Guided Translation to Channel an Autistic Learner's Potentials in L2 Writing: A Case Study

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Abstract: Guided Translation to Channel an Autistic Learner's Potentials in L2 Writing: A Case Study. Objectives: This study aimed to investigate to what extent the use of guided translation from the Indonesian language into English could facilitate a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to write a five-paragraph descriptive essay and expository essay in English. **Methods:** The study used observations on the participant's learning behaviours and qualitative document analysis of the participant's essays during the period of one semester. **Findings:** The use of guided translation helped the autistic learner, who typically had difficulty in language production both in L1 and L2, to write two essays in L2, whose overall quality analysed using the grading rubrics, was relatively the same as those of his developing peers, albeit the participant needed much more time. **Conclusion:** The finding suggested that autistic learners' L1 could be capitalised to optimise their L2 learning.

Keywords: Guided translation, Autism Spectrum Syndrome (ASD), L2 writing, case study.

Abstrak: Penerjemahan dengan Bimbingan untuk Menyalurkan Potensi Murid Penyandang Autisme dalam Menulis Bahasa Kedua: Studi Kasus. Tujuan: Studi kasus ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi sejauh mana strategi penerjemahan dengan bimbingan dari Bahasa Indonesia ke Bahasa Inggris dapat menfasilitasi murid penyandang Gangguan Spektrum Autisme (ASD) untuk menulis esai deskriptif dan ekposisi yang tediri dari lima paragraph dalam Bahasa Inggris. Metode: Penelitian ini menggunakan observasi perilaku belajar peserta dan analisis dokumen kualitatif dari esai peserta dalam kurun waktu satu semester. Temuan: Meski pun memerlukan waktu lebih lama dari teman sebayanya, melalui penerjemahan dengan bimbingan, murid penyandang autisme, yang biasanya kesulitan dalam keterampilan Bahasa aktif baik dalam Bahasa pertama maupun kedua, mampu menulis dua esai dalam Bahasa kedua yang kualitas nya relative sama dengan esai yang dihasilkan teman sebayanya dilihat dari rubric penilaian. Kesimpulan: Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa Bahasa pertama murid-murid penyandang autism dapat di dayagunakan untuk mengoptimalkan pembelajaran Bahasa kedua mereka.

Kata kunci: Penerjemahan dengan bimbingan, Gangguan Spektrum Autisme (ASD), menulis dalam Bahasa kedua, studi kasus.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been generally recognised that equity and equality in education should be maintained and strengthened so that all students have the same chance to learn (Padmadewi & Artini, 2017). These students should be able to obtain sufficient support systems so that every one of them can strive in their pursuit of education and these students include those with special needs (Sheehy & Budiyanto, 2014). Among the plethora of types of special needs of learners, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is perhaps one of the most common ones.

Learners with ASD exhibit different behaviours depending on the spectrum, ranging from mild to severe (Kluth & Darmody-Latham, 2016). There are several characteristics of learners with ASD and these characteristics are manifested depending on the severity level/spectrum of the syndrome. These learners tend to be unable to understand strings of verbal instructions (Grandin, 2007), unable to understand others' emotions, have difficulty to start a conversation as well as respond conversational turn appropriately (Kluth & Darmody-Latham, 2016). Vacca (2007) mentioned that these learners may be able to understand information, but they tend to have difficulty in the organisation as well as coherence in speaking and writing. Thus, these learners may face difficulty in expressing what is in their mind comprehensibly both in the written or spoken form of language (Vacca, 2007).

Among four language skills, listening, reading, speaking, and writing, writing may pose particular difficulty to learners with ASD and it is associated with these autistic learners' characteristics (Asaro-Saddler & Bak, 2015). Autistic learners' deficiency in understanding others' emotions (Brown & Klein, 2011; Kluth & Darmody-Latham, 2016) may affect their concept of writing because of an absence of audience (Asaro-Saddler & Saddler, 2010; Brown & Klein, 2011). As such, they tend to be unable to anticipate readers' reactions, thus affecting their writing quality a great deal. They also face difficulty in differentiating between important and less important details, which may affect their ability to construct effective supporting details or arguments (Asaro-Saddler & Bak, 2015). Furthermore, discussing executive dysfunction in autism, Hill (2004) mentioned that learners with ASD often lack self-regulation skills in some components of executive function such as planning and self-monitoring, directly affecting their writing ability in a negative way.

In response to the call to provide inclusive education for learners with special needs, especially those with ASD, in the area of language learning, many empirical studies have been conducted on differentiated instructions to cater the needs of learners with ASD (Asaro-Saddler & Bak, 2015; Baker, Roberson, & Kim, 2018; Chan & Lo, 2016), perhaps implying that providing support for students with ASD in language class has been a necessity and is becoming a common practice in language classes. Asaro-Saddler and Bak (2015), for example, used the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) approach as an intervention to help six autistic learners in writing persuasive essays. It was found that through this intervention, the length, essay elements, and holistic quality of the six student participants' essays increased, indicating that the intervention was successful in helping these learners improve their writing skill. Another study by Asaro-Saddler et al. (2015) also found that technological intervention in the form of *First Author* software also helped secondary school learners with autism to learn writing seen from the improved quantity and quality of their writing.

Among L2 writing strategies, translation is believed to assist learners in acquiring writing skill, helping them to develop and express ideas and facilitating their comprehension (Bagheri & Fazel,

2011). It can be a powerful tool to help learners to understand words and expressions in L2 more confidently and to help them express ideas in L2 they otherwise may not be able to do (Al-Musawi, 2014). Al-Musawi (2014) asserted that there is no harm in using translation as a teaching strategy moreover if learners learn English in an EFL context and are of the beginner level of the language. As such, the bilingual method such as translation from learners' L1 should be welcomed when needed (Al-Musawi, 2014). Liao's (2006) mixed-method study in the Chinese context using questionnaires found that translation was reported to contribute positively to learners' writing. The same questionnaires were then adapted in Bagheri's and Fazel's (2011) study in the Iranian context in which they found consistent findings. Their student participants believed that translation from Farsi, their L1, substantially contributes to their English writing skill. It was found that these students used moderate to heavy translation as their learning strategy to learn English writing. Another study in Iran involving 170 participants was conducted by Karimian and Talebinejad (2013). They found that Iranian learners use translation for self-assessment, language comprehension, and social strategy when interacting with other people in English. When learners performed these strategies, they lessened their anxiety and their self-confidence improved (Karimian & Talebinejad, 2013).

Concerning the use of L1 in L2 classroom, such as the translation practice, when both teachers and learners share the same L1, "it would be foolish to deny its existence and potential value" (Harmer, 2007, p. 39), suggesting that learners' L1, instead of being marginalised in L2 classrooms, can be capitalised to optimise L2 learning. The use of translation, Harmer (2007) mentioned, makes sense as learners translate in their heads anyway. Besides, language learners at beginner levels have a very high tendency to translate what is happening into their L1 whether

their teachers want them (Harmer, 2007). Besides, L1 use was also reported to be attributed to lower anxiety in the Indonesian context (Subekti, 2018) and in the Chinese context (Mak, 2011) and Bahrain (Al-Musawi, 2014) especially among less proficient learners. Subekti (2018), for instance, found that when teachers allow learners to use the Indonesian language at times in English class, their anxiety tends to be lower.

The use of translation in L2 classrooms does not necessarily mean a return to the Grammar Translation Method. Rather, optimising learners' L1 could help them see possible connections as well as differences between L1 and L2 (Harmer, 2007). At times, L1 could also be used to convey complex explanations or concepts learners are unlikely able to grasp if conveyed in L2 (Harmer, 2007), with DiCamilla and Anton (2012) referring to it as a psychological tool used by less proficient learners when facing cognitive difficulty.

Rationales of the Present Study

In the case of facilitating learners with ASD, the use of translation may be deemed appropriate because many studies have found that translation has been a strategic tool used for learners of lower proficiency (e.g.: Al-Musawi, 2014; Karimian & Talebinejad, 2013; Liao, 2006). Learners with ASD, with the characteristics mentioned previously, who typically struggle in communication, could well be categorised into these learners who may benefit from the use of their L1 when learning an L2, such as translation strategy. Besides, examining the plethora of research and theories suggesting that learners with ASD have a high tendency to face difficulty in writing, creating an intervention for these learners to learn writing skills and seeing the extent of its usefulness is deemed paramount important. Besides, it is also strongly in line with the spirit of "no child should be left behind" in education in which learners are given opportunities to strive in learning (Padmadewi & Artini, 2017).

Specifically, on the autistic learner investigated in the present study, my previous study also found that differentiated instruction or intervention given to him in the forms of self-made vocabulary cards had helped him learn tens of isolated vocabulary items he otherwise could not achieve without any differentiate instruction. This research may give some kind of support to further conduct differentiated instruction for learners with ASD to facilitate them to strive in learning.

In relation to the previously mentioned rationales, the study seeks to investigate to what extent guided translation facilitates an autistic learner to write two five-paragraph essays in English.

■ METHODS
Research Design

The design of the present study was a case study. The choice of the case study was attributed to the uniqueness, and perhaps rarity, of the case (Basit, 2010) presently investigated in which the fact that a learner with ASD, typically struggling on communication and language, studied in an English Education major. Using Vygotsky's view of learners' development as something complex affected by numerous intertwining factors, the phenomenon investigated in this study was investigated as a contextual entity bound to experience constant change (Mahn, 1999). In line with Gray's (2014) idea that case study emphasises on the "how" and "why" of the phenomenon, to provide uniqueness of the case and an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon was emphasised rather than to seek a one-size-fits-all analysis of learners with ASD.

The present case study used observations and qualitative document analysis of the participant's essays as the methods of collecting data. The data obtained from the observations were field notes on the participant's responses to guided translation employed to facilitate him to write two five-paragraph essays in Essay Writing class. The notes included the excerpts of conversation between me and the participant capturing his learning behaviours, including his reactions, understanding, and progress in learning as well as my ongoing reflections as his teacher on his progress. The document analysis on the participant's essays, furthermore, were analysed per grading rubrics to see to what extent the participant could fulfil the demand of the class.

The data collection using both methods was divided into two phases. The first phase was conducted when the participant worked on his five-paragraph descriptive essay (Weeks 1-9, and Week 12). The second phase was conducted in Weeks 10, 11, and 13-16 when the participant worked on his five-paragraph expository essay. The field notes were written in weekly basis, right after each session with the participant, whilst the document analysis of his essay was conducted at the end of each phase. The combined data were then analysed and reported qualitatively in sequence of the phases.

Participant and Setting

Benny (pseudonym) was a male student of the English Language Education Department (ELED) of Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana (UKDW). He was 23 years old and in the fifth semester of his study when this study was conducted. I taught Benny in Vocabulary Building class in the odd semester of the 2018/2019 academic year and then in Intermediate Grammar class the semester after.

During the time of teaching him, I could observe Benny's several observable behaviours that could be attributed to his ASD. He, for example, was generally unable to construct comprehensible and grammatical sentences in English (see Yahya, Yunus, & Toran, 2013). He was also unable to comprehend complex verbal instructions (see Grandin, 2007; Kim & Roberti, 2014), which may be attributed to ASD learners' deficiency in processing auditory stimuli

(Padmadewi & Artini, 2017). To overcome this challenge, any instructions given to Benny during the differentiated instruction were conveyed more simply and concretely and step-by-step (see Grandin, 2007). What may be relieving about Benny was that he had a very high motivation to perform well. Once he felt confident or was tasked to present about things he liked, for example, football, he would start talking in English, despite language inaccuracies. He was quite a technology literate and learned better visually than auditory.

Furthermore, the setting of the present study was Essay Writing class in the odd semester of 2019/2020 academic year. The class was mainly offered to third-semester students of the ELED. Benny, who was in his fifth semester then, took the class which was mainly taken by third-semester students, due to his slower pace in learning and passing classes offered by the department.

Differentiated Instruction: Guided Translation

I employed differentiated instruction in the form of guided translation to Benny in writing a descriptive essay and an expository essay in English. First, Benny was asked to write a descriptive paragraph in the Indonesian language. I facilitated him to have ideas about what to write. After he finished writing the descriptive paragraph in the Indonesian language, I checked his Indonesian sentences. Due to his autism, even writing in his L1 created a challenge. Many of his sentences had confusing structures. Here, I facilitated him to make revisions through consciousness-raising in the form of giving step-by-step prompting questions. After Benny's paragraph in the Indonesian language had been good enough to be translated into English, I asked him to translate his paragraph. His translation into English, which he mostly did at home, typically had major errors in organisation and comprehensibility. Here, my role was to facilitate him to be able to revise his translation through consciousness-raising, so in the end, he could produce an understandable English paragraph with a decent English structure. With the same procedure, Benny was facilitated to write the other four descriptive paragraphs to build a five-paragraph descriptive essay. As he was getting familiar with the sequences of writing an essay from translating a paragraph previously mentioned, he was then asked to write a five-paragraph expository essay with the same sequences.

■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of differentiated instruction conducted to facilitate Benny in Essay Writing class during one full semester could be observed in Table 1. The class consisted of sixteen meetings, each of which was conducted once a week.

Table 1. Differences in weekly objectives between benny and his peers

Weeks	Benny's Objectives	Benny's Peers' Objectives
1.	Paragraph writing: descriptive	Paragraph writing: descriptive
2.	Paragraph writing: descriptive and expository	Paragraph writing: descriptive and expository
3.	Paragraph writing: descriptive and expository	Paragraph writing: recount

4.	Assessment: writing a descriptive paragraph (developing his previous/unfinished descriptive paragraph)	Assessment: writing two new paragraphs (choosing two genres among descriptive, expository, and recount)
5. 6. 7. 8. 9.	Essay writing: writing a five-paragraph descriptive essay developed from the descriptive paragraph he had written previously	Essay writing: writing a five-paragraph descriptive essay Essay writing: writing a five-paragraph expository
10. 11.	Essay writing: writing a five-paragraph expository essay using the topic he was very familiar with	Essay writing: writing a five-paragraph recount essay
12.	Selected Essay assessment: submitting the descriptive essay he had finished writing	Selected Essay assessment: choosing one of the three essays that had been written to be graded
13. 14. 15.	Essay writing: writing a five-paragraph expository essay using the topic he was very familiar with (*continuation of week 11*)	Essay writing: writing a five-paragraph argumentative essay
16.	Final Assessment: submitting the expository essay	Final Assessment: submitting the argumentative essays
Total	**Two essays: one descriptive and one expository**	**Five paragraphs (descriptive, expository, and recount)** **Three essays (descriptive, expository, and argumentative)**

As seen in Table 1, Benny needed to fulfil different objectives from that of his typically developing peers in the class. To be more specific, Benny was given different objectives to fulfil each week from those of his peers with only weeks 1 and 2 having the same objectives. Usually, I addressed all the students first and facilitate them to meet the objectives set in the syllabus. Once I made sure Benny's peers knew what to do or whilst they were working on their paragraphs or essays, I would spend some time to do guided translation treatment to Benny. The time I spent doing the treatment in each meeting was approximately fifteen to twenty minutes. This amount of time was generally longer than the time I allocated for each of Benny's peers. They, however, were very supportive of Benny and did not mind their teacher spending more time helping him.

Weeks 1-9 and Week 12: Writing a Five-Paragraph Descriptive Essay

Benny's objective during nine weeks (Weeks 1-9) was to develop a five-paragraph descriptive essay with Week 12 being the week when he submitted his essay to be graded following the class schedule in which Benny's peers chose one of the three essays they had written previously (descriptive, expository, and recount) to be graded.

In the first and second meeting, all learners were introduced several genres of texts, with the emphasis on descriptive, whose purpose is describing someone or something through elaboration appealing to senses, and expository, whose main purpose is to explain something, concepts, phenomena in a relatively objective manner (Zemach & Ghulldu, 2011). Learners were then asked to write short descriptive

paragraphs, describing, for example, their houses, pets, friends, and family members, and to write expository paragraphs, explaining, for example, natural phenomena, a branch of science, and how to do something. They had to structure their paragraphs in sandwich style, in which the paragraph should begin with a topic sentence followed with several supporting sentences, and should end with a concluding sentence (Zemach & Ghulldu, 2011).

In the first meeting, indications that Benny could not keep up with his peers started to emerge. Whilst his peers had started to type in the computer or browse on the internet for some ideas, he would just sit still whilst biting his left hand's fingernails, showing anxiety, his right hand holding his pen on top of his notebook, without writing anything. In the first meeting, I approached him and invited him to a conversation.

> Me : So how is it, Benny?
> Benny : *Bingung* (almost inaudible) (I do not know what should be done).
> Me : Do you know what to write? You can describe your house, your pet, a person... how about [describing] your family?
> Benny : [Nodding]
> Me : Who? Father? Mother?
> Benny : My sister.
> Me : Good. Now write a paragraph about your sister in the Indonesian language first. Okay? If it is not done, make it homework.
> Benny : [Nodding]

In the second meeting, Benny finished writing the paragraph in the Indonesian language. However, the structure of his Indonesian sentences resembled the way he talked and it was barely comprehensible. If translated into English, these sentences would likely result in highly unintelligible and grammatically inaccurate ones. What I did was to facilitate Benny to revise his Indonesian sentences into those of a simpler

structure that he could translate into English later. This was an example of his Indonesian sentence: "*Kakak pertama saya, dia itu orang yang paling jenius sebagai dokter hewan*" (literal meaning: My first sister, she is the most genius person as a veterinarian). If Benny had translated this original sentence with complex structure into English, he would likely produce unintelligible English sentences due to his limited language ability. Thus, I provided him prompts that enabled him to revise his sentences into simpler ones. It could be seen from the excerpt.

> Me : *Kakak mu dokter hewan yang paling jenius di seluruh dunia atau dia sangat jenius saja?* (Your sister is the most genius veterinarian in the world or she is just very genius?)
> Benny : *Sangat jenius* (very genius).
> Me : Okay. Selanjutnya, "dia" di sini siapa? (Next, who is "she" you are referring to?
> Benn : *Kakak saya* (my sister).
> Me : *Sudah di tuliskan?* (But you already wrote that, right? (Pointing at 'kakak perta masaya'/my first sister)
> Benny : *Sudah* (I have).
> Me : So...
> Benny : *Kakak pertama saya sangat jenius* (My first sister is very genius).
> Me : *Sebagai...* (as...)
> Benny : *Sebagai dokter hewan* (as a veterinarian).
> Me : *Coba diulang* (please repeat).
> Benny : *Kakak pertama saya sangat jenius sebagai dokter hewan* (My first sister is very genius as a veterinarian).
> Me : Good.

The same prompting process was also conducted in all of his Indonesian sentences to ensure that the Indonesian sentences he would

later translate into English had decent and relatively simpler structure. In this process, I also needed to be careful to minimise the possibility that his Indonesian sentences would sound like Indonesian English due to his limited linguistic, and thus translation ability. Figure 1 shows an example of how Benny's original Indonesian sentences underwent revisions through this prompting process.
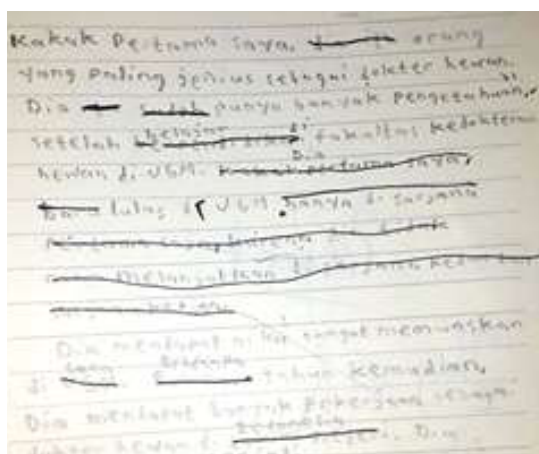

Figure 1. Example of benny drafting his writing in the Indonesian language

After Benny finished revising his Indonesian sentences through my step-by-step prompting, he began translated his Indonesian sentences into English. Though the Indonesian sentences had been made simpler, a challenge still emerged. Whilst Benny's vocabulary mastery was quite decent, his ability to organise the vocabulary he knew into intelligible English sentences was very low. Hence, his original translation would typically have a lot of grammatical errors. Thus, step-by-step prompting to guide him to revise his English sentences was again employed. During this process, it was found that even though he might not be able to translate his Indonesian sentences into good English independently, he was often able to identify his mistakes when prompted. An example of the prompting process of revising the English sentences could be seen in the excerpt.

Me   : *Kapan kakak mu dapat nilai bagus? Sekarang? Dulu?* (When does/did your sister get good grades? Now? In the past?) [Pointing at the word 'get' in Benny's translation 'She get score it's very satisfying']
Benny : *Dulu* (in the past).
Me   : So...
Benny : got [revising 'get' into 'got']
Me   : *Ini, maksud nya apa?* (What does this word refer to?) [Pointing at the word 'it's']
Benny : Score
Me   : *Skor bukan nya sudah disebut kenapa diulang lagi*? (I think you have mentioned the word 'score' why repeating it?)
Benny : [Nodding; erasing the word 'it's']
Me   : *Kalau kamu mau bilang 'skor yang sangat memuaskan', Bahasa Inggris nya apa?* (How do you say 'very satisfying score' in English?)
Benny : Score very satisfying
Me   : *Kalau kau mau bilang 'rumah besar', Bahasa Inggris nya apa?* (How do you say 'big house' in English?)
Benny : Big house
Me   : *Bukan* "house big"? (Not 'house big'?)
Benny : [shaking head]
Me   : *Jadi, "nilai yang memuaskan," Bahasa Inggris nya*? (So, what's the English translation of 'very satisfying score'?)
Benny : Very satisfying score
Me   : Good. Please repeat the whole sentence.
Benny : 'My sister got very satisfying score.'
Me   : Very good.
Being facilitated through these step-by-step prompts of consciousness-raising on grammatical aspects, in the fourth meeting, Benny could finally

finish one descriptive paragraph describing his sister. This could be seen in the excerpt.

> My first sister is very genius as a veterinarian and she has an amazing family. She has much knowledge after she studied at Veterinary Medicine Faculty at Universitas GadjahMada (UGM). She got very satisfying score there. Many years later, she has work as veterinarian in Indonesia. She becomes a veterinarian too overseas. She got many best achievements. She has 2 children. Her first child is a girl and her second child is a boy. Her husband works as a breeder. They live together in Bogor. In conclusion, my sister is a great veterinarian and has a fine family.

As seen from the excerpt, Benny's sentences, though not complex, could be understood well and in general, were grammatically accurate. The prompts on consciousness-raising included several aspects, for example: noun phrase structures, Subject-Verb Agreement, and several simple structures. At times, I wrote some practical grammatical patterns in his notebook, so he could easily refer to them when he needed them, channelling his tendency to understand better visually (see Grandin, 2007). Figure 2 shows two examples of my feedback written in his notebook whilst I gave him prompts. Normally, the aspects I wrote down were aspects in which Benny repeatedly made mistakes.
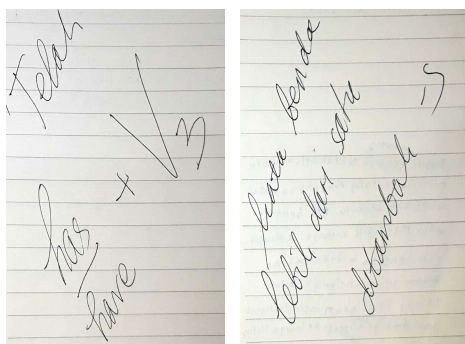

Figure 2. Two examples of practical feedback written in benny's notebook

The feedback on the left was on pattern Benny had to use when he wanted to say something has already happened ('*telah*' means 'already), in which case he had to use 'has/have' + V3. The feedback on the right, reading '*kata benda lebih dari satu di tambah –s*' (meaning: plural noun should be added with the suffix –s), was written because Benny repeatedly missed the suffix '-s' after countable plural nouns. The sentence "She got many best achievements" in the previously mentioned Benny's paragraph about his sister, for example, was formerly written as "She got many best achievement," missing '-s" at the end of the word "achievement".

Starting from the fifth meeting, Benny's peers, after having written descriptive, expository, and recount paragraphs, began to learn to write essays. For the rest of the semester, they would write in total of four five-paragraph essays (descriptive, expository, recount, and argumentative). Each essay consisted of one introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, and one conclusion paragraph.

Benny, in comparison, would unlikely be able to catch up with such class demand. Hence, I set a different target for him. That was for him to be able to write one descriptive essay and one expository essay using the guided translation procedure he had experienced when he wrote his descriptive paragraph. Here is the excerpt of our conversation.

> Me : Benny, how many paragraphs do your friends write for their essays?
> Benny: Five.
> Me : You, too, can write five paragraphs. *Paragraf tentang kakak kemarin mana?* (Where is your paragraph about your sister from last time?)
> Benny : [Opening the file in Microsoft Word]
> Me : *Benny sudah punya satu paragraf. Ini paragraf yang baik. Paragraf ini bisa dijadikan paragraf isi pertama. Berapa paragraf isi yang harus*

kamu tulis? (Benny, you have had one paragraph, a good one. This paragraph can be used as your first body paragraphs. How many body paragraphs do you have to write?)

Benny   : Tiga (three).

Me   : *Kamu sudah punya satu tentang kakakmu, sekarang kamu harus menulis dua lagi. Mengerti?* (You have had one about your sister, now you have to write two more. Understand?)

Benny : [Nodding]

Me: Now, who do you want to write about for your second body paragraphs? Mother?

Benny   : Father.

Me   : Good. Now, you write about your father. *Bahasa Indonesia dulu seperti kemarinya* (Use the Indonesian language first, like last time, okay?).

Benny   : [Nodding]

Using the same procedures of guided translation to write a paragraph about his sister previously mentioned, finally, Benny was able to write two more paragraphs, one about his father, and one about his uncle. Already having three paragraphs about his family members as body paragraphs, Benny was required to write the introduction and conclusion paragraph about his family. Facilitating him to write the conclusion paragraph was easier as the conclusion was the repetition of each supporting paragraph in different words and a shorter version. Therefore, it was conducted before that of the introduction paragraph. How Benny was directed to work on the conclusion paragraph could be seen in the excerpt.

Me   : Okay Benny, now you have already had three paragraphs. Good job.

Benny   : [Showing proud expression]

Me   : Now, like your friends, you have to make introduction and conclusion paragraphs. Let's start from conclusion. Conclusion contains summary of each body paragraphs in different words. *Misal,* inti dari satu paragraf isi ditulis lagi dalam satu atau dua kalimat, bisa? (For example, the ideas of one body paragraph are summarised in one sentence or two, can you do that?)

Benny   : *Ya, coba* (I will try).

Me   : *Contoh bisa dilihat di modul* (Examples [of conclusion paragraph] can be seen in your module)

Benny   : [Directly opening his module for reference]

He seemed to have developed his self-confidence in the process that he even had the initiative to start writing the Indonesian sentences of his introduction paragraph after he finished his writing the conclusion one even before being asked to do that. The draft of Benny's introduction and conclusion paragraphs in the Indonesian language could be seen in Figure 3 (a) and 3 (b) respectively.

(a)
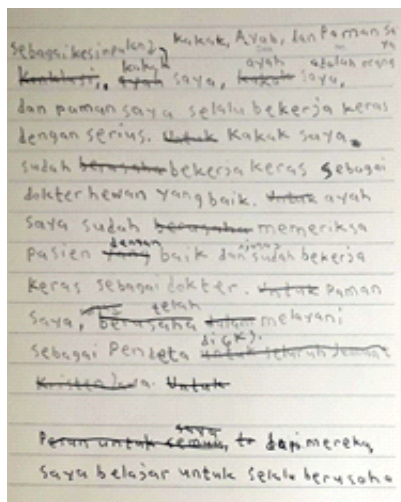
(b)

Figure 3. Indonesian draft of the (a) introduction and (b) conclusion paragraphs

As seen in Figure 3, several strikethrough marks were still visible, indicating that Benny's Indonesian sentences still needed revising before he could translate them into English. However, he, in general, had experienced improvement in his sentence production efficiency, seen from fewer strikethrough marks than those of earlier stages of his writing process in the class.

The final version of Benny's descriptive essay in English, which he submitted in the twelfth meeting, could be observed in Appendix 1. In total, he needed nine to ten weeks to complete this five-paragraph essay or approximately one paragraph per two weeks. However, his speed tended to be faster towards the end, perhaps indicating that he was getting familiar with the whole sequence, learned some aspects from the previous guided translation sessions, and built a certain degree of confidence.

Weeks 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16: Writing a Five-Paragraph Expository Essay

Whilst Benny's peers were tasked to write expository, recount, and argumentative essays during these five weeks, Benny was tasked to write an expository essay. Whilst a target to complete an expository essay in five weeks seemed to be very slow, this task was twice as fast as the previous task in which he was given ten weeks to finish his descriptive essay. The increase in pace and expectation was based on the realisation that Benny had shown familiarity with the guided translation procedure he was required to do and thus already knew what he was expected to do. He also showed increased self-confidence seen from lessened gestures of anxiety and from increased initiative to ask questions.

The first step was to find the topic. Whilst Benny's peers were required to browse in the internet about their possible topics of expository essays such as natural disasters, learning styles, impacts of social media, and many others, Benny was required to write an expository about things he already knew and felt familiar with so he did not need to browse in the internet. Here is the excerpt on how he finally found his topic.

Me : Benny, you have done your descriptive essay. *Bisa ternyatakan?* (You can actually do that!)

Benny : Still scary.

Me : That's fine, it will be getting easier. *Menulis deskriptif sudah bisa, sekarang kamu nulis eksposisiya?* (Now that you have been able to write descriptive, you need to write an expository one, alright?)

Benny : [Nodding]

Me: To write expository is to explain something. *Apa yang bisa kamu jelaskan?* (What can you explain?)

Benny : Learning theories....

Me : What do you know about that?

Benny : *Mmmm... Preskriptif, behaviorisme, terushumanisme... (*Prescriptive, behaviourism, and then... humanism...)

Me : [Thinking that these might be too difficult for him to develop into an essay]

Hafal itu tentang apa saja? (Do you know what those are all about?)

Benny : *Di buku soal nya buku nya tidak di bawa soal nya...* (In the book, but I am not bringing the book now).

Me : Is it from a class? What class?

Benny : *Pengantar Pendidikan* (Introduction to Education class).

Me : Okay, what if in your expository essay, you explain about three classes you have taken so far – the classes that you like?

Benny : [Nodding]

Me : What classes? Introduction to Education, what else?

Benny : *Agama, Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan* (Religion, Civic Education classes)

Me : Very good. So, now you write in the Indonesian language three body paragraphs about Introduction to Education, Religion, and Civic Education classes. How about that?

Benny : [Nodding and beginning to work]

The same guided translation procedure as the one employed in facilitating him to write the descriptive essay was employed. As a result, in five weeks, Benny was able to finish writing his expository essay. Benny's familiarity with the procedure, his learning several basic sentence patterns during the process, and the increasing level of confidence may be attributed to the shorter time needed to complete this second essay. His second essay could be observed in Appendix 2.

Benny's grades of his two essays, graded using the same scoring rubrics as those of his peers, compared to the mean score of the class could be observed in Table 2.

Table 2. Benny's grades in comparison with mean scores of the class

	Benny's Grades	**Class' Mean Scores**
Selected essay (Benny: descriptive; Peers: descriptive, expository, or recount)	73.33	69.23
Final assessment (Benny: expository; Peers: argumentative)	66.67	67.2

The data shown in Table 2 indicated that Benny's descriptive essay's grade was above the mean score of the class, whilst his expository essay was slightly lower than the class' mean score. However, in general, his essay's grades were relatively equal to the class' mean score, indicating that albeit needing much more time to finish one essay, Benny could be facilitated to produce essays of the relatively same quality with those of his peers.

There were several other aspects related to the study's findings worth further commenting.

First, Benny's choices of topics, both for his descriptive and expository essays, were based on his familiarity with the topics. He, for example, was known to be close to his sister, and therefore, that he chose to describe his sister in his first descriptive paragraph was understandable. This familiarity with topics helped him to fulfil the task better. It could also be the case when he chose his three favourite classes to explain in his expository one. In this case, capitalising autistic learners' preference to the fullest could be seen as a strategic way to help them learn better and faster (Grandin, 2007).

That Benny made poor sentence structures in the Indonesian language may give support that

autistic learners, in general, are struggling in language production, both in L1 and in L2 (Asaro-Saddler & Bak, 2015; Vacca, 2007). However, knowing this characteristic, the revision session conducted could be said to be successful in the way that it could facilitate him to revise his Indonesian sentences to be simpler and more intelligible, and thus were easier to be translated into English.

Secondly, the implementation of step-by-step prompting was attributed to the fact that Benny was unable to comprehend series of complex instructions at once (Grandin, 2007; Kim & Roberti, 2014; Padmadewi & Artini, 2017). Benny, who was generally very motivated to perform well in class, often felt disappointed with himself if he did not know what to do or he thought he did not do well in class. Through this step-by-step prompting, he could better understand what he was expected to do and it helped build his confidence throughout the semester.

Third, some consciousness-raising prompts were found to be effective in stimulating Benny's memory on vocabulary and grammar that he had learned. When prompted, Benny seemed to be able to recall what he knew, for example, the English equivalent of several words and the past tense forms of several verbs. When he did not know the answer right away, I would usually say, "*cari di internet*" (meaning: try to find it on the internet) and he would type some keywords such as "*memeriksa* in English" to find the meaning of "to examine" and "examine V2" to find the past tense form of the word "examine". He was quite able in finding information on the internet, suggesting that learners with ASD are generally good at technology (Ramdoss et al., 2011), but he needed to be instructed to do so as he was unable to do so on his own accord, perhaps attributed to his lack of executive function such as planning and self-monitoring (Hill, 2004).

In general, the guided translation treatment on Benny had been quite successful. It could facilitate Benny, for the very first time, to be able to write relatively good essays in English, he was unlikely able to write without the treatment. The success was attributed to strategies to capitalise his preference and what he knew well such as his family members and his favourite classes, to anticipate his weaknesses as an autistic learner, and to remedy these weaknesses. Remedying strategies in general included revision sessions of his Indonesian paragraphs and revision sessions of the translated version of his paragraphs through the use of a step-by-step prompting strategy, allowing him to have more time to work on his essays.

■ **CONCLUSIONS**

This study offered a unique finding on how an autistic learner who typically had difficulty in language production both in L1 and L2 could be facilitated to produce two quite well-written essays in L2. More interestingly, the treatment employed for the autistic learner in this study optimised his L1 to facilitate him to reach his true potential in L2. Hence, this study may not only offer unique perspectives for the field of ASD studies but also language learning in general as it paved a way for further studies investigating the potential of bilingual autistic learners' L1 on the development of their L2.

Furthermore, though this case study may have offered some contribution in the fields of special needs students and language instruction, it also has a limitation. I was the one conducting the treatment and the observation at the same time. As such, several more detailed important phenomena might have been missed due to my double roles, as the one giving treatment and the observer. It could be better if one additional person was observing how the treatment was carried out as a means of corroboration.

In general, future studies should investigate new kinds of treatment to facilitate learners with ASD in learning as they should be given an equal chance to pursue learning. Optimising the potentials of autistic learners' typical developing peers could also be an option, for example, through peer-review in writing class, or study buddy programmes. Such treatments may not only help learners with ASD in their learning but also facilitate their typically developing peers to be aware of the values of collaboration, compassion, as well as providing an inclusive environment for everyone to strive.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Benny's descriptive essay

My family: Sister, Father, and Uncle

Family members work for their family. For example, a mother works for financing her children. A father works for educating his children. My family members also work for educating all family members. In this essay, I will introduce three of my family members, my sister, father, and uncle.

My first sister is very genius as a veterinarian and she has an amazing family. She has much knowledge after she studied at Veterinary Medicine Faculty at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM). She got very satisfying score there. Many years later, she has work as veterinarian in Indonesia. She becomes a veterinarian too overseas. She got many best achievements. She has 2 children. Her first child is a girl and her second child is a boy. Her husband works as a breeder. They live together in Bogor. In conclusion, my sister is a great veterinarian and has a fine family.

My father is great doctor and he is good family leader person. He is always work hard as doctor no leaves. He doesn't like joke, and he is serious. He doesn't like holiday, but he chooses working as a doctor. He doesn't like go night, but he choose stayed at home and working. He always opened clinic house at 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. He is closed clinic house at 08.15 and 20.25. He is departed to hospital using bike ride. He is work hospital at 10 or 11 a.m. as schedule. He is going home at 13.00 or 14.00 p.m.

My uncle is a priest, who serves at GKJ Joyodiningratan Solo. He is always active since he was young. In the past, he studied at Duta Wacana institute of Theology. He took scholarship for his dream. After he graduated from college, he was invited to serve at GKI Salatiga. After 3 years at GKI Salatiga, he moved to Solo to serve at GKI Coyudan Solo. After 5 months at GKI Coyudan Solo, he moves to GKJ Joyodiningratan Solo. He served there, until he became an Emeritus Priest in 2010. As the conclusion, my uncle always worked hard, and served seriously.

As the conclusion, my sister, father, and uncle are good persons and hard workers. My sister has worked hard as a good veterinarian. My father has examined patients well and also has worked hard as a doctor. My uncle has served as a priest at GKJ. From them, I learn to always try my best.

Appendix 2. Benny's expository essay

Classes: Introduction to Education, Religion Class, Civic Education

Classes are very important for students. The students need knowledge about many things in class. The students must also learn more in class. Among classes which are important, Introduction to Education class, Religion class, and Civied Education class must be learned. Therefore, I will explain those three classes.

Introduction to Education is a class for preparing future teachers. Firstly, we learn to know all materials from syllabus. Secondly, we learn to know about learning theories. Materials are discussion about education, for examples learning theories such as Descriptive and Prescriptive, Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Humanism, and Constructivism. Thirdly, we watch movies about education. And fourthly, we must observe some English classes and understand content of movies. As conclusion, we learn many things for becoming teachers.

Religion class introduces student to six religions. We are asked to know meaning of these six religions. We must visit worship places of these six religions in groups. In mid semester exam, we must visit worship places of these six religions individually. In final test, we make a video in groups about worship places. As conclusion, we get to know these six religions through this class.

Civic education class introduce student to political, Indonesian Constitution, and parliament. Firstly, we discuss Indonesian Constitution, parliament, and politics. Secondly, we interview another student about Human rights violation. Thirdly, we interview a person from outside of university about democracy. We also write reflection about democracy. As conclusion, the student, we get to know about civied education through the class.

All paragraphs above talk about three classes. Firstly, we discuss Introduction to Education which equips students as teacher candidates. Secondly, we discuss Religion Class which teaches students about six religions. The last is civic education which teaches about politics, democracy, Indonesian constitution, and parliament. Those three classes are very usefully for us.