

THE USE OF TOTAL COMMUNICATION TO TEACH ENGLISH VOCABULARY TO DEAF STUDENTS OF ELEVENTH GRADE IN SMALB NEGERI BLITAR

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Abstrak

Bahasa Inggris adalah salah satu mata pelajaran pokok yang diajarkan kepada semua siswa di Indonesia, termasuk kepada siswa yang tuli. Komunikasi Total (Komtal) adalah sebuah model komunikasi yang menggunakan semua media komunikasi yang tersedia dan model ini digunakan oleh Guru Bahasa Inggris di SMALB Negeri Blitar untuk mengajar Bahasa Inggris kepada siswa yang tuli. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah (1) untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana guru menggunakan Komtal untuk mengajar Bahasa Inggris kepada siswa kelas sebelas yang tuli di SMALB Negeri Blitar, (2) untuk memaparkan respon siswa terhadap pelaksanaan Komtal, dan (3) untuk menjelaskan kemampuan kosa kata siswa. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian metode campuran dengan desain paralel dimana data kualitatif dan kuantitatif dianalisa secara terpisah; hasil analisa dilaporkan dalam dua bagian tulisan yang berbeda namun tetap dalam lingkup laporan yang sama. Subjek penelitian ini adalah Guru Bahasa Inggris dan siswa kelas sebelas yang tuli di SMALB Negeri Blitar. Instrumen penelitian yang digunakan adalah catatan lapangan, petunjuk wawancara, pertanyaan dalam angket, dan tes untuk siswa. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa guru melaksanakan Komtal dengan baik; guru menggunakan Bahasa Isyarat Indonesia dan ejaan jari; guru mendorong siswa untuk menggunakan kemampuan membaca-bibir. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa merasa terbantu dengan pelaksanaan Komtal. Dapat disimpulkan pula bahwa rata-rata kelas sebesar 75 memenuhi nilai minimum; sedangkan untuk rata-rata individu, terdapat seorang siswa yang memenuhi nilai minimum dengan memperoleh nilai 100 dan terdapat tiga siswa yang tidak dapat memenuhi nilai minimum karena hanya memperoleh nilai sebesar 66.67.

Kata kunci: Komunikasi Total, Siswa yang Tuli, Kelas Sebelas, Respon Siswa, Kosa Kata.

Abstract

English is one of compulsory subjects taught to Indonesian students, including the deaf students. Total Communication (TC) is a model communication which uses all available communication media and it was used by the English teacher of SMALB Negeri Blitar to teach English to deaf students. The objectives of this study are (1) to describe how the teacher implements TC to teach English to deaf students of eleventh grade in SMALB Negeri Blitar, (2) to interpret the students' response toward the implementation of TC, and (3) to provide an explanation about students' vocabulary mastery. This study is a mixed method research with parallel design in which qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed separately; the result of the analysis were reported in two distinguished parts within the same report. The research subjects are the English teacher and the deaf students of eleventh grade in SMALB Negeri Blitar. The research instruments used are field note, interview guidelines, the question list for questionnaire, and students' test. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the teacher implemented TC properly; the teacher uses Indonesian Sign Language and finger-spelling; the teacher fosters the students to use speech-reading ability. The results show that the students felt helpful by the use of TC. It can be also concluded that the classroom's mean score which is 75 meets the minimum standard; while for the individual mean score, there is only one student who fulfilled the standard by obtaining 100 and there are three students who could not meet the standard since they only scored 66.67.

Key Terms: Total Communication, Deaf Students, Eleventh Grade, Students' Response, Vocabulary.

INTRODUCTION

It is demanded in 2006 Curriculum that Indonesian students should be able to compete globally and to be able to live arm in arm with

other citizens (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2007). Gaining access to those two demands, English is believed to be the key role and therefore, it becomes the compulsory subject to be

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taught to Indonesian students, included those who are deaf. It is essential to teach English to deaf students as it takes a prominent role in the world of technology (Clymer & Berent, 2007) and those deaf students are required to be able to catch up with the latest technology to cope with globalization (SMALB Negeri Kota Blitar, 2013).

Teaching English to deaf students is not a piece of cake. They confront more complicated obstacles in learning language than the hearing students. The major problems the deaf students deal with are that their language and speaking development are not well polished (Sa'idah, 2009). It is so as they have limited exposure to sounds (Garare, 2000) and have limited chance to imitate sounds (Formanika, 2004) whereas language development depends greatly on practices. Unfortunately, deaf students do not have enough access for those matters unlike their hearing peers who maintain lots of chances to use language and to imitate sounds. Inadequate experience to hear and use sounds frequently makes the deaf students repeatedly misinterpret what people are trying to say to them. Deaf students tend to be depressed due to this condition and this leads to diminish their confidence and motivation to learn.

Deaf students hold some unique attributes that distinguish them to the hearing-students and it is important that the teachers are aware of these because these distinct properties can either help them to teach deaf students well or even become a drawback in teaching them. One of the attributes is that deaf students rely on facial expression to obtain clues as to what people around them are saying (New River Community College, 2006). If teachers want to talk to their students, they must not cover their face since it will be troublesome for deaf students to get cues of what the teachers try to convey. Another feature of deaf students that the teachers notice is that they have limited vocabulary (New River Community College, 2006), for that reason, the teachers are asked to use colloquial vocabulary to communicate with the students. Besides those two characteristics stated above, it is important to know that students who are deaf tend to have low self-esteem as they have different ability to those hearing students. This statement is supported by Doyle & Dye (2002) as they asserted that many deaf students are neglectful, easily depressed, and less-confident. Therefore, it is essential that the teacher create a positive atmosphere in classroom to endorse the students' motivation to learn.

There are several models to teach English to deaf students and one common model to be

employed is Total Communication. Total Communication (TC) is a model of communication which uses whole available communication media that allow people to deliver their ideas and thoughts to the deaf (Rusyani, 2010). TC was first implemented to teach deaf students in the early 1960s (Stewart in Musselman, 2000). TC generally refers to synchronized use of spoken language and sign (Musselman, 2000). Musselman (2000), in his article entitled *How Do Children Who Can't Hear Learn to Read an Alphabetic Script? A Review of Literature on Reading and Deafness*, exclaimed that TC tries to make use of visual methods of communication, the residual hearing (if any), and speech-reading. The visual methods can be in the form of gestures, finger-spelling, and sign language. This method is aimed to foster effective communication so that it can help teachers to deliver the materials to the deaf students easily and to make sure that the ideas transferred are well-seized by the deaf students (Musselman, 2000).

There are several studies conducted based on the issues of Total Communication. One of them is a study employed by Formanika (2004), a university student of Mulawarman University. Her research was entitled *Komunikasi Total Sebagai Model Komunikasi Bagi Anak Tuna Rungu* (Total Communication as A Model of Communication for Deaf Students). This research tried to find out whether or not total communication increases reading comprehension of deaf students (twelfth grade) in SMULB Bontang. The result showed that total communication is a good communication method in teaching deaf students.

SMALB Negeri Blitar is one of promising special schools in Blitar because this school tries to provide maximum education for students with disabilities, including the deaf students, and gets its students to be ready to handle technology and globalization. Therefore, in its curriculum; i.e. 2006 Curriculum, English is set out as a compulsory subject to be taught. Nevertheless, the English teacher of SMALB Negeri Blitar cannot teach this subject like other English teachers who teach in regular schools as the English teacher of SMALB Negeri Blitar has to teach deaf students who have no hearing ability and minimum English vocabulary. Therefore, the English teaching in this school is focused on enriching the deaf students' vocabulary. To do so, the English teacher utilizes Total Communication in the process of teaching English vocabulary to his deaf students. The teacher uses any available communication media to deliver English material

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to his deaf students. In this case, the teacher uses speech-reading, Indonesian Sign Language, and finger-spelling as the way to communicate. The way the teaching and learning process in this class is very atypical and it drew the researcher's interest to find out more about this phenomenon and to describe how exactly Total Communication is implemented to teach English to deaf students. Therefore, the researcher carried out a descriptive study entitled *The Use of Total Communication to Teach English to Deaf Students of Eleventh Grade in SMALB Negeri Blitar*.

Based on those explanations, the researcher formulated three research questions; they are (1) how does the teacher implement Total Communication to teach English vocabulary to deaf students of eleventh grade in SMALB Negeri Blitar?, (2) what are the students' responses toward the implementation of Total Communication during English teaching and learning activity?, and (3) how are the students' vocabulary mastery when the teacher utilizes Total Communication to teach English in SMALB Negeri Blitar?.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method employed is mixed method research with parallel design. Mixed method research was employed since the research deals with two different types of data; words and numbers. The purpose of mixed method design is to elaborate findings and to further develops interpretation (Greene, Caracelli, and Graham in Ary; 2010). The researcher believed that by using two approaches in this study, the result could be more enlightening than when only one approach employed. The design of mixed method research used is parallel design. Within this kind of design, the qualitative and quantitative data are collected separately, but at approximately the same time (Ary, 2010). The sets of data are analyzed separately and they lead to their own inferences, thus the result of the analysis may be reported in two distinguished parts within the same report (Ary, 2010).

In this study, the researcher purposively selected the English teacher and the students of eleventh grade of SMALB Negeri Blitar as the subjects of this research. The English teacher of SMALB Negeri Blitar was selected as the subject of this study since the teacher utilizes Total Communication to deliver the materials of English subject. The English teacher was observed and interviewed to get the data about how TC was implemented to teach English vocabulary to

the deaf students in SMALB Negeri Blitar. The other subject of this research is the deaf students of eleventh grade in SMALB Negeri Blitar. They were selected as the subjects because they share distinctive traits that attracted the researcher's attention. The deaf students were given questionnaire to attain the data regarding to their responses toward the implementation of TC. The deaf students can also help to provide the data related to their vocabulary mastery by evaluating their test.

To collect the desired data, the researcher employed four instruments in this research. The first instrument used in this study is field notes. Field notes help the researcher to note down the events happening in the setting of the study during observations. Field notes consists of two parts; the descriptive part displaying the description about what happened in the setting of the study and the reflective part representing the researcher's opinion or personal feeling (Ary, 2010: p 435). The second instrument used in this study is the interview guidelines. It contains several questions the researcher addressed to the interviewee, in this case, the English teacher of SMALB Blitar. The questions help the researcher to dig deeper about how exactly the teacher implements TC to teach English to deaf students in his class. The interview guidelines helped the researcher to attain the desired data regarding to the first research question regarding to the implementation of TC. The other instrument utilized to obtain research data for this study is the list of questions for the questionnaire. These questions covered some issues regarding students' responses toward the use of TC in the English teaching and learning process. There were six questions formulated for the questionnaire. The last instrument employed in this study is students' test. This instrument provided the answer for the third research question stated in Chapter I regarding to the students' vocabulary mastery. The students' test was obtained from the English teacher of SMALB Negeri Blitar. The test is in the form of matching test; there are thirteen questions in the test which cover all the materials given in the two meetings.

The challenges of analyzing the data in a mixed method research lie in the process of integrating those two different types of data to supply dependable answers for the study. The basic analysis data of qualitative and quantitative research are used to analyze the various types of data in this mixed method research (Ary, 2010:565). Onwuegbuzie and Teddie (2003) in Ary (2010:565) suggested seven phases in analyzing

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data for a mixed method study. The first step is Data Reduction; in this first stage of data analysis, the researcher analyzed the qualitative and quantitative data separately using basic data analysis techniques used for each approaches. For the qualitative data, the researcher employed three stages of analysis as suggested by Ary (2010); they are familiarizing and organizing, coding and reducing, and interpreting and representing, while the quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The second step is Data Display; in this phase, the researcher displayed the qualitative data in the form of list; listed all the result attained from observations, interviews, and questionnaires. While for the quantitative data, the researcher preferred to display the data in the table of frequency distribution to easily organize the score, sum the scores, and sum the total number of the students. The third step is Data Transformation; in data transformation, the researcher should transform the quantitative data into narration or qualitative data since this study is aimed to described or narrate the phenomena that happened during the research. the fourth step is Data Correlation; the researcher would correlate the qualitized data with the original quantitative data to determine if those two data represent the same finding. The fifth step is Data Consolidation; in this stage, both qualitative data and quantitative data are combined to create a new set of data which can be used to compile the result of this study. The sixth step is Data Comparison; it deals with comparing the qualitative and quantitative data. It is expected to ensure that all the data support each other and, therefore, it can provide a dependable answer to the research questions. The last step is Data Integration; in this last phase of data analysis, the data and the interpretation can integrated either into a coherent whole or two separate sets of coherent whole (Ary, 2010:565). In this study, the results were represented into in the form of two separate sets of coherent whole since this study was managed by using parallel design.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Implementation of Total Communication in Teaching English to Deaf Students

The researcher did the observations for three times; April 23rd, May 21st, and May 28th. The interview was conducted on May 28th; the researcher handed the questionnaires and collected the vocabulary mastery score also on May 28th right after the last observation. Based on the observations, it can be noticed that the teacher

was using Total Communication (TC) to teach English to the deaf students. He used all means of communication to deliver the materials. It is in accordance to the definition of TC proposed by *Departemen Pendidikan Nasional* (2002) which stated that Total Communication (TC) is a model of communication for deaf individuals which optimizes the use of any possible models of communication (oral, aural, and manual). The English teacher of SMALB Negeri Blitar uses Indonesian Sign Language and finger-spelling most of the time. He signed the words which were being discussed. The words signed are listed in *Kamus Sistem Bahasa Isyarat*. He usually finger-spelled some words which are considered as abbreviations and he used it when he wanted to emphasize certain words. This is conformed to the rules of using finger-spelling stated by *Departemen Pendidikan Nasional* (2002) which argued that finger-spelling is only employed to sign names, abbreviation, and words which are not yet listed in *Dictionary of Indonesian Sign Language System*, or to clarify the instructions. One thing to notice is the fact that the researcher could not find the completion of speech-reading by the teacher. The research clarified this matter during the interview. The researcher asked whether the teacher used speech-reading in delivering the materials. The teacher answered that he was not the one who did speech-reading, but the students. He only tried to foster the students' speech-reading ability by saying the words out loud while he was signing or finger-spelling. He added that he always uttered the words as natural as possible and tried not to cover his mouth to maximize the students' information gaining. He did that so that the students can see his lip-movement and get the idea of what he is saying. It is correlated to the theory stated by New River Community College (2006) which argued that people have to speak normally like they do when addressing hearing persons, since the exaggeration of lip-movement will make it hard for the deaf to catch what word is being uttered.

The findings obtained from observations show that the teacher taught six words per meeting. The words are basic words which are included in Tier I. Vocabulary in Tier I is considered as conversational vocabulary (Pikulski & Templeton, 2004; Beck et al., 2002). These words are used frequently in daily life. The teacher chose to teach basic words for the deaf since the deaf students are having limited vocabulary which does not allow them to understand the material easily. Nevertheless, to be familiar with English vocabulary is essential for them as they are

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expected to be able to catch up with the latest technology that usually uses English as the language of instruction.

Students' Responses toward the Implementation of Total Communication in Teaching English to Deaf Students

The students' responses show that they like English subject; it can be said so since all of the students checked yes as the answer in the questionnaire asking whether they like English or not. Although they stated that they like English subject, they were still dealing with difficulty in learning it. It was proven by all of them checked yes for the answer of the item in the questionnaire asking if they deal with difficulty in learning English or not.

The questionnaire also explored what means of communication which can help them understand the material delivered by the teacher. Item number 3 to 5 represented it. From the item number 3, it can be said that all of the students can absorb the information delivered by using Indonesian Sign Language. All of them also stated that they can understand the materials transferred by using finger-spelling. Nevertheless, the students had different answers for the item number 5 asking whether they can get the gist by speech-reading. Eventually, there were only few students who can understand the material by 'reading' the lip-movement of the teacher, while most of them cannot grasp the idea by doing so. The last item asking whether the way the teacher teaches can motivate them was answered by the total of four yes-answers. Therefore, it can be stated that the students gave a positive response toward the implementation of Total Communication during the English teaching and learning process.

Students' Vocabulary Mastery during the Implementation of Total Communication in Teaching English to Deaf Students

The vocabulary mastery of the students was represented by the mean score of the test. Based on the findings, the classroom's mean score is 75; it means that the classroom's mean score meets the minimum standard adjusted by the curriculum, which is 75. For the individual score, there is one student who got 100 and there are three students who got 66.67; it clarifies that these students have not fulfilled the minimum standard.

CONCLUSION

Total Communication is a model of communication which uses the whole available communication media that allow people to deliver their ideas and thoughts to the deaf. This model of communication is used by the English teacher of SMALB Negeri Blitar to teach the deaf students of eleventh grade. From the overall findings elaborated in Chapter IV, it can be concluded that the teacher utilized Total Communication to teach English well. He utilized Indonesian Sign Language and finger-spelling to deliver the materials. He also fostered the students to sharpen their speech-reading by uttering the sentences or words as natural as possible like when he is talking to hearing people.

By applying Total Communication, the teacher can teach English vocabulary to the deaf students. The use of Total Communication can help the deaf students to grasp the materials. There are some students who consider that they can understand the material easily when the teacher uses sign-language or finger-spelling, but there is only one student who said that he could easily understand the materials when he 'read' his teacher's lip-movement. In addition, the students' vocabulary mastery was represented by the mean score of the test. Based on the findings, the classroom's mean score is 75 which means that it meets the minimum standard adjusted by the curriculum. For the individual mean score, there is one student who got 100 and there are three students who obtained 66.67; it means that these students have not fulfilled the minimum standard.

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