The Implementation of English Teaching and Learning Process to Students with Visual Impairment

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ABSTRACT – This research aims at (1) describing the implementation of English teaching and learning process to students with visual impairment including: (a) teaching and learning documents; (b) implementation of teaching and learning process, and (c) the supporting components on the English teaching and learning implementation; (2) finding the problems encountered by the English teacher during teaching and learning process; (3) finding proposed solution given by the English teacher to overcome the problems; (4) investigating students' achievement in the implementation of teaching and learning process. The research was conducted at SMP YKAB Surakarta, Central Java. It was a qualitative research in the form of case study. The subjects of the research were 7 students in the ninth grade of Junior High School. The data analyzed through the researcher conducted three things namely: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusion/verification. The curriculum, syllabus, and lesson plan applied in English teaching and learning process to students with visual impairment were equal with regular school. The result of the research revealed four major findings which consist of: (1) the curriculum, syllabus, and lesson plan applied in English teaching and learning process to students with visual impairment are equal with regular school; (2) the difficulties found out from students perspective are the lack of textbooks in Braille, time limitation for students to do examination test and the long sentence of question text. Then, the difficulties viewed from teacher's perspective are the lack of teaching media and classroom management; (3) proposed solutions by the teacher to overcome the difficulties are printing the material in Braille, providing English course to prepare students in national examination, providing alternative teaching media, and arranging classroom management; and (4) the level of IQ was more beneficial to students' achievement rather than visual acuity.

Keywords: English teaching and learning, visual impairments

INTRODUCTION
According to constitutions, Pasal 31 ayat 1 UUD 1945, everyone has the same right to get education. This obligation means that all children have the same right to learn at all stages of their development that are appropriate and easily accessible to them. In this case, all the subjects should be taught whether the students are physically normal or handicapped. However, as quoted from kompas.com (04/24/12), “The government assessed remiss in providing Braille script for blind students who take national examination this year.” this is due to the absorption and thinking skills of students with special needs in inclusive schools same with other normal students. For that reason, the government adopted a policy of eliminating Braille script for inclusion
school. Even so, the government should pay attention to their rights of blind students that provide Braille script in national examination. Therefore, they can be more independent in doing the exam.

Basically, student with visual impairment does not automatically mean that a student has lower intelligence, but it does mean that modified ways of accessing the curriculum will be needed. In teaching learning process, it is essential for teachers not to hold low expectations of students with impaired vision, but to provide many new challenges and encourage them to do as much as possible.

English as a subject should be directed to provide learners with communicative competence both oral and written at a certain level of literacy based on the rules of the use of English by speakers. The aim of learning English subject is developing skills in order that the graduates can communicate in the level of literation that consists of performative, functional, informational, and epistemic. In performative level, the students have capability in mastering four language skills, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In functional level, the students have capability in using language to fulfill the daily necessity such as reading newspaper. In informational level, the students get knowledge by language ability and in epistemic level, the students can express their knowledge in source language into the target language (Peraturan Mendiknas No. 22 dan 23 Tahun 2006).

Accessing the program of studies is often challenging for students with visual impairment or blindness. It is because the students who are visually impaired or blind have major problems in gaining educational or learning opportunities. In order to participate fully within the educational environment, these students require instruction from a trained professional in such disability-specific skills as Braille literacy and numeracy, assistive technology skills, use of low-vision devices, career and life management skills, social interaction skills, independent living and personal management skills, and orientation and mobility skills.

Nowadays, there are two kinds of educational system for the students with special needs, special school and regular school with inclusive educational system. Exceptional school is a special school for students who have certain disorders, such as exceptional school-A is for children who have disorders in sight. In this way the system called by regression. It means that they learn separately from children who attend public school (regular). Besides, regular school with inclusive educational system is an educational
system for the students with special needs in regular school with certain adaptation. In this study, SLB-A YKAB Surakarta appears as an exceptional school for children with special needs which help the students to achieve an optimal development that appropriate with the level and type of specificity. In this school, the students with visual impairment get special service to acquire an education as any other sighted in regular school.

On the contrary, students with visual impairment have difference language skills with sighted students. Indirectly, the visual impairment has an effect on reading and writing skills. In reading skill, visual function is replaced by fingertips function. Besides, in writing skill, the students used Braille system which is based on rectangle made up of six dot position. Therefore, the writer of Braille writing is slower than writer which writes by alphabet letters.

Based on that description, I conducted this research on the implementation of English teaching and learning process at SMP YKAB Surakarta as the one of exceptional school for children with special needs that take English as one of the lesson material. Besides, this research only focused on the students of the third grade junior high school to prepare English material for national examination.

From the description of the background, the problems formulated in this research are:

1. How is the implementation of English teaching and learning to students with visual impairment on the ninth grade of Junior High School at SMP YKAB Surakarta?

This question will be specified in the following sub-questions:
   a. How is the documentation of the curriculum, syllabus, and lesson plans applied?
   b. How is the process of English teaching and learning to students with visual impairment?
   c. What are the supporting components on the English teaching and learning implementation?

2. What are the difficulties found by the English teacher during the teaching and learning process?

3. What are proposed solutions by the teacher to overcome the problem in teaching and learning process?

4. How is students' achievement in the implementation of English teaching and learning process?

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the objectives of the research are:

1. To describe the implementation of English teaching and learning process to students with visual impairment included teaching and learning documents, implementation
of teaching and learning process, and the supporting components on the English teaching and learning implementation

2. To find out the problems encountered by the English teacher during the teaching and learning process

3. To find proposed solution given by the English teacher to overcome the problems during the teaching and learning process

4. To investigate students achievement in the implementation of English teaching and learning process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditionally, language learning focuses on language structure and elements such as pronunciation, sentence and so on. Now, some methods in language learning have focus more on general communication skill and give bigger priority to the ability to express oneself meaningfully and to make oneself understood than to grammatical accuracy or perfect pronunciation. Reaching the main goal of language learning, it is very important to have language skills, both productive skills covering speaking, writing, and receptive skills covering listening and reading (Richard and Rogers, 1998: 19).

Teaching and Learning Process consist of three main steps; they are planning, main activity or acting, and evaluating. Then, the process of teaching and learning involves not only one component to master the objectives of teaching and learning but also needs the others.

According to Lado (1979: 58), for handicaps’ student, the principles have to be modified or suspended. Blind students, for example, cannot use an ordinary textbook or visual aids. They cannot use the phonemic alphabet. They may, on the other hand, have greater acuity in listening and a longer memory span for speech than those who depend on their sight for much their learning.

According to Westwood (2008: 48), in the case of students with physical disabilities (in the absence of other handicapping conditions), the teaching methods used are often the same as those applied in regular school. Student with visual impairment does not
automatically mean that a student has lower intelligence; but it does mean that modified ways of accessing the curriculum will be needed. It is essential for teachers not to hold low expectations of students with impaired vision, but to provide many new challenges and encourage them to do as much as possible.

There are degrees of visual impairment. Armstrong (1996: 120) divides this type into two, partially sighted and legally blind. People who are partially sighted usually have a visual acuity between 20/70 and 20/200 after the best possible correction has been obtained. This means that they see at a distance of twenty feet what a person with unimpaired vision sees at a distance of seventy to two hundred feet. While, people who are legally blind have less than 20/200 acuity after correction; however, they can see. They are readily able to distinguish light from dark and may also be able to read large print. People who are totally blind often can distinguish light from dark and see large from.

Indirectly, visual impairment affects on two language skills, reading and writing skills. The average of reading speed of visual impairment readers is about 90-115 words per minute, while, visual readers can reach 250-300 words per minute (Simon & Huertas, 1998). This result can be assumed that the main cause of the difference is on the total of information that can be absorbed. Sighted reader can absorb written information “visual fixation”, in which the field of perception from each visual fixation at least 15 letters (Simon & Huertas, 1998).

Reading Braille writing, the students should penetrate the paper when they are writing. If it is not doing, the dots cannot arise and cannot be touched. That is why writing with Braille system is slower than writing alphabet which is done by sighted person. The Journal from Associate Professor Saowalak Rattanavich (Ph.D) proved it that blind students usually learn how to read and write more slowly than sighted students since much learning, concept development, and detailed discrimination is a function of sight. The traditional way of teaching Braille, starting with writing before reading, contrast with literacy learning by students, in which reading precedes writing.

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH
The subject of the research was the ninth grade students of SMP YKAB Surakarta in the odd semester of the academic year 2012/2013 which identified in the table of details students.

Table 1.1 Details of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Level of Visual Impairment</th>
<th>Cause of Visual Impairment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wahyu</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Totally blind with a bit light perception</td>
<td>Accident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fajar</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Totally blind with a</td>
<td>Heredity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The method used in this research was qualitative research in the form of case study. Case study research represents a much broader view. It means conducting an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources evidence (Yin, 2003). Through case studies, researchers hope to gain in-depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006: 9).

In collecting the data, the writer used three data collection techniques, namely: classroom observation, interview, and document analysis. Classroom observation was conducted the ninth grade of Junior High School of SMP YKAB Surakarta. After that, the researcher adopted semi-structured interview. It used because it gave freedom to the interview while the researcher could also get in-depth information on the practice of how teachers prepare, implement, and evaluate their students. Then, the researcher used the document analysis to identify local content curriculum and syllabus, English textbooks, lesson plans and the condition of students.

The data analysis in qualitative research involves three things namely the data reduction, the data presentation/display and the conclusion drawing/verification (Sutopo, 2002: 90). In this study, the process of analyzing the data was aimed to describe the quality of the implementation of English teaching and learning to students with visual impairment.

**FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

Standard curriculum for SMP YKAB Surakarta is equal as those applied in regular school. Besides, the curriculum of SMPLB is used by the students with multiple disabilities, for example, the students with visual impairment and mental retardation. The design of the syllabus in English teaching is based on KTSP curriculum. This is used to describe and organize the material taught, and to describe the aims at the study achieved by Junior High Schools students. On the contrary, in teaching and learning process, the teacher does not make the lesson plan according to what he taught in class. He uses the lesson plan made by *Badan Nasional Standard Pendidikan* (BNSP) in guidance book of *RPP Mapel Bahasa Inggris untuk SMP kelas IX*. Through that source, he
elaborates with what is appropriate for the students with visual impairment.

Concerning with special education for students with visual impairments, Shea & Bauer (1996: 258) points out that:

Three sets of needs must be addressed if schools are to provide service for learners with visual impairments. First, needs that can be met by adapting the curriculum; second, needs that require changes in teaching method but not curriculum or objective; third, needs that are the direct result of visual impairments that cause a lack of incidental learning.

There are four skills included in English teaching and learning process to students with Visual Impairment: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In teaching process, all of these skills are learned together or integrated in a subject. The difference of the process between visual impairment and sighted students is on the way of their study which uses Braille, an alternative written communication system by fingertip touch to read patterns of raised dots on the page. They change their visual function into auditory function and also they often use sense of touch to recognize the objects around them.

Richard and Rogers (1998: 19) supports the statement that it is very important to have language skills, both productive skills covering speaking, writing, and receptive skills covering listening and reading. Listening skill is the most important skill for the students because to deliver the material or exercise the teacher usually gives it orally.

Achieving the objectives of the study, the teacher follows the process of teaching and learning included three main steps activity in lesson plan: opening, main activity, and closing. The teacher used traditional learning approach in which the learning process is teacher-centered rather than student-centered. It means that the learners act as the listeners without doing any other activities as the effort to construct their own knowledge about the materials which delivered by the teacher. This is done because adapt to the conditions of the learners which categorized in auditory learners that learnt by what they heard.

Students with visual impairment have difference language skills with sighted students. The impact of visual impairment on language skills, involve: listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Listening is the main important skill to improve the language skills for the students with visual impairment. It is because the students change their visual function to auditory function. They can catch much information and get the instruction quickly from the teacher or another auditory source through listening.
In speaking skills they tend to think in a long time to express something directly without any preparation before. It could be because they nervous but it tend more to the lack of vocabulary. For this case, it was not only happened to students with visual impairment but also sighted students. Furthermore, the lack of vocabulary of the students with visual impairment was caused because basically they could not make sense of a visual object. Besides, they tend to be passive which relied on their sense of hearing without balanced with the pronunciation of words.

In reading skill the students tend to read slowly when the text was not written by them, but it is easier if they written by themselves. The text sometimes made them curious and they need rapid movement of their finger to spell the word. Not only the finger, reading tactual involved with the coordination of the movement of the fingers, hands and arms. Therefore, Braille readers cannot do the same thing with sighted students because the sighted students use eye movement to read, while Braille readers use the tip of his fingers pass through all the letters of the text read.

In writing skill, students seem a little bit slowly in writing English words. When the teacher read about new word the students ask the teacher to read more than once with its spelling. They tend to be slower in writing a vocabulary that they already heard. As well as in reading skill, if the source of reading is the result of their own writing, they will be easily to read. However, if the writing is in the form of Braille and that is a new source given to them, they will tend to be slower in reading.

According to Hallahan & Kaufman (1994: 363) the child who is blind still to hear language and may even be more motivated than the sighted child to use language because it is the main channel through which he or she communicates with others. In this case, teacher's role is really important to help the students achieve the goal of the study beside the students themselves.

The other things support the English teaching and learning implementation are the media used by the teacher and also the teaching aids used by the students with visual impairment. The school provided non-optical aids, tactual aids, and auditory aids to facilitate the instruction of learners with visual impairments.

The difficulties found out from students' perspective are the lack of textbooks in Braille, time limitation for students to do examination test and the long sentence of question text. Then, the difficulties viewed from teacher's perspective are the lack of teaching media and classroom management. Then, proposed solutions by the teacher to overcome the difficulties are printing the material in Braille, providing English
course to prepare students in national examination, providing alternative teaching media, and arranging classroom management.

Regarding with students’ achievement in the implementation of the strategy used by the English teacher in teaching and learning process, Table 1.2 shows the score from each skills of 7 students.

Table 1.2. Students’ Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>W</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rizqi R.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fajar WN.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wahyu S.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemish</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yohanes</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kokok J</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsa C.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

L: Listening  
S: Speaking  
R: Reading  
W: Writing

According to Hallahan & Kaufman (1994: 348), listening skills becoming more important than ever because of the increasing accessibility skill is not important. It, then, doesn’t mean that another skill is not important.

In another case which related with examination, there is no difference result in test which the question read by teacher or read by the student itself. Therefore, the thing that determines in students achievement is Intellectual Quotient (IQ) of each student. Besides, it appears that the blind students proved to have a higher achievement than low vision. It is showed that the different visual acuity, either low vision or blind does not influence students’ achievement. Otherwise, the level of IQ is more influenced in students’ achievement rather than visual acuity.

Shea & Bauer (1996: 253) states that the accurate assessment of learners with visual impairments is a collaborative venture including medical and educational professionals. As with all learners, emphasis must be placed on the learner's ability and ways to accommodate the learners so that he or she has educational opportunities similar to those of his or her sighted peers.

CONCLUSION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND SUGGESTION

After conducting the research of the implementation of teaching and learning process to students with visual impairment conducting in SMP YKAB Surakarta, the result can be concluded that:

1. The curriculum, syllabus, and lesson plan applied in English teaching and learning process to students with visual impairment are equal with regular school. There are no different objectives in teaching English for the students with visual impairment and sighted students.
The school provided non-optical aids, tactual aids, and auditory aids as the supporting components on the English teaching and learning implementation in order to facilitate the instruction of learners with visual impairments.

2. The difficulties found in teaching and learning process viewed from students' perspective are: The lack of textbooks in Braille, time limitation for students to do examination test and the long sentence of question text. Then, the difficulties viewed from teacher's perspective: The lack of teaching media and classroom management.

3. Proposed solutions by the teacher to overcome the problem are: printing the material in Braille, providing additional English class to prepare students in national examination, providing alternative teaching media, and arranging classroom management.

4. The difference visual acuity, either low vision or blind does not influence students' achievement. Otherwise, the level of IQ is more influenced in students' achievement rather than visual acuity.

The teacher holds the big role as the key factor in the successful implementation of curriculum changes and learners categorized as the key participants in curriculum development projects. In developing the aspects to the student with visual impairment, the teacher is more focus in cognitive and affective aspect. It does not mean that the teacher ignores psychomotor aspect. These three aspects are being controlled by the teacher. This study is very important to special education in Indonesia which is related to students with visual impairment. The description of implementing English teaching and learning to students with visual impairment can be the guiding of the school which has visual impairments' students. Moreover, it is expected that this research can take benefit to develop educational system.

The researcher gives some suggestions from the result of the study involved the suggestion for the teacher, the students, and the school principals. (1) In conducting teaching and learning activities, it is advisable to the teacher to prepare and organize every detail of activities in the classroom based on the students’ needs and curriculum requirements; (2) The students should not be afraid to make mistakes in learning English and aware with their study even though they have physical disabilities; (3) The school principals should provide the material, guidance book, and examination text in Braille's print to make the students more independent to study without helping from private reader.

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