

DEAF STUDENTS' ABILITIES IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY AT SPECIAL SCHOOL

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Abstract

Deaf students are included in students with special needs because it is a type of physical disability. In teaching, teachers are faced with various challenges. For this reason, special methods are needed in teaching so that learning becomes effective. The support and participation of the school are also needed. English lessons in public schools find many difficulties, especially in schools with special needs. This study aims to describe the teacher's strategy in teaching English to deaf students at SLB C Muzdalifah. This research used a qualitative method. Data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and documentation (pictures). To analyze the data obtained, the authors use data collection techniques, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The results of this study indicate that the teacher applies a learning strategy that contains repeating material and periodically checking students' understanding. However, in practice, it is still less effective. The sitting position of students in the classroom is also arranged before the lesson begins. Total Physical Response and Grammar Translation Methods are used as a strategy for developing English vocabulary for deaf students combined with sign language. However, even though the teaching is still not effective, in general, it can be concluded that the objectives of teaching

English using this strategy can be achieved. Teaching English to deaf students at SLB C Muzdalifah is focused on reading and speaking skills.

Keywords: deaf students, English vocabulary, special school.

Introduction

English is one of the important subjects in all educational institutions in Indonesia. Not only in formal schools, but also in informal education, such as courses. English courses are also developing a lot in Indonesia. Therefore, English is often found in daily activities. Nowadays, everyone can learn at least one or two English vocabularies on social media or several online platforms and other learning media and so on. In learning English, students face several obstacles, especially in understanding English vocabulary. One of the obstacles is coming from teachers who still use unsatisfactory methods. So, it causes students to not master the material presented. Then, there are several schools that do not recognize English as an important subject because English is only an extracurricular subject. The new method is an important way to help teachers motivate students to learn. That is the problem faced by public schools. However, this is also experienced by schools that are specifically for children with special needs.

In this research, the researchers focused on understanding the vocabulary of children with special needs, especially students with hearing impairments or deafness because vocabulary enrichment is very important in English learning. The Indonesian government defines that teaching English is part of the curriculum for all educational institutions. So, not only in public schools but for students in special schools as well. Then, meeting students' needs is the main principle in teaching English. Not all students can be treated equally between one. There are many students in Indonesia who need special treatment, which is usually called a disability. Disabled students must survive with their abilities. For this reason, researchers examined the ability to understand English vocabulary in students with special needs because education is the right of all Indonesian people regardless of physical differences, including children with special needs. Teaching

English to students in public schools is a challenge for all teachers with different comprehension abilities and student characteristics. However, teaching students with special needs is no less challenging, even more so than students in public schools because students with special needs require special methods or strategies and require the participation of all parties at school. Moreover, students with deafness, which is a type of physical disability with high hearing loss.

Marschark et al. (2003) stated that deaf students are learning by seeing, therefore they are known as visual learners. An English teacher who teaches deaf students must instill in his/her pity that there is specificity in teaching deaf students. This specificity is principally on how to interact with them. SLB C Muzdalifah is one of the special schools in Medan. The location is right beside the road. This school provides good facilities for students in carrying out teaching and learning activities. After conducting research in SLB C Muzdalifah, the researchers found that teaching English as a foreign language to deaf students is very difficult because deafness leads to a lack of language development, and deaf people also do not understand spoken language. The right strategy is needed in teaching English to deaf students so that they can understand the material provided. The researchers are very curious to know the strategies used by teachers in teaching English to deaf students at SLB C Muzdalifah.

The researchers refer to two related research which contributed to this current research. Azizah (2020) described the process of teaching and learning English and found the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English in class XI SLB-B YRTRW Surakarta for the 2019/2020 academic year. The results of this research indicate that, first, the process of teaching and learning English to deaf students in class XI at SLB-B YRTRW Surakarta is carried out using WhatsApp group media by using video calls to hold online classes. The challenges faced by teachers in teaching English in class eleven SLB-B YRTRW Surakarta for the 2019/2020 school year are known to be six challenges faced by teachers in teaching based on interviews conducted by researchers, including the difficulty of access in conveying information to deaf students in learning so that it

affects students to increase vocabulary and use new words. Ristiani (2018) examined the challenges faced by teachers of deaf students in teaching English and strategies to overcome these challenges. The results of this research indicate that teachers experience several challenges in teaching deaf students such as difficulties in understanding words from students' lip movements, providing definitions and examples, distinguishing similar words in different contexts, and conveying material related to prior knowledge. student. Strategies for overcoming these challenges are asking students to prepare dictionaries, using alphabet marks, waving or tapping students on the shoulder to get their attention.

Based on the related research, schools with special needs need creative and effective professionals in teaching English to deaf students, as well as appropriate methods to be applied in the learning process. For this reason, this research describes the appropriate strategies to be used in teaching English vocabulary to deaf students at SLB C Muzdalifah. Theoretically, this research can be a reference for other researchers who are interested in investigating the strategies used by English teachers in other special needs schools. Practically, for SLB C Muzdalifa is to overcome students' difficulties in learning English vocabulary.

Method

Participants/Subjects/Population and Sample

The research used descriptive qualitative research by objectively describing the variables and all the factors that influence these variables. This research aimed to describe the strategies that was used in teaching English vocabulary to deaf students at SLB C Muzdalifah. The data for this research was conducted at SLB C Muzdalifah Medan in the 2022/2023 academic year involving English teachers and deaf students at SLB C Muzdalifah. The deafness of students at this school is conductive deafness and nerve deafness with varying degrees from mild to severe.

Instruments

This research used three types of methods, such as observation, interview, and documentation. In this research, researchers examined English learning activities in the classroom. The researchers recorded and assessed as their methods in observation. The researchers used interviews to get information about teacher strategies in teaching English for deaf students. The interview was also conducted by researchers on English teacher and deaf students. In documentation, researchers took pictures during an interview with an English teacher and deaf student. In addition, researchers took several pictures while making observations in class.

Data Analysis Procedure

The steps in this research were taken from Miles and Huberman in Iskandarwassid & Dadang (2016) which displayed steps in data analysis such as data reduction to identify and classify the results of each instrument, presenting data to analyze data then arrange it systematically based on research question. So that, the data obtained could explain or answer the problems under research, and drawing conclusions for further analysis of data reduction and data display. After being verified, researchers drew conclusions in the form of descriptive as research reports.

Findings

In the learning and teaching process, appropriate strategies were needed in order to achieve teacher's teaching goals. In teaching, surely every teacher had a different strategy in learning, as well as an English teacher from SLB C Muzdalifah. To find out what strategies were implemented by English teacher, researchers conducted interviews with SLB C Muzdalifah's English teacher, research question were "What is the strategy used by English teacher

in teaching English for deaf students at SLB C Muzdalifah?". The interview contained of English subjects for deaf students and especially the strategies used by teacher in teaching English. From the results of the interview, the researcher found that the application of English subjects to deaf students was simpler and easier than for normal students in general. In providing teaching material, it must be measured by the ability of students. It took the right strategy or method so that students understood better. This material was in accordance with the government curriculum. From interviews and observations about the strategies used by the teacher, there were three strategies in accordance with academic teaching and class accommodation in teaching deaf students. In addition, there were two methods used as teacher strategies regarding students' motor and material translation or vocabulary.

1. The English subject for deaf students

The researcher analyzed the way the teacher delivered English material to deaf students. Data collection was obtained from interviews with English teachers at SLB C Muzdalifah. the English teacher explained that the English subject matter for deaf students was very simple because it was believed to be an appropriate method or strategy for students to understand. For graded students in elementary schools, the curriculum used was still KTSP where English lessons were one of the subjects that students learned at that time. However, recently SLB C Muzdalifah had implemented the 2013 curriculum so that the provision of English subject started from junior high school. Furthermore, the English teacher added that English lessons for deaf students were basically the same as for students in public schools as usual, it was just that the teaching approach was truly individual. So that the teacher became overwhelmed to ensure that one by one the

students understood the material presented. The material provided was also in accordance with the curriculum recommended by the government. Teachers also sometimes got material from the internet as supporting material.

2. Strategies implemented for deaf students in teaching English to deaf students

Furthermore, researchers got what strategies were applied by the teacher during learning activities. Researchers collected strategy data through interviews with English teachers. In this case, the researcher found 3 things, namely the strategies implemented by the teacher were a combination of methods, such as the lecture method, the assignment method, interviews, and direct communication. The teacher also repeated the material several times and checks understanding periodically with individual students. The researcher found that the teacher used Total Physical Response and Grammar Translation methods in teaching English to deaf students by paying attention to students' motor skills and material translation because English was a foreign language. Teachers should also realize that deaf students had limitations in communication that caused their language development.

3. The Implementation of the Strategy

Interviews and class observations were conducted to find out what strategies were applied by the teacher. The researchers found that the Total Physical Response and Grammar Translation Method had not been implemented properly. Teachers often looked tired in repeating material and several times go through the stages of asking individual students' understanding. Communication between teachers and students used sign language accompanied by a loud teacher's voice. Learning activities are also divided into pre-activities, core activities and

post-activities. The teacher also came to each student to ask for their understanding. From the results of these observations, researchers saw a good relationship between teachers and students. The strategies and materials delivered to students were actually appropriate for the needs of students, but their application is still lacking. The teacher explained that the use of Total Physical Response and Grammar Translation Methods by exemplifying the vocabulary into signs was an easy thing that students could follow, then they were asked to guess the meaning of the vocabulary. However, it must be repeated several times until students understand. This was what made teachers tired. Not only asking the teacher, but the researchers also asked several deaf students about this strategy. In simple questions, and in simple answers from students, the researchers found that some students felt they understood more and were in accordance with the strategies given. The rest did not enjoy the strategy on the grounds that they were bored and unsatisfied.

Discussion

English subjects were studied by students in public schools and schools with special needs. However, the lessons given to deaf students were much simpler because students with special needs, especially the deaf had hearing loss. For this reason, the material provided was also adapted to the conditions of students. This is in line with Wasita & Chrisna (2013) who argues that in general the intelligence of deaf children was potentially the same as normal children, but the loss of hearing for deaf children causes the process of broader achievement to be constrained or hampered so that deaf children experienced limitations in their abilities. language, information, and power of abstraction.

The strategy used by the teacher in carrying out effective learning was to repeat the material and check student understanding periodically to measure the ability of each deaf student. However, in practice, teachers often do not regularly check students' understanding. This was caused by teachers who are tired if they have to check the understanding of students one by one. This concern is related to the theory of Pierangelo & Giuliani (2008) which stated that effective strategies for deaf students place more emphasis on academic learning, such as in conducting effective learning by periodically asking students' understanding of lessons, and individualization.

In learning the English subject that was done in the classroom, deaf students had different ways of learning and comprehension. The researcher also realized that the students' sitting positions were also arranged so that they were comfortable because the students' comfort in the class could affect the course of the learning process. From the situation above, the teacher had implemented classroom accommodation as stated by (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008) that one of the most common accommodations is the classroom which involves determining the seating of deaf students. Students were better off sitting near the teacher. But in reality, not all students could sit near the teacher, where the number of teachers and students in the class was very inversely proportional. To pay attention to students' motor skills in class, the teacher used Total Physical Response and Grammar Translation Method in the teaching process. This method can also help students understand the meaning of vocabulary by translating it into Indonesian, but the teacher must also be really active in implementing it.

For Total Physical Response and Grammar Translation Method applied by the teacher in teaching deaf students at school, in line with Asher in Herrel & Michael (2012) which states that, in Total Physical Response, the teacher introduces commands or body movements to show students about the

vocabulary being taught. In observation, the researcher saw the teacher apply it in English class. Students will be asked to guess the meaning of the vocabulary from the teacher with a sign. This is considered good in motor development and student focus in associating language with action in learning English. The researcher also saw that some deaf students enjoyed the learning activities.

Then, the Grammar Translation Method is also explained in Larsen-Freeman (1987), in which the translation changes sentences from a foreign language to the mother tongue, finds information in an event, finds antonyms and synonyms, learn foreign words that are similar to the mother tongue, understand a pattern or grammar, complete a sentence, memorize grammar and vocabulary, make a sentence and events according to the rules. The results of the research show that learning has not carried out according to these techniques. Some techniques have not been applied to learning.

Based on observations, researchers found that teachers in this school had little in common with Larsen's theory. The teacher translates the English vocabulary into Indonesian through sign language. Then, students understand the meaning of the vocabulary. Researchers found sign language used in this school as a communication tool for deaf students in teaching and learning activities. The teacher stated that sign language is commonly used by special schools in Indonesia. This sign language was adopted from American Sign Language (ASL). This sign language is used as an alternative for deaf people to be able to understand the lessons given by the teacher.

The researcher found the same results from the two related research that English teachers also experienced problems when delivering material to deaf students. Azizah found that learning to use WhatsApp as a learning medium in the pandemic era was experiencing problems. Teachers are faced with six challenges as previously described. The strategies used to overcome

these challenges are asking students to prepare dictionaries, using alphabetical signs, waving or tapping students on the shoulder to get their attention. However, this strategy is not perfect to be fully applied to deaf students.

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