

The Implementation of Phonic Method in Teaching Vocabulary in Speaking to Visually Impaired Students in SLB A (Visual Impairment)

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Abstract: This research aimed to explore the implementation of phonic method in teaching vocabulary to vision impairment students. This study was a qualitative research with case study as the research design. Data in this study was analyzed by using Miles and Huberman model of analysis. It consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Result of this study showed that teaching documents used in the teaching-learning process of English to visually impaired students of SLB A Surakarta are curriculum, syllabus, and lesson plan. To teach effectively, the teacher uses some components to support the teaching process. The supporting components used in this teaching-learning activity related to phonic method are laptop, slate and stylus, and JAWS and TALK Program

Keywords: phonic method, visually impaired students, vocabulary teaching

Many educational institutions include English as one subject to be taught. English becomes one important subject taught in both regular school and special school. Students with disabilities have the same right to learn English in school as the general school population. There should be no discrimination in the field of education, including children with special needs. An increasing numbers of students with special needs are enrolling into educational institution.

Visually impaired people are known difficult to see objects clearly. To teach visually impaired students, especially English, it needs persistence, enthusiasm, and seriousness from teachers. Visually impaired students have difficulty to maximize the function of their eyes or even barely can use their eyes at all. Although they are difficult to do visual activity, they are able to do activities using other senses. To support their lack in visual activity, they need their other senses such as hearing, movement, or tactile.

The basic stage in learning foreign language, or in this case learning English, is learning vocabulary first. Vocabulary is the basic material to put into the patterns, because there is no sentence, no essay, and even no language without vocabulary (Pan and Xu, 2011). In the other words, English learners' ability in reading, listening, writing, and speaking is influenced by the vocabulary. To teach vocabulary, it aims not only to make learners memorize words, but also to make them master and use their vocabulary for all context.

Vocabulary is knowledge or knowing the meanings of words and knowing how to use it in sentences (John, 2004). Vocabulary also can be defined as words we must know to communicate effectively

in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and in listening (receptive vocabulary) (Neuman and Dwyer, 2009). This statement is also in line with the statement from (Hiebert and Kamil, 2005) defining that vocabulary is knowledge of words and words meaning in both oral and print language and in productive and receptive forms.

Visually impaired children find it hard to read text in textbook written with ordinary letters. Visually impaired children can rely on their hearing ability to acquire information. Phonic method can be an alternative method used to teach visually impaired students since it uses sounds as the main media in teaching. Phonics is a systematic teaching of the sounds conveyed by letters and groups of letters, and includes teaching children to combine these to read or write words (McGuinness, 2004). This method provides students, especially with visual impairment, to learn through hearing, so that they can use English well (Virdyna, 2015). Teaching English by using Phonic method need to be conducted in a systematic way. Teachers should follow some particular steps in using phonic method, from letters to words, and from words to sentences.

METHOD

The major focus of this research is to explore the implementation of phonic method in teaching vocabulary to visually impaired students. This research involves phenomena related to investigate human behavior. It focuses on the reality happening in the field. The result is then explained in form of words rather than measurement or statistics. By looking at the objective

of this research, a qualitative research is determined as the proper research to be used. The implementation of phonic method in teaching vocabulary to visually impairment students is regarded as a case study because its objective is to identify the implementation of phonic method in teaching vocabulary to visual impairment students.

Data were analyzed by using Interactive Model Analysis of Miles and Huberman. There are three steps in this model, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction means summarizing, selecting the important points, focusing on them, and looking for the theme. After reducing data, the next step is displaying data. The third step in analyzing qualitative research is drawing conclusion or verification. Conclusion in qualitative research is its finding.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Teaching and Learning Documents

Teaching and learning documents used as data in this study cover (1) curriculum, (2) syllabus, and (3) lesson plan. Curriculum has a function as guidance for teacher in performing learning program to achieve educational target (Hidayat, 2013). Referring to the statement, curriculum is an important component that should be comprehended by teachers. There was no difference between curriculum used in special school and regular school. The government had provided Curriculum of 2013 (K13) as the new curriculum. However, the curriculum used at SLB A Surakarta was still *KTSP*.

The second document was syllabus. The English syllabus used in the teaching-learning process at SLB A Surakarta was based on curriculum of *KTSP*. However, syllabus used in every school should be adjusted to students' ability. Therefore, the English teacher of SLB A Surakarta also adjusted the syllabus they used with their students' ability. Hadi (2007) states that needs must be addressed if schools provide service for learners with visual impairment are needs that can be met by adapting curriculum and second, needs that require changes in teaching method. Mulyasa (2009) mentions that curriculum is developed by considering the students' potential, development, and needs.

The third document used was lesson plan. The lesson plan was divided into three main phases, namely exploration, elaboration, and evaluation. Besides, phonic method was also mentioned in the lesson plan as another teaching method because the teacher used phonic method to teach English in class. According to Mutonga (2011), teachers may be able to use their usual

instructions techniques with some modification to provide effective education program. Besides, Mulyasa (2009) states standard materials developed and used as teaching-learning material should be adjusted based on the needs and abilities, containing the value of the functional, practical, and adapted to the conditions and needs of environment, school, and region.

Vocabulary Teaching Process Using Phonic Method to Visually Impaired Students

One obstacle that the students had to face in learning vocabulary was the lack of Braille printed English book. All guidance books from government were printed in regular letter. Thus, to overcome the problem, teacher used phonic method to teach English. He delivered the materials by reading aloud or asking some questions to students. For example, he asked his students whether anyone knew what "*sapu*" in English was. Then, he said that *sapu* in English was *broom*. The teacher then told his students that the letters were 'b', 'r', 'o', 'o', and 'm'. After he spelled the letters, he pronounced the word correctly. Although there were two o letters, he told the students that when they say "broom", they should pronounce double o with 'u'. He also taught how to use the word in sentences. In this part, he already taught his students the meaning, how to spell it, how to pronounce it, and how to use it in sentence.

Heward (2000) states that teachers may develop verbal or other auditory cues as signals for important information or particular events. According to Liu (2005), explicit phonics instruction is significantly more effective than nonsystematic phonics instruction with children of different ages, abilities, and socioeconomic background. Based on the statement, explicit phonics instruction is effective for children with different abilities. Visually impaired students have different ability from normal or sighted students. Thus, explicit phonics instruction is suitable for them.

In the process of teaching and learning in class, teacher SWS tried to create fun environment in class by inserting some light humors. He also often started the lesson with regular conversation. Teacher SWS has implemented fun learning to create enjoyable lesson for his students and to avoid boredom and stress for the students. Also by starting the lesson with regular conversation, teacher SWS could create friendly situation that eliminate tensed and stressed atmosphere in classroom. Willis (2007) states that superior learning takes place when classroom experiences are enjoyable and relevant to students' lives, interests, and experiences and students retain what they learn when the learning is associated with strong positive emotion. Besides, learning will take place if the person delivering it acts as a facilitator. The facilitator should

establish an atmosphere in which her learners feel comfortable, are able to discuss new ideas and learn from their mistakes, as long as they are not threatened by external factors.

Teacher's Way to Develop the Indicator of Vocabulary Mastery

There are four indicators of vocabulary mastery, namely meaning, pronunciation, spelling, and use. To develop the students' ability in meaning, the teacher also frequently gave them some questions related to previous lesson. By doing this activity, teacher SWS could check his students' memory about the previous lesson. If his students forgot, he could remind his students again. Besides, through this repetition, his students could strengthen their memory related to meaning. Dimiyati *et al.* (2004) state that learning is an activity to train the existing abilities in humans consisting of the ability of observing, responding, remembering, and thinking. By performing a repetition, those abilities will develop.

The next indicator of vocabulary mastery was pronunciation. To master vocabulary, the English learners should practice how to pronounce words correctly. To develop his students' ability in pronouncing words, teacher SWS often gave his students example of the correct pronunciation. Teacher SWS asked his students to repeat after him. Bandura (Boeree, 2006) states that children are very quick to absorb what they see or hear, so they are easy to obtain information or learn by imitating. Following this theory, teacher SWS taught his students by asking them to imitate what he said, thus the students can pronounce correctly based on what they hear from their teacher.

The third indicator of vocabulary mastery was spelling. To teach spelling for the students, teacher SWS spelled words orally. After he taught his students the correct spelling, he asked the students to spell the word again and how to pronounce it. Teacher SWS also gave his students homework related to vocabulary. From the homework, he could check his students understanding about spelling. He discussed the homework that he gave at the previous meeting together with all students. By discussing together, students knew their mistakes related to spelling and could obtain the correct answer.

The last indicator of vocabulary mastery was use. Teacher SWS had taught them how to make sentences by giving them exercise in class. He also gave them some questions to make them build some simple sentences. To increase their ability in using words, teacher SWS often asked some questions in class to push them making sentence. When they faced difficulty, he helped them by guiding them word by word. Another way that teacher SWS used to develop his students' ability in using words was by giving them homework. Homework allowed students learn individually at

home. By giving them homework, teacher SWS could check his students' ability in using words.

Supporting Components for the Implementation of Phonic Method in Teaching Vocabulary to Visually Impaired Students

To teach effectively, a teacher may use some components to support the teaching process in class. Teacher used laptop to play the songs used in teaching-learning activity. By listening to English songs, students could listen English words and knew how to pronounce words correctly through native speaker. The second component is Slate and stylus. They were writing tools used by visually impaired person to write. All students used slate and stylus to write text or to note down the material given by the teacher.

The last component is JAWS and TALK Program. JAWS stands for Job Access with Speech. This program was a computer screen reader program for Microsoft Windows that allows blind and visually impaired users to read the screen. While JAWS was built for computer, there was another program created for cellular phone called TALKS & ZOOMS Program. This program was a software application for mobile handsets that converts displayed text into highly intelligible speech and/or large print on phones. Westwood (2009) states that to facilitate the instruction of visually impaired students, the school should provided non-optical aids, tactual aids, and auditory aids.

The Difficulties Faced by the Students and English Teacher in the Implementation of Phonic Method in Teaching Vocabulary in Speaking

The first difficulty faced by students dealing with vocabulary learning was noise. SLB A Surakarta is located on the side of busy road. Meanwhile, the 7th, 8th, and 9th grade rooms are located at the very front of the school. It makes the sounds of busy road can be heard from the classroom. The second difficulty is that the students found it hard when teacher SWS spelled too fast. It was difficult for students to write when teacher SWS spelled too fast. They should ask their teacher to repeat the spelling again, unless they would record with the wrong spelling. The third difficulty is that they still had difficulty in using words in sentences. They mentioned that they had difficulty in making sentences. Phonic method was not suitable to be used to deliver usage of words since this method was implemented by linking letter to letter into word and pronounce it. This method supported to form words instead of sentences.

Not only students but also teachers had their own difficulties in teaching-learning activity. Related to the implementation of phonic method in teaching vocabulary in speaking, teacher SWS also faced some

difficulties. First difficulty faced by teacher SWS was timing. Teacher SWS felt that the allotted time was too short for English. Moreover, when he had to teach using phonic, he should spell the words for his students. This method was rather time consuming. The lack of Braille book became the second difficulty faced by the teacher. All English books given by government were still in Latin alphabet. Surely, without textbook, the students could not learn independently at home. They obtained materials from their teacher by recording the materials explained in their notebook. Thus, teacher had extra task. Besides, he should explain the materials. He should also teach the students the correct spelling by using phonic method.

Hadi (2007) states that teaching-learning activities created by teachers are not always the same from day to day, for example a noisy classroom may be disruptive. Therefore, the use of methods should be appropriate to the situation. This is very important because the situation also determines the success of a method. With supportive situation, it will be in line with what the teacher wants to deliver to the students. This statement is also in line with the statement from Syarifuddin (2011) that one of the factors that influence the success of learning is the classroom atmosphere. The quiet, safe, and disciplined state of the class affects the level of learners' understanding of the material. It relates to student's concentration and comfort. From those statements, it can be concluded that to deliver materials through effective teaching method, teachers need to consider class situation and atmosphere. Teacher's sound should be louder if the class situation was noisy so that the students could hear the material delivered by the teacher well.

To overcome the disruptive situation caused by noise, teacher SWS should find a way so that he can teach his students effectively. The strategy that teacher SWS used is by setting the tables in classroom. The table for teacher is placed very close with students' tables. This setting can minimize teaching-learning problem caused by noise. By setting teacher's table to be very close with students' table, teacher can deliver his materials more effectively. The students can also hear explanation and materials from their teacher more clearly since their position is close to their teacher. In line with this elaboration, Fauziati (2015) states that arranging the seating is important too in classroom management. Seating arrangement will affect the lesson. Different situation of the class requires different seating arrangement. Another theory comes from Dunbar (2004) stating that many experienced teachers recommend assigned seating for students to facilitate discipline and instruction. Best practices suggest a few common-sense rules to guide classroom arrangements, namely (1) students should be seated where their attention is directed toward the teacher and (2) students

should be able to clearly see chalk board, screens, and teacher.

English Teacher's Proposed Solution to Overcome the Problem in Teaching Vocabulary in Speaking to Visually Impaired Students

To solve problems faced by English teacher dealing with vocabulary teaching process, students should be provided with Braille printed textbooks. By using the mentioned books, the students could study independently at home and teaching-learning process in classroom could be faster and more efficient. In addition, teacher SWS also suggested that the school provided a language laboratory. Providing them language laboratory would give more opportunity to improve their ability in English, especially in listening and speaking. The last is related to teaching method. Teacher should use other teaching methods or models to complement the phonic method. Besides, teacher SWS also suggested that teachers, especially who teach students with special needs, need to use and consider some proper teaching methods by looking at the students' condition and needs.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The result of this research showed that: (1) teaching documents used in the teaching-learning process of English to visually impaired students of SLB A Surakarta are curriculum, syllabus, and lesson plan; (2) the problems faced by the students are disturbing sound from outside, spelling words too fast, and using words; and the teacher argues that the allotted time was too short, unsuitable teaching method used to teach sentences, and noisy sound become problems faced by the teacher; and (3) The solutions proposed by the teacher are providing students with Braille printed English textbook, providing students with language laboratory, and using other teaching methods or models to complement phonic method.

Suggestion

Referring to the result of this study, the researcher gives some suggestions. In using phonic, teacher should consider the tempo when he/she spell the words. Besides, teacher needs to discover teaching methods, models, and strategies to support phonic method. Teacher should also play audio media of English native speaker for visually impaired students to develop their English skill. The second suggestion is for students. The students should pay more attention when their teacher spells words, so that they can write the correct spelling.

Students should be more active to note down the words spelled by the teacher. Students should be more diligent to note down new vocabulary in their book.

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