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Exploring the Role of Digital Learning in Developing English Writing Skills Among Hearing-impaired Students in Indonesia

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Abstract

Learners with hearing impairments encounter persistent barriers in acquiring additional languages, particularly in developing English writing skills, which rely heavily on linguistic exposure and structured input. In Indonesia, scholarship examining digital learning within special education contexts remains limited, despite growing technological advancement and policy commitments to inclusive education. This paper explores the role of digital learning in developing English writing skills among hearing-impaired students in Indonesian special schools through a critical review of current literature and contextual analysis. The study examines how visually oriented digital tools, including interactive writing applications, electronic books, captioned multimedia resources, and artificial intelligence assisted platforms, can enhance writing proficiency, motivation, and learner engagement. Evidence suggests that such technologies align with the visual learning preferences of deaf students and can facilitate vocabulary development, sentence construction, and idea organisation. However, the paper argues that the transformative potential of digital learning is constrained by structural inequalities, including limited technological infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, inconsistent English proficiency among special education teachers, and disparities between urban and rural schools. The analysis highlights the tension between pedagogical innovation and systemic limitation, emphasising that digital learning alone cannot resolve educational inequities without sustained institutional and policy support. This study contributes to the emerging discourse on inclusive digital pedagogy in Indonesia and offers implications for teacher professional development, infrastructure investment, and future research on equitable English language education for hearing-impaired learners.

Keywords: Assistive Technology; Inclusive Education; Special Education; Teacher Professional Development; Visual Pedagogy