The Vocabulary Learning for Slow Learners

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Abstract. This research happens due to some difficulties that slow learning children face in studying vocabulary in the 3rd grade primary school at Akasa Center Surabaya as a research subject in this case. It also aims to recognize the slow learners' evaluation of the vocabulary learning process and uses a qualitative method, particularly in study cases. The data was collected by observing students and interviewing the therapist in Akasa Center Surabaya. The data sources were video recordings during the learning process, audio recordings during the interview, and the learning evaluation. Then, the data were analyzed using the data analysis method by Miles and Huberman, which has four steps: data collection, reduction, data presentation and explanation, and conclusion. The result of this research showed the process of learning vocabulary to the slow learners by giving a book in terms of introducing vocabulary and word cards through playing games. Moreover, the learning evaluation revealed that the vocabulary of slow learner students in the 3rd-grade primary school at Akasa Center Surabaya is not optimal, so it needs a new medium, a fable book called Adible.

Keywords: Learning · Vocabulary · Slow learning children

1 Introduction

A special needs child is a kid who has a limitation mentally, intellectually, emotionally, or physically. According to the data from Statistic Center Department in 2017, the number of special needs children is up to 1.6 million in Indonesia, and one of them is a slow learner. Slow learner children mean that child has a low intellectual ability and a minimum IQ of around 70 to 90 [1]. They also have a normal physical appearance, but their intelligence is below the standard [2].

Slow learners are a condition of children with below-average cognitive capacities who are not included in the disability category but are quite tough to adapt to academic demands. IQ Capacity Children with slow learning are different from mentally retarded children. Slow learners have an IQ of 70–90 [3] while mentally retarded children have an IQ of less than 70. Slow learners need more time to understand learning. In addition, the criteria for slow learners from one another cannot be beaten evenly. So, it is often found that learning adapts to the characteristics of slow learners is not the other way around. Slow learning children have normal physical characteristics as children in general but

have below normal intellectual abilities [4] so in receiving vocabulary learning they have difficulty.

Among the characteristics of slow learning, children have difficulty concentrating, have low memory, forget easily, cannot do complex tasks, and are slow in mastering academic skills of reading and counting [5]. In addition, slow learners also experience obstacles in the academic and social fields [6]. They have difficulties understanding language skills, numbers, and concepts in academic life due to their limited IQ. In the social area, slow learners tend to be insecure because they feel isolated from other children who are quicker to understand learning material.

Learning has urgency related to the activities carried out in the child's learning process that has been systematically arranged according to the child's learning needs so that it requires teaching materials that are easy, precise, and appropriate when used in learning. In addition to teaching materials, other elements support learning, such as teachers, children, materials, books, methods, and adequate facilities [7]. Thus, it can be called learning if a process of interaction between teachers and children is formed between learning resources and learning environments are formed. Furthermore, learning interprets as a form of activity from educators to children in order to gain knowledge, insight, and attitude formation. Learning becomes a bridge between educators and students in changing knowledge, understanding, and behavioral attitudes. Then, the results obtained from education are in the form of changes from ignorance to knowledge and implementation in everyday life.

Learning is also correlated with vocabulary, which is often called vocabulary. According to Aulina [8] is a word or phrase that has a particular meaning. In this case, the vocabulary is more focused on the amount of vocabulary a person owns. Therefore, vocabulary cannot be separated from the four language skills, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking [9]. Children are able to increase their vocabulary, which will indirectly affect speech and communication. Children will be more fluent in speaking and communicating with others.

This kind of research has been carried out by previous researchers, as was done by Darmanto in 2022. This research has the same target: children who are slow learners but the objects studied are different, yet previous researchers studied universal learning assistance. Then there is a study in 2022 by Sulistyowati which has the same thing, namely vocabulary, but the intended target is different Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Meanwhile, this research focuses on vocabulary learning and slow learners. Thus, this research contributes new things since it provides different object studies and targets.

The purpose of this study was to determine the vocabulary learning process for slow learners and obtain the results of the evaluation of vocabulary learning for slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya.

2   Methods

This research was conducted at Akasa Center Surabaya, a therapy center for Children with Special Needs (ABK) located on Jalan Kebraon V, Kebraon, Karangpilang, Surabaya, East Java. It is a strategic position since it is close to the highway, so it is used as a reference for parents to treat their children. This therapy institution handles various ABK, most of which are classified as slow learners. Slow learners at Akasa Center

Surabaya are aged 6–12 years or equivalent to grades 1–6 elementary school, with most of the slow learners sitting in grade 3 elementary school.

Slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya have unique cognitive characteristics. It takes a long time to understand the lesson linguistically, namely pronouncing words and articulation and auditory-perceptually. In other words, they hard to recall objects seen and write down what is remembered; visually-motors prefer visual media, and socially-emotionally their moods are volatile. In addition, they have difficulty understanding the lesson due to lack of focus, lazy reading, and lack of vocabulary. There are 12 therapists at Akasa Center Surabaya, with three therapists who specialize in dealing with slow learners. Each therapist has a background of ABK education graduates with expertise in handling children who are deaf, mentally disabled, slow learners, learning difficulties, and have autism.

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a case study approach. The research subjects came from eight slow learners in grade 3 elementary school with three therapists. The technique of collecting data is through observation with data instruments in the form of observing vocabulary learning activities taking place and the results of their evaluations. Moreover, the interviews with data instruments are in the form of concept questions about the vocabulary learning process and the assessment results. Furthermore, the data instrument was reviewed for video and audio recordings as well as transcription of audio recordings to be analyzed using Miles and Huberman data analysis, in the form of data collection, reduction, and presentation, to conclude.

3   Results and Discussion

3.1   The Vocabulary Learning Process

Based on observations and interviews that have been carried out, vocabulary learning for slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya is established with two face-to-face meetings in an hour for a week. While learning vocabulary, the therapists used teaching materials in the form of media books, namely a special vocabulary introduction book for slow learners of levels 1–10 (Fig. 1).

The book is the main book for slow learners in grade 3 learning vocabulary. This book contains vocabulary, phrases, single sentences, and stories of only 3–4 sentences. The difficulty level in the vocabulary introduction book for slow learners varies depending
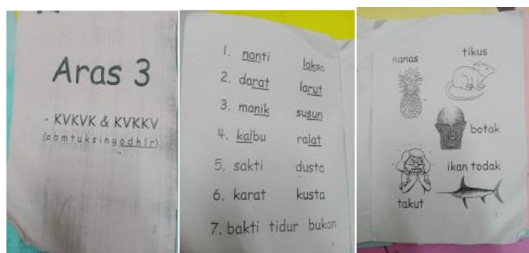

Fig. 1. Vocabulary Special Book.

on the level of slow learners at Akasa Center Surabaya. Besides using teaching materials in the form of textbooks, the therapists also use other media such as word cards.

Learning vocabulary for slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya consists of three activity processes: opening, core, and closing. The opening activity is carried out at the beginning, which contains activities that can build children's enthusiasm and provide motivation. After that, the core activities are adjusted to the PPI (Individual Learning Program). In the process of learning vocabulary, children are given a special vocabulary book. New children who join in grade 3 are given a word card first. The word card contains the alphabet to basic vocabulary. Moreover, children are asked to read the writing on the word card either sequentially or randomly.

The process of learning vocabulary is done by reading it repeatedly. After the child is asked to read a special vocabulary book based on its level, they asked to read again from the writing on the paper that the therapist has prepared. Its function is to aid children in remembering the vocabulary that has been read in the previous book. For the closing activity, which contains an evaluation, is related to the core activities that have been carried out in the form of questions that review what has been taught by providing practice questions in the form of reading exercises as homework assignments. The application of game methods such as monopoly, daikon, snakes and ladders is made by the therapist based on the state of the child's mood during learning. If the child's mood is not good, they do not want to learn formally using vocabulary book media. The therapist uses the game method. It is intended that the vocabulary learning process can still be done as a game method.

3.2   The Evaluation Results

At Akasa Center Surabaya, the scoring system is not in the form of numbers or grades but in the form of a narrative written by the therapist in each child's contact book. The therapist also provides an assessment in the form of a narrative about what has been achieved and its motor skills.

The book will be delivered to the child's parents so that the role of parents is also needed in learning vocabulary at home. From observations and interviews that have been done, it shows that the results of the evaluation of slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya are still low.

Based on the results of this evaluation, the learning media used by therapists are still ineffective in increasing the vocabulary of slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya. They need new media in the form of Adible fable books (Audio Movable). The book is present at the complaint and request of the therapists. Adible's fable book is a book containing fables that were innovated using the concept of a movable audiobook. This fable book hopes to provide alternative solutions for therapists in order to increase vocabulary and add motivation to learning for slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya.

The audible fable book (Audio Movable) was selected based on the initiation of partners with a reviewing team research based on needs analysis and literature study. This book contains an original fable story presented linguistically, with 3D visuals, audio, and movable images to facilitate the vocabulary learning process for slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya. The quality of the stories that are

published adapts to the characteristics. It considers the needs of slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya, starting from the determination of diction, the number of sentences, font of writing, type of writing, and illustrations to be made. The fable story was chosen because it can shape children's character early [8]. Furthermore, reports categorized as one type of fairy tale can improve children's speaking skills, instill various values and ethics in children, and create a sense of empathy and sympathy in children [9]. The audio in this book consists of four key features, namely: (1) On/Off tools to turn the audio; (2) Next Previous to move the recorded sound; (3) Pause to pause the sound; and (4) to repeat the sound.

The advantage of Adible's fables compared to other fable books is the combination of audio and movable concepts. It is added in this book so that slow learners can listen to vocabulary, sentences, and stories repeatedly. Considering that one of the obstacles for slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya is low memory, which makes it easy to forget, the concept of audio is needed to overcome this problem. In addition, the movable idea in this book consists of pop-ups, namely image objects that are displayed in 3D. The transferable concept means moving, i.e., object images of animal figures can be moved manually. The use of the movable concept was chosen to increase learning motivation for slow learners in grade 3 SD Akasa Center Surabaya. The existence of illustrations that are also adapted to the characteristics and needs of slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya. It also adds to their interest in reading for more than five minutes, as is the problem faced by the therapist. The usefulness of the Adible fable book has multiple benefits, for example, increasing vocabulary, attracting learning motivation, improving memory, teaching good moral values, training social attitudes, facilitating imagination, and exercising motor skills when moving the movable.

4   Conclusion

According to the previous explanation, it can be concluded that the vocabulary learning process for slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya uses a special book for introducing vocabulary. Furthermore, it is delivered by collaborating with some games, such as monopoly, *daikon*, and snakes and ladders. Then, the evaluation results of the learning process showed that the vocabulary of slow learners in grade 3 elementary school at Akasa Center Surabaya was not optimal, so there was a need for new media in the form of Adible (Audio Movable) fable books.

Authors' Contributions. Author 1 is in charge of collecting data, writer 2 and 3 are in charge of analyzing the data. Then, writer 4 and 5 are in charge of expressing ideas in the form of articles, and writer 6 is in charge of checking the grammar and format of the article.

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