

EXPLORING TEACHER'S COMPETENCIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR DEAF STUDENTS AT 8TH GRADE OF SLB NEGERI MANDIRAJA, BANJARNEGARA

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore English teachers' competencies in teaching deaf students at the eighth grade of SLB Negeri Mandiraja, Banjarnegara. Employing a qualitative case study design within a constructivist paradigm, data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving two English teachers and the school principal. The findings were analyzed based on four core teacher competencies mandated by Indonesian educational regulations: pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competence. The results reveal that the teachers demonstrated strong social and personal competencies, reflected in effective communication, empathy, professionalism, and positive role modeling. Pedagogical and professional competencies were partially fulfilled, as teachers showed strengths in understanding students' characteristics, adapting materials, and using visual-based instruction, but faced limitations in technology integration, reflective practices, and innovation. Overall, the study concludes that while the teachers possess a solid foundation of competence, continuous professional development is necessary to enhance pedagogical and professional competencies to improve the quality of English instruction for deaf students..

Keywords: *Teacher Competence, English Teacher, Deaf Students, Special School, Qualitative Study*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' academic and personal development and are central to improving the overall quality of education. Beyond transmitting knowledge, teachers act as facilitators, motivators, and role models who design, implement, and evaluate learning processes to ensure that educational objectives are achieved. In the context of rapidly changing educational demands, teachers are required to adapt pedagogical strategies, integrate appropriate technology, and foster inclusive learning environments. Consequently, teacher competence becomes a key factor in determining the success of educational practices and future-oriented learning paradigms (Muhammadiyah et al., 2022).

Language serves as a primary means of communication and social interaction, enabling individuals to express ideas and connect with others (Yulizah et al., 2024). In Indonesia, English has become an essential subject within the education system, prompting continuous development in teaching methodologies, curriculum design, and assessment practices. The effectiveness of English language instruction is highly dependent on teachers' instructional competence, particularly in contexts where English is taught as a foreign language (Mappiasse & Sihes, 2014).

Special schools are educational institutions designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities, including those with hearing impairments (Irawati, 2023). Teaching English in special education settings presents unique challenges, as deaf students often experience difficulties related to limited vocabulary, low motivation, insufficient learning media, and teaching strategies that are not fully adapted to their physical and cognitive conditions (Yulizah et al., 2024). These challenges highlight the importance of teachers' ability to design appropriate materials, apply effective

instructional strategies, and understand students' specific learning needs (Dewi, 2019).

Teaching English to deaf learners also requires overcoming communication barriers, reliance on visual-based instruction, limited availability of sign language support, and the need for adapted literacy strategies (Gerald & Joseph, 2025; Polok & Surma, 2022). Teachers must modify learning materials, select suitable media, and employ alternative communication strategies to ensure effective learning (Ristiani, 2018). In Indonesia, Law No. 14 of 2005 mandates that teachers possess pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies to carry out their roles effectively.

Preliminary interviews conducted at SLB Negeri Mandiraja, Banjarnegara revealed that teaching English to deaf students requires specific competencies, including the use of visual aids, sign language, simplified materials, patience, creativity, and flexibility. Given the distinct characteristics of English instruction in special schools compared to mainstream junior high schools, this study aims to explore the competencies of English teachers in teaching deaf students at the eighth grade of SLB Negeri Mandiraja, Banjarnegara.

This research question is elaborated into:

- a. What competencies are possessed by the English teacher at SLB Negeri Mandiraja, Banjarnegara?
- b. How does the English teacher apply these competencies at SLB Negeri Mandiraja, Banjarnegara?

Research Objective, this research aims to:

- a. The first objective of this research is to identify the competencies possessed by the English teacher at SLB Negeri Mandiraja, Banjarnegara. This objective focuses on examining the teacher's pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies as required by national education standards. By

identifying these competencies, the study seeks to provide a clear description of the teacher's overall competence in teaching English to deaf students. Research Significance.

- b. The second objective of this research is to describe how the English teacher applies these competencies in the teaching and learning process at SLB Negeri Mandiraja, Banjarnegara. This objective emphasizes exploring the practical implementation of the teacher's competencies in classroom activities, instructional strategies, communication, and interactions with students and other stakeholders. Through this analysis, the study aims to understand how teacher competence contributes to the effectiveness of English instruction in a special education context.

To ensure focus and analytical depth, this research has the following limitation

Teachers' Competence refers to the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes across pedagogical, personal, professional, and social dimensions that enable teachers to carry out their duties effectively, responsibly, and ethically (Patras et al., 2023; Zakiah et al., 2022).

Students with Special Needs are learners with sensory, intellectual, physical, or socio-emotional limitations who require individualized support and adaptive instruction to achieve their academic and personal potential (Nugrogo, 2025; Fasica et al., 2023).

Deaf Students are individuals with partial to total hearing loss that affects communication and development, requiring specialized instructional approaches to support effective learning (Nofiaturrehman, 2018; Bowen & Probst, 2023).

These limitations were deliberately established to maintain sufficient analytical depth in examining English teacher competencies for deaf students, while recognizing that ongoing developments in educational practices and assistive technologies may influence the broader applicability of the findings over time.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive field research design aimed at exploring English teacher competencies in teaching deaf students. Field research was chosen because the study sought to examine educational phenomena as they naturally occurred within the school context. A descriptive analytical approach was applied to systematically portray and interpret the teaching practices, behaviors, and competencies demonstrated by the English teacher during the instructional process.

Qualitative research was selected to provide an in-depth understanding of social and educational phenomena from the participants' perspectives. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of spoken or written words and observable behavior, enabling researchers to examine phenomena holistically. This approach emphasizes non-numerical data such as observations, interviews, and documents to capture meanings, perceptions, and contextual realities that cannot be adequately explained through statistical analysis.

Furthermore, qualitative research views reality as socially constructed and shaped by human experiences. It does not merely describe phenomena but also explores underlying processes, contexts, and meanings. As stated by Gullion (2024), qualitative inquiry is grounded in philosophical foundations involving ontology, epistemology, and the role of theory in interpreting social realities. In line with this view, the present study sought to build a comprehensive understanding of English teacher competencies as applied in special education settings. This perspective is supported by Sidiq and Choiri (2019), who emphasize that qualitative research is particularly suitable for examining complex social phenomena closely related to human interactions and educational practices.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at SLB Negeri Mandiraja, Banjarnegara, located on Jl. Desa Kebakalan, Mandiraja District, Banjarnegara Regency. Data collection took place over approximately three weeks, from November 4 to November 21, 2025.

The participant of this study was one English teacher who taught eighth-grade deaf students at the school. The object of the research focused on the implementation of the teacher's competencies—pedagogical, professional, social, and personal—during the English teaching and learning process. The study also examined lesson plans and instructional practices designed to meet the specific needs of deaf students, recognizing that English instruction in special schools differs significantly from that in mainstream junior high schools due to the necessity of adaptive and individualized approaches.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation to ensure data triangulation and enhance credibility.

Observation

Non-participant classroom observation was conducted to obtain objective data regarding the implementation of teacher competencies. The researcher observed teaching and learning activities without participating in them. Two observation sessions were carried out to examine pedagogical competence (lesson planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, and assessment), professional competence (subject matter mastery and instructional materials), social competence (teacher–student interaction and communication), and personal competence (teacher attitudes, discipline, and professionalism).

Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information regarding the teacher's perspectives and experiences in implementing the four competencies.

Interviews allowed the researcher to explore meanings, motivations, and reflections that could not be fully captured through observation alone (Sugiyono, 2017). Three interview sessions were conducted with the English teacher to discuss pedagogical strategies, professional development, communication practices, and personal values in teaching deaf students.

Documentation

Documentation was used to support observational and interview data. The collected documents included teaching modules, students' worksheets, and photographs of classroom activities. These materials provided concrete evidence of instructional planning and classroom implementation, particularly in relation to pedagogical and professional competence.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's qualitative data analysis framework, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

Data Reduction involved selecting, simplifying, and categorizing data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation to focus on relevant information related to teacher competencies.

Data Display was conducted by organizing reduced data into thematic categories, including understanding students, instructional design, curriculum development, and learning evaluation.

Conclusion Drawing involved interpreting the organized data to generate meaningful conclusions regarding the competencies of English teachers in teaching deaf students at SLB Negeri Mandiraja, Banjarnegara.

DISCUSSION

This study reveals that the English teacher demonstrated varying levels of competence in teaching deaf students. Pedagogical competence was partially fulfilled, as the teacher showed strong understanding of students' characteristics, curriculum alignment, structured instruction, empathetic communication, and assessment practices. However, limitations were found in technology integration, development of students' potential, use of assessment results for improvement, and reflective teaching, indicating a gap between theory and practice (Ranta et al., 2023; Trihantoyo et al., 2023).

Professional competence was achieved at a moderate to strong level. The teacher demonstrated subject-matter mastery, adaptation of learning materials, logical instruction, professional responsibility, and commitment to self-development. Nevertheless, innovation, research-based practice, reflective actions, and ICT use were not optimally implemented (Ismail, 2010; Orazbayeva, 2016; Channa et al., 2024).

Social competence was fully demonstrated through effective, empathetic communication, collaboration with colleagues and parents, adaptability, and inclusive, non-discriminatory practices, supporting previous studies (Maulina & Zumrotun, 2024; Sagita et al., 2022).

Personal competence was strongly fulfilled, reflected in moral integrity, professionalism, emotional stability, empathy, and commitment to continuous self-development. However, adaptability to broader educational changes still requires improvement (Ismail, 2010; Tolipov, 2022; Molina-Moreno et al., 2024).

Overall, while social and personal competencies were strong, pedagogical and professional competencies need further development to improve the effectiveness of English instruction for deaf students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion conducted, several main conclusions can be drawn as answers to the research questions:

This study concludes that the English teacher at the eighth grade of SLB Negeri Mandiraja demonstrated varying levels of competence in teaching deaf students. Social and personal competencies were strongly fulfilled, while pedagogical and professional competencies were achieved at a partial to moderate level.

Pedagogically, the teacher showed strengths in understanding students' characteristics, applying learning theories, developing curricula, implementing structured instruction, communicating empathetically, and conducting assessments. However, limitations were found in technology integration, development of students' potential, use of assessment results for instructional improvement, and reflective practices. Professionally, the teacher demonstrated subject-matter mastery, curriculum alignment, adaptation of learning materials, and professional responsibility, but lacked innovation, research-based practice, systematic reflection, and ICT use.

In contrast, social competence was fully demonstrated through effective, empathetic communication, collaboration, and inclusive practices. Personal competence was also strong, reflected in professionalism, moral integrity, emotional stability, empathy, and commitment to self-development, though adaptability to educational changes requires improvement.

Overall, continuous and targeted professional development is needed to strengthen pedagogical and professional competencies to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of English instruction for deaf students

Acknowledgments

The researchers would like to gratefully acknowledge the Rector of University Islam Negeri Prof. K.H. saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto.

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