An Analysis of English Language Teaching Strategies for the Hearing-Impaired Students in SLB B Yakut Purwokerto during the Pandemic of Covid-19

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilaksanakan untuk melihat tantangan yang dihadapi guru dalam mengajar Bahasa Inggris kepada siswa tunarungu serta menggambarkan strategi yang digunakan oleh guru untuk mengatasi tantangan tersebut. Metode kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini dan pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya empat variabel yang menjadi tantangan guru dalam mengajar bahasa Inggris kepada siswa tunarungu yaitu (1) komunikasi antara guru dengan siswa, (2) persiapan bahan pembelajaran, (3) pemilihan media pembelajaran, dan (4) cara penyampaian bahan pembelajaran. Untuk mengatasi tantangan tersebut, guru menggunakan beberapa strategi sebagai berikut: menggunakan pendekatan komunikasi total, mengadaptasi bahan ajar, memilih media visual, dan menggunakan *drilling* dalam mengajar bahasa Inggris kepada siswa tunarungu, namun temuan penelitian ini dapat menunjukkan beberapa perbedaan dibandingkan pada sekolah luar biasa lainnya. Intinya, kesabaran dan kreativitas dalam menemukan cara yang tepat dalam mengajar bahasa Inggris tetap menjadi harapan utama bagi guru bahasa Inggris untuk siswa berkebutuhan khusus.

Kata kunci: gangguan pendengaran, pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, siswa tunarungu, strategi guru

ABSTRACT

This study was led to discover the challenges teachers face in teaching hard-of-hearing (HH) and deaf students the English language as well as to describe the strategies teachers used to address these challenges. The methodology of this study was qualitative. Data were collected by observation, interviews, and documentation. The research uncovered four of the variables representing challenges teachers encountered when teaching English to hearing-impaired students, namely: communication between teacher and students, preparation of materials, selection of materials, and distribution of materials. To deal with the challenges, teachers used several strategies: customize the materials, choose visual media, and use drills to deliver the materials using a total communication approach. Although this study provided information on challenges and strategies for teaching English to deaf students, the results of this study might show differences when applied in other special education schools. Fundamentally, patience and creativity in finding appropriate ways to teach English continues to be the primary expectations of English teacher for students with special needs.

Keywords: hearing impairment, English teaching, deaf students, teacher's strategy

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INTRODUCTION

English is a worldwide communication language. People need to learn English to be able to communicate with other people from other countries. It has developed into the international language of technology and science, travel and tourism, as well as diplomacy and trade (Frath, 2010). Due to its significant role in global communication and knowledge transfer, the Indonesian government has introduced English as a formal elective in primary school and as a compulsory subject from secondary school onwards (Alwasiah, 2013). Correspondingly, English becomes a subject for special-need students at *Sekolah Luar* *Biasa* (SLB) or Indonesian Extraordinary School. It means that all students need to learn English, including disabled and special needs students.

According to Law No. 72 of 1991, the Indonesian government initiated distinct schools for special needs students. This law states that all children with disabilities have the right to an education. Therefore, Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB), or Extraordinary school is made to provide facilities for development, cultural language and behavioral development, and supports students with special needs. Additionally, as stipulated by Article 16 of Law No. 72 of 1991, the special schools' curriculum is comparable to that of regular schools in Indonesia, but with some adjustments to meet the needs of students. This specifies that special education refers to education in environments that can meet the needs of special-needs students (Redbridge, 2014).

A special-need student is a student with certain conditions or circumstances. In addition, if the disability is related to academic, sensory, or physical function where the student differs from most peers and involves separate and/or extra sources, people then consider the student to have the need for special education (Wah, 2011; Pratama, 2016).

Disability itself is a word that comes from the word meaning uptake, i.e. disability or incapacity. A disabled person is someone who has a mental or physical disability which significantly restricts one or more essential activities in life. A student is considered to have a disability if he or she has the disability, has a record of having the disability (UNHCR, 2010). Disability labels stigmatize stereotypes that students who are disabled are not as capable as their peers due to their incapacity in educational activities. Therefore, students with disabilities have Special Educational Needs (SEN).

There are six types of disabilities for SEN students (Wah, 2011; Pratama, 2016), namely attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (one's decreased self-control ability in public), cerebral palsy (impairment of posture and movement), intellectual disability (apparent limited function of cognitive), multiple disabilities (2 above barriers), visual impairment, and hearing impairment. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines hearing impairment as "an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance". According to Paul and Whitelaw (2011), hearing loss is a common term referring to all degrees, types, and causes of hearing impairment. It is a general term that includes both deaf and hard-ofand traditionally hearing refers to individuals with any type or degree of hearing loss that causes difficulty at work (Gargiulo, 2006). The higher the level of disability, the less likely individuals are to develop everyday language, and the more likely they are to require special education (Westwood, 2009).

Hearing ability has a close relationship with language comprehension. Hearing loss has a substantial influence on the speech and language development of deaf students which negatively affects their academic achievement, social and emotional cognitive interaction, and milestones (Moores, 2001). Moreover, these hearingimpaired students show that they indeed struggle with communication, academic, social, emotional, and family problems due to their condition (El-Zraigat & AI Emam, 2005). According to Westwood (2011), deafness puts young children at noticeable interruptions in many areas, including literacy skills, spoken language acquisition, and social development. Therefore, it is assumed that through adequate exposure and practice, deaf students can improve their language ability and competence.

Students with hearing impairment need a special language, speech, and audiological rehabilitation curriculum (El-Zraigat, Ibrahim, 2013; Movallali et al, 2015). A major goal in educating deaf students is to improve their language skills as much as possible. With language proficiency, each student can make better use of their intellectual abilities as well as socially gain and grow a deeper understanding of the curriculum. Therefore, to improve their

language skills, hearing-impaired students need a teacher who can appropriately transfer the material considering their disabilities. To be able to transfer the material appropriately, the teacher should have information about the range of hearing loss and its educational implication for hearing-impaired students. People who are incapable of hearing as well as those with normal hearing (binaural hearing thresholds above 20 dB) are said to be deaf. This explanation referred to the hearing loss degree. How loud sounds need to be for one to perceive them is the base of the degree. Decibels or *dB* refer to loudness. The term dB HL describes hearing loss in decibels. The information about the range of hearing loss is explained and presented in the table below (The American Speech-Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2022; Word Health Organization, 2021).

Range of	Decibel	Educational
hearing	level	Implications for
loss	(dB)	Students
Normal	Up to 20 dB	 Can hear all speech in a good acoustic environment Show rare problems in hearing
Slight-Mild	20-45 B	 May show effort to hear inaudible voices Need help developing language, speaking, reading, writing, and social skills Possibly to have an audiologist's recommendati on of hearing aids or FM systems
Moderate	45-60 dB	Recognize conversational

		 language when approaching and facing the speaker. Require hearing aids and FM system Possibly involve additional backing in school
Moderately -Severe	60-70 dB	 Conversation must be loud. Need FM system and hearing aids General speech information failure Will require help in language, speech, writing, and reading Will require social skill special training
Severe	70-90 В	 Require hearing aids and FM system Rely mainly on visual rather than auditory in the processing of information Unable to hear speech May hear loud sounds when near the sound source Difficulties in speech intelligibility and speech quality May have language and social delays May need to

		learn sign and spoken language • Require special programming
Profound	90 dB or more	 Will require to wear suitable technology (e.g. cochlear implant, hearing instruments) Unable to hear any sounds without implication May have language and social delays Have difficulties in speech intelligibility and speech quality Require special programming

From the above description, it is obvious that the level of functional difficulty experienced by deaf students is related to the level of hearing loss expressed in decibels. The table above shows the various levels of hearing loss and their corresponding decibel levels. The table also shows the treatment options available to individuals with these conditions. Each of the stages brings different challenges and different treatment needs.

Teaching English to hearing-impaired students is still a big challenge for teachers today. The process of learning and teaching English for hard-of-hearing (HH) and normal students is quite different. It is very tough for HH students to learn English. It is because there are often substantial delays in phonemes, generating syntax, and vocabulary (Cawthon, 2001). Hard-ofhearing students cannot completely comprehend information in audio form like their normal peers.

It is also affected the students' ability to read as it was smaller than the sounds they couldn't handle. Hence, for students with hearing impairment and hearing about visual expenditure, it is difficult in the ordinary environment, especially regarding important information, it must be provided solely by spoken oral language (Oyewuni, 2008; Mpofu & Chimenga, 2013).

Despite the fact that hearing-impaired students achieve their goals in learning English, teachers should not view them as defects, but rather as unique trait patterns (Moores, 2001). Teachers should focus their energy on identifying these students' strengths. In addition, teachers need to be aware of the characteristics, needs, and abilities of the students; therefore, they can provide appropriate classroom activities. Furthermore, teachers whose students have special needs should have knowledge of disabilities, their causes, assessment, and how to appropriately address them in the learning process (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2011). In this case, as a consequence, teachers need to give special consideration to adapting to behavioral disorders through specific strategies to support the teaching and learning process.

METHODOLOGY

This research applied an exploratory research design because it was intended to explore and get deeper information related to English teaching strategies applied to hard-of-hearing students in SLB B Yakut Purwokerto during the pandemic of COVID-19. This research was conducted on $11^{\text{th}} - 20^{\text{th}}$ January 2022 at SLB B YAKUT Purwokerto in the academic year of 2021/2022. The participants in this research were the English teacher in the school and the employed sampling was total sampling since the teacher was the only English teacher at school.

Data were collected by observation, and documentation. The interviews, researchers used non-participant observations in recording the classroom teaching and learning activities for five months from May until September 2022. With the consent of the school and teachers, video surveillance was used during classroom activities and interview sessions with teachers. Additionally, in this study,

the researchers applied the model of Miles and Huberman (Miles et al., 2014) to examine the study data in several steps, namely reducing data, displaying data, and making conclusions. The researchers also reduced invalid data that did not meet the research goals. The data were then displayed and triangulated. Triangulation with this data collection became a way to ensure the validity and reliability of this study. Finally, conclusions were drawn regarding the results and considerations of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research found that there were four challenges in teaching English to hearingimpaired students that the teacher faced and four strategies for overcoming these challenges.

The Challenges	The Strategy
Teacher-students communication	Adopting the total communication approach
Teaching material	Adapting the
preparation Teaching media selection	teaching material Choosing visual media
Teaching material delivery	Using drilling in delivering teaching material

The first challenge for teachers was communicating with deaf students. As Moores (2001) noted, deaf students have limited ability to speak as a result of their disability; he stated that "Hearing loss significantly influences the language and speech development of students with hearing impairment which negatively affects their academic achievement, social and emotional interaction, and cognitive milestones." It can be seen that hearingimpaired students have problems with communication. academic. social. and emotional factors.

Communication issues required teachers to customize and deliver teaching materials using appropriate communication approaches. In the first and second classroom observations, researchers found that teachers combined verbal language, lip reading, sign language, and finger spelling as communication approaches for deaf address these concerns, students. To Westwood (2009) suggests that the total communication approach combines sign language and gestures with verbal methods to help deaf students understand and express ideas and opinions. Relating to this case, promoting optimal communication skills at an early age can be done through manual and oral training combinations (Golding-Meadow, 2005; Westwood, 2009). The total communication approach refers to a flexible that uses all means approach of communication. Teachers carry out this approach by using speaking (orally), lip reading. fingerspelling, sign language, reading, writing, and symbols.

From observations, speaking became the primary means for the teacher and students at this school to communicate. The teacher trained the students to improve their lip-reading skills in order to understand what the teacher was saying. Sign language is utilized here as an instrument of communication support. Both teacher and students continue to verbally communicate using sign language.

In addition, the teacher introduced new words by spelling the alphabet with her finger (finger spelling); the sign language alphabet is used to finger-spell words. SLB B YAKUT employs Alphabet Sign Language and Sign Language provided by Electronic Dictionary Indonesian Sign Language System or *Sistem Isyarat Bahasa Indonesia* (SIBI). Clearly, the students have an impairment in hearing, yet they still have residual hearing and this makes the teacher adopts the total communication approach.

The second challenge faced by the teacher was that she needed to prepare the material before teaching English to the hearing-impaired students. Considering the disability of the hearing-impaired students in hearing sounds, the teacher needed to prepare the materials before teaching English to the students. According to Hallahan & Kauffman (2012), a teacher who teaches students with special needs

must know the knowledge of disability, its causes, assessment, and how to manage them well in the learning process.

The teacher also clarified how lack of background knowledge affects students' learning of the material; lack of background knowledge stems from the inability of deaf students to access information in audio form. Therefore, the teacher should prepare the material before teaching the students.

The materials must be able to improve the students' abilities and knowledge in learning English, so they must be suitable for their abilities. Materials should allow students to express their thoughts, words, and imagination. This condition can produce high levels of reaction and activity from students. Materials should help students to easily understand the lesson due to the fact that the research reflects decisions about the primary goals of the material. According to the interview result, the teacher explained that she needs to make some adaptations in preparing the teaching materials for teaching English to hearingimpaired students. It is in line with the statement by Thompson (2012), "there are several instructions to the teacher to teach language to students with hearing impairment. One of them is planning the materials that consider or depend on the need of the students."

In adapting materials, she looks at many references which can be used to teach English according to the hearing-impaired students' needs and knowledge. The teacher usually looks for the materials on the internet such as YouTube. It is believed that the teacher has completed countless work in planning the materials through adaptation that is related to the students' needs and the effort of the teacher resembling an expert's theory.

The third challenge that the teacher encountered in teaching English was finding the appropriate media for the hearingimpaired students. In teaching English to hard-of-hearing students, media usage is needed by the teacher; consequently, the students can easily understand the material. As Arsyad (2011) noted, educational media have the following features to help students. They enhance students' attention and serve as an important foundation for course development. These features, therefore, make teaching more stable and provide a hands-on experience for students to demonstrate their efforts for themselves. In addition, regular and continuous reflection, especially on life images, helps create comprehensions that benefit students' language development, gives them an otherwise unattainable experience, and adds efficiency and variety to their learning.

At SLB B YAKUT, students were unable to hear materials and media in audio format; consequently, the teacher had to present materials in an appropriate manner using accurate media. Media education is important because it can develop students' creativity with images, words, and sounds that flow from different media. According to the interview results, different media was employed to support the process of learning and teaching English. The media used by teachers were visual and audiovisual media.

The interview results showed that YouTube videos were the medium that the teacher used to teach English to her deaf students. In addition, the teacher usually uses pictures as the media in teaching English to hearing-impaired students. Besides, the teacher also employed a laptop and LCD projector in displaying the videos and pictures. Occasionally, the teacher used a whiteboard in explaining the material.

The last challenge faced by the teacher was delivering the material to the hearingimpaired students. Repetition is totally needed when the teacher provided the materials. The process of delivering educational materials was made more difficult by some of the challenges mentioned above. As a result, hearingimpaired students did not have access to audio-based materials, making it very difficult for teachers to explain them. Repetition remains a problem that the teacher has when doing English material explanations to deaf students. Deaf students did not grasp the material as easily as normal students. They had to repeat it several times until they could absorb the teacher-provided material in class.

To address these concerns, Thompson (2012) pointed out that there are several instructions for teachers to teach language to deaf students. One of them uses instructions and repetition with each word or sentence by writing the keywords on the board.

CONCLUSION

There are four challenges to cope with challenges that the those teacher encountered in teaching English to HH students, namely: communication between the teacher and the hearing-impaired students, material preparation for teaching English, appropriate usage of teaching media, and material delivery. To face the challenges, the teacher uses some strategies such as the total communication approach to communicate with the deaf students. To prepare the teaching material, the teacher makes adaptations related to the students' characteristics and needs. She also uses visual and audiovisual media teaching for hearing-impaired students.

The teacher clarifies the cause for deciding on which strategies to use is primarily set on experience years of teaching HH students have a restricted approach to audio materials. As a result, hearingimpaired students do not have as much as background knowledge than normal students. Given these conditions, the teacher should remain patient with their students. After spending many years teaching HH students, the teacher remains in search of better and more creative teaching ways.

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