



# Prosiding

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## Strategies and Challenges Teaching English at Special Schools Bojonegoro

Alvin Elok Suraya<sup>1(✉)</sup>, Meiga Ratih Tirtanawati<sup>2</sup>, Chyntia Heru Woro Prastiwi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, Indonesia

[alvineloksurayaikippgri@gmail.com](mailto:alvineloksurayaikippgri@gmail.com), [meiga\\_ratih@ikippgribojonegoro.ac.id](mailto:meiga_ratih@ikippgribojonegoro.ac.id),  
[chyntia\\_heru@ikippgribojonegoro.ac.id](mailto:chyntia_heru@ikippgribojonegoro.ac.id)

**Abstrak**— Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi tantangan dan strategi yang dihadapi oleh guru bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB) di Bojonegoro khususnya di SLB negri sumbang dan SLB putra harapan dalam mengajar siswa tuna rungu dan tuna wicara. Responden dalam penelitian adalah guru Bahasa Inggris yang aktif dalam mengajar siswa tuna rungu dan wicara di kedua sekolah tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru menghadapi berbagai tantangan seperti kesulitan aspek fonetik dan tata Bahasa, keterbatasan media pembelajaran, minimnya penguasaan kosakata siswa, kesulitan dalam memahami pelafalan dan tata bahasa, serta kurangnya media pembelajaran yang disesuaikan. Untuk mengatasi tantangan tersebut, para guru menerapkan berbagai strategi seperti penggunaan media visual, bahasa isyarat, gerakan tubuh, media interaktif, dan pendekatan pembelajaran kontekstual. Hasil penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya kreativitas, kesabaran, dan pelatihan khusus bagi guru dalam mengajar Bahasa Inggris kepada siswa berkebutuhan khusus. Dari penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi referensi pengembang praktik pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris yang inklusif di SLB serta memperkuat kontribusi teori pendidikan inklusif dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa asing.

**Kata Kunci**—Strategi Mengajar, Tantangan Guru, Bahasa Inggris, Tuna Rungu, Pembelajaran Inklusif

**Abstract**— This study aims to identify the challenges and strategies faced by English teachers in special schools in Bojonegoro, especially in SLB negri sumbang and SLB putra harapan in teaching deaf and speech impaired students. respondents in the study were English teachers who were active in teaching deaf and speech impaired students in both schools. This research uses qualitative methods with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The results showed that teachers faced various challenges such as difficulty in phonetic and grammatical aspects, limited learning media, lack of students' vocabulary mastery, difficulty in understanding pronunciation and grammar, and lack of customized learning media. To overcome these challenges, teachers implemented various strategies such as the use of visual media, sign language, body movements, interactive media, and contextual learning approaches. The results of this study emphasize the importance of creativity, patience, and special training for teachers in teaching English to students with special needs. This study is expected to

be a reference for developers of inclusive English learning practices in SLB and strengthen the contribution of inclusive education theory in the context of foreign language learning.

**Keywords**—Teaching Strategies, Teacher Challenges, English, Hearing Impaired, Inclusive Learning

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right for every individual, including those with special needs. In the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, it is emphasized that every citizen has the same right to obtain quality education without discrimination. The success and failure of a nation is greatly influenced by the character of its people, therefore it becomes important in building the nation, both in terms of physical, as well as mental and spiritual (Musawwamah & Taufiqurrahman, 2019) This commitment to fair and equitable education is realized through an inclusive education system and the implementation of special schools (SLB). SLB is designed to provide educational services to students with physical, intellectual, emotional, and/or communication barriers, such as the hearing and speech impaired. In an SLB environment, the learning process must be adapted to the characteristics and abilities of students, including in teaching English subjects which have their own complexities. As an international language, English is an important competency in modern education, both for global communication and access to knowledge.

However, teaching English to deaf and speech impaired students has its own challenges. Hearing-impaired students experience barriers in understanding phonetics due to limited auditorial perception, while speech-impaired students have difficulty in expressing the language. However, teaching English to deaf and speech impaired students has its own challenges. Hearing-impaired students experience barriers in understanding phonetics due to limited auditorial perception, while speech-impaired students have difficulty in expressing the language. Education is a fundamental right for every individual, including those with special needs. In the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, it is emphasized that every citizen has the same right to obtain quality education without discrimination. The success and failure of a nation is greatly influenced by the character of its people, therefore it becomes important in building the nation, both in terms of physical, as well as mental and spiritual (Musawwamah & Taufiqurrahman, 2019) This commitment to fair and equitable education is realized through an inclusive education system and the implementation of special schools (SLB). SLB is designed to provide educational services to students with physical, intellectual, emotional, and/or communication barriers, such as the hearing and speech impaired. In an SLB environment, the learning process must be adapted to the characteristics and abilities of students, including in teaching English subjects which have their own complexities. As an international language, English is an important

competency in modern education, both for global communication and access to knowledge.

However, teaching English to deaf and speech impaired students has its own challenges. Hearing-impaired students experience barriers in understanding phonetics due to limited auditorial perception, while speech-impaired students have difficulty in expressing the language. One of the most important aspects in learning English that significantly influences student success is vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary serves as the fundamental foundation for acquiring the four other language skills. According to Tirtanawati (2021), vocabulary is the essential base that students must master in order to develop effective reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities. Without strong vocabulary proficiency, students will struggle to comprehend the content of learning materials. Multisensory and visually-based learning approaches are necessary to help students understand material in a contextual and communicative manner (Olszak & Borowicz, 2025). Therefore, English teachers at special needs schools (SLB) are required to implement more flexible and adaptive teaching strategies that accommodate students' diverse needs.

Previous research has highlighted the importance of inclusive teaching strategies in English language learning within special education settings. It has been found that the use of visual media such as flashcards, posters, and interactive images can significantly enhance the motivation and engagement of SLB students in the English learning process (Syukri & Humaera, 2019). Another study by Sayfullaevna and Mukhamedjanovna (2025) demonstrated that sign language and visual-based approaches are highly effective in delivering foreign language content to deaf students. Meanwhile, the success of English language learning among students with special needs largely depends on the teacher's ability to design contextual teaching methods and optimally utilize visual aids (Ponce et al., 2024).

However, most previous studies have been conducted in general contexts and have yet to explore in depth the local context, particularly in the Bojonegoro Regency. Special needs schools in this region face unique challenges, including limited resources, a lack of media tools, and low frequency of teacher training in inclusive English language instruction. In an autonomous learning context, the role of teachers in designing learning strategies greatly affects student achievement (Hariyadi et al., 2021). To date, there has been no research specifically examining how teachers in Bojonegoro's SLB schools address the challenges of teaching English or what strategies they employ in working with deaf and speech-impaired students at the elementary SLB level. Yet, understanding local dynamics is crucial for designing effective teaching strategies that align with on-the-ground realities. Therefore, this study aims to identify the challenges faced by English teachers at SLB Negeri Sumbang and SLB-B Putra Harapan Bojonegoro in teaching deaf and speech-impaired students, and to describe the teaching strategies used to overcome these obstacles.

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of inclusive, effective, and adaptive English teaching strategies for students with special needs in special education schools.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at thoroughly describing the challenges and English language teaching strategies implemented by teachers at Special Needs Schools (SLB). This approach was chosen as it is well-suited for exploring experiences, interpretations, and real-life practices of teachers in the context of special education.

The research was conducted at SLB Negeri Sumbang and SLB-B Putra Harapan, both located in Bojonegoro Regency, East Java. These two schools provide educational services for deaf and speech-impaired students at the elementary school level (SDLB). The primary subjects in this study were English teachers actively teaching at these schools, while principals, students, and learning documents served as supporting data sources.

Data collection techniques were carried out through three main methods:

1. In-depth interviews with English teachers to explore their experiences in facing teaching challenges and applying strategies
2. Participant observation of classroom learning activities to directly observe the strategies used in practice.
3. Document study, which involved reviewing lesson plans (RPP), syllabi, teaching materials, and teachers' reflective notes as supplementary data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study revealed a variety of challenges and strategies faced by English teachers in teaching deaf and speech-impaired students at SLB Negeri Sumbang and SLB-B Putra Harapan Bojonegoro. Through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation analysis, several key findings emerged:

**Table 1.** Challenges and Strategies in Teaching English at SLB

No.	Challenge	Strategy	Explanation
1	Limited phonetic understanding	Use of visual media such as pictures, flashcards, and body movements	Deaf students struggle with pronunciation due to their inability to hear
2	Students' limited vocabulary	Introducing vocabulary through concrete objects, visual illustrations, and simple repetition	Low vocabulary mastery in English hinders word recognition
3	Lack of adaptive learning media	Teachers create their own aids such as cards, posters, or interactive boards	Teachers use whatever tools are available

4	Difficulty in verbal expression	Reinforcement through sign language, modeling techniques, and Total Physical Response (TPR)	Speech-impaired students struggle to express words or sentences orally
5	Low student motivation	Creating a fun learning atmosphere, giving praise, and using educational games	Students often feel discouraged and lack confidence in learning a foreign language

The results show that teachers at SLB in Bojonegoro face complex and multidimensional challenges in teaching English. Vocabulary was identified as a core issue in English language learning. As stated by Tirtanawati (2021), vocabulary mastery is essential as it forms the basis of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Without understanding vocabulary, students will find it difficult to develop other competencies. These challenges stem not only from students' limitations, such as phonetic and verbal expression barriers, but also from external factors such as inadequate teaching resources, lack of professional training, and rigid curricula. This supports the findings of Olszak & Borowicz (2025), who emphasized that DHH (Deaf and Hard of Hearing) students require consistent visual-based learning and non-verbal strategies.

Despite these limitations, teachers at both schools were able to independently develop adaptive strategies. Strategies such as the use of sign language and contextual approaches proved effective in helping students understand vocabulary and basic sentence structures in English. As found by Syukri & Humaera (2019), visual media significantly enhances the motivation of SLB students in English learning. Meanwhile, Sayfullaevna & Mukhamedjanovna (2025) highlighted the effectiveness of movement-based and symbolic methods for students with sensory impairments.

Thus, although limitations exist, the creative efforts of teachers to adapt their teaching strategies deserve appreciation and can serve as references for developing more inclusive and effective English teaching models in SLB environments.

## CONCLUSION

1) English teachers at SLB Negeri Sumbang and SLB-B Putra Harapan Bojonegoro face several challenges in teaching English, including limited phonetic understanding, low student vocabulary, lack of adaptive teaching media, difficulties in verbal expression, and low student motivation; 2) The strategies used to overcome these challenges include the use of visual media, Total Physical Response (TPR) methods, sign language, contextual approaches, educational games, and the creation of an enjoyable learning environment; and 3) This study contributes to enriching the literature on inclusive education, particularly in teaching English at SLB, and can serve as a reference in designing more adaptive learning models in the future.

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