Methods of Teaching and Learning of Jawi Braille to Visually Impaired Students in Special Education Religious Schools

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ABSTRACT

Jawi Braille Script is one medium to learn the letters and proper articulation of the Quran as well as Islamic Education learning medium for visually impaired students. They also studied the Islamic Education and the Quran just like other normal students using mainstream curriculum. However, the main issue among teachers of students with visual disabilities is because they are less able to apply the methods to suit the students’ need. Hence this paper will somehow reveal to the readers about the concept of strategies, approaches, methods and techniques used in the teaching and learning of Jawi Braille briefly. In addition, the study also describes the methods used in the teaching and learning of Jawi Braille in detail. This qualitative case study using semi-structured interview method and content analysis of the data. The findings indicate that strategies used were teacher-centered method of teaching and learning by dictation, listening and speaking, drill, memorizing, demonstrations, and lectures. With this exposure, it is expected to provide some guidance and appropriate methods for educators in the field of special education, thus contributing to the educational needs of visually impaired students with Special Needs.

Keywords: Teaching and learning method, Jawi Braille, Visually impaired students

INTRODUCTION

For Visually Impaired Students with Special Needs, they also learn religious subjects just like the normal students. Referring to the National Education Policy, the rights of children with visual disabilities is never compromised. Jawi module is one of the module in the Islamic Studies that
focus on skills to learn and read in Jawi. Weakness in reading in Jawi among students was not new. Lack of proficiency in Jawi will lead to the problem of implementing Islamic education and reading the Quran. According to the study by Che Pee (1983), among the problems faced in implementing the teaching of Islamic education in schools were including students’ weakness in mastering Quran and Jawi reading in primary schools. This is also happened to visually impaired students with Special Needs. This was due to teachers were less successful in applying the strategy, approach, method, technique that were suitable for visually impaired students (Norhasnira et al 2015). Using an effective method is very important for students to receive instruction, however, the study by Akmariah & Sofia (2010) and Lionel (2012) states that there were very few teachers who were not emphasized the use of appropriate methods to students. Therefore, this study aims to explain briefly the concept of strategies, approaches, methods and techniques in teaching and learning. In addition, the use of Jawi Braille in teaching and learning methods used by teachers for visually impaired students are also explained in detail.

STRATEGIES, APPROACHES, METHODS AND TECHNIQUES CONCEPT IN LEARNING

Coherence between strategies, approaches, methods, and techniques are necessary to improve the quality of teaching and learning process (Kamarul & Aderi 2013). According to Mok Soon Sang (2009), the concept of strategy in teaching and learning was not limited to planning and determination of methods and teaching techniques alone. In fact, it is also included things such as approach determination based on study objective, selection and preparation of methods and teaching techniques based on the approach defined by principles and theories. In addition, optimum distribution of time, the use of teaching materials and classroom management according to the needs of each strategy and appropriate measures should also be taken into account.

According to Che Siah (2006) strategy is the knowledge of the ways of planning and execution to achieve a purpose. It also involves the methods and techniques to convey a lesson content in an effective manner in lines with strategy selection criteria based on subject, learning outcomes, student’s ability, types of teaching and learning activities as well as integrated principles (Mok Soon Sang, 2009). According to Ibn Khaldun, in teaching strategies, the teacher must ensure that each content of teaching and the problems should be solved first before moving on to another topic (Kamarul & Aderi 2013) in addition of teacher’s wisdom to select and apply the approach, methods, and techniques of teaching based on learning objectives (Zamri Mahamod 2014). Therefore, the strategy can be summed up to ability of the teacher in selecting approaches, methods, teaching techniques by looking at certain criteria based on the study objectives.

Approach is an overall or general view about delivering lesson. Starting a task is also a type of approach (Che Siah 2006). This including how to change concrete to the abstract, simple to complex, from whole to parts, from the general to the particular, from the specific to the general, from near to far, from the known to the unknown (Kamarul & Aderi 2013) based on defined learning objectives (Zamri Mahamod 2014). Therefore, teaching and learning approaches is a comprehensive overview on the lessons delivered by refering to the way it was taught.

Meanwhile, teaching methods is a series of systematic actions by teacher in order to achieve teaching objectives with structured delivering method, with relation to the specific theoretical approaches (Mohd Yusuf 2000 & Esah 2004). Che Siah 2006 & Mok Soon Sang 2009 stated that the method is a teaching procedure that are the step and stage based on the objectives. Teaching methods used must be closely linked to the approach used (Zamri Mahamod 2014). Therefore, we can conclude that, the teaching method is and how teachers deliver lesson systematically and methodically based on the objectives and the approach used.
According to (Ahmad 1997), technique is a small unit contained in a method. It was also the skills and behaviors of teacher in the management and application of teaching methods in the teaching and learning activities to make effective teaching methods and achieve the objectives (Zamri Mahamod 2014 & Esah Sulaiman, 2004). The technique can also be defined as the most effective way to achieve the objectives of the lesson immediately (Che Siah 2006). Therefore, the definition of teaching and learning techniques can be summarized as a small unit that is the teacher's skills in applying methods used in order to have effective teaching methods and achieve the lesson objectives.

In conclusion, in the teaching and learning of Jawi Braille, it covers strategy and wisdom of teacher in selecting approaches and efficiency of using methods and techniques in teaching based on selected learning outcomes. Meanwhile, learning is a process of acceptance by the students. Teaching and learning are a combination of teaching methods that are involving the teacher and students and helping one another.

JAWI BRAILLE TEACHING AND LEARNING METHOD

Jawi is not only learned by normal students only. In fact, it is also learned by visually impaired students with special needs. Teachers who teach the visually impaired students must have appropriate teaching skills to suit their needs. Therefore, teachers need to have basic Braille Code, as well as skill to use Braille machine and read the Braille (Mohd Mokhtar & Aliza 2004) before choosing an appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

In order to achieve lesson objective, it is very important for teacher to choose suitable approaches, methods and teaching techniques. The consolidation plan is known as teaching strategies. Teachers should think of teaching strategies to meet the needs of students from different levels of mastery as well as integrate their teaching methods in order to form an effective teaching and learning.

Method to use need to be choose and planned beforehand in order to maximize time and minimize non-productive activities while the uncertainty of method selection mostly due to the differences among teacher, students, and lesson topics. Using various teaching methods will make the learning process more efficient and increase student motivation to learn. However, selecting appropriate method should be based on the students level and ability.

Based from the interviews, there were several methods used by the teachers. Those methods are suitable for visually impaired students in order to learn Jawi. Methods used including reading and writing methods. Among the method used is dictation, listening and speaking, drills, memorization, demonstration, and lectures.

Dictation Method
Method that is often used by the teacher is dictation. Dictation means the teacher will read out loud, and students will write it down. This method involves two skills; listening and writing skills. This will strengthen the sensitivity of students by using their hearing and touching sense in the process of writing Jawi in class. For teachers in special education religious schools, they taught Jawi by pronounced the letter or syllables, and the students will press the keys on a Braille machine according to the suitable dot.

By following this method, the students were more proficient in writing Jawi Braille as well as strengthen their sensitivity using the sense of hearing. However, there was a difference between dictation method among teachers according to the level of the students. In year one,
the teacher will pronounced Jawi letter followed by Braille code reference to ensure the students identified and pressed the correct code for each letter. Then, the students will write according to the mentioned code. (Fikri 2016)

For year two, they will teach by pronouncing the syllable one by one without giving the Braille code. This will make the students more active in teaching and learning session as they have to think about the correct spelling that match with the pronunciation. (Hassan 2016)

For students in year three, the teacher will read the question, then the students will write the questions. Then the students will answer based on answer given before. For year Three, they have learned on remuneration of word. The teachers no longer read out the Braille Code and syllables for each letter and Word. (Azlifah 2016)

Furthermore, by using this method, the teacher can take this opportunity to make some activities using peer methods through the process of teaching and learning Jawi Braille. Intelligent students that can complete their works early will be asked by the teacher to check the writings of their friends. And the teachers will guide this activity. This can help improving the students’ Jawi Braille reading skills.

The advantage of this method is that it can helps to consolidate Jawi spelling in students after hearing the syllables read by teachers at a word or a sentence. It also cultivate students’ thinking skills in order to differentiate the correct or wrong spelling as well as assists the students in making Islamic Education lesson notes, thus makes it easier for them to remember the Braille code.

However, there is a downside to this method as it will make the weak students will feel bored in the teaching and learning process and start making their own activities (Hamidah Suhaimi 2012). Teachers need to be skilled in order to attract the attention of the students in the classroom.

Methods of listening and speaking
Through dictation methods, indirectly, methods of listening and speaking are also used in tandem with listening and writing activities. Listening and speaking are the method using the sense of hearing. Teachers will mention a letter or syllable, then the students will repeat the sound before proceed to write it down. This method is very effective as it emphasizing the sound of a letter. It will be easier for the student to identify letter or word through the sound of the letter. Not only can be used by teachers, but the teaching aids (BBM) also can be used so the students can speak via audio material. It involves two skills that are listening and speaking. The methods used are according to their level. For year one, the teacher mention the Jawi letter and Braille code for the letter, then the students mention the Braille code. It shows that students were only emphasized to mention Braille code without mentioning the Jawi letter through this method.

The advantage of using this method is that it is easy for student to guess and adjust the sound of the syllables in the spelling and cultivate the thinking skills in learning Jawi. In addition, it will also improve listening and speaking skills of students with proper pronunciation and easy to remember. The process of sound identification by adjusting the letters is an active process because causing response from the students. Study by Nik Rosila (2007) also suggested to use this method to overcome students’ weakness in reading Jawi text.

However, this method requires a relatively long period in order to teach students of different levels of mastery in one class. This is because the teachers need to move around and
repeat everything one by one to students individually. If there are students who fall behind, teachers have to teach the same thing again repeatedly. Therefore, it will take longer time.

**Drill Method**

This drill method is also frequently used. Drill method is a repetition of facts, sentences or efficacy studied. It is also known by the concept of ‘tikrār’, i.e repetition. Repetition including teachers or students mentioned the same thing over and over again. The aim is for students to achieve proficiency level of reading and memorizing as well as to ensure students remember it well. This method is often used, especially for students who are weak and have other problems apart from vision problems. This method is not only used to read and write Jawi Braille, but it also applies to Braille machine and the correct fingering system.

This method also varies according to the students level. It is based on the syllabus given. For Year One, teachers will emphasize on letters in Jawi Braille. Reading and writing practice will be given by writing and speaking repeatedly in order to facilitate students to memorize Braille code in Jawi. (Fikri & Hafiz 2016)

For Year Two, it is more focusing to the spelling of open and closed syllables. The teacher will give a word, then, the student will try to spell the word in Jawi. For intelligent students, at least 16 words with two syllables will be practiced in one session in the beginning of year, while for average students they need to practice at least 9 to 10 words. While for poor grade students they still at the stage of exercise of writing Jawi.

For Year Three students, the teacher will give remuneration exercise. Students are asked to create sentences based on practice given. Teachers will provide a maximum of five remuneration, and students need to make three words with remuneration given, and make sentences based on the words that have been made. At this stage, students have the skills in using Braille and writing by using Braille code. This is supported with data content analysis that shows that the teachers have achieved the desired objective.

For reading practice, the teachers do not use text books to read Jawi. Drill Method is used by re-reading the words that were written by the students. Teachers will listen and correct them. Peer method is also used by exchanging answers to check their writing.

The advantage of this method is that the students can repeat the word and improve their thinking skills thus smooth their reading and writing skills simultaneously. In addition, students will engage themselves in the teaching and learning process despite their difference level of Jawi. According to Fikri (2016), repetition method is necessary because some students also have learning dissabilities rather than simply visually impaired.

This is in line with the method of delivery of the Prophet to his companions. Prophet S.A.W said:

\[
أَنَّهُ إِذَا سَلَمْنَا ثَلَاثًا وَإِذَا تَكَلَّمْ بِكِتَابٍ أَعَدَّهَا ثَلَاثًا
\]

*Meaning: that when Prophet s.a.w greeted, he greeted three times, and when he told something he would repeat it three times.*

(al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, kitab al-`ilm bab man a āda al-ḥadīth thāthā liyafthā ma `anhu faqūla alākī wa qawla al-`ūf famā rāla yukarrīrūhā)
Tikrār concept is also used in the teaching and learning of Imam Abu Hanifa which required the students to do learning practice (Kamarul Azmi 2013). This is similar to the study by Alimah (2006), which found that combination of drill method with other methods will make the teaching process more effective. However, teachers need to differentiate the level of students so that poor students do not get bored and on par with the teaching and learning process.

Memorizing Method
Memorizing method can be divided into two, namely direct and indirect memorizing methods. Direct memorizing methods is that the teacher will ask students to memorize Jawi Braille code individually. This method is often used by teachers to weak students who are still behind in class and still in the stage of recognizing hijāiyyah letters. The weak students will memorize the letters while other students will continue learning using other methods based on their ability level. This is because, there are no separation between intelligent and weak students like the one in government schools that have special class for weak students. (Assaddiqi 2016). Through this method, the teacher will ensure first that letters written by weak students are in the correct sequence, later the students will memorize it through their own writing.

According to Azlifah (2016), this method is very suitable for students at the basic level as it will be easier to understand. Memorization of Jawi letter and Braille code must be synchronize. However, memorizing method will make weak students feel bored as it lacks of active interaction in class. Teachers will be more focused on intelligent students during teaching and learning process using other methods.

Meanwhile, indirect memorizing method occurs when teachers say and repeat the pronunciation in the classroom. According to Fikri (2016), this method is extremely necessary for students with visual disabilities. This is because, based on his experience, the visually impaired, has a high memory when something is pronounce repeatedly. This finding also similar to Mat Taib (2006) which states that the method of memorization is a type of skills that can sharpen mind strength. This is similar with drill method. Indirectly this will make the students remember what they have learned. According to Azlifah (2016), by using this method, weak students can learn simple words one by one, by using hearing sensory without even participating directly in the teaching process.

Demonstration Method
Demonstration method is involving a two-way method of teaching and learning. The teacher will demonstrate and explain, and the students will do it based on guidance given by the teacher either at the same time or at different times (Tunku Sarina and Yusmini 2006).

By using this method, the teacher will provides the information and at the same time the students will mimic the activity. This method is also used in the process of writing and reading. In teaching Jawi Braille, the teacher will demonstrate right fingering method to use Braille machines, of the left and right students and rules to write in Braille such as long lines in header, skip in writing, space between words and so on. Based on the study by Siti Afifah (2014) this method is consistent with the methodology used by the Prophet that is a lesson is a combination of words and practice.

Besides, teachers are also involving the students in this method. Students who are good in reading and spelling will serve as an example to others. It can groom the students through the class activities as well as give high motivation to the students (Abd Ghafar 2003). In addition, the teachers will also show the sound of a letter through merging the consonant and vowel, followed
by the students. Thus, the students will clearly understand from the practical explanation of the teachers aside from relating the theoretical and practical part of a lesson (Abd Ghafar 2003).

However, this method needs to be done one by one for visually impaired students with special needs. This will cause the teachers to take a long time to teach the students individually.

**Lecturing Method**

Lecturing method is a teacher-centered methods that consider the teacher knows everything and the students receive everything from the teacher without any discussion during class. (Atan Long 1980). Through this method, teachers need to prepare psychological and knowledge, have clear voice, and motivated to deliver a lesson to the students.

For visually impaired students, lecturing method is used more in describing Jawi Braille spelling with clear voice and correcting their error. Students only do what is required to them. This method is widely used especially in an introductory session for Year One students. According to Assadiqi (2016) this method is used according to the students’ ability level as there are different types of students who suffer from blindness as well as behavior and various IQ level. This method is in line with study by Siti Afifah (2014) which showed that the Prophet also emphasize and take into account the ability of the mind as well as delivering lesson clearly. The main topics delivered using this method are introduction of number, right and left students, introduction of fingering, followed by the introduction of Jawi Braille (Assadiqi 2016) while additionally describe the use of Braille machines, from the point of introduction of the functions of the 'space', button 'enter' and so on.

This method is also used to describe the right Jawi spelling system so that the students will get a proper explanation especially for those who have problems in distinguishing Jawi letters. This method is in line with the strategies and approaches used. However, this method is not used at all times. It is only used at certain times. This is because, if only teachers who lecture and explain something, the students will be sleepy and bored (Azlifah 2016). Therefore, teachers need to diversify the methods and activities during the teaching and learning process.

In conclusion, based on the interviews analysis, teachers of students with visual disabilities were using dictation, drill, memorizing, demonstration, listening and speaking method and lecturing method during teaching and learning process of Braille. This clearly shows that teachers did diversified the methods according to the level and appropriateness of students. This is in line with what Hajarul Bahti (2010) has discussed so that teachers can choose the method that can evoke and stimulate the interest of students so that they will still remember what have they learned. The methods used by the teachers in this school were in line with the base methodology used by the Prophet according to study by Siti Afifah (2014), namely talaqqi musyāfahah, tasmī’, murajaah (revise memorization), tadarrus (one reads and the others listen with concentration).

**CONCLUSION**

As a conclusion, strategies, approaches, suitable methods and techniques were needed in the process of teaching and learning in order to achieve the objective. Briefly, the methods used were the same as the normal students such as dictation methods, listening and speaking, drill, memorizing, demonstrations, and lectures. The difference is, the teachers have to adapt the methods to suit the learning disabled students using their own creativity.
Therefore, based from this finding, the teaching and learning methods used are in accordance with the needs of the visually impaired students. This finding is highly necessary to provide guidance to other teachers in applying the methods of teaching and learning for visually impaired students with Special Needs.

REFERENCE


