

## TEACHER'S STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR THE HEARING-IMPAIRED STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** This study is aimed at investigating the teacher's strategies in teaching English for the hearing-impaired students of a special education school in Surakarta, to find out the teacher's problems in teaching English, and to find out how the teaching strategies help the hearing-impaired students to learn English. The method used in this research is a case study. The qualitative data used in this research were collected from observation, interview, and documentation. The techniques used to analyze the data are from Miles and Huberman (1994), which include data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification. From the result of this research, it showed that the strategies the teacher used in teaching English for the hearing-impaired students were drilling and visual scaffolding. The result of this research also showed the strategies the teacher used can help the students in memorizing new vocabulary and help the students in understanding better.

**Keywords:** *teacher's strategies, teaching English, hearing-impaired students*

### INTRODUCTION

Everyone has a right to get an appropriate education. Furthermore, students with the disability also have the same right with the non-students with the disability. In other words, education is not only for normal students but also including all of the students with disability.

Students with disability need special attention or special education which is appropriate to their condition. Therefore, the students with the disability also have a right too to access and to be facilitated by the school, whether in regular schools or special schools.

Smith, Polloway, Patton, and Dowdy (2001, p. 5) define students with disabilities as those who exhibit one of several specific conditions that result in their need for special education and related services. It means that students with disabilities can be described as

the students with one or several disability conditions which need special education services and other specialized services and support.

Gargiulo (2012, p. 5) states that disability might be thought of as "an incapacity to perform as other children do because of some impairment in sensory, physical, cognitive, or other areas of functioning".

Based on IDEA (The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) there are 13 categories of children with special needs or children with the disabilities 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).

To support the requirement in education for the students with special needs, special education must be available for them. Besides that, to provide a better education for the students with special needs, the Indonesian government established specific education which is called Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB) for the students with special needs. Based on Law No. 72 of 1991, it stated that every child with the disability has the right to go for an education. In Article 16 of Law No. 72 of 1991, the curriculum of special schools is equal to regular schools in Indonesia with the adaptation which follows the needs of students with special needs.

English subject is not only taught in regular school, but also in the special school. The curriculum of English subject is the same as that of regular school. The thing that makes difference is that content of the materials and the textbooks that the teachers use in teaching English. The content of the materials mainly is more simple and the textbooks used by the teacher depend on the needs of the students or the disability of the students.

One of the disability categories label by IDEA is hearing impairment. According to Hallahan and Kauffman (1988, p. 260), hearing impairment is “a generic term indicating a hearing disability which may range in severity from mild to profound: it includes the subsets of deaf and hard of hearing.”

Gargiulo (2012, p. 439) states that hearing impairment is “a generic term indicating a hearing disability that may range in severity from mild to profound.”

Westwood (2009, p. 68) states that the term hearing impairment is used to cover all degrees and types of hearing loss, ranging from profound deafness through to mild loss.

Westwood (2009, p. 69) explains some principal characteristics of individuals with hearing impairment, namely:

- Delayed onset of babbling in early infancy
- Late achievement of language milestones
- Very slow acquisition of vocabulary
- Shorter utterances and frequent non-conventional word order
- Poor understanding of the speech of others
- Unusual voice quality
- Problems with learning to read, write and spell

Hearing-impaired students have a different learning mode rather than normal students. They use sign language as their language to communicate and to interact with other people. Hearing-impaired students in special education also have their own characteristics. Such as they learn English in generally from reading and writing.

The process of learning English for regular students and for hearing-impaired students is not the same. For hearing-impaired students, it is a little bit difficult for them to learn English because hearing-impaired students often show significant delays in phoneme production, vocabulary, and syntax. (Cawthon, 2001). The hearing-impaired students cannot fully process the 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. (Adi et al., 2017).

Oyewumi (as cited in Mpofu et al., 2013) states 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." It means that the hearing

impaired students tend to learn everything from visually such as picture, powerpoint, or something that can be seen; and this condition is hard for the hearing impaired students where much of the necessary information is delivered specifically in orally. Therefore, their language characteristics are very unique rather than the other students who do not have hearing loss. So that it will be the challenges for teachers to teach the hearing-impaired students.

The hearing-impaired students mainly have difficulties in hearing sounds and to communicate with other people. In addition, the teacher who teaches English for the hearing-impaired students must know and

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher is interested to observe the teaching strategy that the teacher uses in teaching English in the classroom. The researcher also interested to observe how the teacher faces the problems while teaching the hearing-impaired students.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted with a qualitative approach with a case study method. According to Yin (cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 40), a case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.”

This research was carried out in a special education school of Surakarta from March to June 2019 at the eighth-grade students of the hearing-impaired in the academic year of 2018/2019. The subjects are the English teacher and three students of the hearing-impaired.

The data were collected through observation, interview, and documentation. From the observation, the researcher could gain some information related to the learning

able to manage the problem that happens in the classroom while teaching and learning are held. Therefore, it will be important for the teacher to choose the teaching strategies which are appropriate to the students' needs. In this case, the teaching strategies used by the teacher should be different from regular schools.

This research is aimed: 1) to investigate the teacher's strategies in teaching English for the hearing impaired students; 2) to find out the teacher's problems in teaching English the hearing impaired students; and 3) to find out how the teaching strategies that the teacher uses help the hearing-impaired students to understand English.

process of the English class that been taught by the teacher. While through an interview, the researcher dug up the whole information fully from the teacher and from the student point of view. For the documentation, the researcher took some pictures that related to the teaching process in the classroom. The pictures can be taken from the strategies' that the teacher used in the classroom and the students learning process in the classroom.

The techniques used to analyze the data are from Miles and Huberman (1994), which include data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification. For the data reduction, the researcher tried to select and to reduce the data that were not appropriate with the topic. Therefore, the researcher can take the main points and the important data for this research. For the data display, the researcher showed the data that have been gained before. The researcher also matched the data between the interview's result and observation's result. For the last step, conclusion drawing or verification, the researcher made the conclusion based on the interview, observation, and document analysis.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this research showed that the teacher's strategies in teaching English for the hearing-impaired students are Drilling and Visual Scaffolding.

Drilling is one of the strategies mostly used by the teacher in teaching English for the hearing-impaired students. Drilling is a strategy that uses repetitions in certain behavior. Based on the results of observation in English class, the role of the teacher as a model for his students to imitate what the teacher said and wrote correctly in the English words. Meanwhile, the role of the students was to repeat what the teacher said and did. The benefits of drilling strategy were to make the students familiar in writing English words, and also to pronounce the words correctly.

The teacher always starts drilling by using some vocabularies related to the real object in the class such as book, pencil, clock, broom, chair, table and etc. The teacher always introduces the real object which was available in the class, because the hearing-impaired students have difficulty in learning vocabulary which is abstract or unseen for them.

As stated by the teacher, it was very important to explain some vocabularies which are considered as the real objects to the hearing-impaired students. The hearing-impaired students can easily understand new vocabulary if they can see the real objects. Moreover, explaining the real objects is a must for the teacher who teaches the hearing-impaired students.

As stated by Senel (as cited in Riswanto, 2014) drilling technique is very useful in teaching pronunciation because it can create correct and accurate pronunciation. It means that drilling strategy is really good in teaching pronunciation for the hearing-impaired students. Larsen-

Freeman (2000, p. 43) also states that "the more often something is repeated, the stronger the habit and the greater the learning". It means that when the students are applying repetition in their learning, it is shaping their habit so that it will make the learning process run smoothly.

Visual Scaffolding is another strategy which was very helpful in teaching English for the hearing-impaired students. This strategy was implemented by the teacher to help the students in learning the material in class. While scaffolding itself means assistance. In other words, visual scaffolding means a strategy that uses visual media in the goal of helping the students to understand what they will learn in the class.

Herrel and Jordan (as cited in Lestari, 2016) state that visual scaffolding is a strategy for teaching English that utilizes drawings, photographs and other visual in order to help students to better understand the language. It means that visual scaffolding is a strategy that helps the students in understanding the material well by using visual media such as drawings, pictures, photographs, pictures from the internet and other visual material. Moreover, visual media is really helpful for them to understand better in class.

The hearing-impaired students have the difficulty in hearing and speaking, therefore the teacher used visual media to help the students in understanding what the teacher wanted to explain in the class. The teacher stated that the most effective media to support the learning process for the hearing-impaired students was using LCD that shows some pictures or images. The teacher also said that using video is one of the additional media to support the learning process in the class because the video belongs to visual media and audio.

Visual scaffolding applied by the teacher included pictures, video, gesture, and realia. Based on the interview and observation conducted by the researcher, visual scaffolding strategy was proved to be one of the most useful strategies applied by the teacher. This strategy also provided the students with a pleasant atmosphere. Visual scaffolding strategy also provided a clear description of the topic of the material taught in the class.

There were some problems that the teacher faced while teaching English for hearing-impaired students, such as:

a) Students' limitation on vocabulary.

Having difficulty in speaking and hearing are the main problem for them, which affected their daily life. For example, they had limited vocabulary that they could memorize in their daily life.

The hearing-impaired students had difficulty in vocabulary. They had difficulty in Indonesian vocabulary and English vocabulary.

In this case, the hearing-impaired students always have difficulty in learning abstract vocabulary or the objects that they cannot see. They will need more time to learn abstract vocabulary rather than concrete vocabulary or real objects. As a result, the teacher has to do some extra efforts to help them in learning abstract vocabulary.

b) Need repetition in explaining the material.

Repetition is one of the problems that the teacher faced while explaining the material in English for the hearing-impaired students. The hearing-impaired students were not able to catch the material easily just like regular students. They needed some repetition so that they

could receive the material that the teacher delivered in the class.

The teacher also stated that in explaining one material needed 2-3 repetition sometimes. The hearing-impaired students did not immediately understand if the teacher only explained the material one time. As a result, the teacher always repeated what he explained in the previous meeting.

In another case, the teacher also stated that in repeated vocabulary, the hearing-impaired students needed 4 up to 5 times repetition. The teacher needed to repeat these words in order to make the students understand them clearly. While repeating these words, the teacher also explained how to pronounce these words, so that they could pronounce it correctly in English. The teacher not only gave repetition in orally only but also gave repetition in writing these words in the whiteboard. From this way, the hearing-impaired students will easily understand in learning new vocabulary in English.

c) Limited time in teaching

In teaching the hearing-impaired students, it is not always easy, this is because it will need more time to explain the material. Teaching the hearing-impaired students needed some repetition so that it affected the time allocation of English lesson in each meeting. In explaining the material for the hearing-impaired students they did not immediately understand it so that it would take more time for the teacher to explain it again.

The time allocation had already been set in lesson plan and syllabus, and at this point, the teacher had a difficulty to meet the time allocation that had been set. For example, there was a topic that had to be finished in two meetings, but the reality was shown differently. In this case, the

teacher would need more extra time for achieving his goal in teaching a certain topic. As a result, the time to explain the material was limited and not enough.

The teacher also stated the time allocation for English lesson was flexible and could be changed anytime, but in this case, the time allocation for English lesson tends to be reduced if there was an event or something urgent. For example, if there were some training skill for the students, such as cooking, sewing, carving, and etc.

d) Limited facilities.

Facilities are one of the powerful support in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The hearing-impaired students are good at visual and textual. This is the reason why they have to be supported by some facilities which can make them more easily understand in learning English.

Facilities that were used by the teacher included LCD/projector and speaker. In this case, the teacher tends to use LCD/projector in his class. He said that LCD/projector could show some pictures and video which could make the hearing-impaired students more enthusiastic in learning English. He also said that pictures and video could make the students feel more fun and exciting while the teacher explaining the material with that.

The teacher stated that the reason why LCD/projector was not used too often because every class was not always provided with LCD/projector by the school. The other reason is that because there were so many classes in this school so that the facilities were not enough for every class. He also said that the procedure to lend LCD/projector is rather difficult so that it will take time.

The strategies' that the teacher used in teaching English for the hearing-impaired students also helped the students to memorize new vocabulary and helped them to understand better. Drilling strategy could help the hearing-impaired students to memorize new vocabulary that they got in in their class while learning English. The use of visual scaffolding also helped the students to memorize better. For example, when the teacher used gesture to demonstrate new vocabulary in the class. Gesture helped the students to memorize better because it makes the students remember new vocabulary easily. Visual scaffolding strategy also helped the hearing-impaired students to understand better in the material that the teacher wanted to explain in the classroom.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

After conducting the research about the teacher's strategies in teaching English for the hearing-impaired students, the researcher got some points of findings. The result of the research showed that the teacher's strategies in teaching English for the hearing-impaired students were Drilling and Visual Scaffolding. The use of drilling strategy makes the students more easily in remembering new vocabulary that they got from the teacher. The teacher used visual scaffolding in order to support the students in understanding the material. The teacher used pictures or images, video, gesture and realia that belong to visual scaffolding.

From the findings, there are four problems that the teacher faced while teaching English for the hearing-impaired students. Here are the following problems: (a) students' limitation on vocabulary. Having difficulty in speaking and hearing are the main problem for them, which is affected in their daily life. For example, they have limited vocabulary that they can memorize in

their daily life; (b) need repetition in explaining the material. The hearing-impaired students are not able to catch the material easily just like regular students. The teacher always repeats up to 2 or 3 times in explaining the material in the class; (c) limited time in teaching. Teaching the hearing-impaired students is not always easy. This is because it will need more time to explain the material. Teaching the hearing-impaired students also need some repetition so that it affected the time allocation of English lesson in each meeting; (d) limited facilities. Not every class is provided with LCD by the school. Another reason is that the procedure of borrowing LCD is a little bit complicated because the teacher has to make an appointment or schedule to borrow in the administration office so that it will take more time for the teacher.

The strategies that the teacher used in teaching English for the hearing-impaired students can help the students to (a) memorize new vocabulary, (b) understand better. By using drilling and visual scaffolding, it will improve the students' new vocabulary. Drilling mostly helps the students in the way of repetition in memorizing new vocabulary that they got from the teacher in the class. While using visual scaffolding will help the students mainly in understanding better.

The researcher proposes some suggestions after conducting this research for teachers, for students, for special schools, and for other researchers. For teachers, they should be more creative in using strategy while teaching English to hearing-impaired students. Therefore, teachers also need to be competent in selecting appropriate teaching media for hearing-impaired students. Teacher also has to understand every student in the class, so that it will help them in building their confidence in the classroom. Teacher has to be active in stimulating their students

so that the students can give some feedback or answer in the class. For students, they suggested being more active in the classroom. They should participate in the teaching and learning process so that it will help them in understanding every material that the teacher explained in the classroom. Students should be confident and not to be afraid of making a mistake in English class because by making their mistake, they will learn from that. Students also should be brave in facing their difficulty and sharing their thought so that it will help them in understanding better in the classroom. For special schools, they can facilitate the students' need which can support them in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. Not only for the teaching media, but also a good strategy which is presented by teacher. For other researchers, it is hoped that the result of the research can be used as a reference to conduct similar research about the teacher's strategies in teaching English for the hearing-impaired students.

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