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## Analysis of Sign Language in Learning Students with Special needs at SLB-B Beringin Bhakti Cirebon District

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**Abstract:** This research aims to describe the effectiveness of using sign language in the learning process, especially at SLB-B Beringin Bhakti. The method used is qualitative with an observation and interview approach. This research describes adjustments in sign language to the learning process at the Beringin Bhakti SLB-B school. Communication is an important aspect in conveying ideas, information and feelings to speakers and listeners, while social development is a process for each individual in acquiring skills, values and behavior to interact with other people and the surrounding environment. This research found that the effectiveness of sign language in learning for deaf and speech impaired students depends on the communication and social environment in their school. This research also emphasizes that there is empathy and awareness from students, teaching and education staff and the surrounding environment to understand and accept shortcomings in sign language communication.

**Keyword:** Sign Language Communication, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, Educators, Learning Effectiveness

### INTRODUCTION

Communication is a very important aspect of human life. Through communication a person can convey ideas, information, and feelings to others. But for people with hearing loss, verbal communication is not an easy challenge to overcome to overcome these limitations sign language becomes the main means of communication that allows them to interact, learn and develop.

Sign Language is a formal language used to communicate using gestures and hand signals, usually in place of vocalisation. for deaf children, sign language is the fastest way to communicate. So children will be better at learning to speak verbally if they start learning sign language. Children pick up gestures and symbols more easily than they make sounds. Children will remember pictures or signs to match words. (Prof Dr Alo Liliweri, 2021)

Sign language is very important to help the social interaction and educational process of the deaf. Sign language is the most important communication tool in schools, especially special needs schools to convey subject matter, establish communication between teachers and students, and create an integrative learning environment. Since deaf students rely entirely on visuals and body language to understand information, nonverbal communication is the basis of all learning activities here. (Hajrah et al., 2023)

The Indonesian Sign Language System (SIBI) is legally issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) which then becomes a target given to special schools (SLB) which is mandatory for deaf students in Indonesia to use. The regulation regarding the standardisation of the Indonesian Language Sign System (SIBI) is regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number Corresponding author: Slamet Thohari 0161/U/1994 (Ministry of Education and Culture: 1997).

Indonesian Sign Language or commonly referred to as BISINDO comes from the initial language or mother tongue of people with speech impairment which is used as a practical and effective communication tool for people with speech impairment.

effective communication tool for people with hearing and speech disabilities. Usually the use of Bisindo is adjusted to the understanding of sign language from various regions. Sign language that can be used in daily communication is contained in the Disability Law No. 8 of 2016 article 24 No.C on the right to expression, communication, and obtaining information for persons with disabilities.

Deaf people are individuals who have obstacles in hearing both permanent and non-permanent, because they have obstacles in hearing individuals who are deaf in speech so they are commonly called tunawicara. How to communicate by using Sign Language, for the Finger Alphabet which has been formalised internationally while for Language signs vary in each country. (Dermawan, 2018)

Inclusive schools accept all children without exception and tailor learning to their needs. These schools also create a friendly learning environment and support the academic, social and emotional growth of every student, including students with special needs.

SLB-B Beringin Bhakti is a private educational institution located on Jl. Pangeran Cakrabuana Gang Mangga Kepongpongan Village Talun Kab Cirebon (45171).

The school was established in 1996 and has accreditation with category "B". Having a land area of 600 m<sup>2</sup> and a building area of 240 m<sup>2</sup>, this institution stands on land owned by the Beringin Bhakti Foundation. Currently, the school principal is Mohamad Apendi, S.Pd who holds the position of Pembina IV/a. SLB-B Beringin Bhakti has an operational permit number 421.9/SK.80.16-PLB/27-4-2004, NSS 80.202.170.002, and NPSN 20215028. For further information, the school can be contacted by phone at (0231) 8302384 or through the principal's mobile phone number at 081222071115.

With a vision to "excel in developing *life skills* through quality learning to create independence for students with speech impairment in 2024," SLB-B Beringin Bhakti is determined to provide the best education for these students. Its missions include moulding students into individuals of faith, piety and good character; providing fair learning opportunities; and equipping them with knowledge, technology, arts and practical skills. In addition, the school also encourages students to explore their potential and prepare themselves for independent living according to their individual abilities and needs.

SLB-B Beringin Bhakti also has a team of educators and staff consisting of one principal, one teacher who is a civil servant, eight permanent foundation teachers (GTY), as well as one administrative staff and one cleaner.

administration staff and one cleaner. The school does not have any non-permanent teachers (GTT), but remains determined to provide the best education for students with special needs.

The number of students at SLB-B Beringin Bhakti reaches 48, who are in various levels of education. At the SDLB level, there are 17 students (5 boys and 12 girls). At the SMPLB level, the number of students reaches 11 people (7 boys and 4 girls). While at the SMALB level, there are 20 students (8 males and 12 females), which is the highest number. All students are placed in classes according to their individual needs and progress.

Sign Language not only helps students understand what they are learning, but also allows them to interact with peers and teachers. However, the introduction of Sign Language learning does not always go smoothly. Teachers often face various challenges, including: Limited skills in using sign language, lack of supportive learning media, and students' varying levels of sign language comprehension.

This limitation is further exacerbated by the lack of training and guidance for teachers to improve their proficiency in the use of sign language. Not all teachers have sufficient specialised educational background to teach sign language effectively. This results in a gap in the learning process where some students feel left out because they do not fully understand the instructions used by the teacher. In addition, support from extracurricular environments such as students' families also plays an important role in the success of sign language learning. Unfortunately, not all parents have the opportunity to use sign language at home, so students rely solely on learning at school to develop their communication skills. The lack of continuity between the school and home environment can hinder the development of students' sign language skills.

This research uses a nonverbal communication theory approach to find out how the use of sign language in SLB-B Beringin Bhakti facilitates the learning of students with special needs. The aim is to find out and identify the various obstacles faced by teachers and students when applying sign language as a teaching and learning method.

Hence to explain how communication efficiency in a sign language environment can be improved. By highlighting the important role of sign language in inclusive education, this research is expected to make a real contribution to improving the quality of learning in inclusive education from the perspective of teachers, students and education policy in general.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted at SLB-B Beringin Bhakti Jl. Pangeran Cakrabuana Gang Mangga Kepongpongan Village Talun Kab Cirebon (45171). The focus and purpose of this research is the effectiveness of sign language communication in learning in the school environment, with the aim of understanding the learning strategies used by Educators and the obstacles faced in the learning process.

The research approach used is qualitative research with a case study method, this approach was chosen to obtain an in-depth understanding of the situations and conditions that occur in the school environment in this case, namely sign language learning interactions in the classroom. Thus, this research seeks to define reality as it is understood by the research subject, namely supporting informants in this case involving educators at SLB-B Beringin Bhakti.

The data collection technique in this research includes several methods, Firstly, observation is carried out to directly observe the communication process that occurs in sign language learning in the classroom. Second, interviews were conducted to explore the perspectives of educators regarding the effectiveness of sign language learning, the

challenges faced, and the strategies applied. Third, documentation is used to be attached as supporting evidence to strengthen the analysis that occurs in the school environment.

Thus, based on the triangulation of data sources above, the data generated can provide comprehensive results regarding the effectiveness of sign language learning at SLB-B Beringin Bhakti.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, it is described in detail that the results of research on sign language in learning students with special needs at SLB-B Beringin Bhakti Jl. Pangeran Cakrabuana Gang Mangga Village Kepongpongan Kec Talun Kab Cirebon (45171). The results of this study are the results of qualitative research, namely interviews and observations of sign language learning in SLB, the data obtained in this study were processed and analysed in accordance with the techniques and procedures. The steps in analysing the data are the holding of interviews in writing to Educators and Education Personnel at SLB-B Beringin Bhakti. Based on the results of interviews from all Educators and Education Personnel totalling 8 people who were given Interview Instruments. This study aims to understand the use of sign language in the learning of speech deaf students at SLB-B Beringin Bhakti found several aspects, as for the explanation as follows;

### **1. Facial Expression as Support in Sign Language Communication**

Facial expression is important in communication using sign language. Based on the results of interviews, educators and education personnel said that facial expressions help clarify the meaning of the message conveyed to the listener. Some important points are that in sign language facial expressions function as intonation and emotions commonly used in verbal communication. In facial expressions also increase understanding of the meaning that sign language can help students in understanding a message conveyed, for example conveying orders or questions sometimes facial expressions also adjust the intent and purpose of the message.

So in Controversy surrounding the question of whether facial expressions are a worldwide and universal display, among humans continues to roll to be researched. According to Ekman (1975) found strong evidence of the universality of some facial expressions of emotion as well as why expressions may appear differently across cultures. According to a set of controversial theories, these facial expression movements can convey the emotional state of an individual to an observer.

Darwin (1872) was the first to state that facial emotions are universal, in his theory showing that emotions and expressions are biologically innate and evolutionarily adaptive and similarities in them can be seen phylogenetically. Based on the results of the interview, the challenges in using facial expressions some Deaf students still have difficulty in adjusting and showing what they want to convey. therefore, intensive training is needed so that the school scope is more effective in communicating.

Here are some expressions when students feel that they are experiencing Sad, Happy and Angry including:



1.1 The picture above shows the mood when feeling Sad



1.2 The picture above shows the mood when feeling Happy



1.3 The picture above shows the mood when feeling Angry

## 2. Hand and Body Movements in Sign Language

Based on the results of interviews with educators and education personnel said that each movement has a simple meaning. So that they complement each other to convey a complex word or concept and body position. Hand movements have a function to direct the attention of symbols and understanding in ensuring the message to be conveyed effectively and efficiently. So that body and hand movements have variations and maintain accuracy and clarity in communication and are also the main aspects of sign language used by deaf students.

Based on the theory of William C Stokoe in 1960 he published the book *Sign Language Structure* which proves that *American Sign Language* (ASL) has a phonology in sign language into 3 main components namely DEZ (*Designator*) is the shape of the hand in sign language, Tab (*Tabula*) is the location on the body or space where the gesture is performed, and Sig (*Signation*) is a movement made by the hand. The concept is similar to phonology in

spoken language which consists of consonants and vowels. Here are some hand and body movements when students are communicating including:



**2.1 The picture above shows when the student was asked about "have you eaten today?" then he answered "already, eat mutton"**



**2.2 .The picture above shows when the student was asked about "what grade are you in?" then he answered "grade 11"**



**2.3 The picture above shows when the student was asked about "what are your daily activities?" then he answered "sleeping".**

### **3. Speed and Rhythm**

Speed and rhythm are two aspects related to tempo and regularity patterns in various activities such as communication, movement, and music. Speed refers to how fast or slow something is done, while rhythm is the pattern of regularity in movement or sound. In sign language, speed determines how fast the sign is delivered, while rhythm helps create a clear and understandable structure, thus affecting the fluency and effectiveness of communication (Stokoe, 1978).

Speed and rhythm in communication using sign language, based on the results of interviews with educators and education personnel that sign language plays an important role in conveying emotions and messages. When someone communicates using sign language, faster movements indicate strong emotions or urgent situations and reflect the mood of the speaker so that it affects the understanding of the impression conveyed. The slow rhythm emphasises certain messages. Variations in speed and rhythm also depend on the individual's ability to understand sign language while rhythm in sign language is similar to intonation in spoken language. According to William C Stokoe shows that speed and rhythm in sign language are not only physical aspects but also part of a complex linguistic structure in understanding, speed affects the understanding and emotions of speakers and listeners, while rhythm helps structure clear and effective communication. (Stokoe, 1978) Here are some examples of speed and rhythm movements when students feel happy, sad and angry. Among them:



**3.1 The resulting speed and rhythm will look slow because he feels his mood is not okay about the sadness he is experiencing**



**3.2 The speed and rhythm will be more balanced between the soul and the feelings he experiences when he is happy**



**3.3 Speed and rhythm will be faster and angrier when she is angry**

#### **4. Social connectedness and sign language in the neighbourhood**

Social connectedness or social interaction is a relationship between individuals, both individually and in groups that are dynamic and influence each other. In this process, actions (actions) and responses (reactions) are created involving linguistic communication, nonlinguistic communication, and social games. (Putri, 2018)

Social connectedness and sign language in the surrounding environment based on the results of interviews with educators and education personnel convey the ability of sign language to be easily recognised and understood. As well as strengthening relationships between deaf students by creating a sense of community and supporting more effective communication, increasing good and correct social interaction.

However, the biggest challenge in building social connectedness is the lack of understanding of sign language among non-users which can hinder the continuity of communication. Sign language communication also builds trust and strengthens emotional connections, thereby improving overall social connectedness and building social solidarity

through the use of sign language as their primary means of communication. Social connectedness can be a bridge to reduce the communication gap between deaf and hearing people. It can create better understanding and government programmes can also support this social connectedness by facilitating training, public awareness, and the use of sign language in the local environment.

### **5. Collaborative Learning in the context of Sign Language:**

Effective sign language learning does not only rely on individualised methods, but also requires collaboration between teachers, students and the school environment. This collaboration is important so that deaf students' understanding of sign language is developed and applied in everyday life.

In the learning process, it is important to implement interactive and communicative methods. For example, deaf students can learn sign language through group games, joint discussions, or simulations of real-life situations. This helps them understand the use of sign language in various communication contexts. The teacher's role as a facilitator is not only to act as a teacher but also as a facilitator who guides students in understanding and using sign language properly. Teachers need to understand the communication needs of each student and provide an appropriate approach. Increasing interaction between deaf and non-deaf students collaboration in learning not only involves fellow deaf students but also non-deaf students.

Through activities such as joint discussions, drama performances using sign language, or group projects non-deaf students can learn to understand sign language and increase their awareness of inclusive communication. Despite the benefits of collaborative learning, there are challenges such as a lack of understanding of sign language among non-deaf students, limited supportive learning media, and the need for additional training for teachers to be more effective in teaching sign language.

### **6. Cultural Acceptance in Sign Language Communication:**

Cultures generally develop words for concepts that are important to them. Language can change over time to indicate cultural needs and values. Sign language is also not just a means of communication for deaf students, but also part of their cultural identity (Woolfolk & Usher, 2024).

In this study, it was found that sign language plays an important role in shaping deaf students' self-confidence and social connectedness. For deaf students, sign language is part of their identity that distinguishes them from verbal communicationbased gatherings. By understanding and mastering sign language, they can express themselves more freely and feel more accepted in their environment. The community's understanding of sign language is still limited. Therefore, socialisation about sign language needs to be improved so that people are more aware of the importance of inclusive communication. Schools have a strategic role in introducing sign language as part of deaf students' culture. Programmes such as sign language art performances, inclusivity seminars, and collaboration with deaf communities can increase appreciation of sign language. One of the main obstacles in making sign language a culture is the lack of support in family and community settings.

Many deaf students have difficulty communicating with family members who do not know sign language. Therefore, it is necessary to educate families and communities so that they better understand and support the use of sign language.

## CONCLUSION

This research conducted at SLB-B Beringin Bhakti shows that the learning system for children with special needs in sign language is direct interaction. Knowing with whom we communicate whether the person has the ability to use sign language communication, in the context of learning also deaf students are given an explanation of the accuracy in communicating sign language. Such as the right facial expressions, body hand movements, and the right rhythmic speed in using sign language, teachers adjust learning strategies to the individual abilities of each student both in terms of communication and learning.

learning. In addition, SLB-B Beringin Bhakti in the learning process does not only apply individual learning methods. But also applying collaborative learning methods between teachers, as well as between students working together in the continuity of good learning, including by conducting joint discussions, group assignments and training to support the talents of speech deaf students.

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