

TEACHERS' METHOD AND CHALLENGES IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Students with special needs are students who experience developmental delays, and have certain medical conditions, psychiatric conditions, and/or congenital conditions. Teachers who teach students with special needs faced unusual teaching challenges compared to teachers who teach in conventional classes. Therefore, the teachers are required to be selective in using the best teaching method to be used as the students encountered special challenges that are not faced by normal students. The purpose of this study is to investigate the teachers' teaching method and teachers' challenges in teaching students with special needs. The study was designed in descriptive qualitative study. An in-depth interview was employed as the instrument of the study. The study concluded that the teachers teach the students with different methods following the students' category. The total Physical Response is mostly used for teaching the ADHD students, deaf Students and mental retardation students. While for Contextual Teaching Learning method is used in teaching students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and blindness. The study also reveals that there are several challenges that teachers encountered in teaching students with special needs, such as students' behavior that tend to change spontaneously which following their mood, the students are difficult to be focus in learning process, and repetitive explanation that has to be done due to the shortcomings of the students in comprehending the lesson. Further study is suggested to conduct the study in experimental form, experimenting the teaching methods to find out the best method for each category of the students, and to conduct the study in more schools as this study was only conducted in one school.

Keywords: Teachers, Teaching Method, Challenges, Students with Special Needs

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of basic right of every citizen regardless of their background. As stated in our 1945 Constitution of The Republic of Indonesia verse one and two, it is stated that every citizen obtain equal rights in education. Beholding on those verses, to fulfill the citizens' right to possess quality education,

schools may not stop any citizens from going to schools, including children or students with special needs. Children with special needs obtain insurance in many aspects including (Anggraheni et al., 2019). This is stated in Law of the Republic of Indonesia number 20 of 2003: (1) Article 5 verse 2 asserted that citizens with physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and/or social disabilities have the right to receive special education; (2) Article 5 verse 4 stated that citizens who are gifted in intelligence and special talents have the right to receive special education; (3) Article 15 asserted that the types of education encompass general, vocational, academic, professional, vocational, religious and special education; (4) Article 32 verse 1 “special education is education for students who have difficulties in following the learning process due to physical, emotional, mental, social disabilities, and/or are gifted in intelligence and special talents”.

Students with special needs are children who experience developmental delays, and have certain medical conditions, psychiatric conditions, and/or congenital conditions (Larson et al., 2001). Special attention and handling are needed to help them in reaching their potential. Children with special needs are not less talented, intelligent, or incapable. Nevertheless, they possess special challenges that are not encountered by most other normal children. The stated condition happened when the children possess limitations or extraordinary abilities that affected the process of growth and development. Thus, it indicates that students need proper assistance. Special needs are an umbrella term for a wide range of diagnoses, ranging from conditions that resolve quickly to conditions that can be a lifelong challenge, both relatively mild conditions to severe conditions exist (Apriliyanti, 2023).

The characteristics that indicate students with special needs can be explained through three different perspectives, they are; biological perspectives, psychological perspectives and family, social and cultural perspectives. Biological perspectives are indicated through development obstacle faced by students due to genetical and neurological factor. While for psychological perspectives can be seen through emotional obstructions that cannot be handled by the students that lead to maladaptive behavior (abnormal). For the family, social and cultural perspectives referred to obstruction that caused by family environment, social and culture (Kristina & Widayanti, 2016).

There are several categories of students with special needs; (1) deaf students are those who have hearing loss, either partially or completely, affecting their language and speech abilities (Jambor & Elliot, 2005); (2) blind visually impaired students are students with special needs who experience partial or total blindness (Lieberman et al., 2019); (3) students who have abnormalities or problems in controlling emotions and social control, even carrying out deviant behavior, namely, attention and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Frick & Nigg, 2012); (4) the last is students with autism spectrum

disorder category. Student with autism has very wide range of autistic. In addition, students with disabilities are a classification of children with special needs who experience movement disorders due to paralysis, deformities, body functions, or limb abnormalities (Putri & Putro, 2021).

Having elaborated the categories of students with special needs above, we realize that teachers who teach students with special needs faced unusual teaching challenges compared to teachers who teach in conventional classes and not all them can teach students with special needs. There are at least four competencies that must be possessed by teachers who teach students with special needs, they are; pedagogic, social, personal, and professional competencies (Apriliyanti, 2020). To teach students with special needs, a teacher is also required to have a good method and strategies in teaching students with special needs.

Studies on teaching to students with special needs have been conducted by several researchers, the first is a study conducted by Gumiandari and Nafi'awhich investigated the effectiveness of teaching English to students with special needs in two different schools through Social Constructivism Pedagogy-Based Joyful Learning. Their study found that the implementation of Joyful Learning METHOD encouraged students in English classes, and the result of combining Joyful Learning with Social Constructivism Pedagogy approach is significantly effective (Gumiandari & Nafi'a, 2021).

The second study that has been conducted is a study carried out by Daroni entitled Teaching English for Autism Students (Daroni, 2018). The study found that the design in learning English for children with autism should be designed through conducting a prior analysis in order to make it easier to see what students' needs and constrictions are. Afterward, the teacher can begin to determine the learning design. With this technique, the learning process will be easier to be carried out and learning objectives can be achieved optimally.

The last study is a study conducted by Sulaiman, in his study, he explored the development of English teaching for Autism children (Sulaiman, 2019). The result of his study showed that English as a foreign language makes many students encountered some problems in learning the language initially, and there are some students who may take a longer time to get used to it, especially for students with special needs who have anomalies such as in intelligence, social and linguistics aspect. Hence, the teachers' analysis in finding out what the students' need is significantly important to help the students in teaching and learning process.

Having done the literature review related to similar studies that have been conducted, none of the study tried to explore the teachers' aspect in teaching students with special needs. Therefore, this study is intended to explore the teachers challenges in teaching students with special needs, with two

research problems addressed, they are; (1) what are teachers' method in teaching students' with special needs, and; (2) what are teachers' challenges in teaching students with special needs.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed Descriptive Qualitative method. This method is used to find out teachers' method and challenges in teaching students with special needs. Qualitative method can be done through ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, case study and content analysis (Huberman et al., 2014). In advance, he also classified the characteristic of a study with qualitative method, in which the characteristics are, the study is carried out by doing direct interaction with the participants, researcher' role is to obtain the whole picture of an individual and groups, and the analysis result is presented through words.

Data of the study is obtained through in-depth interview conducted to the teachers as informants of the study. There are two teachers that become informants of this study. Both of them are English teachers in SLBN 1 Sumbawa. The interview is done to obtain data regarding teachers' challenges and method of teaching students with special needs.

After data collection has been done, the next step is analyzing the data. Qualitative analysis step is used to analyze the result of interview. There are three steps in data analysis, they are; data condensation, data presentation and data verification (Huberman et al., 2014). Data condensation is done to select data that obtained from the results of interview towards the teachers. The data selection is based on the purpose of the interview; to know teachers method in teaching students with special needs, and to find out teachers' challenges in teaching students with special needs. Afterwards, all of the data then classified and presented in discussion.

2.1 TIME AND PLACE

The study is conducted in State Special School (SLBN) 1 Sumbawa. This school is located at Jalan Durian No. 29, Sumbawa Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. The total active students of this school are 230 students that consist of 136 male students and 94 female students. While for the teachers, there are 35 teachers in this school, 11 of them are male teachers and 24 of them are female teachers. The students of this school consist of some categories of students with special needs, such as blindness (*tuna netra*), deaf (*tuna rungu*), mental retardation (*tuna grahita*), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) etc.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Teachers' Method in Teaching Students with Special Needs

The result of interview showed slight difference in terms of method used in teaching students with special needs by the teachers. As explained previously, there are two teachers that become informants of this study. The informants refused at the first place when the researcher asked permission to put their name in the study. Therefore, the researcher used initial to refer to their names; Mr. Ad and Mrs. Ul. Mr. and Mrs. refers to their gender identity.

Table 1. Teaching Method Used by the Teachers

No.	Informants	Students' Category that Teachers Teach in School	Teaching Method used
1	Mr. Ad	Blindness student	Contextual Teaching Learning (CTL) and Direct Method
		ASD student	CTL Method
		ADHD Student	Total Physical Response
		Deaf Student	Total Physical Response
2	Mrs. Ul	Blindness student	CTL Method
		Mental Retardation student	Total Physical Response
		Deaf student	Total Physical Response
		ADHD student	Total Physical Response

3.1.1 Teaching Method used by Mr. Ad in teaching students with special needs

As can be seen in the table above, Mr. Ad teaches several categories of students with special needs, such as blindness students, ASD students, ADHD students and deaf students. In teaching the students, Mr. Ad employed several teaching method based on the category of the students. For blindness students, Mr, Ad used Contextual Teaching Learning method. When the researcher asked in more detail about the reason why he employed the method, he said;

“Metode pengajaran yang saya gunakan untuk siswa tuna netra biasanya CTL atau paling nggak direct method. Sebenarnya siswa yang tuna netra ini kan hamper sama dengan siswa normal mas, cumin dia kurangnya tidak bias melihat aja. Jadi tidak terlalu sulit sebenarnya untuk melakukan proses pengajaran kepada mereka. Dan metode yang menurut saya paling pas saya gunakan adalah CTL dan Direct method tersebut. Dan berdasarkan pengalaman saya, metode ini cukup efektif digunakan ke mereka dengan mengaitkan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dengan keseharian mereka dengan menekankan penggunaan Bahasa Inggris langsung dalam proses pembelajaran”.

Translation: “The method I used in teaching blindness students are CTL and Direct Method. Actually, the blindness students are almost the same with the normal students, they are only

cannot see. So, it is not really difficult in doing the teaching and learning process to them. And the method that I think the best to be used is CTL and Direct Method. Based on my experiences, the two methods are effective to be used in teaching them by correlating the English learning with their daily and social context by emphasizing the use of English in the learning process”.

For ADHD and Deaf students’ category, Mr. Ad employed the same teaching method, namely Contextual language teaching. The teacher used the strategy because he considered the strategy is effective to be used for teaching them. He believed that by acting out or simulating the word that he said or teach will make the deaf students easier to catch what the teacher mean and intention as they have problem in hearing and communication.

“Total Physical Response ini efektif mas, saya gunakan ketika mengajar siswa tuna rungu dan siswa ADHD. Karna dengan memperagakan kata yang saya ucapkan atau ajarkan membuat para siswa menjadi lebih paham terhadap makna kata yang saya maksud dan ucapkan”

Translation: “The total Physical Response is effective to be used in teaching deaf students and ADHD students’ category. Because by acting out or simulating the words or sentence that I say or teach will make the students easier to catch the meaning of words or sentence that I uttered”.

The last is ASD students, Mr. Ad employed Contextual Language Teaching method in teaching the ASD students. He used some teaching media such as pictures, cards, videos and games to gain students attention and interest in learning process as they are sometimes mentally unstable. Based on Mr. Ad experience of teaching ASD students, this method is effective to be used.

3.1.2. Teaching Method Used by Mrs. Ul in Teaching Students with Special Needs

The second informant of this study is Mrs. Ul, she is an English teacher in SLBN 1 Sumbawa. Based on the interview results, Mrs. Ul teaches some categories of students with special needs; deaf students, mental retardation students, ADHD students and blindness students. The teaching method that used mostly by Mrs. Ul is Total Physical Response. This method is employed in teaching deaf students, mental retardation students and ADHD students, while Contextual Language Teaching is used in teaching students with blindness. The reasons of why Mrs. Ul mostly used Total Physical Response in teaching the students are quite similar to what the first informant stated. She said:

“Saya menggunakan metode Total Physical Response dalam sebagian besar pengajaran saya, khususnya ketika mengajar siswa tuna rungu, tuna grahita dan siswa ADHD. Alasannya karena sebagaimana yang kita ketahui, anak-anak ini memiliki kekurangan, mohon maaf, baik secara mental maupun fisik. Oleh karena itu, tentunya itu berdampak pada kemampuan mereka dalam proses belajar. Perlu usaha ekstra dan kreatifitas tinggi ketika melaksanakan

pengajaran. Metode Total Physical Response ini kemudian membantu saya dalam proses pengajaran. Karena dengan menggunakan metode ini, saya bias memeragakan setiap kata ataupun kalimat yang saya ucapkan maupun ajar. Jadi, anak-anak lebih terbantu memahami apa yang saya maksud dan ajarkan, tentunya dibantu dengan beberapa media pembelajaran seperti gambar, puzzle, dan media-media yang lain”.

Translation: “I used Total Physical Response method in most of my teaching activities, especially when teaching deaf students, mental retardation students and ADHD students. The reason is, as you know, most of those students need extra attention due to their condition. Hence, it’s for sure affect their learning ability. The teacher needs extra effort and creativity in doing the teaching process. The total physical response then helped me in doing the teaching, because this method allows me to act-out the words or sentence that I explained and uttered. Thus, students are helped to comprehend the material being taught. In employing the Total Physical Response, I used some teaching media such as picture, puzzle and some other teaching medias”.

For the blindness students, Mrs. Ul employed Contextual Language Teaching method. It is slightly different compared to Mr. Ad that used two methods when teaching the students with blindness, they are CTL method and direct method. For the reasons, Mrs. Ul stated that using CTL method in teaching blindness students gives her wide range of creativity that she can implement in teaching process. She added, teaching blindness students is more like teaching normal students we can almost teach like teaching normal students.

3.2. Teachers’ challenges in teaching students with special needs

Based on the result of interview with the two informants, we have found that the informants shared similar challenges in teaching the students, it is probably because they teach in the same school. Some of their challenges in teaching students with special needs are; (1) Students behavior that tend to change spontaneously which following their mood. To cope with this situation, the teachers must prepare some alternative efforts so that the students can still follow the class. Teachers must be able to make sure that class is conducive, students are relax, enjoy and ready to follow the class, this is to prevent students to be moody and having unstable behavior. As experienced by Mr. Ad, the ADHD students need conducive and calm place to study. When they show excessive behavior, they tend to talk continuously, crying and laughing; (2) students are difficult to be focus in learning process. Therefore, students cannot follow and comprehend the lesson properly. Thus, the solution that often employed when facing students who cannot focus is by inviting the students to play and take rest for a while and once the students regain their focus, the class is then continued and students can follow the class properly again, and; (3) repetitive explanation, this is the last challenge that teachers face. Some categories of students with special needs have to be explained several times

until they can finally comprehend the material being taught. Students with mental retardation for example, they often sleep in the class and tend to talk less that affect their communication skill which led the teacher to repeat the explanation and ask the students again and again till they can comprehend the lesson.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the study related to teachers' teaching method in teaching students with special needs and teachers' challenges in teaching students with special needs, it can be concluded that there are three methods that teachers employed in teaching the students, they are; Contextual Language Teaching, Total Physical Response and Direct Method. The total Physical Response is mostly used for teaching the ADHD Students, Deaf Students and Mental Retardation Students. While Contextual Teaching Learning method is mostly employed to teach students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and blindness. And the last is Direct Method that is only used by an informant in teaching Blindness Students. Both informants have slight difference in terms of methods used in teaching the students with special needs. Meaning that, the method used by them is almost the same for each categories of the students with special needs. The two teachers adjust the methods they employed following the categories of the students.

Regarding with teachers' challenges in teaching students' with special needs, the study reveals that there are several challenges that teachers encountered in teaching students with special needs, such as students' behavior that tend to change spontaneously which following their mood, the students are difficult to be focus in learning process, and repetitive explanation that has to be done due to the shortcomings of the students in comprehending the lesson. This study was only conducted to teachers in one school. Besides, it only investigated teachers' challenges and methods of teaching the students with special needs which might be rather subjective as the answer given based on the teachers' perspective and experience. Therefore, further study is suggested to conduct the study in experimental form, experimenting the teaching methods to find out the best method for each category of the students. And it is also suggested to conduct the study in more schools as this study was only conducted in one school.

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