

TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISSABILITIES

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Abstract

In this globalization era, English is considered as a powerful language in the world to transfer information and technology. Thus, English is being a subject that must be taught on each level of education in Indonesia. In teaching English, teachers should consider the differences of their students, regarding to their levels, interest, gender, abilities, cultural, and learning disabilities. Students' with learning disabilities is being the focus of this research. Students with learning disabilities are often caught in a vicious spiral of school failure. There has been a lot of discussion around the topic of teaching English to students with learning disabilities. Students with learning disabilities have dysfunctions in processing information typically found in language-based activities. They have average or above-average intelligence, but they often encounter significant problems learning how to read, write, and compute. They also may have difficulty following directions, attending to tasks, organizing assignments, and managing time. Sometimes these students appear to be unmotivated or lazy when in fact they are trying to the best of their ability. Moreover, English teachers have to think over the instruction, activity, and strategies that they will use to students with learning disabilities. Therefore, this research will discuss about teaching English to students with disabilities, more focused on strategies used by English teacher in teaching to students with learning disabilities.

Key words: *Learning Disabilities, Teaching English, Teaching English Strategies.*

A. Introduction

In teaching and learning process, teacher has important roles in transferring their knowledge to the students, controlling the classroom activities, and making the teaching learning process be interested for the students, thus the process will be run well. Besides that, the teacher should know what the appropriate approaches, methods, strategies or technique which should apply in teaching learning process.

In our country, Indonesia, English is one subject must be learned in the school. English subject is not only given to the regular students but also given to the students with learning disabilities. Teaching to students with learning disability is challenging to the teacher.

Students with learning disabilities are students with special characteristics that differ from students in general without necessarily indicate the inability of mental, emotional, or physical. They are include students with visual impairment or blindness, students with hearing loss or hearing impairment, autism, mental retardation, dyslexia, students with cognitive delay, cerebral palsy, and many others.

In teaching English to students with learning disabilities, there are some strategies which can be used by the teacher. They are teacher-mediated strategies, peer-mediated strategies, routine-based strategies, and specific naturalistic (Milieu) strategies (Gargiulo and Kilgo, 2004). Therefore, this research analyzed the strategies used by English teacher in teaching to students with learning disabilities.

B. Brief Review of Related Theories**1. Students with Learning Disabilities**

Students with learning disabilities are children that are unique in the type and characteristics, which distinguish them from normal students in general. This condition requires an understanding of the nature of students with learning disabilities. According to Arends (2012) students with learning disabilities are students who have special needs or challenging; the inability to do something such as hear, walk, or learn. It means that the students need special treatment or education that suitable with them.

Moreover, there are some types of students with learning disabilities; according to Arends (2012), Iswari (2008) Tarmansyah (2009):

- a. Development Disability or Delay
- b. Deaf-blindness
- c. Deafness
- d. Emotional disturbance
- e. Hearing impairment
- f. Mental retardation
- g. Multiple disabilities
- h. Orthopedic impairment

- i. Other health impairment
- j. Specific learning disability
- k. Speech or language impairment
- l. Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- m. Visual impairment

The types of students with learning disabilities that used in this research are: Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation, and Visual impairment. The reason to choose only that students is because the students with learning disabilities in some *SLB (Sekolah Luar Biasa)* in Payakumbuh only consist of that amount of students.

2. Teaching English Strategies to students with Learning Disabilities

In teaching students with learning disabilities, there are some strategies which can be used by teacher, according to Gargiulo and Kilgo (2004) they are:

a. Teacher mediated strategies

It has typically been used to describe teacher-directed intervention designed to promote social interaction. It divides into some strategies: (1) Environmental Arrangements, (2). Promoting acceptance, (3). The provision of Prompts and Praise, (4). Accepting different levels and types of participation, (5). Monitoring Communicative Input.

b. Peer Mediated Strategies

It was defined as the teaching of a peer to interact with a particular child and to provide reinforcement to that child for targeted behaviors. Its means child will help their friend in learning if they still confused with material which give by the teacher. There are two types of strategies that utilize peer to mediated learning, they are: (1). Peer-Initiation Interventions, & (2). Cooperative Learning

c. Routine-Based Strategies

Here, teachers and parents need to understand that daily activities that have specific purpose also serve as an instructional times. Therefore, before starting routine based instruction it would be important that all involved with the child (teachers, assistants, and parents) are able to recognize the variety of skills that can be promoted within the same routine activity. Teaching strategies that belong to Routine-Based Strategies are: (1). Play-Based Intervention Strategies, (2). Activity-Based Instruction, (3). Changing the Content of an Existing Activity, (4.) Transition-Based Instruction

d. Specific Naturalistic (Milieu) Strategies

Milieu strategies are used to facilitate language skills (especially social interaction context) that take advantage of the natural environment (people, materials, activities) to support learning. Variations of these naturalistic strategies include: (1). Incidental Teaching, (2). The Model and Expansion, (3). The Mand-Model, (4). Time Delay, (5). Interrupted Routine.

C. Data Analysis and Discussion

This research was done to know teaching strategies used by English teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities at SLB Payakumbuh District. They are SLB Luak Nan Bungsu in East Payakumbuh District, SLB Tunanetra in Koto Nan IV Payakumbuh and SLB N Center in Kelurahan Balai Betung.

The data are collected through observation, field notes, and audiovisual material. Observation is conducted to know teaching strategies used by the English teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities. Field notes is conducted to know what happened in the classroom while the teacher teaching in the class. Audiovisual material is taken to make a videotape, re-check the teachers' strategies in teaching students with learning disabilities and make description about the teaching learning process that happen in the classroom.

The result of teaching strategies used by the English teachers who teach students with learning disabilities can be seen in the following table below:

Table 1: Teaching strategies used by English teacher

Teaching strategies	Teacher who teach students with learning disabilities			
	The first teacher	The second teacher	The third teacher	The fourth teacher
1. Teacher-Mediated Strategies				
a. Environmental arrangements	-	-	-	-
b. Promoting acceptance	-	-	-	-

c. The provision of prompts and praise	-	✓	-	✓
d. Accepting different levels and types of participation	-	-	-	-
e. Monitoring communicative input	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Peer-Mediated Strategies				
a. Peer-initiation interventions	-	-	-	-
b. Cooperative learning	-	-	-	-
3. Routine-Based Strategies				
a. Play-based intervention strategies	-	-	-	-
b. Activity-based instruction	-	✓	-	✓
c. Changing the content of and existing activity	-	-	-	-
d. Transition-based instruction	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Specific Naturalistic (Milieu) Strategies				
a. Incidental teaching	✓	✓	✓	✓
b. The model and expansion	✓	-	✓	✓
c. The mand-model	✓	✓	✓	✓
d. Time delay	-	✓	-	-
e. Interrupted routine	-	-	-	-

From the table above, it can be seen that there are two English teacher use teacher-mediated strategies in the provision of prompts and praise and all English teachers use teacher-mediated strategies in monitoring communicative input. In peer-mediated strategies, there is no English teachers use this teaching strategy in teaching students with learning disabilities. In routine-based strategies there are two English teachers use activity-based instructions as a teaching strategy and all English teachers use transition-based instruction in teaching students with learning disabilities. In specific naturalistic (milieu) strategies, all English teachers use incidental teaching and the mand-model, three English teachers use the model and expansion, and an English teacher use time delay as a teaching strategy to students with learning disabilities.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that teaching strategies which used by English teacher in teaching students with learning disabilities are teacher-mediated strategies, routine-based strategies, and specific naturalistic (Milieu) strategies. There is no English teachers use peer-mediated strategies in teaching students with learning disabilities.

Based on data gathered in the fields, English teachers who teach students with learning disabilities used teacher mediated strategies, routine-based strategies, and specific naturalistic (Milieu) strategies while teaching. It was described in following explanation below:

1. Teacher-Mediated Strategies

Teacher-mediated strategies consists of environmental arrangement, the promoting acceptance, the provision of prompts and praise, accepting different levels and types of participation, and monitoring communicative input.

In teaching students with learning disabilities, there two English teachers use teacher-mediated strategies in the provision of prompt and praise. This teaching strategy showed while the teacher gave a "thumb" or said "good" to the students who have a correct answer.

Besides that, in teacher-mediated strategies all English teachers use monitoring communicative input as a teaching strategy. It can be showed while the teachers use of simple vocabulary and shorter sentences, and also the teacher used variation in intonation and rate of speech while teaching students with learning disabilities.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that English teacher who teach students with learning disabilities used teacher-mediated strategies in the provision of prompts and praise and monitoring communicative input as a teaching strategy. All English teachers do not use teacher-mediated strategies in environmental arrangement, the prompting acceptance, and accepting different levels and types of participation in teaching students with learning disabilities.

2. Peer-Mediated Strategies

Peer-mediated strategies consist of peer-initiation intervention and cooperative learning. In teaching English to students with learning disabilities, there is no English teacher use this teaching strategy.

3. Routine-Based Strategies

Routine-based strategies consist of play-based intervention strategies, activity-based instructions, changing the content of an existing activity, and transition-based instruction.

In teaching students with learning disabilities, there are two English teachers use routine-based strategies in activity-based instruction as teaching strategy. This teaching strategies use by the teacher while the teachers gave reinforcement for the students answer.

Furthermore, in routine-based strategies, all English teachers use transition-based instruction as a teaching strategy. This teaching strategy used by the teacher while she/he asks the students to respond the question which was give to them.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that in teaching students with learning disabilities, English teacher use routine-based strategies in activity based instruction and transition-based instruction as teaching strategies. All English teachers do not use routine-based strategies in play-based intervention strategies and changing the content of an existing activity in teaching students with learning disabilities.

4. Specific Naturalistic (Milieu) Strategies

Specific naturalistic (Milieu) strategies consist of incidental teaching, the model and expansion, the mand-model, time delay, and interrupted routine.

In teaching students with learning disabilities, there are three English teachers use specific naturalistic (Milieu) strategies in the model and expansion. These teaching strategies use by the teacher while she/he provides a verbal or gestural model for the students.

Besides that, there is an English teacher use specific naturalistic (Milieu) strategies in time delay while teaching. These teaching strategies used by the teacher while she/he waits the respond from the students to begin the interaction. There are three English teachers use the mand-model as a teaching strategy. This fact showed while the teacher presenting the students with a direction, command, or questions that requires a verbal response from the students. And the last, teaching strategies uses by English teacher are specific naturalistic (Milieu) strategies in incidental teaching. All English teachers use this teaching strategy while teaching students with learning disabilities. This fact showed while the teacher set the position near to the students, focuses on the students, asking for more elaborate language, and so on.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that in specific naturalistic strategies all English teachers use incidental teaching, two English teachers use the model and expansion, and an English teacher use time delay while teaching English to students with learning disabilities. All English teachers do not used specific naturalistic (Milieu) strategies in interrupted routine while teaching students with learning disabilities.

From the result of data analysis, it is found those English teachers who teach students with learning disabilities at SLB Payakumbuh District does not use all teaching strategies as what had been stated by the expert in teaching English. The teachers used teacher-mediated strategies, routine-based strategies, and specific naturalistic (Milieu) strategies in teaching English.

1. Teacher-Mediated Strategies

All English teachers use teacher-mediated strategies in monitoring communicative input while teaching students with learning disabilities. This teaching strategy is effective use by the teacher in teaching students with learning disabilities. It probably happened because using a simple vocabulary make the students are not difficult in learning English, and also using the variation in intonation and rate of speech make the students can get more information from the teacher. For the students with hearing lost, the use of variation in intonation of the teacher is needed because in teaching students with hearing loss, the teacher should use high intonation and rate of speech because students with hearing lost have a trouble with their ability in hearing.

Furthermore, two there are two English teachers used teacher-mediated strategies in the provision of prompts and praise while teaching. It is probably happened because by giving praise will motivate the students in learning activity.

Whereas, all English teachers do not use teacher-mediated strategies in environmental arrangement, promoting acceptance, and accepting different levels and types of participation because the writer assumed that English teacher focused the teaching learning activity just to learn English.

2. Peer-Mediated Strategies

In teaching English to students with learning disabilities, there is no English teachers use peer-mediated strategies as a teaching strategy. As stated before, peer-mediated strategies is one of teaching strategies that can be used by the teacher to instruct selected peers to interact with children with disabilities and make a small group discussion to be actively in learning activity. In this research, all of English teachers do not use

this teaching strategy because the writer assumes that the limited members of students with disabilities make them quite difficult to divide into a small group.

3. Routine-Based Strategies

Meanwhile, in teaching students with learning disabilities, all of English teacher in this research use routine-based strategies in transition-based instruction and two English teachers use routine-based strategies in activity-based instruction as a teaching strategies. As stated by the expert before, provides reinforcement from the teacher for children for participating in planned activities that are motivating to them. This fact approved by the teacher who gave some questions to the students and asked the students to respond the questions. Besides that, the teacher also gives reinforcement for the student's answer. The writer assumed that by giving reinforcement for the students' answer make them more understand about the lesson that they learn.

Meanwhile, all English teachers in this research do not use routine-based strategies in play-based intervention strategies and changing the content of an existing activity. It is happened because the limited time of teaching English in the school make the teacher difficult to provide the play activities.

4. Specific Naturalistic (Milieu) Strategies

The last teaching strategies use by English teachers is specific naturalistic (Milieu) strategies. All English teachers in this research use this teaching strategy because in this strategy the teacher set the position near to the students. It makes the teacher easy to monitor the students and focus on the students. Besides that, provides a verbal gestural model for the child make the students easier in understanding the material, especially for the students with hearing loss.

From the explanation above, it can be said that English teachers who teach students with learning disabilities do not use all strategies which have been stated by the expert.

D. Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the finding and discussion which have been explained in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that teaching strategies used by English teachers in teaching students with learning disabilities are teacher-mediated strategies, routine-based strategies, and specific naturalistic (Milieu) strategies.

On the other hand, the findings show that the teachers do not use all strategies in teaching students with learning disabilities.

Based on the conclusion above, the writer suggests that the teachers who teach students with learning disabilities can improve teaching and learning process by varying the teaching strategy. It can help the teachers to make students more interesting in learning English. And it is hoped that the variation of teaching strategies which used by the teacher can make the students with learning disabilities enjoy in learning English and they can improve their knowledge in English language.

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