

**A TEACHER’S STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO VISUALLY IMPAIRED
STUDENTS AT YAKETUNIS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL YOGYAKARTA: A CASE STUDY
RESEARCH**

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ABSTRACT

Each teacher must have their own strategy in delivering material to students in the class. Generally, the strategy for delivering material, for normal students is different than that for visually impaired students. Consequently, teachers must have different teaching strategies in delivering material to visually impaired students, because they have limitations in understanding the lesson. Therefore, applying appropriate teaching strategies can facilitate visually impaired students in learning English.

In teaching English at YAKETUNIS, the teacher applied several strategies into her teaching. The teacher may have several perceptions regarding to the implementation of those strategies in teaching-learning process. The main purpose of this study is aimed at finding out how the teacher perceived the strategies that she employed in teaching English to visually impaired students at YAKETUNIS. This case was investigated by using qualitative research design with one teacher as the participant. The data were collected from observations, interview, and documents. This study revealed that *cooperative learning*, *interactive read aloud*, and *guided reading* were implemented extensively in her English class. Besides, the researcher also identified an emergent finding in this study. The teacher-participant also used *student-centered learning* strategy in her teaching. Regarding all the strategies implementation, the teacher confirmed that those strategies were effective strategy to teach English to visually impaired students. Additionally, this research recommend that *cooperative learning*, *interactive read aloud*, *guided reading*, and *student-centered learning* may be continually used to teach English to visually impaired students.

Keywords: Teaching English Strategies, Visually Impaired Students, Case Studies

I. Introduction

Education is the process of forming intellectual and emotional abilities of a person. Everyone is entitled to a proper education, regardless of status, race, ethnicity, religion, or certain groups. Through education, a person can improve and develop their own self so that their social status could be change too. Besides, education is not just about learning in the school and homeschooling but also education for special needs students. In the context of Indonesian education, every citizen has the same opportunity to obtain education (the 1945 Constitution article 5 in chapter IV, paragraph 1 and 2), as well as in Act of The Republic of Indonesia Number 20 year (2003) on National Education System, which reads “ (1) Every citizen has equal rights to receive a good quality education. (2) Citizens with physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, and/or social deficiencies shall have the right to receive special education”. From the above statement, we already know that everyone is allowed even required to learn or to study as high as they can in order to avoid from the stupidity. It means that students with special needs (visually impaired) are entitled to get an education and every human have the same position in terms of getting a high education, either education for regular students or students with special needs (including visually impaired students).

The teacher is essentially one of the elements that becomes a source of strength in the learning process. Teachers are also role models who have a big influence on students, especially students with visual impairments. The teacher of students with visual impairments is the central figures on the educational term. That is how the teachers who have expertise in how visual impairment affect students' development and learning, as well as teaching strategies, materials, and tools that can help them learn about the lesson, perform everyday activities, and participate in the general curriculum and other activities in the school. According to Spungin and Ferrel (2000) as cited in Emily and Beamish (2012) stated that teachers of students with visual impairments are qualified specialist teachers who have skill and practical experience in the field of visual impairments. Thus, teachers of students with visual impairments, whose specialized skill and experience establish them as the individual best qualified to address the unique learning needs to visual impaired students. Likewise, Riley (2000) stated students who are blind or visually impaired must be provided appropriate instruction in a variety of subjects, including language arts, composition, sciences and mathematics, in order to educated them in these subjects effectively, they must be taught the necessary skills to enable them to learn to read and to use other appropriate technology to obtain access to information.

Furthermore, Freeman et al (2007) mentioned that visual impairment refers to a functional limitation of eye(s) or visual system due to a disorder or disease that can effect in a visual disability or a visual handicap. It means that visual impairment is a term refers to a significant loss of vision. According

to Hatlen (1996) from Siu (2014), stated that in order to learn new skills visual impairments need specialized services to sighted peers typically learn incidentally. In the mean time, Spungin (2007) mentioned that students with visual impairments have the same curriculum needs as all students in general population, but their visual impairments often imposes restrictions on their ability to access curriculum when presented in the typical method of learning and teaching by the classroom teacher.

Language learning is also similarity important for visually impaired students. There is an experience from a blind student in Norway, As cited by Zheng (2014) that they felt difficult as a blind student in schools, they need provision and support given for them, this provision and support should be appropriate to facilitate their studies in schools, provision or support that were missing or require improvement and the informants' suggestion on future practice.

Following the above statement related to learning English for visually impairment students, teachers must have some teaching strategies to understand them about the lesson. Teaching strategies are one of the important factors in education that relate to the teachers, learners, and teaching methods. Of course, students with visual impairment will have difficulties for learning especially when it deals with visual reading caused by their vision loss. They need to learn other skills that enable them to obtain information, such as helping students with visually impaired to understand the reading text.

Based on the problem stated above, this study aims at capturing the strategies and the implementation that used by English teacher in teaching English to visually impaired students at YAKETUNIS.

II. Literature Review

a. Visually Impaired Students

According to Araluce (2002) as cited in Ghafri (2015), visual impairment is a term refer to vision impairment or vision loss. As cited by Scott (1982) in Taylor and Sternberg (1989), visual impairment is a condition in which student's vision significantly affects their school functioning named visual impairment. Likewise Carney et al (2003) define visual impairment is a term refers to a significant loss of vision, even though corrective lenses used by the person. In addition, Parveen (2015) stated a term of visually impaired in an educational context used to describe all the persons whose vision is affected by impairments in seeing. Moreover, Patton (2004) stated that visual impairment refers to any condition in which eyesight cannot be corrected to what is considered normal.

Not all visual impairments are the same. The word visual impairment also may be used to describe as the consequence of an eye condition and disorder. There are two main categories for visually

impaired students in the process of learning according to Carney et al (2003): included blindness and low vision.

b. Strategies in Teaching English to Visually Impaired Students

As mentioned by Conroy (2005) teaching English to visually impaired students is a technique where the teacher can combine the strategies such as create, modify, and adapt lessons referring to student's needs. The most important in teaching visually impaired students is advanced planning, organization for structuring the learning environment, and the materials used in teaching.

According to Basaran (2012), it is clearly indicated that EFL teacher in Turkey almost have the same teaching techniques and material to teach sighted students and the visually impaired students. Furthermore, none of the teacher had any formal training on teaching English to visually impaired students. Eventually, they had several challenges and problems and they did not know how to solve it. In the mean time, the visually impaired students have different social behavior and learning styles.

Furthermore, Conroy (2005, p. 105-107) also classified teaching strategies for visually impaired students into 7 variations, which are; total physical response, cooperative learning, learning centers, interactive read aloud, writing workshops, language experience approach, and guided reading.

III. Research Method

This research is conducted by using qualitative research (case study). The setting of this research is at YAKETUNIS Yogyakarta. The participants of this research was 1, including English teacher of visual impaired students. Observation, interview, and documents involved as source of data of this research. The researcher used observation table and interview questions as research instruments. The data collected through observation in 6 times and interview with one participants. The researcher also conducted the field notes based on the situation that happened during learning process in YAKETUNIS.

IV. Research Findings and Discussion

a. Findings

Table 4.1 Strategies in teaching English at YAKETUNIS

No.	Teaching Strategies	Detail of Tasks
1.	Cooperative Learning	Discussion in the group
2.	Interactive Read Aloud	Reading aloud
3.	Guided Reading	Reading instruction in individual coaching

The table above indicates that during observation, those strategies; cooperative learning, interactive read aloud, and guided reading are occurred during learning English. For the observation related to the strategies in teaching English, it shows that not all strategies that occurred in the observation. For the observation, only three strategies employed by the teacher in teaching English to visually impaired students.

b. Discussion

In this research, the researcher wants to describe the form of strategies of teaching English used by English teacher for visually impaired students. There are constraints and challenges that teacher should accepted sincerely. They are divided into three strategies; cooperative learning, interactive read aloud, and guided reading.

Cooperative Learning

The teacher confirmed that she used cooperative learning strategy in teaching English to visually impaired students but she had different implementation in her learning process, which occurred in the form of discussion and teacher's explanation. In this context, the teacher did not divide them as in normal class because of the limited number of students. It also gave the teacher some challenges in grouping the students because there were only 4 until 6 students in the class. So, they did not have a group but discuss together. The teacher thought that by employing cooperative learning it would encourage the students who did nothing to be able to do something which was discussing about some topics. The students could talk and interact with other through this strategy.

“Well, Mbak, because here is the group yeah, Mbak, **while in the blind, there were only one class, there were four**, even though ideally, the group is called a group of four. **It is just like one class in one group, so they did not have a group but discussion together**”. (I/1/CL/5)

“If the discussion, **only discussion is effective**, Mbak, **but it depends on the material**, mbak, if the material felt more suitable to the individual, then individually. For certain, yes, that is good, Mbak, cooperative learning, because **it would encourage for who do not nothing to be able to do** eee...discussion, just that, there were also some students who were eee...because of slow or maybe it could be called as mental retardation, so **sometimes invited them to speak**, disconnect, that's it”.(I/1/CL/6)

The teacher used cooperative learning strategy such as; when learning tongue twister. In this lesson the students were to browse the internet and to pronounce words. So, she asked students to learn

cooperatively with helping each other in browsing the internet. Actually, there were words in tongue twister that students could not pronounce it, so their friends would help her/his how to pronounce words. Here was what the teacher called as discussion together. The role of teacher in that situation were helping students when they needed and correct the wrong one.

“For this collaboration, the activities such as **have to browse the internet**. Um...**they were usually grouped because there were those who were might not be able to operate the gadget too much**, then what else is...for example speaking pronunciation like yesterday, yes it was a collaboration anyway, “no, I am talking about this” huh, well it has become more interesting, there were that cannot be used at all”. (I/1/CL/9)

Interactive Read Aloud

The teacher mentioned that interactive read aloud strategy in the English class was effective for certain students who wanted to be active.

“**Effective** for certain students **who wants to be active**”. (I/1/IRA/26)

The teacher applied an activity through interactive read aloud strategy when learning tongue twister. She asked students to use their cellphone to search kinds of tongue twisters in the internet. Then, she asked students to write the sentences in their notebooks. Some sentences that students had from the internet were the new sentence or new vocabulary for them. Therefore, the teacher asked students to read aloud in order she could check students pronunciation and students understanding. Besides, the teacher was surprised because the students could easily remember the material that they have learned. It means that the material could be easily remembered by students using this strategy.

“What kinds of activities? Individual Mbak, it means. Yes, individual. If the group for this is rather difficult. Um...what activities, well like yesterday Mbak, tongue twisters, **they wrote, searched, first, they searched by browsing on the internet, writing, then they got new vocabulary, or maybe got a new sentence, now they tried to read**”.(I/1/IRA/31)

“Because it is interesting, it seems that the students are also eee...what is it, **when taking lessons they enjoyed. It is quite effective** Mbak, at least ee...**until now there have been a number of students who were still wow “she sells, she shells”** like that so it was still up to now”.(I/1/IRA/32)

Guided Reading

The teacher confirmed that the implementation of guided reading was an effective strategy in teaching English to visually impaired students.

“Ouch...it is effective Mbak, because of course **they touch that braille** Mbak, and **the writing was touched then say verbally**. Especially **the writing touching with pronunciation and the meaning is most important**”. (I/1/GR/42)

The teacher confirmed that the implementation of guided reading strategy was very useful to teach English to visually impaired students. For the first section, the teacher gave students the text. She dictated the sentences one by one to students. This activity usually took one hour, because of that the teacher continued the lesson with the same topic for the next meeting. After the writing session, the teacher asked the students to read (not read aloud) while checking their writing carefully. For guided reading technique, the teacher read the text slowly then students listened and repeated after her. Sometimes, she managed this guided reading strategy with asked students one by one to read the text. She just guided students and checked their reading and their pronunciation.

“Ee...the first activity, **I gave the text, well they have to write the text first, after they wrote the text, well sometimes it was almost 1 hour just to write because I had to dictate letter by letter** Mbak. **Well after that “please read” therefore I gave the text that were not too long. ...It has been an hour to write, after they have the text “please check, read carefully, maybe read, keep quite...the important thing is read” after that I read slowly then they followed.** Well, it is just like that”.

“Organize...**how do I managed?** Um...**usually from the sentences, this sentences might be for this students, the next one and they repeated it, followed me, if not. Please read it slowly, one by one**”. (I/1/GR/52)

V. Conclusion

The research concluded that the strategies of teaching English were effective in teaching English to visually impaired students because could help students to understand the material. In short, those strategies gave many advantageous for teacher to teach English to visually impaired students. Researcher concluded that by implementation of those strategies during the class, it helps student in mastering English.

The teacher confirmed that she also used students-centered learning strategy in her teaching. She also mentioned that it was an effective strategy in the classroom. The teacher implemented this strategy through learning “Time”. This strategy could help the teacher to know students’ needs of material. Besides, the teacher used this strategy to make students independent in learning because it strategy centered on students.

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