

## THE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON TEACHING ENGLISH STRATEGIES TO AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER STUDENTS

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### Abstract

It is very challenging for a teacher to teach students with special needs, for example those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), so that they can learn and get a proper education. ASD students have poor communication and interaction skills. This can be a problem for teachers in the teaching process because their mastery in teaching English strategies to ASD students is low. Teaching ASD students is different from teaching other students in general because English teachers must have special guidelines for teaching strategies. The solution to help is to equip them with the right teaching strategies. Teaching strategies are the structures, systems, methods, techniques, procedures, and processes that teachers use during teaching as a way to help students learn better. There are five teaching strategies for ASD students by applying: 1. Total Physical Response (TPR), 2. Contextual Teaching Learning (CTL) approach, 3. Image media with play techniques, 4. RPP according to the needs of ASD students, 5. Video Recording Method Interactive. The socialization of community service was oriented to focus on strategies for teaching English for ASD students to English teachers at the Musyawarah Kerja Kepala Sekolah (MKKS) Private Junior High School association in the North Surabaya region. The target participants for this activity were 40 junior high school teachers from various schools who are members of the association, but in fact there were 97 people who attended this seminar. This study aimed to determine teachers' perceptions in teaching English language strategies to students with ASD. This study used qualitative research methods by describing the results of teachers' perceptions obtained from interview with them. The findings of this study indicated that teachers' perceptions were positive regarding this matter. The data collection method was carried out by interviewing five English teachers randomly. Data analysis was carried out by describing the data from the interviews. The results indicated that the English teacher's perception of this community service activity was positive to increase English teachers' mastery in teaching English language strategies to ASD students so that they can teach with appropriate teaching strategies.

**Keywords:** English Teaching Strategies, ASD Students

### Abstrak

Sangatlah menantang bagi seorang guru untuk mengajar siswa berkebutuhan khusus, misalnya penyandang Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) agar mereka dapat belajar dan mendapatkan pendidikan yang layak. Siswa ASD mempunyai kemampuan komunikasi dan interaksi yang kurang. Hal ini dapat menjadi permasalahan bagi guru dalam proses pengajaran karena penguasaan mereka dalam mengajarkan strategi bahasa Inggris kepada siswa ASD rendah. Mengajar siswa ASD berbeda dengan mengajar siswa lain pada umumnya karena guru bahasa Inggris harus mempunyai pedoman khusus dalam strategi mengajar. Solusi untuk membantu adalah dengan membekali mereka dengan strategi pengajaran yang tepat. Strategi pengajaran adalah struktur, sistem, metode, teknik, prosedur, dan proses yang digunakan guru selama pengajaran sebagai cara untuk membantu siswa belajar lebih baik. Terdapat lima strategi pengajaran pada siswa ASD dengan menerapkan: 1. Total Physical Response (TPR), 2. Pendekatan Contextual Teaching Learning (CTL), 3. Media gambar dengan teknik bermain, 4. RPP sesuai kebutuhan siswa ASD, 5. Metode Perekaman Video Interaktif. Sosialisasi pengabdian masyarakat ini diorientasikan untuk fokus pada strategi pengajaran bahasa Inggris bagi siswa ASD kepada guru bahasa Inggris di asosiasi Musyawarah Kerja Kepala Sekolah (MKKS) SMP Swasta wilayah Surabaya Utara. Sasaran peserta kegiatan ini adalah 40 orang guru SMP dari berbagai sekolah yang tergabung dalam paguyuban namun nyatanya yang hadir sebanyak 97 orang di seminar ini. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi guru dalam pengajaran strategi bahasa Inggris kepada siswa ASD. Kajian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan mendeskripsikan

hasil persepsi guru yang diperoleh dari wawancara dengan mereka. Temuan kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa persepsi guru positif terhadap hal tersebut. Metode pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan wawancara terhadap lima orang guru bahasa Inggris secara acak. Analisis data dilakukan dengan mendeskripsikan data hasil wawancara. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa persepsi guru terhadap kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini positif untuk meningkatkan penguasaan guru bahasa Inggris dalam mengajarkan strategi bahasa Inggris kepada siswa ASD sehingga mereka dapat mengajar dengan strategi pengajaran yang tepat.

**Kata Kunci:** Strategi Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, Siswa ASD

## PENDAHULUAN

Being a teacher is a challenging career in which teachers interact with students from a variety of socioeconomic and intellectual backgrounds. Successful teachers are responsible for not only transferring knowledge, but also for transferring it effectively and successfully (Jabri, 2017). As a result, they also need to possess a different skill known as teaching ability or competence. Competence in teaching is a set of skills that educators must possess, master, and put into practice when carrying out their professional duties. To put it another way, competence is the result of a teacher's knowledge, skills, and behaviors that enable them to operate sanely and responsibly while carrying out their duties. All teachers must have pedagogical competence, personality competence, professional competence, and social competence, according to Permendiknas No. 16/2007. In teacher performance, the four competences are intertwined. It is crucial for teachers to possess these four skills because effective teachers produce good students. It is very challenging for a teacher to teach students with special needs, such as those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in order that they can learn and receive proper education. The ASD students have lack of communication and interaction ability. Furthermore, they have lack of focus and understanding in communication. These can be the problems for the teacher in the teaching process. However, according to law number 8 of 2016 concerning persons with disabilities, they have the right to receive quality education in all types, pathways and levels of education in an inclusive and special manner. In the article 18 it is stated that every person with a disability has the right to accessibility. Furthermore, in the article 40 paragraph 1 it is stated that the Government and Regional Governments are obliged to organize and/or facilitate education for Persons with Disabilities in every pathway, type and level of education in accordance with their authority. In addition, UU no. 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education in article 32 paragraph 1 it is stated that educational services for people with disabilities in higher education can be provided in the form of special education and special education services. According to Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education Regulation No. 46 of 2017 concerning Special Education and Special Education Services in Higher Education in the article 8 paragraph 1 it is stated that higher education institutions facilitate learning and assessment according to the needs of students with special needs without reducing the quality of learning outcomes, and in paragraph 2, it is stated that learning as intended in paragraph 1 can be made in the form of adjustments: a. material; b. tools/media; c. learning process; and/or d. evaluation. Many ASD students have not developed as they are supposed to be and must therefore be supported by special education which fulfills their needs (Parsons et al., 2020). Educational programs for students with ASD are developed through a process of information gathering and consultations to determine the individual learning profile for each student (den Houting et al., 2019). The ASD students have various learning profiles, and not all of them receive a specific method or program of education. In terms of subjects taught, inclusive education theories inform that any students, including ones with special needs, have to be served with the same components of learning subjects with diverse compositions dependent upon students' competences and needs (Friantary et al., 2020).

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is categorized as a neurodevelopmental disorder. It is one of the special education subgroups (Scovel, 2018). It 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). Parmeggiani (2019) also stated that along with repetitive, constrained, and stereotypical habits, interests, and activities, it is marked by difficulties in social interaction and communication. A person who has been identified as having one of the autism spectrum disorders finds it challenging to communicate successfully with others and to decipher his intentions when he talks. He has communication problems, but the problems are typically brought on by linguistic deficiencies, particularly in phonology and syntax (Rowland, 2013). Communication problems are particularly important among those identified in ASD since many of the difficulties faced arise from a lack of communication with

others. (Cattik & Odluyurt, 2017). These difficulties adversely affect an individual's functioning. ASD is usually a lifelong condition (Newcomb & Hagopian, 2018) argued that Autism spectrum disorders are lifelong developmental disabilities that can impact how people understand what they see, hear and otherwise sense. This can result in difficulties with social relationships, communication and behavior. Based on the problem above, education is currently the primary form of treatment for ASD students. Education is one of the milestones of a nation's progress. Education is a means to lead to the growth and development of the nation. Education is also a long-term investment in human resources which has strategic value for the continuity of human civilization in the world. With this education, humans develop themselves so that they are able to face every change that occurs due to advances in science and technology (Wibowo & Pratiwi, 2018). It is an important asset for advancing a nation because the prosperity and progress of a nation can be seen from its level. It plays an important role in creating quality individuals. One part of it that has received attention because it can develop abilities and skills in communicating and thinking critically is an English education, which means it includes English lesson. As the foregoing, English subject is no exception. Once ASD students are thought English, it is also expected that they are guided by their teacher to build up their English communicative competences so that they can take part in English communication as well. English is an international language used by most countries in the world as the main language. Apart from that, it is an international language that is important to master or learn. Even though English is a foreign language in Indonesia, English occupies an important position in society (Maduwu & Pd, 2016). This is clearly visible in the world of education in Indonesia.

English is one of the subjects taught to students from elementary to tertiary level. The Indonesian government starts introducing English as early as possible. Learning English in this digital era should also follow developments in the media used as tools that help facilitate the learning process. A variety of English learning strategies can certainly attract students' interest in learning (Maduwu & Pd, 2016). Therefore, English teacher must also be able to help students well in gaining their knowledge. One of the crucial ways to be taken in efforts to help ASD students is to provide them with proper teaching strategies. Teaching strategies, in this sense, refer to Linguists: Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching Vol. 7, No. 1, July 2021 79 the structures, systems, methods, techniques, procedures, and processes that a teacher uses during instruction as ways to help students learn better. In the field of English education, the subject that has been part of the present study's orientation, teaching strategies play a crucial factor as well, especially in terms of teaching ASD students. With proper English teaching strategies, teachers can help students build up their competences in analyzing, identifying problems, solving problems, and making decisions. Teaching ASD students is of course different from teaching other students in general because the English teacher must have specific guidelines for teaching different skills and strategies. Regardless of specific orientations towards ASD and English education, in terms of teaching students with special needs, there have been a couple of studies working on the issues of teaching strategies. Those studies inform various strategies teachers can apply. For example, according to the study conducted by Tichá, Aberly, McMaster, Avagyan, Karapetyan, and Paylozyan (2018), teachers should use the peer-assisted learning approach (PALS) or peer-tutoring strategy, cooperative learning, direct instruction strategy, and play-based strategy. Aberly and Harutyunyan (2018) advocated for the use of constructive learning strategies in the classroom. Subsequently, there are three studies, which could be identified, that have worked on the issues of teaching strategies for ASD students. Those are the studies conducted by Ikhtiar and Parveen (2023) on Learning Strategies of Autism Children In SLB, Tipton et al. (2017) on parent Strategies for educating ASD children, and (Murray, 2015) on practical teaching strategies for ASD students. However, there is very few or no studies have been undertaken on English teaching strategies for ASD students. As the foregoing, fulfilling such a void is of this study's novelty which provides certain experiential insights concerning a few strategies which could be applied for teaching English especially for ASD students. In this community service, it is oriented to address English teaching strategies for ASD students. Therefore, it is conducted the socialization of teaching English strategies for ASD students to English teachers in the association of Musyawarah Kerja Kepala Sekolah (MKKS) private Junior High Schools in the area of North Surabaya. Based on data obtained from the head of the MKKS Junior High School North Surabaya, there are 40 schools that are members of the association, including: SMP Katolik Anggelus Custos 1, SMP Tamariyah, SMP Kawung 1, SMP Unesa 1, SMP Bina Bangsa 2, SMP Kemala Bhayangkari 6, SMP PGRI 5, SMP Muhammadiyah 11, SMP Tunas Buana, SMP Bina Karya, SMP Hang Tuah 4, SMP Katolik Santo Mikail, SMP Al Ikhlas, SMP At Tarbiyah, SMP Al Irsyad, SMP Al Khairiyah, SMP KHM Nur, SMP Ihyaus Salafiyah, SMP Kemala Bhayangkari 8, SMP Nasional, SMP PGRI 22, SMP PGRI 6, SMP Muhammadiyah 16, SMP

Islam Al Amal, SMP Islam Lil Wathon, SMP Cahaya, SMP YP 17, SMP Katolik Pecinta Damai, SMP Wachid Hasyim 1, SMP Muhammadiyah 15, SMP Taruna Jaya 1, SMP Taman Belajar, SMP Triguna Bhakti, SMP Romly Tamim, SMP Tri Tunggal II, SMP Sasana Bhakti, SMP PGRI 7, SMP Barunawati, and SMP Mujahidin.

From the results of the situation analysis and discussions with partners, two main problems were formulated, including: (1) There is still a lack of knowledge among English teachers who are members of MKKS Junior High School North Surabaya regarding English language teaching strategies for ASD students. The lack of knowledge of English teachers is due to a lack of socialization about English teaching strategies for ASD students due to a lack of expertise and experience regarding English teaching strategies for ASD students. The solution was there should be socialization about English teaching strategies for ASD students. (2) There was still a lack of knowledge among English teachers who are members of MKKS Junior High School North Surabaya about how to implement English language teaching strategies for ASD students. This lack of knowledge was due to the lack of experience regarding English teaching strategies for students with ASD. The solution was there should be the implementation of English teaching strategies for ASD students in order to increase knowledge about English teaching strategies for ASD students and how to implement them. Although this activity was carried out within the scope of English language learning for ASD students, teachers of other subjects could also learn teaching strategies for ASD students and how to implement them if they felt there were similarities. This community service activity was carried out to support the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) which provides students with the opportunity to take credits outside of the study program and encourages universities to continue to innovate learning in the Industry 4.0 era and the Society 5.0 era. Apart from that, this was also an effort to strengthen institutional capacity in achieving Main Performance Indicators (IKU) for higher education, especially IKU 2 (Students Gain Experience Outside Campus), IKU 3 (Lecturers Doing Activities Outside Campus) and IKU 5 (Lecturers' work results are used by the community or receive international recognition). The target of participants were all Junior High School English teachers who are members of the MKKS in the North Surabaya region, totaling 40 participants.

## **METODE**

The community service activity involved preparation, implementation and evaluation. It will be explained as follows:

### **Preparation phase**

The method that was applied in this community service activity was seminar with the following description:

- a. Coordinating with school principals and teachers regarding the implementation of seminar about English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students to English teachers in the association of MKKS private Junior High School in the area of North Surabaya. In this activity, the team explained the aims of the seminar so that they agreed and provided suggestions regarding to the seminar activity and supported the progress of this activity until the end.
- b. Inviting all target partners (Junior High School English teachers who are members of MKKS in the North Surabaya region totaling 40 participants) in the seminar.

The time and place for this community service activity program was held online via Zoom Meeting on Thursday, 20 June 2024 at 09.00-11.30 and carried out for once with the target participants totaling 40 participants.

### **Implementation Phase**

The implementation of the seminar of community service was carried out with a meeting duration of 130 minutes (theory, simulation and discussion) plus 20 minutes which included opening, prayer and ice breaking. This activity is explained in detail as follows:

- a. Before starting the seminar, participants filled out the attendance list. After that, the community service team opened the event and led prayers before the event started.
- b. Team of community service activities led the chants at the seminar. At the first meeting, chants were taught as an icebreaker for English teachers so they did not take themselves too seriously and relax.
- c. The speakers taught English language teaching strategies for ASD students. After the presentation of the material, it was continued with simulations and discussions.
- d. The team interviewed five English teachers to find out their perceptions about English language teaching strategies for ASD students.
- e. Once finished, the event was closed.

f. Activity reports were reported to the school principal

**Evaluation Phase**

Monitoring and evaluation of activities was carried out by:

- a. Monitoring participation, attendance and activeness of participants during the seminar and mentoring activities. Attendance evaluation can be seen from the presence of students in Zoom meeting, while participant activity can be seen from the participants’ interaction.
- b. Monitoring the English teachers’ perception on English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students through community service.

The final evaluation results were expected by the team to find out whether the English teachers’ perception was positive or not on the seminar about English language teaching strategies for ASD students so they could choose and implement the most appropriate one in teaching their ASD students.

**HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN**

The seminar of community service entitled “Strategi Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris pada Siswa Gangguan Spektrum Autisme” was held online via Zoom Meeting on Thursday, 20 June 2024 at 09.00-11.30. The pamphlet of the seminar will be as follow:



Figure 1. Pamphlet of the seminar of community service

Figure 1 indicates the pamphlet of the seminar of community service. The seminar entitled “Strategi Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris pada Siswa Gangguan Spektrum Autisme”. This community service activity was carried out to North Surabaya Musyawarah Kerja Kepala Sekolah (MKKS) Junior High School teachers, on June 20 2024 at 09.00-11.30 through online seminar via Zoom Meeting. This activity is entitled “English language teaching strategies for students with autism spectrum disorder”. It was Intended for all North Surabaya Musyawarah Kerja Kepala Sekolah (MKKS) Junior High School teachers (especially English teachers) and students at Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya. It is hoped that they will understand kinds and the characteristics of disability students and English language teaching strategies used for disability students (especially for Autism Spectrum Disorder students) with the aim of increasing their mastery to teach English to their ASD students in order that they could implement the appropriate English language teaching strategies to teach them.

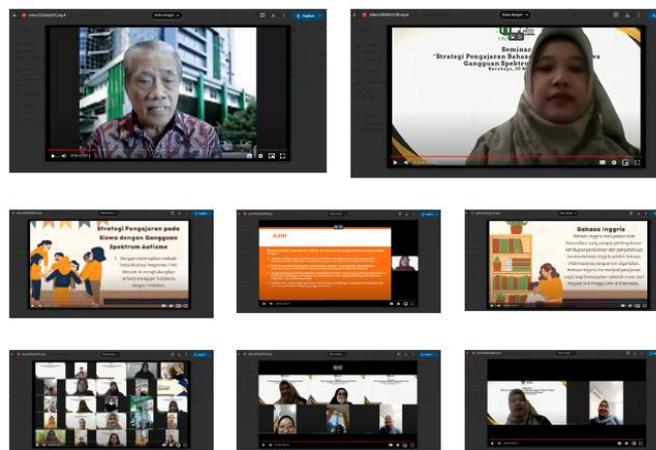


Figure 2. Seminar of community service

Figure 2 indicates the material delivery during seminar of community service entitled “Strategi Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris pada Siswa Gangguan Spektrum Autisme”. It was attended by 97 North Surabaya MKKS Junior High School English teachers. For the material itself, it was delivered directly by Tiyas Saputri, S.S., M. Pd. and Machmudah, S. Psi., M. Psi. From the figure above, it could be observed that the English teachers were enthusiastic in implementing Jamboard application and it was not difficult for them to implement it. They could follow the workshop from the beginning until the end.

The results that have been achieved in implementing community service included:

1. The English teachers’ participation, attendance and activeness of participants during the seminar and mentoring was good.

The target of the participants at first was only 40 people but in the reality, there were 97 North Surabaya MKKS Junior High School English teachers joined seminar through Zoom meeting. It can be seen from the attendance list. There was an increase of participations totally 57 people. They were so enthusiastic to join the seminar English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students. They were so active to join the seminar starting from the beginning until the end of the seminar. They were active to ask questions dealing with the topic as they faced some problems handling the ASD students at school.

2. The English teachers’ perception on English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students through community service was positive.

According to the interview data to five English teachers involving five questions taken from recording, it can be obtained that after asking the first question, “Do you have any passions and desires to succeed in English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students?”, they answered “Yes, I do”. It means that they have passions and desires to succeed in English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students. After asking the second question, “Do you have an encouragement and a need to learn English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students?”, they answered “Yes, I do”. It means that they have an encouragement and a need to learn English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students. After asking the third question, “Do you have any hopes and aspirations in the future to learn English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students?”, they answered “Yes, I do”. It means that they have hopes and aspirations in the future to learn English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students. Even most of them stated that they hope they could master English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students well and implement it to their ASD students in the class. After asking the fourth question, “Do you think using English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students will be effective in teaching English for the ASD students?”, they answered “Yes, I do”. It means that they think that using English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students will be effective in teaching English for the ASD students and they will get more knowledge and master to teach them. After asking the fifth question, “Do you think English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students can create a conducive learning environment in English learning?”, they answered “Yes, I do”. It means that they think that using English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students can create a conducive learning environment in English learning. It could be made a summary that all of them were positive to learn English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students.

After the community service activity with the title "English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students" was carried out, the next step was to monitor and evaluate the progress of English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students. This monitoring and evaluation were based on observations of whether or not the 97 English teachers have implemented English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students or not in the classroom. Until now, monitoring and evaluation is still carried out on the English teachers. If necessary, the seminar about English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students part 2 will be carried out again to increase their mastery on English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students.

## SIMPULAN

The results of this community service activity were that the English teachers’ participation, attendance and activeness of participants during the seminar and mentoring was good and their perception on English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students through community service was positive. The next community service activity about English Teaching Strategies for ASD Students will be held again but in another type of disability students so that it is varied which of course can be beneficial for Junior High School English teachers to increase their mastery on English Teaching Strategies for disabled students.

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