Teacher’s Problems in Dealing with Autism Children in Learning Process
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Abstract

This research aimed at finding out the teacher’s problems in teaching English to autism children in SDLB YPAC (Sekolah Dasar Luar Biasa Yayasan Pembinaan Anak Cacat) Labui, Banda Aceh. This descriptive qualitative research was conducted by observing the classroom during the learning process and interviewing the English teacher in order to collect the data which was needed for this study. The subject of this research is an English teacher at SDLB YPAC Labui while the object of this research is the teacher’s problems in dealing with students with autism in learning process. The result of this study showed that there are several problems faced by the teacher in teaching students with autism namely the lack of teaching aids, hard to find visual aids that can be used to attract students’ attention, difficult to provide structured instruction of new vocabulary which is supported by visual aids, and hard to find suitable objects to encourage students’ expression. In conclusion, the main problem faced by the teacher in SDLB YPAC Labui is the lack of facility to smoothen the learning process.

Key Words: Teacher, Teaching, Autism

1. INTRODUCTION
Teaching is the process of transferring knowledge from the teacher to the students whether in a formal or informal situation. Good result of teaching and learning process depends on the interaction between the teacher and the students. Related to the interaction between teacher and students, sometimes there is a certain condition where the interaction may not going well. It is because every student has different needs, especially those who are having mental disorder such as autism. Their needs may be much more differ than normal students. So, the teacher has to understand what the students need. Therefore, language has an important role in developing good interaction between the teacher and students.

One of the languages that is usually taught in school is English. As a foreign language, English has been taught at elementary school, junior high school and senior high school in Indonesia, not only for normal students but also for students
who has a special need. English also has to be taught at SLB (Sekolah Luar Biasa) or Extraordinary School in Indonesia including in Banda Aceh. During the learning process, teaching English to students as a foreign language has many kinds of problems. It means that the same case also applies in teaching English to students that have special needs in the classroom. According to Hilyati (2013), students with autism behave like children under their age. They talk like children do, always repeat the same questions frequently and difficult to do interaction with others. For them, teacher is their hero that can help them and protect them.

Furthermore, the teachers know that autistic students have hyperactive characters that have developmental abnormalities in the brain. Children with autistic have difficulty in their learning process. It is different from normal students who do not have problems with their attitudes. Autistic students are easier to get frustrated in the learning process and it also makes them avoid studying. The teacher is the key to make the learning process successful. Teaching students with special need is not as easy as teaching normal students. The teacher needs more patience and various creativities in order to teach them successfully. As cited in British Columbia Ministry of Education in their book entitled “Teaching Students with Autism” (2000), some instructions and instructional approaches have proved successful for teachers working with students with autism.

From the arguments above, it is an interesting topic to find out what problems that occur to the teacher in teaching English for students with autism. Therefore, the writer is interested in conducting the research entitled “Teacher’s Problems in Dealing with Autism Children in Learning Process”. The research is conducted at SLB CD YPAC-II (Sekolah Luar Biasa Yayasan Pembinaan Anak Cacat) as one of the schools in Banda Aceh that provides the teacher for students that has special need. The school has students with disabilities including autism. The school is located in Ateuk Pahlawan, Kec Baiturahman Kota Banda Aceh.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 The Definition of Autism

Fay and Schuler (1980, cited in Buehrly, 2005) said “autism is a development brain disorder that usually come in the first three years of life, it affects brain areas controlling language social interaction and abstract thought”. Autism is a life-long developmental disability that prevents people from understanding what they see, hear, and otherwise sense. They have problem with social relationship, communication, and behavior (Cited in British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2000, p.3).

In Alberta Learning (2003, p.3), it is stated that the term Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is sometimes used to refer to autism and other conditions included within the PDD (Pervasive Developmental Disorder) classification. It shows that the student with autism are very special students that can be taught by teacher with special ability, for example, the teacher with qualification in teaching students with autism.

2.2 Problems in Teaching Students with Autism

There are several problems faced by teacher in teaching students with autism. A study conducted by Sari, Zaini, and Suarja (2017) showed that the problems come from the students. There are two kinds of problems faced by the teachers, which are the problems that come from the students’ internal factor (vision and hearing ability, attitude, intellectual level, potency, talent, etc.) and
students' external factor (social environment, family, school, friend, culture, facility, etc.). The result of the study showed that the teachers faced more problems which are caused by internal factor more than the problems which are caused from external factor.

Conversely, there is also another research related to teachers' problems in teaching autistic students which showed different result. The study conducted by Edward (2015) found that the problems lie in the teachers, not the students. The research’s results showed that the problems are the poor of teacher’s knowledge, lack of appropriate training, lack of in-service training among teachers.

In addition, Ferbalinda (2016) conducted similar study related to the teachers’ problem in teaching students with special needs in SMA Negeri 14 Lampung. The study found that the problem which emerges in the teaching and learning process is because of the teachers' lack of experience and in teaching the students with special needs. Another finding from this study is the problems that come from the students. The problems arise because of students’ condition such as low intellectual and cognitive ability in learning and unusual behaviors that happens during the learning process. Additionally, the lack of facility in the school such as technological equipment that can assist in learning also become one of the reason why the teachers having the problems in teaching autistic students.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employs descriptive qualitative approach in collecting and analyzing the data. Marquerite (2006, p. 264) explained that descriptive research focuses on the study of social phenomena and on giving voice to the feelings and perceptions of the participant under study. The advantages of this research was to improves a depth understanding in words rather than in numeric data.

Pertaining to the method that the writer used to obtain the data in this study, the writer collected the data through observation and interview. This research was focused on the teacher’s problems in dealing with autistic children in the learning process. The data collected and analyzed using observation instrument by “A Resource Guide for Schools” book from British Columbia Ministry of Education Special Programs Branch (2000).

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Results

As explained in the previous section, the data was collected by using observation and interview. The observation was taken in 10th January 2019 and the second observation was in 14th January 2019 in SLB CD YPAC-II. The total number of students are 26 students for Junior High School level. Meanwhile, the interview was conducted with the teacher on 21st January 2019 in the school. The writer visited the school to do the interview because it might help the teacher to remember the situation of the learning process that became the writer’s purpose. During the interview, the writer asked several questions and required detail information about the problems in teaching English to the students with autism.

4.1.1 The Result of Observation

The instrument used by the writer was the checklist which was adapted from British Columbia Ministry of Education Special Programs Branch (2000). Based on the observation of the class activity, the researcher had checked some the
important points in the checklist during the learning process. The result of the observation can be seen throughout the following table.

**Table 4.1  Problems in teaching students with autism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Problems in teaching autistic students</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Post classroom rules, with illustrations or symbols</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Provide visual cues to support oral information or teacher directions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Break tasks into component parts and teach each with action</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Use simple oral instructions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Wait with patience for student response</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Highlight important information</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Using visual aids (photographs, pictures, objects, etc.) to get the attention of students</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Use gestures with oral communication to approach the students</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Provide structured instruction of new vocabulary supported with visual aids live during the learning process</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Use objects or activities to encourage expression</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Use discussions of routines to practice skills</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above, it can be seen that there were three problems found during the observation in the classroom which are; problem in using visual aids to get students’ attention, problem in providing structured instruction of new vocabulary supported with visual aids, and problem of using objects or activities to encourage expression.

**4.1.2  The Result of Interview**

The purpose of interview is to obtain additional information related to the problems faced by the teacher during the teaching and learning process. The result showed that the English teachers in SLB CD YPAC-II Labui in Banda Aceh had trouble in providing visual aids and other useful aids to help students imagine the vocabulary toward the photographs, pictures, or objects. The teacher believed that using visual aids such as projectors is very important in these days. In addition, the lack of teachers’ ability in handling the autistic students may also be the problems faced by the teachers.

**4.2 Discussion**

The results of this research showed that the main problem faced by the teacher in teaching English to students with autism is due to the lack of teaching
aids such as visual aids. During the observation, the teacher sometimes had problem in finding the visual aids that can be used to attract students' attention. In addition, the teacher also had difficulties in providing structured instruction of new vocabulary which should be supported by visual aids. Lastly, the teacher had problem in finding suitable objects to encourage students' expression.

Moreover, from the result of the interview, the common problem faced by the teacher during the teaching and learning process is the students' unusual or strange behavior. The students with autism in the classroom tend to be too active and hard to be calmed down. This problem might get worse if there are more two or three students who act like this simultaneously. However, the teacher believed that this is not a serious problem because it is not the students' fault. It is natural that students with special needs to behave like that. This finding is in line with a statement of Hilyati (2013) who said that students with autism usually have difficulties in concentrating during learning process and also unable to control their emotion well.

Another problem which was found from the interview with the teacher is the lack of teacher's experience in handling the situation in the class of students with special needs. The teacher stated that most of the teacher who has little experience in teaching students with autism will face serious problem in the class. She added that the training which was held by the government is rarely helpful because during the training process, the teacher had too many theory rather than practiced thing in handling the students with special needs. Therefore, a low-experienced teacher will face more problems than a high-experienced one.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the elaboration of the result and discussion of this research, there are several problems faced by the teacher in teaching students with autism in SLB CD YPAC-II. The problems are; the lack of teaching aids, hard to find visual aids that can be used to attract students' attention, difficult to provide structured instruction of new vocabulary which is supported by visual aids, and hard to find suitable objects to encourage students' expression. In addition, there is also an inner problem from the teachers themselves which is lack of experience.

Ultimately, the researcher would like to give a few suggestions regarding to the problems that are found from this research findings. For the teacher, it is hoped that the teacher to be well-prepared to face the possible problem such as students' unusual behavior and students' easily-changing mood that may happen during the learning process. In addition, the teachers are also suggested to master their own emotion especially in facing the common problems that are caused by the students. Furthermore, for the future teachers who are planning to teach at SLB (Sekolah Luar Biasa), it is expected that they increase their skill in managing students with autism and increasing ability to handle the situation related to technical problem such as the lack of teaching aids.

To sum up with, in order to teach students with autism, a teacher must be well-prepared by finding the students' characteristics and comprehend students' behavior. These problems could be solved by working together as a team consisted of all school's elements such as staff, principals, fellow teacher, or parents, and also by doing research, attending the training for teacher in teaching English to autistic
students, and searching many sources and planning the good management in teaching students with autism.

6. REFERENCES


