

Teaching Special Students: English Lessons for Deaf Students in Indonesian Special Junior High Schools

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Abstract

English is established as a subject for students in Indonesian Special Junior High Schools. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), one of the categories of students with special needs is deaf students. This research aims at describing teachers' challenges to teach English for deaf students as well as the describing the strategies to cope with those challenges. This is a descriptive qualitative research with usage of interview guides and observation sheets. The research revealed several challenges such as getting students' attention, understanding words from students' lip movements, giving definitions and examples, differentiating similar words in different contexts, and delivering materials related to students' prior knowledge. Based on the teacher's years of experience, to cope with those challenges, the teacher asked the students to always bring dictionaries, used alphabetic signs, and waved or patted the students' shoulders to get their attention. Finally, this research suggests the use of computer dictionary software, which can show pictures of words. The school should also consider the use of sign language and the combination of lip reading and sign language.

Keywords: special schools, special students, deaf, challenges, alphabetic signs

1.0 Introduction

English has already been established as one of the subjects in a regular school in Indonesia from the junior high school level (Ministry of Education and Culture, Article No. 060/U/1993, cited in Suyanto, p. 3). It is also a subject for students with special needs in special schools, called *Sekolah Luar Biasa* (SLB) in Indonesia.

A special school is a school which is specifically designed to provide and support the needs of special education for students with special needs. Special Education is an education which fulfills the needs of special students with adaptation to their needs. Redbridge (2014, Para.1) states: "the term Special Educational Needs (SEN) has a legal definition... it applies to children who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it significantly harder for them to learn or access

education than most other children of their age.” The term of Special Educational Needs is set out in the Education Act of 1996 and the Children and Families Act of 2014.

Based on Firestone. (Para.1), special education means:

“A form of instruction that's designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities, so that they can learn the same skills and information as other children in school. The term special education is used interchangeably with special needs, and the disabilities may be physical, emotional, or behavioral.”

As stated in Redbridge (2014) and Firestone, special education refers to an education for students with special needs with an environment that could facilitate the students with special needs.

Students with special needs refer to children with learning difficulties or disabilities that make it significantly harder for them to learn or access education compared to regular students. Based on First 5 California (2008, p.1), children with special needs refers to “Children with identified disability, health, or mental health conditions requiring early intervention, special education services, or other specialized services and supports; or Children without identified conditions, but requiring specialized services, supports, or monitoring”.

Based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), there are 13 categories of children with special needs such as Autism, Blindness, Deafness, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visual Impairment. (The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2012).

In Indonesia, the government established special schools for students with special needs, based on Law No. 72 of 1991 where it is stated that every child with disability has the right to go for an education. The special school will help to provide all the facilities for the students with disability and help them to learn in school. Based on the policy, the special school accepts students with disabilities, such as deaf students, blind students, and so on. Based on Article 16 of Law No. 72 of 1991, the curriculum of special schools is similar to regular schools in Indonesia with adaptation which follows the needs of the students with special needs. Therefore, as one of the subjects, it includes English.

However, the process of learning English for deaf students is not the same as for regular students. For deaf students, it is quite difficult for them to learn English because children with hearing impairments often show significant delays in phoneme production, vocabulary, and syntax. (Schirmer, 1985; Seewald, Ross, Giolas, & Yonovitz, 1985; Skarakis & Prutting, 1977 in Cawthon, 2001). Deaf students cannot fully process information in the form of sounds, while regular students can process them; this may affect their reading ability because of the lack of vocabulary from the sounds they cannot process. Oyewumi (2008) stated that “Deaf and hearing impaired students tend to be visual learners – and this is difficult in an environment where much essential information is delivered exclusively by word of mouth.” (cited in Mpofu, *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, the language characteristic is usually different; the structure of sentences of deaf students is usually different from hearing students, and it will be a challenge for the teacher to teach the deaf students the structure of both Indonesian sentences and English sentences at the same time.

Based on the prior explanation, the researcher is firstly interested to know the challenges in teaching English for deaf students, secondly to know the teacher’s efforts to face the challenges, and lastly to know teacher’s reasons for their efforts.

SMALB-B YPTB is one of the special schools in Malang. SMALB-B YPTB is the oldest special school, which was built in 1995. The purpose of this school is to give children with special needs the chance to go for a higher education, which focuses on deaf students only. The researcher

chose this school as the source of the research based on the researcher's experience as a volunteer of accompanying deaf students of university level who were alumni of the school.

There are two previous studies used as references in this research. The first one is *Challenges of Educating Students Who Are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing in Jordan* by Dr. Ibrahim A. El-Zraigat and Dr. Yahya Smadi. The second one is *English Teachers of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students in French Schools: Needs, Barriers and Strategies* by D. Bedoin.

The researcher hopes that this research can be a reference for teachers who are teaching English for deaf students in SMALB or in an inclusive class to find out the best way to teach deaf students.

Statement of the Problem

Based on the aforementioned background, the problems of this research are first, what are the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English for deaf students? And second, what are the strategies to cope with those challenges? This study sets out to describe teachers' challenges to teach English for deaf students as well as describing the strategies to cope with those challenges.

2.0 Literature Review

Special Schools in Indonesia

A special school is a school which is specifically designed to provide and support the needs of special education for students with special needs. The school supports the students by adapting the material, media, curriculum, and so on, in relation to their special needs. The goals are mainly to help the students to get the knowledge they need despite their disability.

Meanwhile, special education is a process of teaching and learning which is adapted under certain conditions and situations of the learners. Thus, the learners can get knowledge and soft skills despite of their conditions and situations.

Therefore, the term of Special Educational Needs (SEN) was created; it has a legal definition which is set out in the Education Act of 1996 and the Children and Families Act of 2014. The term refers to needs of special education which is applied to the students with learning difficulties or disabilities that make it significantly harder for them to learn or access education than most other students of their age (Redbridge, 2014, para.1).

Based on Firestone. (Para.1), special education means:

“A form of instruction that's designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities, so that they can learn the same skills and information as other children in school. The term special education is used interchangeably with special needs, and the disabilities may be physical, emotional, or behavioral.”

As previously stated in Redbridge (2014) and Firestone, special education means education for children with special needs with an environment that could facilitate children with special needs. A special school would provide the special education for them based on the 13 categories of students with special needs as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), such as autism, blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment (The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2012).

In Indonesia, the government established special schools (known as *Sekolah Luar Biasa*) for students with special needs for their special education, based on the Law No. 72 of 1991 which

states that every child with disability has the right to get an education, and to get knowledge and soft skills from the process of teaching and learning in classes despite their disability.

The special schools will help to provide the special education with all the facilities for the students with special needs and help them to learn in school to get the knowledge and soft skills they need.

Based on the policy, the special school accepts students with disabilities from three main categories: physical, mental, and personality disorders. The physical disorder category consists of deaf students, blind students, and so on. Meanwhile, the mental disorder category includes mental retardation students. Last, students with personality disorders are also allowed to participate. Some special schools accept different kinds of special students, while others only focus on one kind of students with special needs. For example, there is a special school which focuses on special education for deaf students only.

The special schools' goals are to provide the special education for students with special needs considering their disability (physical, mental, and personality disorder) with the expectation that students can improve their character, knowledge, and soft skills, to live and adapt with the culture or situation of the community where they live despite their disability.

Based on Article 7 of Law No. 72 of 1991, the curriculum of special schools is based on the national curriculum; it is similar to the curriculum of regular schools in Indonesia with adaptations that follow the needs of the students with special needs (Based on Article 16, Law No. 72 of 1991).

The school provides teachers with the consideration that they have the background knowledge about special schools, special education, and students with special needs. The school creates an environment which supports the process of teaching and learning for students with special needs, so that students can acquire knowledge and soft skills freely and in a comfortable way, despite their disabilities.

Language Acquisition of Deaf Students

Students with special needs refer to students, who under certain conditions and situations, are different from most other students of their age that make them have learning difficulties, so they need special education in a special school that attempts to provide for their special needs. First 5 California (2008, P.1) stated that students with special needs refers to "Children with identified disability, health, or mental health conditions requiring early intervention, special education services, or other specialized services and supports; or Children without identified conditions, but requiring specialized services, supports, or monitoring".

Deaf students are students with hearing impairments that make it hard for them to perceive information in the form of sounds, and usually exhibit some form of an articulation difficulty. This leads the students to be unable to perceive much of the material from the teacher. Therefore, deaf students would usually face some challenges in the process of learning and teaching, especially in fully understanding the material compared to unimpaired students. Therefore, they need teachers who can transfer the material in an appropriate way considering their deafness.

Chomsky in 1960 states that children are born with an inner capacity for language development which is called LAD or Language Acquisition Device. Chomsky suggested that this device is the answer to why no one really knows how language is learned. This device is carried from birth, as the device that helps people to naturally learn language (cited in Deaf Children Australia).

In his research, Chomsky found that children use LAD to understand and produce language starting from birth; they process it in their minds and then produce sentences through the input of what they have heard from their surroundings and communities. In general, children start to build

their language foundations by the time they are five years of age. Therefore, it is important to expose children with good input from around five years of age to help their language development; they need to be exposed to interactions in a meaningful way. After putting input into their language acquisition device, the children can process the input and utter sentences by themselves with the help of the language acquisition device.

In the case of deaf children, they are also born with the language acquisition device. Yet, they cannot hear or access any information in the form of sounds. This issue affecting their language development means that they have less input for the language acquisition device compared to unimpaired children. Therefore, the lack of input results in a lesser capability to utter sentences and the slow development of language compared to unimpaired students, because they have less input to be processed by the language acquisition device. This is the reason why the language characteristics of deaf children are quite different from unimpaired children, and at times the language is confusing. Often, the only input a deaf child can understand is when people talk or sign to them directly, one-to-one (Institute of Deaf Children Australia, 2012).

Nevertheless, deaf children are also born with language acquisition devices. These devices help them to cope with their situation and learn language in their own ways which complement their nature. Thus, they grow as deaf children yet are still able to develop their language, though their language development is weaker compared to unimpaired children.

Based on the researcher's experiences, the researcher once went to a kindergarten for deaf children. The researcher was amazed by how young the deaf children were, yet they could communicate to each other through lip-reading. This proves how every child is born with language acquisition devices which naturally helps them with the language development.

The concern is that the less input the deaf students receive, the less background knowledge they have compared to the students with normal hearing. Thus, in the process of learning in school, deaf students probably need more time to understand the material. Their nature or characteristics are also a concern which needs to be learned and understood to help them in the process of learning in the school.

Deaf students have some characteristics such as difficulties in following verbal directions and the inability to hear, which leads them to being unable to understand things which are communicated verbally. They cannot grasp certain words and their meanings because some words have similar lip movements; an example is the lip movements of the word *okay*, which is similar to the word *no way*. This could lead them to misunderstand certain ideas.

Their difficulty in following verbal directions lead to the delay of language. They often have a greater degree of language delay compared to unimpaired students. Their writing usually has some language mistakes and this leads to misconceptions of their ideas in their writing. This also could lead deaf students to some difficulties with social interaction, whether emotional or interpersonal skills.

Deaf students usually exhibit some form of articulation difficulty. There are some words which are hard to be pronounced by deaf students clearly. Deaf students can become easily frustrated when they cannot grasp an idea or to understand something which is present as an abstract concept because of their difficulty in following verbal directions and language delay. And this could lead to a lack of motivation in learning or participating in an activity.

Deaf students are highly expressive with their body language to help them present their ideas. They will use their hands to describe something. It is best to teach deaf students with pictures or body language so they can grasp certain ideas.

Therefore, it is a challenge for a teacher to teach deaf students. Their characteristics need to be known by a teacher who fully understands how to teach deaf students (Mpofu 2012).

Teaching Special Students

The process of learning English for regular students and deaf students is not the same. For deaf students, it is quite difficult for them to learn English because children with hearing impairments often show significant delays in phoneme production, vocabulary, and syntax. (Cawthon, 2001). Deaf students cannot fully process the information in form of sounds, while regular students can process them; this may affect their reading ability because of the lack of vocabulary from the sounds they cannot process. Oyewumi (2008) stated that “Deaf and hearing impaired students tend to be visual learners – and this is difficult in an environment where much essential information is delivered exclusively by word of mouth.” (cited in Mpofo, *et al.*, 2013). The language characteristics are usually different; the structure of sentences of deaf students is usually different from unimpaired students.

Based on the challenges faced by deaf students above, it becomes a challenge for a teacher to teach English for deaf students. The teacher needs to have special considerations to adjust to students’ disabilities or their behaviors (Mpofo, *et al.*, 2013).

Before starting the class, something that a teacher can do is to attract the attention of deaf students with a cue, such as a tap on the shoulder or by waving. A teacher needs to speak clearly and naturally without exaggerating the lip or hand movements to keep the focus of deaf students. A teacher needs to face the students and avoid standing in front of a light source to avoid difficulty in reading lips (Mpofo, *et al.*, 2013).

The setting of the class is important; it is necessary to place the chairs where all the students can see the teacher’s lip or hand movements. The use of mirrors on all sides of the class is necessary, as the student can see the lip movements through the mirrors, which helps them to focus to the teacher and to avoid any distractions, considering deaf students are visual students.

Teachers’ considerations to adjust to students’ disabilities or their behaviors refer to teachers’ efforts to adjust the material, media, and so on, considering deaf students who are not able to learn listening and speaking skills, and ways to make deaf students easier to learn writing and reading skills. In an example, a teacher tended to use pictures when describing something to avoid abstract imagination from the deaf students, to help them better understand things, and to give an exact example of something, because deaf students are visual learners.

Brelje (1999) stated that there are two main approaches of teaching methods for deaf students; one is lip reading, and another is sign language with the help of oral language (cited in Bedoin, 2010). Yet, as principals of special schools for deaf students in Indonesia do not allow sign language in the process of teaching and learning, the schools choose to use the lip-reading approach. This leads to consideration of the what-if situation of when the deaf students are not surrounded by people who can use and understand sign language.

There are two previous studies used as a reference in this research. The first is *Challenges of Educating Students Who Are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing in Jordan* by El-Zraigat and Smadi (2012). The second one is *English Teachers of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students in French Schools: Needs, Barriers and Strategies* by Bedoin (2010). The former study was conducted to review current special education programs and curricula related to deaf and hard-of-hearing students using a review of Jordanian national standards. Qualitative data were collected throughout the study. The results showed that educating students who are deaf and hard-of-hearing is challenging. These challenges included a lack of remedial and educational programs, insufficient teachers, unequipped schools, and a lack of instructional and assessment tools. The importance of the study was to evaluate the process of educating students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing in Jordan. It was hoped that the study results would provide knowledge that helps in the development of special educational programs offered at schools for students with a hearing impairments.

The second previous study was conducted to know the needs, barriers, and strategies of teachers who work with deaf students. They are faced with the challenge of how to adjust their teaching to their students' impairment and at the same time develop the latter's knowledge and skills in English. In order to analyze teaching practices in English classes, questionnaires, interviews and in-class observations in several special and mainstream schools were conducted. The findings showed that different teaching strategies are used in order to make English lessons accessible to deaf students.

3.0 Methodology

A descriptive qualitative research was applied in this study. This seeks to answer the questions to a unique phenomenon that occurs, in the form of detailed description. This is based on descriptions of observations that seeks to answer the questions of a phenomenon, which could be extraordinary events, occurrences, or circumstances. Data are in the form of descriptive narratives, such as field notes, recordings, or other transcriptions from audio, videotapes, tapes, films, and other written records. The objects that people make, do, say, produce, or write are also taken as artifacts (Yulianto, 2016). Field notes, recordings and other transcriptions from audio, videotapes, and other written records are used to obtain the data.

Data Collection

The main data source in this study was the English teacher as the main subject of the research. The teacher is one of the teachers of *Yayasan Putra Tunas Bangsa*, the special school of deaf students. Other sources of data in this study were the eight deaf students who are taught by the teacher, who were from the tenth grade. The data were expected to be supporting data from other than the main subject, the teacher. The researcher chose this class based on the recommendation from the teacher. To collect the data, first the researcher conducted an interview with the English teacher. Next, the researcher conducted observations twice in the class and took documentation of the teaching and learning process.

The researcher conducted the interview with the English teacher using an interview guide; there were seven questions in the interview guide. The interview with the English teacher was conducted to find out the challenges in teaching deaf students, and the teacher's efforts to face those challenges, as well as the teacher's reasons for those efforts.

The observation and documentation were conducted in the class through the process of teaching and learning to cover the research problems. The researcher observed the process twice using the observation sheet. The documentation of the process used a camera as the instrument to record videos and to take photos.

Data Analysis

In this research, the data were analyzed using the theory of Miles and Huberman (1994). The descriptive qualitative analysis in this research consists of three activity steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

The first step was interview with the teacher using the interview guide. The next step was documentation of classroom observations. From the data, the researcher selected important data which answered the research problems. This involved making a transcription of the interview and description of the observation sheet, then selecting the challenges faced by the teacher based on the interview guide, and observation sheet. The next was listing the solutions from the teacher.

The second step of the analysis process was the display of the data of challenges faced by the teacher taken from the interview and observations in the form of table as well as pictures from

the documentation. The data triangulation of the research is between the data from the interview and the data from observations.

The third step of the analysis process was conclusion drawing and verification. The verification was based on the researcher's thoughts during writing, with a short excursion back to the field notes, which are thorough and elaborate, with lengthy argumentation and review. In this research, the researcher described the data as collected in as much detail as possible in drawing the conclusions. In the process of drawing conclusions, the researcher confirmed the result of the analysis with the theory taken from El-Zraigat (2012) on challenges in teaching deaf students, Bedoin (2011) on teachers of deaf students, and Mpofo and Chimenga (2013) on challenges faced by hearing-impaired pupils in learning.

Triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies. In this study, for enhancing the validity of the data, triangulation was done by cross-checking the two sources of data. They were the data from the interview with the teacher and the data from observations in the classroom. The data collected through the interview were cross-checked with the result of the observations, and the data from observations were also cross-checked with the result of the interview. Wherever the data collected from all sources were similar, the data were considered true and trustworthy.

4.0 Findings

The interview with the teacher was conducted using the interview sheet (appendix 1, page 42) with seven questions, and one of the questions has sub-points. From the interview, the researcher obtained the data to answer the research problems. Yet, the researcher needed to conduct the observation to cross-check the data from the interview with the data from observation as a part of data triangulation.

The interview was conducted to find the answer related to the research problems. In the interview guide (appendix 1, page 42), question number 1 was intended to know how many years the teacher has experience in teaching deaf students. Questions number 2 and 3 were intended to know the method used by teacher to deliver the material and the language the teacher used. Then, questions number 4, 5, and 6 were intended to find out what the teacher's challenges were in teaching deaf students. Those questions were also intended to find out what the teacher's efforts were to face the challenges in teaching English for deaf students' and what were his reasons for his course of actions. From the interview, there were eight challenges faced by the teacher in teaching English for deaf students. Yet, after the process of data triangulation, the process of cross-checking the data from both the interview and observations, there were only six challenges faced by the teacher. Those challenges are explained below.

Challenges in Teaching English for Deaf Students

In this part, the researcher presents the challenges the teacher faced in teaching English for deaf students. The data were collected from the interview and from the observations.

The first challenge was that the teacher needed to adapt the material and media. The students' disability to hear any material and media in the form of audio or sounds made the teacher needed to adapt and deliver the materials in appropriate ways with the right media. Yet, from the first observation, there was no sign of adaptation related to the material and the media done by the teacher. During the first observation, the teacher taught the material about tenses. The teacher asked the students to translate sentences from Indonesian to English and vice versa, which were related to

tenses. From the second observation, the researcher found out that the books used by the students were specific books from the government; the books are specifically designed for the deaf students.

The second challenge was that the teacher faced difficulties in finding the appropriate media for the students. Similar to the first challenge, the teacher needs to consider the students' disability to receive any materials in form of audio. Therefore, the teacher needs to find an appropriate media for the students. Yet, from the observation, the teacher did not seem to have difficulties in finding the appropriate media. At the first observation, the teacher used only the white board as a media, although there was an LCD projector in the class which can be used to display visual aids such as pictures or videos.

The third challenge was that sometimes the students made mistakes in understanding words because of similar lip movements to other words, and it was also hard for them to guess the words the teacher said because they only saw the lip movements, and they could not hear the teacher's voice. Therefore, the teacher sometimes needed to repeat the words or write them down. For example, the teacher needed to write down some words on the whiteboard when the students cannot grasp the words teacher said. At the first observation, the challenge occurred several times, and the students were confused with several words the teacher said by looking only at the teacher's lips.

The fourth challenge was to get the students' attention without calling their names. In the first observation, there were times when the teacher needed to walk around the students and pat them on their shoulder, or the teacher asked the closest students in front of him to get the attention of the students in the back.

The fifth challenge was the students' limited vocabularies; the teacher first needed to give definitions and examples of words before continuing the next materials. There were several terms which were confusing to the students even after they were translated to Indonesian.

The sixth challenge was the lack of background knowledge of the students. The teacher explained how the lack of background knowledge influenced the students in learning the material. The lack of background knowledge resulted from the disability of deaf students to access any information in the form of sounds. This is similar to the example of the fifth challenge; the students' lack of background knowledge makes it more difficult for the teaching and learning process because the teacher needed to explain the material more than once. From the observation, the students were quite confused with the material, and although they looked up their dictionaries, it took them a little bit longer to understand meanings and contexts compared to non-hearing-impaired students. Yet, it is important to mention that the deaf students are not unintelligent or do not have a low IQ. The lack of background knowledge resulted from the disability of deaf students to access any auditory information.

The seventh challenge was the students' difficulties in differentiating similar words. For example, the teacher gave the word 'done' and translated it into Indonesia as '*sudah*' or '*telah*' but several students were confused by the differences between the use of those words; those two words have similar meanings and functions, however there are different contexts related to them. Therefore, the teacher needed to explain the differences first and before giving the main explanation.

The eighth and last challenge was the need of repetition in delivering the material. The process of delivering the material was harder because of the several challenges explained before; therefore, it was even harder for the teacher to explain the material for deaf students because they could not access any materials in the form of audio and teacher needed to write down several words on the white board. The teacher needed to consider the background knowledge of the students, and deaf students took more time compared to unimpaired students to understand the material.

Teacher Strategies to Cope with the Challenges

This part explains the teacher's effort to face the challenges explained above. The data is taken from the interview with the teacher and from the observations in the class.

The first challenge was that the teacher needed to adapt the material and media. From the interview, the teacher stated that the effort to face this challenge was to look at many references on different kinds of media that can be used to teach deaf students. The teacher read many references and learned from his experiences. Yet, from the first observation, there was no sign that the teacher made an effort to adapt the material and media. They only practiced on translating sentences related to tenses at that moment.

The second challenge was that the teacher faced difficulties in finding appropriate media for students. Similar to efforts for the first challenge, from the interview the teacher stated that he faced the challenge by looking at many references of good materials from books and the Internet. The teacher mostly used media in form of pictures, videos, and prototypes. Yet, from the first observation, the researcher saw that the teacher only used the white board as the media, and the teacher did not use the LCD projector.

The next challenge was that the students made mistakes in understanding words due to similar lip movements to other words. The teacher's effort was to write down the word on the white board and to use alphabetic sign language to help them understand the words the teacher said. The data from the interview and the observations were both true.

The fourth challenge was how the teacher managed to get the attention of the students without calling their names. The teacher knocked the table to capture the attention of some students that may be able to hear the sound and used them to get the attention of other students. The teacher also walked around to get their attention. From the observations, the teacher walked around the class or asked the students sitting in front to get the attention of students in the back by waving their hands.

The fifth challenge was students' limited vocabularies which made it necessary for the teacher to give definitions and examples of words first before continuing to the next material. From the observation, it was revealed that the teacher also asked the students to always bring their dictionaries for both English and Indonesian to help them with their limited vocabularies.

The teacher's effort to face the sixth challenge, the students' lack of background knowledge, was similar as for the previous challenge. The teacher also faced the challenge by always giving the students homework to enrich their knowledge. From the observation, the teacher gave them homework and lots of examples that relate to real life.

The seventh challenge was the students' difficulties in differentiating similar words. For example, the teacher gave the word 'done' and translated it into Indonesian as '*sudah*' or '*telah*' but several students were confused by the differences between the use of those words, as those two words have similar meanings and functions, but different contexts. In this case, the teacher gave examples for each word, and made a comparison to help the students understand the differences of contexts. The data from the interview and the observations were both true.

The eighth and last challenge was the need for repetition in delivering the material. The teacher explained that in this kind of situation, the key was the ability of the teacher to stay patient with the students. From the observation, the teacher showed lots of patience in the teaching and learning process in the class.

The teacher explained that the reasons for the efforts were based on the teacher's years of experience. It was hard to teach deaf students for the first time, yet the teacher eventually learned through the process. The teacher learned from many references how to teach deaf students with consideration of the appropriate media and material. The teacher stated as time passed, he

eventually knew how to deal with any situation based on his own experience as he tried and figured out the ways to do so.

The teacher understood that deaf students have limited access to audio materials. This leads to deaf students having less background knowledge compared with the students who are able to hear, considering this condition.

Therefore, the teacher asked the students to always bring their dictionaries to help the teacher in giving the definition of words; it is easier for the teacher because the students can try to understand the definitions by themselves while the teacher only needs to give them the examples.

The teacher wrote down several words on the whiteboard to avoid misunderstanding because there are some words that have similar lip movements. The teacher also used alphabetic sign language to help the teacher spell out some words.

The teacher's reason for making the efforts was essentially because of the teacher's own experiences. Through years of teaching deaf students, the teacher has looked and is still looking for better ways to teach deaf students.

From the findings, the researcher performed data triangulation so that the researcher could cross-check the validity of the data from the interview with the data from the observations and vice versa. In the final data, there were only six challenges which were valid and proven through the observation in the class.

The data triangulation was done to confirm data validation by cross-checking the results of the interview with the results of the observations, both for the challenges faced by the teacher and the efforts made by the teacher to face those challenges in the process of teaching and learning of English for deaf students.

Discussion

The first challenge was that the teacher found the students made mistakes in understanding words because of similar lip movements to other words. The teacher's effort was to write down the words and use alphabetic sign language to clear the miscommunication.

In relation to this concern, Brelje (1999) stated that one of the approaches of teaching methods is learning to lip-read (cited in Bedoin, 2010). Yet, sometimes mistaken words because of similar lip movements to other words may arise. Therefore, the teacher needs to speak clearly and naturally without exaggerating lip movements or volume. The teacher also should be aware that moustaches, beards, hands, books, or microphones in front of their faces can add to the difficulties of lip reading for the students (Mpofu, *et al.*, 2013).

The researcher believes if the school would give permission to use sign language in delivering the material, it would be easier for the deaf students to understand. Based on the researcher's experiences as a volunteer in a deaf community, there are several deaf students who share that it is easier for them to understand the material if it is delivered in sign language, yet the school principal does not use sign language in school because the deaf students are expected to understand lip-reading in case they live in a community where people do not use sign language.

The second challenge was how to get the students' attention without calling their names. The teacher effort is to walk around the class to get the students' attention; the teacher asks the students in the front seats to wave to the other students or pat on their shoulder. Mpofu and Chimenga (2013) stated that there are several ways to get the attention of deaf students considering their deafness. One of them is to pat on the shoulder of the deaf learners or to wave to them, and the teacher also needs to walk around. Based on the theory by the experts, the researcher believes the teacher has done a good job in maintaining the students' attention, as the teacher's effort is similar to the theories of the experts.

The third challenge was that the teacher needed to give a definition and example of the word before going to the next material, considering the students' limited vocabularies. The teacher faced this challenge by explaining the words first, and then giving examples. The teacher also asked the students to always bring their dictionary for English and Indonesian. The researcher believes that the teacher's effort is good, yet the researcher would like to suggest to take advantage of the LCD projector in the classroom to display words from a computer dictionary which has pictures for examples of the words, an example being the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 3rd Edition*.

The fourth challenge was that the teacher found that the students had difficulties in differentiating similar words with different contexts. Similar to the previous effort, the teacher faced this challenge by explaining the words first, and giving examples for each context. For both the third challenge and the fourth challenge, these concerns are related to the experts' theories. Cawthon (2001) stated that the process of learning English by regular students and deaf students is not the same.

It is quite difficult for deaf students to learn English because children with hearing impairments often show significant delays in phoneme production, vocabulary, and syntax (Schirmer, 1985; Seewald, Ross, Giolas, & Yonovitz, 1985; Skarakis & Prutting, 1977, cited in Cawthon, 2001).

Therefore, it is acceptable if the deaf students have a more limited vocabulary compared to unimpaired students because they cannot access information in the form of sounds. It is completely acceptable if the students have difficulties in differentiating similar words with different contexts, considering their limited vocabularies compared to unimpaired students.

The fifth challenge was that the teacher found difficulties in delivering the material, which is related to the lack of background knowledge of the students. The teacher gave them more examples and told the students to look in the dictionary first.

Related to the previous experts' theories, the students' significant delays in phoneme production, vocabulary, and syntax which manifest as limited vocabularies compared to unimpaired students, it is understandable if the deaf students have less background knowledge compared to unimpaired students.

The researcher believes that the use of a computer dictionary will be useful for the deaf students. The researcher has experienced the advantages of pictures as examples for the words in a computer dictionary such as the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 3rd Edition*.

The last challenge was that the teacher needed to repeat some materials before going to the next material; the teacher repeated explanations twice or even several more times. This concern is related to all of the previous challenges explained above.

It is acceptable and eventually important for the teacher to repeat several things and make sure the students understand before going to the next material. This challenge is a concern related to the teacher's patience and efforts to face the challenges.

The researcher believes that the patience of the teacher is very important in the process of delivering the material in the process of teaching and learning in the class.

5.0 Conclusion and Suggestions

Conclusion

The data shows there are six challenges faced by the teacher. The first is that the teacher needs to get the students' attention without calling their names. The second challenge is that the teacher finds the students make mistakes in understanding words because of similar lip movements to other words. The third challenge is that the teacher needs to give a definition and example of the word before going to the next material, considering the students' limited vocabularies. The fourth challenge is that the teacher finds the students have difficulties in differentiating similar words in different contexts. The fifth challenge is that the teacher finds some difficulties in delivering the material, in relation to the lack of background knowledge of the students. The last challenge is that the teacher needs to repeat some materials before going to the next material.

The teacher faced those challenges in several ways. One way is that the teacher asked the students to always bring a dictionary and look it up, and the teacher gave them many examples. He also used alphabetic sign language many times. The teacher also waved or patted on the students' shoulder to get their attention.

The teacher explains that the reason for the effort is based on the teacher's years of experience. The teacher understood that deaf students have limited access to audio materials. This leads to deaf students having less background knowledge compared to unimpaired students; considering this condition, the teacher remained patient with the students. Through many years of teaching deaf students, the teacher is still looking for better ways to teach deaf students.

Although this research provides information about the challenges of teaching English for deaf students, however, the findings of this research cannot be used as a generalization for all English teachers in special schools. The results and findings of this research might show some differences in comparison to other special schools.

Furthermore, it is expected that English teachers remain patient in teaching English to deaf students and keep looking for appropriate ways in teaching English to deaf students. Accordingly, the researcher also expects that the results of this research can be useful for English teachers to teach English for deaf students in a better way despite the many challenges that might appear.

Suggestion

The researcher suggests that first, the teacher should consider the use of a computer dictionary which can show pictures of words. The school should consider the use of sign language in delivering the material.

The second suggestion is a consideration to use sign language to deliver the material. Based on the researcher's experiences as a volunteer in accompanying deaf students and the deaf community, it is better to explain something with the combination of both lip-reading and sign language.

For the next researchers who wish to conduct the same kind of research with similar focus, it is expected that they can make up for the weakness of this research and conduct a better research. It is recommended for the next researchers to continue this research by focusing on more effective ways on dealing with the challenges explained before. Also, it is interesting to see whether the use of sign language in delivering the material is better than the lip-reading method.

Last, for the readers, it is important to mention that deaf students are not unintelligent or incapable. They only need to deal with the situation where it is not easy for them to access any information in the form of sounds, and it is also the teacher's task to help them study despite their situation.

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