AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHER'S AND THE BLIND STUDENT'S NEEDS TOWARD AN ENGLISH INSTRUCTION FOR THE BLIND IN THAI CONTEXT

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Abstract

Normally sighted individuals who have studied English may encounter difficulties and problems in multiple linguistic skills e.g. listening, speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary. They are also main tribulations for people with visual loss. This study set out to conduct a needs analysis to examine the teacher's and the blind's needs toward an English instruction for the blind. A qualitative methodological approach was utilized to collect data from the teachers and the blind students at the Nakhon Ratchasima School for the Blind and the Khon Kaen School for the Blind. The two research instruments used in the current study were a semi-structured interview and class observation. Concerning the participants, five blind students and five teachers teaching the blind were selected for this study. The six-question items were utilized to elicit information about the problems, the desire, or the needs for English language teaching and learning. Additionally, a class observation was implemented to explore the learning environment. The findings indicated that the teachers had desires in enhancing the blind's listening ability while the blind would like to practice more on speaking. However, the analysis of the qualitative data revealed that they encountered two main problems which were: instructional materials and learning time constraints.

Keywords: Needs analysis; blind; disabilities; English teaching and learning

Introduction

In the recent decades there has been a huge increase in the number of English users in several authorities across Thailand owing to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). According to the ASEAN Charter, Article 34, it addresses that the working language of ASEAN shall be English, so the English language is an official language for ASEAN countries to cooperate (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2008). Additionally, the English language is a compulsory subject in Thai schools. For this reason, English is now widely used in the Thai community. The book *"Education in Thailand"* written by the Office of the Education Council, Ministry of Education in 2017 distinguishes Thai Education into three types. The first type is Formal Education. The second type is Non-formal Education whereas the last one is Informal Education. This study revolves around the basic education for children with special educational needs. It consists of three groups of learners, which are the gifted, the disadvantaged, and the disabled. Most importantly, the focus of this study is on the learners who have visual disabilities i.e. the blind in Thailand. Due to the National Persons with Disabilities' Quality of Life Development Plan (Volume 5) B.E. 2560-2564 (2017-2021), it is stated that 1.65 million people or 2.52% of Thailand's population experienced some forms of disabilities. Having good schooling is a huge tribulation for 613,000 people with disabilities (Committee of Promotion and Development of Life Quality of Disabled Persons, n.d.). There is no prejudice of any kind, yet it seems so clear as can be seen from the number. Therefore, the researchers would like to explore what the teachers at schools for the blind need to help the blind due to the instructor's perspectives and the blind's perspectives.

Learning Programs for the Blind

The educational systems that the blind have been participating rely on three different programs (which are what the teachers at the School for the Blind informed the researchers). The first program is called *"Preparatory Education Program"* while the second is known as *"Inclusive Education Program".* An individual student must learn in the Preparatory Program in order to receive an academic foundation before being promoted to collaboratively learn with

normal-sighted students in the Inclusive Education Program. They regularly learn all the compulsory subjects e.g. mathematics, English, Thai, the basis for reading and writing braille, assistive technology, as well as essential skills for everyday living. When the levels of readiness and ability are acceptably adequate to high, the blind are transferred to study in the school with normal-sighted students. In this case, they are sent to the inclusive education when they finish 12th grade. However, they could be delivered earlier when their ability seems similar to normal-sighted students and not problematic to themselves i.e. some students may be sent out of the school to learn in inclusive education program even if they are studying in the 4th grade. Individual blind students in the School for the blind are boarder students, so the school will bus them to the inclusive schools in the morning and take them back again in the evening. Significantly, when the blind is assessed as non-highly skilled students in terms of academics after completing grade 12, they will be moved and supported to learn in "*Vocational Program*" under the same foundation that could be counted as the third program for the blind in the educational systems.

Teaching Foreign or English Language to the Blind

Language acquisition has distinctive features and values for individual language students. In a classroom setting, language teaching encompasses interaction among the students and the teacher. This is of the utmost importance to the blind because the foreign or English language can be characterized as the route to education that fortifies the learner's capability. For many individuals whose native language is not broadly used, learning a foreign language can be the path out of seclusion since it probably serves as the tool that enables them to be part of learning activities as well as any international events (European Commission, n.d.). The English language provides people who are blind access to multiple kinds of media. They can easily navigate a plethora of websites to access semiotic representations. Then, blind people benefit from language study in the same way as normal-sighted students, but there are some crucial differences in the way they learn. Some blind students are given an opportunity to study in the Inclusive Education Program. Thus, there have been vital attempts to strengthen the qualities and to solve the problems of blind related to

the technological and pedagogical aspects because each particular group of learners needs different teaching strategies (Lewis and Norwich, 2004). This section aims to purpose the different ways in which the teacher could implement in the classroom as teaching the blind requires specialized pedagogies. Furthermore, the challenges to all levels of inclusive education lie in having suitable instructional materials i.e. the pedagogical methods utilized are sight-based, so they tend to rely on visual perception and audio-visual approach. The materials sometimes have too many pictures that cannot be accessed by people with visual disabilities. Thus, proper teaching methodologies and practices should be taken into consideration. They might embrace the adaptation of existing methods and implementing a new teaching approach (European Commission, n.d.).

The first approach when teaching a foreign language to the blind students in an inclusive environment is the adaptation of an existing method. It means the teachers adapt the already-used method to meet the blind's needs in the classroom. The information is elaborated in Table 1.

Table 1: Adaptation of Existing Methods

Techniques	How to implement
Blackboard	Teachers must speak out loud what they write on the blackboard, by spelling out difficult or new words so the blind can write them down.
Pictures/Posters	The description could be given by a classmate or other sighted person and the pictures or posters should be designed in an accessible format.
Knowing how to behave	The simple things are that teachers should not avoid speaking daily vocabulary and the language addressed should be precise i.e. using the students sitting in the first row instead of the students in this group. Also, the teachers should show they are present at any time when entering the class.
Classroom environment	The classroom should be a blind-friendly design and whenever there are changes in terms of classroom arrangement, they must be notified and given time to explore the new environment. The blind should not be influenced by the teacher in seating options.

Table 1: (Continued)

Techniques	How to implement
Adapting materials	The materials should be developed in an accessible format (*.doc/*.docx). Text should be clearly numbered. Lists should be organized using a dash at the beginning of each item. Extra spaces and blank lines should be avoided. Pictures, drawings and diagrams, all should now appear in the document.
Audio-visual	The lesson and images should be described and any text included in presentations should also be provided in a written form to the blind student beforehand.
Kinesthetic approach	It is the approach of replacing the pictures with the movements and gestures. It is used to introduce new vocabulary word i.e. jump will be learned through action instead of looking at the picture showing jumping action.

It has become a necessity to continue the forward trajectory required for progression and improvement. The proper techniques and procedures are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Implementing a New Teaching Approach

Techniques	How to implement
REALIA	REALIA can be defined as the use and handling of real objects in language teaching. This technique is appropriate to instruct students regarding real-life objects and daily situations. The characteristics of REALIA might be small to handle, real as possible, and immediately recognizable.
Role-playing	This technique is designed to permit the students to explore authentic situations while systematically interacting with other peers. This approach puts a value on the student who is blind in the classroom as they will feel satisfied with being actively involved in the learning process.
Braille flash cards	The materials are applied in combination with braille and flashcards. Teachers can type the context of the flashcards, stick it on a thick piece of paperz and cut out the flashcards. It would be more effective once the students are familiar with the context.

Table 2: (Continued)

Techniques	How to implement
Guiding questions	As generally known, the textbooks are sight-based. Guiding questions are then utilized to replace pictures presented in a sequence. The teacher can set a series of questions relied on the actions shown in the pictures, to help the student who is blind in writing his short story.
Hands-on experience	It is a multisensory approach used in language teaching to heighten a more inclusive setting (Mobility International USA, n.d.). Examples of the multisensory approach include classroom activities, descriptions of pictures in the students' native language to help the blind learn more vocabulary, and division of the students into groups to help and be helped. European Commission (2019) stated that it would be considerably tough if the students had no related experience.

Assistive Technology for Learning a Foreign Language

Hersh and Johnson (2008) describe that assistive technology has a major role in foreign language education of individual blind students in terms of immediate access to information. The central idea of this part will illustrate the information regarding assistive technology for the blind to learn a foreign language. According to European Commission (n.d.), this topic is based on a series of special education teaching guides with the support of Erasmus and Program of the European Union entitled *"Teaching the Blind Foreign language"*. It is organized into the following six themes: (1) Computer-Assisted Language Learning, (2) Computer-Assisted Vocabulary Learning, (3) Screen reader, (4) DAISY books and players, (5) Digital recorder, and (6) Reading machine. The elaboration will be shown as follows.

(1) Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

Computer-Assisted Language Learning has made improvements in foreign language learning of people with visual disabilities. Aiazzi (2008) provided a suggestion that teaching English to people with visual disabilities should deal with increasing their self-assurance and esteem. She stated that

people with disabilities in her class were aware of the significance of English learning and they had the desire to work independently. Milian and Pearson (2005) proposed the method that increases the learning chance named "Dual-language education" which is used in the USA. It aims to instruct both English speakers and non-English speakers to study a second language together.

(2) Computer-Assisted Vocabulary Learning (CAVL)

Vocabulary also takes on an importance at a time of language learning. There is an absolute requirement to master a word's meaning, form, and use (Nation, 2001). Therefore, learning vocabulary could build up spelling and orthographic knowledge that are necessary for the blind. Recent developments in CAVL have highlighted the need for auditory input involvement while trying to teach the blind to orthography (Stein et al., 2010). Additionally, the research study carried out on the development of an orientation assistant for the blind to instruct vocabulary lessons while exploring the environment (Hub et al., 2005). As illustrated in the result of the study, the assistive device consisting of a sensor module and a portable computer, and needs the formation of a 3D model of a particular environment could assist the blind to learn the object name while they were exploring or wandering through the environment.

(3) Screen Reader

American Foundation for the Blind (n.d.) depicts that screen readers are software programs that allow the blind to read the text that is displayed on the computer screen with a speech synthesizer or braille display. The data derived from the blind and the teachers at the school for the blind has increased our knowledge of how the blind learn via computer. JAWS (Job Access with Speech), PPA Tatip, and AVDA (Nonvisual Desktop Access), for example, are installed to read the screen for the blind. Through these functions, the blind who would like to access to the computer do not need to use a mouse to navigate the screen. It benefits the blind in multiple aspects. For instance, JAWS works with Microsoft Office and any famous Internet browsers. Also, it has multi-lingual synthesizers, possesses voices for over 30 languages. Despite having the scanned images shown on the screen, JAWS will report them as empty documents (FreedomScientific, n.d.).

(4) DAISY Books and Players

DAISY (Digital Accessible Information SYstem) is an e-book in mp3 format that is designed to allow navigation, bookmarking, and notetaking in an audiobook, which facilitates the blind's studying. Kearney, the manager for accessible media at the Association for the Blind of Western Australia in Perth (2011), describes that digital talking books for people who are blind or have a print disability has been under development for over ten years. A student who is blind can reap immense benefit from the use of a DAISY book if listening to it with the use of a DAISY Reader.

(5) Digital Recorder

Digital recorders are often one of the greatest assistive technology devices for the blind who participate in an inclusive setting. Having an opportunity to listen back to the lesson on their own studying time and pace once again will allow them to write the notes on the preferred method or better understand and fathom parts of the lesson that they did not have full comprehension of while they are learning in class. This approach is more widespread among students of higher grades and/or in cases where the blind possess poor skills in braille.

(6) Reading Machine

Reading machines have been made famous by their characteristics amongst adults, but students learning a foreign language may also benefit from its use, especially if they to read a huge portion of written words in the book. Even though the designs and models may be variously developed, the effect is the equivalent: a text is either scanned or captured by a camera and then mechanically recognized into a text form by the machine and read out loud.

Language Development for the Blind

There were two key concepts about visual problems indicated by Hallahan and Kauffman (1988), whether or not blindness affects language usage.

(1) Linguistic Understanding and Usage: The first concept was concerned with linguistic understanding and usage. The concept illustrated that

people with visual disabilities have a similar ability in understanding and using a language. Many authorities accept it as true that lack of vision does not have a very significant effect on the ability to understand and use language (Rosel et al., 2005 as cited in Hallahan et al., 2014).

      (2) Language Development*:* There was an idea that people with visual disabilities develop their language differently compared with sighted people (Cutsforth, 1951). The hidden reason was that people with visual disabilities did not expose to some senses; therefore, it affected their language use. They could not convey their expected messages because they had never experienced in some senses. Moreover, there was a study mentioned that blind learn to read and write more slowly than normal-sighted students because they could not enhance their learning, concept development, and discrimination. However, in recent years, studies in neuroscience have led to the conclusion that people who are blind are not disadvantageous in learning foreign languages, but rather are more advantageous than those normal-sighted people (Aslantas, 2017). Furthermore, the blind do not differ from normal-sighted students in terms of verbal intelligence tests. That is to say, there were no differences found between both groups regarding major aspects of language. Still, the significant differences that have been found between them were related to gestures since they habitually use auditory perception (Bateman, 1965; Matsuda, 1984; McGinnis, 1981; Rogow, 1981 as cited in Hallahan and Kauffman 1988). Another camp of researchers disagreed with one mentioned earlier. They stated that blind appeared markedly different in comparison to normal-sighted ones in the ways of thinking. Cutsforth (1951) wrote out the term "verbalism" or verbal unreality. As we know, the blind mainly explore the world through the auditory channel. What's more, it exerted influences on how to express words or phrases that were considered inconsistent with the sensory experiences. The blind often use words that have visual meanings despite being born with no vision. Cutsforth (1951) exemplified by using the word "Indian" and the blind tend to respond with visual words e.g. red or brown. The reason for applying verbalism is to gain and meet social approval. They ought to represent things like normal-sighted people as nearly as possible. Thus, verbalism has always been an aspect taught, but not experienced on their own. The convincing proof of the verbalism is from the blind writers or talkers who use the same words as the normal-sighted do.

Therefore, the language they use may not reflect their thoughts but teachers'. Nolan and Ashcroft (1969) and Suppes (1974) mentioned that verbalism interferes with the child's cognitive development. Nevertheless, Harley (1963) gave a different account by saying that verbalism was not a problem for personal adjustment. Coupled with Harley (1963) and Dokecki (1966), there was no basis found that verbalism inhabits conceptual development. Most importantly, there was a claim that verbalism is a useful means in an educational context because the blind can use the language properly and effectively within the surrounding cultures: concrete referent is not known or experienced by the blind speakers.

Need Analysis

For needs analysis or needs assessment, Brown (1995) defined it as a process of gathering information serving as the basis for developing a curriculum, whose meeting the learning needs of a specific group of students. Another meaning given by Richards et al. (1985) is the process of determining the needs for which learners or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs based on priorities. The data on needs analysis could be collected through subjective and objective perspectives e.g. questionnaires, tests, interviews, observation (as cited in Brown, 1995). Li (2014) addressed the benefit of a needs analysis that it would offer references for the policy-making, curriculum design of foreign language teaching. The importance of a needs analysis is to analyze the gaps and provide information concerning the 'who', 'what', 'where', 'when' and 'why' for those gaps (Matusky, 2018). Needs analysis generally deals with lacks, needs, and wants (Tuzi, 2013). People who are involved in the needs analysis could be grouped by their duties into four general categories: the target group, the audience, the needs analysts, and the resource group. The detailed information of each individual's role will be provided:

• The *target group* is a group of people whose information will be collected e.g. the students in a program, but teachers and/or administrators are sometimes targeted.

• The *audience* encompasses people who will be required to act upon the analysis e.g. teachers, teacher aides, program administrators, government bodies, supervisors in the bureaucracy above the language program.

- The *needs analysts* tend to be used to refer to people whose responsibilities are to conduct the needs analysis e.g. consultants or members of the faculty.

- The *resource group* can be broadly defined as people who may serve as sources of information about the target group e.g. parents, financial sponsors, or guardians.

What's more, knowing the point of view to be taken is one of the key components of needs analysis conduction. Brown (1995) describes three basic scopes of investigation: (a) situation needs versus language needs, (b) objective needs versus subjective needs, and (c) linguistic contents versus learning processes. Thus, what follows is a brief overview of each dichotomy.

(1) Situation Needs Versus Language Needs

Situation needs refer to the program's human aspects such as the physical, social, and psychological contexts where learning occurs. By contrast, language needs can be defined as the target linguistic behaviors that the learners must acquire, including details about the environments the language will be used, the dimensions of language tangled, the learners' motives for studying, the present connected to the motives. However, the distinction between both terms is not obvious as they are interrelated.

(2) Objective Needs Versus Subjective Needs

Objective needs are represented as needs imposed based on obvious, apparent, and observable data obtained concerning the situation, the learners, the language which the learners must eventually attain, the present proficiency, and skill level while subjective needs are concerned with needs, desires, and expectations.

(3) Linguistic Contents Versus Learning Processes

Linguistic needs may be defined as needs analyzed objectively from a language needs viewpoint and spelled out in linguistic relations whereas learning processes can be described as needs specified from a situation needs viewpoint. Learning processes are likely to be more subjectively analyzed needs concerning affective domain, for instance, motivation and self-esteem.

After knowing people and viewpoints involved in doing needs analysis, what follows is the framework of the process in conducting needs analysis in foreign language and second language. Two researchers who are frequently cited about the conduction of second language or foreign language needs analysis are Long (2005) and Brown (2009). In this study, the researchers

selected to organize the route of conducting needs analysis based on Brown (2009) since its relationship to the study, consisting of three main phases with ten stages as can be seen in Figure 1. The first phase seems like a preparatory phase for the researcher. The second phase deals with the data of the needs analysis: collecting, analyzing, and interpreting while the third phase encompasses the use of the data after doing needs analysis. However, there are several studies in recent years (e.g. Akyel and Ozek, 2010; Baig, 2012; Serafini et al., 2015; Albassri, 2016; Todea and Demarcsek, 2017; Flowerdew, 2018) that seem to be up-to-date version, yet they were based mainly on English for Specific Purposes which are too specific for the current study. In the book named *"Introducing Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purposes"* which is written by Brown (2016) still shows the same procedures compared to his book written in 2009. It would then be more suitable to use the framework displayed in 2009 because it does not particularly rely on one specific thing e.g. a learning-centered approach, a learner-centered approach, and a task-based approach, but the actual real-world needs. The framework will focus on what the blind and the teachers desire to do or have in the specific situation with the existing individual factors that influence the identified needs.
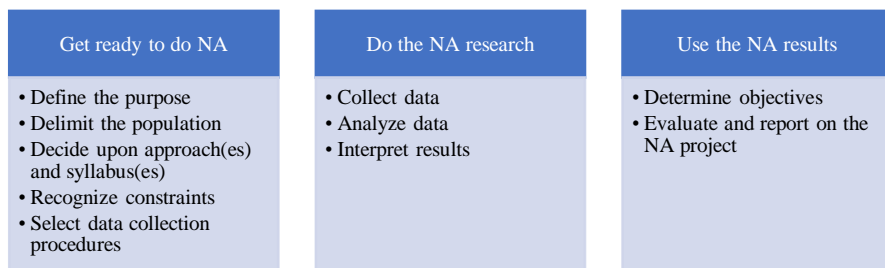
Get ready to do NA	Do the NA research	Use the NA results
• Define the purpose • Delimit the population • Decide upon approach(es) and syllabus(es) • Recognize constraints • Select data collection procedures	• Collect data • Analyze data • Interpret results	• Determine objectives • Evaluate and report on the NA project

Figure 1: A Framework of Doing NA

Source: Adopted and Adapted from Brown, 2009

Significantly, researching about the blind's ability in the English language would be a neglected thing in the Thai Educational System because it seems so clear that there is a small amount of research being conducted with the blind in the English language learning context. Consequently, this study can be utilized as a big step for further research studies in this field. Also, there is a need to research in this field to help the blind in learning the English language.

The results will eventually be helpful for those who are intrigued by special education.

Research Questions

1. What are the teacher's and the blind's problems, needs, or desires toward an English instruction for the blind in Thai context?

2. What English language skills do the teachers and the blind think it is necessary to improve?

Research Methodology

Participants

As regards the semi-structured interview, the participants of this study comprised five blind students and five teachers who work at the Nakhon Ratchasima School for the Blind and the Khon Kaen School for the Blind. The study was limited concerning the number of the teachers. The Nakhon Ratchasima School for the Blind and the Khon Kaen School for the Blind had only one English teacher. Both of whom belonged to the Nakhon Ratchasima School for the Blind while the Khon Kaen School for the Blind consisted of three teachers: one English teacher and one school director or school administrator of the educational institution. One sample, in the current study, was female whereas the other four samples were male. At the time of collecting data, it was the time of changes: therefore, two English teachers at the Khon Kaen School for the Blind were recruited for the present study. Regarding the blind students, two groups of participants were selected, namely two students at the Nakhon Ratchasima School for the Blind and three students at the Khon Kaen School for the Blind. In terms of class observation, two classrooms were observed: 1 class at the Nakhon Ratchasima School for the Blind and 1 class at the Khon Kaen School for the Blind.

Research Instruments

This study aimed to obtain in-depth information about the teachers and the blind students' needs toward English instruction, including semi-structured interviews and class observation. Following that, the qualitative method was

selected. The reasons for triangulation were to orally elicit information from the teachers and to see classroom management in a natural setting or naturally occurring situation. The process of collecting data lasted four weeks.

Data Collection

a) Semi-structured Interview: The method of inquiry used in this study to gain detail was a semi-structured interview. The researcher interviewed the teachers about the problems, desires, and needs toward English instruction. In the process, the semi-structured interview was conducted in the form of a face-to-face interaction for approximately 20 minutes. While interviewing, the researcher also wrote down the responses. The semi-structured interview comprised of six questions.

b) Class Observation: While the teacher was teaching the blind, the researchers were responsible for gathering data through senses to examine the interaction between teacher and student and/or student and student, activities during class, external factors, behaviors, instructional materials, instruction, and so on. The techniques used to collect the data were a checklist and narrative recording.

Data Analysis

The data of the current study were grouped and categorized due to similarities and differences. Specifically, the data were analyzed by using content analysis: the data were transcribed, coded, and concluded, and later illustrated (Creswell, 2007).

Findings

1) Findings of Semi-structured Interview

(a) Instructional Materials

During face-to-face interviews, the teachers at Nakhon Ratchasima School for the Blind informed the researchers that a number of instructional materials for the blind were a lot higher. Still, the material inadequacies have been problematic. Another interesting information obtained from the teachers at the Khon Kaen School for the Blind about instructional materials was comparable in shortage to that found at the Nakhon Ratchasima School for the

Blind. The teachers at Khon Kaen School for the Blind, too, emphasized the remaining problem in terms of material appropriateness despite being given and supported by government financing. The features of the materials cannot advance the blind to achieve their ultimate goals as they are designed because of having a plethora of pictures and drag-and-drop activities. Thus, the blind could not take control or change a position freely. Some learning packages do not serve and fit the blind's ability to use because the design is likely to be considerably complicated. Once all of the teachers were inquired for the reasons, they did not produce their instructional materials, the answer among them was that they could not develop as they did not know the processes of doing and they already had much work to accomplish. Furthermore, the researcher gained the necessary information that there was no handing down of materials from the former teacher. It would affect the students since there was no conformity between the former and current teachers. He then advised that the teachers themselves should hand down the materials to the next teacher as much as possible. The blind had multiple different perspectives toward the instructional material inadequacy that rather hinders them in linguistic progress. They would like to have an excellent library where they can have easy access to ready-to-use books without waiting for the school to produce the instructional materials for them. Moreover, e-books that the images are describable are also needed.

(b) Desired Language Skill

As can be seen in Table 3, the teachers at the Khon Kaen School for the Blind reported that they wanted their students to be able to comprehend the spoken discourse because it will subsequently affect speaking, reading, or writing. Another requisite point to be illustrated is that the teachers are unable to emphasize much on listening and speaking due to the policy that aims to enhance writing and reading braille. The teachers addressed that listening becomes enormously vital. It is perspicuous that it is regarded as an essential perception for the blind to perceive semiotic representations. Moreover, the most desired thing after getting involved with the English language teachers and principals of Nakhon Ratchasima School for the Blind and Khon Kaen School for the Blind during needs analysis was that they have a passionate desire to assist the blind to expose and practice listening skill more frequently. Still,

concerns were expressed about chances to do listening activities because of a time-consuming job and a shortage of materials. The teachers believe that having a firm basis could help the blind to have a remarkable improvement from now on although it seems a lot of effort. The teachers from Nakhon Ratchasima School for the Blind and the Khon Kaen School for the Blind together hold the view that listening skills should be the first skill that is strengthened. The blind, on the other hand, tended to greatly desire learning speaking. The overwhelming majority of the blind emphasized speaking practices because they thought that practices could benefit in routine use in terms of fluency and confidence. One student stated a convincing reason that all skills were equally important but speaking seemed to help the blind establish a good relationship and led them to success in foreign language learning. Nowadays, there have been many foreigners in Thailand. It is then important to learn speaking skills.

Table 3: Summary of the Desired Language Skills

Respondents	Language Skills				
	Listening	*Speaking*	*Reading*	*Writing*	*Etc.*
Teachers (n)	5	-	-	-	-
Students (n)	1	4	-	-	-

2) Findings of Class Observation

Learning Time Constraints:

It was noticeable to the researcher that the time spent in class was relatively short and seemed to be inadequate because the blind had to walk to the next class when the previous class was over. Some of the blind were slow walkers while on their way to class; others also often left a certain way to the class. Additionally, the blind spent a lot of their time finding the worksheet from the recent class. The possible cause of this problem is that the blind were not provided books supported by the government financing for their learning since the contents are in the form of the book, not transformed into braille. Owing to

these factors, they affected the teachers to lose one-third of class time waiting for the blind to come and be ready for class. Much of the time wasted in getting the blind to be prepared before class resulted in the lessons being incomplete. Lack of time, thus, can cause the blind's comprehension toward the lessons. One of the teachers at Nakhon Ratchasima School for the Blind has shown interest on other things during class in place of teaching the lesson from the book such as teaching how to write braille and memorize the braille abbreviations i.e. two letters in "ch" will be transformed into one letter in braille. Another important point that emerged from the class observation was the activities among the teacher and the blind. The teachers seemed devoted because he composed songs for the students to memorize but the chosen words looked diverse in themes. It did not look related to the objectives that the blind were required to learn.

Discussion

Instructional Materials

Perhaps the most compelling finding is decent instructional materials. Due to lacking visual sense, the blind have to adjust their studying by using other senses. Many studies have shown the problems with the materials for the blind. The teachers at the school for the blind were not knowledgeable about producing materials that could strengthen the blind's learning skills. Wanawananon (1985 as cited in Rattanavanich, 2015) and Meesri (1997 as cited in Rattanavanich, 2015) mentioned the problem might have been from the teachers because they did not graduate with a degree in special education as similar to what Ainin (2016) mentioned. Another tribulation about the materials for learning at school stated by Araluce (2002) was that the teachers already had a big amount of work to be completed, so they did not want to increase their workload. Supawattanakul (2006) interviewed Suthi, the Director of Thailand Association for the Blind, and gained information that materials production process created problems for the blind in diverse viewpoints. The main problem indicated by the director was concerned with the cost of materials i.e. some materials needed to be imported from other countries. Consequently, it seems so clear that the high cost of the materials was a problem for the blind. These previous studies

could mirror the findings in the current study why the library does not have enough ready-to-use books or texts. Furthermore, some imported instructional materials normally came with the English language or the language of the country of origin, so the materials had to be translated prior to utilization. The teachers also said that it was not their duty to produce materials, but the government's responsibility to provide the instructional materials (Efstathiou and Polichronopoulou, 2015). Kanoksilapatham et al. (2016) proposed a detailed explanation about the current educational issues in Thailand under the concept of English Teaching in Regional Contexts entitled *"Global English Enhancement and Regional Thainess Maintenance Using Community based Instructional Innovation"*. A relationship between the blind and the normal-sighted students based on the previous reviews was that the relevant instructional materials did not affect only the blind, but were also a big problem for the normal-sighted students. According to the Educational Media Center for Disabled (2005), a majority of the blind (81.58%) at the secondary level from the five schools for the blind in Bangkok and the outskirts indicated that many books and audiobooks were inadequate. Over half of the blind who responded to the questions regarding instructional materials around 55.26 percent also commented that the Thai language, mathematics, and the English language audiobooks were the most important for them to review after class.

Learning Time

Researchers identified themes from the content analysis of semi-structured interviews. Concerning the findings of the semi-structured interview, among the teachers, there was an agreement that the blind did not have a chance to expose to listening, which is thought to be the main receptive perception for them, as much owing to the learning time. Kaufmann (2016) offers agreement for this idea because it is believed that listening skill was the grounded skill that should be improved since it could lead to other language competencies such as speaking, vocabulary, or accuracy. Another point mentioned by Kuafmann (2016) was that speaking skills could best be improved when people have massive exposure to listening adequately. Referring back to the ideas of what Kaufmann (2016) mentioned, they implied that the more the students have high exposure or experience to listening skills, the improvements of the other

competencies aforementioned would follow. In accordance with Richards' statement (2005), teaching listening has started to play a crucial role compared to the situations in the past. Brown (1994) also pointed out that listening comprehension has attracted educators to focus on teaching and learning a language because it does not only assist people to be able to understand the listening more, but it also helps other language aspects to grow invaluably. From this, it could be said that listening, which is what the teacher mentioned in a semi-structured interview that they desired, may facilitate the blind students to confidently and fluently speak as the blind desired. This could improve the relationship between the spoken discourse. This study is also consistent with that of Piamsai (2017) who commented that it was not surprising to see the results that listening skill and speaking skill are utilized the most in everyday life but students hardly have opportunity to practice in class, Biyaem (1997 as cited in Noom-ura, 2013) also addressed in the same way. Adler et al. (2004) stated that people mostly spend 70 percent of their time on oral communication: listening 45% and speaking 30%. However, some may still think that it is difficult to master due to the nature of listening: The input normally comes and passes very quickly (Ur, 1991). This view is supported by Kaufmann (2015) who mentioned a way that could weaken this attribute, that using the listening materials could offer the listeners exposure to the speech as much as they desire. Thus, it would lead students to process information easily and effectively by listening to the recorded spoken language or audio files since the audio files can be played back and forth. Another idea regarding listening is that comprehension will take place when the rate of delivery should not be too fast. Having pauses then can facilitate listeners to comprehend better than listening to sheer speed conversations (Richards, 1983).

General ideas obtained from the class observation were of use to the researcher to give importance to the class time being utilized and eradicate the gap of time constraints. The teachers should provide them sufficient time to practice. Furthermore, teaching them how to listen may be regarded as a must since the teachers are able to direct the blind to reach their highest potentials. Most of the language teachers tend to give attention to speaking skills since they think that it is the most successful skill of learning a language.

Suggestions and Recommendations

According to the research conducted and the findings gathered the following suggestions and recommendations can be drawn concerning the class development:

Firstly, the researcher should find the most suitable learning approach that can help the blind to improve their listening skills and speaking skills and provide convenience to the teachers in terms of lesson conformity. The findings could be utilized to establish learning outcomes and seek the possible techniques to close the gaps in the blind learning.

Secondly, listening and speaking activities are time-consuming as generally known. Thus, the researchers who are interested in special education should find a helpful approach to solve the problems with time constraints and strengthen the blind's listening ability.

Thirdly, regarding instructional materials, the blind should have appropriate and supportive materials to learn. The instructional materials should be intentionally devised to serve their learning styles. Some challenges e.g. biological constraints for learning should be taken into consideration.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the needs and desires of the teachers at the Khon Kaen School for the blind and the Nakhon Ratchasima School for the Blind toward an English instruction. The findings indicate that instructional materials and learning time were considered problems for blind education. The creation of the supportive learning environment for the blind is one of the goals of most teachers who teach in the inclusive education. When teachers are managing teaching methodologies, learning activities and procedures, programs, assessment, and instructional materials for the blind, teacher must ensure that there are guidelines in place such as the strengths (what is working and needs to be continuously used), weaknesses (how and what to compensate), chances (find a new way that is deliberately generated in order to benefit the blind, as well as threats (future areas of concern that need to be taken into consideration). The blind do not have appropriately designed instructional materials to use nor do they have sufficient time to practice. Following that, the

teachers suggested that they wanted their students to improve listening skill and the blind would like to enhance their speaking skill, commonly used perception for the blind for communication. The teachers and the blind seemed to bond over sharing the desire of language learning skill in classroom. Teachers who teach the blind are expected to link aural and oral skills together. Intending to develop the blind's listening and speaking skills is necessary because they are normally encouraged to learn regarding humanities and social sciences degree programs. This study has gone some ways toward an understanding of the blind educational system. These findings will help other researchers design the approach to close the gap of inappropriate instructional materials and insufficient time to assist and improve the blind's listening skills and speaking skills. Considering that English education for the blind in Thailand does not gain constant and sustained attention that leads to critical changes, it is vital that more research studies should be carried out. It appears that having teachers fathom and heighten awareness might not only have immediate impacts including the blind's learning chances, learning competence, etc. when teachers plan to design a course for the blind, but also long-term effects on their education. It is worth pursuing as a possible way for teachers to assist the blind's language learning. The aforementioned factors could then lead to entirely new avenues to explore and develop in future studies and be an essential resource for program design and evaluation.

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