

## **Factors of Difficulty for the Disability Students in Learning English**

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### **Abstract**

The writing of this thesis is motivated by the difficulty in learning English experienced by children with special needs, especially tunagrahita students, this is based on the limitations of their thinking abilities. Because tunagrahita students can be interpreted as mentally weak, brain weak, weak in mind, mentally disabled, or mental retardation. The purpose of this study was to describe the factors that influence the process of learning English faced by Mental Retardation students who were selected as research subjects. This research was conducted at the SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu, with five research subjects in ninth grade Tunagrahita coded with the initials MPS, IPH, VR, AS, and NA. This type of research is a qualitative descriptive analysis. The data collection technique used by conducting interviews and observations. The data analysis technique was carried out in 3 stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results showed that the factors that influenced the difficulty in learning English for Mental Retardation students at SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu were the influence of several factors including: (1) the method applied during learning (2) the teacher did not always use learning media, the media used was useless varied and less interesting so that students get bored easily; and the last is (3) the factors that exist in students, including physiological factors, cognitive factors, and fatigue factors.

**Keyword:** learning English, disability students, students of mental retardation.

### **A. Introduction**

A language is a tool of communication or a symbol for which purpose as a connection between human interaction. Therefore language is a mandatory thing as the main requirement in communicating between people. The language is also a system of conventional spoken, manual, or written symbols employing which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. A functional approach to language means investigating how language is used and finding out the purposes that language serves us best

and how we achieve these purposes using the four macro skills, namely: speaking and listening, reading, and writing. In classrooms characterized by teacher research, the use of transcripts on small-group dialogues and children's reasoning in problem-solving tasks help teachers understand how students construct meaning by sharing their knowledge. Explored the cognitive functions of language in preschool children. The study highlights the areas on three cognitive functions of language, namely as a tool for concept formation, communication, and problem-solving. (Ambrosio, et al., 2015). They are many languages in the world that are different from one to another. One country has one language that differs from another. Even, one region of a country has one language that differs from another. The difference and diversity show the signs of the power of Allah. Allah says in holy Al-Qur'an:

“And among His sign are the creation of heavens and the earth and the difference of your languages and colors. Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge.” (**Ar-Rum:22**).

The term English is derived from English, the speech of the Angles—one of the three Germanic tribes that invaded England during the fifth century. The English language is the primary language of several countries (including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and many of its former colonies, and the United States) and the second language in several multilingual countries (including India, Singapore, and the Philippines). It's an official language in several African countries as well (such as Liberia, Nigeria, and South Africa) but is spoken worldwide in 101. It's learned around the world by children in school as a foreign language and often becomes a common denominator between people of different nationalities when they meet while traveling, doing business, or in other contexts. (Nordquist, 2016).

The four skills of language (also known as the four skills of language learning) are a set of four capabilities that allow an individual to comprehend and produce spoken language for proper and effective interpersonal communication. These skills are Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. In the context of the first-language acquisition, the four skills are most often acquired in the order of listening first, then speaking, then possibly reading and writing. For this reason, these capabilities are often called LSRW skills. (Morehouse, 2017).

Education is a place to gain knowledge, sharpen the intelligence of the brain, and channel talents and skills for children in general, all children have the right to education

facilities as well as for children with special needs they are also eligible for education like everything else but here the government has also provided schools based exclusively on children with disabilities, especially children with mental retardation at SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu. Mental retardation children are children who experience obstacles to the functions of intellectual intelligence and social adaptation that occur in their development. Mental retardation consists of various classifications, one of which is child mental retardation. In terms of IQ, children with mental retardation have an IQ of around 50 to 70. Moh. Amin suggested that: "Mental retardation is those whose intelligence and social adaptation are late, but they can develop in academics, social adjustment, and workability." The term mental retardation is often referred to as mental retardation or mental disability. Explain mental retardation with the term mental retardation that can be learned has the ability of IQ 50-70. (Maria J, 2007). Likewise, in the world of education, these mentally retarded children find many difficulties learning especially in English lessons.

Based on preliminary observations conducted by researchers from the junior high school at SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu, precisely in class nine mental retardation students. The researcher asked the number of mental retardation students. In 2020 there were 15 total mentally retarded students, 7 male 8 female members consisted of two groups. On average, they are seventeen years and above, but researchers only examined one class, amounting to 8 students consisting of 4 males and 4 females. There, the researchers also observed how the activities of mental retardation students in the English subject class. Their activities are spent to follow these subjects by paying attention to teaching subject teachers using conventional methods in the classroom, so that it is undeniable that this, of course, will have an impact on their mindsets that are increasingly difficult to absorb everything the teacher has taught and caused students to exist who is sleepy and doesn't care.

When observations were made, the researcher also began asking questions about the English subject teacher. Among them are, in addition to mentally retarded children, they have weak intellectuals, which makes it difficult for them to absorb subjects, especially English subjects, they are slowly, forgetful. (Sumbaji, 2020).

This was proven when the researcher tested the students by observing the students during the course and interviewed several students, 5 students who tested the test namely MPS

(Name disguised) aged 18 years, IPH (Name disguised) aged 18 years, VR (Name disguised) age 20 years, AS (Name disguised) age 17 years, NA (Name disguised) age 21 years. When researchers observe the students on average, all of these students, the researchers found all of them had difficulty learning in English subjects.

It cannot be denied that as long as researchers observe the process of learning English in the classroom researchers find all students mental retardation difficulties in all skill of English subjects, namely reading, writing, speaking, and listening which should be the most basic things that must be mastered by children when they are entering their age at the lesson. So from that, the task of the teacher is to teach them patiently and full of perseverance and with other supporting things such as methods and rooms as well because researchers see their feelings including lack of support in the learning process because general and special children should be distinguished in any way, but behind it, all perseverance and desire of children are more important to change themselves to be better, but still children with special abilities cannot be equated with children in general. Also, the books used by subject teachers are using the 2013 curriculum which is specifically for mentally retarded children, but the contents are still the same as books in general, there are no specific methods or tricks in delivering content.

With all the explanations above, the researcher decided to conduct a study entitled “Factors Of Difficulty For The Disability Students In Learning English (A Case Study at the Ninth Grade Students of Mental Retardation at SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu).”

## **B. Research Methodology**

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. States that qualitative research is a research method based on postpositivism philosophy, used to examine the condition of natural objects, (as opposed to experiments) where researchers are as a key instrument, data collection techniques with triangulation, data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and qualitative research results more emphasis on the meaning of the generalization (Sugiyono, 2010).

The type of research used in this research is descriptive research. Argues that descriptive research is a study intended to investigate the conditions, conditions, or other

things already mentioned, the results are presented in the form of research reports (Arikunto, 2010).

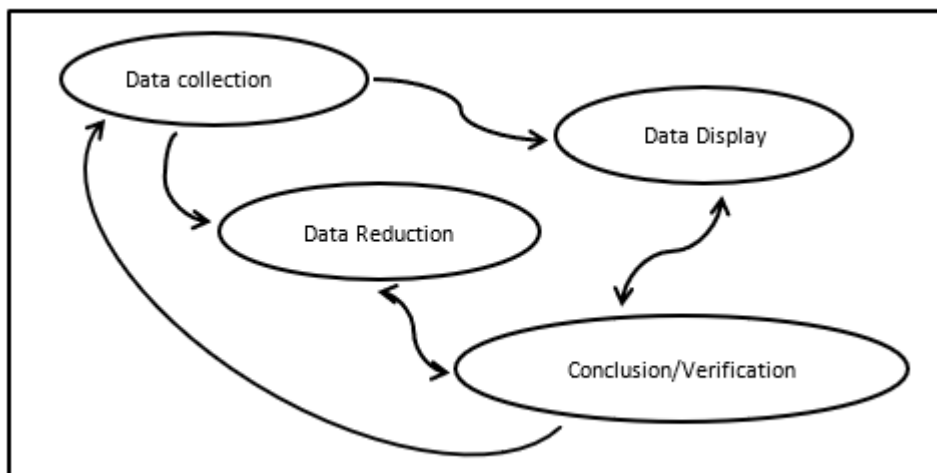
In qualitative research, researchers enter certain social situations, make observations and interviews with people who are considered to know about the social situation. Subjects in this study was a child with a mental retardation category in nine grade class Senior High School SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu.

In this study, data collection techniques conducted by researchers are ; (1) Observation, researchers used participatory observation. Susan Stainback states in participatory observation, researchers observe what people do, listen to what they say, and participate in their activities (Sugiyono, 2010). In this observation, researchers are directly involved in the daily activities of the subject under study. Researchers participated in learning for students of ninth grade mental retardation in Senior High School SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu. While doing the observation, the researcher did what the researcher did, so the data obtained was more on the level of meaning. The information that researchers want to obtain in this observation are related to factors affecting the learning difficulties of English for mild mental retardation students, namely: the application of the principle of learning, the material taught to the student's mental retardation, methods and media used in learning, the role of teachers in the learning of students mental retardation, obstacles experienced by teachers, as well as the response of students mental retardation in learning. (2) Interview, the Interview is the exchange of information from two or more people through question and answer. In qualitative research, participatory observation is often combined with in-depth interviews. This is done because there are things that do not appear in the observation but can be known after conducting interviews with resource persons. (3) Documentation, the form of the document is diverse, ranging from writings, drawings, or monumental works. Document study is a complement of observation and interview methods in qualitative research (Sugiyono, 2010).

Miles and Huberman mentioned that activity in qualitative data analysis is done interactively and continuously until complete, so the data is saturated. Activities performed in data analysis are data reduction, data presentation, and verification or conclusion (Sugiyono, 2010).

According to Mudjiarahardjo in (Sujarweni, 2014) data analysis is an activity to measure, sort, group, code in order to obtain the necessary data. Data analysis is a very important part of research.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that data analysis is the process of compiling data obtained from observation activities, interviews, documentation, or other field notes systematically. The compilation of data is based on certain categories, so it can be easily understood by yourself and others. Data analysis used in this qualitative research is data analysis model Miles and Huberman covering three activity, that is:



**Picture 3.1** Data Analysis Component

Data Reduction (Data Reduction). The purpose of data reduction is to summarize, select the important things from the data that has been obtained in the field, in order to provide a clearer picture. Reduction of data will also facilitate researchers in conducting further data collection.

Presentation of Data (Data Display). Presentation of data in qualitative research can be a chart, a brief description, the relationship between categories, flowchart. The purpose of the presentation of this data is to facilitate researchers in understanding what has happened and plans that will be done after the researchers understand the circumstances that have occurred.

Withdrawal Conclusion (Verification). The conclusion in qualitative research is a new finding in the form of description or description of an object that has not been existed

yet and still dim or dark so that after examination becomes clear, can be a causal or interactive relationship, hypothesis, or theory (Sugiyono, 2010). In qualitative research, withdrawal conclusion is done after the data in the field-collected and used to answer the problem formulation. Conclusions can be said to be valid if supported by the evidence obtained during the study took place.

Triangulation techniques are used to test the credibility of data performed by checking the data to the same source with different techniques. Triangulation of this technique is done by using the results of the Interview, which is then checked with the results of observation and documentation.

From these techniques can be expected to produce a conclusion related to the implementation of learning for Mental retardation students in Senior High School SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **1. Results**

In the initial process of the study, the theme of difficulty factors for students with disabilities in learning English attracted the attention of researchers to study it further. Because this theme is closely related to the world of education, especially English, although it has been widely discussed and developed by many education experts. This theme is still interesting to be studied more differently. Here researchers focus research for children with special needs category tunagrahita.

Researchers took the research site at SLB, which included schoolchildren who had specificity over other normal children. Researchers want to reveal more about the difficulty factors for students with disabilities in learning any English language. SLB referred to here is SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu. Here researchers focus on mental retardation students who have reached junior high school education level.

The sample of the study subjects here were five mental retardation students who belonged to the light and moderate category. The number of mental retardation students in SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu itself consists of 8 students. These five students are samples from grade IX. The subject has the initials MPS is now 18 years old,

IPH is 18 years old, VR is 20 years old, AS is 17 years old, and NA is 21 years old. If you look at the age, the level of education they receive today is not by the age restrictions. According to the average age of education, they should have reached high school level because their intellectual barriers should be different from normal children in general.

In the academic field, these five subjects are already able to read, write, and count. MPS, IPH, VR, AS, and NA, can already read with a few words appropriately. Only when there are words that are not familiar, then will students find it difficult. However, despite being able to read, these students do not yet understand what they are reading. Their writing is still messy and untidy. Some are still wrong. Sometimes there are additions and subtractions of letters. This is natural because they are children who have intellectual barriers that require special handling in terms of learning. Students tend to be easy to forget about the subject matter they get because their comprehension skills also tend to be low, so while learning, the teacher must often repeat the explanation (Interview SB8).

In terms of communication, students are cheerful children. They are easy to interact with even though it is not like normal children in general. Researchers were also accompanied by teachers of English subjects when inviting them to communicate at the beginning of inter-action. Sometimes the words they speak are difficult to understand even if the intentions expressed are as we expect.

### **1. Factors Affect the Difficulties in Learning English for Mental Retardation Students.**

Every learning process that takes place is definitely inseparable from some problems, be it little or much. Similarly, what happened to English learning at SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu. The problem is the problem of difficulty in the learning process. Problems in the learning process are in English learning materials.

In addition to the problem of teaching materials, teachers also have to deal with students who have different characters and their own difficulties in learning. As for the problem with mental retardation children themselves, when the learning process, it is easy to feel tired, bored, and easily forget the materials that have been delivered (SB2, SB7 & SB8). In addition, students are slow in accepting the material being delivered by the teacher. While learning English itself is difficult to be reading that the pronunciation must be in

English, and the students have difficulty. The researchers found out from the results of interviews with English teachers, as follows: "The names are mental retardation children, so their IQ abilities are below the average child in general. Apart from that, they easily forget what is conveyed, and they also get tired easily, sometimes they don't finish writing, they complain, he says, tired. For English material that is read in English, children have difficulty." (Interview SB7).

Based on the above interviews on the problem of students with visual impairment in learning problems, namely: Physical limitations and low IQ cause students difficulty to receive lesson materials. When the learning process takes place, students easily feel tired, bored and easily forget about the material that has been delivered by the teacher.

From the explanation above can be known the learning problems of students with visual impairment, which is influenced by several factors cognitively the thinking ability of children with visual impairment below the average of other normal children. This makes students tend to be easily forgotten and sluggish in receiving any material delivered by the teacher. As for the problem of English learning related to mental retardation students, are said to be unable to pronounce vocabulary whose context uses English correctly.

The problem of mentally retardation students that is the most influential in student learning is the family environment. Then the family should be able to motivate their children at home because motivation is a very important factor to be given to mental retardation students in everyday life to raise students' enthusiasm in the learning process.

From the exposure of the data above can be known factors that affect the difficulty in learning English for students with Disabilities in SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu as follows: The method applied during mental retardation learning is the lecture method, question and answer, and assignments and also by providing an individual approach because the method used in learning mental retardation at SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu is less varied and less attractive, so students are easily bored with any subject matter delivered by the teacher in class. (Interview SB4). The learning problems of mental retardation children are caused by several influencing factors, including cognitive problems of mental retardation children who have limited thinking abilities, where their abilities are below the average child in general. This makes it easy for children to forget and

slow to accept any subject matter presented by the teacher in class. Some of the problems above affect the psychology of children who tend to get tired and give up easily. This is the background for the emergence of problems in children's English learning. (Interview SB3 and SB7).

## **2. Discussion**

Factors subject matter that is not in accordance with the conditions of students will affect the emergence of a student learning problem. But basically, the learning problems experienced by students can occur by several factors, one of which is a factor that comes from the students themselves, including. (Interview SB3 and SB7). Cognitive factors where the level of intelligence is one of the critical success factors of learning and fatigue factor.

Learning problems in children with special needs include problems that are often felt in teaching and learning activities, including problems in subject matter, teacher teaching techniques, and facilities used by teachers (Atmaja, 2018).

As the problem of learning English at SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu, which originates from within the mental retardation students, is caused by several influencing factors, including cognitive problems of mental retardation children who have limited thinking abilities, and their abilities are below the average student in general. This makes students easy to forget and slow in accepting any subject matter presented by the teacher in class. Some of the problems above affect the psychology of children who tend to get tired and give up easily. This is the background to the emergence of problems in learning English for mental retardation children, and the problems include: it is difficult to read English texts and pronounce the vocabulary being taught. From some of the problems described, there are also extra-academic advantages possessed by children with special needs for mental retardation, namely arts such as playing music, dancing, etc.

From the analysis of the data above, it is known that the problems that arise during the English learning process are influenced by several factors, including: 1) the method applied during the mental retardation learning is the classical method, namely lectures and questions and answers. 2) in learning for the mental retardation at SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu, the teacher does not always use learning media. The media

used in learning is less varied and less interesting, so students are easily bored with any subject matter delivered by the teacher in class. (Interview SB4 and SB5).

There are several factors originating from students that influence the emergence of problems or problems in learning English, including: 1) Cognitive factors where the thinking ability of mental retardation students is below the average student in general, making students easy to forget any material presented, tend to be slow in receiving material. This makes it difficult for students to think abstractly. 2) Fatigue factors and easily bored, mental retardation students easily feel tired in learning, so they get bored easily. This is influenced by the thinking ability of mental retardation students who tend to be below the average child in general.

#### **D. Conclusion and Suggestion**

##### **1. Conclusion**

Based on the results of research and discussion that has been described, it can be concluded that the factors that influence the difficulty in learning English for mental retardation students at SLB Dharma Wanita Persatuan Provinsi Bengkulu are influenced by several factors, including 1) the method factor applied during learning with intellectual disabilities is the classical method. 2) teacher factors do not always use learning media, even the media used in learning are less varied and less interesting so students get bored easily, and the last is the factors that exist in students, including physiological factors, namely the condition of students who have difficulty speaking, factors Cognitive, namely the ability to think of students below the average which causes students to forget and slow in receiving material easily, and the fatigue factor, namely students easily feel tired and bored. (Interview SB3, SB4, SB5 and SB7).

##### **2. Suggestion**

Based on these conclusions, the researchers suggest that In the process of learning English in the mental retardation class, teachers should pay attention to the characteristics and needs of students and make individual development programs. So that learning can be beneficial for mental retardation students in social life. In learning, teachers should use new learning media more often. So that mental retardation students have broad knowledge and

can recognize a lot of vocabulary through new media. And learning media that are used must be concrete, easy to use, and familiar with mental retardation students. It is expected for the parents to be more patient and continue to give motivation to the children so that children in the spirit of learning.

For further research, the study also conducted interviews with the parents of the students, not only from the school, so that the data obtained can be more profound.

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