Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents several points to discuss the main focus of the research. This chapter is arranged into the background of the research, statement and limitation of the research, research question, the purpose of the research, significance of the research, and organization of the research.

Background of the Research

One of the institutions that give a huge influence to education is school. This indicates that school is an important part of our life. The first step of becoming a successful person begins in school. Based on the act of education system of Indonesia, education types involve general, vocational, academic, professional, religious, and special education (Indonesia, 2003). Darma and Rusyidi (2015) noted that the facility of special education namely special needs school or *Sekolah Luar Biasa* (SLB) is provided for special needs students in Indonesia. Students with special needs deserve a special school, treatment, and educators that are ready and enthusiastic to teach them. According to Vaughn and Linan-Thompson (2003), the initial purpose of special needs school was to ensure that the students with disability were given an opportunity to attend and benefit from education. BPS (2012) noted that in Indonesia, there are approximately 9,9 million children with disability (as cited in Juharoh, 2020).

Thus, special needs schools are needed in order to make students with disability receive a proper education. Children with special needs are those who have a disability of hearing or sight, either physically or mentally. This is in line with Winarsih (2013) who mentioned that students with special needs are students that has abnormality or differences (physical mental-intellectual, social, emotional) in the

process of development or relative progression from other students in their age (as cited Juharoh, 2020). Therefore, parents' role is important in knowing and being aware of their children's disability that needs a special school and treatment from teachers in a special needs school that teach differently from other school. Special needs school certainly has a different treatment or strategies on teaching the students that need special instruction to learn.

One of the kinds of special needs students is those with visual impairment, some are indicated by a low vision while the rest may be indicated by a total blindness. By knowing the disability of students, teacher should be aware of the kind of strategies used in their teaching. Basaran (2012) noted that visually impaired students have a decreased ability to see; hence, most of visually impaired students have a different way to interact with other students and different style in learning language. They rely on verbalism when learning due to their decreased ability to see. Therefore, visually impaired students are unlike the majority of other students because they spent more time in their learning process. Moreover, it is not easy for teacher to manage the teaching and learning process to match the schedule and duration in the class (Orsini-Jones, 2005).

Visually impaired students have to learn four skills in English, which are speaking, reading, writing, and listening, in the classroom. However, visually impaired students may face challenges to improve their reading and writing skill. Visually impaired students need teachers with suitable role and strategy to support them in increasing their reading and writing skill in online English learning. Although visually impaired students have some difficulties to see, they have some advantages, such as great memorizing skill and stronger verbal memory, especially in learning foreign language, which implies fast progress in language learning (Arslantaş, 2017).

Thus, teachers' role to teach visually impaired students in English learning is highly required.

COVID-19 pandemic effected the world of education especially in Indonesia. Rasmitadila et al (2020) stated that the changes in learning structures are pushing schools to introduce online learning, e-learning, distance learning, correspondence education, external research, flexible learning, and massive open online (MOOC) courses. Educators in Indonesia have more struggle in managing learners to understand their learning process. Educators for special needs students, especially visually impaired students, need to learn more about the technology to teach English online. Yadav & Mishra (2015) noted that online education has changed pedagogically from conventional to new teaching techniques, from classroom to Zoom classroom, from personal to digital, and from seminars to webinars. In this time of pandemic, teachers that teach visually impaired students in English language are required to teach online while also deepen their understanding on online teaching. According to Adedoyin and Soykan (2020), online learning is the use of the internet and many other essential tools for the production of educational content, instructional delivery, and program management.

Therefore, the challenges to teach online for visual impaired students emerge during this time of the pandemic. In other word, one of the most challenging issues that is faced by teachers is bad internet connection, which is commonly occur when the learning activity is conducted online. Furthermore, the process of teaching and delivering English learning materials for visually impaired students that is conducted virtually will emerge challenges for teachers. Teachers should prepare strategies to overcome the challenges, such as maintaining a good communication with students and their parents to discuss the problem faced by visually impaired students during

their learning process. In addition, the tasks given by teachers for particular learning materials should suit students' need and adjust students' potential. Moreover, teacher have to provide individual work for students with visual impairment to let them focus on the materials given by teachers.

In this time of pandemic, teachers are required to be able to learn more about proper usage of technology for their students' learning process. Susilowati (2020) stated that in time of pandemic, online learning can be described as the use of the internet to access information; to collaborate with content, teachers, and other students; and to gain assistance in the learning process to gain knowledge. Additionally, to achieve the information and knowledge for students, teachers should provide various social media platform to be used in time of COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, WhatsApp, Zoom, Microsoft team, Google Form, and YouTube are useful for both teachers and students' needs. WhatsApp is a social messaging application to send group and private messages using text or audio with simple navigation and fast interaction (Libera & Jurberg, 2019). One of the social media platforms that teachers commonly use is WhatsApp to help visually impaired students to interact with their teachers easily through screen reader, group video, or voice note. Therefore, this indicates that in the era of modern technology, every activity is run online, including teaching activity in educational context.

English teaching and learning process is usually conducted in school to let direct communication between students and teachers in a classroom. However, for online English teaching and learning process for visually impaired students requires teachers' immense effort. Teachers should learn technology with enthusiast and figure out the strategies and teaching materials suitable for visually impaired students. Additionally, visually impaired students still follow advanced education era and they

also have an opportunity to learn online using technology like the majority of students.

Statement of the Problem

Schools in Indonesia have been applying online English teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, including SLB in Indonesia. Thus, this research focuses on SLB in Yogyakarta, Kebumen, and Bangka; specifically, for type A SLB which is for visually impaired students. Visually impaired students are one of the kinds of students with disabilities. They have difficulties to see and certainly need various suitable teaching strategies to support their learning process. Students with visual impairment rely more on their listening skill to learn and also use braille if required. Teaching and learning process that are normally conducted in a classroom is easy to do because the teachers were able to control the class and are able to see their students' activity directly. However, in online teaching and learning activity, the teachers are faced with challenges to control the online situation and to make sure that all of the students join the online class and ready to learn. In the other word, teachers need parents' role in online learning for visual impairment students, and that is become the most challenge for teachers when conducted this online teaching and learning, teachers need the involved of the students' parents. Parents are expected to support visual impairment students during the online learning. In the other hand, that is not easy for visual impairment students learning by themselves in a home, they need parents' support and involvement in online learning. Moreover, they have a limitation in their sight to conduct online learning and there are no teachers to help them to doing their task. However, a lot of parents were not aware the situation that their children need a role of parents as a replacement for teachers in online learning. That is bring a challenge for teacher that sometimes students were not submit the task

before the deadline. In this case, support and a role of parents are really obligated to applied during online learning to help visual impairment students achieve their target learning.

Delimitation of the Problem

Based on the statements of the problem, the researcher focuses on investigating the challenges and the online teaching strategies for visually impaired students. Regarding the problem of this study, the researcher was interested to broadly explore the challenges faced by teachers to teach English online. Moreover, the researcher found out the strategies that were implemented by teachers to solve the problems. Three SLB in this research implemented synchronous and asynchronous online learning. The synchronous learning was conducted via Zoom meetings or video calls in WhatsApp once a week to check their activity and understanding of particular materials they learned. Afterwards, the implementation of asynchronous learning was for the task and assignment which students should submit in the due date applied by teachers. The examples of the task were video activity task or voice note task for particular learning materials. According to Simamora (2020), synchronous learning is an interaction where participants communicate in the same timeframe such as video conferencing, while asynchronous learning is time-separated communication such as e-mail or online discussion forums. The three English teachers as participants are concerned to only teach senior high school students. Thus, this research only focuses on visually impaired students in senior high school.

Research Question

The researcher would like to find out the strategies of teachers to teach English language online at special needs school, specifically for visual impaired students. The research focus is formulated in the following questions:

1. What are the challenges faced by teachers to teach English online to visually impaired students?

2. What are the teachers' strategies to overcome the challenges in teaching English to visually impaired students?

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the study is to answer the formulation of the study, they are:

1. To find out the challenges faced by teachers to teach English online to visually impaired students of junior high school at SLB in Yogyakarta, elementary school at SLB in Kebumen, and senior high school at SLB in Bangka.

2. To identify teachers' strategies to teach English online to visually impaired students of junior high school at SLB in Yogyakarta, elementary school at SLB in Kebumen, and senior high school at SLB in Bangka.

Significance of the Research

The results of the study have significance for several parties. They are listed as follows:

Students

This study is useful for students who conduct online learning. From this research, the students can get new experience of online learning from the teacher to enhance English learning skill based on the teacher's teaching strategy. Thus, the result of this research is beneficial for visually impaired students' online learning.

Teacher

This study is beneficial for the teachers, especially for those who face challenges in teaching English online to visually impaired students. The findings of this study may be used to encourage teachers to be conscious of the challenges that they face along with the strategies to overcome the problems. In addition, this study is

useful as a review of their online teaching for visual impaired students. Moreover, this research may be used as a future reference for teachers on how visually impaired students can be taught.

Other Researchers

This research can be used as references for other researchers who want to conduct the same topic or focus of research. This research can also be used as a resource for other researchers who want to know the best strategies to be used in teaching English to visually impaired students.

Organization of the Research

This research consists of five chapters which explain an overview of each research chapter. The first part of this research is introduction. The introduction consists of background of the research, statement and limitation of the research, research question as formulation in this research, purpose of the research, the significant of the research, and outline of the research. The second chapter includes literature review. This chapter presents the theory of the challenges faced by teachers in online teaching for visually impaired students. Moreover, this research consists of theories regarding the strategies that teachers apply in online English teaching for visually impaired students. Moreover, chapter two covers explanation of special needs school, curriculum for special needs students, visually impaired students, challenges to teach visually impaired students online, strategies to teach visually impaired students, and review of related studies. At the end of chapter two, the conceptual framework is also included.

Chapter three discusses research methodology. This chapter gives clear illustration of how this research was conducted and how the data were collected. The third chapter focuses on the research methodology in collecting data which includes

design of the study. The setting of the study was in three different SLB which are in Yogayakarta, Kebumen, and Bangka. Participants of the study were three English teachers: junior high school teacher in Yogyakarta, elementary school teacher in Kebumen, and senior high school teacher in Bangka. Interview was used as the data collection method. The data collection procedure consisted of the researcher conducting the meeting for approximately 45 to 60 minutes in Indonesian language. For data analysis, the researcher transcribed all the interview data to be analyzed. Last but not least, the researcher coded the data.

In chapter four, the research finding and discussion are discussed. The fourth chapter of this study presents the findings of the study to identify the challenges faced by teachers in online teaching for visually impaired students and strategies to overcome the challenges. The findings for challenges were having bad internet connection, difficulty in choosing teaching materials, difficulty in personalizing lesson plan, difficulty in delivering materials, and lack of parents' support. For the strategies, there were providing an individual work, providing comprehensible materials, adapting the curriculum, motivating the students, using social media platform, and managing the time. Last but not least, chapter five includes the conclusion and recommendation. The first part is the conclusion of the research which has been inferred by the researcher based on the finding and discussion. The second part is recommendation or suggestion, there are four recommendation or suggestion which are for students, teachers, parents and other researcher.