

ENGLISH TEACHER'S DIFFICULTIES IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

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Submission date: 01-Aug-2022 11:05AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 1877531121

File name: n_Teaching_Vocabulary_to_Students_with_Learning_Disabilities.pdf (736.17K)

Word count: 5959

Character count: 33804

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DOI: 10.29300/ling.v8i1.6902

Received: June 8th 2022

Accepted: June 25th 2022

Published: July 19th 2022

Abstract

This study investigated teachers' difficulties in teaching English vocabulary to students with learning disabilities and how they overcame the situation at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang. The researchers used qualitative research with a case study method. This study was conducted at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang. Purposeful sampling was employed in selecting the English teacher, with the criteria that the subject had an educational background from a particular school and had taught students with a learning disability who has more qualified in learning. In collecting data, the researchers used semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed by using the thematic analysis technique. The result of the study showed that the teacher at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang had difficulties teaching English vocabulary to students with a learning disability and some strategies to deal with the problem, such as asking the students to remember English vocabulary, attracting the attention of students, controlling pronunciation of students, managing the learning time, and finding proper strategies.

Keywords: Teachers' difficulties, English vocabulary, students with learning disability

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language as means of international communication among nations in the world. Furthermore, Sneddon (2003) argued that as a global language, it is obvious that English plays an important role in the international interaction. English language has been used by most of the world's population in the world. Also, it was supported by Ilyosovna (2020) that there were 67 countries have English as their official language and there are 27 countries that have English as their secondary official language. The function of English language is not only as a medium to connect between nations, but also increasingly

How to cite this article: Lestari, U., Erlina, D., & Saputra, E. (2022). English Teacher's Difficulties in Teaching Vocabulary to Students with Learning Disabilities. *Linguists : Journal Of Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 8(1), 100-114. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.29300/ling.v8i1.6902>

widespread, namely as a language of technology, science, politics, culture, economic, and even art.

Therefore, teaching English is essential to have the increasingly global world for the students. Nishanti (2018) mentioned that learning English is significant as it empowers you to communicate effectively with your kindred worldwide residents. English is one of the compulsory subjects needed by the students, not only for the students in general but also students with special needs must study English. Therefore, students with special needs are children with special characteristics that are different from children in general without always showing mental, emotional or physical disabilities (Efendi, 2006). Overall, there are various kinds of students with special needs, one of them is students with learning disability. Students with learning disability children are a classification used to determine individuals with IQs ranging from 50-70 (Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen 2009). Then, students with learning disability means substantial limitations in age appropriate intellectual and adaptive behavior (Hawkins, Eklund, James, and Foose 2003). In short, the students with special need are they who need some encouragements and guidance from normal people such as their parents, society or teacher to motivate their interest in learning.

Students with learning disability have barriers in developing their intelligence that make it hard for them in learning English such as English vocabulary. According to Richards & Renandya (2002), vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. However, teaching English vocabulary for students with special needs such as students with learning disability has its own challenges. Students with learning disability have limitations in language acquisition.

Teaching English vocabulary to students with learning disability is more complicated than normal EFL students, and it requires specific strategies. Moreover, Cohen (2017) stated that language learning strategies include strategies for identifying the material that needs to be learned, differentiating it from various materials, and grouping it for easier and simpler learning. Pointedly, the strategies to teach disable students is different with normal students (Chamont, 2005; Friantary, Afriani, & Nopitasari, 2020). Hence, teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary for students is very essential to make the learning processes went as expected and then the use of appropriate strategies can also help teachers face the challenges of learning English vocabulary for students with special needs.

Based on the preliminary study that was conducted at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang, it was found that teacher at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang had difficulties in teaching English, teachers' said it's hard to apply the English teaching practice accordance with the curriculum because the students couldn't cope the syllabus and also the teacher stated that students

cannot learn English sentences so the teacher stated teaching English just word by word that conclude the teacher just teach English vocabulary.

In addition, it was supported by a research Maulani (2018) who revealed that there are some problems that can be identified from teaching English to students with learning disability, such as giving the lesson and instruction, lack of pronunciation, interest and enthusiasm, hard to find the right method toward their characters, time management, and limited room and space in the school area. In order to solve the difficulties, the teacher should have some strategies in teaching English to students with learning disability. So, the appropriate method in teaching English is needed to make the students with learning disability understand the material well. In conclusion, based on some previous studies and some facts during the preliminary study in teaching English vocabulary to students with learning disability, the researchers interested to conduct this study.

The Special Needs Students with Learning Disability

The students with special need are they who need some guidance and encouragements from normal people such as their parents, society or teacher to motivate their interest in learning. Therefore, students with special needs are students with special characteristics that are different from students in general without always showing mental, emotional or physical disabilities (Efendi, 2006). Furthermore, students with learning disability are a condition of students whose intelligence is far below the average and characterized by limited intelligence and inadequacy in social communication (Atmajaya, 2017). Then, Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen (2009) stated that students with learning disability children are a classification used to determine individuals with IQs ranging from 50-70. In addition, special need students need additional support such as special schools and pedagogical methods, including suitable teaching strategies for the students with disabilities (Bray & Kwo 2014).

The characteristics of students with learning disability, like deficits in cognitive functioning and learning styles characteristic of individuals students with learning disability include short term memory, slow learning rates, attention problems, difficulty generalizing what they have learned, and lack of motivation. However, Nicholas (2003) said that students with learning disability not only influences the performance test of general intellectual functioning, but also determines one's capacity for language, self care, and speaking ability. According to Sobur (2003), there are some types of students with learning disability: Mild has an IQ range for levels 50-55 to 70, Moderate has an IQ range for levels 35-40 to 50, Severe has an IQ range for levels 20-25 to 35 and Profound has an IQ range for levels 20 or 25. Based on explanation above, it can be concluded students with learning disability is a

condition where the difficulties in intellectual development caused delaying the developing emotional, mental, intelligence and adaptive behavior.

Teaching English Vocabulary to Students with Learning Disability

Vocabulary is component that connects the four abilities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Acquiring vocabulary is a very important tool to master a language. Vocabulary mastery is how the teachers teach a list of a word with their meanings, especially in a book for learning a foreign language to the students.

Moreover, Dhermawati et.al (2019) stated that there are several teacher's strategies in teaching English vocabulary to students with learning disability: Repeating the material, giving examples, using song and giving reward.

1. Repeating the material

Students with learning disability may have different ability to remember and understand the material taught by the teacher. Hence, repeating the material is one of the best way to remind and review the material taught before. Repeating the material for the students with learning disability might be a boring activity for the teacher as he should repeat the same material over and over again, but this will help the students so much in gaining the idea why they should learn English vocabulary, why the teacher repeat the material over and over again. Even that the teacher has no idea how many times the repetition should be done, but if the teacher thinks that the repetition he has done is enough that he can possibly go to the next material.

2. Giving examples

One of the strategies used by the teacher of students with learning disability is by giving examples to them. Some students might be confused. Then, Adam (2018) stated that teachers should start off the activity by checking and giving example to make sure they understand the material and know what they are doing. This is the primary teaching activity even for regular students. Writing down the subject matter or in this case is the English vocabulary is the easiest way to teach the students with learning disability. The students will follow the teacher by also writing down the words on their books. If the word is easy to draw, the teacher then draws the objects (words) on the blackboard, too. This is so much easier to understand the words for the students. Another way of giving an example is to speak up the words. The teacher speaks aloud the words and the students will follow the teacher. This indirectly teaches the students how to pronounce the words correctly. It is important in giving the students the opportunity to be successful in learning a language. After giving examples, the teacher can give task to the students to know their improvement after learning the material given.

3. Using songs

In language development, singing a song take an important role as a flexible resource that usually used by teacher. The repetition of words in every song helps students to absorb and reproduce the language easily. Furthermore, Dzanic & Pejic (2016) uttered that songs are beneficial teaching supports which increase and keep students' motivation, especially in some situations when they are attractive and reinforced with colorful visuals, realia (objects from real life used in classroom instruction), and movement. These materials become additional sensory and visual input to enhance learning.

4. Giving rewards

Reward is one way that use of the teacher to motivate the student learning process. Higher motivation to learn has been linked not only to better academic performance, but to grater conceptual understanding, satisfaction with school, self-esteem, social adjustment and school completion rates. The power of tangible rewards is evident in the dopamine discharge in the brains of primates who predict or expect the delivery of preferred rewards (Schultz, Tremblay & Hollerman, 2000). However, how the delivery of the reward is received affects the possible long-term motivational effects of the reward. Whereas the delivery of a reward is important, both the receipt of the reward and the corresponding behavior determine the effectiveness of the stimulus. The more teacher understand about praising and other approaches for increasing motivation for learning and achieving in a way that benefits students' long-term development, the more probable it is that all students will accomplish to their full potential. In conclusion, by knowing about the student motivation, teachers can know their students interest in learning English vocabulary.

In addition, there is strategy for teaching students with learning disability that is VAKT strategy (Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, and Tactile). While the multisensory or VAKT method is a learning method that uses visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic modalities (Abdurrahman, 2009). Then, the VAKT method is based on the assumption that children will learn well if the teaching material involves various modalities of sensory devices such as vision, hearing, touch and movement (Zulkifli, 2013). According to Sadjah (2005), the more students are seen, heard, touched, or felt the object, the more developed they will be in perception. The more feedback obtained, the more developed in language including vocabulary. Furthermore, if the students see, hear, say, and do something more, the easier to learn (Rose, Colin and Nicholl 2002). It is supported by Obaid (2013), he explained that a multisensory or VAKT approach can improve learning skills in children who have learning difficulties. The VAKT strategy can use a variety of media, such as colored word cards, embossed letters, puzzles and kinetic sand. The validity and reliability of the tool was

measured through the results of visual analysis. In conclusion that teaching language to students with learning disability involves a combination of patience, understanding, and a positive attitude conviction in their ability to learn, and can provide students with a real example and assist with memorizing.

Teachers' Difficulties in Teaching English Vocabulary to Students with Learning Disability

Teaching students with special need may be more difficult and frustrating, because there are many aspects that should be considered and paid attention in teaching English vocabulary. According to Maulani (2008) there are some difficulties in teaching English vocabulary students with learning disability.

1. Teachers had difficulty in giving instruction

Teaching students with learning disability is far different from normal students, as students with learning disability need special treatments from the teachers. Deficits in cognitive functioning and learning styles characteristics of individual learning disability students include short term memory, slow learning rates, attention problems, difficult in generalizing what they have learned, and lack of motivation. According to Prystiananta (2020) the teacher should teaching through topic and assign new task (vocabulary) slowly enough that the students with learning disability experiences a high degree of success. Also the teacher needed to explain the instruction concretely and specifically. Because the students with learning disability have difficulty filling in details correctly when instructions are ambiguous or incomplete. So, the teacher needed a lot of patient and gave extra explanation to students with learning disability to follow the instruction.

2. Teachers had difficulty in materials for teaching vocabulary.

The lack of teaching materials was also one of the teacher difficulties. The teacher also needed to adapt the material and media. As a teacher of special need students must be able to adapt and utilize the materials in good ways with the right media because in language teaching the teacher used the term material to help teaching English vocabulary learners (Richards & Smith, 2002). It may be presented in print (a textbook and photocopied handout) or audio or video form. In short, the English teacher is recommended to develop teaching materials by themselves in order to meet their learners' need.

3. Teachers had difficulty in asking students to remember vocabulary.

In teaching English vocabulary the teacher used to give new vocabulary to remember for students with learning disability, so it is important for the teacher to delivering new

vocabulary slowly and appropriately because the students with learning disability have learning difficulties and are unable to understand the long sentences and follow complex instructions. According to Schalock et al. (2010), students with learning disability had low cognitive capacities and adaptive skills, as well as the need for special assistance in order for a person to participate in activities that are typical of human functioning. Then, students with learning disability memory ranges are short, especially those associated with academic, less able to think abstract and complicated. The low cognitive of students make it difficult for the teacher to ask students to remember the new vocabulary that already given. Hence, one way that teachers can do this is to provide examples of words used in contexts with low cognitive load, contexts where the content is familiar to students so they can focus on function words that are new to them.

4. Teachers had difficulty in attracting attention of students.

In process of teaching, the teacher felt difficulty to get attention from the students. Students with learning disability have behavioral problems such as, attention problem, and that attention problem had impact on process of teaching because the teacher felt difficulty to make the students attending instructions, focusing on schoolwork, following assignments, completing assignment and also social interactions. Parsons et al. (2001) stated that students with learning disability may show attention problem. They often pay attention to wrong things or have difficulty allocating their attention properly. In society, students with learning disability have problem such as making trouble with friends and tending to have poor self concept. So, the teacher should understand and make a class effective with their creativity.

5. Teachers had difficulty in managing time

In process of teaching English vocabulary the teacher needed a lot of patient and gave extra explanation to students with learning disability. The teacher should give the clear instruction to make students understand and also give all attention to students with learning disability and its must fair and impartial. Therefore, the teacher taught students with learning disability based on individual needs. So, it takes the long time for teacher in process of teaching vocabulary for students with learning disability. Then, Ahammed (2021) stated that in teaching English vocabulary the teacher couldn't able to spare enough time to focus on each child because time is limit the teacher felt difficult to look children one by one and sometime the students with learning disability gets emotions so along in classroom and its make the teacher lack of time in process of teaching. In addition, the teacher has goal set want to reach and never reach at in time because there is always a lag that is the biggest difficulty.

6. Teachers had difficulty in training at special school

Teachers of students with learning disability often lack of the support. The teacher need for support by experts in the field from the school such as service training regarding the curriculum and special education school. According to Landsberg (2005) the educators need to be trained to work with each other as well as other professionals, such as nurses, psychologist, parents and social workers. In addition, the special school teachers' need to be train in teaching to be more creative and to make the students with learning disability more easily to understand the teacher explanation.

METHOD

Research Design

In this research, the researchers used qualitative method. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative study is research method for a problem which can be studied to get an in depth understanding of the case not excluding understanding the participants, event, activity, process, individuals etc. The method used was case study design. Creswell (2003) defined case study as researchers explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a progress, or 1 or many individuals. Therefore, the case study was applied for this study to gain the further information of the phenomenon occurred at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang.

Participants of the Study

This study used purposeful sampling technique. In purposeful sampling, the researchers intentionally selected individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). There were 6 teachers who taught at special school (SLB) C Karya Ibu Palembang. In this study, the researchers only chose one teacher to became participant because the teacher had an educational background from special school which means that the teacher has the knowledge and ability to treat students with their special needs in the learning process. Besides, the teacher has taught for 5 years at SLB C Palembang.

Data Collection

In data collection, the instruments used in this research was interview. According to Creswell (2012), interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researchers ask one or more participants by using open-ended questions and record their answers. Moreover, in semi- structured interviewed the researchers had more guidance over the direction of the conversation and discussed content than in a non-directive data

collection approach, but still the informants are not restricted in elaboration or changing the course of the interview into other related area (Palys & Given 2008).

The researchers interviewed one teacher at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang. There were twenty items were used for the interview. The interview process is in Bahasa Indonesia and the result was transcribed into English transcription. The first language, Bahasa Indonesia, was used in order to make participants understand with the questions and enable them to give necessary information about the phenomenon.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

After analyzing the interview data, the result showed that teachers had some difficulties in teaching English vocabulary at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang. The themes and codes analysis got from the qualitative data through in-depth interview were presented as follows:

Table 1. Teachers' difficulties in teaching English vocabulary at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang.

Theme	Codes
1. Teacher had difficulty in asking students to remember English vocabulary.	The teacher had used the media as requirement to teach learning disability students. Even though, the teacher introduced English vocabularies, they were still unable to remember.
Teacher had difficulty in attracting attention of students.	There were students inattentive, restless and over active such as, run around the classroom and did not want to enter the class but the teacher kept trying to teach better by continuing to invite the students when the teacher mentioned English vocabulary.
Teacher had difficulty in controlling pronunciation of students.	The students had language difficulties that make students with learning disability could not pronounce the vocabulary correctly even though the teacher already repeat the new English vocabulary.
Teacher had difficulty in managing time.	The teacher lacked of time in reaching the learning objectives that should be reached because the teacher had to repeat and gave other example in teaching and learning process.
Teacher had difficulty in training	The teacher at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang lack of motivation to join service training about teaching English vocabulary to students with learning disability.

In addition, the result of interview found that there are some strategies used by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang. The themes and codes analysis were from the qualitative data through in-depth interview were presented as follows:

Table 2. Teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang.

Theme	Codes
Repetition.	In asking students to remember and controlling pronunciation, the teacher repetition the new English vocabulary to make the students easy to remember new vocabulary.
Giving example.	In attracting attention of the students, the teacher gave example of English vocabulary such as real objects or picture to got students' attention.
Giving reward.	In controlling pronunciation of the students, the teacher liked to give applause to students. It is one of the teacher strategies to motivate students to pronounce new vocabulary correctly in learning English vocabulary
Using VAKT (visual, audio, kinesthetic and tactile).	In managing time because the teacher could not reach the learning objectives on time. So the teacher used (visual, audio, kinesthetic, tactile) this strategy had a positive impact for students to remember and understand the meaning of the new vocabulary and It also saves time because the teacher does not need to repeat the explanation.

Discussion

The researchers analyzed the data by using thematic analysis, the result showed that there are some information about teachers' difficulties in teaching English vocabulary to students with learning disability at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang, those consisted of (a) Teacher had difficulty in asking students to remember English vocabulary, (b) Teacher had difficulty in attracting attention of students, (c) Teacher had difficulty in controlling pronunciation of students, (d) Teacher had difficulty in managing time (e) Teacher had difficulty in training and (f) Teacher use strategies repetition, giving example, giving reward and VAKT.

The first difficulty was teacher had difficulty in asking students to remember English vocabulary. The media that applied by the teacher to teach students with learning disability were the picture and real objects. Teaching English vocabulary used appropriate media. For example, the teacher used pictures when introduced the numbers or English vocabulary and also the teachers used real objects around the class when teach new English vocabulary that related to objects in the classroom. As Maryanti (2016) stated that the media used for students with learning disability were attractive and colorful pictures to encourage students in learning.

Second, the teacher had difficulty in attracting attention of students, the teacher felt difficulties when teaching because the teacher must give students with learning disability high attention in the classroom. For example, when students went from the class and make noise in the class. The teacher should understand and make a class effective with their creativity. It was supported by Bogdanova (2005) stated that behavioral disorders in students with learning disability may be due to teacher activity mistakes.

Third, the teacher had difficulty in controlling pronunciation of students. In process of teaching English vocabulary the teacher asked students to pronounce some words such as the names part of body or counting the number but the pronunciation of students was not right. They also did not know the meaning of the word. It was supported by Allimudin (2013) As experienced by the student with learning disability, the student with learning disability has language difficulties and speech difficulties such as pronounce the new vocabulary.

Fourth, the teacher had difficulty in managing time. Teacher felt difficulty when they should fulfill the objective of the lesson in one meeting. Teach students with learning disability required time because the students have a different intellectual disability. In this case, Pratiwi (2007) argued that teacher provide continues services to students with learning disability based on the individual needs. The teacher often to repeat material to make sure all of students remembering the English vocabulary had been delivered by the teacher.

Fifth, the teacher had difficulty in training. The teacher of special needs must have special training how to deal with the students with learning disability. However, the more frequent the training held at the school, the more it affects the teacher's ability to teach students with learning disability. According to Landsberg (2005) the educators need to be trained to work with each other as well as other professionals, such as nurses, psychologist, parents and social workers.

After that, the researchers got much information about teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary to students with learning disability at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang, those consisted of (a) Teacher use strategy repetition, (b) Teacher use strategy giving example, (c) Teacher use strategy giving reward and (d) teacher use strategy VAKT.

The first is teacher use repetition strategies, Students with learning disabilities may have varying abilities to recall and understand the content provided by the teacher. As a result, repeated the lesson was one of the most effective ways to recall and evaluate previously taught material. Then, Dhermawati et.al (2019) stated that there are several teacher's strategies in ELT to students with learning disability: Repeating the material, giving examples, using song and giving reward.

Second, the strategy is giving an example such as how to speak up the words. The teacher speaks aloud the words and the students will follow the teacher. This indirectly teaches the students how to pronounce the words correctly. It is important in giving the students the opportunity to be successful in learning a language. Moreover, Adam (2018) stated that teachers should start off the activity by checking and giving example to make sure they understand the material and know what they are doing.

Third, the teacher also give reward such as applause for students with learning disability to increase students' enthusiasm for learning. Then, the power of tangible rewards is evident in the dopamine discharge in the brains of primates who predict or expect the delivery of preferred rewards (Schultz, Tremblay, & Hollerman, 2000). Hence, strategies in teaching English vocabulary are very important so that students can achieve learning targets.

CONCLUSION

The result of the study showed that the teacher at SLB C Karya Ibu Palembang had difficulties in teaching English vocabulary to students with learning disability and some strategies to deal with the difficulties. The researchers identified some difficulties in teaching English vocabulary to students with learning disability. They were, teacher had difficulty in asking students to remember English vocabulary, teacher had difficulty in attracting attention of students, teacher had difficulty in controlling pronunciation of students, teacher had difficulty in managing time, teacher had difficulty in training at special school and the last the strategies teacher use to overcome the difficulties that is repetition, giving example, giving reward and VAKT.

Based on the conclusion described above, the researchers would like to convey some suggestions that is important to criticize and pay much attention to the difficulties faced by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary to students with learning disability. In this context, my suggestions are oriented to students, teacher, school and other next future researchers. By knowing the difficulties faced by the teacher in teaching English vocabulary to students with learning disability, first the researchers proposed that students should be more enthusiastic in learning English vocabulary in the classroom. Second, the teacher is advised to join teaching English vocabulary training so the teacher is not difficult to teach students with learning disability that has different intellectual disability also the teacher should encourage themselves in teaching English subject such as playing game or using more interesting media. Third, for school, it is suggested to school must give some coaching to teacher which is related to teaching students with learning disability, give something that can support teaching learning process and give motivation for teachers. Last, this study can be useful for the future research who are interested to dig more information up. The researchers expected other researchers can find out the other difficulties that can affect in teaching English vocabulary, and provide solution to reduce or solve the problem.

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