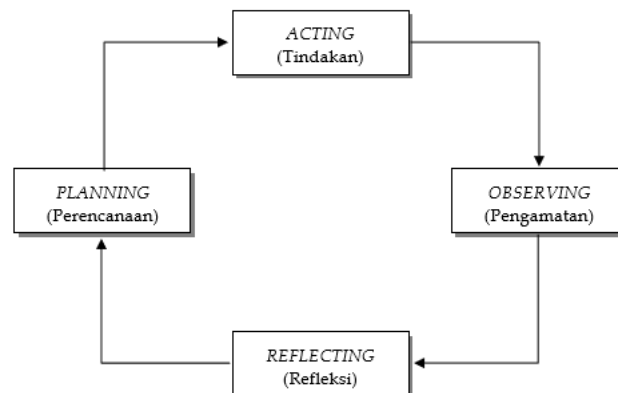

Figure 1. Diagram of the Classroom Action Research (CAR) Model Stages

The subjects of this study consisted of 23 students from class XI-8 at SMAN 17 Surabaya. The initial stage of implementing the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach began with a diagnostic assessment using multiple-choice questions distributed via Google Form to map the students' cognitive abilities (Banerjee et al., 2016).

After obtaining the pretest results, the students were divided into three learning groups based on their proficiency levels: advanced, developing, and beginner. Subsequently, differentiated instruction was conducted according to the specific needs of each group. Evaluation was carried out through a post-test to measure the achievement of learning objectives, and reflection was facilitated by asking students to complete reflection sheets as feedback on the learning process.

According to Sari and Prasetyo (2020), the improvement in student learning outcomes can be measured by calculating the percentage increase in scores before and after the intervention. The researcher then interpreted these percentage results into several categories, such as very significant, significant, moderate, low, and no improvement, to facilitate the analysis of the effectiveness of the implemented learning model.

1. **Calculate the Score Improvement per Student:**

$$Score\ Impprovement = PostTest - PreTest$$

2. **Calculate the Percentage of Improvement:**

$$Percentage\ of\ Improvement = \frac{Score\ Improvement}{Pre - Test}\ x\ 100\%$$

3. **Interpretation of Percentage of Improvement:**

The Percentage of Improvement (%)	Categories of Improvement
> 30%	Very Significant
21% – 30%	Significant
10% – 20%	Moderate
< 10%	Low
≤ 0%	No Improvement

The final result of implementing differentiated instruction using the TaRL approach shows an improvement in students' learning outcomes on the Narrative Text material, meeting the KKM (Minimum Competency Criteria) standards in the English subject.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in class XI-8 at SMAN 17 Surabaya during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The research subjects consisted of 23 students with diverse learning abilities. This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) model consisting of two cycles, each cycle including the stages of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. The material taught was Narrative Text in the English subject, using the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach through differentiated instruction.

Cycle I

In the first cycle, the researcher conducted a diagnostic assessment through a pre-test to map the students' initial abilities. The pre-test results showed an average score of 53.91, with only 5 out of 23 students meeting the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM). Based on these results, the students were grouped into three categories: advanced, developing, and beginner. Differentiated instruction was applied according to the needs of each group, in terms of content, process, and product. At the end of cycle I, a post-test was administered to measure the improvement in learning outcomes.

Tabel 1. Average Score Pre-test and Post-test Cycle I

No	Average Pre-test	Average Post-test	Improvement
1	53,91	85,22	31,31

The post-test results showed a significant improvement, with 17 students (73.91%) achieving or exceeding the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM). However, there were still 6 students who had not yet reached mastery.

Cycle II

In the second cycle, the researcher conducted reflection and strategy improvements, including providing more intensive assistance to the beginner group and increasing the variety of group activities. Differentiated instruction continued to be applied, but with an emphasis on collaboration and scaffolding. The post-test results of cycle II showed that all students experienced an increase in scores, with 21 students (91.30%) achieving the Minimum Competency Criteria (KKM) and only 2 students not yet reaching mastery, although their scores had improved.

Based on the analysis of pre-test and post-test data, the improvement in student learning outcomes can be seen in Table 2 below:

Tabel 2. Distribution of Student Learning Outcome Improvement Categories

Categories of Improvement	Number of Students	Percentage(%)
Very Significant	14	60,87
Significant	4	17,39
Moderate	3	13,04
Low	2	8,70
No Improvement	23	100

The majority of students (78.26%) experienced improvements in learning outcomes categorized as "Very Significant" and "Significant." Two students who did not

show improvement still gained better learning experiences in terms of participation and motivation.

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of differentiated instruction using the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach significantly enhances students' learning outcomes in the Narrative Text material. These findings align with the theories proposed by Banerjee et al. (2016) and Maulida et al. (2023), which state that instruction tailored to students' ability levels can optimize their learning potential. Furthermore, these results support the research of Sari and Prasetyo (2020), who assert that improvements in learning outcomes can be objectively measured through the percentage increase in student scores.

Reflections from each cycle demonstrate that learning strategies responsive to individual needs, the provision of feedback, and the adjustment of learning activities are crucial for achieving optimal learning outcomes. The researcher also found that student motivation and participation increased alongside the implementation of differentiated instruction.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECCOMENDATIONS

This study demonstrates that the implementation of differentiated instruction through the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach effectively enhances student learning outcomes in Narrative Text material in class XI-8 at SMAN 17 Surabaya. Analysis of pre-test and post-test data reveals an increase in the average student score from 53.91 to 85.22. The majority of students, specifically 60.87%, exhibited improvements categorized as very significant, 17.39% as significant, and 13.04% as moderate. Only 8.7% of students showed no improvement. These findings substantiate that instruction tailored to students' ability levels, interests, and needs can optimize learning potential and reduce student underachievement. Furthermore, the continuous application of diagnostic, formative, and reflective assessments plays a pivotal role in identifying learning needs and delivering targeted interventions. Differentiated instruction also positively influences student motivation, participation, and attitudes toward learning in the classroom.

The implications of this study underscore the importance of teachers consistently implementing assessment-driven differentiated instruction throughout the planning, execution, and evaluation phases of learning. Teachers are encouraged to continuously develop variations in grouping strategies, learning activities, and assessment methods to ensure all students achieve the expected competencies. Moreover, these findings can serve as a valuable reference for schools in designing programs aimed at improving learning quality that are responsive to student diversity.

Based on the results, it is recommended that teachers further enhance their competencies in designing and implementing differentiated instruction and conduct ongoing assessments to accurately identify student needs. Schools are expected to provide support through training and resources that facilitate the effective implementation of differentiated instruction. Future research could expand by involving a larger sample size, diverse learning materials, and more varied assessment instruments to evaluate the long-term impact of the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach across different learning contexts.

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