

## AN ANALYSIS OF LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kesulitan siswa berkebutuhan khusus dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan deskriptif kualitatif, yang memberikan penjelasan tentang aktivitas siswa berkebutuhan khusus dan kesulitan belajarnya. Sampel penelitian ini adalah siswa berkebutuhan khusus tingkat SMA di salah satu SLB Makassar yang terdiri dari seorang siswa tunagrahita dan dua siswa autisme. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kesulitan siswa berkebutuhan khusus dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris adalah kesulitan dalam pemahaman dan kesulitan dalam pemecahan masalah. Selain itu, ditemukan bahwa listening sebagai keterampilan yang paling menantang. Hal tersebut disebabkan oleh kegiatan pembelajaran di kelas, minat belajar, motivasi belajar dan lingkungan keluarga.*

**Kata kunci:** *kesulitan belajar, siswa berkebutuhan khusus, pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris.*

### **Abstrac**

The study aimed to examine the difficulties of students with special needs in learning English. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, which gave descriptive of the activity of students with special needs and their learning difficulties. The sample of this study was students with special needs at the senior high school in one of SLB Makassar consisting a mental retarded student and two autistic students. The results showed that the difficulties of students with special needs in learning English are difficulties in understanding and difficulties in solving problems. Furthermore, it was found that listening as the most challenging skills. Those is caused by classroom instructional activities, learning interest, learning motivation and family environment.

**Keywords:** *learning difficulties, students with special needs, learning English*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The era will be always improved over time and education is the key to face the challenges of change and development of an increasing era and has an important role in improving human resource quality. Qualified education is known by how big the contribution to the intellectual life

of the nation and advancing national culture. Thus, education is categorized as a successful education because it forms an intelligent young, has character, and has good morals and personality. It means that everyone deserves it and is expected to be developed in it, education is endless. Generally, education is very important in the life process in developing each individual to be able to live and carry out life. Without an education, someone will be useless and can't fulfill their basic needs in the future. English is one of the subjects that is learned by students in school. Because English is an international language that is applied as the first or second language in some countries. Also, English is being a lingua franca on the internet, knowledge, and technology also it is used in various fields of science, profession, etc. The English language is taught to students from elementary school to college.

The implementation of education is still general In Indonesia and only a few institutions focus on what their students need, and their characteristics. Because we know that every student is different, not all students are born normal. Even though when they are normal but still not all of them have the same comprehension speed. Many unfortunate children are born abnormal. Even if they are born imperfect or with slow comprehension speed it doesn't mean that they don't deserve to get an education, because every child is special in their passion and talent so we have to give them the same opportunity to get the education to find their passion and improve it. Children with special needs are the children who in the process of growth and development experience abnormalities/differences both emotionally, intellectually, etc., when compared to their peers, so they need to get special education and services as revealed (Sulastri., Ratnawati., Radhiyani, F. 2021). Students with special needs also have the right to study just like normal people. Indeed, students with special needs have limitations and weaknesses in self-development. But in fact, in society sometimes the le with special needs are humiliated by others because of their weaknesses. But behind their limitation and weaknesses, some of them have strengths that can be more than normal people if they improve it. Then to improve their passion and potency, they need help from everyone or even from the expert.

Therefore, the reason why special school is exists to help students with special needs education problems. Special Schools (SLB) are education for students who have difficulty participating in the learning process because they have special needs such as physical, emotional, mental, and social, but have the potential for intelligence and special talents. In short, special education is a learning program that is prepared to meet the unique needs of the students. Because of the lower number of the special school, some of them are still lacking attention from the government. Therefore, most of them are trying to fix their problem, especially in the learning process. Based on that problem, this research exists. This research has the purpose of finding the student's activities in learning process and knowing their difficulties during learning English.

## METHOD

The research that was used by the writer was qualitative research. Qualitative research is based on philosophy of postpositivism, because it is used to examine conditions of natural objects, (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is the key instrument sampling of data sources is carried out purposively and snowball, data collection techniques are triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive/qualitative research, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Sugiyono, 2017).

This research used qualitative research, therefore the terms population and sample were not used as stated by Sugiyono, (2017) that “in qualitative research the term population is not used, but by Spradley it is called “social situation” which consists of three elements namely: places, actors, and activities interact synergically. The sampling technique that used in this research nonprobability sampling with purposive sampling technique. According to Sugiyono, (2017) that purposive sampling is a sampling technique for data sources with certain considerations. The reason why the writer used purposive sampling because all the subjects were not having same criteria with the phenomenon under study. According to Sugiyono, (2017) that purposive sampling is a sampling technique for data sources with certain considerations. The reason why the writer used purposive sampling because all the subjects were not having same criteria with the phenomenon under study. Data collection had done in various ways, setting and source. The methods that used by the researcher were observation, interview and documentation.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Learning difficulties is the situation where the students are less able to deal with the demands that must be made in the learning process so that the process and results are unsatisfactory. This learning difficulties is when the condition of students’ experiences disturbances in the learning process (Muhajir., Sulaiman, R., Ismail, U. 2018). Having learning difficulties certainly will be an obstacle in the learning process, in which the goals of learning can’t be fully achieved due to these obstacles. Therefore, it is important to know and solve it. The aims of this research are to know how are the activity of students with special needs in learning English and knowing what are the difficulties of students with special needs in learning English. The difficulties facing by the students with special needs are learning experience, learning comprehension and the learning interest. Especially in learning English, their difficulties are from listening skills.

The research that has been done since 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 shows that the activity of students with special needs at SLB is not only focus on their academic but also focusing on their skill, such as: beauty class, sewing class, cooking class, etc. these skills’ class aims to help them being independent in living their lives. Because it is impossible for them always to be with their family that can help and take care of them. But in the other side, the existence of these skills’ class limits their academic hours. The subject only study approximately 2 hours in a day. Of course, these learning hours are not enough for them to maximize their learning process. Therefore, to maximize the student’s potential and abilities, if the students are considered able and from the academic and social side then they will be transferred in to inclusive class. During the learning process, the writer found that the subjects tend to fixate to their notes. In their mindset, they only think that learn is all about taking the notes, even when they are still lack of understanding about the material and class is still going on, as long as they had written in their notebooks, they will collect the book in the teacher’s table and they want to take a rest. Therefore, the subjects experience difficulties in comprehension.

According to the research that has been done by Syarifuddin, Salmia., Hasyim, I. (2017) found that students with special needs activity in the inclusion class is only take notes so that the learning process is passive. The same cases also exist in this research, but the difference is the subjects here which is here the students with special needs at the special school are still active, that sometimes they ask to the teacher about the material, and the subjects is still active to communicate with their classmates. In the other side, the subjects’ activeness can’t be compared

with the subject in the inclusion class. The students with special needs are considered having good understanding, different with the real students with special needs. So that's some of them are not having good understanding about the lesson.

Dealing with the learning comprehension of the subjects, the way their teacher taught them repeatedly several times slowly and with clear instructions and questions. As stated by Hadijah., Basri, D, M., Halijah, S. (2018) that one of the learning difficulties experienced by autistic children is in the cognitive. In this case, autistic children generally have difficulty communicating verbally and non-verbally, lack of concentration and lack of understanding of instructions. Therefore, the progress of their lessons only increases little by little. As the research that has been conducted by Yunus, M., (2017) showed that the curriculum 2013 cannot be fully implemented in learning Indonesian at SLB Autism Mitra Ananda. This is due to the condition of class VII students who are moderate and severe autistic with other accompanying obstacles such as low motor skills, low focus, unstable emotions, and low communication skills. The material they master is also not in accordance with the level of education they have achieved. Thus, the books that have been provided by the government to SLB Autism Mitra Ananda cannot be fully implemented. The unstable condition of the students also hampered the process of learning Indonesian in class. When students have tantrums, learning is not conducive. In that study, proves that the limited capability of the students being the obstacles in their comprehension.

The other difficulties facing by the subject is from their learning interest which sometimes the students feel bored during the learning process. Feeling bored during the learning process is a common thing in the learning process. Dealing with the students' learning interest is always being the teacher's challenge. But dealing between students with special needs and the students in general is very different, the types of students with special needs can't be force to study like the students in general. Also stated in the Sulaiman, R. (2021) that the obstacles that is experienced by the teacher is that the subject's concentration does not last long so that the teacher has difficulty to teach the new things, such as recognizing objects, letters and numbers. The worst impact of it, they won't study anymore because they don't feel comfortable and don't feel happy during the learning process. Therefore, it was being big challenge to the teachers of special needs on how to make them comfortable to study but also dealing with the students' learning interest. The, it will be affecting their class attendance. To solve the learning interes, the teacher may try use or variations teaching method and learning media will also affecting the quality of the study. If the teacher uses new method or media, it will attract student's attention, therefore the students will put all their attention to the teacher, therefore hopefully the students will understand the lessons.

Another difficulty of students with special needs are their classroom attendance. Sometimes, some of them are lazy to school. It caused by these students are quite different with the students in general that the students in general can be go to school by themselves gathering with their friends. The students with special needs must be driven to their school and they have to picked up also. Therefore, when their family are busy and no one to drive them to the school, so they will not go to school. It is bad because, only present in the class, it doesn't guarantee that they will understand the material well and their knowledge will left behind, moreover they don't. furthermore, they were having problem with short memories lost that they easy to forget the lessons. For example they had taught this week, then the next week they will forget what they had learned. As explained by Syamsu, A., Muhajir (2022) that most students with mental retarded have difficulty retaining information long-term. This may be related to difficulty maintaining focus but also indicates that

the lower the level of intelligence, the more repetition and practice must be given to ensure that the information or skill being taught has been retained. Therefore, the way teacher deals it by before start to learn the teacher will review the material before in order to strengthen their memorize. There are four skills in learning English that need to know and mastered by the students, they are writing, listening, speaking and reading. Between four skills in English, these students were having problems with the listening skills. According to the interview, the students were lacking of the vocabularies therefore when the teacher mention a vocabulary in English, the students will confuse. It also caused by the students are not used to hear English in their also they only learn English once a week only at school and the students don't tend to listen the everything that used English language.

Based on the answer of both problem statements, it is known that the contributions of this study to the body of knowledge are provide the information on how the students with special needs study and their learning difficulties, therefore for teacher can be understand the student's condition then the teacher can be find new method to teach them that can solve their difficulties in learning, in order to maximize the learning process of students with special needs. This study are potentially biased because some of the shortcomings that exist during the research. The shortcomings of this study are limited number object of the research and the difference of subject's disability. Therefore, the researcher can't analyze the students well. It is hoped that the next research can be the use of some learning method for students with special needs.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research that has been done by the writer, it can be conclude that:

- a. The student's activity in learning process, the activity of students with special needs are not only focus with the academic skills but also their basic live skills. It was caused by the purpose of their education system was not only how to make the students being smart but also how the students with special needs can take care of themselves.
- b. The difficulties of students with special needs in learning english, the results showed that the difficulties of students with special needs in learning English are difficulties in understanding and difficulties in solving problems. The difficulties facing by the students with special needs are difficulties in understanding and difficulties in solving problems. Furthermore, they found listening as the most challenging skills. Furthermore, they found listening as the most challenging skills. Those is caused by classroom instructional activities, learning interest, learning motivation and family environment.

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