

# **CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN BOJONEGORO**

**SKRIPSI**



Presentasi to  
IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of sarjanah in English Education

**By:**  
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**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTEMEN  
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND ARTS EDUCATION  
IKIP PGRI BOJONEGORO  
2025**

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2025**

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Bojonegoro, 15 July 2025

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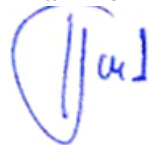
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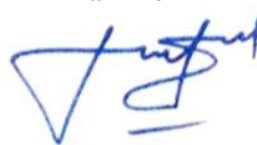
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## MOTTO

**“Ihsan ala may yangfauka, Wastainu Billah walaa ta’jaz.,wa, Faa  
innamaalusri Yusraa. Inna maal usri yusra”**

Bersungguh-sungguhlah untuk mendapatkan apa yang bermanfaat bagimu dan  
mintalah pertolongan kepada Allah (dalam segala urusanmu) serta janganlah  
sekali-kali engkau merasa lemah. dan, maka sesungguhnya beserta kesulitan pasti  
ada kemudahan

(hr. muslim & al-insyrah:5)

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## STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

Name : ALVIN ELOK SURAYA  
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In order to uphold academic integrity, sincerely and without coercion from any parties, I hereby declare that the thesis entitled:

### CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN BOJONEGORO

Is the result of my own original work, and all sources of information used have been clearly cited in the reference list according to the scientific and academic code of ethics. I am aware that if any violations of scholarly ethics regarding to the authenticity of this work are found, **I personally** accept the consequences in accordance with the applicable regulations and am prepared to bear legal sanctions.

Bojonegoro, 15 July 2025



Alvin Elok Suraya  
NIM 21120050

## ABSTRACT

Suraya, Alvin. Elok., (2025). Challenges and Strategies in Teaching English at Special schools Bojonegoro. Thesis, English Education Departement, Faculty of Languages and Art Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Advisors: (1) Meiga Ratih Tirtanawati, M.Pd. Advisor, (2) Chyntia Heru Woro Prastiwi, M.Pd.

**Key word** : challenges theaching, learning strategies, English language, Deaf and mute, SLB

English language learning in Special Schools (SLB) has its own complexities, especially when teaching students with special needs such as deafness and speech impairment. Teachers at SLB face various unique challenges that differ from general English language learning, so special strategies are needed to ensure the learning process remains effective. This study aims to identify the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English to deaf and speech-impaired students, as well as to analyze the learning strategies applied to overcome these challenges. This study uses a qualitative approach with a multiple case study method conducted at SLB Negeri Sunbang and SLB-B Putra Harapan Bojonegoro. Data was collected through classroom observation, in-depth interviews with English teachers, and analysis of learning documents. The results of the study indicate that the main challenges faced by teachers include limitations in verbal communication, a lack of appropriate learning media, and difficulties in adapting learning materials. Strategies implemented by teachers include the use of sign language, engaging visual media, multisensory learning methods, and individualized approaches tailored to each student's characteristics. This study contributes to the development of more effective English language teaching methods for students with special needs at SLB.



## ABSTRAK

Suraya, Alvin.Elok., (2025). Challenges and Strategies in Teaching English at Special schools Bojonegoro. Thesis, English Education Departement, Faculty of Languages and Art Education, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Advisors: (1) Meiga Ratih Tirtanawati, M.Pd. Advisor, (2) Chyntia Heru Woro Prastiwi, M.Pd.

**Kata kunci :** tantangan mengajar, strategi mengajar, bahasa inggris, tuna rungu dan wicara, SLB

Pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di Sekolah Khusus (SLB) memiliki kompleksitas tersendiri, terutama saat mengajar siswa dengan kebutuhan khusus seperti tuna rungu dan gangguan bicara. Guru di SLB menghadapi berbagai tantangan unik yang berbeda dari pembelajaran bahasa Inggris secara umum, sehingga strategi khusus diperlukan untuk memastikan proses pembelajaran tetap efektif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi tantangan yang dihadapi guru dalam mengajar bahasa Inggris kepada siswa tuna rungu dan gangguan bicara, serta menganalisis strategi pembelajaran yang diterapkan untuk mengatasi tantangan tersebut. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus ganda yang dilakukan di SLB Negeri Sunbang dan SLB-B Putra Harapan Bojonegoro. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara mendalam dengan guru bahasa Inggris, dan analisis dokumen pembelajaran. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa tantangan utama yang dihadapi guru meliputi keterbatasan dalam komunikasi verbal, kurangnya media pembelajaran yang sesuai, dan kesulitan dalam menyesuaikan materi pembelajaran. Strategi yang diterapkan oleh guru meliputi penggunaan bahasa isyarat, media visual yang menarik, metode pembelajaran multisensori, dan pendekatan individual yang disesuaikan dengan karakteristik masing-masing siswa. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan metode pengajaran bahasa Inggris yang lebih efektif bagi siswa berkebutuhan khusus di SLB.

## **PREFACE**

Firstly, the researcher expresses gratitude to Allah SWT for His blessings. Secondly, salutations to our Prophet Muhammad SAW. The researcher has completed this thesis. The title submitted by the researcher is “Strategies and Challenges Teaching English at Special School in Bojonegoro”. The researcher also thanks the following parties:

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Background of The Study**

Education is a fundamental right of every individual without exception, including students with special needs. This is emphasized in Law No. 20 of 2003 Article 5 paragraph (1) concerning the national education system, which states that "every citizen has equal rights to obtain quality education." This statement becomes the state's responsibility to provide equitable educational services, regardless of social, economic background, or physical and mental conditions. Education is not merely about knowledge transfer but also character building, skill development, and instilling values as provisions for the future. Therefore, providing equal access to education is crucial for citizens, including persons with disabilities.

According to Law No. 20 Article 3, "the purpose of education is to educate the nation's life and develop students' potential to become faithful, pious, noble, and skilled individuals who benefit themselves and society." This statement reflects Indonesia's educational philosophy that is not only oriented toward cognitive aspects but also emphasizes holistic personality formation integrated with spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social values. To achieve these educational goals, adaptive and responsive learning approaches are needed to meet the needs and characteristics of students, including those with special needs. The integration of various innovative methods, strategies, and learning media becomes crucial to facilitate optimal learning processes for every student, regardless of their physical or psychological conditions. With the right approach for them, particularly those with disabilities, they have equal opportunities to demonstrate their talents and potential Mika & Mardiana,(2023), enabling them to contribute positively to society according to their abilities.

To realize educational service needs for persons with disabilities, Bojonegoro Regency has a national education system, namely Special Schools (SLB) included in the special education category, provided by the government, with legal basis Law No. 8 of 2016 Article (10) concerning persons with disabilities stating "persons with disabilities have the right to receive inclusive education or special educational institutions." Based on Indonesian school directory data, there are 12 SLBs located in Bojonegoro Regency, East Java, consisting of 7 (58.33%) government-owned SLBs and 5 (41.67%) private ones, including SLB Negeri Sumbang and SLB-B Putra Harapan which are the focus of this research. These special educational institutions play important roles in providing educational services adapted to the characteristics and specific needs of students such as intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments, speech disorders, and other conditions.

In today's globalization era, everyone can communicate with anyone both domestically and internationally, and one international language that can be used is English. Mika & Mardiana, (2023) state that currently, globalization or free markets make everyone must be able to compete to obtain quality resources. Therefore, English becomes very important. Mastering English should be considered as important provisions for future success. However, many students still experience difficulties due to lack of practice in daily life. This also applies to children with special needs, such as students with hearing and speech impairments, because English opens opportunities for them to access global information, expand knowledge, and increase their opportunities in education and future careers (Fakhrunnisa et al., 2023). By mastering English, students with special needs can more easily interact with people from various countries and feel more independent in facing global challenges.

However, in implementing English learning in SLB, students have many specific



challenges, especially those with hearing and speech impairments due to their limited abilities. One of the main challenges is vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary is a basic element in English learning because without mastering it, students will also have difficulty in reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Tirtanawati, 2021). Additionally, difficulties in understanding words and communicating are often found in hearing-impaired students who tend to have difficulty acquiring foreign languages due to limited auditory input, requiring visual aids, sign language, and digital technology approaches (Olszak & Borowicz, 2025).

In Bojonegoro, not many SLBs have implemented these approaches maximally, indicating an urgent need to evaluate the teaching strategies used. This is one of the important components that becomes an obstacle for students with hearing and speech impairments. This difficulty occurs because hearing-impaired students do not have language perception. On the other hand, speech-impaired students have difficulty expressing words and sentences verbally, which hinders them from interacting and communicating effectively in society (Marzal, 2014).

Besides students facing challenges in the learning process, teachers also face various obstacles in developing English teaching strategies. This is due to the mismatch between students' abilities in following the learning process. Therefore, teachers are required to design appropriate learning strategies so that the teaching and learning process continues to run effectively. Teachers need to develop methods that can meet individual student needs in SLB. Learning methods are one of the important elements determining the success of the independent learning process. The selection of methods and implementation of these strategies cannot be separated from teachers' ability to design learning (Hariyadi et al., 2021), considering the differences in each student's abilities and learning styles. Learning must be structured with a structured yet flexible

approach and able to adapt to student characteristics. The implemented strategy must be able to support the creation of optimal learning experiences and maintain the continuity of the learning process. In this context, research by Suharsih, (2022) reveals that the most widely used learning approaches are contextual teaching learning and expository.

Research by (Syukri & Humaera, 2019) Syukri & Humaera (2019) shows that the use of visual media such as flashcards and posters increases learning motivation among students with special needs in understanding English vocabulary contextually. Other research by Ponce et al., (2024) in Ecuador identifies that teachers' limitations in special training hinder the effective English teaching process for students with hearing and attention disorders. Sayfullaevna & Mukhamedjanovna, (2025) also found the importance of adapting sensory and visual-based teaching methods for students with hearing impairments to accelerate foreign language understanding.

International research by Stalmach et al. (2023) shows that the use of digital technology such as educational applications can also strengthen the learning process for students with special needs. In research (Fitas, 2025) also suggests the integration of AI-based technology and Augmented Reality (AR) to create inclusive learning environments and support more active student interaction. Meanwhile, (Takriyanti, 2022) through systematic literature review concludes that SLB teachers in Indonesia still lack training and resources in teaching foreign languages, and need multisensory and individual-based approaches.

However, most of these studies are still general and have not specifically examined local contexts, such as in Bojonegoro Regency. Yet each region has different cultural characteristics, resources, and local policies that can influence

learning strategies. Therefore, this research is very important to explore challenges and English learning strategies at SLB Putra Harapan and SLB Negeri Sumbang.

Based on the above description, this research is conducted with the aim to comprehensively identify the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English at Special Schools (SLB) in Bojonegoro, specifically at SLB Negeri Sumbang and SLB-B Putra Harapan, as well as to explore innovative strategies that have been developed and implemented by teachers in overcoming challenges, both from internal and external factors that hinder the learning process. The exploration focus includes learning approach strategies, utilization of media and learning technology suitable for hearing and speech-impaired characteristics.

SLBN Sumbang (Sekolah Luar Biasa Negeri Sumbang) is a public special needs school located at Jl. Patimura No.28, Ledok Kulon Dua, Sumbang, Bojonegoro District, Bojonegoro Regency, East Java 62115. As a state educational institution, SLBN Sumbang was established to provide quality special education services for students with special needs in the Bojonegoro region and surrounding areas. The school operates under the auspices of the East Java Provincial Education Office and follows the national curriculum that has been adapted for the needs of students with special need

SLBN Sumbang serves various types of special needs including hearing and speech impairments (tunarungu), intellectual disabilities (tunagrahita), physical and motor impairments (tunadaksa), emotional and behavioral disorders (tunalaras), and autism spectrum disorders. As a public institution located in Bojonegoro Regency, the school is equipped with comprehensive facilities compared to private special schools, including specialized therapy rooms, multimedia learning equipment, walking therapy facilities, accessible infrastructure, and a well-equipped library with visual learning

materials.

This research has significant urgency both in academic and practical contexts, considering the still limited literature that specifically examines English learning for hearing and speech-impaired students in the Bojonegoro region, which has major characteristics and challenges. In the academic context, this research will contribute to developing a body of knowledge regarding foreign language pedagogy for learners with special needs, particularly in educational settings with limited resources. Meanwhile, in the practical context, the research results are expected to serve as references for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in designing more targeted interventions to improve English learning quality in SLB.

Based on the above description, the researcher is interested in conducting research on **"Challenges and Strategies for Teaching English at sepecial school Bojonegoro"**. This research is expected to provide significant contributions to developing effective and inclusive English learning methods for students with special needs in Bojonegoro Regency.

## **B. Identification of the problems**

Based on the bacground of the study,the wirter formulates some problems as follo

1. What are the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students at SLB Negeri Sumbang and SLB-B Putra Harapan Bojonegoro?
2. What learning strategies are implemented by teachers to overcome challenges in teaching English so that the learning process remains effective for hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students at SLB Negeri Sumbang and SLB-B Putra Harapan Bojonegoro?

### **C. Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the reseach are listed below:

1. To identify and describe the challenges in teaching English to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students at SLB Negeri Sumbang and SLB-B Putra Harapan Bojonegoro.D
2. To analyze the learning strategies implemented by teachers in facing challenges to maintain effective learning in the English teaching process for hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students at SLB Negeri Sumbang and SLB-B Putra Harapan Bojonegoro..

### **D. Significances of the Study**

Besed on the reseach objectives above,usefulness or brnefits or tabned.The benefits of this reseach are as follows:

#### **1. The teorictical Significance**

This research provides theoretical contributions to the development of inclusive English learning approaches for hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students in Special Schools (SLB). Through analysis of teaching strategies used by teachers, this research expands understanding of how adaptive learning models can be effectively implemented in real contexts. These findings enrich individual learning theory by emphasizing the importance of using visual media, supported sign language, and learning technology adapted to students' sensory conditions. Furthermore, the results of this research also strengthen the view that teacher readiness and understanding of student characteristics are determining factors in the success of inclusive education. According to Gunjawate et al.,(2025) , the quality of education for children with hearing impairments depends greatly on teachers' ability to adjust their learning methods and strategies. Therefore, this

research is expected to serve as a theoretical reference for curriculum development, teacher training, and instructional design that is responsive to the diversity of learners' needs.

## **2. Practical Significance**

### **a. For SLB Teachers**

This research can serve as a reference in designing English learning strategies that suit the characteristics of hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students, providing guidance for designing more adaptive learning strategies to meet the needs of hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students. Through findings related to challenges and implemented strategies, teachers can evaluate and develop methods such as using visual media, sign language-based approaches, and integrating assistive technology in English teaching.

### **b. For Hearing-Impaired and Speech-Impaired Students**

This research provides important contributions for hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students as the main recipients of adaptive English learning processes. Appropriate teaching strategies are expected to help students understand vocabulary and English structure, increase learning motivation, and strengthen confidence in communicating actively in class.

### **c. For Schools and Educational Institutions**

The results of this research can be used as a basis for developing teacher training, curriculum development, and procurement of visual-based learning facilities that are more friendly to special needs. These findings can also be used as consideration material in formulating policies to improve the quality and inclusivity of English education in SLB.

## **E. Definition of Terminologies**

### **1. Challenges (in Teaching English in SLB)**

Challenges in the context of special education refer to obstacles or constraints faced by teachers in the process of teaching English in Special Schools (SLB), particularly for hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students. These challenges can be internal and external, such as minimal teacher training, lack of teaching media suitable for student characteristics, and inappropriate curriculum. According to Isroani et al., (2024), challenges faced by SLB teachers include differences in student learning styles, communication barriers between teachers and students, and minimal professional training in English teaching strategies for students with disabilities. These challenges often arise due to teachers' lack of understanding of inclusive learning strategies and students' limited exposure to oral or written English (Hamasaheed & Abdulrahman, 2023). In the context of SLB Bojonegoro, these challenges are caused by minimal utilization of assistive technology and professional training programs.

### **2. Strategy (in English Learning in SLB)**

English teaching strategy is defined as a series of approaches and methods used by teachers to deliver material to students with the aim of improving understanding and language skills. In this context, these strategies must be adapted for hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students, involving the use of visual media, interactive technology, and multisensory approaches. According to Wardah et al., (2023), strategies

such as sign language, subtitled videos, explanations with body movements, and pictorial vocabulary reinforcement are very effective for students with communication barriers. Strategies that combine visual symbols, gestures, and digital technology can increase active participation of hearing-impaired students in English learning (Sari & Putro, 2021). In this research, teaching strategies are viewed as teachers' responses to existing challenges, aimed at improving participation and understanding of English by SLB students.

### **3. Hearing-Impaired and Speech-Impaired Students**

The term hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students refers to learners who experience barriers in hearing and speaking, causing limitations in communicating and receiving information. Hearing-impaired refers to someone who has lost hearing ability significantly, while speech-impaired students are those who experience disorders or barriers in speech organs that affect verbal production (Knoors & Marschark, 2014). Both conditions require learning methods that are not only oral-based but also visual, kinesthetic, and symbolic. They need alternative communication such as sign language or symbol-based applications to understand lessons, especially in learning English.

### **4. Special School (SLB)**

Special School (SLB) is a formal educational institution specifically designed for students with special needs, such as hearing-impaired, speech-impaired, visually impaired, intellectually disabled, and other types of disabilities. SLB provides curriculum and learning methods that have been



specifically adapted to suit the characteristics and needs of students. According to Amaliyah et al.,( 2025), the success of inclusive education implementation and adaptive curriculum in Indonesia is greatly influenced by teacher competence, flexibility in developing learning programs, and collaboration between schools and parents. In the context of this research, SLB plays an important role as a space for teachers to implement innovative strategies in teaching English to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students. SLB is not only a place of learning but also an environment that supports social growth and effective communication through visual, multisensory, and context-based learning approaches.

## **5. English Language**

English as a foreign language (EFL) is a subject taught in Indonesia to equip students with global communication skills. In Special Schools (SLB), EFL learning has its own challenges due to students' sensory limitations, especially hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students, who require different approaches from regular learning. According to Amaliyah et al., (2025), the lack of adaptive curriculum and insufficient visual methods are the main obstacles in English learning in SLB. Teachers need to implement strategies such as using visual media, supported sign language, and context-based exercises so that material can be received more easily. In the context of this research, EFL is understood not only as a mandatory subject but also as a means to open access to inclusive global information and communication for students with special needs.

## **6. Visual Media**

Visual media is a learning aid that conveys information through visual elements such as images, illustrations, videos, animations, or illustrated printed media. In the context of education for hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students, this media becomes the main tool that replaces verbal or auditory communication functions. The use of imaginative images, contextual narratives, and consistent visual grammar can improve understanding of sentence structure and writing abilities of hearing-impaired students in English learning (Chomicz, 2025). In this research, visual media is used by SLB teachers to convey vocabulary, explain grammar, and build learning interactions that can be accessed by students with verbal communication limitations. Effective use of this media not only clarifies material but also creates active engagement and confidence in the learning process.

## **7. Multisensory Learning**

Multisensory learning is an educational approach that involves a combination of various senses such as sight, hearing, touch, and movement to strengthen students' understanding and information retention. In the SLB context, this approach becomes very important because hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students experience limitations in accessing information auditorily. The use of multisensory approaches in English learning can improve concentration, vocabulary understanding, and active participation of students with special needs (Hamasaheed & Abdulrahman,

2023). Techniques such as visual games, hand signals, tactile manipulatives, and interactive digital media become effective methods in creating a fun and inclusive learning environment. In this research, multisensory approaches are analyzed as one of the key strategies used by SLB teachers in Bojonegoro to overcome communication barriers and bridge differences in student learning styles.

## **8. Sign Language**

Sign language is a communication method that combines oral or written English with the use of hand signals that reflect word meanings. This method is widely used in learning for hearing-impaired students because it facilitates simultaneous understanding of meaning without completely relying on auditory input. Sign language plays an important role in bridging students toward understanding English structure while maintaining the visual connection needed for learning (Hamasaheed & Abdulrahman, 2023). In this research, sign language is used by teachers as an adaptive strategy to deliver vocabulary material, class instructions, and simple conversations. This approach allows students to engage actively despite having speech or hearing barriers and helps them transition toward stronger reading and writing abilities.

## **9. Language Accessibility**

Language accessibility is the extent to which content, instructions, and learning media can be accessed and understood by all students, including hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students. In the context of

special education, accessibility involves not only providing material in text form but also in visual, gestural, and other assistive technology forms. Language accessibility in English teaching for students with hearing impairments depends greatly on visual adaptation, material simplification, and consistent use of sign language to support understanding and participation (Anaba, 2023). In this research, language accessibility is understood as a key to the success of English learning strategies in SLB, where teachers must design approaches that are responsive to communication barriers faced by students. This effort reflects the principles of inclusivity and equity in education.

#### **10. Learning Adaptation**

Learning adaptation refers to the adjustment of strategies, media, content, and assessment by teachers so that the learning process suits individual student needs. In SLB, this adaptation is important because differences in student characteristics are very large, especially in terms of language reception and expression. Forms of adaptation can include task simplification, use of nonverbal media, or providing additional time to understand instructions (Beal et al., 2024). In this research, learning adaptation becomes part of teachers' strategies in facing communication challenges and auditory input limitations of hearing-impaired and speech-impaired students. By making adaptations, teachers can create an equal learning environment and encourage student involvement in the English learning process.