

AN INVESTIGATION OF TEACHING STRATEGY EMPLOYED BY ENGLISH TEACHER OF DEAF STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY AT AN INDONESIAN SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to find out the implementation of teaching strategies by English teacher for deaf students and the challenges faced by the English teachers in using teaching strategies for deaf students. This research used qualitative method as the research method and case study as the research design. To obtain the data, observation, interview and documentation were used. The result of the research showed and inferred that frequent teaching strategies applied by teacher in teaching English for deaf students were direct teaching and cooperative strategy. The research also revealed the challenges encountered by the teacher during teaching English to the deaf students were due to communication problems. Sometimes the students made mistakes in understanding words because of similar lip movements to other words; they got difficulties in differentiating similar words; they had limited vocabularies; and they were the lack of background knowledge. These led to the need of getting more the students' attention, adapting the material and media, and repetition in delivering the material.

Keywords: *Teaching Strategy, Deaf students, Special Needs School.*

INTRODUCTION

English should be taught not only to students who are physically normal but also to those with physical disabilities. According to constitution, UU No 20, 2003, the disabilities learners to have education as good, as the normal ones. Deafness is one kind of physical disabilities. It means, the deaf children also have rights to get education, including learning English as foreign Language. However, teaching English to deaf students is not easy. They confront more complicated obstacles in learning language than the hearing students. According to Sa'idah (2009) the major problems the deaf students deal with are that as they have limited exposure to sounds and have limited chance to imitate sounds whereas the language development depends greatly on practices. Unfortunately, deaf students do not have enough access for those matters unlike their hearing peers who maintain lots of chances to use language and to imitate sounds. Insufficient experience to listening and using voice, often makes deaf students repeatedly misinterpret what people are trying to say to them. Deaf students tend to get depressed because of this condition and this leads to less confidence and motivation to learn.

Furthermore, it is general assumption that teaching deaf students is certainly relatively more difficult than normal students, because by nature they cannot use the sense of hearing of ordinary people in general. In fact, every student have different needs which need to be taken care of. Newman (2004) emphasizes that students with special needs often need more help, stimulation, and encouragement to develop skills than other students.

One of the factors involved in teaching and learning activities is teaching strategy. Teacher's teaching strategies will advance the success of learning, especially if remembering deaf students should get more special treatment from teachers. In the learning process, to achieve the learning objectives, it is necessary to formulate a strategy for that goal is achieved optimally. Without an appropriate strategy, it is impossible to achieve goals. The engineering of the learning process can be designed by the teacher in such a way. Ideally activities for clever students should be different from activities for moderate or under-sized students, although to understand the same kind of concepts because each student has their own uniqueness. This suggests that

understanding of approaches, strategies and methods of learning cannot be ignored. Therefore, the learning strategy must be completely mastered by a teacher in dealing with students, especially deaf students, so that students more easily absorb and understand the material presented by the teacher well. Based on the problem above, the researchers are interested to investigate the implementation of teaching English for deaf student at Special Needs School (SKh) Negeri 01 Kota Serang.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research employed case study. Qualitative research is a form of interpretative inquiry of a phenomenon that happens to a certain individuals or groups. This is in line with Creswell (2009:4) who proposed that qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or group ascribe to a social or human problem. Furthermore, case study is preferred to be employed in this research because it describes an intervention and the real life context in which the phenomenon occurred. According to Yin (2002:1), case study is the preferred strategy when the focus is on the contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.

Data Collection Technique

In a research, the data collection has important role in order the reseracher could answer the research questions. As Creswell (2012: 212) says that qualitative data collection is to identify the types of data that will address your research question. The researchers investigated teaching strategies employed by English Teacher of deaf students and to find out the challenges faced by the English teachers in using teaching strategies for deaf students by conducting observation, interview and documentation.

1. Observation. This technique was used to get the data of teaching activities in classroom abd to find out the implementation of teaching strategies employed by an English teachers for deaf students. The observation was a non-participant observation in which the researchers did not engage and participate in teaching-learning activity. This is supported by Cohen Et.al (2007:259) who explained that

non-participant observers stand out aloof from the group activities they are investigating and eschew group membership. To collect the data during observation, observation checklist was developed as an instrument in order to find out how was the implementation of teaching strategies employed by an English teachers for deaf students in teaching learning activities. The observational checklist were divided into three aspect indicators, they are pre-teaching, whilst-teaching and closing. Considering the importance of the observation of the research used video recording. According to Yin (2002) the recorded video helped to convey important case characteristics to outside observers. For that matter, the video recorder placed in the back of classroom to capture the teaching activities by that missed by the observer.

2. Interview. The researchers interviewed the English teacher to obtain information about challenges faced by the teacher during teaching. And semi-structured interview used to interview the English teacher. Semi structured interview is chosen to obtain in-depth information about teaching learning for deaf students. The researchers used the interview guidelines to ask some questions for the teacher. The interview guideline consisted of twenty questions in Indonesian in order the participant really understand the questions.
3. Documentation. Any documents obtained during observation and interview related to this research were collected. It was done to get the written data, such as a note, transcript, newspaper, magazine, agenda, etc.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Getting all the data, the researchers continued to analyze them in order to give meaningful interpretation based on some theories. The researchers found that the teacher used some strategies in teaching English on three stages: pre-activity, main activity, and post activity. According to Kindsvatter (1996:290), teaching strategy is to

help teacher make optimal use of methods, and instructional materials. It means that the strategies which are used by teachers help the students to get easier in understanding the material. It helps as a way to accomplish and reach the goal for the teaching and learning process. After doing observation for three times in the class, the researchers considered the strategies applied by the teacher are direct teaching and cooperative learning strategy.

In the present research, the researchers observed the teaching learning process applied by English teacher to teach English for deaf students at special need school (SKh) Negeri 01 Kota Serang for three meetings. In the first meeting, the teacher mostly spoke in Indonesian language and sign language then gave students some picture and also order students to use their dictionary. Before teaching process, the teacher asked students about home work. Then when the students did not understand about the vocabulary written in white board, the teacher helped them to look for the meaning in the dictionary and re-explained, or gave a simple example.

Next, the teacher conducted production activities through matching activities. In this stage, the teacher applied Direct Learning strategy because she emphasized on the vocabulary names of animal pets as led-in before getting into the stages of examples and practice which the rule is applied then the teacher give them chances for following group activities. Then the teacher show the picture about animal pets and asked the students to answer the picture in bahasa and translate it into English. After that the teacher asked the students to stand up in front of class to wrote some names of animal pats in the white board. Then she asked every student to analyze the names and how to mention with the corrected.

Direct Teaching Strategy refers to academically focused, teacher-directed classroom using sequenced and structured materials. For the warm-up activity, teacher gives the overview and the introduction of the topic to students, for example: teacher explains to students when the materials about human body. The teacher used the replica of human body. The teacher pointed the part of the body (eyes) then the students guest the word in Indonesian. After that, the teacher told the word in english and gave the infomation about the function of the body part. At eighth grade,

there are only eight student with different levels of mastering sign language and intelligence. Actually, teaching strategies or approaches have to do to each student (individual).

In the second meeting, the teacher taught about things at school she used some strategies such as this strategy personal delivery, discussion, and cooperative strategy. Before starting the lesson she used cooperative strategy in order to make students feel comfortable, relax and enjoy while studying English in the class. The teacher conducted production activities. She asked the students to translate words into English then order the students to be active in discussing about the lesson with friend. The teacher indirectly applied cooperative learning strategy. In this stage the teacher asked the students individually to write some word about thing at the schools on their books. If the students got difficulties, the teacher asked the students to discuss again, and wrote the result of their discussion on the white board. While the process of writing the words, the student asked to analyze, guide, and correct by the teacher. It meant that the teacher's strategy has solved the students' difficulty in learning English. She used personal delivery strategy to communicate clearly with students and combined with presentation to explain about material she taught. Then the teacher used cooperative strategy for being more communicate with students because this strategy made students braver to talk and share their ideas.

In the third meeting, the teacher used cooperative strategy. She gave material vocabulary about 'Part of Body', and the students very enthusiastic to get involved. The teacher conducted production activities by asking the students to translate some words into English, then order the students to be active in discussing the lesson with friends. The teacher showed the replica of human body and asked the students to answer the part of body in Indonesian and then translate it into English, after that the teacher invited the students to come forward to write some parts of body on the white board. Then she asked every student to discuss and analyze the names and how to mention them correctly. The researcher considered that activity as teacher's effort in helping students by guiding materials

of all the parts of body from bahasa to English by themselves.

The findings showed that the strategies applied by the teacher in teaching English for deaf students were effective, by applying cooperative strategy or direct learning strategy to guide the students. Roberts & Kenney (1985) state cooperative strategy uses peer tutoring and team cooperation to encourage student learning. This strategy is to focus on authentic or real-life problems. The teacher's role is to identify activities that fuel students' interest. So this strategy is modifications and variations in teaching english. It emphasizes motivation, as does mastery learning, among students (discussions) in order to maximize students' understanding of the lesson and problem solving become faster with a discussion among students.

Besides finding out what strategies applied, in this part, the researchers present the challenges the teacher faced in teaching English for deaf students. The data were collected through interview and observations. First, it was found 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 until third observation, the teacher taught the material about animal pats. The teacher asked the students to translate words from Indonesian to English, which were related to their daily life.

Secondly, 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 picture. Therefore, the teacher needs to find 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, and picture.

Thirdly, 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.

Fourthly, to get the students' attention without calling their names also became a challenge for the teacher. 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.

Fifthly, the student's 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.

Sixthly, 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.

Seventhly, 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 before giving the main explanation.

The 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.

CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the data, it could be concluded that teaching strategies applied by English teacher of deaf students were direct learning strategy and cooperative strategy included in (even individual and cooperative strategies applied by the teacher did not constructed independently) as proven in observation sheets. In addition, teacher encountered some challenges during teaching english to the deaf students were due to communication problems. Sometimes the students made mistakes in understanding words because of similar lip movements to other words; they got difficulties in differentiating similar words; they had limited vocabularies; and they were the lack of background knowledge. These led to the need of getting the students' attention, adapting the material and media, and repetition in delivering the material.

SUGGESTION

Finally, there are some suggestions offered for teacher such as giving the students the simplest explanation about the topic or using total physical response to explain the new vocabulary or new lesson. The researcher hopes that there will be more researchers who are interested in researching special education with wider scope and various concern.

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