

ENGLISH WRITING SKILL OF A DEAF LEARNER AT SLB NEGERI 1 MAKASSAR

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Abstract

This study aims to know the problems experienced by deaf learners in learning English writing skills and to find out how the writing skills of a deaf learner in learning English. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The data of this study were grouped into two, namely main data consisting of introduction and documentation. Direct observation, administering tests in the form of questionnaires and English writing ability tests. Involved observation and collection of physical artifacts in the form of questionnaire results, English writing ability test results and lesson plans. The results of this study show that deaf learners can write words, phrases and sentences using a vocabulary list in English. Deaf learners can fix incomplete English sentences with the sensitivity to know the words that can be used to complete the sentence. Deaf learners are unable to make complex sentences, passive sentences and compound sentences due to the complexity of these sentences and the limitations of the research object in terms of language processing senses. Deaf learners can create simple paragraphs and create two simple coherent paragraphs using vocabulary lists and simulations of fixing incomplete sentences. Deaf learners have difficulty processing complex grammatical content. In general, paragraphs contain complex topics that are not relevant to the learning environment of the research object. Deaf learners can use the 5Ws and process consistent and coherent paragraphs using the formulas that have been discussed.

Keywords — Deaf, disabled learner, writing skills.

INTRODUCTION

The existence of learning English in the high school education curriculum at special schools is certainly a challenge for education in itself for the education component in this field. In the teaching and learning process at special schools, of course there are many differences from the teaching and learning process in ordinary schools in various aspects, including, among others, teaching materials, learning media, competence of teachers or educators, systematic assessment or evaluation of learning and so on. One of the most crucial is the competence of teachers with qualified disability knowledge for the smooth running of the teaching and

learning process. Hallagan (2009) agrees that teachers of any field of study who teach learners with disabilities must have the ability and knowledge of disabilities in particular and be able to distribute specific learning materials to the learners being handled. This is of course an emphasis that, on other components in the learning of children with special needs it requires different treatment, knowledge, abilities, learning systems, and learning media.

The special school itself includes the division of groups or classifications of learners into various groups, including: A: Blind, B: Deaf, C: Mentally Disabled, D: Quadriplegic and E: Autistic. From each of these groupings, there is English as one of the compulsory subjects in learning. Blind learners study English with a focus on listening skills and kinesthetic learning styles, while learners with visual impairments study English with a focus on inner reading and audiovisual learning styles. Autism learners learning English by focusing on light symbols of all competencies, like reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Especially for deaf learners who are the object of this research are learners who study English with a focus on writing skills.

The existence of a discussion that focuses on deaf students, has been investigated by several previous researchers. These studies are dominated by references to deafness in children in general, such as research conducted by Archbold Sue (2013), which discusses the shifting characteristics and needs of deaf students. Furthermore, there is a study conducted by Stephen P. Quigley (2003) regarding the factors of deafness which in turn affect students' academic skills. In his research it was stated that the problems experienced by deaf students in general and special schools were caused by various factors, both internal and external where the role of the family was needed as the main preventive solution in providing support to deaf students. Then there are other studies that are very general in nature with very broad outcomes. It can be concluded that these studies do not discuss specifically between deaf students and writing skills.

Then move on to previous studies that touch technically on writing skills, such as research conducted by Hannah & Kimberly (2014) which states that in schools, deaf students are found in a serious portion of applying sign language with American standards (American Sign Language) and remain involved in the educational process related to literacy and writing. In this study it was also stated that the most likely to be investigated in terms of language skills in deaf students was writing skills, because there were blind spots in listening skills, speaking skills, and voice reading skills.

Then, research conducted by Connie et al (2016) entitled reading and writing skills of deaf

pupils with cochlear implants. In the introductory part of the study, there is an affirmation that the reading ability of deaf students cannot be studied if it focuses on the ability to read aloud, while the listening ability of deaf students can only be studied with a listening aid. This statement is followed by a statement that the most likely to be researched is the writing ability of deaf students. It's just the size and aspects of the research that must be reconsidered. From the series of studies above, it is very clear that aspects of writing skills are the main research variables to be studied in deaf students. This includes the problems experienced by deaf learners in general and specifically based on the aspects that affect them. It can be concluded that from the studies above, it is very clear that no one has investigated in depth the English writing skill of deaf learners and the problems that they experienced in learning the skill. This is the reason behind the writer taking this title in the hope that there will be further development of learning methods, especially on writing skills for deaf students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In general, learning English is designed by taking samples from educational objects, namely learners with biological conditions in the form of perfect language learning devices. Starting from the completeness of the senses, to the completeness of language acquisition devices. Recently, English learning was made equalized and specialization was made for learners with disabilities, including deaf learners. This equalization is based on the goals of inclusive education and the full belief of deaf learners that they still have language acquisition skills even though they are limited. Berent (2001) stated that most of deaf learners are sometimes able to compensate for the lack of auditory access, then regulate it to the spoken language and attain native-like knowledge of the language. However, many deaf learners completing only partial acquisition of the spoken language and experience strict difficulties in reading comprehension and written expression. In other words, that deaf learners commonly experience formidable difficulty in acquiring spoken languages in contrast to their natural and effortless acquisition of signed languages. Without complete access to the sounds and intonations of a spoken language, the acquisition process for deaf learners is often morbid, hard and unnatural and occurs at a much slower rate than for hearing learners.

From the various existing studies examining the continuity of learning English for deaf learners, it is concluded that the most dominant aspect that can be studied is the writing skills of deaf learners. This is because language acquisition such as listening and speaking is not really

needed in writing skills. The sensory devices needed are touch/kinesthetic devices in the form of fingers, visual, and the ability to read directions using sign language or symbols.

Medically deaf is a medical condition characterized by reduced or lost ability to hear sounds. The degree of hearing loss varies from mild to very severe. Deaf can be caused by many things. Starting from injuries, diseases, genetic disorders, and aging factors. Most learners who are deaf from birth also experience speech impairment/mute/silence/dumb. According to Somad and Hernawati (1995), deaf is someone who experiences a deficiency or loss of the ability to hear either partially or completely due to malfunctioning of part or all of the hearing aid, so that they cannot use their hearing aid in everyday life which has an impact on his life in a complex manner.

For deaf learners, it is possible that the learners may experience speech problems (mute) or not. This is related to the incidence of hearing loss, which is deaf occurring since infancy before recognizing language, or deaf occurring after learners recognize language. Deaf that occurs before learners know the language, there will be interference with language understanding, communication or interaction between people. This results in learners not understanding language and unable to convey language structures in communication.

However, for learners who experienced deaf after understanding language, learners can convey the language that is understood in everyday life. The incidence of deaf after getting to know language can be caused by infection, drugs, trauma, or booming sounds that damage the hearing system.

According to Melinda (2013), there are three limitations in grouping deaf learners based on how far the learner can take advantage of the rest of the hearing with or without the aid of hearing aids, namely as follows:

- a. Less hearing, but can still use it as the main means/modality to listen to someone's voice and develop speech skills.
- b. Deaf, namely those whose hearing can no longer be used as the main means of developing speech skills, but can still be used as a supplement to sight and touch.
- c. Totally Deaf, namely those who have absolutely no hearing so that they cannot be used to listen or perceive and develop speech.

Meanwhile, according to Winarsih (2010), based on the level of hearing ability expressed in the intensity of the sound heard in dB (decibels), deaf learners are grouped into several categories, namely:

- a. Group I. Loss of 15-30 dB, mild hearing losses; comprehension of normal human speech voice.
- b. Group II. Loss 31-60 dB, moderate hearing losses; the comprehension of human speech is only part of it.
- c. Group III. Loss of 61-90 dB, severe hearing losses; the comprehension of human speech voice does not exist.
- d. Group IV. Loss 91-120 dB, profound hearing losses or very severe hearing loss; the comprehension of human speech voices is completely absent.
- e. Group V. Losses more than 120 dB, total hearing losses; the comprehension of human speech voices is completely absent.

Deaf is also divided based on three criteria, namely the time of hearing loss, based on the location of the damage to the hearing organ and based on the level of language acquisition.

a. Based on the nature of the occurrence

- 1) Congenital deaf, meaning that when the child is born, he or she is deaf and the sense of hearing is no longer functioning.
- 2) Deaf after birth, which means the occurrence of deafness after the child is born is due to an accident or an illness.

b. Based on the place of damage

- 1) Damage to the outer and middle ear, thus blocking the sounds that will enter the ear is called Conductive Deaf.
- 2) Damage to the inner ear, so it can't hear sounds, is called Sensory Deaf.

c. Based on the level of language acquisition

- 1) Pre-language deaf are those who become deaf before mastering a language (age 1-6 years) which means that the child equates certain signals such as observing, pointing, reaching and so on but has not yet formed a symbol system.
- 2) Post-lingually deaf are those who become deaf after mastering language, that is, they have implemented and understood the symbol system prevailing in the environment.

Furthermore, based on the deafness grouping analysis above, the writers found agreement with the statements of Hallahan and Kauffman (2009) which stated that hearing impairment is a general term denoting hearing loss whose severity ranges from mild to severe, it includes the

subsets of deaf and hard of hearing. A deaf learner whose hearing, disability hinders successful processing of linguistic information through audition, with or without a hearing aid.

From this statement it can be concluded that deaf learners are one of the general terms that indicate hearing disabilities from mild to very severe which are classified as deaf and hearing impairment experienced by a child at school age. Deaf learners are students who experience hearing disabilities so they experience obstacles in processing language information through their hearing with or without using hearing aids.

Deafness experienced by a learner has a wide impact which will be a disruption to the life of the person concerned. According to Arthur Boothroyd (2011), the various impacts caused by hearing impairment affect: auditive perception problems, language and communication problems, intellectual and cognitive problems, educational problems, social problems, emotional problems, and even vocational problems.

Education experts for deaf learners such as Daniel Ling (1983) argued that hearing impairment has a core impact on the person concerned, namely language development disorders/barriers. Barriers to language development give rise to other very complex impacts such as aspects of education, emotional-social barriers, intellectual development and finally obstacles in the personality aspect, meaning that the core impact suffered causes/links to other impacts that disrupt their life.

RESULTS

The first question which is a basic writing skill is writing a sentence in English. In general, deaf students are able to do this and this also happens to research objects. The research object is able to write a word in English such as the names of objects, verbs and other English vocabulary that is short and often found and often seen both in classroom and outdoor simulations.

The second question, which is still related to the first question, shows the fact that the object of research is able to write a phrase or two English words at one time. This departs from the classroom interactions experienced by research objects who are always taught affirmative and validative topics from their teachers who communicate using sign language. Most of the phrases that can be written are phrases that contain a subject, verb or adjective, such as "*Beautiful Mom*", "*Good Mother*" and "*I am smart*". Other phrases that can be written also depart from simple communication between sign language teachers and visual learners around

the research object. For example, "Cute cat", "Big elephant", and "Soft cloud". These examples prove that writing phrases for research objects is not difficult as long as the topic being written also it is in an active learning process and it is supported by visuals that are within the reach of the senses of sight and touch. This ability will also support the writing ability in number 3.

As for number 3, it discusses simple sentences where in terms of writing skills phrases can also be considered simple sentences in some cases. The research object is able to write simple sentences starting by using only subjects and verbs (S+V) or subjects and adjectives (S+A). In theory, this includes writing simple sentences. However, it doesn't stop there, the research object is also able to write simple sentences using subjects, verbs and descriptions. A simple concept of a patent sentence (S+V+Adv), for example "My mother went to the market", "This is my book", "I go to school". This fact is proof that simple phrases and sentences are not a problem for deaf students to write and declare in writing for learning and passive communication purposes in addition to sign language communication.

Then in number 4, the research object is able to create a vocabulary list. In the field, when research was carried out through basic introduction and identification of the research object, it was discovered that the research object had its own vocabulary list which was created through an independent learning process. Based on reports from accompanying teachers, it was found that the object of research was interested in making vocabulary lists specifically, whether used in the learning process in the classroom or in the independent learning process.

When the research object is asked to make a list of vocabulary that is specialized only in a certain room, the research object is also able to make it with assistance in the identification process, simple recognition and use of a deaf dictionary. The amount of vocabulary created is not limited to nouns, but can also create vocabulary from adjectives that arise from the words identified. For example, there is a vocabulary list like the following:

Classroom:

Book, Board, Chair, Table, Floor

The research object is also able to create a list of other vocabulary related to the vocabulary found, whether related to the use of the context of sentences/phrases or related to the adjectives of each word found. For example:

White (adjective) is associated with **White** book

Black (adjective) is associated with a **Black** blackboard

Many (adverb) is associated with **Many** chairs

Hard (adjective) is associated with a **Hard table**

Clean (adjective) is associated with the **Clean floor**

With a concept like the one above, the research object is able to create a list of vocabulary that is long, interconnected and has close ties. As long as all these new words can stand alone and are found in visual learning classifications such as types of colors, lists of opponents and word similarities and other classifications contained in the simulation process and learning methods obtained by the research object.

With the ability to increase the vocabulary, it can be ensured that the object of research is very capable of completing simple, incomplete sentences such as those in number 5. If given a simulation text in the form of an incomplete sentence, the object of research has the sensitivity to know the right words that can be used. to complete it. For example:

Mom goes to the market to ... fish.

The research object is able to write the correct verb to complete the sentence. The fact is that the object of research also has a list of verbs that are often read and carried out directly by people around them. The research object has an understanding that seems absolute and simple at the same time that the verb that is related and appropriate to connect the **market** and **fish** is "**buy**". The research object is also able to complete other sentences such as:

Father ... to office.

My brother plays on ...

I am ... so I can't go to ...

Even though the object of research is more active and able to systematically complete subject sentences, verbs and descriptions, the research object is also able to write sentences with a simple cause-and-effect system. Language knowledge of this concept is once again a habit in learning interactions with accompanying teachers. For example, the sentence "*I am sick so I can't go to school*". The object of research is very familiar with this concept, that in everyday life the object of research or other colleagues in the class often do not go to school due to health problems.

As for numbers 6,7 and 8, in the questionnaire the object of research respectively states the inability to make complex sentences, passive sentences and compound sentences. Complex sentences themselves are sentences that consist of a main clause and a subordinate sentence.

These sentences sometimes have several subjects, several verbs and several adverbs. With this condition, it makes sense for research objects that have limitations in processing vocabulary and have limited language sensing devices. Even non-disabled students will have difficulties in this regard, but with a small possibility, because in general complex sentences can be found in the daily verbal conversations of non-disabled students.

Then number 7 where the object of research is also unable to write passive sentences. In simple terms, passive sentences are the opposite of S+V+Adv sentences. Technically the concept is reversed to Adv+V+S. The research object experienced difficulties in carrying out the process of writing this version. When given an example, the research object will understand a sentence and immediately apply the same concept to another sentence. In writing skills, it is indeed found that the passive sentence does not apply to all simple single sentences. There are several active sentences that cannot be made passive without supporting visits and word enrichment that can support the existence of the sentence.

Meanwhile in number 8, more dense and complex difficulties were experienced by the research object after a validation test was carried out on the questionnaire. As with complex sentences and passive sentences, research objects also have difficulty making compound sentences. Compound sentences themselves are sentences that have conjunctions or conjunctions which are declarations of cause and effect. The research object was able to understand the concept of "*I am sick so I can't go to school*" and other similar sentences. However, the compound sentence in question is a cause-and-effect sentence that has an introduction to the situation and information that shows a conjunction, such as "*If Andi skips school, the teacher will punish him*". At first glance, compound sentences like this have the same concept as cause and effect in the previous numbers, but in fact they don't. There are the words "**If**" and other assumption adverbs which are not even found at all in the research object vocabulary list.

Numbers 1-8 are questions that generally focus on vocabulary, phrases and sentences. The numbers that follow will focus the research object on paragraph mastery. Specifically, in question number 9, the research object clearly shows the ability to create simple paragraphs. Starting from the research object's ability to make simple sentences, in the end two to three simple sentences will produce a simple paragraph. This is how the research object executes the process of writing a simple paragraph by writing several simple sentences that are still related in a certain pattern sequence that is considered proper, for example:

"Mother go to the market to buy fish. The fish she bought was sponge fish. Sponge fish is very delicious."

This simple paragraph is actually made from three simple sentences that correspond to the research object ticks on the questionnaire. There is a list of vocabulary such as **go, buy, fish, delicious**. There are also phrases such as "**buy fish**", "**delicious fish**" and three simple sentences marked with dots. This is also contained in the following simple paragraph:

"Today is raining. I can't go to school. I can't meet my friends."

From this paragraph, it is very clear that the object of research is able to create simple paragraphs but cannot construct paragraphs from complex, passive or compound sentences. This is in accordance with the unchecked numbers 7, 8, and 9.

At first, these paragraphs are just single sentences that happen to be in the same paragraph. In numbers 10 and 11, the research object is unable to write inductive and deductive sentences. Apart from not having been introduced by the teacher and not being in the basic competency of the curriculum being used, the research object also had difficulty making sentences that describe the main sentence. This is also because the research object assumes that all sentences are something that can stand singular, doesn't explain other sentences and are not explained by other sentences. In fact, in linguistics, inductive and deductive sentences do not work like that. This is what causes the research object to be unable to create the main topic sentence and explain the supporting sentences in the next line, and also unable to create introductory sentences which at the end of the sentence give rise to the main topic.

In numbers 12, 13 and 14, respectively, the research object is able to create two coherent paragraphs, using a vocabulary list, as well as completing paragraphs that have missing words. The simulation can be seen as follows:

*"Dad **works** in the **office**. Every day he goes by **motorbike**. If it **rains**, dad wears a **raincoat**. Dad's raincoat is **yellow**.*

*On holidays Dad likes **fishing**. Dad fishes in the **river**. There are lots of **fish** in the river."*

The two paragraphs above are two paragraphs that are coherent or related to each other. The paragraph is composed of simple sentences using the following vocabulary list:

*"**Work, Office, Rain, Raincoat, Yellow, Fishing, River, Fish**"*

These paragraphs are also produced from completing research objects from paragraphs that have missing parts such as:

*“Dad ... in the Every day he goes by If it ..., Dad wears a Dad's raincoat is
On holidays Dad likes Dad fishing in the.... There are lots of ... in the river.”*

Numbers 12, 13, 14 generally illustrate that using vocabulary lists to complete several coherent paragraphs and produce complete paragraphs is something that is easy for the research object to do.

The last one, namely number 15 specifically explains that the object of research is not able to write paragraphs on complex topics. Apart from the limited vocabulary in independent vocabulary lists and class vocabulary, research objects also experience difficulties with the emergence of more complex grammar. The research object actively accepts topics that are within visual reach in the classroom, family and social interactions around school and home. Topics such as classrooms, hospitals, parks, streets, and other public places. However, research object has difficulty with topics that require more in-depth analysis, such as relationships between friends, social-contemporary topics, topics discussed narratively by the media, technology, encyclopedias and unfamiliar terminology.

CONCLUSIONS

Deaf learner is able to write simple words, phrases and sentences and make vocabulary lists in English. Most of the words, phrases and simple sentences are words, phrases and sentences found by research object in the learning simulation process in the classroom and outside the classroom as long as they are still within reach of the senses of touch and sight.

Deaf learner is able to fix incomplete simple sentences in English. Deaf learner has the sensitivity to know the right words that can be used to complete a simple sentence as long as the word in question is still in the vocabulary list created and associated in frequently carried out activities.

Deaf learner is unable to make complex sentences, passive sentences and compound sentences in English. This is due to the complexity of the sentences themselves as well as limitations in processing vocabulary and having limited language acquisition devices. The research object is focused on the examples that have been given in the form of simple sentences which cannot be freely applied to complex, passive and compound sentences.

Deaf learner is able to make simple paragraphs. This ability stems from the ability of the research object to process more than one simple sentences. The research object executes the process of writing a simple paragraph by writing several simple sentences that are still related in a certain pattern sequence that is considered proper.

Deaf learner is unable to write inductive and deductive paragraphs. This is because it has not been introduced by the accompanying teacher and is not within the competency of the curriculum used. The research object assumes that all sentences are something that can stand singular, doesn't explain other sentences and are not explained by other sentences. With this understanding, inductive and deductive paragraphs will be very difficult to produce.

Deaf learner is able to create two coherent paragraphs, using a vocabulary list and completing the paragraph that has missing words.

Apart from limited vocabulary in independent vocabulary lists and class vocabulary, research objects also experience difficulties with the emergence of more complex grammar. The research object only actively accepts topics that are within visual reach in the classroom, family and social interactions around school and home.

Deaf learner is able to use the 5Ws correctly in writing with the help of the accompanying teacher's sign language perception assistance.

Deaf learner is able to write paragraphs that are consistent and coherent with the formula discussed in the previous chapter.

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