TEACHING ENGLISH TO VISUALLY-IMPAIRED STUDENTS: AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHER'S PROBLEMS

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Abstract
The aim of this study was to find out the teachers' problems in teaching English to visually-impaired students. The participants of the study were two English teachers at one special school in Palembang, Indonesia. A qualitative research design with a case study method was applied in this research. Interviews and document analysis were conducted to gain in-depth information and understanding on the subject, while thematic analysis was used to analyze and describe the collected data. Triangulation and member checking were used to assess the trustworthiness of the research results. The results indicated that the main problems encountered by the teachers in teaching English to visually-impaired students were associated with time management, students' attitude and behavior, lack of instructional materials and equipment, and poor classroom condition.

Keywords: teachers' problems, teaching English, visually-impaired students

Introduction

In Indonesia, English is intended to be one of the compulsory subjects in junior high schools, senior high schools, and universities. It is widely noted that English is important for the most common reason that English is a global or international language (Lauder, 2008). By mastering English, the students might improve their communication skills, widen their opportunities to study from various sources, and pursue their future studies and carriers. Furthermore, R. Marzano, J. Marzano & Pickering, (2003), stated that in teaching English as foreign language (EFL), teachers as the facilitators of students learning take a variety of roles within the classroom (as cited Marzulina, Erlina, Holandyah, Harto, Desvitasari, & Angreini, 2021). Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging task for teachers, especially to visually-impaired students. Teacher is an essential source of strength in the learning process of students with visual impairments. Emily and Beamish (2012) states that teachers of students with visual impairments are qualified specialist teachers who have the skills and practical experience in the field of visual impairments. Their specialized skill and experience establish them as the best qualified individuals to address the unique learning needs to visual impaired students. Additionally, Riley (2000) states that students who are visually-impaired must be provided with appropriate instruction in a variety of subjects, including Language Arts, Sciences, and Mathematics. To educate them in these subjects effectively, they must be taught the necessary skills to enable them to learn to read and use appropriate technology to access and obtain information.

Several previous studies reported teachers' problems in teaching English to visually-impaired students. Basaran (2012) focused on strengths and problem as well as the techniques and materials used by three EFL teachers working in two special primary schools for the visually-impaired students. Several teaching problems determined in this study such as problems related to the students and families, curriculum, verbalism, scarcity of resources, and the use of teaching techniques. El-hossary (2018) did his research at Al-Nour School in Egypt. The findings designated the need for allocating extra time for listening and speaking activities and practice inside and outside the classroom to deal with the problems in teaching English to visually-impaired students. Audio materials or Braille books and supplementary aids, in addition to learning environment which includes the classroom settings, sound isolation aids, and equipment for listening like speakers or microphones were required for successful English teaching and learning.

Referring to the studies above, it can be inferred that being visually impaired does not necessarily mean being unsuccessful language learners. Although human vision serves as a major stimulus for learning, with the assistance of teacher and technology, visually-impaired students actually have potential for learning foreign languages. Teaching English in a manner that meets the special learning needs of visual-impared students might be challenging for the teachers. This phenomenon encourages us to conduct a similar research at one special school in Palembang. Our preliminary study was carried out through informal interviews with two of the English teachers who taught visually-impaired students at one special school in Palembang, Indonesia. They informed that their visually impaired students were unable to see objects clearly. The students have difficulty to maximize the function of their eyes or even barely can use their eyes at all. It differs from the students with normal condition of eyes that learn English by what they see around them, such as colors, shapes, images, facial expressions, and book illustrations. Consequently, teaching English to visually-impaired students' needs expertise, enthusiasm, and seriousness of the teachers. The result

of the preliminary study indicated that the teachers in this special school faced several problems in teaching English to visually impaired students, so this issue became the main concern of this research. Teaching English that meets the special learning needs of visual-impared students might be challenging for the teacher. This phenomenon encourages us to conduct a research at one special school in Palembang. This research is intended to analyze the teachers' problems in teaching English to visually impaired-students based on teachers' perspective and experience.

Literature Review

Visually-impaired students

Visually impaired is a disorder characterized by poor visual function that cannot be repaired by refractive correction (glasses or contact lenses), medical procedures, or surgery (Naipal & Rampersad, 2018). The nature and degree of visual impairment may vary significantly, so each student may require individual adaptations to instructional practices and materials in order to learn effectively. According to Fuhr and Norden (2002), visual impairment refers to the function of the eye and can be measured with tests such as visual acuity, visual field, color vision, and contrast sensitivity. In addition, visually impaired manifest itself in a variety of ways, including photophobia, diplopia, contrast sensitivity or impaired visual acuity, loss of vision, visual perception issues, visual distortion, or some combinations of the aforementioned. Not all visual impairments are the same. The word visual impairment also may be used to describe as the consequence of an eye condition and disorder.

In conclusion, visual impairment is a condition where a person's vision is not the same as regular as vision in regular person in general. The visually impaired should be educated in the same general way as the sighted following the same general principles, but teachers must have some teaching strategies for them. Students with low vision or those who are legally blind may need help in using residual vision more efficiently and in working with special aids and materials.

Teaching English to visually-impaired students

In teaching visually-impaired students, teachers ultimately should comprehend that students with vision impairment would face different kinds of holdbacks and ways to learn English. Davis (2003) claims that teaching English to visually impaired students differs from teaching students with normal condition of eyes. Visually-impaired students cannot learn English by seeing objects, colours, shapes, facial expressions, book illustrations, digital images, animals, landscapes, skylines, architecture, transportations, and so on. Therefore, teachers who teach visually-impaired students can generally have much more control over learning environments, teaching resources and strategies than they can hope to over the qualities and characteristics of the individuals they teach (Webster and Roe, 2003). For pupils with visual impairments there will be important questions about how best to encourage mobility, exploration, play, language and learning. Many aspects of development are related and depend to a greater or lesser degree on the integrating qualities of vision.

Students with visual impairment depend on effectiveness in using a language in a world that is becoming increasingly visual. From an early age, pupils with visual impairment should be encouraged to develop their communication and language skills to their full potential (Salisbury, 2008). Therefore, teachers should have a set of skills and techniques to create a positive and

productive learning environment for the students (Habibi, Mukminin, Sofwan, & Sulistiyo, 2017; Habibi, Mukminin, Najwan, Sofwan, Haswindy, Marzulina, Sirozi, & Harto, 2018). They have to bring proper strategies in teaching English to visually-impaired students such as interactive reading aloud, guided and cooperative learning strategies to ensure that a certain message or lesson is passed from the teacher to the students (Emily & Beamish, 2012).

Problems in teaching English to visually-impaired students

Teaching English to visually-impared students requires several educational considerations to accomodate their special learning needs. Kuchah and Shamim (2018) mentions that there are several factors to consider that might arise problems in teaching English to visually-impaired students. They are as follows:

Lesson plan, a lesson plan needs to be made to know what is going to be taught in the class. It is one of the important parts of the teaching and learning process. Lesson plan contains several components such as objectives, materials, activities, media, and assessments, and each component should be described clearly. Harmer (2007) highlights the function of lesson plan. A lesson serves as a guide for teacher to conduct a set of activities in the classroom, determine what the students will learn and how the lesson will be taught as well as how learning will be evaluated.

Time management, time management is an inseparable element of a school organization. It is the art of arranging, scheduling and budgeting time to achieve learning objectives (Edwards, Baglion, & Cooper, 2003). It is a process which involves the determination of needs and prioritization of tasks. It was acknowledged across the globe that time management for teachers is more important than any other professionals because they are master of the fate of future generation. Master (2013), Horng (2010), and Kaushar (2013) reported that time management is an important element for teachers' effectiveness and school's results. In fact, time management was one of the major challenges that teacher and students face at schools. Green and Skinner (2005) found in their studies that time management pointed a high inconsistency between individual's estimations of time usage and output results. Kayode and Ayodele (2015) described that teachers' time management has significant impacts on students' performance. Therefore, teachers must manage their teaching time effectively for everything they plan to do for the class.

Environmental issues, environmental issues or the condition of the class can effect the teacher's quality in teaching and can cause problems for them. Firstly, discipline has become a chore that the teachers must do it for the succession of the teaching a learning process. When dealing with discipline, the teachers need to be comfortable with their position of authority in class. They also need to gain respect from the student and state you expectations for their behaviour in class (absence policy, test taking, respects for others, turn-taking). No matter how frustrated the teacher is, they must preserve the students' dignity and if all matters fail the teacher may consult to the institutions counselor or administrator. The problems that may rise is when the student/teachers digress and throw the lesson for the day, an unexpected questions comes up, a technicality problem, a disruptive student etc. Secondly, classroom condition has significant effect on the level of language proficiency learners. Kiatkheeree (2018) found that students and teachers interaction in a classroom, as part of learning environment, was regarded as important factor in promoting students' achievement. Moreover, according to Marzulina, Erlina, Holandyah, Harto, Desvitasari, Angreini, (2021), a classroom with too many students often presents some problems for the teacher, such as

lack of individual teacher-student attention, fewer opportunities for students to speak, and insufficient teacher's feedback on students' written work.

In addition, large class is usually hot, crowded, and noisy (Al-Obaydi & Al-Bahadli, 2017). It affects the teaching process and student academic performance. Building effective learning environment seemed to have great impact on language learners. As classroom condition affects students' learning achievement, physical environment is seen to be one important factor in building good environment for learning. Lodhi, Sahar, Qayyum, Iqbal and Shareef (2019) also state that classroom was a place where teachers transfer and students acquire knowledge in order to fulfill the academic needs and achieve learning outcomes. Poor indoor environment of the classroom affect students' performance badly (Ipinge, 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to have a well-organized classroom condition to create positive and comfortable environment for teaching and learning.

Methodology

Research design, participants, and site of the study

This study was conducted by using a qualitative approach with a case study method. A qualitative research aims at expanding phenomena based on the perspectives of participant. A case study is used to describe a specific intervention or phenomena as well as the context in which it occurred (Yin, 2014). Thus, a case study was appropriate to this research that focused on the teachers' problems in teaching English to visually-impaired students.

The participants of this study were two English teachers at one special school in Palembang, Indonesia. Convenience sampling was taken as one of purposeful sampling strategies to select the research participants that are easy to access and inexpensive to study (Patton, 2002). The justifications in selecting the participants were the teachers had to be permanent and had more than 5 years' experience in teaching English to visually-impaired students. We masked the names of the teachers and research site through the use of pseudonyms. For the names of the participants, we used AY and YS instead of their real names.

Data collection and analysis

Interviews and document analysis were conducted to gain in-depth information and understanding on the subject of the study. Interview involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses. In this study, face-to-face interviews with the participants were conducted. The interview consists of 26 main questions that were derived from Kuchah and Shamim (2018), and Brown (2001). The aspects obtained from these sources were about lesson plan, time management, and environmental issues that may influence the teachers' problems in the research site. Document is data source which provide the data in the form of words, pictures or symbols. According to Creswell (2012), documents consist of public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain about a site or participant in a study and they can include newspaper, minutes of meeting, personal journals, and letter. The documents in this research were all written information dealing with English teaching and learning activities such as teachers' lesson plans and syllabus.

In analyzing the data, thematic analysis was applied. In this process, we had read all transcriptions and started to code the data that were related to the research question of this study.

Then, we made themes from the code that interconnects the themes. Creswell (2012) also states that interconnecting themes mean that the researcher connects the themes to display a chronology or sequence of events when qualitative research generates a theoretical or conceptual model. Lastly, we made a personal interpretation from the themes and codes as the final summary about this research in relation to the research question.

Establishment of trustworthiness

To obtain the trustworthiness of the data collected for this research, we used triangulation and member checking techniques (Creswell, 2012; Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Mukminin & McMahon, 2013). The purpose of triangulation is to increase the credibility and validity of the findings. There are six techniques of triangulation, namely investigator triangulation, combined level triangulation, methodological triangulation, theoretical triangulation, time triangulation, and space triangulation. In this research, we did triangulation by analyzing the data from two perspectives of data collection, interviews and documentations, rather than relying only on one source of data. We crosschecked the information that has been found by comparing the data from interviews and documentations to enhance the validity of the data regarding the teacher's problems in teaching English to visually-impaired students. We used member checking to verify the accuracy of the results and interpretations (Creswell, 2012; Abrar, Mukminin, Habibi, Asyrafi, Makmur, & Marzulina, 2018). We gave back the transcribed interview data and findings to the participants to ensure that they were in agreement with the data and findings.

Findings

In reference to the data obtained through interviews and documentations, teachers' problems in teaching English to visually-impaired students were categorized into four major themes including (1) time management problems, (2) students' attitude and behavioral problems, (3) availability of instructional materials, and (4) poor classroom condition. The following table showed the themes and codes gained from the thematic analysis.

Table 1: Themes and codes of teachers' problems in teaching English to visually-impaired students

Themes	Codes
Time management problems	The teachers did not have enough teaching time allotment.
	They could not cover all the materials in their lesson plan.
	They only taught simple and easy materials.
Students' attitude and behavioral problems	The students were unruly in the classroom and hard to be disciplined.
	Most of the students did not pay attention to the lesson.
	Some of the students did not respect the teachers.
Lack of instructional materials and equipment	Inadequate audio, software and hardware for teaching English
	Inadequate large print books and textbooks required by visually-impaired students
	Inadequate equipment for listening such as speakers or microphones.
Poor classroom condition	Uncomfortable classroom temperature
	Unpleasant odor and smelly classroom
	Insufficient air ventilations in the classroom

Time Management Problems

Teaching time allocation had been a crucial part of teacher's daily lesson plan for the success of English teaching and learning process. The data from interviews showed that teachers had experienced problems related to the time management. As quoted from the interview of AY,

> AY: *"*Uhm… time allocation for each lesson is very limited, we only teach for 20 minutes per lesson, while in normal school, 45 minutes for one lesson. We do not have enough time for teaching the students in 20 minutes."

From what had been said by AY, the time allocation in this special school was different from regular school. The teachers only had 20 minutes for teaching each meeting, so they could not cover all the materials in their lesson plan. They only gave simple, short, and easy materials. For example, as quoted by the English teacher initially AY that,

> AY: "No, it is not enough (time allocation). So, I need to select the materials, and decide to teach the easy materials to the students."

Students' Attitude and Behavioral Problems

There were several students' factors that impacted the teachers in teaching visually-impaired students. The majority of the problems were about the students' attitude and behavior. The student's attitude and behavior were mostly described in the participant interviews. YS had complained about many things, some of which, she said,

> YS: "Most of the students are unruly in the classroom. They do not pay attention on us. Yes, when we try to remind or admonish them, they are difficult to manage. It is hard for us to make them obey the rules of the class".

She expressed that the students' actions are difficult to control in the classroom. They did not pay attention to the lesson and teacher's explanation. In addition, AY had also experienced problems because of the students' behavior and attitude. Some of which AY said,

> AY: "They did not pay attention to the lesson. They did not response what we asked them for". "They did not care about us, they did not pay attention on us".

AY expressed that many students did not pay attention and they were careless in doing their works. This became a problem for the teachers in teaching, As YS said,

> YS: "We want to be angry with them but what is it for? It takes time to change them. I am tired, I see outside, and then just go out the classroom."

YS explained that it was very difficult for the students to be disciplined and the students did not obey the rules as they were supposed to.

Lack of instructional materials and equipment

Another problem that the teachers had encountered was that they had very limited teaching materials for visually-impaired students such as large print books and textbooks, audio, software and hardware for teaching English to students with visual impairments. For instance, as emphasized by the English teacher initially YS that,

> YS: "It is difficult to teach without enough large print textbooks for students with low vision. Before teaching the class, I have to make the copy of the materials for the students."

YS expressed her problems in preparing the materials for the visually-impaired students. At first, she did materials selection to find the easiest materials for the students and develop the materials referring to the syllabus. Then, she had to print out the materials in larger size for the students to make the students easier understand the materials. AY also mentioned that they had to bring speakers or microphones to the classroom

Poor classroom condition

Another problem that the teachers encountered was the poor condition of the classroom. This was reported by the teachers called AY. She complained that there were not enough air ventilations in the classroom, as she said,

> AY: "Yes, it definitely disturb me because it is kind of smelly and hot classroom, there is not enough ventilation in the classroom".

AY experienced that after Sport class, when the students did not change their clothes as they were supposed to, the classroom became so smelly. This unpleasant odor really disturbed the concentration and comforts of the teacher in teaching. These problems had emerged because there were insufficient air ventilations in the classroom.

Discussion

We found that there were several problems faced by teachers in teaching English to visually impaired-students at one special school in Palembang. Those consisted of (a) time management problems (b) students' attitude and behavior problems (c) lack of instructional materials for students with visual impairments, and (d) poor classroom condition. The findings showed that most of the teachers had encountered time management problems due to their limited teaching hours for English lesson. This is in line with Ololube and Prince (2013), Hashimoto and Nguyen (2018) and Pike (2004) reported that the time allocation has been a very crucial part of the English learning process. Time management has an important role in teaching, especially teaching English as a foreign language for visually-impaired students. In addition, Pike (2004) described that time allotment must be allocated and kept in balance with the time and exercises that are needed in each lesson.

Teachers had problems to deal with students' attitude and behavior. Gardner et al. (1985), in their study stated that attitude as an evaluative reaction to some referent, e.g. behaviors or objects, on the basis of an individual's beliefs and opinions about the referent (as cited Marzulina, Abrar, Mukminin, Habibi, Asyrafi, and Makmur (2018). According to Rutter, Giller, and Hagell (1998), bad attitude or behavior might be an expression of dissatisfaction and frustration. McCord, Widom, and Crowell (2001) further stated that disruptive behavior in the classroom consumes a teacher's time and energy and interferes with the learning processes of disruptive and non disruptive students, which may lead to a classwide reduction in academic achievement. Moreover, classroom behavior problems may represent early expressions of disruptiveness that may later develop into delinquent behavior. Hence it was proven as to be one of the problems that the teacher's face during teaching visually-impaired students.

Lack of instructional materials also posed problems for the teachers in teaching. They had very limited teaching materials for visually-impaired students such as large print books and textbooks, audio, software and hardware for teaching English. According to Al-Hashemi and Al-Ghazawi (2006), using involvement as a standard of evaluating the textbook is one of the different ways. The use of involvement helps in investigating the suitability of the textbook for students' level and helps in exploring students' ability to use the learning material (as cited Aladwan, 2021). The teachers had to spend more time, energy, and money prepare and print out their own materials. They had to print out their materials in larger size on their own. Oaks and Saunders (2002) emphasize the importance of instructional materials including printed, audio, visual materials in a language teaching program as they the primary means through which students gain access to the knowledge and skills specified in the learning objectives. Additionally, UNESCO (2016) has proposed the use of textbooks to improve learning outcomes in a shortage of instructional time. Therefore, well-designed textbooks in sufficient quantities for students with visual impairments are needed to improve quality of English teaching and learning process.

Poor classroom condition had also become an obstacle that made the teacher experienced problems to deal with. Uncomfortable classroom temperature due to insufficient air ventilations disturbed the teachers in teaching. According to Fisk (2017), ventilation were often used for classes that have a more high humidity level and the function of the ventilation was to get rid and renew the air inside the classroom. When ventilation were not enough, the CO_2 that has been built up in the class will cause humidity inside the class and is trapped inside. According to Rosbach, Vonk, Duijim, Ginkel, Gehring and Brunekreef (2013) classroom ventilations often do not meet building standards, although this was considered to be important to improve indoor air quality. Some literatures mention the possible effects of poor IAQ (Indoor Air Quality) on students' low learning achievement. They concluded that there is suggestive evidence for an association between ventilation rates and the students' learning attention and academic performance. It can be said that there is a linear relationship between poorer classroom condition and lower academic achievement, and vice versa.

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, there were several problems that the English teachers had encountered in teaching English to visually-impaired students. The main problems were associated with time management, students' attitude and behavior, lack of instructional materials and equipment, and poor classroom condition. These problems need to be overcomed or at least

minimized to give optimal learning space and opportunity for the students with visual impairments to learn English. This study might offer basic information of problems experienced by the teachers in teaching English to students with visual impairments. Further studies might be directed to investigate other problems and also the strategies to facilitate visually-impaired students in learning English.

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