

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focused on six parts, including the background of the research, the problem identification, the problem limitation, research questions, research objectives, and research significances.

1.1 Background of the Research

Learning English is essential for special needs students as it provides them with a gateway to understanding the world around them. As a widely spoken global language, English offers immense opportunities for communication, education, and personal growth. By acquiring English language skills, special needs students can enhance their ability to connect with others, access a broader range of resources, and develop a deeper understanding of different cultures and perspectives. English proficiency empowers special needs students to engage in meaningful interactions, pursue higher education, and explore various employment possibilities. Moreover, learning English enables special needs students to enhance social interactions and promote inclusivity. Therefore, learning English plays a pivotal role in expanding the horizons of special needs students and actively participating in a global society.

Education for special children can be defined as a set of teaching strategies precisely designed for the demands of special needs students carried out by specially trained educators (Cook & Schirmer, 2003). Franciscost et al. (2020) state that special education is a type of education that is particularly tailored to meet the learning requirements of people with disabilities, whether they are in a classroom, in the hospital, or at home. Ali (2022) states that special education alludes to the education of children who differ socially, cognitively, or physically from the average, therefore, typical school procedures must be modified. Based on the definitions from experts, special education is an educational type designed to fulfill the learning needs of special needs children which can be conducted at home, classroom, or in the hospital.

Special needs children are classified into permanent or temporary special needs (Soendari et al., 2008). According to Maryanti et al. (2021), permanently disabled children consisting of children with visual impairment (tuna netra), children with hearing impairments (tuna rungu), children with intellectual disabilities (tuna grahita), children with physical impairments (tuna daksa), children with behavioral and emotional disorders (tuna laras), ADHD, children with specific learning disorders, and autistic. While for children with temporary special needs include those who encounter communication barriers due to bilingualism, trauma caused by natural disasters, learning obstacles because of failed teaching processes from the teacher, and learning barriers due to poverty and cultural isolation (Maryanti et al., 2021). Each child with special needs has different development, learning difficulties, and specific needs. The environmental and internal factors of the child are the factors of the learning barriers experienced by special needs children.

Hearing impairment can be defined as a reduced ability to perceive sounds in one or both ears with or without amplification, affecting a child's academic achievement (Hebb et al., 2017). Hearing impairment is a broad term that refers to a range of disabilities from moderate to severe (Ristiani, 2018). Moreover, according to Maryanti et al. (2021), hearing impairment is a condition in which children with partial or total hearing loss have difficulty communicating verbally. Multiple deaf students have modest hearing loss and may be able to utilize a hearing aid to increase sound amplification, while others have no awareness in one or both ears. Ristiani (2018) states that people with hearing impairment may be born deaf or develop hearing loss because of age, disease, trauma, and loud exposure. Students who are deaf have difficulty accessing information through their hearing. Therefore, deaf students must enhance their language skills for social interaction and academic success.

Deaf learners rely more on the use of gestures, sign language, body language, and facial expressions to express their thoughts and feelings. Deaf child does not respond consistently to sounds or his name, asks for things to be repeated, has unclear speech, and turns the volume up loud on the TV and other electronic devices as the characteristics. In terms of language skills, deaf

learners have a poor vocabulary that makes it difficult to convey speech. It raises the language barrier between deaf students and normal learners (Iskandar & Supena, 2021). Because of this language barrier, learners with hearing loss struggle to fit into society. Hearing loss may generate personality obstacles because deaf learners are upset as they strive to achieve the level of hearing persons. In Indonesia, special education is a developing field devoted to promoting inclusive and equitable education for students with special needs. The existence of special schools in Indonesia is based on Law No. 72 of 1991 and Law No. 20 of 2003, which states that every person with physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, or social disabilities has the right to obtain special education (Wungu, 2011). The special school welcomes students with disabilities from three major categories that are physical, mental, and personality disabilities according to the policy (Adi et al., 2017). Special schools aim to provide special education with all of the necessary facilities for special needs children and to assist them in learning to get more knowledge and improve skills. A special education teacher must have a prior understanding of special education, special needs students, and special schools.

As a result, when the teacher meets the standards, the teacher and school may establish an environment that supports the teaching and learning process for special needs students. The system of special education in Indonesia is divided into three types, segregation, integration, and inclusive education. The segregation system means students learn in separate environments that are designed to respond to their particular needs (Nuraini, 2019). According to Rahardja and Sujarwanto (2010), the special school/SLB (Sekolah Luar Biasa), is classified into six categories based on disability types. SLB-A is for blind people, SLB-B is for people who are deaf, SLB-C is dedicated to students with mental illness and IQs below the average, SLB-D is for people with physical disabilities, SLB-E is intended for students who have hard controlling emotions and behavior, and SLB-G for people with multiple disabilities. Meanwhile, the integration system can be described as a school system in which students are placed in a school with their similar-aged peers, but the physical environment, school culture, and pedagogy remain unchanged (Kahlenberg et al., 2019). As

stated by Padmadewi and Artini (2017), inclusive education refers to an approach where students with special needs are provided with opportunities to access the same level of education and knowledge as their peers. The special school or SLB in Indonesia follows the same curriculum as the regular school, with modifications based on the needs of the students (Rahardja & Sujarwanto, 2010). In recent years, the curriculum applied by the special schools is the Curriculum 2013 or the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. Both curriculums include English as a compulsory subject. In the special school, English subject is studied by middle school and high school students. The government's decision to include English as a subject for special schools is a great step. Based on the explanation from Arribas et al. (2020), when special needs students acquire excellent English skills, it helps them attain social integration, interact with others from abroad effortlessly, and offer additional career prospects.

The English curriculum for deaf students is identical to normal students. According to the curriculum 2013, they need to fulfill the competence to communicate in oral and written forms, possess an awareness of the nature and importance of English to increase the nation's competitiveness in a global society and develop an understanding of the relationship between language and culture (Marzal, 2014). The demands of mastering English for deaf children based on the existing curriculum are arduous to achieve. Even in learning their mother tongue, deaf students often face numerous problems. In addition to visual media, the student communicates using sign language, finger spelling, or lip reading (Ristiani, 2018). Deaf students cannot properly process sound information. Therefore, it presents a challenge for the English teacher to teach English and deaf students in learning English.

Teaching English to deaf students is a challenging and complex assignment (Dewi et al., 2019). It necessitates specialized skills because of potential language barriers and communication hardships. The process of learning English differs for regular students and those who are deaf. Learning English proves to be particularly challenging for deaf students due to significant delays in vocabulary, phoneme production, and syntax, which are commonly observed in children with hearing impairments (Susilo Adi et al.,

2017). Designing an appropriate lesson plan (RPP) based on students' needs is key to achieving positive learning outcomes in teaching English. A special school (SLB) is more likely to use a regular lesson plan with similar content and teaching strategies for normal students. While, in an inclusive school, the teacher prefers to create a special lesson plan called an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each child. Moreover, the English teacher must master SIBI, BISINDO, and ASL sign languages,

Appropriate teaching methods based on students' needs are significant in teaching English to deaf students. As an example, the teacher in a special school in Surakarta uses drilling and visual scaffolding in teaching English to deaf children (Hadi et al., 2019). Drilling is a teaching method that focuses on fostering students' acquisition of language through repetitive practice and memorization of grammar patterns (Fransiska & Jurianto, 2016). The teacher consistently begins the drilling process by employing vocabulary connected to tangible objects present in the classroom, like a book, pencil, clock, broom, chair, table, and more. Meanwhile, visual scaffolding refers to a method in English teaching that employs visual aids such as drawings, photographs, videos, and flashcards to enhance students' comprehension of the language (Lestari, 2016). In teaching English to deaf children, the teacher utilizes LCD to show pictures and videos. Visual scaffolding creates a pleasant learning environment for the students and effectively conveys the topic of the teaching material.

Besides teaching methods, the use of teaching media must be suitable for deaf students. Deaf children rely on sight to obtain information due to auditory difficulties. Hence, deaf students are considered visual learners (Holmer et al., 2016). Based on research conducted by Adnyani et al. (2021), multimedia aids learning and allows the teacher to teach English effectively to deaf students. The use of multimedia makes learning more appealing than traditional methods. Furthermore, several types of multimedia are learning books, videos, pictures, real objects, PowerPoint, printed words, and applications. One of the media is educational videos which are a form of media that supports students in grasping theories and processes by presenting information through both

visual and auditory (Khasawneh, 2023). In this case, the video utilized by the teacher must include text or subtitles and sign language. Thus, deaf students understand what they see and learn. Compared to hearing people, deaf children depend more on pictorial representations and have better visual-spatial working memory. They can enhance their vocabulary proficiency by associating with real objects shown in colored images and printed words.

However, in teaching English to deaf learners, the teacher experiences numerous challenges. According to Susilo Adi et al. (2017), the English teacher encounters several challenges, including difficulty in choosing suitable media and material for deaf students, students' limited vocabulary, students have hardships in understanding words because of similar lip movements, the teacher's need to repeat the material because students are easily influenced by other things, and differentiating similar words in different contexts. Furthermore, in teaching deaf students, the teacher is not professionally trained. The teacher is not adequately prepared to teach deaf students due to a lack of knowledge and training, especially in mastering sign language (Ristiani, 2018). Therefore, ideally, an English teacher who teaches deaf students must be proficient in using SIBI, BISINDO, and ASL. In addition, understanding the characteristics of deaf students is also necessary for the teacher.

In Indonesia, there are two categories of sign language, namely SIBI (Sistem Isyarat Bahasa Indonesia) and BISINDO (Bahasa Isyarat Indonesia) (Maulida, 2017). According to Nugraheni et al. (2023), (SIBI) is a sign language adopted from American Sign Language (ASL). SIBI is used as a sign language established by the government for use in special schools (SLB). Furthermore, SIBI has the same grammar or language structure as spoken grammar by using prefixes and suffixes. Meanwhile, BISINDO is a pure sign used by deaf people according to their understanding of the surrounding environment (Palfreyman, 2015). BISINDO is also called the mother tongue of deaf people. In addition, BISINDO has different languages in each region, like regional languages in Indonesia. Even BISINDO has different dialects in each region. BISINDO can be easily understood by Deaf friends. Of the two sign languages, deaf friends prefer to use BISINDO rather than SIBI because SIBI

is more arduous to learn (Rahmawati & Rosyidi, 2022). After all, it contains a lot of complicated and standard vocabularies. Therefore, deaf friends choose to use BISINDO as a daily communication tool.

The other sign language is American Sign Language (ASL). It possesses the full range of linguistic features found in spoken languages, exhibiting a distinct grammar different from English (Strong & Prinz, 1997). ASL relies on hand and facial movements for expression. According to Hoffmeister et al. (2022), fingerspelling in ASL involves spelling out English words using a designated handshape for each letter in the alphabet. Fingerspelling is commonly employed for proper names or when indicating the English term for an object or concept. Similar to SIBI and BISINDO, ASL exhibits regional accents and dialects, much like how specific English words may be pronounced differently across various regions of the country. Furthermore, ASL displays regional differences in signing rhythm, pronunciation, slang, and the usage of signs.

SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng is a special school located in Jalan Yudistira Selatan Nomor 16 Singaraja. This school has two types of special needs students, children with deafness and students who have below-average IQs. Each grade in Middle High School has one class for deaf students. Hence, there are three classes. Meanwhile, the below-average IQs students are collected into one without looking at their grades. SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng is divided into three levels of students, such as Elementary, Middle High School, and High School students. The Special Middle High School has three grades: seventh, eighth, and ninth. Each grade consists of 7 to 10 deaf students. The eighth-grade class has seven students. Furthermore, there is only one English teacher at this school. The teacher has been teaching English at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng for two years.

The English curriculum used by the teacher is based on Curriculum 2013. In designing a lesson plan, the English teacher refers to the regular lesson plan for normal children. The time span of teaching English is 35 minutes and only taught once a week. Furthermore, the teacher downgrades the material based on students' capabilities. Deaf students emphasize the use of sign language in

learning English because that is their typical method of communication. Therefore, the English teacher communicates by utilizing sign language with deaf students. The sign language used by the English teacher is ASL. Besides sign language, the teacher utilizes spoken language, writing, finger spelling, and visual media. Therefore, the method applied by the English teacher is the total communication method. In addition, the teacher focuses on teaching vocabulary instead of grammar or sentences because it is difficult for him and deaf children due to language barriers. Multimedia, such as books, videos, pictures, applications, and PowerPoint are the media to teach English in the classroom.

Based on the problem above, the researcher is intrigued to find out and analyze the teaching method used by the teacher in teaching English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng, the use of media in teaching English, how the assessments are conducted, and the challenges faced by the English teacher. Hence, the researcher takes an opportunity to conduct a study entitled “An Analysis of Teaching English to Deaf Students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng”.

1.2 Problem Identification

Before commencing the research, it is crucial to first identify the problem. In SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng, the teacher teaches English to deaf students in the same manner as normal students. Despite the teacher's efforts to simplify the materials, the students struggle to learn due to the chosen teaching methods, media, and assessments. Additionally, the teacher has not yet fully mastered sign language, leading to a language barrier between the teacher and students.

1.3 Limitation of the Research

The research focuses on the teaching English process, including the methods used, what kind of media are utilized, how the assessments are carried out by the teacher, and the teacher's challenges in teaching English to deaf students. Thus, it is limited to the English teacher only. The researcher will do the observation of the English teaching process in the eighth-grade class at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng in the academic year 2023/2024.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the statement of research questions is as follows:

1. What are the methods applied in teaching English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng?
2. What are the media used in teaching English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng?
3. How are the assessments conducted in teaching English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng?
4. What are the challenges faced by the teacher in teaching English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng?

1.5 Research Objectives

In line with the research questions, this study has four purposes. The objectives are formulated as follows:

1. To describe the methods applied in teaching English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng.
2. To describe the media used in teaching English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng.
3. To describe the assessments conducted in teaching English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng
4. To find out the challenges faced by the teacher in teaching English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng

1.6 Research Significances

The research's findings are intended to be valuable in two aspects, namely theoretical significance and practical significance

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The results of this research aim to provide understanding regarding the methods applied by the English teacher in teaching English to deaf students, the media used, how the assessments are carried out by the teacher, as well as the challenges faced during

the teaching process. Moreover, the findings of this research are expected to contribute to and enhance prior studies on teaching English to deaf students, specifically about teaching methods, media, and assessments. It is expected that these findings will serve as a valuable resource for other researchers undertaking similar studies in the future.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

Besides the theoretical significance, this research is significant practically for the English teacher and the school.

1. For the English Teacher

This study will help the English teacher in evaluating the teaching of English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng. Therefore, the English teacher can develop the quality of teaching English by selecting the appropriate method and media based on students' needs, conducting suitable assessments for deaf students, and overcoming the challenges in teaching English.

2. For the Special School

The outcomes of this research are expected to serve as evaluation material for the special school, thereby it can enhance the quality of effective and meaningful English teaching to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng.