



Implementing Vocabulary Teaching Strategies for Students with Disabilities

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Abstract

This research examines the use of vocabulary teaching techniques by English teachers for students with disabilities within a special education framework. The research is based on inclusive education concepts, highlighting the significance of adaptive and student-centered teaching methods to support learners with different needs, including those with hearing impairments. Vocabulary acquisition is a crucial aspect of English language learning; yet, children with disabilities frequently encounter challenges stemming from restricted auditory availability, cognitive diversity, and communication obstacles. These issues necessitate that educators implement instructional methodologies that transcend traditional teaching methods. This study utilized a qualitative descriptive research approach to thoroughly investigate classroom-based teaching strategies. The study was performed at SLB Negeri Wonomulyo. Data were gathered by non-participant classroom observations, comprehensive interviews, and document analysis involving one English instructor and eighth-grade students with disabilities. Classroom observations were conducted over six educational sessions to identify consistent teaching patterns and instructional methods. The gathered data were examined utilizing an interactive model that encompassed data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion formulation. The results indicate that the educator employs many interrelated tactics for vocabulary instruction. This encompasses tailored training according to students' proficiency levels, multisensory methodologies utilizing visual aids, gestures, and Total Physical Response (TPR), collaboration with a teaching assistant, sequential instructional design, and methodical repetition. Vocabulary is presented incrementally, first with tangible visual

representations, succeeded by Indonesian explanations, and ultimately English word forms to guarantee understanding prior to memory. Furthermore, classroom management is implemented using a humanistic approach bolstered by collaborative effort. The study emphasizes that effective vocabulary learning for children with disabilities necessitates adaptable, flexible, and collaborative pedagogical approaches. The findings provide empirical insights into inclusive vocabulary instruction within special education settings and have practical implications for English educators dealing with challenged students.

1. Introduction

Inclusive education asserts that all students, including individuals with disabilities, have the right to access significant and equitable educational opportunities. In the realm of English language acquisition, vocabulary mastery is essential as it supports both receptive and productive language skills [1]. Insufficient vocabulary knowledge hinders learners' comprehension of texts, articulation of ideas, and engagement in communicative activities. Students with disabilities, especially those with hearing impairments, encounter distinct problems in vocabulary acquisition due to restricted access to auditory stimuli and traditional verbal instruction [1].

Prior research indicates that vocabulary training for individuals with hearing impairments should mostly utilize visual, kinesthetic, and interactive methodologies. Studies suggest that employing sign language, drills, visual aids, gestures, mnemonic techniques, and technology-based media can enhance vocabulary understanding and retention in deaf children [2][3][4][5]. While these studies offer significant insights into effective instructional methods, the majority concentrate on pinpointing tactics rather than analyzing how educators apply these strategies in actual classroom contexts.

In Indonesian special schools, English educators are often required to adapt teaching methodologies to accommodate pupils' diverse abilities, behavioral traits, and communication needs. Nonetheless, empirical studies investigating the practical application of vocabulary instruction strategies in genuine special education settings are scarce, especially in under-explored areas.

This research examines the use of vocabulary teaching tactics by an English instructor for students with disabilities in a special education environment. This study aims to address the following research question: How does the educator employ language instruction tactics for students with disabilities?

This research is unusual due to its comprehensive examination of classroom instructional implementation, emphasizing adaptive practices, instructional sequencing, and collaborative teaching within special education settings.

2. Method

This study utilized a qualitative descriptive research approach to get a comprehensive knowledge of vocabulary instruction methods performed by an English teacher in a special education context. Qualitative description was used to document authentic classroom interactions and instructional methods as they transpired during the teaching process.

The study was carried out at SLB Negeri Wonomulyo from October to November 2025. The study involved a single English instructor with over three years of expertise instructing students with impairments. The participants were eighth-grade pupils with diverse disabilities, including auditory impairments.

Data were gathered using three methods: non-participant classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Classroom observations were performed over six educational sessions to determine prevalent teaching styles and trends. Interviews were conducted to obtain a more profound understanding of the teacher's instructional choices and classroom management strategies. The documentation, comprising lesson plans and teaching materials, was examined to corroborate the observational and interview data.

The data analysis adhered to the interactive model established by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, encompassing data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion formulation [6]. To ensure trustworthiness, data triangulation was applied by comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documentation.

3. Results

Implementation of Individualized Vocabulary Instruction

The results demonstrate that the English instructor employed vocabulary education via personalized learning strategies according to students' varied capabilities. Throughout classroom activities, the instructor modified learning objectives according to students' reading levels and cognitive preparedness. Students with diminished academic proficiency were instructed to recognize and identify language by visual aids and symbols, whereas students with superior aptitude were prompted to compose short English phrases utilizing the provided terminology.

This personalized approach allowed pupils to engage significantly in learning activities without encountering undue stress. Observation data indicated that the teacher consistently offered individualized support, particularly for pupils needing repetition or visual aids. Such techniques demonstrate the teacher's attentiveness to the unique requirements of learners in a special education setting.

Multisensory Vocabulary Teaching Practices

Multisensory instruction has become a fundamental approach in vocabulary instruction. The instructor continuously utilized visual media, gestures, and Total Physical Response (TPR) to enhance students' understanding. Vocabulary items were initially presented via images or tangible objects, followed by instructor gestures and bodily actions that conveyed word meanings.

These multimodal exercises facilitated students' association of words with tangible experiences rather than abstract interpretations. Observations indicated that students exhibited increased interest and retention when language was paired with physical movements. This method proved especially advantageous for kids with hearing difficulties who depended significantly on visual and kinesthetic stimuli in their learning process.

Collaborative Teaching with a Teaching Assistant

A notable discovery was the teacher's partnership with a teaching assistant. The assistant actively translated instructions into sign language, upheld classroom order, and offered individual support. This partnership enabled the primary educator to concentrate on educational delivery while addressing students' communication requirements.

The collaborative teaching approach fostered a friendly educational atmosphere and reduced misconceptions during instruction. The presence of a teaching assistant improved classroom management and increased student engagement throughout vocabulary learning exercises.

Step-by-Step Vocabulary Instruction and Repetition

Vocabulary education adhered to a methodical, sequential framework. The instructor started with visual representations of terminology, proceeded with explanations in Indonesian, and ultimately provided the English terms in writing format. This incremental advancement guaranteed that pupils comprehended the significance of vocabulary terms prior to retention. Repetition was systematically implemented via regular review sessions and reinforcement exercises. Previously acquired language was reviewed at the start of each class to enhance retention. This systematic repetition enhanced pupils' memory formation and facilitated more consistent language learning.

Humanistic Classroom Management Practices

Classroom management was executed via a humanistic and compassionate methodology. The teacher prioritized tolerance, encouragement, and collaborative problem-solving above stringent punitive methods. When students exhibited inattentive or disruptive conduct, the instructor replied with composure and engaged the teaching assistant to offer personalized help. This method developed a constructive educational environment and alleviated pupil apprehension.

Observational data revealed that students exhibited a greater willingness to engage in vocabulary tasks when they perceived emotional support.

4. Discussion

Vocabulary Teaching as an Inclusive and Adaptive Practice

This study's implementation of tailored teaching embodies inclusive education concepts that emphasize fair access to learning. By adapting vocabulary instruction to students' capabilities, the instructor facilitated all learners' participation in classroom activities in accordance with their learning readiness. This discovery endorses the notion that inclusive vocabulary learning necessitates adaptable pedagogical strategies and attentiveness to learner variety.

The Role of Multisensory and Collaborative Instruction

The implementation of multimodal techniques and collaboration with a teaching assistant corroborates prior research indicating that students with hearing impairments benefit from visual and kinesthetic learning modalities. The incorporation of gestures, images, and Total Physical Response enhanced understanding by diminishing dependence on aural stimuli. Collaboration enhanced educational efficacy by mitigating communication obstacles and facilitating classroom management.

Structured Instruction and Learning Sustainability

The methodical instructional sequence and systematic repetition identified in this study facilitated enduring vocabulary acquisition. Introducing language from tangible to abstract forms facilitated pupils' cognitive processing, while repetition enhanced memory retention. The findings underscore that proficient vocabulary learning in special education settings necessitates systematic sequencing and ongoing reinforcement.

Implications for Special Education Practice

The findings indicate that effective vocabulary training for kids with disabilities necessitates adaptive teaching, collaborative assistance, and empathic classroom management. This study builds upon prior research by delivering a comprehensive analysis of the implementation of vocabulary teaching tactics in actual classroom contexts, therefore offering practical insights for English educators in special education settings.

5. Conclusion

This study finds that vocabulary training tactics for students with disabilities at SLB Negeri Wonomulyo are executed using adaptive, multimodal, and collaborative teaching methods. The English instructor employs personalized instruction to address students' varied skills, facilitating significant engagement in vocabulary acquisition. Multisensory methodologies, encompassing visual media,

gestures, and Total Physical Response, significantly enhance understanding for kids with hearing impairments by reducing dependence on aural input. Collaboration with a teaching assistant enhances educational delivery, communication, and classroom management.

Vocabulary education is systematically organized through a sequential progression from tangible visual representations to Indonesian explanations and English word forms, reinforced by methodical repetition to enhance memory. Classroom management employs a humanistic approach that prioritizes patience, empathy, and collaboration, fostering a helpful educational atmosphere.

The findings emphasize that effective vocabulary instruction in special education necessitates adaptable implementation, teamwork, and awareness of kids' learning traits. This study, albeit confined to a solitary participant and environment, offers valuable insights for English educators in special schools and recommends that subsequent studies encompass wider contexts and investigate the use of digital media to improve inclusive vocabulary training.

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