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## Investigating Keyword Method in Teaching English Vocabulary for Junior High School with Special Needs Student

Triska Ernita Siregar  
*Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang*

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to see whether the Keyword Method could be used to teach English vocabulary to special needs students. This research used the descriptive qualitative method as the research design. Throughout the research, quiz and test scores improved. The Keyword Method has been proven to be an effective teaching tool through extensive research. It improves the concreteness and meaning of newly acquired information, and the Keyword Method connects newly learned information to previously stored knowledge.

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### A. INTRODUCTION

Knowing a second language is undoubtedly a high priority in this century. Unable to speak a language other than the mother language can be considered a very large letter form (Rondal, 2000). But learning a second language is not a simple task. Many problems are questioned in class. Having a negative attitude, low motivation, high challenges, or even brain function can be considered the most important reasons (Bank, 2008). This problem is that the enlarged compilation should be both languages for persons with intellectual disabilities. One of the weaknesses is very clear, one of them is a lack of language. According to the American Association on Mental Deficiency, "Mental retardation is determined in the form of general intelligence which is below the average needed during the period of development and is discussed with difficulty in adaptive relationships." (Heber, 1959).

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\* Corresponding author.

The Keyword Method is a versatile, mnemonic memory technique used to help with vocabulary learning by helping you associate two things together to form a memorable definition of key vocabulary words. Students may be able to use the Keyword Method for particularly difficult words. When tested immediately after learning the keyword, this new link will be fresh in their mind, and easily retrieved. However, as time goes on, and the advantage of recent retrieval is lost, what is left to make the new link stronger than the existing links? The answer is nothing unless you strengthen the learned strategy by drill and repetition followed by frequent practice.

Therefore, students several of several that prevent them from reaching communicative competence. The Keyword Method was found to be too difficult to use by learning disabled children in grades 4 to 6 (Pearlman, 1990). The question remains: will using the Keyword Method for vocabulary learning improve the recall of vocabulary words of junior high school special education students? To overcome this loss, the gap between class knowledge and special students' abilities in real communication must be bridged. Conduis et al. (1986) observed major effects on the Keyword Method across three other learning factors, including the quick reminder test and one for a maximum of 10 weeks later, for 12-year-olds with a learning disability. This study shows that learners with learning disabilities will use this approach to help them learn new vocabulary. The Keyword Method can sharpen not only students' minds, but teachers as well can learn and perhaps remember what always seems to be forgotten (Danielle M. Aureli, 2011). Hence, the authors want to explain as clearly as possible about the keyword method in learning for junior high school with special needs students so that they can remember more words.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. The Importance of Vocabulary Development**

Words are tools that we use to access our background knowledge, express ideas, and learn about new concepts. Understanding is far more than just recognizing words and remembering their meaning. Reading vocabulary consists of all the words in print that can be recognized. Vocabulary development has received little instructional attention in recent years. This program needs to be taught every day as a valuable part of the curriculum to successfully improve student vocabulary learning.

## 2. Keyword Method

When the Keyword Method was first introduced by Atkinson and Raugh in 1975, it was used as a method to easily learn foreign languages. Jones and Hall found that the effectiveness of techniques at the secondary school level does not depend on providing keywords to students. Methods that use visual displays of vocabulary relationships, such as chart organizers, tend to produce organized vocabulary learning better than methods that don't. Using verbal context and imaging in direct learning about definitions can be a very effective combination. It can also improve not only academic performance but also self-confidence, especially in the special education population, according to a study.

The Keywords Method can also be used for other subjects such as foreign languages, science, history, geography, social studies, mathematics, phonics, and spelling. A more recent study conducted by Sadoski in 2005 found that keyword instruction produced results that were significantly superior to the vocabulary usage test in understanding sentences and stories.

## 3. The Effects of Vocabulary Development on the Special Education Students

There is a need for language learning strategies to serve several fields of deficits for students with learning disabilities. Some students do not have certain vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, or understanding of subject metaphors. A student who can recognize most or all words in the context or text of information, may not guarantee to understand the material. Middle-class secondary education teachers face many challenges when they try to teach developmental reading skills and subject matter. Teachers in the middle-class need strategies that are more useful to help develop reading

skills, develop vocabulary, and teach an understanding of the subject matter. Teachers need to teach students in the background of knowledge about the subjects they are reading. Students who are familiar with the subject learn new material in the subject faster than students who do not have the same depth of knowledge and understanding of the background. It is important to introduce vocabulary and information texts to special education students because these children will struggle to understand difficult concepts and vocabulary in information texts.

Special education students are very negatively affected by lack of a vocabulary and understanding. Teachers are urged to teach more vocabulary and introduce information texts in basic classes. Teachers need to expose children to understanding activities at the beginning of their academic careers to prepare them for later in their academic careers. The main reading problem that seems to be faced by students is. Problems with decoding, poor metacognitive skills, failure to understand reading material needed due to lack of. vocabulary, and inability to apply comprehension strategies.

A good reading strategy must provide material reviews, scaffolding, and support for learning the subject matter. Words of vocabulary often create the first major obstacle to acquiring knowledge for all students. According to Palumbo and Loiacono (2009), middle-class teachers usually have difficulty dealing with students who have different reading skills and abilities. Teachers who teach higher grades have more complex problems because they have to deal with subject matter instruction, developmental reading needs, and students with special needs. The curriculum works when the school dedicates itself to extensive development of subject matter and literacy teaching, says Palumbo.

#### 4. The Limitations of Using the Keyword Method as a Study Strategy

Using mnemonics such as the Keyword Method can increase the recall of information. Strategy modeling is an important factor that will describe to students what is needed. It is important to evaluate the use of the Keywords Method. Data collection can help in determining whether the strategy is effective. No difference in long-term retention after using strategies like the Keyword method, according to a 1987 study by McDaniel and

Pressley. The Keyword method is an effective method for teaching vocabulary by using mnemonic strategies such as those outlined in this article. Students and teachers need to work together so that students can obtain maximum academic benefits from the mnemonic strategy. The teacher must review what is taught and examine understanding to ensure students understand what is being taught. Study: Keyword methods are no more effective than other methods participants make to measure themselves.

Study: Keywords can inhibit rather than facilitate learning when simple words are not used. Youth and adult participants in Experiments 1 and 2 produce mental images that connect keywords to the target words. After one week, the Keyword Method is significantly less effective than the memorization method after the first week. The use of the Keywords Method inhibits the memory that might come from a lack of participants' understanding of how precisely the Key Word Method works, says Campos. The results are similar to those of adolescents in experiment 3.

The control group showed better memory than the drawing group. The study was published in the journal Psychological Bulletin. "Keyword Method" is an open-source, free-to-use, online-only method for learning.

### **C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the researcher uses a qualitative approach to achieve the objective of the research. This study applies to Leavy (2014) and Luttrell (2019) and understands that terms can be extracted from numbers or definitions as contextual data. The researcher wants to investigate the use of the Keyword Method in teaching vocabulary, especially for special needs learners in ELT classes. The research process involves emerging questions and procedures, data collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.

One of the Special Needs Centers in Telukjambe Karawang uses the keyword method as a teaching method for student learning. This school also has another suitable English teaching method, better than other schools. The main idea of keyword strategies is to develop better ways to encode (take in) information so that it will be much easier to remember. In this

study, the researcher chooses three junior high school children (aged 13-15, 2 boys, and one girl) with an identified learning disability from three different classes.

#### **D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In combination with Merriam-Webster Dictionary and British Council, the Keyword Method technique was used to help students learn new vocabulary terms. Baseline data was taken before the Keyword Process technique was studied by the students. For each unit, children are given 5 words. To gather baseline data without the use of the Keyword Process technique, the first theme (five words) was used. The second (5 words) was used to gather data from the Keyword Method approach and observe the efficacy of the strategy for the Keyword Method.

##### **1. Data Observation**

Collecting baseline data was the first part of this experiment. With the definition, the students introduced five vocabularies. At the end of the first three vocabulary quizzes, the learners were also given vocabulary tests to test long-term vocabulary retention. During the collection of the baseline data, a drill and repetition method of teaching was used. Most of the students did well in short-term vocabulary quizzes, but when completing a cumulative vocabulary test, they proved to be less successful. On the cumulative long-term vocabulary test, only one student scored 100.

The first phase of the Keyword Method was the second part of this experiment. Three vocabulary quizzes were taken by the learners, which were averaged for the quiz grade. At the end of the three vocabulary quiz sections, the students were also given one vocabulary test to test the vocabulary's long-term retention. During this process, the Keyword Method was used as a teaching instrument for students. To help with memory retrieval, the teacher selected a keyword to link to each vocabulary word as well as an image. As they learned the vocabulary terms, the teacher also printed a study sheet for each student to use. In contrast to the baseline data set, most children did not perform well in the short-term vocabulary quizzes. When compared to the baseline results, the students performed much better on the long-term retention vocabulary test. On the combined long-term retention vocabulary test, two students scored 100.

The second step of the Keyword Method was the third part of this experiment. Three vocabulary quizzes were taken by the learners, which were averaged for the quiz grade. At the end of the second round of three vocabulary quizzes to test long-term vocabulary memory, the learners were also given a vocabulary test. During this point, the keyword method was used as a teaching tool for students. The teacher allowed the students to pick a keyword to relate to each vocabulary word, as well as a picture to help retrieve the memory. As a whole, the class determined which keyword and which illustration to use for the study sheet. Compared to the first step of the Keyword Method, most children performed better at short-term vocabulary quizzes. In contrast with the first step of the Keyword Method, the students performed much better on the long-term retention vocabulary test. A total of three students scored 100 on the long-term cumulative retention vocabulary test.

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## 2. Data from Interview

In this part, the researcher tried to find out the teachers and understand the Keyword Method in teaching English vocabulary. The researcher categorized the findings into three categories. The findings discussed below are the teacher background, school background, and the use of the Keyword method in learning.

### a. The teacher background

Teachers do not take special education to educate children with disabilities.

*Interviewer : “Apakah Anda mengambil Pendidikan khusus untuk mengajar anak-anak disabilitas?”*

[Did you major in special education to teach children with disabilities?]

*Interviewee : “Saya tidak mengambil Pendidikan khusus tapi saya lulusan sarjana pendidikan bahasa inggris tetapi sering mengikuti seminar-seminar psikologi tentang anak disabilitas.”*

[I did not take special education for children with disabilities, I am a graduate of English language education, but I often attend psychology seminars about children with disabilities.]

Based on the data that has been done on the teacher as a participant. The researcher found that English teachers have special education backgrounds for children with disabilities. This means that teachers do not have special abilities to educate children with disabilities, but they improve their teaching skills through seminars dealing with children with special needs.

b. The School background

Two teachers teach English at this school.

*Interviewer* : “Ada berapa guru Bahasa Inggris yang mengajar?”

[how many English teachers teach in this school?]

*Interviewee* : “Untuk guru Bahasa Inggris di sekolah kita ada dua, satu di kelas kecil dan kelas besar. Kebetulan saya di kelas kecil dan satu lagi ada di buat untuk kelas besar.”

[There are two English teachers in this school, one teaching in large classes and one in small classes. I teach English to small classes. The keyword method is a method commonly used in teaching, the keyword method and usually direct verbal.]

Based on the interview findings, the researcher found two English teachers that commonly used the keyword method for teaching English. This means that both teachers and children with disabilities have frequently used the keyword method to learn English to add new vocabulary every two weeks.

c. The use of the keyword method in teaching English

In the classroom, teachers are used to utilizing Keyword Method.

*Interviewer* : “Apakah menurut Anda metode Keyword efektif dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris bagi anak-anak disabilitas?”

[Do you think the keyword method is effective in learning English for children with disabilities?]

*Interviewee* : “Menurut saya metode keyword efektif karena anak-anak disabilitas harus di ajarkan dengan hal-hal yang bisa menarik.

*Contohnya gambar yang warnanya mencolok, supaya dia mengingat apa kosakata yang ada di gambar gitu.”*

[The keyword method is effective in learning because children with disabilities must be taught interestingly. For example, with pictures with striking colors, so that it is easier for them to remember new vocabulary through these images.]

Based on the findings obtained from the interview, the researcher found that Teachers in this school often use the keyword method in learning so that children with special needs can remember new vocabulary in English more efficiently. The use of the keyword method is considered effective in learning English for children with disabilities.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The Keyword Method is a helpful mnemonic aid that can help students expand their vocabulary through speech and language, and eventually reading and writing. Students with special needs can use the Keyword Method strategy to connect new vocabulary words to words they already know and remember. Students also select pictures that correspond to the new vocabulary. The Keyword Method strategy can be applied to any school subject as a study skill. When students can recall curriculum vocabulary easily, they can better discuss and write about school topics. Students with learning disabilities find it more difficult to learn and retain material from the general education curriculum as inclusion settings become more popular. Reading comprehension is greatly influenced by understanding vocabulary words and how they relate to other ideas and concepts. The Keyword Method has been proven to be an effective teaching tool through extensive research. It improves the concreteness and meaning of newly acquired information, and the Keyword Method connects newly learned information to previously stored knowledge.

Based on the observations and discussions above, the researcher suggests that pre-service teachers and even teachers use the Keyword mnemonic approach to recall different types of knowledge more efficiently. Colour photos in keyword mnemonics are more appealing. The instructor can also use the Keyword mnemonic tool during the learning process to help students recall the subject matter more easily and rapidly, as well as to improve their memory in recalling lessons. Suppose future researchers are interested in studying the keyword

mnemonic approach. In that case, it is preferable to administer therapy multiple times and test behaviourbehaviomultiple times to ensure that the intervention causes behavior changes. Other foreign languages, such as German and Japanese, may be used by researchers. Researchers may also employ various testing designs, such as pre-test and post-test. The researcher must use two separate measuring instruments of the same difficulty level in the pre-test and post-test designs to be checked on the same group without any learning. Future researchers can focus on a variety of topics. Mnemonic keywords are beneficial in kindergarten, primary school, college students, and the elderly. The keyword collection should be tailored to the research subject's background, as well as the subject's age and environment. The following researcher would be able to link the mnemonic keyword to multiple intelligence.

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