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INCLUSIVE ENGLISH EDUCATION: EMPOWERING LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH COOPERATIVE LEARNING APPROACHES

Hidayah Nor*

hidayahnor@uin-antasari.ac.id

(corresponding author)

Nur Asiah

nurasiah@gmail.com

Saadillah

saadillahelhady302@gmail.com

Universitas Islam Negeri Antasari

Banjarmasin, Indonesia

Abstract: This research aimed to explore effective cooperative learning strategies for learners with disabilities and identified the challenges teachers face in implementing these strategies in the classroom. A qualitative descriptive approach using a case study design was utilized for data collection, including observations, interviews, and documentation analysis. The collected data was analyzed deductively. The participants of this research were four English teachers and six disabled students of SMAN 4 Banjarbaru, South Kalimantan. The findings of this study revealed that teachers employ various cooperative learning strategies such as NHT (Number Head Together), Jigsaw, Round Robin, and STAD (Student Teams Achievement Divisions) to support students with disabilities. However, teachers encounter specific obstacles in implementing these strategies, including the unique characteristics of each student with a disability, requiring individualized adaptations. This implies that teaching and learning approaches for students with special needs cannot be standardized, and personalized attention and active involvement from both the teacher and other students are crucial for optimal learning outcomes.

Keywords: cooperative learning, inclusive English education, disabled learners, learning strategies

Introduction

In Indonesia, English-language instruction has been practiced for a long time. Although it is a foreign language in Indonesia, English plays a key role and is taught in every school. Therefore, one of the government's main focuses is to implement strong English education. Unfortunately, the English educational system still has a way to go, especially in accommodating students with disabilities. Despite having a distinct approach model from students in general, there are few English language education models designed specifically for persons with impairments, which is evidence of this. It is the same as separating us if we do not concentrate on improving education for students with disabilities.

Nguyen (2012) estimates that the number of English language learners has grown by about 50% during the past ten years. According to Amka (2019), South Kalimantan's schools now use inclusive pedagogy due to local government policy. The majority of administrators are in favor of implementing inclusive education, the majority of teachers are open to working with children with disabilities, and the majority of parents of typical students support the inclusive idea. The Regional Office of the Social Department of South Kalimantan Province (2018) reports a considerable increase in population, including 19.621 students with special needs throughout the entirety of South Kalimantan. They also considered the significance of creating particular strategies for persons with specialized education plans and English language learners. Teachers must look for and use strategies that may effectively address and meet the demands of English language learners due to Indonesian students' growing creative and linguistic

diversity. Mason (2006) contends that clear strategies must be implemented for children to succeed. When working with English language learners (ELLs) with disabilities in the classroom setting of mutual education, various skills and interventions must be demonstrated. One type of intervention that has been demonstrated to be beneficial is cooperative learning techniques (Kagan, 1994).

These types of English language learners who try are not just confined to speakers of a single language; rather, the many types of English language learners who challenge come from various languages. Albus et al. (2004) and Liu et al.'s study (2005) both found that ELLs with disabilities, particularly Hmong and Latino students, had the worst academic achievement and participation ratios on statewide exams of educational success that were required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Due to a substantial number of issues, students with impairments become demotivated. Abedi et al. (2008) report that people with learning disabilities struggle to maintain their enthusiasm for academic pursuits. Many students who fit this description lose their confidence and become unsatisfied. Students' motivation levels start to decline when they experience a loss of confidence and emotional distress. According to Baker et al. (1996), motivation greatly impacts how readers and writers develop their skills. Additionally, they pointed out that studies have shown that gaps in motivation can result in inequalities in achievement within Latino homes, regardless of the financial situation or the parents' educational background (Baker et al. 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield 1997).

The growing prevalence of disability among English language learners is acknowledged by Planty, Hussar, Snyder, Provasnik, Kena, Dinkes, and Kewalramani (2008). According to Abedi et al. (2008), a significant component of this linguistically and culturally diverse student group is made up of ELL students. This suggests that a sizable portion of this cohort's students are still working toward being fluent in English and come from various cultural backgrounds. They include the requirement for tailored language assistance, culturally sensitive instruction, or tactics to promote inclusion and productive learning among students with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. For educators and legislators to design more inclusive and productive learning environments, they must have a thorough understanding of the dynamics of this group.

This study intended to offer more information, statistics, and advice for teachers on how to enhance the learning environment for children who are English language learners with disabilities. According to Abedi et al. (2008), English language learners with any impairment need particularly tailored training to suit their language learning and disability-related needs. This research gathered data to provide information on cooperative learning strategies and student motivation. There are many strong arguments in favor of continuing this investigation. The first finding is that ELLs with disabilities have increased significantly. Padmadewi and Artini (2017) claim that the demographic of ELLs with impairments has recently increased and is currently prevalent in schools around Indonesia. More research must be done to accommodate and help the increasing number of students. Additionally, as ELLs with impairments encounter various difficulties in the classroom, this topic merits further investigation. Nguyen (2012) looked at the challenges English language learners with impairments face when trying to learn in a formal educational setting. For the students to succeed greatly, educators must implement various classroom tactics to motivate and engage students. ELLs with disabilities and all teachers will gain from this research.

For ELLs with impairments, a lack of desire is a concern. However, they also need help dealing with an abundance of different sources. The causes that put these kids in jeopardy of failing their academic attempts are looked into by Paneque and Rodriguez (2009). Additionally, they point out that students with two or more risk factors are more likely to fail their academic courses. Alternative educational approaches must be employed in addition to conventional teaching strategies to fulfill the requirements of students with disabilities and students who do not speak English (Paneque & Rodriguez

2009). English language learners with disabilities are viewed similarly by Liu and Barrera (2013). They observed that students with impairments in grades K -12 grew in importance. Liu and Barrera (2005) looked at the difficulties faced by English language learners with disabilities in learning the language while still having to prove their academic proficiency.

The effectiveness of several cooperative learning strategies is the main emphasis of this study, which examines how strategies can benefit English Language Learners (ELL) with disabilities. What makes this study new is that it has two goals: first, it evaluates the particular cooperative learning methods that work well for this intersectional group, highlighting the strategies that could improve their education. Furthermore, another objective is to elucidate teachers' difficulties and challenges while implementing cooperative learning techniques designed for English Language Learners with disabilities. This study provides thorough understandings and workable answers that can greatly aid in the educational support and inclusion of these distinct students by addressing the potential advantages and real-world obstacles.

Literature Review

Cooperative learning tools must be used for students to study well in this setting. However, these strategies assist ELLs with disabilities and benefit students in mainstream education settings. These cooperative learning strategies result from higher exam scores, better confidence, more engagement, and increased motivation (Clark 2008). Students can learn to take leadership roles in their teams through cooperative learning, a skill that Williamson and Null (2008) argued can be used outside of the individual classroom to prepare students for life as democratic citizens. They also offered advice on how teachers can create an innovative and responsive atmosphere to students' interests. Collaborative learning practices can benefit teachers and students in many ways. One way is to help low-level readers. Another appropriate learning approach that benefits teachers and students is for students to participate actively in the learning process. According to Williamson and Null (2008), numerous parents, teachers and citizens agree that education should be individualized, that students should not be compelled to listen to lectures throughout every class, and that teachers should respect the particular needs of all children.

An investigation of students' knowledge of bonding was carried out by Acar and Tarhan (2008) through the use of cooperative learning methods in their research. The kids reacted positively to the interviews, showing they had a strong sense of community and were well-connected. The students engaged in fruitful debates while exchanging thoughts and information (Acar & Tarhan 2008). Cooperative learning is an active learning strategy and it may lead to improved academic performance and social skills. According to Williamson and Null (2008), cooperative learning allows students to learn from their professors, classmates, and themselves. When it comes to cooperative learning, teachers must be creative in their approach; it is a tool that interests students as they collaborate with their colleagues. It is the student's responsibility to be responsible for their learning (Williamson & Null 2008).

According to Williamson and Null (2008), cooperative knowledge is the best method to enhance formal instructional opportunities. Cooperative learning allows youngsters to interact with others who share their interests, increasing their power. In addition, Williamson and Null (2008) also stated that most teachers have recognized that scholars need to be deeply worried about the topic they are reading to be successful. According to their findings, lively involvement promotes better levels of processing and mastering, permitting students to generate more significant connections. In another study, Fayon et al. (2010) concluded that student performance may be improved through learning community models (cooperative learning). It contains positive results such as establishing self-supporting communities, active participation and expanded learning experience, and perseverance, among other characteristics.

According to Grenier and colleagues (2005), cooperative learning strategies encourage students to work together while enhancing their excitement for learning. Children and young people with disabilities may additionally discover ways to interact with one another in order to help them accomplish their psychomotor, cognitive, and emotional desires through cooperative studying sports. Clark (2008) carried out a study wherein college students were requested to judge how well cooperation within the classroom functioned along with a check, and the results were published. According to Clark (2008), when students were assessed in a cooperative learning setting, they showed more positive emotions than when they were not. Her students were pleased with their capacity to help one another with classwork and proud of themselves. She discovered that children's discussions might be expanded to include their parents and teachers in the learning process, which was a significant learning experience. Cooperation-based knowledge of groups can create excessive degrees of achievement among students while fostering meaningful ties. In step with Clark, cooperative gaining knowledge in an assessment environment is encouraged for numerous reasons.

Research has demonstrated that cooperative learning benefits general education students and may also benefit English language learners with disabilities. As Kim et al. (2012) pointed out, collaborative learning can benefit all students, regardless of their race, ethnic origins, physical or mental disabilities, educational level, or other characteristics. Cooperative learning may be helpful for students of all ages and backgrounds. The findings of Millis (2002), who agrees with Kim et al. (2012), related to students acquiring clearer ideas, attitudes, and opinions toward one another and towards their peers as a result of cooperative learning. Individuals of diverse ethnicities, nationalities, educational levels and medical problems were represented among the students who attained this objective using cooperative learning methods (Millis, 2002).

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative method as a case study to examine whether different Kagan (1994) strategies engaged and motivated English language learners with impairments. The reason for choosing the case study was that the researchers wanted to explore the implementation of cooperative learning strategies. This study also emphasizes how difficult it is for teachers to put cooperative learning ideas into practice. There were three elements to the instructor component that were conducted separately. A semi-structured interview with the English teacher was used to perform the study. The teacher's interview lasted 20 minutes in school, and it was a face-to-face interview to get detailed information about implementing cooperative learning strategies for students with disabilities. An English teacher was considered an interviewee because she had experience teaching students and had difficulties explaining the aim of the research.

In addition, the study's methodology included observations of the classroom, interviews with the participants' teachers, and documentation of the teaching and learning process. This is qualitative research since the study aims to clarify how a target audience behaves and perceives a certain topic. This study was carried out at SMAN 4 Banjarbaru. For some reason, the researcher sought data from this particular school. The first justification is that this institution is one of the inclusive schools, meaning that students with disabilities are catered for at this senior high school. Furthermore, an exploratory, descriptive approach was chosen for the inquiry. In this study, information from both teachers and students, as well as observation data and documentation, were all utilized. These assessments aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention's methods and the motivation, engagement, and teacher perceptions of Kagan techniques when applied to ELLs with impairments. Regarding data validity, the researcher's first responsibility is to ensure that the participants are safe while maintaining a professional demeanor and acquiring the data necessary for the study. While observing the activities

of teachers and students, the researcher made a concerted effort to maintain as much professionalism and silence as possible in the classroom.

In order to maintain the students' natural behavior as though the researcher had not been there, careful observations were made to record how the students were acting. This required secretly filming their conversations, activities, and reactions to reduce any impact or awareness that they were being watched. This would have provided a more accurate picture of their usual conduct in that situation. This technique ensures that the researcher's presence does not unintentionally change the children's behavior, which helps preserve the study's integrity.

The data in this study were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) model, which was done in the following ways: data condensation, data display, conclusions, and data verification. In the data condensation, the researcher used the collected data to identify themes, patterns, and information that should be written more extensively while discarding information deemed superfluous. In order to provide simpler and more chosen data, this study's data condensation process involved interviewing and direct observation of the English teacher who used cooperative learning methodologies to teach students with disabilities as well as describing the difficulties she faced. Meanwhile, in the data display, following the gathering of information about the difficulties encountered in implementing cooperative learning strategies, the researchers presented and thoroughly explained the findings of their observations and interviews. Finally, in the conclusions and data verification, the researcher made conclusions regarding the implementation and difficulties of cooperative learning strategies. The researcher also thoroughly reviewed and verified the data to ensure the information was valid, reasonable, strong, and confirmed

Findings

According to the teacher, the cooperative learning approach was selected to allow students with special needs to be more engaged, collaborate with classmates of a typical age, and develop social skills and other abilities. There is no doubt that this differs from special education programs, like special school, where the focus is on teaching students how to be independent and self-sufficient.

Types of Cooperative Learning Strategies Used in Teaching the Learners with Disabilities

English teachers have employed Numbered Head Together (NHT), Jigsaw, Round Robin, and Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) as examples of cooperative learning techniques. Kagan (1994) initially established the TGT-type of cooperative learning model, the basis for the NHT-type of cooperative learning model (numbered heads). One of its unique features is group learning via work completion and idea exchange. The objective is to enable a common understanding of the topic across all students to guarantee simultaneous comprehension; each group needs to ensure that every member is proficient in the activity. In this study, each group member using the NHT type has to make sure the students with disabilities in their group comprehend the activities assigned and are encouraged to talk and share ideas.

Using the NHT approach, the teacher forms six groups with four to five students, and everyone sits in a circle. The teacher then presents the subject or content for discussion. The teacher requests that they converse and exchange thoughts regarding the subject matter. Students with disabilities are positioned in the middle of the group by the teacher or group leader using the NHT approach, which allows the students to concentrate on learning from their peers and the group members to give closer attention to the disabled student. All group members will take part in discussions and group activities in this way.

This method has several advantages in a cooperative learning setting, particularly for students with disabilities. When students with disabilities are seated in the middle

of the group, their classmates can actively participate in and support their learning while also giving them a concentrated learning environment. With this arrangement, everyone is welcome to participate in conversations and activities and is encouraged to be inclusive. The NHT method fosters a cooperative and inclusive learning environment that benefits the entire class and the students with disabilities by encouraging participation, shared learning, and encouraging relationships.

The second strategy is a jigsaw, in which the teacher gives each group leader instructions to go with the disabled students in their groups so that they can stay seated in the first group and hear explanations from other groups when they come to explain. Using the Jigsaw approach, the teacher splits the class into five or six groups, each with four or five students. The teacher gathers all students with the same number to form a single group. The next step is to give each group distinct resources to study and become proficient. They will then disperse to different groups in order to provide important information. Those with disabilities will fall under the group leader's responsibility.

Students with disabilities will receive a thorough and concise explanation of the topic from them. When other group members disperse to share materials with other groups, the group leader and the disabled members stay together in their group. When other groups arrive, the group leader will assist students with impairments in simplifying their content and explaining the material presented by other groups. This setting helps kids in their groups learn how to collaborate and take accountability seriously to successfully complete the group's tasks. In the end, this strategy fosters an atmosphere in which all students, including those with disabilities, get tailored help, actively participate in group projects, and acquire inclusive and collaborative skills that are critical for both social and academic advancement.

The round-robin method begins with group formation, has students sit in a circle, and ends with the teacher posing a question with multiple-choice answers or a topic for brainstorming. This technique is typically used as a warm-up before the session begins in the Round-Robin system. After breaking the class into many groups, the teacher will quiz each group on the previously covered topic. The group leader and other participants will ensure that the students with disabilities in their group remember the prior material and comprehend the teacher's questions so they can still participate in answering questions. The teacher will set a timer for the group's time, and each member will answer questions. This method promotes an inclusive and supportive environment where all students, including those with disabilities, may contribute, learn, and interact effectively. It also encourages active involvement and retention of previously learned content.

The researcher discovered during the study that teachers also used cooperative learning strategies of the STAD kind. Using STAD, teachers can form a multi-ability team and have them practice learning ideas and skills together. Class presentations, teams, quizzes, individual progress scores, and team recognition are the five primary components of STAD. Following the instructor's explanation of the content, the students were split into multiple study groups. The instructor then assigns both group and individual quizzes. Group members confirm that the students with disabilities have comprehended the information the teacher has explained or reexplained the material understandably. Additionally, it assists students with disabilities in engaging actively in group tests. This approach is particularly beneficial for disabled children who, on their own, have flaws, restrictions, or learning challenges because it places them in groups.

Students' learning achievement increased with implementing the STAD approach, particularly for those with disabilities. This approach facilitates students' knowledge acquisition and understanding from multiple sources beyond instructor explanations and textbooks. In order to implement cooperative learning, the instructor must conduct the following actions: set goals and inspire students; provide information; divide the class into study groups of five to seven students; offer advice; assess the groups that performed well; and award the winning group.

Active learning, which includes cooperative learning, can make learning more successful; cooperative learning may be an alternative. Student cooperation is prioritized in cooperative learning to meet learning goals. Cooperative learning can shift the focus of the teacher's duty from instructing students in large groups to controlling them in smaller groups. In addition to being useful for teaching complicated content, cooperative learning methods also support teachers in achieving learning objectives related to human relations and social dimensions. Through active participation in educational activities in group settings, cooperative learning offers students many advantages to improve their skills.

English teachers employ cooperative learning techniques in inclusive classrooms, including Jigsaw, NHT, STAD, and Round-Robin. Students utilize NHT to exchange thoughts, perceptions, and ideas regarding the subject matter or subjects the teacher covers. The round-robin method fosters solidarity and teamwork among participants, particularly those with disabilities. Jigsaw is used to help students learn how to concentrate on taking in and processing information, as well as how to strengthen their memory and simplify the content they have learned. Utilizing STAD helps individuals and groups focus on success. The application of STAD consists of multiple phases and goals, such as teaching students how to learn information fast, honing their comprehension of the material through group projects and quizzes, enhancing student cohesiveness and performance on their own by using knowledge and insights from their peers.

Challenges Faced by English Teachers in Implementing Cooperative Learning Strategies for Students with Disabilities

The teacher must adjust to each student's unique demands because there are many individuals with special needs. They should take responsibility for the students' diversity. This implies that treating a special needs student differently than teaching and learning activities is not the same. For instance, children with visual and auditory impairments handle learning assistance differently. Numerous special needs children, including deaf, blind (poor vision), slow learners, cancer patients, medium speech impaired, and others, have attended SMAN 4 Banjarbaru, according to the results of the interviews. SMAN 4 Banjarbaru still has eight active special-needs students. In addition, the English instructor stated that working with deaf students presented the biggest obstacle to the variations among each child with special needs. This is a result of teachers' varied levels of sign language proficiency.

It is known from the interviews that teachers frequently have to visit special needs children's homes to drop off and pick up their assignments. This happens in students with unique requirements, like those with cardiac conditions. Limitations combined with the child's physical infirmity make it extremely uncommon for children to attend school. As a result, the teacher sees the student frequently.

There are some challenges that the teachers face when providing education through home visits for students with special needs, such as time and travel restrictions, unique needs, scarce resources, difficulties in the home environment, parental engagement, teaching consistency, cooperation and communication, and safety concerns are some of the factors that can cause problems. In order to effectively address these issues, it is necessary to plan and communicate with parents and caregivers efficiently, allocate resources, and provide teachers with the training they need to modify their teaching strategies to fit a variety of home circumstances while still meeting their children's educational goals.

In the meantime, the group leader is especially asked to remind other students especially those in the group that includes students with special needs—of the online learning schedule in case other special needs students are not as engaged during the session. This is especially important for the teacher to manage. According to the teacher's account, it is not unusual for students with special needs to stop participating in online learning if the class leader neglects to remind them. As can be seen from the

above description, the teacher keeps a close eye on the progress of the students in the group who have special needs to create a proactive reminder system for all students. Also, the teachers utilize Google Meet, Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Classroom, and other online learning tools.

Providing individualized support, timely interventions, adjusted learning materials, frequent communication, progress tracking, accountability promotion, supportive environment building, and a proactive monitoring system for students with special needs can greatly increase their engagement and participation in online classes. Proactive monitoring systems are essential tools that teachers use to support students individually, keep them engaged, and ensure that students with special needs are included in online learning environments. Its efficacy is contingent upon the teacher's capacity to effectively evaluate data, modify instructional practices in light of the findings, and consistently communicate with caregivers and students.

Discussion

The cooperative learning model used a structured system in groups or when building teams. The group comprised three or more individuals with varying backgrounds, including gender, color or ethnicity, and academic standing. One of the features of cooperative learning was that students are assigned assignments to do in groups to meet learning objectives. These groups of students included those with high, low, and intermediate success levels. Nonetheless, it is well known that during the pandemic, schools had always used online video programs like Zoom, Google Meet, and others, or e-learning materials to conduct distance learning. Meeting in person is challenging, let alone completing the assignment in groups.

According to the researcher's perspective and experience, the cooperative learning paradigm is still applicable and efficient during the pandemic. Since students' primary gain from cooperative learning is increased self-esteem, this benefit encourages students to engage in the learning process (Johnson & Johnson 1989). Student collaboration can improve the performance of those involved (Slavin 1987). Therefore, this cooperative learning style is crucial for pupils as it helps to foster a sense of teamwork among students and can raise student achievement overall.

According to this study, teachers' greatest obstacles when working with inclusive classrooms were the variations in the traits of typical students and the inadequacies that students with disabilities confront. For instance, if students in a class have low vision, the teacher needs to know how to educate them so that their limitations do not hinder them. For example, writing and reading techniques are less useful when used on youngsters with impaired eyesight. Children with limited vision may benefit more from lecture techniques, class presentations, group projects, and oral assignments.

Suppose there are students in the class who are also medium speech impaired. In that case, the teacher encounters an additional challenge because the teaching strategies typically differ from those employed with low-vision students. Group work is, therefore, the best technique to teach individuals with disabilities. Because of their flaws, people may initially be reluctant and low self-esteem to work in groups (Glazzard 2011). Nonetheless, they were excited to study in groups because of the teachers' and the other group members' support.

Group work significantly impacted the development of communication skills, social interaction, a supportive environment, peer learning, differentiated learning, increased engagement, and peer support for children with speech impairments. Even though students with speech difficulties can benefit immensely from group work, educators must foster an inclusive and accommodating environment. This entails supplying the required tools, modifying the activities to accommodate various needs, and promoting efficient communication between all group members. Teachers should also make sure that every student, regardless of communication skill level, feels that their contributions are valued and acknowledged (Seary & Willans 2020).

As previously mentioned, the reality frequently faced in the field was that every student with a disability has unique qualities and weaknesses. Naturally, how the teacher handles and pays attention to students also differs. The researchers discovered in this investigation that the educational institution arranged for a maximum of one or two disabled students to be enrolled in every inclusive class. With just one kind of student with a handicap in the class, this should make it simpler for teachers to manage and focus more efficiently. Together with helping other typical students adjust, it will also help with class management.

Conclusion

NHT (Number Head Together), Jigsaw, Round Robin, and STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Divisions) are a few examples of cooperative learning strategies teachers utilize with students with disabilities. Incorporating cooperative learning practices for students with impairments might be difficult for teachers because of special needs-child's differences. It implies that each disabled student has a unique character, and the instructor must adjust to the particulars of those characters. Children with special needs demand specific attention and handling, which calls for teachers to be more engaged in their classrooms. This means that how one special needs child is handled differently than how another special needs child is handled in the context of teaching and learning activities.

This study emphasized how important it is to modify instructional strategies to meet the unique requirements of students with disabilities within an inclusive English education framework. It highlighted the importance of providing each student with tailored attention, which means that educators should adapt their lesson plans and forms of assistance to meet the various learning needs of their pupils. This customized approach could entail modifying course materials, providing specific assistance, or using various teaching techniques based on the skills and difficulties of each particular student.

Furthermore, the study emphasized how crucial it is for students to participate actively—not just from their teachers but also from their peers. Every student contributed to creating an atmosphere that supports and accommodates their peers who have impairments in an inclusive setting. Classmates could be actively involved by helping out, encouraging diversity, and creating a welcoming environment that promotes student engagement and teamwork.

Ultimately, this research highlighted that the best learning outcomes for disabled students in inclusive English education settings were attained when active involvement and personalized attention were used. Active involvement involved teachers and students helping created a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. This method sought to optimize each student's potential for growth and success, irrespective of their aptitudes or impairments.

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