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STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY FOR DEAF STUDENTS IN SLBN SINGKAWANG

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to describe the strategies used by the teachers in teaching English vocabulary to deaf students at SLBN Singkawang in Academic Year 2021/2022. The informant of this research was a teacher from SLBN Singkawang who taught English to deaf students for more than 10 years. This research was qualitative descriptive research. The researcher interviewed the teacher and used a semi-structured interview about the strategies that had been used to teach English vocabulary to deaf students. The documents analysis technique was also used to collect the data. The researcher used theory by Miles and Huberman (2014) to analyze the data. The triangulation technique was used to validate the data. The research findings showed that the strategies used by the teacher to teach English vocabulary to deaf students in SLBN Singkawang were giving the students individualized attention, using visual media, sign language, fingerspelling, and drilling.

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INTRODUCTION

Education that is customized to the requirements of special kids is known as special education. Disability Rights and Special Education Community Alliance According to California (2011), special education refers to instruction for kids with disabilities in a setting

that can accommodate those students. Because every kid with a disability has the right to an education, the government of Indonesia developed special schools for children with special needs in accordance with Law No. 72 of 1991. According to Article 16 of Law No. 72 of 1991, the curriculum of special schools in Indonesia is adapted to accommodate the requirements of students with special needs but is otherwise identical to that of regular schools. Consequently, English is included as one of the disciplines.

Since English is so important to them, special schools have started teaching it. It is challenging to teach English to people with disabilities, notably the deaf, at special schools. Although the curriculum is the same for deaf and hearing students, learning English for the deaf is extremely different since deaf children typically struggle more with language acquisition. The difficulties experienced by English teachers in engaging students' attention, reading students' lips to decipher words, giving definitions and examples, differentiating similar words in different contexts, and imparting knowledge based on students' existing knowledge (Susilo, Unsiah, & Fadhilah, 2017). With those obstacles, it might be hard for the teacher to accomplish the learning objectives. Teachers may have instructional success by meeting the challenge.

Teaching strategies are the framework, system, tactics, procedures, and processes that a teacher employs while teaching students (Marschark & Hauser, 2008). One factor that influences teaching and learning activities is the teaching strategy. When teachers recall that deaf children with greater needs should receive more individualized attention from teachers, it will be easier for students to learn more efficiently. It is necessary to design a plan of action to make sure that the learning objectives are successfully met. Goal-achieving is impossible without a suitable strategy.

How teachers use teaching strategies in the classroom affects how successfully deaf students learn languages. How important teaching strategies for deaf students in learning a language, especially English, has been described in the book written by Marschark & Hauser (2008). There would be some benefits to students' classroom learning when teaching strategies are used in the English learning process. Teachers might need to master lip reading, finger spelling, or sign language. Using visual resources and tools might be the best option. Teachers should decide on the best learning strategies for deaf students in order to assist them in learning English. Due to their learning disabilities, deaf pupils require specialized teaching methods when learning English.

In a previous study from the Islamic University of Malang, Ristian (2018) found that the teaching strategies employed by English teachers in one special school in Malang were encouraging students to prepare dictionaries, using alphabetic signs, and patting or waving at the students' shoulders to get their attention. In this previous research, the research focus was in English language learning context which means still broad, not specific in one students' skill different from this research which focused on strategies in teaching English vocabulary to deaf students. Another previous research by Dewi, Yawisah, and Siregar (2019), the suggested EFL classroom activities for deaf students were contextual, used some pictures to help the students understand, focused on teaching new English vocabularies, and appropriate for children with hearing impairment limitations, characteristics, abilities, and needs. The previous research similarly had a broad emphasis and did not focus on any particular ability. However, this study's findings show that the researcher advised the teacher to concentrate on teaching new English words to deaf students. In contrast to earlier research, Yuliandari's (2017) study, *Teachers' Strategies to Teach English Vocabulary for Hearing-Impaired Students at SLB N 1 Bantul*, has a specific focus on vocabulary teaching. According to the findings, some of the strategies used included using dictionaries, games, photos, matching exercises, body movements, words and sentence completion, crossword puzzles, flashcards, and realia.

Different with two previous research, this research will focus on one specific skill which is vocabulary. The focus is comparable to Yuliandari's research, but the data collection,

the participant, and the data validation are different. In Yuliandari's study, the researcher interviewed a teacher with five years of experience as the only source for data collection, and the researcher then used source triangulation to validate the data (Yuliandari, 2017). In this study, the researcher used interview data collection, document analysis, and interview data support and confirmation.

According to the results of earlier study, deaf children can learn and comprehend English just like students with normal hearing, despite the fact that they have additional challenges. The appropriate teaching strategies employed by the English teacher when teaching deaf students English vocabulary may help the deaf students in mastering the language. The researcher is interested in conducting descriptive qualitative research with an English teacher in SLB Negeri Singkawang about what are the teachers' strategies in teaching English vocabulary to the deaf students at SLBN Singkawang in the academic year 2021–2022. The purpose of this research was to describe the strategies used by teachers in teaching English vocabulary to the deaf students at SLBN Singkawang in Academic Year 2021/2022. Since there are still few studies about the teacher strategies in teaching English vocabulary to deaf students in Singkawang.

This research focuses on teaching English vocabulary because deaf children struggle more than their hearing peers to learn new words. Furthermore, vocabulary is crucial for deaf and hard of hearing students because it is one of the few things they can learn in learning English. This statement is further supported by the knowledge the researcher receives from the informant, according to which the deaf students in this school learn English by concentrating on vocabulary.

Since the purpose of this study is to describe the strategies utilized by the English teacher in teaching English vocabulary to deaf students there, descriptive qualitative is the best method to apply. The researcher would learn more about the teacher's strategy and develop a better understanding of it by using a descriptive qualitative methodology. To better comprehend and describe the teachers' strategies for teaching English to deaf students, an interview was conducted with the English teacher at SLB Negeri Singkawang who has extensive experience teaching English to deaf students.

The researcher chose this school as a research site since it is the only government-run special school in Singkawang for special students, particularly deaf students. This school offers programs at the kindergarten, elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels. The largest special school in the city, this institution offers full support and qualified teachers with extensive experiences. These factors led the researcher to consider that this school might provide the greatest data and information for her research. The researcher expects that the findings of this study would benefit English teachers in their efforts to enhance their knowledge of how to teach vocabulary to deaf students.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher used descriptive qualitative research to answer the research question about the teacher's strategy in teaching English vocabulary to deaf students. Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, and data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes (Creswell, 2014). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), in qualitative research, the researcher creates a field text consisting of field notes and documents from the field. The writer-as-interpreter moves from this text to a research text. This text is then re-created as a working interpretive document. Finally, the researcher produces the public text that comes to the reader.

This research was conducted at SLBN Singkawang. This school consists of 24 teachers and 164 students with various special needs, such as visual impairment students, mental retardation, disability students, autism students, and hearing-impaired or deaf students. The researcher selected this school as the setting of the research based on the fact that this school is the only special school managed by the government and also the best special school in Singkawang with the largest number of students from Singkawang and other regions like Sambas and Bengkayang. The complete facilities and professional teachers with long year experiences also became one of the reasons. For that reason, the researcher believed that this school could give the best information and data for this research.

The participant in qualitative research was called the informant. In this research, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique. The key informant was a teacher from SLB Negeri Singkawang who teaches English to deaf students. Based on the pre-research, the researcher knew that in the Special school curriculum there is no teacher's subject and every student's group is taught by only a teacher called a Homeroom teacher. Homeroom teachers teach every subject based on students' needs. The researcher chose a homeroom of Junior High School level as a key informant. Her initials are SR. She started teaching in SLBN Singkawang in 2012. The researcher selected the teacher as a key informant due to the teacher's long experience in teaching English to deaf students and also because the English teaching in her group is effectively worked.

In this qualitative research, to collect the data the researcher used two techniques which are interview and document analysis. Semi-structured interview used to interview the informant who is a homeroom teacher who teaches English in SLBN Singkawang related to the teacher's strategy for teaching English vocabulary to deaf students. In this research, a semi-structured interview was done one time. The interview started with some general questions about the teacher's strategies in teaching English vocabulary to deaf students. It used a list of 15 questions in the interview guideline. The researcher used a list of 15 questions in the interview guideline to guide the interview and wrote the notes after the interview. For document analysis, the researcher chose a lesson plan and syllabus to analyze because in accordance and suitable with the topic of this research. The lesson plan and syllabus gave the researcher information about what strategies were used by the teacher and how the teacher implemented the strategies in teaching English vocabulary for deaf students. The finding data was in the form of words, acts, signs or symbols thus the best instrument is a human to describe or interpret the data.

The data in this research was analyzed utilizing Miles and Huberman's theory. The analysis techniques include three concurrent flows of activity namely data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusion. In order to ensure the accuracy of the data collected, qualitative research must examine the validity of the data. The data validity technique employed in this research was triangulation.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Finding

The data is collected from an interview and document analysis conducted to an English teacher at SLBN Singkawang. The researcher found that English teachers utilize several strategies to teach deaf students English vocabulary. Because they considered deaf students different from hearing students in certain ways, the teacher used a variety of strategies when teaching English vocabulary to deaf students. For deaf children to master English vocabulary with ease, a specific teaching approach is required. The teacher discovered the most effective method for teaching English vocabulary to deaf students by reading books and journals, attending annual training sessions given by the local education department, as well as via trial and error. Based on the interview transcription below, the teacher made the statements.

“Because deaf students have different characteristics from regular students, they are special. They need a special school with special teachers and special methods also.” (SR)

“We found the strategies from reading books and journals, from training that is held by the education department every year, and also from discussion with other teachers. But, not every method and strategy is suitable for all deaf students. So from trial and error, we learn and find the best strategy for teaching deaf students.” (SR)

Based on the data, the strategies were giving the students individualized attention, using visual media, using sign language, using finger spelling and drilling.

1. Giving Students Individualized Attention

The teacher had to approach the deaf students differently while teaching English vocabulary because of their disparate levels of proficiency. The teacher had to personally re-explain the subject to some of the deaf pupils who needed it after presenting it to the class. Various students require different explanations due to their varying levels of learning capacity. Sometimes, teachers need extra material if the students need that. The emotional and social development of deaf students is a problem that requires customized treatment in addition to their difficulty learning English language. Deaf students frequently exhibit egocentrism and are open about their emotions, which causes them to take offense easily and feel discouraged. The problem must be handled by approaching each one individually, says the informant. The transcript of the interview proves it.

“We should approach them individually and communicate with them personally. Because deaf students are sensitive, they could easily feel offended and discouraged.” (SR)

Moreover, the curriculum and lesson plans of the informant were analyzed by the researcher. It was found that in the lesson plan of greetings, the teacher mentioned the steps of guiding deaf students in person after the teacher asked the students to work with their spouse to make sure they understood about the material. The teacher additionally included guidance and assurance that the students understood how to use the EVG application in another lesson plan. Since there was some overlap in the information about the use of the EVG application from this document analysis and the interview, the information gained was confirmed. The informant chose to give her students' individualized attention because she believed it strengthens her bond with her students, so she knows her students' problems and also their strengths and weaknesses. Individualized attention assists her in overcoming the students' difficulty. It is something that will probably bridge the gap between the students' disparate levels of learning capacity. This will prevent slow learners or deaf students with severe degree loss from experiencing isolation.

2. Using Visual Media

Utilizing visual media was the second method of teaching English vocabulary to deaf children. The teacher employs this strategy at the start of the teaching-learning process to grab the students' attention and introduce vocabulary to help them get familiar with it. The interview's transcription also reveals that visual media is always employed as a stimulus at the start of the teaching and learning process.

“First, we always use flash cards, posters or pictures to describe the word and to get the student's attention.” (SR)

From the teacher's statement found in the interview's transcription above, we also know the kind of visual media used by the teacher. Flash cards, a poster, and images were used by the teacher to give the lesson. One of the documents from the informant that the researcher had analyzed is shown in figure 1 below. The researcher noticed that several of the cartoon images had accompanying captions. The students had also organized some random alphabets in order to determine the proper spelling of vocabulary.



Figure 1. Kind of visual media used by the informant

The teacher said that since deaf students have good vision, utilizing pictures can help them understand vocabulary better. Another reason for using the visual media was deaf students compared to regular students tended to more easily get distracted by the other things or other students in the classroom. The deaf students, according to the teacher, occasionally prefer to ignore her in class and pay attention to something else. In order to keep the students' attention, the teacher required something engaging and entertaining. The transcription of the interview revealed it.

“Because deaf students’ have a good vision so they receive the information with their eyes. But they also tend to be difficult to focus. They like to look around and ignore the teacher who explained the material. That is why we use visual media to grab their attention and to introduce the vocabulary”(SR)

The lesson plans demonstrated that in addition to pictures, flash cards, and posters, the teacher also uses a learning media program called Educational Vocabulary Game to teach new English vocabulary to deaf students (EVG). The teacher that participated in the interview mentioned that the deaf students enjoy using the EVG program to learn English vocabulary.

“Our students like to play this game. We use that game (EVG) as an exercise after delivering the material.” (SR)

This game offered a variety of vocabulary and practice that could help students in learning the vocabulary. In the practice section, the game displayed a cartoon (see figure 2) of a boy signing the vocabulary in sign language as well as some random letters that might be arranged to spell the vocabulary correctly. The students learn the meaning of the words and how to sign them by using the sign language that is employed in this game. The game's cartoon and visualization features might make it easier for deaf students to remember vocabulary in an enjoyable and exciting way.

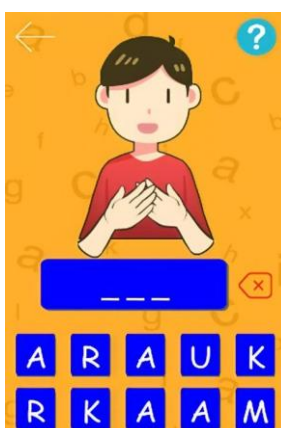


Figure 1. Kind of visual media used by the informant

3. Using Sign Language (SIBI)

For both deaf students and deaf teachers at SLBN Singkawang, sign language is a must. The majority of the first-year deaf students could only communicate using BISINDO, an

informal sign language that is common in the deaf community, so students needed to master sign language before learning other topics and material. However, SIBI (Sistem Isyarat Bahasa Indonesia), the sign language that was recommended by the Indonesian government, was the one that they needed to learn. The researchers have looked over the transcription of the interview below and discovered this data.

“They communicate with BISINDO with their family. BISINDO is Bahasa Isyarat Indonesia. BISINDO is more popular to deaf people in Indonesia because BISINDO is natural, practical, and simple. But SIBI was recommended by the Indonesian government to be used in Special schools as a formal sign language.” (SR)

To make communication easier in the classroom and eliminate the need for an interpreter, they should learn sign language. SIBI (Sistem Isyarat Bahasa Indonesia), a standardized Indonesian sign language that was taken from American Sign Language and used in official settings, was the sign language that was used in SLBN Singkawang. The transcription of the interview contained the following details:

“The deaf students and the teacher that teach deaf students are required to master SIBI. That is why in the first year before starting to learn any subject, all deaf students have to learn sign language. So in the class they using SIBI which is Indonesian sign language that adopted from American Sign Language” (SR)

Additionally, the researcher discovered from the interview transcription that the teacher also discussed the similarities and differences between SIBI and ASL (American Sign Language). The way that the SIBI and ASL sign the letters, numbers, and some words are comparable. However, SIBI is a sign language that uses Indonesian grammar, so there are some distinctions from ASL, which uses English grammar. The prefix and suffix are added to words differently, which is the distinction. The teacher provided some examples throughout the interview.

“You sign “bahagia” like this (sign the word) in SIBI same as happy in ASL they sign happy like this (sign the word). But there are differences in putting the prefix and suffix in SIBI because we follow Indonesian grammatical rules, we must put prefix and suffix like in indonesia example “berbahagia” we put suffix like this (sign the prefix). So the sign for berbahagia is like this (sign the word).” (SR)

Additional data from document analysis support the earlier information. After analyzing the lesson plan, the researcher discovered that the teacher used the term "signaled" rather than "spoke" in the learning objective section, and that the listening skill indicator column in the syllabus stated that students are able to appropriately respond to the speech act of the material as seen from gesture and expression. The indicators emphasize the gesture and expression of the students. The indications for speaking and signing focus on how accurately deaf students imitate how to interpret a text using sign language. The data showed that the students are using and evaluating their sign language.

4. Using Fingerspelling

Sign language includes the use of fingerspelling. The alphabet is written in sign language using our hands. The letter of the alphabet is represented by the shapes and gestures of the hands. Deaf students typically employed fingerspelling for names or challenging words. According to the interview's transcription, finger spelling was another method the teacher employed to teach deaf students English vocabulary.

“To easier the spelling, like we know English spelling is quite difficult and different from Bahasa Indonesia. We also use fingerspelling to spell the vocabulary. We use SIBI alphabet in spelling the words to easier deaf students in writing the vocabulary.” (SR)

In accordance with the interview's transcription above, the teacher utilized this strategy to address the deaf students' problems with English vocabulary spelling. The teacher used the SIBI

alphabet to spell the word. The teacher thought that using fingerspelling would make it simpler for the students to spell words correctly.

The researcher also found in the transcription how the teacher taught a deaf student English vocabulary via fingerspelling. It mentioned that the teacher either wrote the word on the board first or showed the students the written word using photos with captions. The teacher then requested the students to repeat after her as she fingerspelled the word, pointing to each letter as she moved.

“For example when teaching the word “Morning”, first, I will write the word on the blackboard or show the picture with the caption “Morning”. Then I will point to the word morning written on the board and fingerspell M-O-R-N-I-N-G. Then ask the students to repeat after me.” (SR)

5. Drilling

After introducing the vocabulary, the teacher employed the approach of drilling in the middle of the teaching-learning process. The teacher still utilized pictures and captions to drill the students before asking them to sign and spell the word. The transcripts of the interview are provided below.

“Then we drill them by always repeating the picture and the vocabulary, then ask them to repeat the sign and spell the vocabulary.” (SR)

In addition, the data obtained from analyzing the lesson plan also confirm the statement above. The researcher discovered that the drilling method, particularly repetition drill, was used in the major activity of the lesson plan for material greeting and leave taking. The first part of the lesson plan was for the teacher to demonstrate to the students how to sign the expression and response for welcomes and taking a leave of absence. The next phase was for the students to imitate the teacher's hand motions for greetings and taking a leave of absence. The students then requested practice using their friend's spouse to sign their welcomes and responses as they took their leave. All of these actions demonstrated the teacher's use of the drilling method.

The teacher thought that drilling would simplify the process for the deaf students to memorize the language. The teacher thought that the students' ability to memorize words would likewise improve as a result. The data was gathered from the interview's transcription, which is provided below.

“By drilling means they repeat to practice sign and spell the vocabulary. This is could help my students to memorize the vocabulary easily so could improve their mastery in vocabulary” (SR)

Discussion

This section discusses the research's findings and how they relate to the literature review. The discussion is based on the research question; what are the teacher's strategies in teaching English vocabulary to deaf students at SLBN Singkawang in Academic Year 2021/2022? The discussion is divided based on the finding. It is evident from the finding that the English teacher's strategies for teaching English vocabulary to deaf students include giving individualized attention, using visual media, using sign language, using fingerspelling, and drilling.

First strategy used by the teacher based on the interview and document analysis is giving the students individualized attention. In their book, Marschark & Hauser (2008) explained that teachers must create individualized tasks based on where each child is in her EF development in order to scaffold and shape her progress. These approaches concentrate on how students' social interactions and language use shape them into independent learners and facilitate their cognitive development. It is proposed here that the individualized attention provided by sociocultural approaches that focus on each child's development as a social and cultural learner and thinker is likely required to maximize EF development. Although this is applicable to all learners, it is especially applicable to deaf learners and warrants more attention in research and practice. The similar point of this statement and the finding was the teacher

provided the task for one deaf student who needed the task when the gaps of students' ability in mastery of the vocabulary is so far. The individualized attention that should be given to deaf students is also explained deeper in the other books by Marschark & Hauser (2012). The needs of each individual student are the main emphasis of this strategy. The application of this strategy in special education is extremely common. This strategy is used to treat students with special needs, not just deaf students, in the teaching and learning process. Regular students with a range of English-learning abilities could also use this strategy. The teacher may find this strategy useful in problem-solving. As a result, it might reduce student gaps.

The second strategy involved attracting the students' attention using visual media. According to a special education expert, teaching deaf students using visual media improves their proficiency in English (Easterbrooks & Beal-Alvarez, 2013). Deaf students typically have greater visualisation than hearing people, and they also have stronger memory than deaf signers for activities requiring sequential memory (Marschark & Hauser, 2012). The term "visual media" here refers to instructional strategies that increasingly depends on visual aids, such as illustrations, wall charts, pictures, puppets, photographs, graphs, flashcards, crossword puzzles, picture stories, flannel boards, wheel charts in the classroom, cutouts from magazines and newspapers, and picture stories. Students can meaningfully associate the provided content and change the words they are thinking thanks to the visual demonstrations. In addition, it is now easier to find and apply visual learning tools in the students' foreign languages thanks to technological improvements. The English language learning game was now easily accessible to students.

The third strategy was using SIBI sign language as instructional language in the classroom. This is due to the fact that deaf students go through the same linguistic phases as hearing children, including the babbling period where they utilize hand signals instead of speech (Hyams, 2017). The students may quickly grasp sign language, which organizes motions and symbols through movement to communicate. The use of sign language in the classroom made it easier for the students to comprehend what was being taught. Respecting the culture and identity of the deaf students was another advantage of utilizing sign language (De Clerk & Paul, 2016). In their book, they also discussed how the use of sign language supports and is equal to spoken language, allowing deaf students and their teachers to fully participate in the teaching and learning process. Deaf students learning sign language may find fingerspelling useful for writing words with their hands.

The final strategy is drilling. According to the findings, the teacher used drilling as a practice activity after teaching the content to help students in retaining the terminology more quickly. According to Marschark and Hauser (2012), the method is comparable to drilling in that it relies on repetition and practice with deaf children. The approach was referred to as "natural way."

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the finding and discussion, it can be concluded that the strategies used by the English teacher to teach English vocabulary to deaf students are giving the students individualized attention, using visual media, using sign language, using finger spell and drilling. The informant used individualized attention to close the gap of ability between deaf students and to solve deaf students' emotional problems. The use of visual media to grab students' attention and to introduce the vocabulary to deaf students. Sign language (SIBI) was used to facilitate communication and to deliver the material in the classroom. Then to make it easier for the deaf students to spell and write the vocabulary, the teacher employed the fingerspelling method. And the last strategy was drilling to help students memorize the vocabulary effortlessly.

In this research, there were several things that the researcher would like to suggest. The researcher would like to provide a few recommendations on this research. First, the researcher advises English teachers to increase their familiarity with the strategies, resources, and instructional tools that are employed in teaching vocabulary to deaf students. The research also advises English teachers who work with deaf students to use the mentioned strategies when introducing English vocabulary to their students. Last but not least, the researcher suggests more research into special education, particularly on the teaching of English to deaf students. It might collaborate with more informants in order to improve the applicability of this research's findings. The researcher then advises that future research on the same topic investigate the subject area more thoroughly and for a longer period of time to cover richer ground and explore more data. Other researchers are expected to carry on this investigation in a different area that was not the focus of this research. The researcher then advises that future research on the same topic investigate the subject area more thoroughly and for a longer period of time to cover richer ground and explore more data. Other researchers are expected to carry on this investigation in a different area that was not the focus of this research.

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