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Managing Classroom Activities for Autistic Students in Improving English Vocabularies by Using Total Physical Response

Abstract

English is one of the subjects studied in special education schools, and until now, are still many problems faced in the process of teaching this foreign language. Teachers' understanding of classroom management and appropriate learning strategies is a solution to overcome the problems that occur in learning English for children with autism. The application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method is one of the effective methods used to learn English. The purpose of this study is to explore more information about classroom management activities and the application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method at Satria Galdin Junior High School. The research approach used by the author is a qualitative method with a descriptive research design. Sources of data collection using interviews and observations. To analyze the data, the author uses descriptive techniques to present data based on the results of observations and interviews. The participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The participants of this study were students in the 2022/2023 school year, especially class VII of Satria Galdin Junior High School, as many as 20 people. The results of this study can conclude that good classroom management supported by the application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in teaching English vocabulary is proven to be effective for student's mastery of English vocabulary and helps students maximize and explore their abilities. The effectiveness is seen in autistic students at Satria Galdin Junior High School.

Keywords: Managing Classroom Activities, TPR, Vocabulary, Autistic Students

INTRODUCTION

The government has regulated and inserted English subjects in all types and levels of education, including in the special school curriculum (Nurbaeti et al., 2021; Tarigan et al., 2021). The context is about supporting educational equality for all students in Indonesia, as contained in Education Law Article 31 Paragraph 1, which says every citizen has the right to education (Nurbaeti et al., 2021). Following this regulation, all citizens, including children who have limitations or who are in disadvantaged conditions, have the right to equal education (Ulva & Amalia, 2020).

Considering that English is one of the important lessons in the era of globalization, students are expected to have English skills. One of them is the ability of English vocabulary. This is to support the quality of autistic students in cross-language skills adapted to their abilities (Hashim et al., 2022). Because one of the goals of improving English skills for autistic children is for their quality in the future (Alfaris et al., 2021), if the quality and quantity of students' vocabulary are large, then language skills will develop properly (Rahmawati et al., 2019). This means that the provision of English skills that begins with vocabulary mastery will be very valuable to an autistic student in terms of improving the quality of their communication in international languages (Tarigan et al., 2021).

One of the solutions to improve English vocabulary skills for children is to implement good classroom management. Because classroom management activities in the learning process are essential in foreign language learning (Zhu et al., 2022). In addition,

one of the special concerns in the language learning process is that the teacher can manage the class well (Curran, 2003). In essence, the purpose of classroom management is to create an effective and pleasant learning environment. So that it allows students to learn and develop their abilities as much as possible according to the social, emotional, and intellectual environment of students in the classroom (Purwanti, 2015). Furthermore, classroom management is a key area and guide in applying approaches or strategies in teaching (Evrin et al., 2009). Therefore, effective classroom management is needed to respond to learning needs (Juta & Wyk, 2020).

It is a similar case with learning in the scope of special education. In this case, language learning is for autistic children. Teachers are required to be able to manage the class effectively. One of the challenges of the learning process in special education is the leadership of the teacher must be able to determine effective learning strategies. In addition, teaching students with special needs is different from teaching normal students. Thus, teachers in the special education environment are required to have special knowledge and skills to improve the effectiveness of the learning process in the classroom (Ngang & Abdullah, 2015). Having good classroom management, teachers will be able to create effective learning strategies or methods as well as overcome problems, and the effect will improve student learning achievement (Bruce et al., 2010; Chao et al., 2017).

In addition, one of the objectives of classroom management is that in addition to creating a stimulating environment, classroom management activities can also make it easier for teachers to determine models and strategies in the teaching process (Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2011). Because in its implementation, classroom management has an impact on activities, time management, material, and student behavior. Thus, with classroom management, teachers can find out how effective the application of strategies in the learning process is, observe student activities, handle student behavior, encourage students to be more responsible, and make the learning process more effective (Coopmans & Rinnooy Kan, 2023).

Referring to the explanation above, the role of learning strategies or methods is an unavoidable part of overcoming learning process problems and classroom management, especially in special education for autistic children. One method that can be used as an alternative to overcome the learning problems of students with special needs is to apply the Total Physical Response (TPR) method (Nugraheni & Kristian, 2018) (Anggraheni, 2019). TPR is a learning method that coordinates between speech and action. In practice, the application of this method encourages students to recognize and respond to simple movements made by the teacher (Sayd et al., 2018). Thus, activities in this learning process can make it easier for children with special needs to participate in learning (Er, 2013).

In addition, the Total Physical Response (TPR) method is a very effective method for teaching foreign languages (Kuo et al., 2014). Because the use of the TPR method is not only very useful for learning English but effectively explores learning tailored to the needs of students (Wang et al., 2019). In addition, the application of the TPR method is a strategy that is very suitable for language learning for children with autism because, in the process, there is instructive feedback between teachers and students, which makes language teaching easier to implement (Delmolino et al., 2013).

However, autistic children still fail to master English vocabulary (Amelia, 2021). This can happen because the IQ of autistic children is below average. So their IQ limitations

become a problem in the responsiveness of vocabulary and pronunciation (Blosser & DePompei, 2019). Meanwhile, according to other observers, autistic children experience difficulties in learning activities for English subjects. The main difficulty experienced by children with disabilities is in their spelling, which is different from writing (Wardhani et al., 2020). Therefore, an important aspect of communication for autistic students is vocabulary mastery (Sismona, 2020) which is needed to support good communication and cross-language mastery for autistic students. So, to support good communication and cross-language mastery for autistic students, it is necessary to have support for teaching English vocabulary (Dewi, 2019).

Based on the explanation above, problems in learning English vocabulary do not occur at Satria Galdin Special School located in Bandung Regency. From the results of interviews with teachers at this special school for autistic children at the junior high school level, they explained that students at their school did not experience difficulties in learning English vocabulary. This can happen because the teachers in the school can manage the class well, such as being able to create effective and fun learning situations.

In addition, to achieve the success of an effective English learning process, the school also always applies the Total Physical Response (TPR) learning strategy or method in every process of English teaching and learning activities. This is done because the method is very easy to do. After all, in the implementation process, students only imitate and repeat the words and movements made by the teacher. With the application of this method, students are enthusiastic to take part in learning and more easily understand the learning and instructions delivered by the teacher.

Therefore, based on the case, the researcher considers that this phenomenon is important to study. Thus, the novelty in this research is to investigate 1) How classroom management activities are carried out by teachers at the school and 2) How the process of implementing the TPR method can facilitate autistic students in learning English, especially in learning vocabulary at Satria Galdin special school in Bandung District, West Java. The researcher hopes that this research can contribute to facilitating and improving the English learning process for students with special needs, especially autistic children.

METHOD

In this research, the approach used by the author was a qualitative method. The research design of this study is descriptive. It means this research aims to provide an accurate picture or description of certain individual characteristics and scenarios in teaching the English process to autistic students at Satria Galdin special school. These investigations are a way of uncovering new meanings, establishing how frequently something occurs, classifying information, and defining what exists. In this research, the source of data collection used interviews and observation. To analyze data, the author used a descriptive technique to present data based on observation and interviews. This research was conducted at Satria Galdin Special School in Bandung District, West Java. This participant was selected using a purposive sampling technique. This research participants were students in the academic year of 2022/2023, especially in the VII grade of Junior High School Satria Galdin, as much as 20 students located in Mekarsari, Ciparay Bandung District West Java.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

FINDING

Based on the results of observations and interviews with seventh-grade teachers at Satria Galdin Junior High School, before learning begins, the teacher performs five stages in preparing the class and conditioning students. The stages are listed in the following table:

Table 1. Criteria of Classroom Management Activity

No	Indicator	Teacher Activities
1	Planning	Teacher-prepared lesson plans that formulate learning objectives and steps that must be taken to achieve learning targets.
2	Organizing	After the teacher is in the classroom, the teacher provides a stimulus to motivate students to be excited about learning. The teacher gives instructions so that students orderly prepare themselves to take part in learning with the topics and themes that have been prepared.
3	Directing	For the learning process to run according to the expected goals, the teacher first explains the importance of learning English (vocabulary) and demonstrates the steps that students must take during the learning process.
4	Controlling	The teacher always monitors every student's activity and ensures that learning activities in the classroom are what has been planned.
5	Evaluating	The teacher also evaluates every activity carried out in the classroom.

Based on the table above, it shows that teachers apply good classroom management. This can be seen from the preparations made before entering the class (Planning). The teacher conditions the class when introducing the material to be learned (Organizing). The teacher explains the stages of activities that will be carried out in the learning process (Directing). The teacher pays close attention to each learning activity (Controlling), and the teacher evaluates each student's performance before the learning time ends (Evaluating).

The success of learning English vocabulary in autistic students at Satria Galdin Junior High School because in every lesson, the teacher always uses the Total Physical Response (TPR) method. The following are the stages of learning carried out by the teacher when introducing English vocabulary to autistic students using the Total Physical Response (TPR) method:

Table 2. The Stages of Applying the TPR Method

No	Indicator	Teacher Activity
1	Coordination	The teacher introduces English vocabulary by mentioning one by one word in English and then followed by a movement.
2	Grammar	Besides demonstrating the spoken word, the teacher also mentions the sentence and the word with the correct grammar
3	Vocabulary	The teacher does not emphasize the form or structure of the

4	Teacher's role	sentence, but the teacher emphasizes that students can understand the meaning of the word or sentence. The teacher introduces English vocabulary and combines the words or sentences spoken with the movements of the five senses.
5	Student's role	The teacher always asks students to pay attention to the instructions, speech, and movements made by the teacher first. Then, students imitate and repeat each word or sentence learned.
6	Environment	The teacher asks students to say the English word or sentence aloud, which aims to make the learning atmosphere in the classroom more active and fun.

Based on Table 5 above, the teaching activities carried out by the teacher using Total Physical Response (TPR) are by the stages. This is shown by the teacher introducing English vocabulary by combining spoken words with actions (Coordination), the teacher giving examples of the correct grammar of the words and sentences taught (Grammar), the teacher choosing vocabulary that is relevant to the student's environment (Vocabulary), the teacher always tries to provide illustrations and examples of each English word or sentence taught (Teacher's role), the teacher always asks students to imitate and repeat the words explained (Student's role), and the teacher asks students to pronounce the words or sentences taught in a loud voice (Environment).

In addition, the teacher's activity in introducing English vocabulary to students refers to 4 indicators. These indicators are listed in Table3.

Table 3. Vocabulary Mastery Indicator

No	Variables	Indicator	Teacher Activity
1	Vocabulary Mastery	Meaning	The teacher selects English vocabulary that is relevant to students' daily lives, such as place names, objects, sizes, shapes, and verbs that are often practiced by students.
2		Form	The teacher introduces some vocabulary in English, and then the students are asked to repeat the word randomly.
3		Use	The teacher identifies the form of a word in a certain grammatical context.
4		Pronunciation	The teacher always corrects the mispronunciations mentioned by the students.

Based on the table above, shows that before the learning process is carried out the teacher refers to 4 indicators of mastering English vocabulary. These indicators are: 1) the teacher always ensures that the vocabulary taught is adapted to the students' environment and contains simple meaning (Meaning). 2) the teacher provides opportunities for students to practice the word or sentence being learned (Form). 3) the teacher introduces English

vocabulary with correct grammar (Use), and 4) the teacher always corrects any mispronunciation of the students' vocabulary (Pronunciation).

The success of English vocabulary learning activities using the Total Physical Response (TPR) method for autistic students at Satria Galdin Junior High School is contained in the table below:

Table 4. Vocabulary Mastery Score Classification

Student	Indicator				Score	Predicate
	Meaning	Form	Use	Pronunciation		
S1	80	70	70	60	70	Average to good
S2	50	50	50	70	55	Poor to average
S3	60	85	75	60	70	Average to good
S4	50	70	55	55	58	Poor to average
S5	75	85	70	70	75	Average to good
S6	55	55	50	50	53	Poor to average
S7	65	75	80	75	74	Average to good
S8	50	55	75	55	59	Poor to average
S9	65	75	75	70	71	Average to good
S10	50	55	60	60	56	Poor to average
S11	60	70	50	60	60	Average to good
S12	65	70	70	80	71	Average to good
S13	70	70	60	70	68	Average to good
S14	65	55	50	60	58	Poor to average
S16	60	70	70	60	65	Average to good
S17	60	55	50	75	60	Average to good
S18	55	80	80	75	73	Average to good
S19	80	80	80	80	80	Good to excellent
S20	55	70	75	55	64	Average to good

Table 4 above shows that learning English vocabulary in autistic students Total Physical Response (TPR) method for autistic students at Satria Galdin Junior High School is declared successful. This can be seen from the scores obtained by students from the evaluation conducted by the teacher. There are 1 (5%) students who obtained the predicate good to excellent, 14 (70%) who obtained the predicate average to good, and 5 (25%) who obtained the predicate Poor to average. This score shows that the application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in learning English vocabulary for autistic students in class VII at Satria Galdin Junior High School is effective.

DISCUSSION

Classroom management activities carried out by Satria Galdin Junior High School teachers have met the criteria for good classroom management. The characteristics of these activities are the implementation of structured and systematic knowledge and are based on the experience, needs, and circumstances of students (Handayani, 2013). In addition, because managing a class is one of the roles played by a teacher in the learning process, in teaching and learning process, a teacher not only transfers knowledge to students but is also required to be able to manage the overall condition of students

properly (Nugraha, 2018). In other words, in managing classroom activities, a teacher needs to apply an approach that directs students to play an active role and explore the potential that exists in themselves (Juhji, 2017).

Classroom management activities are one of the requirements that must be possessed by teachers to realize the achievement of the goals of a lesson (Engkoswara & Komariah, 2010). It because classroom management skills are very important for the success of teachers and students (McDaniel et al, 2022). Despite decades of research in classroom management, there are still difficulties that make inexperienced teachers feel unprepared to manage the classroom (Shank & Santiago, 2022), but classroom management is something crucial that teachers must do as a series of actions used to organize the course of the lesson while providing and maintaining the learning environment (Horne, 1980).

The application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in learning English vocabulary at Satria Galdin Junior High School is an example that can be done by teachers and other schools to teach English, especially to autistic students. It is because the implementation of the TPR method in the school is to the criteria and principles of the method. In addition, the successful application of the TPR method also occurred at SDLB Negeri Binjai. Based on the results of Rahmi's research (2017) at the school, it is known that the application of the TPR method in introducing English vocabulary to autistic students has proven to be very helpful. This is shown by the results of the pre-test and post-test. There are 54% higher post-test results than the pre-test. At first, the pre-test result was 13.3% to 67.7% of the post-test results (Rahmi, 2017).

In addition, in other studies, it is explained that the use of the TPR method in learning English for students with special needs has a significant effect. The effect is shown by the difference in the value of vocabulary understanding in deaf children before being given intervention using the Total Physical Response (TPR) method with an average value of 45.16 and after being given intervention using the Total Physical Response method with an average value of 87.16 (Dharma & Nehrulita, n.d.). Although in its implementation this method has shortcomings, namely learners who have a shy nature will be a challenge and require more preparation for teachers if using this method for higher levels (Annisa, 2023), the method is one of the effective alternative strategies that can be used to learn foreign languages, especially in learning English vocabulary (Fauzia, 2016).

Thus, because in principle, the implementation of the TPR method is to combine, collaborate, and simulate the material with body movements, the use of this method will be very easy to do, especially for learning foreign language vocabulary. With simulation, body movements followed by the sound of the word or sentence introduced, learning will be more interesting and make students able to remember the material that has been learned (Huang & Wang, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The success of English language learning for autistic students at Satria Galdin Junior High School can occur because it is supported by teachers' understanding of good classroom management and appropriate learning strategies. The use of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in learning English, especially learning English vocabulary, is very effective when applied in special educational schools. It can be proven by the grades and

predicates obtained by autistic students at Satria Galdin Junior High School, which shows that 70% of the autistic students obtained the predicate of average to good.

Thus, this study also proves that good management and supported by the Total Physical Response (TPR) method can be a solution for mastery of English vocabulary for autistic students. However, there are some limitations in this study, namely, the research respondents were only an English teacher and 20 students in the VII grade of Satria Galdin Junior High School Bandung. In addition, the research method used is a qualitative method, where the research results are based on justification and tend to be subjective. Therefore, to obtain measurable and objective data, it is recommended for further research to use quantitative research methods. The researcher hopes that the results of this study can be useful, become a source of information, and contribute to supporting the success of the learning process in schools with special needs in learning English.

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