

Special Needs English Teacher's Strategies for ADHD Student in Vocabulary Mastery Focus

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DOI: 10.37729/scripta.v13i1.7684

Abstract. Vocabulary mastery is important in English learning, especially for students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), who often struggle to maintain attention, remember new words, and participate actively in class. This study explored how a shadow teacher supported English vocabulary learning for a student with ADHD in an inclusive senior high school classroom in North Sumatera, Indonesia. A qualitative case study design was used, with data gathered through interviews with the shadow teacher and English teacher, classroom observations, and document analysis of lesson plans and vocabulary records. The shadow teacher served as primary informant, given three years of daily engagement with the student. Thematic analysis revealed two areas: (1) strategies supporting vocabulary learning, including individualized assistance, repeated practice, emotional guidance, reinforcement, and audio-visual media; and (2) challenges including sustaining attention, limited collaboration, and absent ADHD training. Document analysis corroborated these findings, showing strong vocabulary performance alongside lesson plans with no curricular adaptation. The shadow teacher's role extended beyond academic assistance to include emotional and motivational support, with effectiveness depending on combined strategies rather than a single approach. These findings highlight the need for stronger collaboration, flexible support, and professional development to help shadow teachers work effectively with ADHD students.

Keywords: ADHD student, English learning strategies, Inclusive classroom, Shadow teacher, Vocabulary mastery.

1. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary mastery is a fundamental component of English language learning because it provides learners with the lexical resources required to comprehend input and express meaning across listening, speaking, reading, and writing [1]. Words function as core units of meaning in language, and limited vocabulary knowledge restricts learners' ability to understand classroom instruction and communicate ideas effectively [2]. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, vocabulary instruction becomes central since classroom interaction often serves as the primary source of language exposure [3]. Therefore, vocabulary mastery depends not only on instructional materials but also on learners' ability to maintain focus during learning tasks.

One group of learners who frequently experience challenges in vocabulary learning is students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity that interfere with academic functioning [4]. Students with ADHD often struggle to sustain concentration, regulate behavior, follow instructions, and complete learning tasks consistently [5], and these difficulties frequently extend into language learning activities that demand concentration, memory, and continuous practice [6], reducing classroom participation and limiting vocabulary development, particularly when the classroom environment and instructional methods are not adapted to their learning characteristics [7]. In Indonesia, ADHD has become an increasingly significant issue among school-aged children: recent data from the World Population Review showed that Indonesia's ADHD rate in 2023 was around 376 cases per 100,000 population [8], while a study by Universitas Gadjah Mada in the same year found that nearly 15% of school-aged children in Indonesia experience ADHD, with the number continuing to rise [9].

Attention and working memory play a central role in vocabulary learning, as students must repeatedly recall word meanings, pronunciation, spelling, and usage. Students with ADHD often show weaknesses in working memory, making it difficult to store and recall vocabulary effectively [10], and may also experience expressive language difficulties that affect their ability to organize and use vocabulary

appropriately in communication [11]. These limitations in concentration, memory retention, and classroom participation mean that vocabulary mastery among students with special needs depends heavily on structured guidance and repetition [12], particularly during activities involving long explanations and repetitive tasks [13]. Vocabulary instruction for students with ADHD therefore requires adaptive and engaging teaching strategies that sustain attention and support retention, supported by appropriate instructional modifications and continuous guidance.

Within this context, the English teacher's role becomes central to designing instructional conditions that accommodate learners' attentional and cognitive characteristics. Structured instruction, task segmentation, explicit modeling, and frequent feedback have been shown to improve academic engagement for students with ADHD [14], while varied classroom activities help sustain attention and reduce monotony during vocabulary instruction [15]. Teacher competence in linguistic knowledge is equally essential, as linguistic theory informs instructional objectives, content selection, and pedagogical approaches [16]. Such instructional decisions are shaped by teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and classroom experience: instructional planning, implementation, and evaluation are interconnected processes that depend on teachers' understanding of learners' needs and contextual demands [17], a process that becomes particularly significant in inclusive classrooms, where teachers must accommodate students with diverse cognitive abilities, learning speeds, behavioral conditions, and social backgrounds within a single setting [18]. For students with ADHD specifically, this often requires additional support to manage difficulties in maintaining focus, following lengthy explanations, regulating behavior, and completing tasks independently [5], delivered through clear instructions, engaging activities, repetition, and individualized assistance.

The implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia aims to provide equal educational opportunities and embrace diversity within the classroom [19]. Within inclusive classrooms, one important form of support for students with special needs is the presence of shadow teachers, or Special Assistance Teachers (*Guru Pendamping Khusus*), who accompany students with special needs individually to help them adapt academically, socially, and behaviorally within the classroom [20]. As paraprofessionals, shadow teachers provide individualized assistance that helps students with disabilities participate more effectively in learning activities [21], supporting concentration, comprehension of instructions, emotional regulation, and classroom interaction according to each student's learning abilities and behavioral condition [22]. To perform this role effectively, shadow teachers are expected to possess strong communication skills for interacting with students, teachers, and parents [23], along with patience, empathy, and sincerity in supporting students who may display different behavioral and emotional characteristics from their peers [24]; ideally, they also hold a background in Special Education, as they function as mediators who help students overcome learning difficulties that classroom teachers cannot always address directly [25].

Despite the importance of inclusive education, its implementation continues to face challenges, including a limited number of trained teachers, insufficient understanding of students' disability characteristics, inadequate learning facilities, and difficulties modifying curricula and instructional materials for students with special needs, conditions that complicate teaching when instructional time must be balanced across all students' needs. Previous studies emphasize that interpersonal communication between teachers and students with special needs supports independence and classroom participation [23], that communication and support from parents contribute significantly to students' behavioral and educational development [26], that openness, acceptance, and non-discriminatory attitudes are essential to successful inclusive education [27], and that positive peer interaction can improve students' confidence and social participation [28]. Information technology has further strengthened the role of shadow teachers by helping them improve instructional skills and create more engaging learning activities [29], positioning shadow teachers not merely as classroom companions but as active educational partners in students' academic and social development.

Although prior research has examined inclusive education, instructional strategies for students with ADHD, and the role of shadow teachers, most studies have focused on elementary education, general teaching strategies, or broad inclusive programs, with little attention to how shadow teachers specifically support English vocabulary mastery for students with ADHD within EFL contexts. Research on ADHD at the senior high school level in Indonesia remains particularly limited, despite senior high school students facing more complex academic and linguistic demands than those at lower educational levels.

This study therefore focuses on the role of the shadow teacher in supporting English vocabulary mastery for a student with ADHD in an inclusive senior high school EFL classroom in Indonesia. Because shadow teachers work directly and intensively with students with ADHD, they are positioned to provide the most detailed account of instructional support and classroom assistance practices in vocabulary learning. The study examines not only the strategies the shadow teacher applies, but also how he helps the

student maintain focus, understand vocabulary, regulate emotions, build motivation, and participate actively during English learning activities, areas that have received limited attention in previous research at this educational level.

Based on the background above, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does the shadow teacher support a student with ADHD in English vocabulary learning?
2. What challenges are encountered by shadow teacher in supporting English vocabulary mastery among student with ADHD?

2. METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the role of the shadow teacher in supporting English vocabulary mastery for a student with ADHD in an inclusive classroom [30]. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, instructional support, and classroom practices within a natural educational setting. A case study design was selected because the research focused on a specific case involving a shadow teacher and an eleventh-grade student diagnosed with combined-type ADHD in an inclusive EFL classroom. The student exhibited characteristics commonly associated with combined-type ADHD, including difficulties in sustaining attention, impulsive behavior, hyperactivity, and emotional regulation, and had been receiving individualized support from the same shadow teacher for approximately three years. This design allowed the researcher to investigate classroom interactions and learning-support practices in depth while capturing the complexity of vocabulary learning within an inclusive educational context.

Research Setting and Participant

The research was conducted in a senior high school in North Sumatera, Indonesia, where students with ADHD were formally identified and included in regular classroom instruction. The participants consisted of one male shadow teacher and one female English teacher who were directly involved in supporting a male student with ADHD during English learning activities. The shadow teacher is referred to as ST, while the English teacher is referred to as ET throughout this study. ST had three years of experience assisting the student, whereas ET had six years of teaching experience. Both participants were selected using purposive sampling based on criteria relevant to the study's objectives, namely direct involvement in the student's English vocabulary learning, prior experience supporting students with special educational needs in an inclusive setting, and ongoing knowledge of the student's learning behavior and academic progress. Although both participants contributed valuable perspectives, ST was treated as the primary informant throughout this study. The shadow teacher's three years of continuous, day-to-day engagement with the student provided direct and sustained insight into the student's attention patterns, emotional responses, and vocabulary-learning behavior, a depth of familiarity that ET, working within the instructional demands of a full classroom, could not reasonably be expected to replicate. ET was included as a secondary participant to provide an independent point of comparison and strengthen the credibility of the findings through triangulation.

Data Collection

Data were collected through three main techniques: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The use of multiple data collection techniques was intended to support data triangulation and strengthen the credibility of the findings. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both participants to explore their experiences, instructional strategies, classroom challenges, and forms of support provided during vocabulary learning activities [31]. Classroom observations were conducted to examine how vocabulary learning activities and instructional support were implemented in practice, focusing on classroom interaction, attention management, and the student's participation during English lessons [32]. Document analysis was carried out as a supplementary data source, examining the English teacher's lesson plans and the shadow teacher's vocabulary practice records to provide supporting evidence regarding instructional adaptation and the student's vocabulary performance over time [33]. Regarding ethical considerations, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time. Written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, and participants' identities were protected through the use of pseudonyms. All data were stored securely and used solely for academic research purposes.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six-phase framework [34], comprising data transcription, repeated reading, initial coding, categorization, and theme development. Codes were generated based on recurring patterns related to instructional support, attention management, emotional guidance, vocabulary practice, and classroom participation, and themes were reviewed and refined to ensure consistency with the research objectives. Trustworthiness was established through data triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents, supplemented by member checking with participants to verify accuracy. Transferability was supported through rich, detailed description of the research context and participant characteristics, while dependability was maintained through a systematic and transparent account of the research procedures. Confirmability was ensured through reflective consideration of the researcher's role throughout data collection and analysis to minimize potential bias [35].

3. FINDINGS

Based on data collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis of the English teacher's lesson plans and the student's vocabulary practice records, this study identified several important themes concerning the role of the shadow teacher in supporting English vocabulary mastery for a student with ADHD in an inclusive classroom. The shadow teacher contributed significantly to helping the student maintain attention, understand vocabulary, regulate emotions, and participate actively during English learning activities. Several challenges were also identified during the learning process, particularly difficulties related to concentration, collaboration, and professional preparation.

Shadow Teacher Support in English Vocabulary Learning

The findings presented in this section address the first research question, which explores how the shadow teacher supports a student with ADHD in English vocabulary learning in an inclusive senior high school classroom. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with the shadow teacher and the English teacher, as well as classroom observations conducted during English learning sessions. Through thematic analysis, two closely related themes emerged: the role of the shadow teacher in facilitating vocabulary learning, and the instructional strategies he applied during vocabulary activities. While discussed separately for clarity, the two themes are deeply interconnected in practice, the shadow teacher's role shaped the strategies chosen, and the strategies in turn reflected the demands of that role. The findings suggest that the support provided by the shadow teacher was neither rigid nor scripted, but was continuously adjusted in response to the student's fluctuating attention, emotional state, and learning pace.

The Role of the Shadow Teacher in Supporting Vocabulary Learning

The findings show that the shadow teacher held a central role in supporting the student's English vocabulary learning, functioning as an academic facilitator, emotional support figure, and learning mediator at the same time. According to Shadow Teacher (ST), the student had been formally diagnosed with combined-type ADHD and had worked with him for roughly three years, during which continuous and individualized guidance remained necessary throughout every learning activity. ST noted that the student frequently struggled to maintain focus, follow classroom instructions, and regulate his emotions, a pattern confirmed by classroom observations showing that he was easily distracted and tended to lose attention shortly after instruction began, even while being actively guided.

"The student has difficulty staying focused, is easily distracted, often moves around, and sometimes becomes emotional during learning activities." (ST)

Beyond academic assistance, the shadow teacher provided emotional support whenever the student's behavior disrupted his participation, offering quiet reassurance and redirection in moments of frustration or overwhelm so he could return to the activity without escalation.

"When the student becomes emotional, I usually ask him to recite istighfar so he can calm down again." (ST)

The shadow teacher also served as the student's primary resource for vocabulary comprehension; whenever he encountered an unfamiliar word, he turned directly to him for help rather than to the classroom teacher, a pattern corroborated through observation.

"When he does not know the meaning of a word, he usually asks me to help find the meaning." (ST)

The English Teacher (ET) described this function as a mediating role between the classroom teacher and the student, noting that the shadow teacher's presence was essential for him to follow instruction and

complete assigned work, a description supported by observation data showing higher task completion and engagement when he was actively guiding him.

"Each student has their own shadow teacher who acts as a mediator. When the teacher gives materials and assignments, the student with ADHD often cannot complete them independently, so the shadow teacher helps the student with the tasks. The role of the shadow teacher is more prominent because the student depends heavily on the shadow teacher's assistance during learning activities." (ET)

This indicates that the shadow teacher's presence extended beyond physical accompaniment: without his active involvement, the student tended to lose direction in following instructions and completing tasks, portraying him as fulfilling a multidimensional role, academic companion, emotional anchor, and communicative bridge, between the student and his learning environment.

Strategies Used by the Shadow Teacher in Vocabulary Learning

The findings revealed that the shadow teacher employed several strategies to support vocabulary learning and maintain engagement, including positive reinforcement, audio-visual media, verbal encouragement, and repeated practice. Rewards were used to encourage the student's motivation and participation; classroom observations confirmed greater enthusiasm and willingness to complete tasks when positive feedback or a reward followed his efforts.

"If he studies well and stays motivated during class, I usually allow him to use his phone after school as a reward." (ST)

Given the student's strong interest in artistic activities, the shadow teacher also incorporated music and English songs into vocabulary instruction [36]. Observations showed considerably greater responsiveness during pronunciation and listening exercises, with the student at times mouthing lyrics and repeating words independently, notably different from his behavior during text-based tasks.

"He really likes music and English songs. He can remember lyrics and pronounce English words very clearly." (ST)

Verbal encouragement was applied consistently whenever the student appeared fatigued, distracted, or reluctant to continue; observation data showed that a brief motivational prompt was generally sufficient to redirect his attention back to the task.

"When he starts losing motivation, I encourage him by saying things like, 'Keep going, your mother will be proud of you!'" (ST)

Repeated practice, through pronunciation exercises, guided repetition, and review of previously introduced words, was central to his approach, as the student frequently required multiple exposures before recalling meanings and pronunciations accurately. The shadow teacher was observed repeating words across varying contexts, sometimes pairing them with gestures or visual cues.

"I usually ask him repeat the vocabulary many times so he can remember and understand the words better." (ST)

This pattern was corroborated by document analysis of the student's vocabulary practice records, which showed consistently strong scores across varied lexical domains and a discernible progression from word-level recall toward more contextualized written and spoken production. Across all sessions, the shadow teacher's strategies shared a common thread: they were responsive, flexible, and closely attuned to the student's shifting attention and emotional state, rather than following a fixed instructional sequence, which appeared central to keeping him engaged.

Challenges in Supporting English Vocabulary Mastery among Students with ADHD

This section addresses the second research question, examining the challenges the shadow teacher encountered in supporting English vocabulary mastery for a student with ADHD. These challenges were deeply intertwined with the student's daily learning experience, shaping how instruction was delivered and support provided. Three recurring difficulties were identified: sustaining the student's attention, limited collaboration in instructional planning, and insufficient professional preparation related to ADHD.

The most prominent challenge was keeping the student focused throughout instruction. ST described his combined-type ADHD as characterized by persistent inattention, frequent distraction, excessive movement, and emotional instability, all directly affecting his engagement.

"The biggest challenge is that he is difficult to keep focused because he is easily distracted." (ST)

Classroom observations reinforced this: the student frequently shifted attention away from tasks and required repeated redirection, with his engagement fading quickly during exercises demanding sustained concentration, indicating that attention management was a continuous demand rather than an occasional concern.

A second challenge involved the limited collaboration between the shadow teacher and the English teacher in planning and implementing vocabulary instruction. ST explained that no specific coordination took place regarding learning adaptations or instructional modifications for the student with ADHD. In practice, the shadow teacher simply followed whatever approach the English teacher used in the classroom, without prior discussion.

"There is no specific collaboration with the English teacher. I usually just follow the way the teacher conducts the lesson." (ST)

ET's account aligned with this, noting that lesson plans followed the standard curriculum and were not specifically adapted, on the assumption that the shadow teacher's presence was sufficient to fill the gap.

"The lesson plan is not specifically adapted because the student already has support from a shadow teacher." (ET)

Observations reflected the practical consequences: the shadow teacher frequently made on-the-spot adjustments, simplifying instructions, breaking tasks into smaller steps, and modifying the pace independently, without prior coordination with the English teacher. This was further confirmed through document analysis of the English teacher's lesson plans, which showed uniform learning objectives, instructional steps, and assessment rubrics applied equally to all students, with no differentiated objective or individualized criterion for the student with ADHD. This documentary evidence reinforced both ST's and ET's accounts that no formal curricular adaptation had been made, while the shadow teacher's own practice records indicated that individualized support was instead carried out informally, independent of the school's official instructional planning.

The third challenge concerned the lack of formal professional preparation related to ADHD and inclusive instructional practices. ST reported that no specialized training had been provided regarding ADHD characteristics, behavioral management, or inclusive teaching strategies, so the support approaches used throughout the study were largely self-developed.

"There has been no special training related to supporting students with ADHD." (ST)

This absence was visible in the classroom as well: although the shadow teacher demonstrated genuine commitment and adaptability, his strategies were not always consistent or built upon a coherent pedagogical framework, and instructional support remained largely reactive rather than proactively planned. Taken together, these challenges point to the need for stronger collaborative structures between teachers and shadow teachers, alongside greater institutional support for professional development oriented toward inclusive English language instruction for students with ADHD.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the important role of the shadow teacher in supporting English vocabulary learning for a student with ADHD in an inclusive classroom. The support provided extended beyond academic assistance to include attention management, emotional guidance, behavioral support, and facilitation of classroom participation, reinforcing the notion that students with ADHD often require individualized assistance to overcome challenges associated with inattention, impulsivity, and emotional regulation during learning activities. In inclusive educational settings, the presence of a shadow teacher can help bridge the gap between the instructional demands of the classroom and the specific learning needs of students with ADHD.

One significant finding was the shadow teacher's role as a mediator between the student and the learning environment, continuously redirecting the student's attention, clarifying vocabulary meanings, assisting with learning tasks, and encouraging participation. These findings support previous studies suggesting that shadow teachers play a vital role in facilitating access to learning opportunities for students with special educational needs by helping them navigate academic and behavioral challenges within mainstream classrooms [22][25]. Rather than functioning solely as an academic assistant, the shadow teacher acted as a facilitator who enabled the student to remain engaged and actively involved in classroom learning.

Emotional support was an equally essential component of this role. Students with ADHD frequently experience emotional fluctuations that affect learning engagement and classroom behavior, and in this study, the shadow teacher provided emotional guidance and calming strategies whenever the student became frustrated or overwhelmed, helping him regain self-control and continue participating. This finding is consistent with previous research emphasizing that positive interpersonal relationships and emotional support contribute significantly to the success of inclusive education by promoting students' confidence, emotional security, and willingness to participate in classroom activities [23], suggesting that effective support for students with ADHD requires attention not only to academic development but also to emotional well-being.

Several instructional strategies contributed to the student's vocabulary development. Repeated practice, through pronunciation exercises, guided memorization, and continuous review, aligns with studies indicating that students with ADHD benefit from structured learning experiences and repeated reinforcement because attention difficulties may interfere with the retention and retrieval of new information [1][14], providing additional opportunities to process vocabulary items and strengthen memory retention over time. The use of audio-visual media, particularly music and songs, similarly increased the student's enthusiasm and participation, suggesting that connecting instruction to students' interests can create more meaningful learning experiences; this is consistent with research showing that engaging, multisensory materials help students with ADHD maintain attention and reduce boredom during instruction [15][37]. The student's ability to remember song lyrics and pronounce them clearly further indicates that learning strengths can emerge when instructional approaches align with individual interests and abilities.

Positive reinforcement and verbal encouragement also helped maintain the student's engagement throughout the learning process. These findings are consistent with Operant Conditioning Theory, which holds that behaviors followed by reinforcing consequences are more likely to be repeated, as positive reinforcement strengthens desirable behavior by presenting favorable outcomes following a desired response [38]. In this study, rewards and verbal praise appeared to increase the student's willingness to participate and remain engaged, consistent with research showing that students with ADHD benefit from structured support, frequent feedback, and reinforcement strategies that sustain attention and task persistence [5], and that they tend to respond more positively to immediate rewards than to delayed consequences [39]. The use of rewards, praise, and motivational support therefore appears to be an effective strategy for increasing participation and supporting vocabulary learning among students with ADHD.

Despite these contributions, several challenges were identified. Maintaining the student's attention during instruction was the most significant, as he was easily distracted by surrounding stimuli and frequently required reminders and redirection. This supports previous research identifying inattention as a primary characteristic of ADHD that may negatively affect academic performance and language learning outcomes [5][10][40]; because vocabulary acquisition requires sustained attention and repeated exposure to language input, such difficulties can hinder learning progress and increase the need for continuous support.

Limited collaboration between the shadow teacher and the English teacher was a second challenge. Instructional support depended largely on the shadow teacher's individual efforts, while lesson planning and classroom instruction were conducted by the English teacher without specific collaborative adaptation, a pattern further confirmed through document analysis showing uniform learning objectives and assessment criteria applied equally to all students, with no differentiated provision for the student with ADHD. This suggests that the effectiveness of inclusive education may be constrained when support personnel and classroom teachers do not engage in systematic collaboration. Notably, the shadow teacher's own practice records indicated that individualized instructional planning was, in fact, taking place, but informally and independently of the school's official curriculum documentation, suggesting that the gap lies not in the absence of differentiated support but in its lack of institutional visibility and coordination. Previous studies have emphasized that successful inclusive practices depend on cooperation among teachers, support staff, parents, and schools in designing learning environments that accommodate diverse student needs [27].

This study also supports the view that focused teaching strategies are essential for English learners with ADHD, who frequently encounter difficulty sustaining attention and absorbing instructional content. Prior research underscores the value of instructional approaches that re-engage students whose attention has drifted, reduce cognitive load, and offer structured scaffolding to maintain participation and comprehension[41]. Throughout the observed sessions, the shadow teacher consistently demonstrated these functions, redirecting attention whenever it began to drift, clarifying vocabulary in accessible language, breaking tasks into smaller steps, and offering timely reminders, practices that contributed meaningfully to the student's sustained engagement despite his persistent attentional difficulties. This reinforces the argument that focused, individualized instructional support is a fundamental requirement, rather than an optional addition, for accommodating the learning profiles of students with ADHD in inclusive English classrooms.

The findings also reinforce existing scholarship on the defining qualities of effective shadow teachers, who are expected to embody patience, adaptability, strong communicative ability, emotional attunement, and the capacity to tailor support to shifting individual needs [42]. Each quality was discernible in this study: the shadow teacher's role extended well beyond academic facilitation to encompass emotional

guidance, behavioral regulation, and sustained motivational encouragement, reflected in his consistent use of positive reinforcement, verbal encouragement, repeated rehearsal, and de-escalation strategies. This pattern suggests that the impact of a shadow teacher cannot be adequately captured by academic outcomes alone; it depends significantly on the capacity to cultivate a trusting relationship while responding sensitively to the student's emotional, behavioral, and cognitive needs as they arise.

Taken together, the effectiveness of shadow teacher support in vocabulary learning cannot be traced to any single instructional technique in isolation. Rather, it is the coordinated integration of academic assistance, emotional support, attentional management, and individually tailored strategies that collectively produced meaningful engagement for this student with ADHD, enabling him to remain involved in learning activities despite persistent attentional and behavioral challenges. For educational practice, this implies that shadow teachers assigned to students with ADHD need to be prepared with more than pedagogical knowledge alone; equally important is the development of interpersonal competencies that allow them to recognize and respond to their students' academic, emotional, and behavioral needs in a timely and appropriate manner.

5. CONCLUSION

This study found that shadow teachers play a central and multidimensional role in supporting English vocabulary mastery for students with ADHD in inclusive senior high school classrooms, extending beyond academic assistance to include emotional regulation, motivational support, and classroom mediation. To sustain the student's engagement, the shadow teacher employed adaptive strategies such as positive reinforcement, audio-visual media, verbal encouragement, and repeated vocabulary practice, which proved particularly effective when connected to the student's interest in music. This pattern was further corroborated by document analysis of the student's vocabulary practice records, which showed consistently strong performance across varied lexical domains and a discernible progression from word-level recall toward more contextualized written and spoken production. At the same time, document analysis of the English teacher's lesson plans confirmed that no formal curricular adaptation had been made for the student with ADHD, indicating that the individualized support observed throughout this study was carried out informally by the shadow teacher rather than through institutionalized planning. These findings carry practical implications for English teachers and shadow teachers working in inclusive settings, suggesting that individualized, flexible, and interest-based support is more effective than uniform instructional approaches, and that such support should be formally recognized and integrated into collaborative lesson planning rather than left to individual initiative. Stronger collaboration between English teachers and shadow teachers in lesson planning, alongside targeted professional development related to ADHD and inclusive teaching practices, is therefore essential to provide more consistent and informed support for students with ADHD in English vocabulary learning.

Several limitations should also be acknowledged. The study was carried out in a single inclusive senior high school in North Sumatra, drawing on only one shadow teacher, one English teacher, and one student with ADHD, a scope that limits how far the findings can be generalized to other educational settings. The relatively short observation window further means that longer-term patterns in vocabulary development and instructional support remain only partially understood. Future studies would benefit from involving multiple schools and a broader range of participants to enable richer comparison and more generalizable conclusions. Longitudinal research tracking the sustained impact of shadow teacher support on vocabulary development among students with ADHD would also add meaningfully to this body of work, as would studies that incorporate the perspectives of students themselves and their families within inclusive EFL settings.

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