

Teaching English to Children with Hearing Impairment: A Case Study in Special School

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Abstract: This paper aimed to show the EFL classroom activities for children with hearing impairment conducted by the teacher, the teacher's consideration in designing and implementing the EFL classroom activities, and challenges faced by the teacher in developing EFL classroom activities. The study was qualitative in nature. The data collected through observation, interview, and documentation. Additionally, this paper applied Miles and Huberman model to analyze the research data through some steps, namely, data reduction, data display and drawing a conclusion. In this research, the researcher observed the teaching process and interview the English teacher for children with hearing impairment at the eighth graders of SLB (Education of physically and mentally handicapped children) Negeri Metro. The results indicated that the teacher designed, and implemented the EFL classroom activities based on the students' characteristics, needs, and abilities such as selecting the activity which provides instruments especially visual supports, modifying classroom environment. Moreover, the teacher also faced the children's limitation as her challenges but she had her own way to overcome the challenges such as giving a simple and easy activity and maximum visual supports to the students in the activity.

Keywords: *Children, Hearing Impairment, English as foreign language*

INTRODUCTION

The growth of communication around the world brings the need for knowledge of foreign language especially English (Mydans, 2007). English is one of the major languages used as the worldwide communicational standard among people of the globe and, therefore, it becomes a global lingua franca (Crystal, 20003; Smokotin, et.al., 2014); Christiansen, 2015). Its concern as an international language reaches every modern aspect and field, from professional, personal, until cultural, even for the scientific activity.

English should be introduced to children from their young ages (Cameron, 2003) . In Indonesia, English as foreign language has been officially made it a compulsory subject for Indonesian learners in junior and senior high school (Lauder, 2008). Furthermore, English is taught in all departments in tertiary levels. It is, therefore, crucial for Indonesian learners to learn English subject since their young ages (Gawi, 2012).

English, according to Ministry of Education and Culture, Article No. 060/U/1993, has already been established as

one of the subjects in a regular school in Indonesia from junior high school level including special junior high schools. This means that it is not only normal children with normal hearing who are encouraged to learn English, but also children with special needs such as children with hearing impairment also. This is in line with what Chinh (2013) highlighted that English teachers should take into account the participants' realistic condition. By doing so, it is expected that children with hearing impairment are able to open their mind, have a tool to communicate with others by using international language, and make it easier to get access to different sources of information, for example; internet.

Nowadays, teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to children with hearing impairment is still a challenge for teachers. In terms of language, children with hearing impairment have limited language ability as compared to hearing children peers. Therefore, children with hearing impairment need different kinds of language learning treatment compared to hearing children.

Although children with special needs have limitations, teachers still have to make them reach their goals in studying (Puspitasari, 2019). According to Moores (2001), instead of thinking of children with hearing impairment limitation as a defect, teachers should perceive them as a unique pattern of characteristics of children with hearing impairment. Other professionals must also direct their energies to identify and build on the strengths of those children. In line with this statement, Andrews, et.al., (2004) state that teachers of children and teenagers who have hearing impairment must be knowledgeable about their characteristics, needs, and abilities so that they can provide appropriate classroom activities.

There have been a number of previous studies about teaching EFL for children with

hearing impairment with some focuses such as curriculum modifications (Royle, 2008); teachers' challenges (Adi & Fadhilah, 2017; Sari, 2017); teaching strategies (Wu-yang, 2017); teachers' educational philosophies (Cawthon, 2001); bilingual teaching (Evans, 2005); vocabulary teaching (Yuliani, 2017); e-learning platform (Drigas, Kouremenos, & Vrettaros, 2008); sign language (Hernández, 2017; Dotter, 2008); students' obstacles (Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2013; Murphy & Dodd, 2010) and reading recovery (Charlesworth, et.al., 2006).

Those previous researches showed the significance of EFL teaching to children with hearing impairment. Nevertheless, most of them did not see the teachers' role in the classroom with hearing-impaired children holistically. Also, the research which focuses on the particular classroom activities for them is still rare. Therefore, this research aimed at investigating not only the challenges but also how the teacher designed and implemented instructional activities based on the students' characteristics.

English Teaching for Children

Teaching English is a 'transmission' of knowledge about English as a 'language' that as their chief foreign language in schools from teacher to student, or is it about creating conditions in which, somehow, students learn for themselves, that remained as mechanical and routine ridden. Dörnyei & Murphey (2003) see teaching as the exercise of group leadership. Teaching is an art form. It demands not only knowledge and understanding of the core areas of learning, but also the ability to teach these creatively and effectively and foster learner creativity in the process of teaching language. Children are effortless second language learners and far superior to adults in their eventual success (Brown, 2001).

The qualifications both children and adult, First, children's success in acquiring the second language belies a tremendous subconscious effort devoted to the task. Second, adults are not necessarily less successful in their effort.

The popular claim fails to differentiate very young children (four to six years old) from pre-pubescent children (twelve to thirteen) and the whole range of ages in between. There are actually many instances of six to twelve years old children manifesting significant difficulty in acquiring a second language for a multitude of reasons.

According to Scott & Ytreberg (2001), general characteristics of children are (1) their basic concepts are formed; (2) they can tell the difference between fact and fiction; (3) they have definite views about what they like and dislike like doing; and (4) they have a developed sense of fairness about what happens in the classroom and begin to question the teacher's decisions. Meanwhile, Moon (2001) according to children's characteristics are they have a great capacity to enjoy themselves. When they enjoying themselves, they are usually absorbed by the activity and want to continue with it. They are not always aware that they are learning the language. The other characteristic is that they desire to communicate is very powerful and this carries over into foreign language learning.

To successfully teach children differ from adult teaching. Five categories may help some practical approach to teaching children (Brown, 2001), namely (1) Intellectual Development. Since children (up to the age of about eleven) are still in an intellectual stage of what Paige called "concrete operations", we need to remember their limitation; (2) Attention Span. Teaching children need a variety of activities to keep interested and attention alive. A teacher needs to be

animated, lively, and enthusiastic about the subject matter; (3) Sensory Input. The activities should strive to go well beyond the visual and auditory modes that we feel are usually sufficient for a classroom; (4) Affective Factors. Children are often innovative in language forms but still have a great many obstacles. They are extremely sensitive, especially to peers. Their egos are still being shaped, and therefore the slightest nuances of communication can be negatively interpreted. Teachers need to help them to overcome such potential barriers to learning. Help the children to laugh with each other at various mistakes that they all make; (5) Authentic Meaningful Language. Children are focused on what this new language can actually be used for here and now. They are less willing to put up with language which does not hold immediate rewards for them. Consequently, the classes potentially have an overload of language that is neither authentic nor meaningful.

In addition, suggests that teachers of young learners need to be especially alert and adaptive in their response to tasks and have to be able to adjust activities on the spot. It is not being suggested that young children cannot acquire second languages successfully (Harmer, 2007).

The procedures may help give some practical approach to teaching children (Brown, 2001) such as (1) The teachers should not explain grammar using terms like "present progressive" or "relative clause"; (2) rules stated in abstract terms ("to make a statement into a question, add a 'do' or 'does'") should be avoided; (3) Children are focused on the immediate bare and now, activities should be designed to capture their immediate interest; (4) A lesson needs a variety of activities to keep interested and attention alive; (5) A teacher needs to be animated, lively, and enthusiastic about the subject matter.

Consider the classroom a stage on which you are the lead actor; (6) A sense of humor will go a long way to keep children laughing and learning; (7) The teachers make sure their tap into that curiosity whenever possible; (8) the teachers should help the students to laugh with each other at various mistakes that they all make; (9) the teachers should be patient and supportive to build self-esteem, yet at the same time be firm in expectations of students; and (10) the teachers need to elicit as much oral participation as possible from students, especially the quieter ones, to give them plenty of opportunities for trying things out.

Hearing Impairment

Hearing impairment is a general term used to describe all degrees and types of hearing loss and deafness (Westwood, 2011). Similarly, Paul & Whitelaw (2011) define hearing impairment as a generic term referring to all types, causes, and degrees of hearing loss. Also, according to Andrews, et.al., (2015), hearing impairment is a generic term indicating a hearing disability that may sever from mild to profound it includes the subsets of deaf and hard of hearing. Then, Moores (2001) explains about the definition of hearing impairment as a condition in which someone's hearing is disabled to extend (usually 70 decibels ISO gather) that precludes the understanding of speech through the ear one without or with the use of hearing aid. Then, hard of hearing is a person whose hearing is disabled to an extent (usually 35 to 69 decibels ISO) that makes the hearing difficult but does not preclude the understanding of speech through the ear alone without our with a hearing aid.

Impaired hearing does not mean that an individual cannot detect any sounds. He or she may simply hear some frequencies of sound much more clearly than others. Individuals are usually referred to as *deaf* if

they are unable to detect speech sounds and if their own oral language development is disordered.

Types and Degrees of Hearing Impairment

Most hearing loss can be classified as either *conductive* or *sensory-neura* (Westwood, 2011). The key features of each type of are summarized below:

Conductive hearing loss

Conductive hearing loss occurs when sounds do not reach the middle ear or inner ear (cochlear) because of some physical malformation, blockage or damage.

Sensory-neural loss

Sensory-neural hearing loss is related to the inner ear and the auditory nerve. This type is the most serious hearing losses. As well as being unable to hear many sounds, even those that are heard may be distorted.

Many students with impaired hearing have no other disability; but hearing impairment are often present as a secondary problem in children with intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, or language disorders.

The acuity of hearing is measured in units called decibels (dB). Zero dB is the point from which people with normal hearing can begin to detect the faintest sounds. Normal conversation is usually carried out at an overall sound level of between 40 and 50dB.

Other categories of the degrees of hearing loss are explained by (Wayner, 2001) as mild, moderate, severe and profound. See the table bellows:

Table 1
Category the degrees of hearing loss

Degree of hearing loss	dB level (dB)	Loudness example	Possible challenges and needs
Normal hearing	Up to 20 dB	Rustling leaves, the clock ticking	Very few hearing related problems
Minimal/mild	20–45 dB	Quit/whispered speech,	May have difficulty hearing quiet voices.

hearing loss		clicking fingers	Depending on where children fall in this range, he/she may benefit from amplification or may require extra support in school. Should understand conversational speech when facing the speaker and up close. Will need to use hearing instruments. May require extra support in school. Conversation must be loud. With correctly programmed hearing instruments, will hear normal conversational voices.
Moderate hearing loss	45-60 dB	Quite/normal conversational speech	May hear loud voices up close. Will need to use hearing instruments in order to hear conversational speech. Will need to wear appropriate amplification technology in order to hear conversational speech.
Moderately-severe hearing loss	60-70 dB	Normal/loud speech, the doorbell	
Severe hearing loss	75-90 dB	Telephone ringing, thunder, baby crying	
Profound hearing loss	90 dB or more	Truck, chainsaw	

An approximate relationship exists between the decibel hearing loss and the degree of functional difficulty. The table above opposite offers a guide to the different degrees of hearing loss, the decibel level and an example to demonstrate the loudness of these levels. Each level brings different challenges and the need for different treatment.

EFL Classroom Activities

For many years, scholars and teachers have made a distinction between EFL (English as a Foreign Language). EFL described situations where the students are learning English in order to use it with any other English speakers in the world - when the students might be

tourists or business people (Harmer, 2007).

Teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) means where English is a subject taught at school and where the child generally does not use English outside of school.

Activity may refer to virtually anything that learners do in the classroom. More specifically, when teachers refer to classroom activity, they usually refer to a reasonably unified set of student behaviors, limited in time, preceded by some direction from the teacher, with a particular objective (Brown, 2001).

From the understanding about EFL above, the EFL classroom activities mean learning English as a subject taught at school and where the child generally does not use English outside of school.

Brown (2001) explains some important background for designing and implementing techniques in the classroom. The background can be classified into two major categories, namely (1) principle teaching. It is derived from, and gives feedback to, a set of principles that form the skeleton of an overall approach to language learning and teaching; (2) context of learning. It is part of a teacher's approach to learning and teaching involves an understanding of who the learners are.

Selecting the EFL classroom activities should be suitable with the condition of the children, the age of children and characteristics of the children.

As it might have been known, children with a hearing impairment has the inability to hear clearly places a young child at risk of delay in many areas, including the acquisition of spoken language, literacy skills. Therefore, the teacher can use a visual tool such as picture cards to make it easier delivered the subject. The picture cards can be drawings or cut-outs from magazines, or perhaps photos. It

is easiest to sort the picture card according to size – really big ones for class work, and smaller ones for individual/pair/group work (Scott & Ytreberg, 2001). Another tool that teacher used in implementing EFL classroom was a sign language. It is commonly accepted that children with hearing impairment use the sign language in their communication.

METHOD

This research is qualitative. Qualitative research is an approach called investigation approach because the researcher collects data by facing and interacting with the object directly.

There are two data resources in this research, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data sources are information which gathered directly from the people, situations, genuine environments and behaviors (Creswell, 2008). Instead, secondary data sources are information which tends to be "secondhand" materials of some people, situations, genuine environments and behaviors which came or written by another person, people or institutions. The secondary data sources of this research were taken from books, articles, journals, and websites which correlated with the research and documentation, where the documents were used to collect the data about the context of the research.

Then the data collected through *observation, interview, and documentation*. Additionally, this research applied Miles and Huberman model (Miles & Huberman, 1994), to analyze the research data through some steps, namely, data reduction, data display and drawing a conclusion.

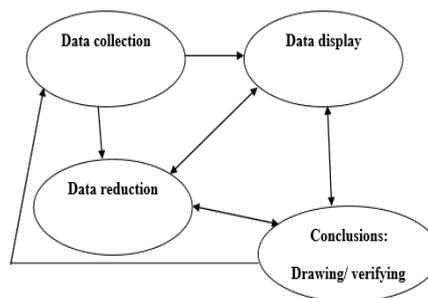


Figure 1

Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model

Then the researcher observed the teaching process and interviewed the English teacher for children with hearing impairment at the eighth graders of SLB Negeri Metro.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted on Thursday 25th October – Thursday 8th November 2018 at SLB Negeri Metro. The techniques used for collecting the data for research were observation, interview, and documentation.

Regarding the object of this research, the research specified to the teacher that teach the children with hearing impairment. In this part, the researcher described the data used as a primary source. The data was taken from observation on learning process and interview with a teacher of English subject. Next, the results were analyzed through Miles and Huberman model.

This model consists of some steps in analyzing the data findings qualitatively. They are:

1. Data Reduction

Data obtained from the field needs were reduced and summarized. The main things were selected and focused on the important things. The result of data reduction was described on the table bellows:

Table 2
The Result of Data Reduction

Information	Sources			The result of data reduction
	Observation	Interview	Documentation	
Some EFL classroom activities usually used by the teacher	the activities done by the teacher	“Yes, there some variations kind CTL, picture and picture, then sometimes remedial needs to do when I teach”	pictures on appendices	EFL classroom activity, picture and CTL
There are some instruments to helping the teaching process	instruments and facilities for helping the teaching process	“Picture, laptop, and other, that’s all for supporting the visual support”	There are some pictures on appendices	The instruments provided visual support to help the teaching process
The considerations in designing and implementing the EFL classroom activity	The important ways in selecting EFL classroom activities modifying classroom environment, providing visual supports, and improving the students’ communication skill	“they have limitation they lack the vocabulary I need to Selected EFL classroom, modifying classroom environment, providing visual supports”		The children’s limitation and characteristic areas the reason in consideration in designing and implementing the EFL classroom activity
The challenges faced by the teacher		I cannot use some sign language because not having basic knowledge. English subject is only two hours. Because the process of delivering the material needs one hour, the application to the students needs more time.		There are some challenges faced by the teacher

The table above is the result of data reduction was taken from observation and interview with a teacher. The column of information is the point of this research. Sources on the table are the data collection that the researcher used by observation of the teaching process, interview with the teacher and documentation. From the observation the researcher found some kind of English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom activities

used by the teacher, it appropriate with the result of the interview.

This reduction indicated that the EFL classroom activities used by the teacher were contextual, used some pictures as the instrument to help the students understand. In designing and implementing the activity, the teacher must understand the student's characteristic, considering the student's limitation. In teaching English, the teacher also found some challenges related to student's limitation, communication, and time to teach the English subject, but the teacher can solve it.

2. Data Display

Data which piled up from fields is difficult to see the relationship between many details so that the overall descriptions are difficult to see and difficult to make the right decision. Therefore, it is necessary to present the data. The presentation of data in qualitative research is usually presented in the short form descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, flowcharts and so on. Miles and Huberman stated that the presentation of data most often used in qualitative research is narrative text. Presentation of this data in this research carried out after the researcher did data reduction. The data about the process of the teaching process, the kind of English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom activities, then the challenged faced by the teacher during teaching English for children with hearing impairment.

This data display indicated the overall descriptions of English teaching for children with hearing impairment. In English teaching there were two kinds of EFL classroom activities that researcher found on the observation and interview. The teacher used some pictures as the instrument to help the students understand. In designing and implementing the activity, the teacher tried to

understand the students' characteristic, considering the student's limitation. In teaching English, the teacher also found some challenges related to student's limitation, communication, and time to teach the English subject, but the teacher can solve it.

CONCLUSION

The result of this research indicated that the EFL classroom activities used by the teacher were contextual, used some pictures to help the students understand, focused on giving new English vocabularies, and appropriate for children with hearing impairment limitation, characteristics, abilities, and needs. Therefore, the classroom activities used by the teacher helped the students reach the target language.

In terms of designing and implementing the activities, the teacher also considered the important ways of selecting EFL classroom activities, providing visual supports, and improving the students' communication skill. However, this research also found the arrangement of the students must be developed so that all of the students can see each other.

In terms of designing and implementing the activities, the teacher also faced some challenges. The biggest challenge was the students' limitations which bring to the students language skill and difficult to learn foreign language. Nevertheless, the teacher has some ways to overcome the challenges by giving a simple and easy activity and maximum visual supports to the students in the activity.

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