An Analysis of English Assessments for Deaf Students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng

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Abstract
Teaching English to students with hearing loss is complex due to their reliance on non-auditory communication methods such as gestures, sign language, body language, and facial expressions. Deaf learners often have limited vocabulary, creating a language barrier with hearing students. This study examines how the assessments are conducted to gauge deaf students' learning English process at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng. This study is classified as a case study conducted using qualitative methods. The data were taken from an interview and observation of the English Teacher in SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng. The findings reveal that the assessments include formative methods, such as vocabulary memorization and presentation, and summative methods, such as multiple-choice questions with visual aids.

INTRODUCTION

English is considered the global language, gaining significance worldwide for its ability to facilitate social, economic, and intellectual progress. It is recognized internationally and acknowledged as crucial for educational development by the Indonesian government, mandating that all students must learn English. (Heriyanti et al., 2023). It implies that even students with special needs must learn English as a second language without any exemptions (Yunisari, 2021). Learning English is essential for special needs students as it provides a gateway to understanding the world around them. 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. Thus, learning English is essential for expanding the opportunities available to students with special needs, enabling them to participate in a global society fully.

Special needs children are classified into permanent or temporary special needs. Deaf or hearing impairment is categorized as permanent special needs (Maryanti et al., 2021). Hearing impairment refers to a diminished ability to detect sounds in one or both ears, whether with or without amplification, which can impact a child's academic performance (NICHCY, 2017). 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.

Teaching English to deaf students is a demanding and multifaceted responsibility (Prasetya et al., 2023). Specialized skills are required due to potential language barriers and communication difficulties. Learning English presents distinct challenges for deaf students compared to their peers, often resulting in significant delays in vocabulary acquisition, phoneme production, and syntax, which are typical in children with hearing impairments (Cawthon, 2001). Deaf students struggle with auditory comprehension, unlike their hearing peers, impacting their reading skills due to limited exposure to vocabulary learned through auditory means.

Deaf individuals typically encounter significant challenges when learning spoken languages, unlike their natural and effortless acquisition of signed languages. Due to limited access to auditory cues such as sounds and intonations, the process of acquiring spoken languages for deaf learners is often cumbersome and slower compared to their hearing peers (Nugroho & Lintangsari, 2022). While some deaf learners manage to compensate for the lack of auditory input and achieve native-like proficiency in spoken language, many only partially acquire it, leading to ongoing difficulties in reading comprehension and written expression (Nugroho & Lintangsari, 2022).

The child with hearing problems experience obstacles in the speech process and language caused by abnormalities in their hearing. As a result of delayed speech development and language, deaf children experience delays and difficulties related to communication matters. They need coaching to communicate with other people (Razi et al., 2021). Even with limitations, such as being unable to speak and hear well, they also have the right to be treated in a social environment equally, especially in education. This matter is supported by guidance and remarkable services in a particular school, called Special Education (Zahro et al., 2023).

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. 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). In addition, 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

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). 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 behaviour, and SLB-G for people with multiple disabilities (Rahardja & Sujarwanto, 2010).

SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng is a specialized school located at Jalan Yudistira Selatan 16, Singaraja. It falls under the SLB-B and SLB-C categories, catering to students who are deaf or

have below-average IQs. The school comprises elementary, middle school, and high school levels. The Middle High School section includes grades seven through nine, each with 7 to 10 deaf students per grade. The eighth grade specifically has seven students. Additionally, there is a single English teacher who has been teaching at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng for two years.

The English curriculum employed by the teacher follows Curriculum 2013. When crafting lesson plans, the teacher adapts regular plans designed for typical children. English lessons are scheduled for 35 minutes once a week. The teacher adjusts the material to suit the student's abilities, particularly emphasizing sign language as the primary mode of communication for deaf students. Consequently, the English teacher communicates using American Sign Language (ASL). In addition to sign language, the teacher incorporates spoken language, writing, finger spelling, and visual aids, employing a total communication approach. The focus is primarily on teaching vocabulary rather than grammar or sentence structure, recognizing the challenges posed by language barriers for both the teacher and deaf students. Multimedia resources such as books, videos, pictures, applications, and PowerPoint presentations are utilized to enhance English instruction in the classroom.

Assessments play a crucial role in the educational system, encompassing teaching, learning, and evaluation processes. Various individuals assess students for diverse purposes within this process. It is essential to maintain focus on the purpose of assessments, which is to gather pertinent information about student performance, progress, and interests, and to identify any additional needs or disabilities. These results inform decisions related to their educational journey (Neild & Diane Clark, 2020). Effective educational programming requires continuous assessments to evaluate students' abilities across academic domains and to inform instructional strategies. In the field of deaf education, these assessments are particularly crucial and deserve careful consideration. Assessment involves collecting and interpreting information about various aspects of a student's performance, including their cognitive, academic, social, emotional, behavioural, and functional abilities (Bishaw & Jayaprada, 2012). This special volume offers an insightful glimpse into researchers' approaches to assessing Deaf children.

At SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng, the English teacher instructs deaf students using methods similar to those used with hearing students, they use formal and informal assessments. Formal assessments are standardized evaluations that utilize statistical techniques to facilitate comparisons. The primary objectives of formal assessment include: (1) comparing the performance of diverse learner groups, (2) determining suitable educational placements for learners, (3) tracking the progress of individuals or groups, and (4) ensuring accountability within the educational framework. On the other hand, observing learners and conducting interviews with parents and students themselves are informal assessments that play a crucial role in identifying their strengths and needs (Kurniawa & Kalimah, 2022). Informal assessments serve several functions: (1) validating information obtained from formal assessments, (2) collecting data that may not be addressed or accessible through formal assessments, and (3) evaluating students' practical skills in various settings, both familiar and unfamiliar. The methods of informal assessment may include structured observations, interviews with parents, teachers, and students, reviewing completed assignments, and compiling student portfolios.

Despite efforts to simplify the materials, students encounter challenges in learning due to the chosen teaching methods, instructional media, and assessment techniques. Furthermore, the teacher's limited proficiency in sign language creates a language barrier between the teacher and students. Based on the problem above, the researcher is intrigued to find out and analyse the teaching method used by the teacher in teaching English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng, by analysing how the assessments are conducted to gauge their learning progress.

METHOD

Qualitative research can be described as a methodology used to explore diverse viewpoints of social occurrences and to emphasize the expression of emotions, and understandings held by the subjects being investigated. Furthermore, qualitative research aims to decipher the significance of individuals and communities in the context of social or human problems (Lambert & Lambert, 2013). This study is classified as a case study conducted using a qualitative method aimed at understanding social phenomena through descriptive narratives. A case study is a type of qualitative research aiming to achieve comprehension and thorough insight into a person, group, or circumstances (Lodico, 2010). It allows an in-depth exploration of this specialized subject and thoroughly examines its contextual interactions. It falls under qualitative research because it generates descriptive data suited to the nature of qualitative inquiry.

The researcher collected the data through observation and an interview. The researcher employed observation to get information related to the assessments used when teaching English to deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng. This study used classroom observation. The researcher sat at the back of the classroom. The researcher used the observation sheet to record the teaching process during the English lesson. The researcher detailed the English teaching procedure based on the observation sheet.

Table 1. Observation Sheet

Observation Sheet
The teacher assigns independent tasks to the students
Description:
The teacher gives group assignments for collaborative work
Description:

Furthermore, The next step was to conduct the interview. Before interviewing the English teacher, the researcher created an interview guideline to prepare for an interview with the English teacher at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng regarding the assessments used by the teacher. The interview was structured. As a result, the English teacher provided structured responses to two questions. Furthermore, the researcher recorded the interview procedure in audio format to ensure that the interview results were correctly saved.

Table 2. Interview Guidelines

Interview Questions
How do you conduct the assessments for deaf students?
(*Bagaimana Anda melaksanakan penilaian terhadap siswa tunarungu?*)
Do you think the assessments are suitable for deaf students?
(*Apakah menurut Anda penilaian tersebut sesuai untuk siswa tunarungu?*)

After collecting research data, the next step was data analysis. This involves organizing and categorizing data into models and descriptions. The researcher utilized the interactive model analysis. The techniques are data collection, data condensation, data reduction, and conclusions (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

Data was gathered through observation and interviews to address the research questions. This step involved selecting, streamlining, and summarizing the collected data to focus on what is significant for analysis. The data was presented in a narrative format, detailing the assessments utilized by the English teacher at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng. Finally, the researcher derived conclusions based on the presented data, summarizing the research outcomes.

Trustworthiness in qualitative research denotes confidence in the methodology, data, and interpretation, ensuring the study's quality (Connelly, 2016). Four criteria for trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility measures the accuracy and correctness of the research, assessing how truthful and precise the findings are. In establishing trustworthiness in this research, credibility was utilized.

One way to check credibility is through triangulation, which involves using multiple sources or methods to confirm patterns. Triangulation can take various forms, including methodological, source, investigator, and theory triangulation (Stahl & King, 2020). This research employed methodological triangulation, a technique of using various ways of collecting data from one resource (Turner & Turner, 2010). Therefore, the researcher utilized observation and an interview to collect data from the English teacher at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng.

Besides conducting interviews, the researcher applied classroom observations, photographs, and personal notes. These diverse data sources provided different perspectives, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the subject and ensuring the findings' credibility. Additionally, the data was supported by related previous research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Assessing deaf students effectively requires a thoughtful and inclusive approach that takes into account their unique communication needs and learning styles. At SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng, the assessment of deaf students integrates various strategies to ensure accurate evaluation and support their learning progress comprehensively. The teacher conducted a formative assessment. This form of evaluation was carried out during the teaching-learning process to offer feedback to the teacher and the learners. The main objective was to keep track of the student's progress and provide continuous feedback, that could be used by the teacher to enhance his teaching and by the students to improve their learning. Formative assessments, such as vocabulary memorization and class presentations, are structured to enhance language retention and boost confidence in communication skills. These activities not only reinforce learning but also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding in ways that are accessible and meaningful to them.

The assessment occurred after the learning process was completed. After reviewing the sports vocabulary with the students and writing it on the board, the teacher instructed the students to commit the vocabulary to memory. The teacher also informed that each student would come forward to mention all the vocabulary they had learned. Students were given time

to memorize for five minutes. After five minutes had passed, the teacher gave opportunities to prepare students. While at the front, the teacher instructed the students to mention eight sports vocabulary words in two languages, namely by using SIBI first and then translating them into English using ASL. When students succeeded in mentioning all the vocabulary, the teacher appreciated it by giving two thumbs up. However, when students forgot the signs, the teacher asked students to remember the signs slowly and repeat them from the beginning.

Following a discussion with the students on the language associated with sports and the writing of the terminology on the board, the instructor gave the students instructions to commit the vocabulary to memory. Additionally, the instructor advised the class that each student would be required to come up and discuss all of the terminology that they had acquired. Five minutes were allotted to the students for memorization. Following the passage of five minutes, the instructor provided pupils with the opportunity to get themselves ready. When the instructor was in the front of the room, she gave the students instructions to mention eight sports vocabulary items in two different languages. Specifically, she asked them to use SIBI first and then to translate them into English using American Sign Language. Whenever the pupils were able to successfully mention all of the words, the instructor showed their appreciation by giving them two thumbs up. On the other hand, when pupils forgot the signs, the instructor instructed them to remember the signs slowly and repeat them beginning with the first sign.

Figure 1. The student came forward to mention eight sports vocabulary as a form of assessment by the teacher

Additionally, the English instructor was responsible for carrying out the summative assessment in addition to the formative assessment. Summative assessments utilize multiple-choice questions supplemented with visual aids to measure the achievement of learning objectives. Visual aids are particularly beneficial for deaf students as they facilitate comprehension and retention of information. These assessments are designed to assess not just knowledge but also practical application and critical thinking skills relevant to the English language curriculum.

During this sort of assessment, which took place at the end of a unit or term, the instructor was able to evaluate the student's level of comprehension based on a set of established criteria. The following interview was conducted, and the following explanation details are based on the results of the interview:

"For formative exams, I use homework only very infrequently. In its place, I favor evaluating the level of comprehension of my students directly in the classroom. To give you an example, after a thirty-minute lecture, I will ask my students to demonstrate their vocabulary

knowledge by using drawings. I am going to inquire about the pronunciation of that picture in English. When it comes to summative assessments, my students, just like students in traditional schools, are required to take a final test after each semester. This examination goes over the topics that were covered throughout the semester. These questions on the exam are multiple-choice, and there are four possible answers: A, B, C, and D. The question "Isyarat manakah yang menunjukkan sepak bola dalam bahasa Inggris?" is an example of a question that could be asked regarding the examination. I would then offer four different photos of signs, and the students would select the answer that they felt was the most appropriate." (The 23rd of November, 2023, Tegar)

"Up to this point, I have ensured that the exams I have administered are appropriate for my students. On the other hand, I do not allow the outcomes of these evaluations to be my entire motivation. The reason for this is that children who are deaf have a tough time learning English. As a result, I also place a significant amount of significance on their daily actions in the classroom, such as their attitude and the degree to which they participate." (The 23rd of November, 2023, Tegar)

"When it comes to abilities that are relevant in the 21st century, such as working together, my students succeed. Some of the pupils in this class are exceptionally bright, while others are having difficulty keeping up with the lecture. One of the things that continues to amaze me is the fact that students with disabilities are self-aware of their capabilities and are not hesitant to seek assistance from their more capable classmates. This group of skilled students is always willing to provide a helping hand to those in need. Having a friendship of this nature is something that I am quite proud of. Following that, I may occasionally assign a pair project for the subject that contains a significant quantity of vocabulary to assist students in better comprehending and remembering the terminology. Not only does it assist them in learning and remembering the terminology, but it also allows me to evaluate their ability to work together and along with others." (The 23rd of November, 2023, Tegar)

Figure 2. An example of the final exam as the summative assessment
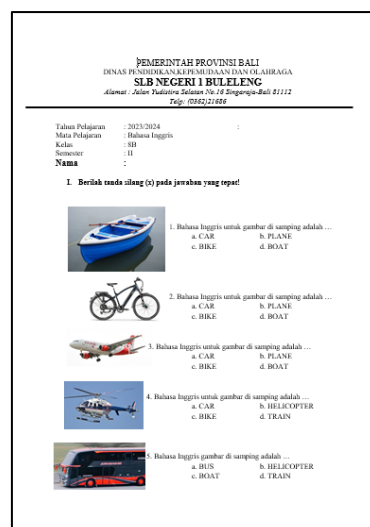
Assessments are crucial tools for teachers to gather and analyse data on students' cognitive, academic, social, emotional, behavioural, and functional skills. They help teachers customize teaching strategies, monitor academic progress, and provide constructive feedback.

Assessments also promote a positive learning environment by encouraging students to take ownership of their learning and strive for continuous improvement.

For deaf learners, formal and informal assessments are used. Formative assessments involve memorizing vocabulary and presenting it in front of the class, which helps teachers understand students' understanding and improves memory and recall skills. Pair projects enhance collaborative and teamwork skills, while summative assessments use multiple-choice questions with visual aids to gauge the achievement of learning goals.

Following an observation and an interview, it was discovered that the English teacher at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng uses two different kinds of evaluations: formative assessments and summative assessments. Formative assessments involve activities such as memorizing vocabulary and presenting it in front of the class. This approach not only helps students retain new words but also boosts their confidence and speaking skills. During the lesson, the teacher carried out the formative assessment by giving each student the task of memorizing vocabulary that had been previously studied. After that, the students performed the vocabulary in front of the class. The students were also evaluated through the use of a pair project, which provided the instructor with the opportunity to evaluate the student's overall performance. Furthermore, this research has the potential to enhance the abilities of deaf pupils to work together and collaborate with others.

Summative assessments, on the other hand, use multiple-choice questions enhanced with visual aids to measure the achievement of learning goals. This method is particularly effective for deaf students, as visual aids provide crucial support in understanding and retaining information. A summative assessment was carried out by the teacher after a particular instructional unit to evaluate the educational progress of the students and compare it to a predetermined standard. The assessment was carried out after the semester. During the final examination, there were multiple-choice questions. American Sign Language signs and brief text were included in the questions. However, the instructor did not depend primarily on this evaluation to make her decisions. It was because deaf students believed that learning English was difficult. Because of this, he placed a strong emphasis on the relevance of the acts that pupils take daily in the classroom, including their manner and the degree to which they participated.

Feedback from assessments plays a crucial role in guiding instruction and supporting individual student needs. It helps identify strengths and areas for improvement, allowing teachers to adjust teaching strategies and provide targeted interventions where necessary. This continuous feedback loop ensures that assessment practices are responsive to the specific learning needs of deaf students, promoting their academic growth and overall development. Beyond academic assessments, the teacher at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng emphasizes the importance of evaluating students' daily actions, behaviour, and participation in the classroom. This holistic approach recognizes the impact of non-academic factors on learning and aims to foster a positive and inclusive classroom environment where all students, including deaf learners, feel supported and motivated to succeed. The assessment of deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng combines rigorous academic evaluation with consideration for individual communication needs and holistic development. By integrating formative and summative assessments, providing targeted feedback, and promoting a supportive classroom culture, the

school ensures that deaf students receive equitable opportunities to thrive academically and socially. This approach not only enhances learning outcomes but also prepares students for future success in a diverse and inclusive society.

Examination scores from these assessments provide valuable feedback to both students and teachers, highlighting areas of strength and identifying aspects that need further improvement. This continuous feedback loop is essential for adapting teaching strategies to better meet the needs of deaf students. However, the teacher emphasizes that assessment should go beyond academic performance. The importance of students' daily actions in the classroom, including their behaviour and participation, is also highlighted. By focusing on these aspects, the teacher aims to address the unique challenges faced by deaf students in learning English, ensuring a more holistic approach to their education.

This comprehensive assessment strategy recognizes that learning is not just about academic achievement but also about developing a positive classroom environment and fostering active participation. By integrating both formative and summative assessments with a keen awareness of daily classroom interactions, the teacher at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng creates a supportive and effective learning environment for deaf students. This approach helps to bridge the gap between different learning styles and needs, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Moreover, the assessment strategy promotes collaborative learning among students through activities like group discussions, peer reviews, and collaborative projects. For deaf students, these interactions not only strengthen their language skills but also foster teamwork and social integration within the classroom, nurturing a supportive community where students learn from each other's strengths. Technology plays a crucial role in supporting the learning journey of deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng. The teacher utilizes educational apps, videos with captions or sign language interpretation, and interactive multimedia presentations to engage students and accommodate diverse learning preferences effectively.

The involvement of parents or guardians is another cornerstone of the assessment approach. Regular communication ensures that parents are informed about their child's progress, challenges, and achievements, facilitating a collaborative effort to support the student's learning both at school and at home. This partnership strengthens the overall support system for deaf students and contributes to their educational success. Furthermore, the teacher emphasizes continuous professional development to stay abreast of best practices in teaching deaf students. Attending workshops, collaborating with peers, and refining teaching methods ensure that assessment practices remain effective and responsive to the evolving needs of students.

The English teacher at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng emphasizes the importance of cultivating a positive classroom culture. This involves creating a safe and supportive environment where all students, including deaf learners, feel valued and encouraged to participate actively. By promoting inclusivity and respect for diversity, the teacher ensures that every student's voice is heard and their contributions are recognized. Moreover, the assessment strategy includes regular reflection and adjustment of teaching practices based on student feedback and outcomes. This continuous improvement cycle allows the teacher to adapt lessons and

assessments to better meet the evolving needs of deaf students, ensuring that they remain engaged and motivated in their learning journey.

The teacher integrates real-world applications into the assessment process, connecting classroom learning with practical skills and experiences. This approach not only enhances understanding but also prepares deaf students for future academic and professional challenges, equipping them with relevant skills beyond the curriculum. The assessment strategy at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng aims to empower deaf students by fostering self-assessment and goal-setting skills. Encouraging students to reflect on their learning progress and set achievable goals promotes autonomy and accountability, crucial for their long-term academic and personal development.

The comprehensive assessment approach adopted by the English teacher at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng combines individualized support, collaborative learning, technology integration, parental involvement, professional development, positive classroom culture, reflective practices, real-world applications, and student empowerment. This holistic approach ensures that deaf students receive the necessary support and opportunities to excel academically and socially, preparing them for success in a diverse and inclusive society.

CONCLUSION

The English teacher at SLB Negeri 1 Buleleng used both formative and summative assessments to assess the progress of deaf students. Formative assessments involved students memorizing language and presenting it to the class, enhancing their vocabulary memory, and self-assurance. This allowed the teacher to assess their comprehension and identify areas for improvement. Summative assessments, which included multiple-choice questions and visual media, were designed to meet the needs of deaf students, ensuring easy accessibility and understanding of the tests. This approach not only evaluated the student's academic skills but also ensured their ability to effectively use the acquired knowledge. The combination of these assessments provided a comprehensive evaluation of the student's progress, allowing the teacher to adjust instructional strategies and ensure individual learning requirements were addressed. This framework ensured that each student's academic capabilities were fully maximized, promoting a well-rounded and efficient education system.

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