



## THE USE OF THE WORLD WALL PICTURES MEDIA IN IMPROVING AUTISTIC STUDENTS' VOCABULARY AT A MATARAM STATE SPECIAL SCHOOL

Novia Suriyani<sup>1\*</sup>; Yuni Budi Lestari<sup>2</sup>; Atri Dewi Azis<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,  
University of Mataram, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: [nsuriyani22@gmail.com](mailto:nsuriyani22@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Vocabulary is the first step that must be learned in learning English. Everyone has the right to get education without exception including autistic students. This study aims to describe teachers' use of the word wall pictures in improving autistic students' vocabulary. The population was all autistic teachers and the sample was two autistic teachers at a Mataram State Special School. Samples were taken by using Purposeful sampling. The research used a qualitative research method which implemented a case study approach. The study found that the teachers employed some techniques of using the word wall pictures media to improve autistic students' vocabulary. Brainstorming, model, listen and repeat, and practice are some techniques of using the word wall pictures media to improve autistic students' vocabulary. The study also revealed that the use of the word wall pictures media was effective in improving autistic students' vocabulary.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is a bridge that helps the progress of a country so that all Indonesian citizens have the right to education without exception. With education, a teacher can form a movement of the younger generation who has a high fighting spirit in the process of preparing for a higher quality education world. Every single human has the right to get education, including children with special needs, especially those with autistic. Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder that is initially characterized by the presence of a disorder that will appear before the child is 3 years old (Azwandi, 2005, p. 13).

Vocabulary is the first step that must be learned in learning English. Vocabulary plays an important role in shaping language. To acquire a language, one must master the vocabulary and be able to understand the meaning of the vocabulary so that from the vocabulary, someone can form a sentence that is used to share information. However, not everyone can easily manage language and express it, one of whom is an autistic child.

To support the learning process for children with special needs, the government has provided special schools. A teacher must be able to choose learning that is suitable for their students to support a more effective learning process. According to Heinich et al., (2001), to impart information and direct a learner's study, a method, media, and technology are required. Several studies have shown that selecting appropriate media in teaching is one of the interventions that is believed to influence the success of teaching and learning vocabulary (Safitri et al., 2022).

According to an autistic teacher at a Mataram State Special School, there are many learning media used by teachers such as printed pictures, flashcards, puzzles, bracelet towers and others. After the researcher observed, the printed pictures and flashcards were small. This makes autistic students a little movement to touch, see and understand the meaning of the picture. It is relevant to Adenubi (2004) who states that media can be divided into different categories, such as print, non-print, audio, audio-visual electronic, non-electronic, and so forth. Another study also showed that word wall pictures, flashcards and songs can be used as media



of teaching (Ekayanti et al., 2020), considering what is being faced in this school. Having the theoretical and empirical support for the use of word wall picture media, the researcher decides to use word wall pictures to overcome autistic students' problems related to vocabulary learning.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The researcher used a qualitative research method by applying a case study approach. All data and information in this research were collected through observations and interviews to find out whether word wall picture had an effect on autistic students' in improving their vocabulary at a Mataram State Special School. According to Fraenkel et al., (2009, p. 13), a case study is a qualitative method that focuses on one important individual, group, or situation to develop interpretations for that particular instance or to make a helpful generalization. To support this research, there were some instruments used to get the data and information such as interviews, observations and a camera. As qualitative research, this research was only an explanation of findings and this research was not obtained through statistical procedures.

This research involved all autistic teachers at a Mataram State Special School as the population of the study. The sampling method used was purposeful sampling. According to Cresswell (2012, p. 206), Purposeful sampling is a sampling technique designed to select purposively the sources and individuals to learn from or comprehend. There were 4 autistic teachers at a Mataram State Special School but the researcher only took two teachers to be used as the sample in this study because autistic students would feel uncomfortable if taught by other teachers.

The supporting instruments to be used to collect the data and information were observation and interview. According to Bungin (2007, p. 118), observation is an approach to gathering research data that relies on observation and sensing. In this case, the observation would conduct by observing word wall pictures in improving autistic students' vocabulary. In observation, the researcher observed all the process of teaching and learning from the beginning until the end. Researcher focused on observing the English teachers in teaching, the interaction between English teachers and autistic students, and all of the activities in the class as focus on this research.

Moreover, Bungin (2007, p. 111) states that an interview is a process that involves face-to-face questioning between an interviewer and the informant or interviewee, with or without the aid of an interview guide, to gather information for research purposes. The interview questions were about word wall pictures that teachers used, then whether the word wall pictures media was effective to improve autistic students' vocabulary.

Instruments of data collection as Purwanto (2018, p. 24) proposed, are tools used for collecting the data. Research instruments would determine the validity of the research results. In this study, observation sheets, interview sheets and a camera were used as the instrument of data collection.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

The research was conducted on November 21st – 30th. It included observations of the learning process and interviews with autistic teachers. According to the observations and interviews with the two autistic teachers (Participant 1 and Participant 2), they did not only explain vocabulary to autistic students, but they also taught them to speak and write using word wall pictures to improve their vocabulary. The interview was conducted face to face. Each participant got the same question that should be answered.



Furthermore, the following area of research findings came from the observation and interview of the two autistic teachers regarding how the teachers' use of the word wall picture media and how the students' responses to the teachers' use of the word wall pictures media.

### ***The Teachers' Use of the Word Wall Picture***

In the observation and interview, participants 1 and 2 gave 15 vocabulary words about parts of the body by using word wall pictures media to improve autistic students' vocabulary. From the data, it was found that participant 1 used brainstorming, listen and repeat and, practice. While participant 2 used model, listen and repeat and, practice. According to the result of observations and interviews, it can be concluded that there were four ways word wall picture media could be explored for improving autistic students' vocabulary. They were as follows:

#### **1) Brainstorming**

Based on interviews and observations, participant 1 used brainstorming with word wall picture media as the first step to improve autistic students' vocabulary. It might be seen from the results of observation and interview below.

##### Extract 1

*P1: First, I do brainstorm. They mentioned their body parts in their first language (Indonesian) and then used English while showing a word wall picture. They could guess that the picture shown was a picture of the eye.*

From the interview, participant 1 used brainstorming to help provide an imagination related to the vocabulary to be given to autistic students. This is related to the observation that participant 1 gave imagination of names of parts of the body while mentioning the function.

#### **2) Model**

Based on interviews and observations, participant 2 used model with word wall pictures media as the first step to improve autistic students' vocabulary. It might be seen from the results of observation and interview below.

##### Extract 2

*P2: First, model. The teacher becomes an example, mentions, and verbalizes the word wall picture.*

From the statement, participant 2 made himself a model. He gave examples of saying and verbalizing vocabulary to provide the best knowledge for their students. This is related to the observation that participant 2 touched his part of the body while mentioning the names of parts of his body, then participant 2 touched again his part of the body and asked the students.

#### **3) Listen and Repeat**

Based on interviews and observations, participants 1 and 2 used to listen and repeat as the second step when implemented word wall picture as teaching media for improving autistic students' vocabulary. It might be seen from the data gathered through observation and interview below.

##### Extract 3

*P1: I mention one of the body parts and then the students repeat what I said using English. After the introduction of body parts, they already remembered, and when asked to touch their nose, they held them.*

*P2: second, listen and repeat, students imitate what I said.*

From these interviews, participants 1 and 2 had the same ways in using word wall picture media for improving autistic students' vocabulary. It was relevant to the observation that participants 1 and 2 asked the student individually to mention the names of parts of the body. If there was an incorrect answer, participant 1 would give the correct answer, and the student would repeat what Participants 1 and 2 said. Participants 1 and 2 repeated the activity until the students understand.

#### **4) Practice**

According to the result of the interviews, participants 1 and 2 used practice as the last step and implemented word wall picture in their teaching as a media for improving autistic students' vocabulary. Practice was carried out to see how far the students' understanding. It might be seen from the data gathered through observation and interview below.

##### Extract 4

*P1: After that, I move to practice, such as speaking and writing, and then they do a match of the picture and the word. It could see how far they understood.*

*P2: lastly, I gave small practices such as touching parts of the body and matching the pictures and the words to see their understanding*

From interview above, it showed that participants gave autistic students practice in the form of matching pictures with words. This method could help the students recognize the parts of their bodies more quickly where it is related to Extract 5.

##### Extract 5

*P1: If there are no media, they will have difficulty learning. On average, autistic students cannot to speak, so the students used pictures as media to speak. For example, if they want something, they will give me a hand picture. So, it means that the students try to speak using the picture.*

*P1: These word wall pictures have bigger images. It is more clear and legible, and also it could be used for games. This made the students very enthusiastic because they could see and touch the pictures, so I made games such as stick and pair, and gradually I added pictures, so the games could increase their vocabulary even more.*

*P2: The picture is semi-concrete, and the text is semi-abstract. The thinking character of the students in our class is average thinking is concrete. The stage of cognitive development is at the stage of concrete development, so using the semi-concrete could help the students. If we don't use pictures directly with text, children jump from their original character state, and it could make the students difficult to understand the material.*

From this statement, it was known that the pictures are semi-concrete while the thoughts of the autistic children in the class are, on average, in the concrete stage of cognitive development, so the pictures that used by the teacher were very helpful in improving autistic students' vocabulary. This was relevant to the observation, participants 1 and 2 asked autistic students to match the picture with the word. When participants 1 and 2 showed a picture of one part of the body, the students directly touched and named the part of his body that matched the picture. If the students look bored, participants 1 and 2 asked them to sing the names of parts

of the body. This activity could support autistic students in practice, memorizing, and, writing vocabulary because it could make autistic students enjoy the process of learning.

## **Discussion**

This part discusses the findings of observation and interviews about some theories that fit the findings. Introducing English vocabulary to autistic students is essential because vocabulary is the basis of lessons before comprehending the English language. Cameron (2001, p. 71) states that an essential component of learning a foreign language at the primary stage is developing a useful vocabulary.

Autistic teachers only focused on teaching vocabulary. There were two students with autism in the autistic class, they were 17 years old. They had learned English before because in their school they had English subjects to improve their language. Teaching vocabulary to autistic students was not easy because they had many characteristics that we cannot guess. The autistic teacher should choose appropriate techniques for teaching vocabulary to autistic students. It is relevant to Heinich et al., (2001), who state that to impart information and direct a learner's study, a method, media, and technology are required. Learning methods play a so crucial role through the process of learning whether inside or outside classroom. So, there were four ways the teachers' use of the word wall pictures to improve autistic students' vocabulary such as brainstorming, model, listen and repeat, and practice.

### ***The Teachers' Use of the Word Wall Picture***

There are four ways how teachers use' the media of word wall picture for improving autistic students' skill in enriching their vocabulary, as follows:

#### **1) Brainstorming**

Data observation and interview showed that teacher used brainstorming to train the imagination and critical thinking of students by giving a small hint so that students can imagine and think critically, which could improve the students' vocabulary. It is relevant to Roestiyah (2008, p. 74) brainstorming is a kind of method in collecting ideas in a large number in a short time from a group of people. Thus, Sakillah (2011, p. 136) states that this brainstorming is an inventory of ideas generated through brainstorming on certain topics freely without selection. So, this method required the teacher to be able to provide problems that could stimulate the students' minds to respond or express their opinion.

#### **2) Model**

Based on observation and interviews, the teacher gave an effective model for the learning process. The teacher as a model could help students to see direct examples of the part of the body, so this could help the students to have a direct image of the vocabulary. It is relevant to Komalasari et al., (2011, p. 176) who state that, modelling is a learning process that involves cognitive processes through observation of observed behavior, either by adding or subtracting the behavior or by generalizing various observations at once. From this statement, the teachers as models or examples during the process of learning could help autistic students see the model used for learning, which helped the students to strengthen their imagination.

#### **3) Repeat and Listen**

Listen and repeat techniques could be implemented in learning to listen, speak, or read. In this learning technique, the teacher said any word, and the students would listen carefully. Then the teacher would say the word again, and then they would be asked to repeat what the teachers have said. Teachers could also be started listen-and-repeat activity by asking their students to imitate an utterance of the word, then the phrase and then a simple sentence. This is also related to Suyanto's theory (2007, p. 88) which states that in the listen-and-repeat technique, the teacher will say any word and the students will just

listen. Then the teacher would say it again, and then the students will be asked to repeat the word that the teacher has said.

#### 4) Practice

Practice was used by the teachers to measure the autistic students' comprehension of the material. The teachers used this strategy before beginning the material, in the middle of the learning process to measure understanding of the materials and at the end of the lesson. Giving questions to students could help teachers measure their abilities. It is related to Suyanto (2009), who states that the question-and-answer strategy is suitable to check students' abilities and teach students how to ask questions and answer.

Based on the explanation above, autistic teachers combined the technique into six meetings in one material. The teachers combined suitable ways with the word wall picture media based on vocabulary that was used. This combination of these word wall pictures used for teaching vocabulary helped autistic students improve their vocabulary.

Brainstorming with model ways, both ways have the best correlation in teaching vocabulary, and the strategies would make autistic students try to think and imagine. Both ways would be supported by listen and repeat. After the teachers gave autistic students an image, the autistic students could see the teacher's part of the body. They then tried to mention the names of parts of the body by listen and repeat until they understood. After that, listen and repeat, combined with practice. These ways could support the students' ability to memorize pictures and words. The teachers used a song and matched the picture and word as practice. Before playing games, the teachers explained to students the materials used, and then they played. This could make it easier for the students to memorize vocabulary.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the results found, there were several ways teachers' use of the word wall pictures media to improve autistic students' vocabulary. The first technique is brainstorming to stimulate the students. The second way is modelling by giving examples. The next one is listening and repeating to strengthen the students' memory, and finally practice to measure the understanding of the students.

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