

**ENGLISH LEARNING STRATEGY ON COGNITIVE STYLE FOR DISABLED STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AT SLB – A PEMBINA TINGKAT NASIONAL JAKARTA**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to determine the learning strategies used by teachers in learning English for visual impairment students in the eleventh grade of SLB - A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta. This research was conducted in May 2023 at SLB - A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. Data were obtained by means of six students with visual impairment and one English teacher. The results showed that the learning strategy used by English teachers is problem-based learning which is taken based on the ability of visual impairment students themselves. Cognitive style found in visual impairment students are Field - Dependence and Field - Independence. This research also discusses the learning approach, media, difficulties, and obstacles faced, how to overcome the difficulties and obstacles faced, and the classroom environment during learning. The results of this study are expected to be useful for related parties such as schools, teachers, students, and further researchers.

Keywords: Visual Impairment, English Learning Strategy, Cognitive Style

**ABSTRAK**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi pembelajaran yang digunakan oleh guru dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris untuk siswa tunanetra di kelas sebelas SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan pada bulan Mei 2023 di SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif deskriptif. Data diperoleh melalui enam siswa tunanetra dan satu guru Bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi pembelajaran yang digunakan oleh guru Bahasa Inggris adalah dengan problem-based learning yang diambil berdasarkan kemampuan siswa tunanetra itu sendiri. Cognitive style yang terdapat pada siswa tunanetra adalah Field – Dependence dan Field – Independence. Penelitian ini juga membahas tentang learning approach, media, kesulitan dan kendala yang dihadapi, cara mengatasi kesulitan dan kendala yang dihadapi, dan suasana kelas pada saat pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat bermanfaat bagi pihak – pihak terkait seperti sekolah, guru, siswa, serta peneliti selanjutnya.*

*Kata Kunci: Tunanetra, Strategi Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Gaya Kognitif*

**A. Introduction**

English become one of the educational curricula for Indonesian

students. Learning English in Indonesia has quickly revolutionized, for example, learning English is no

longer restricted to formal situations like in the classroom or in courses. English is regarded as the first foreign language in Indonesia, and foreign languages are spoken by everyone around the world. Teaching English is a challenge for every teacher, especially in Indonesia, because many aspects make the students difficult to learn English such as the mother tongue.

English is taught in all classrooms, whether for general students or disabled students. Thus, the right to education for students with disabilities is stipulated in law no. 20, 2003 concerning the national education system 23 states that: *“special education is education for students who have difficulty in following the learning process because of physical, emotional, mental and social disorder.”*

Learning a language with disabilities is complex, and learning how to accommodate them is a continuous effort. A student's attention, memory, coordination, social skills, emotional maturity, and ability to read, write, speak, or spell, all can be impacted by learning disabilities. Every learning disability is defined by a significant level of

difficulty in at least one academic performance area (Sowell & Sugisaki, 2021). The Learning Disabilities Association of America (2020) states that *“learning disabilities should not be confused with learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantages.”*

Language teachers can accommodate students with learning disabilities in their classes by using effective teaching strategies for all students, even though they may never become experts in this field in many settings (Sowell & Sugisaki, 2021). In other words, a learning program that is suitable for the needs of students with disabilities and their characteristics must be prepared by the teacher. Furthermore, if the media does not educate disabled students in a way that suits their needs, learning English is considered a failure for them. So, the teacher must use a special strategy to make them easier.

There are many classifications for students with disability. One of them is the student with cognitive style. As stated by Shakarboyevich (2021) physical disabilities can be

present alone or in conjunction with other impairments, such as learning and cognitive delays. Implications students who have physical disabilities have normal to above-average time capacities and are capable of learning English at an age-appropriate level. These students can and do meet the English Curriculum targets with the necessary adaptations. It is crucial to investigate the relationship between cognitive constructs influencing learning disability, related academic achievements, and those constructs that are highly modifiable because most of the research in the field of learning disability has found findings indicating cognitive deficits in such children (Daniel et al., 2022).

Onyekuru (2015) stated that the cognitive styles of field-dependence and field-independence and gender were correlated significantly; Field-independent students performed better on average in the sciences than field-dependent students, while field-dependent students performed better on average in the arts than the field-independent students. In other words, Field-dependent cognitive styles see environmental demands as a user responding to stimuli, and people with

a field-independent cognitive style have trouble separating stimuli from situations/information they have access to, exposing them to perceptions of manipulation of the environment (Mulbar et al., 2017).

Students with disabilities may have cognitive delays, but it does not mean they cannot learn English. Because learning a second language may help the student's fundamental abilities to concentrate, entertain numerous options, and process information improved, learning a new language can be stimulating for students with disabilities.

Regarding the above previous studies, the researcher has chosen the school based on the disability condition. In her research, she chooses SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta where the students are disabled with visual impairment and has different cognitive style. Additionally, the researcher chooses that school because it provided English language teaching for the students there. The researcher also saw how the teacher struggled to teach English to students with different cognitive styles.

Based on the preliminary research that has been done by the

researcher. The researcher found the unique fact that the English teacher at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta also has disabilities with visual impairment. It is a big challenge not only for the students but also for the teacher. Because the teacher should teach the students patiently and memorize their voices to know them. Besides that, the teacher should know well about their individual comprehension and attitudes only by their voices.

Moreover, based on the preliminary research, the researcher found how the learning conducted at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta. Every student has different comprehension which is called cognitive style in learning English. Some of the students easily in understanding the lesson while others do not. Aside from that, some students are active, and some are passive during the learning process. Moreover, they learned English in Junior High School, and it can be one of their obstacles in learning English because they don't learn from the basic vocabulary.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher found that every student has a different cognitive style

in learning English as a second language. So, the researcher is interested and wants to conduct research entitled “English Learning Strategy for Disabled Students with Visual Impairment at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta.”

## **B. Methods**

The researcher uses a qualitative with a descriptive approach in her research because this study is focused on a specific phenomenon in the school environment. The phenomenon in this research is the process of teaching and learning English. Additionally, this research object does not need treatment. The researcher does an observation and gives an accurate description of the phenomenon. Therefore, descriptive research can be employed as the appropriate design in this research.

## **C. Result and Discussion**

Based on the results of research on English learning strategy at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta shows that the strategy used by English teacher in learning at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta practically good, it seen because in using the strategy the teacher does

several ways to get the right strategy on cognitive style to use in the learning process for visual impairment students. In accordance with what was said by Onyekuru (2015), that the teachers should research the students' cognitive styles and modify their teaching strategies in accordance with the student's cognitive styles. In the selection of strategies teachers do a non-formal assessment to see the cognitive style possessed by each student. This is in line with what was said by Horowitz in El-Koumy (2016) students with learning disabilities have average or above average cognitive ability.

English learning strategies at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta was used problem-based in the form of questions and answers. This is in accordance with the learning approaches used by the English teacher, that is the student Centre which invites students to think independently, and the material provided is contextual related to their daily lives. Problem-based as a strategy used by the teacher will develop their knowledge because the students were given the opportunity to give answers to the questions given by the teacher.

The use of media in learning English based on the observation and interview at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta was simply and suitable with the students. The media in learning process were used tactual and electronic. As stated by Ibrahim (2021), impairment is a problem with how the body works or is constructed, whereas an activity restriction is a challenge that a person faces when carrying out a task or action when taking part in activities of daily living, so due to their non-functioning or weak eyesight condition, students with visual impairment must be reached when using media through hearing or touching. The most media that were used by the teacher are braille and audio. In learning activities, the teacher allows the students to bring the laptop. Laptop used by students are equipped with a screen reader. The function of their laptop is for using IndoDic that when students don't know the meaning of sentence, they can find independently at IndoDic.

Difficulties in learning English at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta are felt by teacher and students in class XI A – B. The difficulties felt by the teacher can affect the learning process, because

the difficulties felt in the learning process are in collecting materials and lack of textbook in the form of braille text. These difficulties are due to the lack of English learning resources that are suitable for visual impairment students. As for the material in using audio, according to the teacher the audio found on YouTube is more visual and that cannot be used by visual impairment students. In line with these difficulties, English teacher have been able to handle it by adding descriptions when he wants to use the video which is used to make visual impairment student understand easily. While the copes to handle these difficulties is quite good even the teacher needs more effort. In contracts to the difficulties felt by visual impairment students, they feel difficulties in writing, speaking, pronounce, vocabulary, and reading. In accordance with that Paderuran (2014) stated, that most difficulties for English teachers are oral communication disorders, reading, and writing difficulties. Many teachers lack the skill and knowledge how to teach a foreign language to students with disability who don't yet master their mother tongue. The efforts made by the students to copes the difficulties

is very good, because they have the desire to study harder so that the difficulties they face are reduced.

Obstacles in learning English that often arise at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta are lack of vocabulary and lack of confidence; however, these obstacles have been overcome well by the teacher. The copes the teacher did by using IndoDic application that is installed on each student's laptop. Other copes are by give them assignments and do communication section or discuss about the material that already learned on that day. Another obstacle are facilities, lack media and lack textbook. Also, there is the external factor that the teacher's background is not from English education, but he is from extraordinary special need education.

Classroom environment has an important role in learning because every student show difference interacts with their learning environment. As stated by Bakar & Ali (2018), these differences have an impact on everything from how learners interact with learning material (behaviorally) to the final storage of information (cognitively) for future use or references. Therefore, teacher

creates a learning atmosphere that is interesting and easily understood by visual impairment students. Student learning atmosphere done by the teacher in making learning exciting is by dividing them into several groups and using media as their learning tools. Motivating the students is also done by the English teacher, in motivating the students the teacher invites the students to explore and dig more information that they can find in several sources such as from the internet, reading books and dictionaries. The interaction between students and teacher is also carried out according to the ability of the students themselves, in class XI A – B at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta, they rarely use English, this due to the lack of vocabulary mastered by the students.

Cognitive style is referred to the way of teaching and learning a person's habit. So that the teacher should learn and recognize the characteristics of their students. English subject teacher at SLB A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta learns their cognitive style is through the learning process. Field Independence and Field Dependence has received the most attention in

research on second or foreign language. According to the English teacher, in Senior High School tend to be more dependent on each other, it's mean Field Dependence is the student cannot study alone or they need mate in learning. This is in line with what Mahvelati (2020) has said, students who are Field Dependence frequently process information passively, do something follow instructions, focus on the overall of the information given, struggle to distinguish between concepts and structures in the relevant collection of information and use a previously known method when solving problem. Next explained by the teacher is definition of Field Independence, that the student study independently and does their assignments independently, it's mean they don't need mate. According to Muhammad et al., (2015) Field Independent those who can trace embedded figures out to a significant amount. Based on the interview, all students XI A – B at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta are Field Dependence. Because they are needing mate for discussion in learning English as foreign language students.

#### **D. Conclusion**

According to the description in the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that:

1. The strategies used by teacher in learning English at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat Nasional Jakarta are accordance with the ability of the students themselves and then matched according to the teaching material, which means that in choosing a strategy the teacher sees the ability of the students and conducts an assessment. Problem – based is the strategy most often used by English teacher in learning. The strategy is used by the teacher because this strategy focuses more on students who make students become motivated and spur them to think, usually the teacher starts with questions to spur them to learn the material and spur their enthusiasm in doing the task.
2. The media most often used in learning are audio and tactual, tactual media is braille text. In addition, teachers also use digital form media, which is media in the form of files that have been converted in PDF form. This is because the learning is descriptive and visual has not allowed them. In

using digital media, students open PDF files on their respective laptops using a screen reader. However, visual impairment students prefer to use audio accompanied by sound effects. This is evident from the results of interviews with visual impairment students in class XI A-B that they prefer to use audio, although there are also students who still need braille media.

3. There are several difficulties faced encountered in both students and teacher in learning English at SLB - A Pembina National Level Jakarta. The difficulties faced by teachers are in collecting materials and textbooks in the form of braille text. While the difficulties faced by students come from themselves, difficulties in writing, speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary, and reading. While the way to overcome that done by English subject teachers is to add descriptions when using videos. And the way to overcome that has been done by students is that they study hard according to the difficulties they feel.
4. Obstacles copes in learning English at SLB – A Pembina Tingkat



Nasional Jakarta there are two, lack of vocabulary and lack of confidence. And the other obstacle appears in learning are facility, lack media, and lack textbook. However, these obstacles already cope by the teacher. The efforts that made by the teacher to overcome the obstacles that arise in learning English are using IndoDic application for the student who lack of vocabulary, communication session to make the students more confidence in using English and the teacher gives assignments to the students. While the external obstacle is the inhibited English language skills possessed by English teacher, it because the teacher's educational background is not from English education but from extraordinary special need education.

5. Teachers do several ways to create a comfortable classroom environment for visual impairment students in class XI A-B. The first thing the teacher does is students learning atmosphere by divided into a group and using a media, second is by motivating student such as invite them to explore and think about the benefit of the material

based on what they have learned. In addition, the interaction between students and teacher is not done in full English, this is due to the lack of vocabulary owned by students and teacher usually use English at the opening of the lesson.

6. Cognitive style is a cognitive style owned by students. The cognitive style that students have is different. Visual impairment does not affect their cognitive style, but teacher needs adaptation on learning process. To find out the cognitive style owned by each student the teacher learns it during learning, it is also useful to know the treatment that is suitable for low vision or totally blind students. According to previous research, Field Dependence and Field Independence that get the most attention on second or foreign language. English teacher at SLB - A Pembina National Level Jakarta said the most cognitive style in Senior High School students is Field Dependence that is students who need mates to ask each other. This is in line with what students say, that they prefer to discuss in learning. Field Independence said by the English teacher that he/she

is active or likes to ask the teacher and they do their own work without needing friends.

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