



## Teacher's Verbal and Non-verbal Language in Teaching Narrative Text Reading Comprehension through KWL Strategy to Deaf Students

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### Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the teacher's verbal and non-verbal language during the reading comprehension class. This study was carried out at the special school SMPLB-B YPTB Malang. The sample was eight-graders of hearing impaired students in the academic year of 2021/2022. This study employed mix method design to collect, interpret, and analyze the data. The data was collected through interview, pre-test and post-test, observation sheet, and field note. From the result of this study, it could be seen that the teacher employed verbal language for some purposes during the reading class, they are question, invitation, direction, inform, prompt, encouragement, criticizing, acknowledgement, and comment. And she also used some non-verbal cues like gestures, facial expression, eye contact, distance, haptics, and sign language. And it also could be seen that the KWL reading strategy had been proven to be effective to improve the deaf students' reading comprehension ability. The mean score of the pre-test was 61,5 and the mean score of the pre-test was 81. It showed that the deaf students' reading scores increased by 19,5 points after being taught using the KWL strategy. This strategy also triggered a positive and profound effect on the deaf students' mood which boosted students' participation, motivation, and interest. This research was expected to give a contribution to English teaching learning in special schools..

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## INTRODUCTION

Everyone has the same right to get an appropriate education. And it goes for the students with special needs (SEN) as well. That was the reason why the Indonesian government established special educational schools, usually called Sekolah Luar biasa (SLB) based on Article 16 of Law No. 72 of 1991 which states that every child has the same right to be formally educated individually or together. Special education is a form of institution that is designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities, thus they can learn the same information and skills as their peers in regular school (Firestone, 2015). The curriculum of special schools is similar to regular schools with modifications and adaptations to the special students' needs, and it includes English as one of the subjects taught there. Children with special needs refer to the ones with identified disability, health, or mental health conditions that require early intervention or other special services and supports; or it can be children without those identified conditions, but requiring special services, supports, or monitoring (First 5 California, 2008). Thus, it means that the disabilities could be physical, emotional, or attitude (Firestone, 2015).

For that reason, English language learners with disabilities tend to face many obstacles throughout their academic career, which makes them significantly harder to learn or access education compared to regular students. Especially for those whose native is not English since they have to learn a new language that is away different from their mother tongue and at the same time cope with their disabilities, especially for those with hearing impairment.

Hearing impairment is a term used to describe all degrees and types of hearing loss and deafness that may vary from mild to severe (Westwood, 2011). Thus, it means that they cannot fully process information in the form of sound, while regular students can. They also often show significant delays in phoneme production, vocabulary, and syntax (Cawthon, 2001). Consequently, it may significantly affect their reading skill due to the lack of vocabulary from the sounds they cannot process. While in fact, reading

is the most essential skill to become successful in all academic domains (Brown, 2004). For that reason, reading is crucial to be mastered by deaf students since it is the one and only source of language input for them due to the fact that the auditory channel is limited or even closed. Thereby, it becomes a challenge for the English teachers in special school to arouse and encourage the deaf students to read as well as teach them how to read effectively, critically and meaningfully.

But regarding the disabilities, the way of communication used by the hearing impaired students is indeed different from their hearing peers. Thus, creating a meaningful communication between teachers and students is essential for the effectiveness of the teaching learning process. There are basically two types of communication, they are verbal and non-verbal. Verbal language is a process of delivering information between the communicator with the communicant that uses words, either orally or written (Tannen, 1980). While non-verbal language is a process of delivering messages to others not by words but using gestures/body language, facial expressions, eye contact, physical touches, and distances (Argyle, 1972). Most of the time, deaf students tend to rely more on non-verbal language than verbal one due to the limit of their auditory channel Moores (1974). For this reason, it needs professional teachers who master the hearing impaired students' way of communication so that the communication process runs effectively and the students can apprehend the learning material better and easier.

Based on the preliminary study, the researcher found several problems. In comprehending English passages, students faced some problems which were caused by several things such as a lack of vocabulary, grammar, and motivation. They also got bored easily during the reading class, since they thought that reading an English passage was complicated and hard. As Park & Thomas (2012) said that it is literally not an easy thing to offer an adequate and proper education for English students with disabilities, thus the teachers should aware first about the issues happened in their classes as the consideration to provide appropriate solutions to overcome the

problems and enhance the teaching learning quality.

Referring to those problems above, the researcher proposes an effective reading strategy to assist deaf students during their reading process, which is Know, Want, and Learned (KWL) strategy. It was first developed by Dona Ogle in 1986 and it facilitates the students to be active and independent readers, it helps them to read actively through the learning events individually or in a group. It also helps the readers to elicit prior knowledge of the topic of the text, set a purpose for reading, monitor their comprehension, assess their comprehension, and expand ideas beyond the text (Ogle, 1986). Considering the benefits of the KWL strategy, it supports that this strategy is good to be applied to improve deaf students' reading comprehension ability. Therefore, this study is aimed at analyzing the verbal and non-verbal language used by the teacher in teaching narrative text reading comprehension through the KWL strategy to deaf students in special schools.

## METHOD

This research employed mix method research design, since this study combined the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches within the same study to obtain, analyze and interpret the data. Thus, the result of the data was in the form of a word description with the statistical data as the supporting data. It also offers a more logical ground, methodological flexibility, and an in-depth understanding of cases (Maxwell, 2016). The processes involve emerging questions, planning the procedures, collecting the data, analyzing the data, interpreting the data, and reporting the result of the data.

Technically, there are several steps in conducting this study. The first one, the preliminary stage was done by the researcher to identify the issue in the field. Second, regarding the problems found in the preliminary stage, then some research questions were formulated to help the researcher focuses on investigating the phenomenon. Third, the researcher determined the subject and also the instruments that will be used to gather information. The fifth is analyzing the obtained data and making some interpretations of

them. Thus, all the data obtained was naturally what the researcher found in the field without any direct interference from the researcher.

This study was carried out at the special school SMPLB-B YPTB Malang. The sample was eighth graders of hearing impaired students in the academic year of 2021/2022 which consisted of 8 students. The data was collected through observation, interview, pre-test and post-test, observation sheet, and field note.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings of data analysis to answer research questions.

### Teacher's verbal language in teaching narrative reading comprehension through KWL strategy

The observation results showed that Miss Aisy used verbal language for several reasons that could be divided according to its own purpose, as follows:

- a. The instances of question used by Mrs. Aisy during the teaching and learning process can be seen as follow:

#### Extract 1

*Paham ya penjelasannya? Paham? Paham nda?*

Extract 1 showed that the teacher was checking students' understanding after she explained the instructions to decide whether it was needed or not to repeat the instructions once again.

#### Extract 2

*Ada gambar apa di video tadi? Apa saja?*

The teacher used questions to recall students' memories of the video that they just watched. About anything that they see in the video. This was intended to keep all the students engaged and actively participating during the lesson.

#### Extract 3

*Tikus sama singa tadi di mana? Di rumah? Di jalan? Lah dimana?*

In extract 3 the teacher was trying to check students' understanding regarding the video they just watched. She asked about the setting of the video. It was not stated in the video that the setting

was in the jungle, but it could be implied from the environment in the scene because there were so many trees.

- b. The instances of invitation used by Mrs. Aisy during the teaching and learning process are displayed below:

**Extract 4**

*Ayo maju pimpin doa dan salam.*

The teacher invited one student, who was the captain of the class to come forward and lead her friends to pray together and greet the teacher before they wrapped the lesson up.

**Extract 5**

*Sini maju ke depan kalau tidak kelihatan gambarnya, maju.*

The teacher told the students to come forward since some students squinted their eyes because they could not see the video clearly, but they might be too shy to come forward by themselves without the invitation from the teacher.

- c. The instances of direction used by Mrs. Aisy during the English lesson could be seen as follow:

**Extract 6**

*Ini nanti ada bacaan lalu kalian baca, terus diartikan, boleh buka kamus, terus pertanyaannya dijawab, nanti jawaban dari pertanyaan ini semua ada di teks. Tapi sebelum kalian membaca ini, kalian lihat video dulu ya.*

During the teaching learning process, a teacher should give simple, clear,, and systematic directions. Here the teacher explained the instructions clearly before asking the students to do the task. She explained it systematically, step by step so that the students would not get confused while doing the task later on. She even repeated the instructions about three to four times until the students got a clear concept of what they should do.

**Extract 7**

*Kamu lihat video di laptop, lalu lihat di situ ada gambar apa, contohnya ada gambar singa, boleh di kolom yang ini ditulis singa, tapi lihat dulu videonya, semua gambar yang ada di video tulis di sini ya?*

During the teaching learning process, a teacher should not only explain the instructions but also had to give a simple and relevant example about how to do it as well, so that the students

would be easier to understand the instructions. Here Mrs. Aisy gave examples and demonstrated what the students should write down on the sheet and also where they should write it down clearly.

- d. The instances of inform used by Mrs. Aisy during the English lesson are shown as follows:

**Extract 8**

*Hari ini kita akan belajar tentang memahami teks bahasa Inggris.*

Before starting the lesson, the teacher should inform the students about the material that they were going to learn, which was about reading comprehension in narrative text. So that the students would get a clear concept of what they were going to learn about.

**Extract 9**

*Itu namanya jaring bukan saringan, kalau saringan itu yang buat masak di dapur itu saringan. Kalau ini yang untuk menangkap hewan, namanya jaring. Beda.*

Here the teacher gave information about the name of things that the students got confused at. She corrected the misconception right away and explained to them the correct answer as well as gave them the description of each thing and demonstrated it so that the students could visualize it.

**Extract 10**

*5 boleh. 5 tok gapapa. 5 aja. Tapi kalau bisa lebih boleh.*

The purpose of Extract 10 is to inform the students that they did not have to fill all the 10 numbers in the KWL sheet column 2. The teacher told them that it was good enough to fill in 5 numbers only, but if they could do more, it would be better. She did this since she knew the ability of her students well and did not want to push them beyond their limits.

- e. The instances of prompt used by Mrs. Aisy during the teaching and learning process is shown in Extract 11:

**Extract 11**

*Di dalam hutan ada banyak apa? Baju? Meja? Lah terus apa?*

The teacher gave the students a clue about the setting of the story. She gave them a clue so that

the students could identify by themselves which answer was right and which was wrong.

- f. The instances of acknowledgement used by Mrs. Aisy during the teaching and learning process are displayed below:

**Extract 12**

*Iyaaaa di hutan. Benar. Pinter*

The teacher used acknowledgment to give feedback and praise the students when they got the answer right so that they would feel appreciated and motivated to be more active.

- g. The instances of encouragement used by Mrs. Aisy during the teaching and learning process are shown below:

**Extract 13**

*Oke. Sekarang coba dikerjakan dulu.*

This kind of utterance belongs to encouragement. Since it makes the students more confident to try to do the task given by the teacher.

**Extract 14**

*Apa lagi? Ayo coba diingat-ingat dulu.*

Extract 14 belongs to the encouragement since here the teacher was trying to encourage the students to answer a question, but they could not answer so the teacher asked them to recall their memories to be able to answer the question.

- h. The instances of criticizing used by Mrs. Aisy during the English lesson can be seen below:

**Extract 15**

*Apa Afif? Tadi yang harus ditulis di sini apa? Hm? Makanya perhatikan ya kalau dijelaskan.*

Extract 15 belongs to criticize since here the teacher used that utterance to criticize the student since he was busy with himself and did not pay attention to the lesson when the teacher was explaining.

**Extract 16**

*Dengarkan dulu kalau dijelaskan, jangan main hp sendiri.*

The function of that utterance was to criticize and warn a student who was busy playing with his phone while the teacher was explaining. The students in SMPLB YPTB were allowed to use

a cell phone during the lesson but for learning purposes only, out of that, it was forbidden.

- i. The instance of comment used by Mrs. Aisy during the English lesson can be seen below:

**Extract 17**

*Dinyalakan lampunya. Ini gelap sekali kelasnya.*

Here the teacher tried to make the students more aware of their environment. She said so since she knew well that deaf students were visual learners, so it was a must to ensure that the class condition was supporting visual learning. If it was too dark, then the students would not be able to look clearly at the whiteboard and also could not lipread when the teacher was talking.

- j. There was no ignoring used by Mrs. Aisy during the learning process. She always tried her best to give full attention to the students' questions, answers, ideas, and opinions.

The data collected then was analyzed based on the theory proposed by Sinclair & Brazil (1985). However there were only 9 out of 10 kinds of verbal cues found during the reading class. The data showed that the most frequently used were questioning and informing which stood with the highest percentage among all, 26%. It means that the teacher always tried to keep the students to be active and engaged during the learning process. Then followed by direction 22%, encouragement and acknowledgement 12%, invitation 9%, and criticizing 8%. The least used were comment 7% and prompt 4%. But there was no ignoring found during the reading class. Based on the finding, it was also known that the teacher applied a total communication method that incorporates all means of communication at one time. She synchronized the use of verbal language along with non-verbal language to communicate, explain materials, ask and answer questions, give instructions, warn the students, and even tell a joke. Sometimes when the sentence was not too long, she even only used verbal language, and surprisingly the students still got the point since they were used to lipreading as it was one of the subjects they learned at school, called KBBi which basically was a dictation subject. It was in line with Darmawan (2004) who stated that it was important to embed the habit of always paying attention to the movement of people's mouths and realize that

it could give various messages meanings. Therefore, the teacher always made sure to make her lips move as clearly as possible so that the students could read her lip patterns accurately.

The language used by the teacher during the lesson was mostly Indonesian and sometimes Javanese. She used any possible language and even mixed them together as long as the students could understand the point. English was only used to mention vocabulary. Because as she stated in the interview, that let alone English, the students were still struggling even to form a correct sentence in Indonesian, because their word arrangement was still often got switched one another. It was in line with Hamidah (2013) and Intikasari (2014) who said that the deaf students' ability to receive language was very limited which cause the lack of vocabulary and resulted in their problems with syntax or sentence arrangement. Thus, the teacher always tried to use daily words and simplify the material to make it more understandable for deaf students. It was also found that the teacher always chose words that build and maintain the relationship, she used words that were encouraging, supportive and constructive. She never used destructive words in order to avoid any tension during the lesson.

#### **Teacher's non-verbal language in teaching narrative reading comprehension through KWL strategy**

There were some non-verbal cues commonly used by the teacher during the reading class. The collected data then was analyzed based on the theory proposed by Hans & Hans (2015).

The first one, sign language was the most frequent to appear thus it stood with the highest percentage, 63%. It stands independently and did not being part of other non-verbal cues since it includes other non-verbal cues all at once. This kind of non-verbal language was mostly used by the teacher, as it was the most common way of communication used to communicate with hearing impaired students. But since the teacher applied a total communication approach, she always used verbal language along with sign language to support and make it more understandable for the students.

Then followed by gesture and eye contact which had the same percentage about 19%. Gesture was important to communicate meaning without words, especially for deaf students since they were visual learners. The example was hand movements, she used it when she was pointing to students to give them a chance to express their ideas, pointing to the text to explain the instructions, and pointing to the KWL sheet to explain what the students should fill in each column of the KWL sheet, pointing the video to tell the students to watch it carefully, and waving hands to get the students' attention when they were busy talking with their friends. She also used head movements like shaking her head to indicate 'no' when the student's answer was not correct and nodding as feedback when the student gave the correct answer. And the eye contact was also important since the eyes play a crucial role to maintain the flow of conversation, especially for the deaf since they listen with their eyes. It was also a sign of respect in the deaf community. Thus, as the teacher said in the interview, it was very important to maintain solid eye contact so that the deaf students knew that they were being part of the conversation.

The fourth was facial expression with the percentage of 11%. Facial expressions were responsible for a huge proportion of non-verbal communication. Especially for deaf students, as the teacher said in the interview that deaf students always paid full attention to the interlocutor's face because it was able to enhance the meaning of the sign or even totally change it. There were several facial expressions shown by the teacher, they were angry, upset, happy, confused, and proud. The first was angry, the teacher showed this kind of expression to make the students behave when they were busy talking to each other and did not pay attention to her. She made her expression bold and clear by giving an angry glare, her eyebrows were up, and she also tightened her lips. She used this expression so that the students knew about their misbehavior so they would not do it again in the future. The next was an upset expression, she showed this expression when there was a student who just gave a rambling answer because he did not pay good attention while the teacher was explaining. She frowned, squinted her eyes, and

tightened her lips a bit. The next one was a happy expression. She showed this expression when she and the students were joking around. She laughed, exposed her teeth, her eyes narrowed until there were some wrinkles appeared, and her cheekbones were also raised. It meant that she was enjoying the moments during the teaching and learning process. Next was a confused expression. The teacher made this expression when she did not understand what the point of the student's answer was. When confused, she stopped and seemed to think for a moment, her eyebrows went down together, she squinted her eyes, and furrowed her forehead. And the last was a proud expression, the teacher showed this expression when she was walking around to check students' work, and some students did it very well so she felt so proud and made this kind of expression unconsciously. She made a little smile, raised her eyebrows, and tilted her head slightly back. She did it along with a little nodding gesture.

The fifth was distance with the percentage of 5%. Since the teacher applied an individual approach so the distance played an important role. She kept the distance remained close so that the students would be easier to lipread the teacher's lips and catch other non-verbal cues thrown by the teacher. And the last one was haptics or physical touch with the least percentage 2%. This was the most rarely used non-verbal cue by the teacher. Maybe because the other non-verbal cues were enough to cover the use of haptics, she used them only for particular occasions like patting on students' shoulders as a signal to call them when they were not noticing that they were being called by the teacher.

Due to the fact that there was a limit in the auditory channel, so the other senses would be taking over, and as a result, the deaf would become more sensitive to every little non-verbal cue given by the interlocutor. Thus it was important for the educators who taught the hearing-impaired students to give extra attention to their non-verbal cues during the interaction with the students.

#### **The relationship among teachers' verbal and non-verbal language, KWL strategy, and deaf students' reading comprehension**

The KWL reading strategy was proven to be significantly affecting the way how the students read and comprehend English text, and as a result also affected the outcomes as well. After being taught using this strategy, the deaf students were more capable of mapping the main ideas of the text and comprehending English text better compared to a conventional way. This strategy also helped them to be more active readers that actively engaged before, during, and after they deal with the text. Thus, in brief, this strategy promoted active learning which triggered the students to be autonomous learners (Dieu, 2015).

Teachers' verbal and non-verbal language was also very essential since it was very likely affecting students' learning outcomes and behavior as well. According to Gorham (1988), the use of both verbal and non-verbal communication together had a significant positive impact which had a direct effect on the students' learning achievement, good attitude, and affective learning. From the finding, we could see that the teacher's verbal and non-verbal affected deaf students' comprehension process of the learning material, which resulted in the improvement of reading comprehension skills. As we could see from the finding that the teacher performed a good verbal and non-verbal language so it was very helpful for the deaf students to understand the material and instructions better. And from the research finding we could also see that the teacher's verbal cues were found to be highly consistent with the non-verbal cues, the verbal and non-verbal cues supported one another and did not show any contrast in meaning, so that did not make the students confused. It was in line with Walker & Trimboli (1989) who said that since the communication itself is a complex and dynamic process, the interpretation of the verbal and non-verbal cues is very contextually dependent so they must work side by side.

Therefore, it could be concluded that there was a relationship between teachers' verbal and non-verbal language, KWL strategy, and deaf students' reading comprehension. Those variables were related to one another in affecting the result of the students' reading comprehension ability.

### **The effectiveness of KWL strategy to teach narrative text reading comprehension to deaf students in special school**

Reading comprehension had been an ongoing concern for deaf and hard hearing students. That made this topic of reading comprehension extremely important. Benedict et al., (2015) said that the challenging part was that deaf students often fail to grasp that the point of reading was to understand what they are reading, not just merely read the word. Based on the finding, the KWL reading strategy had been proven to affect the result of students' reading comprehension ability. It could be seen that there was a significant improvement in deaf students' reading comprehension scores before and after being taught by KWL reading strategy. It was proven by the increase in mean scores between the pre-test and the post-test. The result of the post-test mean score was higher than the pre-test mean score. The mean score of the pre-test was 61,5 and the mean score of the post-test was 81. It showed that the mean score had increased by 19,5 points. Thus, it indicated that the deaf students' reading comprehension ability was getting better after receiving the KWL reading strategy as the treatment. After being taught using this strategy, the deaf students were more capable of mapping the main ideas of the text and comprehending English text better compared to the conventional way. This strategy also helped them to become active readers that actively engaged before, during, and after they deal with the text. It was in line with Dieu (2015) who stated that this strategy promoted active learning which triggered the students to be autonomous learners. Thus, it could be concluded that this strategy was effective in improving the reading comprehension performance of deaf students.

Moreover, this strategy also triggered a positive and profound effect on the students' mood. The three stages of the KWL strategy were able to boost the atmosphere of reading class into the more attractive one, it also boosted students' participation, motivation, and interest since they needed to find the answers to their own inquiries which allowed the new information to stay in their long term memory. It was in line with Norasing (1997) who stated that almost all students were

interested in the KWL reading strategy as it was able to increase the students' readability power towards reading comprehension. Therefore, the use of the reading strategy was important since it was really helpful for the students to read and comprehend English text in a better and easier way so that the reading process would be more meaningful yet enjoyable.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis and discussion, the researchers got some points that can be drawn. The teacher employed verbal cues for some specific purposes. Questioning and informing stood with the highest percentage among all which is at 26%, followed by direction at 22%, followed by encouragement and acknowledgement which had the same percentage at 12%, invitation 9%, and criticizing 8%. The least used by the teacher were prompt 7% and comment 4%. And there was no ignoring found during the reading class.

And there were also some non-verbal cues used by the teacher to support the verbal language. Sign language was the most frequently appear thus it stood with the highest percentage, 63% followed by gestures and eye contact which had the same percentage about 19%, facial expression 11%, distance 5%, and haptics had the least percentage at 2% since it was rarely used by the teacher. It also could be concluded that the teacher used non-verbal cues to support verbal language, but not replace it. The teacher's verbal cues were found to be highly consistent with the non-verbal cues, the verbal and non-verbal supported one another and did not show any contrast in meaning, so it did not make the students confused.

The KWL reading strategy was proven to be significantly affecting the reading comprehension performance of deaf students. It was proven by the increasing mean score between the pre-test and the post-test. The mean score of the pre-test was 61,5 and the mean score of the post-test was 81. It showed that the mean score had increased by 19,5 points. Thus, it indicated that the deaf students' reading comprehension ability was getting better after receiving the KWL reading strategy as the treatment. Moreover, this strategy also triggered a positive and profound effect on the students'



mood. The three stages of the KWL strategy were able to boost the atmosphere of the reading class into the more attractive one, it also boosted students' participation, motivation, and interest.

Thus, it was proven that the use of KWL strategy along with the proper and appropriate verbal and non-verbal cues from the teacher significantly affected deaf students' reading comprehension ability.

The researcher proposes some suggestions for those who are closely related to hearing impaired students, special schools, and English teaching learning. For teachers, they should teach deaf students several kinds of reading strategies, especially KWL reading strategy. So that the students will gradually build their own awareness and habit of using reading strategies to help them comprehend an English text meaningfully, critically, and easier. And they also have to be aware of the weight of their way of communication, either verbal or non-verbal, since it has a significant impact on the students' learning outcomes, motivation, and attitudes as well. For students, they are suggested to employ various reading strategies especially the KWL reading strategy to assist them in comprehending passages in an easier, more critical, and meaningful way. For further researchers, they are suggested to investigate deeper in this field since there are still so many gaps that need to be explored to give insight into the special school's teaching and learning development so that students with special educational needs can get the equal education service and have the same opportunity as their hearing peers in the regular schools.

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