

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reveals the background of the research, research question, research purposes, research significances, research scope, the conceptual framework, and previous research.

Research Background

Education, as highlighted by Pidarta (2007), plays a crucial role in shaping both individuals and societies by nurturing students' potential and imparting cultural, moral, scientific, technological, and artistic values. It acts as a powerful tool for empowerment, providing equal educational opportunities for all children, including those with special needs. In Indonesia, the government has embraced inclusive education, defining it as an environment where students with special needs learn alongside their non-disabled peers, emphasizing equal opportunities, respect, and understanding. Inclusive classrooms transcend physical accessibility, promoting an atmosphere where diverse learning styles are accommodated.

According to Henry Mintzberg (1987), strategy is a plan, some sort consciously intended course of action, a guideline (or set of guidelines) to deal with a situation. Teachers in inclusive classrooms, as noted by experts such as Webster & Roe (1998), employ varied strategies to address individual learning needs, recognizing diversity as an asset. Understanding the dynamics of inclusive classrooms is vital for elevating overall education quality. To effectively manage inclusive classrooms, especially with disabled students, teachers must grasp key strategies. Effective teaching, as emphasized by Webster & Roe (1998), involves a complex interaction between teachers and students, requiring adaptability in content, process, or product to engage all students meaningfully.

One of the students with special needs in inclusive classrooms is autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a group of complex disorders of brain development, characterized in varying degrees by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication, and repetitive behaviors (Berry & Goin-Kochel, 2020; den Houting et al., 2019; Goel et al., 2018; Goldin & Matson, 2016; Rosen et al., 2018; Stout, 2016). These difficulties adversely affect

an individual's functioning. Autism is usually a lifelong condition (Hwang et al., 2017; Newcomb & Hagopian, 2018; Van Der Miesen et al., 2016).

Teaching vocabulary, a fundamental aspect of language education, poses a challenge in inclusive classrooms due to the need for diverse strategies and teaching styles. Teachers must create an inclusive atmosphere for all students to actively participate in developing their vocabulary and language skills. Inclusive classrooms leverage cooperative learning strategies to foster a community of learners (Jacob, 1999). Overall, the emphasis is on recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of students, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of knowledge and personal development. The acknowledgment of these strategies is crucial for promoting a holistic approach to inclusive education.

Indonesia regulates inclusive education in Permendiknas No 70, (2009) stating that on Inclusive Education “Inclusive education is a system of education that provides opportunities for all learners who have abnormalities and have the potential of intelligence and or special talents to follow education or learning in an educational environment together with learners in general”. In teaching English to students with special needs in inclusive classrooms, the appropriate strategies are needed. According to Dhermawati et al. (2019), students with disabilities need special teaching strategies and not all teaching strategies suit them.

The main problem that arises in children with special needs when learning is the challenge of a teacher in communicating to convey material in the classroom. According to Hilyati (2013), students with autism behave like children under their age. They talk like children do, always repeat the same questions frequently and difficult to do interaction with others. For them, teacher is their hero that can help them and protect them. Teachers also sometimes need to customize their own materials in order to get the learners' motivation and attention to learn.

Previous researches have delved into teachers' strategies within inclusive classrooms, particularly concerning students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). First, research by Siti Rohmatullaili (2023) entitle Teaching Strategies in Teaching English at Inclusive Classroom of Al Firdaus Junior High School Sukoharjo Academic Year 2022/2023. The current study aims at shedding light on

the strategies used by teachers in teaching English at inclusive classroom. Second, the previous research by Jumatul Hidayah and Ruly Morganna (2019) entitle Fulfilling the Needs of Diverse Students: Teaching Strategies for EFL Inclusive Classrooms. This previous research aimed to investigating teaching strategies and their implementation in EFL inclusive classrooms. Third, research by Brahim (2022) entitle Teaching English to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Challenges and Teaching Strategies in Algeria. The current study aims at shedding light on the challenges that might be confronted while teaching English to students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Notably, while previous studies focus on specific strategies or challenges, the current research aims to comprehensively investigate both the strategies employed by EFL teachers in inclusive classrooms and the challenges they encounter in their implementation, providing a holistic view of the teaching landscape for ASD students.

In addition to the distinctions outlined earlier, there are notable disparities between previous researches and the current research. Previous researches did not specify the particular English language skills under investigation, whereas this study explicitly targets vocabulary. Consequently, the focus of this research revolves around examining the strategies employed by EFL teachers in teaching English vocabulary within inclusive classrooms containing ASD students, along with the challenges encountered in implementing these strategies.

Research Questions

This research develops two main research questions according to the vocabulary teaching strategies for inclusive classrooms. The two research questions are arranged as follows:

1. What are the EFL teachers' strategies in teaching vocabulary for inclusive classrooms with autistic students?
2. What are the EFL teachers' challenges in applying their strategies in teaching vocabulary for inclusive classrooms with autistic students?

Research Purposes

This research is intended to address the following objectives based on the research questions:

1. To discover the EFL teachers' strategies in teaching vocabulary for inclusive classrooms with autistic students.
2. To explore the EFL teachers' challenges in applying their strategies in teaching vocabulary for inclusive classrooms with autistic students.

Research Significances

This research has significances for theoretical and practical purposes.

1. Theoretically, this research can fill gaps in the academic literature by providing new insights about EFL teachers' strategies in teaching. Moreover, this research also gives EFL teachers a deeper understanding of effective teaching strategies in inclusive classrooms when teaching vocabulary.
2. Practically, this research will provide practical guidance to EFL teachers to improve their vocabulary teaching strategies in inclusive classrooms. In addition, EFL teachers can adopt teaching strategies adapted to individual learning needs in inclusive classrooms. To sum up, the research's findings can help EFL teachers effectively design strategies to teaching vocabulary in inclusive classrooms.

Research Scope

This research will focus on vocabulary teaching strategies by EFL teachers in the context of an inclusive classroom involving students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The scope of the research includes an in-depth analysis of the strategies implemented by teachers and the challenges teachers face when implementing these strategies.

Although this research will center on an inclusive classroom with the presence of students with ASD, a limitation of this research is that it does not include an in-depth evaluation of the medical or psychological aspects of ASD. This research will emphasize a qualitative approach to better understand the teaching strategies and challenges faced by EFL teachers when teaching vocabulary in inclusive classrooms. The participants in this research will be two teachers who

teach English in inclusive classrooms who are different in several ways such as age, teaching experience, and so on.

Conceptual Framework

This research explores EFL teachers' strategies for teaching vocabulary in inclusive classrooms. It is almost impossible to learn a language without words; even communication between human beings is based on words. Therefore, teachers and students agree that vocabulary acquisition is a central factor in teaching a language (Walters, 2004).

According to Salamanca Framework for Action, the fundamental principle of the inclusive classroom is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive classrooms must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. Kusumastuti (2014) stated that inclusive school is school that is implementing inclusive education to accommodate all children regardless of physical condition, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. Kumar (2010) believes that in inclusive classrooms, students with disabilities and regular students learn in the same classroom and are given the same access to study.

One of the students with special needs in inclusive classrooms is autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopment condition which alters the way in which an individual can imagine, relate and interact with people and their environment (Autism Spectrum Australia, 2019). Students with ASD are special and their uniqueness requires explicit need for teachers to identify individualized approaches to aid them achieve their academic goals (Mayton, et al., 2010).

Moreover, navigating the teaching of vocabulary in inclusive classrooms becomes challenging due to variations in students' learning styles. Therefore, EFL teachers need teaching strategies to navigate the challenges of inclusive classrooms while teaching vocabulary. Teaching strategy is a teaching activity that must be

done by the teacher and the students to reach the goal of teaching effectively (Kemp, 1995). For example, teachers provide information in various forms to accommodate different learning styles.

Previous Research

There are several previous researches regarding teachers' strategies in inclusive classrooms especially with ASD students in it. First, research by Siti Rohmatullaili (2023) entitle Teaching Strategies in Teaching English at Inclusive Classroom of Al Firdaus Junior High School Sukoharjo Academic Year 2022/2023. This study applied descriptive qualitative approach. The current study aims at shedding light on the strategies used by teachers in teaching English at inclusive classroom of Al Firdaus Junior High School Sukoharjo Academic year 2022/2023. The similarity of this previous research and the research are both researching teaching strategies and challenges in teaching English in inclusive classrooms. The difference between these two studies is the different methods used, the previous study used a descriptive qualitative approach while this research uses a case study qualitative approach. The previous study also did not have specifications for students with special needs in inclusive classrooms while this study has specifications, namely inclusive classrooms with Autism Spectrum Disorder students.

Second, the previous research by Jumatul Hidayah and Ruly Morganna (2019) entitle Fulfilling the Needs of Diverse Students: Teaching Strategies for EFL Inclusive Classrooms. This previous research aimed to investigating teaching strategies and their implementation in EFL inclusive classrooms at one of the junior high schools in Curup-Bengkulu, Indonesia. The similarity of this previous research and the research are both researching teaching strategies and conducting research on inclusive schools. Whereas, the differences between this previous research and the research are that the previous research only examines strategies without challenges, while the research examines both.

Third, research by Brahim (2022) entitle Teaching English to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Challenges and Teaching Strategies in Algeria. This research employed qualitative approach and case study method. The current study

aims at shedding light on the challenges that might be confronted while teaching English to students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and providing remedial teaching strategies that can facilitate teaching English to these special learners. However, the differences between this previous research and the research are in previous research first examining the challenges then finding strategies for providing remedial teaching, while the research examines teacher strategies carried out in inclusive classrooms with ASD students then finding the challenges faced by teachers when applying these strategies.

Apart from the differences listed above, there are significant differences between previous research and this research. Previous research did not specify the English language skills that were the focus of the research. Meanwhile, in this research, there is a specification for English language skills, namely vocabulary. Thus, this research will focus on the strategies and challenges when applying the strategies used by EFL teachers when teaching English vocabulary in inclusive classrooms with ASD students.

