

TEACHER STRATEGIES IN TEACHING WRITING TO SPEECH-IMPAIRED CHILDREN IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL AT SLB YKK PACITAN

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Abstract

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to identify the challenges and determine the teachers' learning strategies in writing skills for speech-impaired students in junior high school classes at SLB YKK Pacitan. Data analysis was taken using interview instruments and classroom observations. This study examines various challenges speech-impaired students face in learning to write, including communication barriers, concentration, and lack of familiarization with English in the home environment. Several learning strategies are implemented to overcome these challenges, such as using visual media, project-based learning techniques, assistive technology support, and bilingual learning techniques in the learning process. Posts are carried out for learning evaluation. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth teacher interviews, and document analysis. The study results focus on the challenges and strategies for teachers in learning writing skills in junior high school speech-impaired impaired. This study shows the strategy applied to increase student participation and motivation in learning to write. The effectiveness of this strategy is evaluated through a post-test method that measures the improvement of students' writing skills before and after the implementation of the learning strategy.

Keywords: *Challenges, Learning Strategies, Post-Tests, Speech Impaired, Writing Skills*

Introduction

Disparity in the world of education for children with disabilities is a deep and complex issue, especially in developing countries. A report published by UNESCO in 2020 provides the fact that children with disabilities are twice as likely to be out of school compared to children of their age who are non-disabled (UNESCO, 2017). This is undoubtedly a concern for the government to provide equal education to children with disabilities to be able to get education equal to children of their age who are non-disabled. Despite a 29 per cent rise in inclusive schools from 2020 to 2021, children with disabilities still have lower opportunities to access and finish their education compared to their peers without disabilities (Apriyanti et al., 2024).

Some factors affect the inequality of education for children with disabilities and non-disabilities, such as lack of physical accessibility and inadequate educational resources. Schools do not have the facilities needed by people with disabilities, so they cannot play an active role in teaching and learning activities. In addition, the lack of specially trained and professional educators to guide and treat children with disabilities exacerbates this condition. In many cases, children with disabilities can only learn at home and do not receive any formal education at all, which affects their literacy and skills in the future.

Disability conditions have various types, such as speech impairment. Speech impairment is a condition in which the ability to produce speech sounds necessary for communicating with others is impaired. The condition may be acquired or developed. Speech impairment could be mild, such as occasionally mispronouncing a couple of words, or it can be severe, such as not being able to produce speech sounds at all (Al-Qatab & Mustafa, 2021). Conditions like this make the problem complex and make it difficult for children with disabilities to get an education. They often require special approach tools in education and the learning process so that they can actively participate in the learning process. In addition, limited

resources and a lack of support from the educational environment can worsen the situation and make non-verbal children often feel isolated (Autism Speaks., 2023). Sign language and argumentative communication tools frequently help them communicate, express themselves and understand the lessons given. Alternative communication methods such as Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) are essential but require special training for teachers and school staff to effectively implement their learning (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2023).

English can be given to children with disabilities. Four English skills are learning that can be optimized into abilities possessed by children with disabilities. The four skills are reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Learning English writing skills is very important for children with speech impairments because it gives them the means to communicate effectively when speaking is impossible. They can participate in academic activities, complete assignments, and communicate with teachers and peers through writing. This improves their academic abilities and helps them develop self-confidence and independence. In addition, mastery of writing skills in English opens up wider opportunities for children with speech impairments in professional life in the future. Writing well in English, as an international language, gives access to a wide range of resources, information, and a global network.

Teachers act as facilitators who support visually impaired children through various strategies tailored to individual needs. According to Smith and Tyler (2010), a teacher must understand the characteristics and special needs of children with speech impairments and create an inclusive and supportive learning environment by using diverse teaching methods, such as sign language, image symbols, and alternative communication technologies, to help children express their ideas and thoughts in writing. Teachers also need to provide clear and structured instruction and constructive feedback to help deaf children develop their writing skills (Smith, 2010). Teachers can use strategies to learn writing skills for children with speech impairments, including visual aids like interactive whiteboards and image-based writing apps, to help children organize and develop their ideas. In addition, teachers can apply collaborative learning methods, where children with hearing impairments work in small groups with supportive classmates, to improve their social interaction and writing skills.

Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive research design to explore teachers' strategies in teaching and learning activities in the classroom for junior high school students with speech impairments. The subject of the study was Mr. Fiqih, an English teacher from SLB YKK Pacitan who was in junior high school. Research data was collected through intensive interviews held on Thursday, July 18th, 2024 and class observation on Thursday, August 1st, 2024, at SLB YKK Pacitan. The instruments used in this study used 2 types of instruments. The first is an interview guideline consisting of seven questions regarding learning strategies, challenges faced during the learning process, and indicators of success in using techniques used in the writing skill learning process, and the second is a sheet of activity observation results from pre-teaching, while teaching, and evaluation in the writing skill learning process.

Data was collected by intensive interviews with teachers and continued with classroom observation to get a comprehensive picture of the learning process in the classroom. Once the data is collected, the first stage of the analysis involves transcribing interviews and observation notes into a written format. Next, the raw data is encoded to identify key themes and emerging patterns. After the themes and patterns were identified, the researcher triangulation the data by comparing the interview and observation results to ensure the findings' consistency and validity. Finally, the analysis results are presented in the form of a descriptive narrative that describes the learning strategies teachers apply and their impact on the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Findings and Discussions

In this study, it is known that the learning strategy of writing skills for deaf children at the junior high school level at SLB YKK Pacitan. The researcher conducted the research according to the stages described in the previous chapter. The results of interviews and classroom observations that researchers encounter in general can be defined as follows.

Challenges in the Learning Process

After thoroughly analyzing the results of interviews and classroom observations, it becomes evident that the primary challenge in teaching writing skills to children with speech impairments is maintaining concentration throughout the learning process. These students often experience difficulty staying focused, and external factors can easily disrupt their concentration, leading to a lack of engagement and subsequent boredom during lessons. This lack of sustained attention is exacerbated by an uncondusive classroom environment, where distractions—whether from peers or the surroundings—further impede their ability to concentrate on the material being taught.

Concentration in the learning process is crucial, as it directly impacts students' ability to understand and retain the material. When students can concentrate, they can absorb information more effectively, leading to a deeper understanding and quicker mastery of writing skills. The interview findings with teachers highlight that concentration issues are a significant barrier to effective learning. However, these issues can be addressed by employing strategies such as incorporating ice-breaking activities into the lessons. These activities pause the learning process, allowing students to reset their focus and prepare mentally to continue absorbing the material. The teacher's temporarily halting the lesson until students are ready to proceed is a practical solution to this challenge, as it helps maintain a conducive learning environment.

In addition to concentration difficulties, another significant challenge identified through the interviews is the lack of English language habituation in the students' home environments. For children with speech impairments who already face difficulties in language acquisition, the absence of regular exposure to English outside of the classroom severely hampers their ability to improve their language skills. This lack of habituation means that students do not have the opportunity to reinforce what they learn at school, which slows down their progress compared to other subjects. The interviews suggest that the delayed acquisition of English language skills is a direct result of this limited exposure, making it clear that a supportive home environment is crucial for these students.

Moreover, children with speech impairments require a specialized approach to learning, particularly when acquiring foreign language skills like English. Their unique challenges—concentration and language exposure—necessitate teaching methods tailored to their specific needs. This includes creating a classroom environment that minimizes distractions, using engaging activities to maintain their focus, and encouraging greater language use at home. By addressing these challenges, educators can create a more effective learning experience for children with speech impairments, ultimately helping them acquire essential writing and language skills.

Strategies in the learning process

The analysis of interviews and classroom observations in this study resulted in the findings of strategies used by teachers to learn writing skills in junior high school classes at SLB YKK Pacitan. The strategy begins by adjusting the material to the student's learning ability. The following is the teacher's expression.

"...Jadi mungkin kalau yang saat ini pengenalan mulai dari alfabet dulu, Selanjutnya kalau sudah alfabet mereka mengenal, bisa ,dual bahasa tentunya, Baik secara Indonesia maupun Barat ya Itu kan beda ya sebenarnya ,Walaupun

mereka pengucapannya itu dan listening sama speakingnya kan sulit ya, Jadi ini itu pengenalan huruf pertama, Terus yang kedua setelah huruf-huruf itu mereka paham Mereka akan mengenal kosa kata yang pendek..”

From the analysis of the above, it can be described that each student's ability is good. Before providing learning materials, teachers prepare materials that have been considered and adjusted to the student's ability. Afterwards, the teacher designs the material in a PowerPoint presentation for the students. In addition, the bilingual teaching method is currently used to teach writing skills to speech-impaired children at the junior high school level at SLB YKK Pacitan. Bilingual is intended to provide material in English but for examples of the implementation of vocabulary taught in Indonesian with everyday sentences that they often encounter. This condition is done to make it comfortable and more accessible for students to understand writing skill learning.

To determine the effectiveness of the strategies used, teachers provide exercises on the material that has been worked on. Technical of this exercise: the students are welcome to come forward individually to answer the questions. If the answer is correct, it is identified that the learning target has been achieved and vice versa. As the teacher's expression at the time of the interview:

“...Melihat dengan kemampuan anak penguasaan materi tadi Seberapa jauh penguasaan materi yang mereka Kuasai, Contoh misalkan Dalam bahasa Inggris kemampuan writing, Nah kita kasih soal translate, Translate sederhana itu Nah seberapa persen mereka, kemampuan mereka Untuk menganalisa soal Kemampuan menangkap perintah dari soal itu Dan kemampuan menyelesaikan soal itu tadi”.

From the analysis of the interview above, it can be concluded that the teacher uses exercises after providing the learning that the students have received.

Discussion

Challenges in the Learning Process

Speech impairment or speech impairment is the inability of an individual to communicate his ideas to others (listeners). As well as impairment in the ability to receive, send, process and understand concepts or symbols. As a result, messages that look simple when conveyed to the interlocutor are challenging to understand. Speech impairment can be seen in hearing, language, and speech. Not infrequently, speech disorders are often associated with hearing loss (Mutiarra et al.,2023). Students with speech disabilities experience difficulties or obstacles in verbal communication, so they have difficulty communicating. It may be caused by the absence or dysfunction of speech organs, such as the oral cavity, tongue, palate such as the oral cavity and vocal cords, in addition to the absence or dysfunction of the auditory organs, resulting in a delay in language development(Veryawan & Septi Anjas Wulan, 2023). With conditions like this, teachers and staff who are professional and able to handle students are needed (Alfianita et al., 2021). In addition, according to Marschark & Hauser (2012), another challenge is the limitation of social interaction. Speech-impaired people often have difficulty interacting with their peers, affecting their social and emotional development. Educators need to develop inclusive strategies that encourage the active participation of all students in classroom activities and create supportive and non-discriminatory environments (Marschark & Hauser, 2012).

In addition to difficulties in communicating, the challenge experienced by students with speech disabilities researchers encountered in this study is concentration in learning. Students' concentration is very influential in learning comprehension. According to research by Barkley (2014), concentration can be improved through a conducive learning environment, such as quiet spaces, sufficient lighting, and time management to avoid mental fatigue. A significant

challenge is the lack of English habituation at home (Barkley, 2014). In contrast, children not used to using the United Kingdom at home often have difficulty developing their language skills, affecting academic achievement and future career opportunities (August & Shanahan, 2017). In addition to the role of teachers in teaching English at home, it will be better and more effective if it is supported by the role of the home environment that supports and facilitates learning English at home. In addition, research conducted by Li and Zhang (2023) shows that lack of language exposure in the home environment can hinder children's language development and understanding of the United Kingdom, thus emphasizing the importance of the role of the home environment in supporting language learning. It can be concluded that the role of people or the environment at home dramatically affects the consistency of English understanding (Zhang et al., 2023)

Strategies in the Learning Process

In this research, it was found that the pattern of strategies used by English teachers at SLB YKK Pacitan in teaching writing skills at the Strategi Junior High School level was to make material that followed the needs of students. Because every student with a speech disability has different abilities, in this study, teachers provide material about punctuation marks using PowerPoint media and hardware such as laptops and projectors. Using PowerPoint media will increase student interest and increase concentration in learning. The use of PowerPoint in learning significantly impacts the effectiveness of material delivery and student understanding. Using PowerPoint in learning helps organise and simplify complex information to be easier to understand through a combination of text, images, and graphics. In his research, Mayer emphasized that the principles of multimedia learning, such as coherence, signalling, and redundancy, can be implemented through PowerPoint to improve the student learning process (Mayer, 2014).

The balance of learning concentration in this study is one of the severe challenges. In this situation, the teacher provides solutions such as pausing learning by giving ice breaks to the students. Ice breaking has several benefits such as This activity can be done and learned by everyone without having to have special skills; a tool that can provide an atmosphere of excitement and familiarity and a feeling of happiness between students, as well as between educators and students and can create nuances in education, a meaningful and fun learning process (Harianja & Sapri, 2022). Ice breaking is used to overcome initial obstacles in group interaction, create a more relaxed and open atmosphere, and facilitate effective communication. According to Hadfield (2013), ice-breaking is an essential first step in any learning session or group activity. It can help reduce tension, build trust, and motivate participants to participate actively. Hadfield emphasized that well-designed ice-breaking activities can speed up getting to know each other between participants and improve group dynamics (Hadfield, 2013).

The role of teachers in the learning process is very crucial. Contextual approach strategy is where the teacher invites students into the real world. This means that the material the teacher delivers is associated with real situations so that students can relate their knowledge to its application in daily life. This approach is efficient because it can help students understand concepts quickly and will not be easily forgotten by students (Dewi & Agustika, 2022). In this study, teachers deliver material using bilingual techniques. The content of the material about 'punctuation' is offered in English, and for examples of its implementation, examples of vocabulary are provided in Indonesian. This is done so that students do not feel burdened with the material and can receive the material well. Bilingual material delivery is an increasingly popular approach in various educational institutions. This method not only facilitates better comprehension of the material for students who may be more fluent in one language than another, but it also improves the student's overall bilingual abilities (Oraby & Azaz, 2024).

The post-test revocation in learning that the researcher found aimed to see students' understanding of receiving learning. The post-test is one of the evaluation instruments used to

measure students' understanding and mastery of the material after completing the learning process. The primary function of the post-test is to assess the effectiveness of the teaching methods used and identify areas that need improvement from both the learner and the teaching side. In addition, post-tests serve as a tool to provide constructive feedback to learners regarding their learning progress (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Post-tests allow educators to adjust the curriculum and teaching methods, ensuring that every learner gets a fair opportunity to reach their academic potential. Besides, the teacher also collaborate with parents in monitoring the children progress in learning (Apriyanti, 2020).

Conclusion

From this study, the challenges faced and strategies in learning writing skills in visually impaired children at the junior high school level at SLB YKK Pacitan were found. The challenges faced are disturbances when communicating, concentration in learning, and the habit of speaking English less from home. Of course, this is a concern for educators when delivering learning. The strategy starts by analyzing students' abilities to adjust learning to students' skills and providing material approaches and methods for delivering material using PowerPoint tools and bilingual teaching techniques.

The conclusion of this study shows that applying appropriate writing teaching strategies to visually impaired children in junior high school classes can significantly impact their writing skills. The qualitative descriptive approach revealed that visual aids, assistive technology, and individualized learning approaches are the keys to success in improving the writing skills of visually impaired children. In addition, the role of teachers as facilitators and motivators is vital in creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. This study emphasizes the importance of adaptive and innovative strategies in the learning process to meet the special needs of students with speech impairments. It underscores the need for professional training and development for educators to improve their competence in teaching students with special needs.

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