

## **Teaching English as a Foreign Language among Hearing Impaired Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study has some reasons why the researcher chooses this topic of the study. Firstly, the researcher is interested on how to teach English as foreign language for hearing impaired students. Secondly, the hearing impaired students do not know how to produce the sound well, and they face the difficulty to listen and read in terms of receptive skill in teaching English. This study aimed to investigate the challenges faced by teachers to teach English as a foreign language for hearing impaired students along with the strategies implemented by teachers to teach English as a foreign language for hearing impaired students. This study was conducted at one private SLB in Yogyakarta. This study focused on hearing impaired students. To obtain the data, the researcher used descriptive qualitative method with the interview as data collecting instruments. The participants were two female English teachers for hearing impaired students at one private SLB in Yogyakarta. This study revealed that were five challenges teachers faced in teaching English for hearing impaired students. Those included students' difficulties in hearing, limited of vocabulary knowledge, difficulty in teaching a long text, lack of communication, limited of using projectors. Moreover, the researcher found five strategies implemented by teachers to face the problems in teaching English for hearing impaired students. Those composed strategies to face students' difficulties in hearing, strategy of adapting vocabulary in focus, strategy of implementing directional orientation, strategies to encounter students' lack of communication, using mobile phone.

***Keywords:*** hearing impaired students, TEFL, challenges, strategies

## **Introduction**

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) refers to teaching English for the students who use English as their foreign language where they do not use it regularly in their daily basis. As one of non-English speaking countries, Indonesia considers that teaching English as important part for the development of science, technology, and aspects related to all for students' skill. From the statement mentioned, it is supported by Sukah and Wahyudi (1996) who stated that English is the first foreign language in Indonesia considered as important part for the purpose of absorption and development of science, technology, and cultural arts as well as to foster relationships with other worldwide nations.

Likewise, English learners are divided into two kinds of student, the special need students and the non-special need students. However, this research only focuses to discuss about the special need students. Those students have special characteristics than others. Following this, they have shortcomings in term of their mental and physical body. Kosasih (2012) stated that special need students are defined as the students who need special learning since they experience physical, mental, intellectual, and emotional disorders. Besides, the special need students are categorized into two groups. For the first group, it is problem in sensory motor which includes hearing impairment, visual impairment, and physical disability. For the second group, it is the problem in learning and behavior which include Intellectual disability, learning disability, behavioral disorders, gifted and talented students, and multi handicap (Santoso, 2012).

Additionally, teaching English for special need students is quite hard to be conducted by the teachers because they need special treatments. For each disorder, the teachers should apply various teaching method based on the students' needs. There are several reasons to choose the topic of the study. Firstly, hearing impaired students cannot hear properly and are not exposed to sound well. That way, they do not know how to produce the sound well, and

they will get the difficulty to listen and read in terms of receptive skill in teaching English. On the other side, it also affects the productive skill such as speaking and writing. As another reason to choose this study topic, teaching English for non-hearing impaired students also still have many obstacles for teachers in TEFL among hearing impaired students. Therefore, there will be many challenges for English teachers to teach English as a foreign language for hearing impaired students. Regarding the phenomena mentioned, the researcher is interested in finding out the challenges along with the strategies in TEFL among hearing impaired students. That way, this research aims to encounter those challenges and strategies used by English teachers at one special school (SLB) in Yogyakarta.

### **Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

TEFL means teaching English to the students who do not use English as their second language. TEFL is commonly learnt at school and outside the classroom. The term English as a foreign language occurs in the Middle East countries such as Indonesia, China, Japan, and others. Richard and Schmidt (2010) stated that a foreign language in a particular country or region is not used as a media of instruction in school. Foreign language is typically taught as school subjects for the purpose of communication with foreigners and reading materials.

### **Hearing Impaired Students**

Hearing impaired is one of the general terms showing the inability to hear from very mild to severe classified as deaf and lack of hearing. Additionally, hearing-impaired students are those with a condition of the functional damage presence from all of the instruments or auditory organs which cause deficiency or loss of hearing ability (Kosasih, 2012). Basically, the hearing-impaired students have verbal communication disorders, so they use a sign language in communication with other students (Kemendiknas, 2010). Besides, hearing-impaired students are the students who usually use the hearing aids as their sign language to allow success in processing linguistic information through their hearing. Therefore, there are a

lot of obstacles and challenges in getting along with non-special need students (Kemendikbud RI, 2010).

### **The Challenges faced by English Teachers in teaching Hearing Impaired Students**

There are two challenges faced by special need English teachers in teaching and learning process. Those challenges are not conducive classroom and lack of teaching methods. Besides, each challenge faced by the special need English students is explained in the following paragraphs briefly.

In receptive delayed vocabulary, Chang, Chow and Fung (2005) stated that the hearing impaired students' problem is a delay vocabulary receptive. This means that hearing impaired students have trouble in understanding the lesson when the teacher talks about English vocabulary. As a reason, hearing impaired students have less of language, and they do not know to produce the sound well (Dalton, 2013). In Limited of using sign language by teachers, hearing impaired students used sign language for communicating with the teachers. As the problem, the use of sign language is the teachers' lack in teaching. Chimhenga and Mpfu (2013) asserted that one of the challenges which the teachers faced in teaching hearing impaired students is they have limited of sign language. In limited of vocabulary knowledge, Rachmayana as stated in Sugiarti (2016) suggested that hearing impaired people are those who have lack and loss of hearing, and they face the trouble in developmental language. Lekberg and Spencer (2001) and Luckner and Handley (2008) said that hearing impaired students have delayed in building vocabulary knowledge.

### **The Strategies Implemented by English Teachers in teaching Hearing Impaired Students**

Chamot (2005) defined that learning strategies as the procedures facilitate learning duties. Moreover, learning strategies enable the students to stretch students' learning styles. Westwood (2007) pointed out that special need students should have some strategies in

learning. Those strategies given to hearing impaired students are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

The first strategy implemented by English teachers in teaching hearing impaired students is using flashcard. Grillo and Dieker (2013) said using flashcard can support and help the students in teaching and learning language process. Besides, using flashcard makes the students enthusiastic because it has a lot of colours and pictures. The second strategy implemented by English teachers in hearing impaired students is using a picture in storybook. According to Birinci (2014), using a picture in storybook is one of the successful strategies in teaching and learning process because it can make the students feel happy with the whole pictures at the story. As the third strategy, applying crossword puzzles in English teaching vocabulary can increase the vocabulary building (Njoroge, Ndung'u & Gathigia, 2013). Implementing dictionary comes as the teachers' strategy in teaching English for hearing impaired students the strategy. Trazek and Wang (2010) argued that dictionary can increase the reading comprehension for the students. Furthermore, using visual aids is the strategy which can be implemented by teachers in teaching as a foreign language for hearing impaired students. As the reason, Saad, Telajan and Zamri (2014) visual aids can help the English teachers in teaching hearing impaired students and give the positive impact for students in learning process especially for hearing impaired students. By using visual aids, the students can memorize the material that the teachers have provided (Agyem, Asare & Obusu, 2013).

## **Methodology**

The researcher adopted qualitative method as the research methodology in this study (Creswell, 2012). This study also used a descriptive qualitative research design to gain thick description or in-depth understanding from several individuals to answer the research question of the study (Sandelowski, 2000). This study was conducted at one private SLB in Yogyakarta. The participants of this study were taken from the English teachers for hearing-

impaired students at one private SLB in Yogyakarta who taught English for hearing impaired students. The researcher selected two female English teachers as the participants. The participants have different level schools for hearing impaired students, Junior High School and Senior High School level. In this study, interview was used as the instrument of the study, and the participants were free to answer the questions based on their knowledge. Besides, The researcher used in-depth interview in getting the information. The researcher also used interview guideline in this study. Moreover, open-ended interview was used in this research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). At the last of the research methodology, several steps included to conduct the data analysis were transcribing, member checking, and coding the data as the correct order to analyze them.

## **Findings and Discussion**

Regarding the interview, the researcher found some challenges and strategies to cope the issue. There were two findings discussed in this chapter supported by the provided theories related to this research. The first finding was about the challenges faced by teachers to teach English as a foreign language for hearing impaired students. The second finding was the strategies implemented by teachers to solve the challenges faced when teaching English as a foreign language for hearing impaired students.

### **The Challenges Faced by Teachers to Teach English as a Foreign Language for Hearing impaired Students**

The first objective of this study was to find out the challenges faced by teachers to teach English as a foreign language for hearing impaired students at one private SLB in Yogyakarta. Based on the participants' answer, there were five challenges faced by teachers to teach English as a foreign language for hearing impaired students. The challenges were about students' difficulties in hearing, limited of vocabulary knowledge, difficulty in teaching a long text, lack of communication, limited of using projectors.

As students' difficulties in hearing, the students had a less level of hearing ability, and they still felt the difficulty to learn and understand about the languages. As a reason, a foreign language has a wide of meaning, so that the students had different variety and multiple special conditions such as the students' hearing level and multiple disorders. Besides, lack of vocabulary knowledge was one of challenges in teaching English for hearing-impaired students came as the limited vocabulary knowledge. Hearing impaired students had lack of vocabulary knowledge owing to the fact that they could not hear well, so they had difficulty in vocabulary selection. Following this, the teachers had difficulty in teaching a long text. Due to the reason, hearing-impaired students had a little vocabulary mastery, and got the difficulty to understand the meaning of vocabulary. That way, the subject made the teachers face the difficulty in teaching process. As the following challenge faced by teachers based on interview of the participants, it was lack of communication. The teachers faced the difficulty when they wanted to communicate with hearing-impaired students in the class. At the last point, the researcher found another challenge faced by teachers which was limited of using projectors. Teaching facilities were lack when it came to deal with hearing-impaired students especially in using a projector in teaching and learning process. As the reason, the students could not hear properly, so that using audio visual was able to help them in understanding the material as learning media.

### **The Strategies Implemented by Teachers to Teach English as a Foreign Language for Hearing Impaired Students**

The second objective of this study was about the strategies implemented by teachers to teach English as a foreign language. In this point, the researcher found the findings of strategies implemented by teachers to English as a foreign language for hearing impaired students. Those strategies were strategies to face students' difficulties in hearing, strategy of

adapting vocabulary in focus, strategy of implementing directional orientation, and strategies to encounter students' lack of communication.

Firstly, the strategy implemented by teachers in teaching English as a foreign language for hearing impaired students was strategies to face students' difficulties in hearing. Those strategies were giving a test and playing games. Regarding to the study, those mentioned strategies were able to encounter the challenges of students' difficulties in hearing. Secondly, strategy of adapting vocabulary in focus could encounter the teachers in teaching for hearing impaired students especially for those who had lack of vocabulary knowledge. Thirdly, the strategy of implementing directional orientation could help the teachers to overcome the difficulty teaching a long text. By implementing of directional orientation, it included an expression used facial expression, short sentences, and real experience in delivering the material. The strategies to encounter students' lack of communication as the last strategy were to encounter students' lack of communication towards the students. Those strategies were using sign language, writing on the whiteboard, implementing realia, and using mobile phone.

## **Conclusion**

The general aim of this study was to investigate teaching English as a foreign language among hearing impaired students. As the reason, the researcher is interested on how to teach English as Foreign Language for hearing impaired students. However, the hearing impaired students cannot hear properly, and they are not exposed to sound well. That way, they do not know how to produce the sound well, and they will get the difficulty to listen and read in terms of receptive skill in teaching English. On the other side, it also affects the productive skill such as speaking and writing.

The first finding found the challenges faced by teachers to teach English as a foreign language for hearing impaired students. Based on the finding, there were five challenges as stated by teachers. The challenges included the students' difficulties in hearing, limited of



vocabulary knowledge, difficulty in teaching a long text, lack of communication, limited of using projectors. As the second finding, the researcher found the strategies implemented by teachers to teach English as a foreign language for hearing impaired students. The teachers mentioned five ways which they had implemented. Therefore, the finding included the strategies to face students' difficulties in hearing, strategy of adapting vocabulary in focus, strategy of implementing directional orientation, strategies to face students' lack of communication, using mobile phone.

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