THE FRIENDLY TEACHER APPROACH: STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME COMMUNICATION BARRIERS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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Journal info	Abstract.
	Effective communication between teachers and students is a key element in the learning process. However, at SMP Negeri 5 Luwuk, various communication barriers were found that disrupted the interaction between teachers and students, which had an impact on students' learning outcomes. This research aims to identify these communication barriers and explore the effectiveness of the Friendly Teacher approach as a strategy to overcome them. The research used a qualitative method with a case study approach, involving in-depth interviews with teachers and students, as well as classroom observations. The results show that the Friendly Teacher approach can improve the quality of communication by creating a more open and supportive environment, thereby reducing communication barriers. The findings make an important contribution to the development of more inclusive and effective learning strategies in secondary schools.

A. INTRODUCTION

Communication between teachers and students is one of the fundamental aspects in education that affects the effectiveness of the learning process and student development. In the school environment, good communication is not only needed to deliver subject matter, but also to build positive relationships that support the teaching and learning process. (Hattie, 2009b). However, communication barriers often arise, especially in the context of junior high school, where students are at a complex stage of development, both cognitively and emotionally. (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

At SMP Negeri 5 Luwuk, communication barriers between teachers and students have become a crucial issue. These barriers not only affect student learning outcomes, but also create tension and conflict in daily classroom interactions. Factors such as differences in cultural backgrounds, inappropriate communication styles and a lack of understanding of students' emotional needs are often the main causes of these barriers. (Jensen, 2013).

In the context of education in Indonesia, the issue of communication barriers between teachers and students is a problem that is often overlooked. In fact, research shows that effective communication between teachers and students can improve learning motivation, student participation, and ultimately their

academic outcomes. (Klem & Connell, 2004); (Roorda et al., 2011). Therefore, new approaches that can help overcome these communication barriers are urgently needed.

Communication barriers in the school environment can have a negative long-term impact on students' development. Not only in academic aspects, but also in their social and emotional development. In a study by (Roorda et al., 2011), It was found that positive teacher-student relationships had a significant correlation with increased student motivation and academic achievement. However, when communication is poor, students tend to experience a decrease in motivation and even feel alienated from the school environment. (Wentzel & Miele, 2009).

The Friendly Teacher approach is one strategy designed to create a more supportive learning environment by emphasizing the importance of empathy, understanding and openness in interactions between teachers and students. It aims to overcome existing communication barriers by strengthening interpersonal relationships between teachers and students, thus enabling a more effective and inclusive teaching and learning process. (Tekkumru Kisa & Stein, 2015).

This study aims to determine how the implementation of the Friendly Teacher approach at SMP Negeri 5 Luwuk,

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is suitable for exploring and understanding the meaning attributed by individuals or groups to a social or humanities problem. (Creswell, 2013). The research subjects were teachers and students at SMP Negeri 5 Luwuk.

The qualitative approach used in this study aims to reveal the complexity of communication in the classroom that cannot be explained only with quantitative data. (Merriam, 2009). Data was collected through several methods through In-depth Interviews Participatory Observation and School documents such as syllabus, lesson plans, and class notes were analyzed to see how communication is organized and implemented in the formal education context. (Bowen, 2009).

This analysis process involved several stages, namely: Familiarization with the Data, Initial Coding, Identification of Themes, Examination of Themes, Writing Up Findings.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, several strategies were applied through triangulation, Member Checking, Audit Trail.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results
a. Communication Barriers between Teachers and Students

Based on interviews with teachers and students at SMP Negeri 5 Luwuk, several significant communication barriers were found. These barriers include differences in communication styles, lack of understanding of students' cultural backgrounds, and low

emotional engagement between teachers and students.

Different Communication Styles: One of the main barriers identified was the difference in communication styles between teachers and students. Some teachers tend to use a formal and authority-oriented communication style, while students are more comfortable with a more relaxed and informal communication style. This often leads to misunderstandings and tension in classroom interactions.

Lack of Cultural Understanding: Another barrier that arises is teachers' lack of understanding of students' cultural backgrounds. SMP Negeri 5 Luwuk has an ethnically and culturally diverse student population. Some students feel that teachers do not fully understand or appreciate their cultural values, which causes an emotional distance in their relationships.

Low Emotional Engagement: Low emotional engagement between teachers and students was also identified as a communication barrier. Students felt that some teachers did not show enough empathy or concern for their feelings and needs. This results in students feeling uncomfortable to communicate openly with teachers.

b. Implementation of the Teacher Friendly Approach

The Friendly Teacher approach was implemented as a strategy to overcome the identified communication barriers. Based on follow-up observations and interviews, it was found that the implementation of this approach brought significant positive impacts.

Improving Openness of Communication: The Friendly Teacher approach was successful in improving open communication between teachers and students. Teachers who implement this approach are more responsive to students' emotional needs, use more familiar language and show a more open attitude. Students report that they feel more comfortable talking to teachers and are more motivated to actively participate in the learning process.

Reducing Misunderstandings: Through the implementation of this approach, misunderstandings caused by differences in communication styles were minimized. Teachers began to adapt their communication styles to students' preferences, and students felt more heard and valued. This resulted in less tension in classroom interactions.

Strengthening Interpersonal Relationships: This approach also strengthens the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students. Teachers who use the Friendly Teacher approach are more proactive in understanding students' cultural backgrounds and show empathy towards them. Students feel more valued and recognized, which in turn increases the sense of trust and closeness with the teacher.

Discussion

The results show that the Friendly Teacher approach can be an effective strategy in overcoming communication barriers between teachers and students. The findings are in line with previous research showing the importance of positive teacher-student relationships in improving student engagement

and motivation. (Roorda et al., 2011). Increased openness of communication and reduced misunderstandings through this approach suggests that teachers who are empathic and responsive to students' needs can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment (Tekkumru Kisa & Stein, 2015).

The Friendly Teacher approach has also been shown to be effective in strengthening the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students, which is important for building students' trust and comfort in communication. (Roorda et al., 2011). These strong interpersonal relationships not only improve the quality of classroom interactions, but also have a positive impact on student learning outcomes. Students who feel valued and recognized tend to be more motivated to learn and achieve better results. (Hattie, 2009a).

This finding is relevant to the literature that emphasizes the importance of effective communication in education. (Hattie, 2009a) states that a positive relationship between teachers and students is one of the most important factors affecting students' academic achievement. The Friendly Teacher approach, emphasizing empathy, understanding, and open communication, can be considered as one way to strengthen this relationship.

(Roorda et al., 2011) also emphasized that a strong emotional connection between teachers and students is directly related to increased student engagement. In the context of SMP Negeri 5 Luwuk, the Friendly Teacher approach helped to overcome barriers that had previously impeded student engagement,

suggesting that the application of this approach can produce positive results in a variety of educational contexts.

It is important for education in Indonesia, especially in improving the quality of communication between teachers and students. The Friendly Teacher approach can be modeled in teacher training to improve their communication skills. In addition, schools can consider implementing programs that support this approach as part of efforts to create a more inclusive learning environment that is responsive to students' needs.

The importance of understanding students' cultural backgrounds as part of an effective communication strategy. In the context of a diverse society like Indonesia, teachers need to be trained to understand and appreciate cultural differences among their students to create more harmonious and effective relationships. (Jensen, 2013).

D. CONCLUSION

This research reveals that communication barriers between teachers and students at SMP Negeri 5 Luwuk are a significant problem affecting the teaching and learning process. These barriers are mainly caused by differences in communication styles, lack of understanding of students' cultural backgrounds, and low emotional engagement between teachers and students. Through the implementation of the Friendly Teacher approach, these barriers were effectively minimized. This approach succeeds in increasing openness of communication,

reducing misunderstandings, and strengthening interpersonal relationships between teachers and students.

The results of this study confirm the importance of an approach that emphasizes empathy and openness in communication between teachers and students. The Friendly Teacher approach not only improves the quality of communication but also creates a more inclusive learning environment that supports students' holistic development. The practical implication of this research is the need for teacher training that focuses on improving communication skills and cultural understanding to optimize the educational process. Thus, this approach has the potential to be adopted more widely in the Indonesian education system to improve the quality of learning.

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