INDIVIDUALIZED GUIDANCE TO EMPOWER AN L2 LEARNER WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IN ACADEMIC ESSAY WRITING

Adaninggar Septi Subekti[a]*, Fransisca Endang Lestariningsih[b]
([a]adaninggar@staff.ukdw.ac.id, [b]endang@staff.ukdw.ac.id)

[a,b]*English Language Education Department,*
Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract: The present study was conducted to see the extent to which intensive online individualized guidance sessions could help a second/foreign language (L2) learner of English with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at an undergraduate level to write an academic essay in the education field with citations and references. The sessions, 30 minutes each, were conducted 14 times in total during the second semester of the 2020/2021 academic year. Teaching journal detailing the participant's learning dynamic in each session, the participant's ongoing writing progress, and the recorded videos of the sessions were used to assess this learner participant's learning progress. The study found that through the individualized guidance sessions, the learner participant could write a 326-word academic essay with citations using three journal articles in the Indonesian language as the references. It also found that as the participant became more familiar with the pattern of the sessions and the expectation of what to do in each session, he could do his task faster and more confidently. Based on the findings, several pedagogical implications and possible research contributions are stated along with suggested directions for future studies in the field of autism in the L2 learning context.

Many learners with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) go to special schools or inclusive education institutions that provide opportunities for them to learn together in a regular school. Autism or clinically known as ASD is defined as "a neurological and developmental disorder that begins early in childhood and lasts throughout a person's life" (MedlinePlus, 2021). Hannan et al. (2020) mentioned because of the different spectrum, each learner with ASD will have a unique set of needs differentiating him/her from other learners with ASD. However, in general, the more severe the spectrum, the less likely these learners can understand other people's emotions or respond to conversational turn appropriately (Phillips, 2016). They also have difficulty expressing their thoughts both in oral or written form (Vacca, 2007), thus hampering their social interactions (Digard et al., 2020). Therefore, depending on the severity of the spectrum, learners

---

* Corresponding author

with ASD probably give up on doing some tasks in an instructional process if they do not receive any support from others, especially the teachers.

With regards to the second/foreign language (L2) learning context, learners with ASD seemed to face doubled challenges as they need to learn an L2 even when they may struggle to communicate in their first language or mother tongue (L1) (Barletta, 2018). A recent study in Malaysia by Hashim et al. (2021) reported several obstacles faced by young autistic learners of English such as difficulty in learning new vocabulary, in responding to and initiating interactions, further hampering the learning process. However, Hashim et al. (2021) also highlighted the crucial roles teachers play in facilitating learners with ASD to learn an L2. An example of the important role of a teacher to help learners with ASD could be seen from a study conducted by Zohoorian et al. (2021) involving two learners with ASD, one with a moderate spectrum and the other one with a severe spectrum. The study reported that teachers' use of the Picture Exchange Communication System method could enhance both learners' L2 vocabulary mastery.

We believe that teachers of learners with ASD play very important roles in guiding them despite their deficiencies. Regarding this, a recent study involving 18 teachers in general education context by Bolourian et al. (2022) reported the teachers' beliefs on the importance of optimizing the talents of the learners with ASD, embracing their special interests, and giving them one-on-one time. In the case of language learning, several studies suggested the crucial role teachers play in helping learners with ASD to learn languages (Giannikas et al., 2021; Miranda et al., 2019). Teachers' interventions, furthermore, have been reported to facilitate learners with ASD to learn an L2 despite their deficiency in expressing their thoughts. This has been reported in numerous studies in different L2 contexts, for example, in Spain (Aran, 2018), Colombia (Martínez & Carvajal, 2021), Nigeria (Ugwuanyi et al., 2018), Hong Kong (Chan & Lo, 2016), Thailand (Opartkiattikul et al., 2014), Malaysia (Yahya et al., 2013), and Indonesia (Kurniawati, 2020; Padmadewi & Artini, 2017; Sari et al., 2021; Subekti, 2020b). In a study in Hong Kong by Chan and Lo (2016), the teacher participants teaching autistic learners enthusiastically expressed their beliefs in the need to support learners with special needs in the L2 classroom. They also developed inclusive instructional practices despite little guidance from the school. Another study in Malaysia by Yahya et al. (2013) found that teachers needed to give verbal prompts supported with examples or instructions or verbal commands supported with concrete stimuli for the autistic learners to understand and show a positive outcome. The use of Malay, the learners' L1, during instructional practices was also reported as a facilitating factor helping learners learn better. In line with that, a recent review study by Conner et al. (2020) also suggested the benefits of incorporating L1 in the instructional process involving learners with ASD.

Furthermore, teachers of learners with ASD need to use appropriate teaching methods to ensure that learners get involved in the instructional process. Some teachers use teaching aids to engage them, such as, using vocabulary cards self-made by a learner with ASD that could enhance the participant's vocabulary mastery (Subekti, 2020b) and individualized instruction to facilitate a learner with ASD in grammar class (Kurniawati, 2020). Numerous other studies supported the importance of applying suitable methods as well. Martínez and Carvajal (2021) also stated that teachers should do methodological adaptations in the form of reasonable

adjustments in teaching strategies, time, and behavioral management. Moreover, the more interested a learner with ASD is in a certain topic, the more motivated the learner will be. Optimizing learners' strength may also develop their mastery experience which could result in a sense of achievement positively affecting their self-perceptions and confidence (Bao & Du, 2015).

Concerning writing, the use of L1 in L2 learning is assumed to have positive effects. Writing, let alone in L2, belongs to the highest level of cognitive process dimension in the Revised Bloom Taxonomy, namely, creating (see Anderson et al., 2001). By the characteristics of many autistic learners, writing, especially in L2, is a skill that is probably very difficult to attain. Related to this, Kim and Roberti (2014) asserted that bilingual learners with ASD could use all their language resources for learning. In Indonesia, a study by Subekti (2020a) found that the use of guided translation from the Indonesian language into English was successful in facilitating a learner with ASD to write descriptive and expository essays during a semester albeit the challenges in both L1 and L2 production. In a rather old yet very relevant publication on how to teach English, Harmer (2007) strongly stated that in the case of an L1 mutually shared by both teachers and learners, "it would be foolish to deny its existence and potential value" (p. 39), implying that learners' L1 could be utilized, instead of marginalized, for the success of L2 learning. For low proficient L2 learners, L1 can be used as a psychological tool when facing cognitive difficulty (DiCamilla & Anton, 2012; Lo & Macaro, 2015) and can be utilized by teachers to explain complex ideas such learners are unlikely able to understand if conveyed in L2 (Harmer, 2007).

In the case of L2 writing, furthermore, learners with ASD are likely to face additional challenges because they generally already struggle in their L1 communication. Several scholars have also conducted studies about ASD learners' performance in writing (Accardo et al., 2020; Asaro-Saddler et al., 2015; Asaro-Saddler & Bak, 2012, 2015; Brown et al., 2014; Finnegan & Accardo, 2018) and the findings generally suggested that whilst learners with ASD struggled in writing, teachers' intervention could remedy the situations and facilitate them to write better. Hence, it is necessary to conduct an empirical study investigating how L2 learners with ASD could be facilitated to achieve a satisfactory performance in L2 writing, especially academic writing in the case of university learners. That is because these ASD learners probably need it to graduate from university. Besides, such a study may be very rare in the Indonesian context thus far. Thus, conducting such a study in this context could pave a way for further studies on autism in L2 writing, a challenging area for learners with ASD. Taking into account that learners with ASD are likely to struggle in L1 communication, let alone in L2, intensive individualized guidance in learners' L1 is considered an appropriate way to empower learners with ASD in L2 writing.

With the previously mentioned rationales, the present study seeks to answer this research question: To what extent does the use of intensive individualized guidance facilitate an Indonesian English learner with ASD to write an academic essay in English?

METHOD

Research Design

The present study was a teacher action research study. Action research is an approach where the action researchers diagnose problems in certain social settings and work on the solutions based on the problems (Bryman, 2012). In teaching context, furthermore, teacher action research involves research conducted by teachers to solve problems in their own classrooms (Bell & Aldridge, 2014).

Before the study was conducted, we identified the potential problem. There was a learner with ASD who was going to take the Academic Essay Writing class we taught. Considering his generally poor academic performances in the previous classes, he was likely to struggle to pass this class if he only attended the regular classes without any intervention. To further confirm this speculation, a needs analysis was conducted on Friday, 5 February 2021 in an online after-class meeting with this learner after the first meeting of the Academic Essay Writing class, where the class syllabus and all the tasks were explained to all learners. In this after-class meeting, this autistic learner shared his fear and anxiety about the possibility of being overwhelmed with all the tasks and not performing well in those tasks. This was because he had difficulty in dealing with various tasks at the same time and in a short period. In response to his concerns, we then offered him online individualized guidance sessions after the regular class sessions where he would be facilitated to write a short academic essay in English. He consented to this idea and the intensive individualized guidance sessions were then scheduled with the first author of this article as the teacher.

The decision to conduct intensive individualized guidance sessions was made considering the characteristics of this learner. He needed guidance in relating abstract concepts. Writing seemed to be a skill that is almost impossible for him since he could not go beyond level 3 of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (applying); whereas writing skill requires higher levels of the taxonomy (Levels 4, 5, and 6 - analyzing, evaluating, and creating, respectively) (Anderson et al., 2001). For this reason, he needed his teacher's constant support and intensive monitoring while working on writing tasks.

The online intensive individualized guidance sessions were conducted fourteen times through the Zoom platform from 19 February 2021 up to 4 June 2021, every Friday from 12.30 to 13.00 after the synchronous sessions of Academic Essay Writing class, or at 11.30 to 12.00 if the regular class was conducted asynchronously. Each session lasted about 30 minutes each and was recorded. The sessions were mostly delivered in the Indonesian language to enhance the participant's understanding. The target of the sessions was to facilitate the learner in writing an academic essay on the topic of education, with in-text citations and references.

Research Setting and Participant

The participant of this study was Benny (pseudonym), an autistic learner taking the Academic Essay Writing class at an English Education Department at a university in Indonesia in the second semester of the 2020/2021 academic year. The regular class was conducted fully online. The class facilitated learners to write two 1,200-word academic essays in English, with

each essay containing citations and at least five references, preferably journal articles in English. The topic of the essay was education, be it education in general or specific to English language learning. Citations and references should be organized in American Psychological Association (APA) style, using Microsoft Word Reference Manager. Synchronous class sessions were mainly conducted to give feedback to each of learners' essays on essay organization, grammar, citing, and referencing, while the development and the writing of the essays were conducted outside the class sessions.

Benny was 26 years old and in the 8th semester of his study. His teachers' observations towards this learner from previous semesters suggested that he could have strong memories of anything he was interested in, or anything he was familiar with. However, he faced great challenges in terms of logical thoughts and developing abstract and associative concepts. He was really worried that he would not be able not catch up with class materials in the Academic and Writing classes. Furthermore, based on a psychological examination on the participant from a professional psychologist in 2020, it was found that he lacked logical thinking, abstract concepts making, and associative thinking. He also had difficulty processing a series of instructions at the same time. However, he was good at clerical and practical works. He had a very good memory of things he was familiar with or things he liked. Moreover, he strived for his goals, had perseverance and was very hard-working despite his limitations. When he was convinced that his works were of benefit to others, he would put even more effort to show his best.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the individualized guidance sessions were in the forms of teaching journal noting the participant's learning dynamics in each session, the participant's ongoing progress in writing an academic essay, and video recordings of the sessions. The teaching journal on the participant's progress and learning dynamics and the participants' ongoing writing progress, which were the main data sources, became the sources of continuous reflections on what should be aimed at in the next sessions. In other words, these data were continuously analyzed through reflections throughout the semester. These data were reported qualitatively in the form of the summary of the learning objectives and the participant's progress. The video recordings of the session became an additional data source capturing the conversations between the teacher and the participant. Several conversations best representing important steps during the guidance sessions were transcribed verbatim to show the dynamics of the sessions facilitating the participant in L2 writing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The research question concerns the extent to which the use of intensive individualized guidance facilitated an Indonesian English learner with ASD to write an academic essay in English.

There were fourteen online guidance sessions, and these sessions were conducted right after Benny attended all the regular Academic Essay Writing class sessions together with his typically developing peers. Benny's 'only task' in regular sessions was to absorb whatever knowledge he obtained related to academic writing with the specific task of understanding how to write APA citations and references, without having to actively participate in the regular class sessions. In comparison, his peers followed the regular syllabus of the class where they were expected to produce two 1,200-word academic essays on the topic of education with at least five journal articles as references in each of the essays. The two essays were turned in approximately in the middle of the semester and at the end of the semester respectively.

In the individualized sessions, Benny was facilitated to write an academic essay as the only writing product he needed to turn in at the end of the semester. As for how the individualized guidance sessions unfolded, Table 1 summarizes the objectives of each session along with Benny's progress in writing the essay.

Table 1. Individualized Sessions: Objectives and Benny's Learning Progress

Session	Date	Objectives	Benny's Progress
1	19 February 2021	Writing a short sandwich paragraph in English using one journal article in the Indonesian language as the reference	Benny could write a 79-word paragraph during these seven meetings.
2	26 February 2021		
3	5 March 2021		
4	12 March 2021		
5	19 March 2021		
6	26 March 2021		
7	9 April 2021		
8	16 April 2021	Writing a short sandwich paragraph in English using one journal article in the Indonesian language as the reference	Benny could write a 146-word paragraph during these three meetings.
9	23 April 2021		
10	30 April 2021		
11	7 May 2021	Writing a short sandwich paragraph in English using one journal article in the Indonesian language as the reference Writing the "References" part of the essay mentioning all of the three journal articles already cited	Benny could write a 101-word paragraph during these three meetings. Benny could write the references using Microsoft Word reference manager with ease.
12	21 May 2021		
13	28 May 2021		
14	4 June 2021	Formulating the title of the essay and writing the thesis statement	Benny could write the title and the thesis statement though slowly.

To write each paragraph, Benny did the following sequences.
1. Benny searched for a journal article in the Indonesian language on the topic of education.
2. Benny independently highlighted ten Indonesian sentences found in the PDF of the journal article.

3. Benny paraphrased the ten Indonesian sentences he previously highlighted and wrote the APA citations of each sentence. Benny first did this task independently at home. After that, the results were discussed together in the sessions where his paraphrasing results were revised to simplify the language and the grammar to facilitate easier translation into English in the next step.

4. Benny translated the already simplified Indonesian sentences into English. Benny first did this task independently at home. After that, the translation results were discussed together in the sessions where his translation results were revised through step-by-step prompting in the sessions.

5. After the accuracy of the English translation had been verified, Benny arranged and organized the English sentences into a series of supporting sentences with logical sequence. In this process, Benny dropped several sentences that turned out to be irrelevant.

6. The teacher helped Benny to formulate, in the Indonesian language, the topic sentence and the conclusion sentence for the supporting sentences he had obtained to form a paragraph and Benny was guided to translate those sentences into English.

As seen in Table 1, to write his first paragraph, 79 words in length, Benny went through the aforementioned six steps in seven weekly sessions from 19 February 2021 to 9 April 2021. To write his second and third ones, 146 words and 101 words in length respectively, going through the same sequences, Benny needed three weekly sessions each, from 19 March 2021 to 9 April and from 7 May 2021 to 28 May 2021 respectively. Benny's final essay product could be observed in the Appendix.

It should be noted, however, that the objectives of the individualized sessions were not rigidly formulated at the beginning of the semester. Instead, the objectives were continually adjusted per Benny's learning pace in the already conducted sessions in such a way that the learning objectives in the sessions that followed did not pose too high cognitive demand for Benny. This was done to sustain his motivation and sense of achievement, which were conditions conducive for Benny's learning.

The guidance sessions were mainly dominated by facilitating Benny's essay writing through prompting and guiding him step-by-step. This could be reflected in the following excerpts from the 12th session on 21 May 2021.

Benny   :   *Motivasi belajar dapat dibentuk, ditumbuhkan, dikembangkan, dan dipelihara* (Learning motivation can be formed, grown, developed, and maintained) [Reading his Indonesian sentence]. Students have motivation can be formed, be grown, developed, and maintained [Reading his original English translation].

Teacher :   *Bentar-bentar... Coba dicari "motivasi belajar" Bahasa Inggrisnya apa* (Wait... What is the English translation of "learning motivation"?)

Benny   :   [Checking in Google Translate] 'Motivation to learn' [He immediately revised his sentence].

Teacher :   Motivation to learn.... [Reading Benny's new sentence]

Benny   :   ... can be formed, be grown, developed, and maintained [Continuing the teacher, reading his sentence].

Teacher : Good, very good! Next.

Benny : *Jika tidak dijaga, motivasi belajar bisa menurun, melemah, dan bahkan hilang* (If not maintained, learning motivation can decrease, become weak, and even disappear) [Reading another Indonesian sentence]. If students not keeping up, study motivation can disappear [Reading his original translation].

Teacher : Hang on. Let us do it this way. *"Jika mahasiswa tidak menjaga motivasi belajar, 'jika tidak dijaga' dihapus"* (If students do not maintain learning motivation, 'if not maintained' should be dropped. [Benny typed as the teacher dictated him.]

Teacher : Okay, now read your new sentence.

Benny : *Jika mahasiswa tidak menjaga motivasi belajar, motivasi belajar bisa menurun, melemah, dan bahkan hilang* (If students do not maintain learning motivation, it can decrease, can become weak, and can even disappear) [Reading his revised Indonesian sentence].

Teacher : Okay, now let us do the English translation.

Table 2 provides a comparison between some of Benny's original paraphrasing results he prepared independently outside the sessions and the corresponding revised versions he wrote with the guidance of the teacher during the sessions.

Table 2. Comparison between Benny's Original Indonesian Paraphrasing and the Revised Paraphrasing

No	Benny's original paraphrasing	Revised versions
1	*Keluarga itu sangat taat kepada Tuhan, apa yang keluarga sudah mendidik anak-anak, mulai dari belajar untuk mengenal dan sumber dari Alkitab (Munandar, 2020).* (Literal translation: Family obeys God so much, whatever family has educated their children, starting from learning to know and sources from the Bible.)	*Keluarga harus taat kepada Tuhan, dan orang tua harus mendidik anak untuk mengenal Tuhan (Munandar, 2020).* (Family must be obedient to God and parents must educate children to know God.)
2	*Anak-anak sebagai pendidikan di sekolah harus belajar tentang nilai-nilai dari Tuhan, seperti kita saat mengikuti pelajaran Agama Kristen secara kepentingan untuk rasa dalam arti taat kepada Tuhan (Munandar, 2020).* (Literal translation: Children as education at school must learn about values from God, such as we have to follow Christianity teachings in the way of necessity to feel in terms of being obedient to God)	Anak-anak harus belajar tentang nilai-nilai Alkitab *(Munandar, 2020).* (Children must learn Holy Bible values.)

Table 3 on the next page provides a comparison between Benny's original English translation he prepared independently outside the sessions and the revised versions he wrote with the teacher's guidance.

Table 3. Comparison between Benny's Original Translations and the Revised Versions

No	Benny's original translations	Revised translations
1	Christianity teacher subject must capable guide and have strong of faith (Sijabat 2018 in Santoso, 2019).	Teachers of Christianity subject should be able to educate students and have strong faith (Sijabat, 2018 in Santoso, 2019).
2	As good Christian teacher person, must accompany student as good (Santoso, 2019).	Teachers as good Christians must accompany students well (Santoso, 2019).
3	Christian Educate goals is for facility student for concern faith development intact (Sijabat, 2018 in Santoso, 2019).	Christian education's goal is to facilitate students to experience faith development in its entirety (Sijabat, 2018 in Santoso, 2019).

In the second-last session on 28 May 2021, besides being required to complete his third paragraph, Benny was required to write the APA References of the three journal articles he had used to write his three paragraphs. He did that mostly on his own with little guidance.

In the last session, the teacher helped formulate several-sentence prologue and the thesis statement of the essay in the Indonesian language and Benny was facilitated to translate them into English. Afterwards, Benny organized his essay in a good layout and asked to turn in the essay as the sole written product with a maximum grade of 60%, the minimum passing grade.

In total, Benny used three journal articles in the Indonesian language on education topics to write his three paragraphs. The selection of the topic of these three journal articles accommodated Benny's interest. The first article was on the role of parents in Christianity education. This topic was based on the fact that Benny was close to his family members and was a practicing Christian. Thus, he was asked to find a journal article about Christian families' roles in education. This selection was made based on a thoughtful discussion with him on 5 February 2021 when Benny agreed to have weekly individualized sessions after class. This could be seen in these translated excerpts from the original conversation in Indonesian.

Teacher : Okay, you need to download an article on the topic of education in the Indonesian language and show it to me next week. What are you interested in?

Benny : Covid-19.

Teacher : Covid-19 is not [about] education.

Benny : Football.

Teacher : Football is not [about] education either. Anything else that you like?

Benny : My sister.

Teacher : Okay, your family members – you love your family members. Why don't you do family education?

Benny : Okay.

Teacher : For example, family education and Christianity – What do you understand?

Benny : I find an article on the topic of family education and Christianity.

Teacher : What should you do next week?

Benny : So I should bring an article on the topic of family education and Christianity.

Teacher : Very good.

The selection of the topic of the second and third journal articles needed shorter discussion. For example, on the 7th meeting on 9 April 2021 when Benny was asked to find another journal article for his second paragraph, the following conversation happened.

Teacher : Now you see you can write a paragraph with citations. Good job. For next week, you need to find another journal article to write your second paragraph. You have read [an article] on Christianity and family education. What [topic] do you want to do next? Christianity and what?

Benny : School... teachers.

Teacher : Do you want to write [about] schools' and teachers' role on Christianity education?

Benny : Yes

The shorter conversation indicated that by this time Benny was already familiar with the 'pattern' of what he was supposed to do. Hence, he understood the instruction faster. His growing sense of achievement after successfully writing his first academic paragraph also seemed to be at play.

Discussion

From the findings on Benny's learning progress in writing a short academic essay in English, several points need to be discussed further. The first was Benny's quite 'speedy' writing process after he successfully wrote his first paragraph. He needed seven sessions to write a 79-word paragraph, but he only needed three sessions each to write 146-word and 101-word paragraphs respectively. This indicated that as he was familiar with the sequence of the work he was required to do, he became more confident and could do the relatively same task better and faster. This was also in line with the characteristics of learners with ASD who generally like repetitions or patterned activities (Asaro-Saddler & Bak, 2012). In studies involving learners with ASD in Germany, Colombia, and Poland, learners with ASD were to repeat words or sentences in repeated task sequences and these activities were reported to benefit these learners' development of language skills (Andreou et al., 2020; Barletta, 2018; Wojciechowski & Al-Musawi, 2017). In the present study, keeping in mind Benny's character seen from observation and the professional psychologist's assessment, that is, his being hardworking and diligent albeit his deficiencies, once he realized he succeeded in doing something he considered meaningful, his confidence seemed to be propelled and he became more determined to show his optimum effort.

Second, Benny's interests and what was dear to him were channeled in the writing process to make him feel more confident and comfortable in doing the task. A review study by Gunn and Delafield-Butt (2015) suggested that whilst the restricted interests of learners with ASD could pose particular challenges for teachers to teach ASD learners in mainstream settings, these interests could be utilized to increase task performance. In this study, it was found that Benny loved his family and particularly idolized his older sister. Though it was not possible to write about his love for his family in an academic essay, this particular feeling was utilized as the 'entry point' to determine the topic of his academic essay, children's education. In addition, as

Benny was a devout practicing Christian, he was directed to find journal articles on children's education in Christianity. This being done, Benny was facilitated to stretch his limit in L2 writing by still being in his 'comfort zone', family and Christianity. This could avoid learning anxiety and boost confidence as he felt he was in control. This finding corresponded with the findings of a quantitative study in the field of mental health by Koenig and Williams (2017) involving 86 participants with ASD. The study reported that most of the participants viewed their interests as strengths that should be encouraged, and they also felt that doing activities in which they were interested was a positive and calming experiences leading to decreased anxiety.

Furthermore, the extensive use of Indonesian in these individualized guidance sessions facilitated Benny's understanding and writing progress. The Indonesian language was used as the introductory language during the sessions and Benny was also tasked to find journal articles in the Indonesian language as the references for his essay. The utilization of the Indonesian language, Benny's L1, was in line with the findings of several studies suggesting the positive role of L1 in teaching an L2 to learners with ASD (Conner et al., 2020; Kim & Roberti, 2014; Subekti, 2020a, 2020b). Besides, considering that writing skills necessitate the highest level of cognitive process dimension in the Revised Bloom Taxonomy, that is, creating (Anderson et al., 2001), learners with ASD like Benny may need to use his L1 as a psychological tool to fulfil such challenging cognitive demand (DiCamilla & Anton, 2012; Lo & Macaro, 2015).

Interestingly, despite his somewhat dependence on guidance sessions to progress in his essay writing, Benny could organize the APA citations and references of his essay using Microsoft Word Reference Manager with little guidance. In the 13th session, or the second last, he showed nearly perfect APA references he organized independently at home. This suggested that he understood how to organize the references through attending the regular Academic Essay Writing class sessions along with his typically developing peers. However, this finding may not be very surprising. Per the professional psychologist's assessment, Benny was good at clerical works, and organizing references using Microsoft Word Reference Manager resembles clerical works of data entry where he recorded journal articles' details such as author's name, article title, journal's name, volume, edition, and pages into the given spaces. A publication reviewing fifty experiments on vocational training intervention involving participants with ASD reported that many of the experiments taught their participants to do clerical works characterized with repetitions (Campanaro et al., 2021), perhaps suggesting doing clerical tasks was one of the forte of persons with ASD. In the present study, what could be rather surprising was that Benny could do this solely by paying attention to the teacher's feedback on references directed towards his peers in the regular class sessions. Consistent and repeated exposure in regular sessions may probably be at play along with Benny's motivation to fulfil his specific task in the regular class sessions, which was understanding how to write APA citations and references.

Furthermore, instant error corrections and verbal prompts seemed to give a positive impact on Benny's writing progress. Though error corrections were often reported to make learners anxious (Mak, 2011), the way and the time teachers corrected learners' errors could be a determinant. In the case of facilitating learners with ASD in writing, error corrections may be paramount because such learners lack structured thought organization, let alone in L2 (Finnegan & Accardo, 2018). In line with that, the positive impact of the teacher's verbal prompts towards Benny's writing process was attributed to Benny's inability to understand a series of instructions

at once. He needed to be guided step by step to understand what to do next and verbal prompts became very necessary for him. The use of verbal prompts was also reported to give positive impacts on L2 learners with ASD in several previous studies (Alison et al., 2017; Asaro-Saddler & Bak, 2012; Subekti, 2020a, 2020b). In a study by Alison et al. (2017) involving three ASD learners of English, verbal prompting embedded in shared story reading activities facilitated learners to comprehend W-H questions and identify W-H rules. Similarly, conducted in an L1 learning context, an earlier study by Pennington et al. (2017) also found that response prompting helped learners with ASD to write accurate and complete sentences, suggesting the relatively uniform findings on the merit of using prompts on learners with ASD.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study offers several implications. First, repetitions or patterned series of activities could facilitate autistic learners' L2 learning progress. In this case, firstly, L2 teachers should design a task allowing the autistic learners to be familiar with the instructions and expectations of the task. The teachers should not move on to another task before these learners succeed in doing the tasks. That is because only when such learners feel 'secured' by feeling they are in control knowing 'how the system works', can they gradually learn from the task. Secondly, teachers should know their autistic learners' interests and what is meaningful for them. Teachers can use these as the 'entry points' from which learners with ASD can be facilitated to learn many other aspects whilst these learners enjoy the process or at least feel 'secured' during it. Furthermore, as seen in this present study, the teacher allocated extra time for Benny and patiently guided him step by step to write an academic essay. This implied that learners with ASD are generally dependent on others and teachers' role is paramount. Unlike their typically developing peers, typical learners with ASD are unlikely able to make initiatives or priorities. As such, teachers would likely need to constantly instruct them on what they are supposed to do and they need to do it slowly, one instruction at a time, for example.

The contribution of the present study mainly lies in its unique and in-depth report on how an L2 learner with ASD could be facilitated to write an academic essay in English with citations and references necessitating him to read several journal articles in the process. Albeit needing the whole semester and the teacher's guidance, Benny succeeded in writing his academic essay. This was perhaps 'against all the odds' as writing is often thought to be the most difficult skill for learners like Benny, who lacked logical thinking, abstract concepts making, and associative thinking. Hence, the present study could pave a way for further studies in L2 writing for learners with ASD, especially in the Indonesian context.

Suggested directions for future studies can be outlined. First, future studies may investigate various instructional practices employed by teachers to teach L2 writing to learners with ASD. Conducting a large-scale quantitative study in the Indonesian context to assess L2 teachers' awareness of teaching learners with special needs especially ASD may also be worthwhile. A large-scale quantitative study involving Head of English Education majors on the extent to which inclusive education contents have been facilitated in their curricula may also be strategic. That is because they prepare future English teachers that should be ready to engage inclusive education as a newly established norm in modern education. Such a quantitative study may

provide an "eagle-eyed' view able to map the position of English Education curricula regarding inclusive education.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

Accardo, A. L., Finnegan, E. G., Kuder, S. J., & Bomgardner, E. M. (2020). Writing interventions for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A research synthesis. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *50*(6), 1988–2006. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-019-03955-9

Alison, C., Root, J. R., Browder, D. M., & Wood, L. (2017). Technology-based shared story reading for students with autism who are English-language learners. *Journal of Special Education Technology*, *32*(2), 91–101. https://doi.org/10.1177/0162643417690606

Anderson, L. W., R., K. D., Airasian, P. W., Cruikshank, K. A., Mayer, R. E., Pintrich, P. R., Raths, J., & Wittrock, M. C. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing* (Abridged). Longman. https://www.uky.edu/~rsand1/china2018/texts/Anderson-Krathwohl - A taxonomy for learning teaching and assessing.pdf

Andreou, M., Tsimpli, I. M., Durrleman, S., & Peristeri, E. (2020). Theory of mind, executive functions, and syntax in bilingual children with autism spectrum disorder. *Languages*, *5*(4), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.3390/languages5040067

Aran, E. V. (2018). A personal experience of teaching English as a foreign language to an autistic child. *APAC ELT Journal*, *86*, 18–22. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/594fcf2ca5790afdb0a78fb6/t/6050e47f65cc41625d93fedb/1615914116899/APAC+ELT+Journal+n.86.pdf

Asaro-Saddler, K., & Bak, N. (2012). Teaching children with high-functioning autism spectrum disorders to write persuasive essays. *Topics in Language Disorders*, *32*(4), 361–378. https://doi.org/10.1097/TLD.0b013e318271813f

Asaro-Saddler, K., & Bak, N. (2015). Persuasive writing and self-regulation training for writers with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *The Journal of Special Education*, *48*(2), 92–105. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022466912474101

Asaro-Saddler, K., Knox, H. M., Meredith, H., & Akhmedjanova, D. (2015). Using technology to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in the writing process: A pilot study. *Insights into Learning Disabilities*, *12*(2), 103–119. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1088270.pdf

Bao, R., & Du, X. (2015). Implementation of task-based language teaching in Chinese as a foreign language: Benefits and challenges. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *28*(3), 291-310. https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2015.1058392

Barletta, N. P. (2018). High-functioning autism and second language development: A case study. *Interamerican Journal of Psychology*, *52*(2), 183–193. https://doi.org/10.30849/rip/ijp.v52i2.345

Bell, L. M., & Aldridge, J. M. (2014). *Student voice, teacher action research and classroom improvement*. Sense Publishers.

Bolourian, Y., Losh, A., Hamsho, N., Eisenhower, A., & Blacher, J. (2022). General education teachers' perceptions of autism, inclusive practices, and relationship building strategies. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *52*(9), 3977–3990. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-021-05266-4

Brown, H. M., Johnson, A. M., Smyth, R. E., & Cardy, J. O. (2014). Exploring the persuasive writing skills of students with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, *8*(11), 1482–1499. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2014.07.017

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Campanaro, A. M., Vladescu, J. C., Manente, C. J., Deshais, M. A., & Debar, R. M. (2021). A review of the literature on vocational training interventions with individuals with autism spectrum disorder. *Behavioral Interventions*, *36*(3), 675–696. https://doi.org/10.1002/bin.1795

Chan, C., & Lo, M. (2016). Exploring inclusive pedagogical practices in Hong Kong primary EFL classrooms. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2016.1252798

Conner, C., Baker, D. L., & Allor, J. H. (2020). Multiple language exposure for children with autism spectrum disorder from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. *Bilingual Research Journal*, *43*(3), 286–303. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2020.1799885

DiCamilla, F. J., & Anton, M. (2012). Functions of L1 in the collaborative interaction of beginning and advanced second language learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *22*, 160–188. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2011.00302.x

Digard, B. G., Sorace, A., Stanfield, A., & Fletcher-Watson, S. (2020). Bilingualism in autism: Language learning profiles and social experiences. *Autism*, *24*(8), 2166–2177. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361320937845

Finnegan, E., & Accardo, A. L. (2018). Written expression in Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *48*(3), 868–882. https://doi.org/https://doi. org/10.1007/s10803-017-3385-9

Giannikas, C. N., Kambanaros, M., & Theodorou, E. (2021). English foreign language teachers' awareness of childhood language impairment. *Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics*, *35*(10), 909–925. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699206.2020.1839970

Gunn, K. C. M., & Delafield-Butt, J. T. (2015). Teaching children with autism spectrum disorder with restricted interests: A review of evidence for best practice. *Review of Educational Research*, *86*(2), 408–430. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315604027

Hannan, A., Satari, N. A., Abu, K., & Yunus, F. (2020). The challenge of managing children with autism from fathers' perspectives. *Humanities*, *8*(3), 367–379. https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.73.2020.83.367.379

Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English*. Pearson Education Limited.

Hashim, H. U., Yunus, M. M., & Norman, H. (2021). English as secondary language learning and autism spectrum disorder: The obstacles in teaching and learning the language. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, *12*(2), 22–30. https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no2.2

Kim, H. U., & Roberti, M. (2014). "Tengo que habla español. Yo no entiendo ingles!": A qualitative case study on a bilingual child with Autism Spectrum conditions. *The Journal of Special Education Apprenticeship*, *3*(1), 1–15. https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/josea/vol3/iss1/7

Koenig, K. P., & Williams, L. H. (2017). Characterization and utilization of preferred interests: A survey of adults on the autism spectrum. *Occupational Therapy in Mental Health*, *33*(2), 129–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/0164212X.2016.1248877

Kurniawati, L. A. (2020). Personalized learning: Empowering a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Basic Grammar course. *Yavana Bhāshā: Journal of English Language Education*, *3*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.25078/yb.v1i1.1372

Lo, Y. Y., & Macaro, E. (2015). Getting used to content and language integrated learning: what can classroom interaction reveal? *Language Learning Journal*, *43*(3), 239–255. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2015.1053281

Mak, B. (2011). An exploration of speaking-in-class anxiety with Chinese ESL learners. *System*, *39*, 202–214. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.04.002

Martínez, Z. L. G., & Carvajal, S. A. R. (2021). Teaching English online to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Down Syndrome during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Ikala*, *26*(3), 715–730. https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ikala.v26n3a13

MedlinePlus. (2021). *Autism Spectrum Disorder*. MedlinePlus. https://medlineplus.gov/autismspectrumdisorder.html

Miranda, J. L. W., Wells, J. C., & Jenkins, A. (2019). Preparing special education teacher candidates to teach English language learners with disabilities: How well are we doing? *Language Teaching Research*, *23*(3), 330–351. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168817730665

Opartkiattikul, W., Arthur-Kelly, M., & Dempsey, I. (2014). From policy to practice supporting students with diverse needs in Thailand: Critical issues and implications. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, *11*(1), 1–18. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1030576

Padmadewi, N. N., & Artini, L. P. (2017). Teaching English to a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder in regular classroom in Indonesia. *International Journal of Instruction*, *10*(3), 159–176. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1151081

Pennington, R. C., Foreman, L. H., & Gurney, B. N. (2017). An evaluation of procedures for teaching students with moderate to severe disabilities to write sentences. *Remedial and Special Education*, *39*(1), 27–38. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932517708428

Phillips, M. (2016). *The effects of visual vocabulary strategies on vocabulary knowledge*. Marshall University.

Sari, D. F., Gea, E. R., & Fajrina, D. (2021). The listening skill of autistic students in learning English through total physical response. *Studies in English Language and Education*, *8*(1), 34–46. https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v8i1.18131

Subekti, A. S. (2020a). Guided translation to channel an autistic learner's potentials in L2 writing: A case study. *Jurnal Pendidikan Progresif*, *10*(2), 250–266. https://doi.org/10.23960/jpp.v10.i2.202010

Subekti, A. S. (2020b). Self-made vocabulary cards and differentiated assessments to improve an autistic learner's English vocabulary mastery. *International Journal of Education*, *13*(1), 8–17. https://doi.org/10.17509/ije.v13i1.22587

Ugwuanyi, L. T., Ubah, J. C., Obatta, M. I., Adama, G. N., Adaka, T. A., Nwabueze, J., Ejide, B. A., & Otu, M. S. (2018). Using story telling technique in developing language in children with autism in Nigeria: Perceptions and challenges. *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research*, *13*(21), 15343–15350. https://www.ripublication.com/ijaer18/ijaerv13n21_70.pdf

Vacca, J. S. (2007). Autistic children can be taught to read. *International Journal of Special Education*, *22*(3), 54–61. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ814511.pdf

Wojciechowski, A., & Al-Musawi, R. (2017). Assisstive technology application for enhancing social and language skills of young children with autism. *Multimedia Tools and Applications*, *76*(4), 5419–5439. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11042-016-3995-9

Yahya, S., Yunus, M., & Toran, H. (2013). Facilitating ESL students with autism learn sight vocabulary: Teachers' practices and voices. *International Journal of Science: Basic and Applied Research (IJSBAR)*, *11*(1), 90–98. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/249333552.pdf

Zohoorian, Z., Zeraatpishe, M., & Matin sadr, N. (2021). Effectiveness of the picture exchange communication system in teaching English vocabulary in children with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A single-subject study. *Cogent Education*, *8*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2021.1892995

APPENDIX

Benny's Essay

Children Education: The Roles of Parents, School, Teachers, and Students

There are four parties which influence children education. They are parents, school, teachers, and students. These parties will be explained in these paragraphs.

Children learn Christianity from parents. Children must learn about Holy Bible values (Munandar, 2020). For example, children must love each other, and support each other. Parents teach children good manner (Munandar, 2020). For example, children must talk politely, and should not swear. Family must be obedient to God and parents must educate children to know God (Munandar, 2020). For example, parents invite children to read Holy Bible. In conclusion, in Christian family, parents must teach children good things.

School and Christian teachers have a job and have a responsibility. Christian education goal is to facilitate students to experience faith development in its entirety (Sijabat, 2018 in Santoso, 2019). Teacher of Christianity subject should be able to educate student and have strong faith (Sijabat, 2018 in Santoso, 2019). Schools and teachers must praise God and love fellow humans (Sijabat, 2018 in Santoso, 2019). Every teacher must exemplify Christ as the true teacher (Sijabat 2018 in Santoso, 2019). The Holy Spirit plays a role in teacher success in teaching (Sijabat, 2018 in Santoso, 2019). Good teachers pay attention to students' condition (Santoso, 2019). Christian teachers have to be creative in using technology for teaching (Santoso, 2019). Teachers as good Christians must accompany students well (Santoso, 2019). In conclusion, teachers must be humble and guide students with Christian Values during in the time students learn at school.

Motivation to learn can be formed, be grown, developed, and maintained (Budiyana, 2018). Students have mental power if they have motivation (Budiyana, 2018). Students want to study because they are pushed by their mental power (Budiyana, 2018). Motivation directs students' behaviour (Dimyati, 1990 in Budiyana, 2018). Learning behaviour occurs because there is motivation (Budiyana, 2018). If students do not maintain motivation to learn, motivation to learn can decrease can become weak, and it can disappear (Budiyana, 2018). Students will succeed in learning if they have good motivation (Budiyana, 2018). In conclusion, students can study well, if they can keep learning motivation.

REFERENCES

Budiyana, H. (2018). Roh Kudus dalam proses pembelajaran pendidikan Kristen mewujudkan pengajaran Kristen yang mengandung nilai kekal. *Jurnal Teologi Berita Hidup*, 1(1), 55-77.

Munandar, A. (2020). Implementasi pendidikan kasih di dalam keluarga Kristen. *Veritas Lux Mea*, 2(1), 106-120 .

Santoso, S. (2019). Pendidikan Kristen konteks sekolah: 12 pesan untuk guru dan pengelola. *Jurnal Abdiel,* 3(1), 77-79.