

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background of the research, research problems, research objectives, the significance of the research, scope and limitations of the research, and operational definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Research

English serves a global means of communication, essential for connecting with people from diverse countries. It has evolved into the primary language for technology, science, travel, tourism, diplomacy, and trades (Frat P, 2005). Recognizing its pivotal role in worldwide communication and knowledge exchange, the Indonesian government has incorporated English as an elective subject in primary schools and made it mandatory from secondary school onwards (Alwasilah, 2005). Consequently, English is also integrated into the curriculum for special needs students at *Sekolah Luar Biasa* (Indonesian Extraordinary Schools), ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, acquire English skills. In line with the regulations outlined in Law No.72 of 1991, the Indonesian government implemented dedicated educational institutions for students with special needs, thereby ensuring the access to education for all children with disabilities. Thus, Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB), or Extraordinary Schools, offers facilities for language, cultural and behavioral development, catering to the unique requirements of special needs students.

Moreover, article 16 of Law No. 72 of 1991 mandates that the curriculum in special schools is comparable to that of regular schools in Indonesia, with necessary adjustment to accommodate the needs of these students. This emphasizes the idea that special education involves creating an educational setting tailored to the unique requirements of students with special needs (Redbridge, 2014). Special needs students are those requiring specialized attention due to developmental disorders and abnormalities that are experienced (Desiningrum, 2016:1). Students with special needs are also characterized by physical, emotional, and intellectual abilities that are lower or higher among other students. Additionally, they are often unable to align themselves to jointly engage in the learning process (Triutari, 2014:117). According to (Hallahan et al., 2005) parents and teachers are increasingly focusing on students with special needs, particularly those with autism spectrum disorders. Special needs students with ASD experience challenges across cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social domains, leading to difficulties in interacting with those around them.

Student's special need with autism spectrum is a disorder that covers cognitive, emotional, behavioral, social areas, including the inability to interact with people around them (Desiningrum, 2016). Children with autism will grow and develop in a different way compared with normal children. This is due to a gradual decline in cognitive abilities. Autism begins in early childhood and can be recognized in the first week of life. It can be found in all socioeconomic classes as well as in all ethnicities and races (Nowell et al.,

2015). Students with autism are unable to relate to others in a normal way from the beginning of life. They have very limited language skills and are obsessed with keeping things routine and monotonous. ASD can be seen how far the progress is because autism can be diagnosed from mild to severe. Autism with mild symptoms only shows impairments in their intellectual process, difficulty understanding, and difficulty communicating with humor and fillings. While autism with severe is by characterized significant language delays, back and forth, and aggressive behavior toward themselves and others (Desiningrum, 2016:27).

Students with autism encounter challenges in various aspects of their health, including issues related to speech, sleep, and gastrointestinal functions such as constipation and feeding difficulties. Additionally, they may experience developmental delays, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), hypotonia, epilepsy, anxiety, disruptive behavior, pica, and eczema (Neumeyer et al., 2018). Furthermore, these students may display aggression and self-harm behaviors, abnormal reactions to people, intense attachment to objects, resistance to change, and engage in repetitive activities like flipping and jumping. They may also demonstrate hypersensitivity across all five senses (Jain et al., 2014). Individuals with ASD face challenges in communication, social interaction, and maintaining focused attention on activities, often engaging in repetitive or restrictive behaviors (Khoirunnisyak et al., 2017). Cognitive barriers represent a significant obstacle to learning for autistic children, manifesting as difficulties in verbal and non-verbal

communication, diminished concentration, and an inability to comprehend instructions (Ballerina, 2016, p. 247). These learning impediments extend across various subjects, including English language studies (Ballerina, 2016).

In the English subject, students learn reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills. Besides that, students should have well understanding of English components such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Vocabulary is very important to be learned by students. English vocabulary, as one of the language skill elements has an important role for students in learning English. Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through university education, the language is taught in schools (Syafrizal et al., 2018). Having English language skills, whether for generally developing or autism students, can aid them in the future with their schooling and employment. However, understanding the English language will be almost impossible if they do not understand the vocabulary component of the language method (Kusumawardhani, 2015, p. 4).

In this research focusing on strategies of teaching English vocabulary to students with autism spectrum disorders at SLB Dharma Putra Daha. The part studied is strategies that are used by the teacher and the obstacles that are faced by English teacher in teaching vocabulary. So, in part of strategies used Schmitt theory. He argued that teaching and learning vocabulary includes five strategies, namely determination, memory, social, cognitive, and metacognitive.

One of the key elements in learning English is vocabulary acquisition, and it is no wonder that vocabulary attracts special attention (Schmitt & Richard, 2000). To underscore this attention, some experts state the importance of vocabulary as follows. First, vocabulary learning is essential for language acquisition, whether the language is first, second, or foreign language (Celce-Murcia, 2001). This is because a substantial part of language learning involves acquiring new words (Schmitt & McCarty, 1997). The second aspect of vocabulary learning is articulated by River (1998). He argued that adequate vocabulary acquisition is necessary for successful second language use. This is because an extensive vocabulary will enable us to use the structures and functions that students with autism have learned for effective communication. According to Schmitt's taxonomy (1997) in vocabulary learning, which consist of two kind of vocabulary learning strategies namely discovery strategies (determination strategy and social strategy) and consolidation strategies (memory, cognitive, and meta-cognitive strategy). Based on the importance of vocabulary described above, teachers must have clear strategies to teach vocabulary effectively. Most students who have physical limitations can still join the class to learn vocabulary with appropriate medical support. However, a different case arises when beginners with cognitive disabilities join the class to learn vocabulary. For this case, teachers should treat students with disabilities well based on their needs. Here, teachers must implement the effective strategies in teaching vocabulary for them. The most suitable teaching strategies should be in accordance with the

type of cognitive impairment the students is facing, especially in cases of autism spectrum disorders. English language learning for autism students does not emphasize that students must be able to learn English but as an additional effort to introduce new vocabulary to students.

Teaching English vocabulary to students with autism spectrum disorders requires self-acceptance, awareness and understanding of the condition of students with autism. That is one of the main points that must be understood by the teachers. The learning process requires the teachers to control the students learning activities. This is one of the teacher's responsibilities in the learning process, namely designing and implementing the learning process, so that students can achieve the predetermined goals. The teacher's professionalism in using spoken language is the main capital possessed during the learning process, so that students can follow the learning easily, fun and understand that the material taught by the teacher. Student's thinking skills become very important as part of the outcome of the learning process. The process of teaching and learning vocabulary to students with autism is not easy: teachers must be diligent, creative, and consistent in their learning activities (Muali et al., 2018).

Some previous research has investigated strategies teaching English to students with autism spectrum disorders. The first research was done by Sulaiman (2019). The research studied a set of English teaching and learning materials that are suitable for autism students. This research is a qualitative research using research and development with a focus on developing English

language materials to be more practical and more interesting to follow for students with autism. The results of this research indicate that the involvement and concentration of autism students in interacting with the various subject matters are presented. The second research was conducted by Padmadewi (2017). The goal of this research was to look into the best way to teach English to students with autism spectrum disorders in regular classroom setting. This research is a case study that carried out in the North Bali Bilingual School. The findings suggest that using visual media in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) through co-teaching, differentiated instruction, and a “buddy program” is effective in helping students learn English as a foreign language. The third research was done by Charpentier (2021). This research aims how to know the help these students in their process of acquiring English as a foreign language especially in the listening and speaking skills. The method of this research is qualitative based on a case study. The results showed that when the students used the advised tactics, he or she performed better in English. The fourth research is by Sadewa (2016). The focused of this research is to know the strategies used by the teacher in step of teaching English for autistic students. This research uses qualitative case study and the result of this research showed the teacher’s strategies used by teacher in teaching and learning process. The fifth research was done by Mifta (2021). This research focused on investigating the realization of English language teaching strategies for autism spectrum disorders students. This research applied a descriptive qualitative method to reveal the data. The

results showed that the teacher used three strategies in teaching children with autism through the PECS method. The difference between the previous researches lies in the research objectives and research method used.

Based on the previous researches, some topics are similar, such as the strategies to teaching and learning English to student with autism spectrum disorders. The research gap of this research with previous researches are this research describing and analyzing the strategies and the obstacles of teaching English vocabulary to students with autism spectrum disorders. The reasons of the research analyze the strategies teaching vocabulary to students with autism is because vocabulary is an important component in the communication process. Through teaching English vocabulary, autism students can improve their ability to communicate, both orally and writing. Therefore, the objectives of this research are to analyze the teacher strategies to teach English vocabulary, and to analyze the obstacles to teach English vocabulary.

B. Research Problems

The research problem as follows:

1. What are the obstacles to teach English vocabulary for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) at SLB Dharma Putra Daha?
2. What are the teacher strategies to teach English vocabulary for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) at SLB Dharma Putra Daha?

C. Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To analyze the obstacles to teach English vocabulary for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) at SLB Dharma Putra Daha.
2. To analyze the teacher strategies to teach English vocabulary for students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) at SLB Dharma Putra Daha.

D. Scope and Limitation

The scope and limitation of this research is the obstacles to teach English vocabulary for students with autism spectrum disorders and the strategies that used by the teacher to teach English vocabulary at SLB Dharma Putra Daha. The subject of this research is the teacher and was conducted to 2nd semester of students at SLB Dharma Putra Daha in the 2023/2024 academic year.

E. Significance of the Research

1. Theoretical Use

This research is expected to use teaching strategies and implementation of the strategy in English vocabulary for students with autism spectrum disorders. This is because students with ASD have different characteristics that make it difficult to understand the lesson especially in English language.

2. Practical Use

The results of this research have practical application in English Language Teaching (ELT).

a. For Students

Effective strategies of teaching English vocabulary can empower students with ASD to improve their communication skills, both verbally and non-verbally.

b. For Teachers

The research can provide practical guidance for English teachers to develop more inclusive and effective vocabulary teaching strategies for students with autism.

c. For Future Research

This research can be exploring the integration of innovative tools and digital resources to enhance English vocabulary to students with ASD.

F. Operational Definition of Key Terms

a. **Students with special need:** students who need special handling because of developmental disorders and abnormalities experienced by the child.

b. **Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD):** a neurodevelopmental disorders characterized by challenges in social interaction, communication, and restricted or repetitive behaviors.

- c. Teaching strategy: a generalized plan for a lesson which includes structure, instructional objectives and an outline of planned tactics, necessary to implement the strategies.
- d. Teaching vocabulary strategies: the various methods, techniques, and approaches that help students acquire and understand new words and expand their language skills.
- e. Teaching vocabulary to autism spectrum disorders: a set of specialized and adapted techniques and approaches designed to facilitate vocabulary acquisition and retention for individuals on the autism spectrum.