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Teachers' Communication Patterns In The Learning Process With Children With Special Needs At The Fitria Bogor Special School

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Abstract

This study examines the communication patterns used by teachers in an inclusive classroom environment at SLB Fitria Bogor, an extraordinary school in Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study explores how interpersonal communication is built between teachers and students with different types of disabilities, especially deaf students. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participatory classroom observations, and document analysis.

The results of the study showed that the teacher integrated sign language, facial expressions, body movements, lip reading, and visual media to build understanding and support the learning process. Despite facing various challenges such as limited vocabulary comprehension, differences in fluency in sign language, and lack of parental involvement, teachers demonstrate flexible communication patterns to overcome these barriers.

This research contributes to the field of educational communication for children with special needs, as well as highlights the importance of using flexible communication techniques in the teaching environment for deaf and several other deaf children.

Keywords: communication patterns, deaf teachers, inclusive classes, special needs education, SLB Fitria Bogor.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a fundamental aspect of human life, as important as biological needs such as food and water. In the field of education, communication plays a role as the main tool

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to convey knowledge, foster critical thinking, and form character. For children with special needs, effective communication is becoming increasingly important because it directly affects the quality of their learning experience.

In Indonesia, Extraordinary Schools (SLB) provide education for students with various types of disabilities, including hearing loss. SLB Fitria Bogor is one of the institutions that offers inclusive education to students with diverse conditions such as autism, Down syndrome, deafness, and disability. One of the unique things about this school is that there is a deaf teacher who teaches in a classroom with students with different types of special needs (Ika Yuliasari & Novianty Elizabeth Ayuna ., 2023)

This research focuses on communication patterns applied by teachers in the classroom environment. This study aims to understand how teachers build meaningful communication patterns with students, even though one of the teachers has limitations in hearing. Given that teachers and students have different levels of understanding and fluency in sign language, this situation demands the use of creative and adaptive communication methods.

Understanding these communication patterns is essential to improving inclusive education practices. This research refers to the theory of symbolic interactionism, the theory of interpersonal communication, and the theory of communication accommodation to analyze the interactions that occur in the classroom. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into how communication can be optimized in the context of special needs education between teachers with various kinds of disabilities, teachers with autistic students and especially when teachers with special needs deaf and students alike face barriers in communication.

In addition, this study also considers the role of the school environment and the support from other parties such as parents, educators, and the surrounding community in shaping effective communication. Their involvement is essential in creating an inclusive and supportive learning atmosphere for students with special needs. Harmonious collaboration between teachers, students, and supporting parties can strengthen mutual understanding despite communication barriers. Technology also serves as a potential aid in supporting classroom communication, such as through visual media, sign language translation apps, and hearing devices. With the use of technology and environmental support, adaptive and inclusive communication becomes more achievable.

This research is expected to contribute to the development of teaching methods in special education schools, particularly in terms of communication between teachers and students with special needs. Furthermore, the results of this study may serve as a reference for

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educational institutions in designing training programs that better equip teachers to face communication challenges in inclusive classrooms. Awareness of the importance of mutual two-way communication becomes a starting point for creating meaningful and effective learning processes. It is also hoped that this research will inspire policymakers to pay more attention to the needs of teachers with disabilities within the national education system. Thus, inclusive education practices in Indonesia can develop more optimally and reach more children with special needs.

Problem Formulation

The presence of a deaf teacher teaching in a classroom with diverse students with special needs creates a unique and complex communication environment. In contrast to conventional educational environments where teachers can rely on verbal instruction, this situation demands alternative and adaptive communication strategies. Teachers have to deal with a variety of challenges, including differences in fluency levels in sign language, students' cognitive limitations, and limited access to appropriate communication tools. This study aims to explore how effective communication patterns can still be realized in these conditions, as well as how it affects students' learning experiences.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to analyze the processes and communication patterns used by teachers in the context of inclusive classrooms at SLB Fitria Bogor and the obstacles faced, as well as the adaptive methods applied to overcome these challenges. Thus, this study provides insight into the dynamics of communication in special education settings involving educators and students with disabilities.

Research Benefits

This research makes a contribution both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study enriches the study of interpersonal communication in special education, especially in the context of deaf, autism, blind, disabled and Down syndrome educators. Practically, this research can be a reference for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the field of special needs education. The findings of this study can be the basis for the development of training programs, curriculum development, and classroom management strategies to support the creation of an inclusive learning environment. In addition, this research also provides a deeper understanding for

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parents and schools about the importance of adaptive communication in encouraging an effective teaching and learning process.

Research Limitations

This research has a limited scope to one case study conducted at SLB Fitria Bogor, with a focus on teachers. Therefore, the findings in this study may not be generalized to all special needs schools or other inclusive classes in Indonesia or in other countries. In addition, because this study is qualitative, the results are highly dependent on subjective interpretations that may be influenced by the researcher's point of view. Further research is recommended using a wider sample or a mixed methods approach to obtain more comprehensive results.

Research Questions

1. What is the communication process in SLB Fitria class learning in the Ciawi area, Bogor City?
2. What is the communication pattern carried out by special school teachers with special needs deaf in class with children with special needs SLB Fitria in the Ciawi area of Bogor City

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of communication in special education settings has received increasing attention in recent years, particularly in relation to how educators adapt their communication strategies to accommodate students with disabilities. In the classroom where both teachers and students face communication challenges with various special needs, understanding these interactions becomes very crucial.

The theory of Symbolic Interactionism is the main foundation in analyzing how individuals interpret and give meaning to symbols in an interaction. According to Mead, human interaction is shaped through symbolic cues, including language, facial expressions, and body movements. This theory is particularly relevant in the context of special education, where non-verbal cues are often more meaningful than verbal communication.

The Interpersonal Communication Theory developed by experts such as DeVito emphasizes face-to-face exchanges involving verbal and non-verbal messages. In an inclusive classroom, communication should consider differences in speech, cognition, and sensory

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processing skills, so interpersonal competence as well as the ability to code and decode messages are critical. This theory explains how communication is shaped by relationships between participants as well as the context of interactions that include physical, social, and psychological dimensions.

Furthermore, Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) by Howard Giles provides an important framework for understanding how individuals adjust their communicative behavior in interactions involving cultural or language differences. In the context of this study, CAT explains how a deaf teacher modifies the way he communicates to be in harmony with the abilities and needs of his students. This theory introduces concepts such as convergence, divergence, and over-accommodation, each of which reflects an interaction strategy based on social perception and relational goals.

Previous research has explored similar themes. Giffary (2024) examined teacher-student interactions in SLB environments and found that non-verbal methods such as movement and visual assistance play a central role in achieving understanding. Zuroida et al. (2024) also found that deaf students responded positively to visual communication techniques, including facial expressions and manual cues. Other studies have shown that adaptive communication in special education settings can improve student engagement, material comprehension, and behavioral development (Ika Yuliasari & Novianty Elizabeth Ayuna ., 2025)

Although most studies have focused on communication from teachers who can hear to students with special needs, few studies have examined the opposite: how deaf teachers can communicate effectively with diverse student populations. This gap highlights the uniqueness of current research, which is interesting in the communication patterns of a deaf educator and other teachers in managing an inclusive classroom with students with a variety of disabilities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research design to explore communication patterns used by teachers in inclusive classrooms at SLB Fitria Bogor. A qualitative approach was chosen to allow for an in-depth understanding of the natural interactions and communication strategies used in real-life classroom situations. The focus of this research is not on the measurement of variables, but rather on the interpretation of communication dynamics that occur in contexts where both educators and students face unique communication challenges.

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Location and Research Participants

This research was carried out at SLB Fitria Bogor, a private extraordinary school located in the Ciawi area, West Java. The main participant in this study is a deaf female teacher who has more than 12 years of teaching experience and educational background in the field of Special Education (PLB) and other teachers with the same background dealing with students with various disabilities. Classes are made up of students with diverse types of disabilities, including hearing loss, autism, and intellectual disabilities. Additional informants include accompanying teachers and school management to provide broader contextual insights.

Data Collection Techniques

Data is collected through the following three main techniques:

1. In-Depth Interview: Conducted with the teacher to explore the perceptions, experiences, and communication strategies he uses in the classroom.
2. Non-Participatory Observation: The researcher observes the learning process in the classroom without being directly involved, to authentically capture communication behaviors and interactions.
3. Document Analysis: Includes an examination of the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), learning materials, and visual media used in teaching and learning activities.

The use of these three techniques allows for data triangulation, thereby increasing the reliability and validity of research findings.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data was analyzed using a thematic approach. Thematic analysis was carried out by coding interview transcripts and observation notes to identify patterns and recurring themes related to communication styles and patterns, barriers faced, and coping mechanisms used. The interpretation of the data is aligned with the theoretical frameworks of symbolic interactionism, the theory of interpersonal communication, and the theory of communication accommodation.

Ethical Considerations

This research ensures compliance with ethical principles through the provision of *informed consent* from participants and the school. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained throughout the research process. This research also follows the research ethics guidelines that have been set by Jayabaya University.

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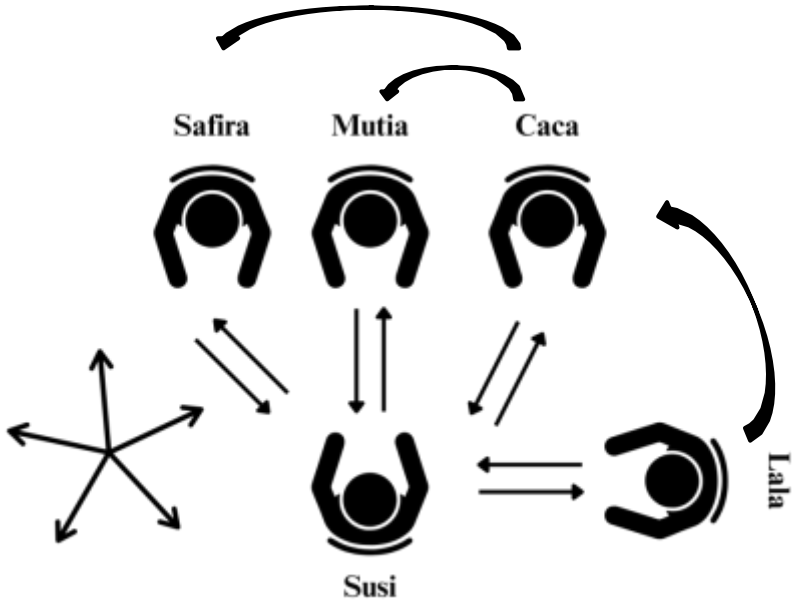
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DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the unique dynamics of communication in an inclusive classroom where a deaf teacher teaches students with a variety of special needs. Through observation and interviews, it is clear that teachers use various non-verbal communication strategies, including Indonesian Sign Language (SIBI), facial expressions, body movements, reading lip movements, and the use of visual media. This method serves not only as a teaching tool, but also as a bridge to build emotional connections and maintain discipline in the classroom.



Communication Patterns of Deaf Classes and Deaf Teachers

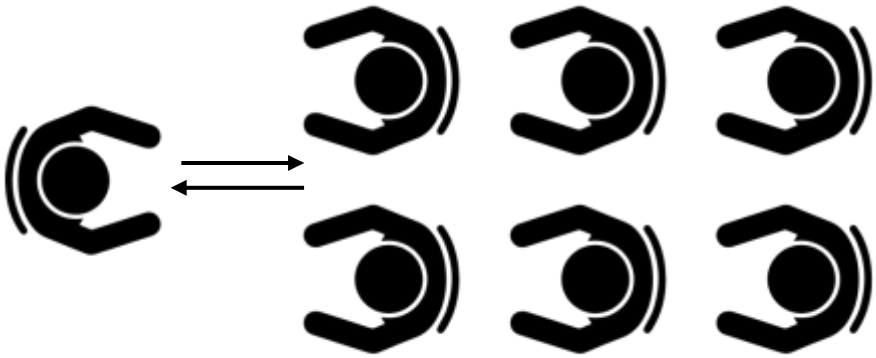
Teacher Susi uses verbal and non-verbal language when communicating with her students and image media as a bridge in her communication process. In the picture, the pattern formed is a wheel pattern and an all-directional pattern, there is also a second-level communication or secondary communicator, namely Caca where when Susi explains or communicates and gets an obstacle, Caca will explain back to her friends about the information conveyed by Susi.

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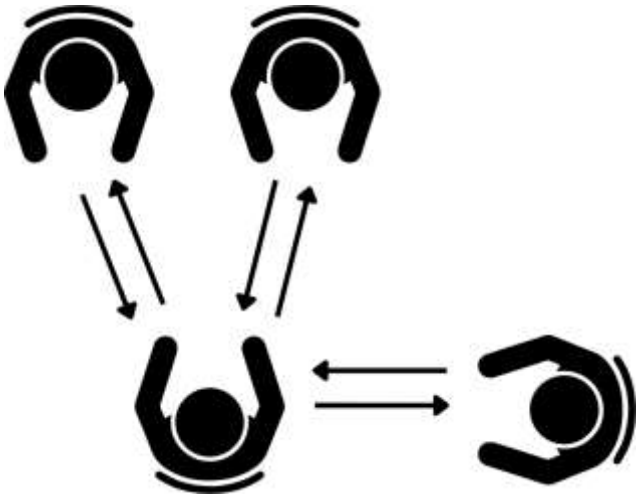
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Heterogeneous Classroom Communication Patterns and Normal Teachers

Guru Kadir who teaches the art of drawing uses verbal language with a combination of non-verbal but not dominant and picture media as teaching materials to make students understand the information conveyed. The pattern formed in this class is a wheel pattern, Guru Kadir explained to the students and thickened with interpersonal communication in each student.



Communication Patterns of Autistic Classes and Normal Teachers

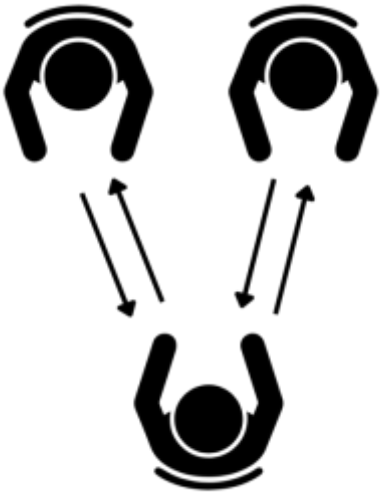
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Teacher Karin, teacher Heri and teacher Fifi teach autistic classes using verbal language and affirmation using hand movements and facial expressions as an addition to communication. And the verbal language used is very limited, this is because if there are too many sentences given by the teacher, students will find it difficult to understand the information given, then the teacher will use only a few words that are important to convey to students. The communication pattern that occurs in this class is the wheel pattern and is predominant in interpersonal communication.



Communication Patterns of Classes with the Blind and Normal Teachers

Teacher Anisa, teacher Mariyam, teacher Juariah teach the blind class using minimalist verbal and non-verbal language. The characteristics of students with disabilities are able to understand information or communication processes carried out by their teachers. The communication pattern that emerges is the dominant wheel pattern and interpersonal and group communication is used in the learning process in the classroom, the perceived obstacle is that students with disabilities have an intellectual level below standard so the language used must be very simple.

One of the other important findings is that teachers consistently adjust their communication methods based on each student's level of understanding and type of disability. For example, students with mild intellectual disabilities respond well to sign language and visual

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demonstrations, while students on the autism spectrum are more interested and engaged when visual aids are used repeatedly with consistent movements. These adaptive techniques are in line with the principles of Communication Accommodation Theory, where Communicators adjust their communication behavior to reduce social distancing and improve mutual understanding.

Despite its successes, the study also revealed several challenges. One of the main problems is inconsistency in the understanding and use of sign language by students. Some students have very limited exposure to formal sign language at home, making it difficult for them to understand the instructions in class. In addition, the absence of standardized communication training for all staff resulted in miscommunication in collaborative teaching(Ika Yuliasari, Made Wilantara, Novianty Elizabeth Ayuna., 2024)

Another challenge is the lack of active involvement from parents. Many parents do not master sign language, which creates a communication gap between home and school. This gap often leads to inconsistencies in strengthening communication strategies outside of the classroom. Teachers address this problem by involving accompanying teachers in daily communication routines and creating visual materials that can be taken home for use by parents at home.

These findings support the framework of Symbolic Interactionism, which states that meaning is created and interpreted through symbols that are understood together. In the context of the classroom, such symbols include not only gestures and movements, but also routines, facial expressions, and environmental cues. The teacher's ability to create a consistent symbolic environment allows students to build a sense of familiarity and predictability, which is especially important in special education.

Overall, this study shows that a normal and deaf teacher can effectively manage and deliver learning in an inclusive classroom by applying adaptive and multimedia communication strategies. These practices not only facilitate academic learning, but also foster a sense of inclusion, confidence, and mutual respect among students with diverse needs.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

This study examines the communication patterns used by a deaf teacher in an inclusive classroom environment with deaf children at SLB Fitria Bogor, Indonesia. The results of the study show that teachers have successfully implemented adaptive communication strategies, such as

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sign language, body movements, facial expressions, and visual aids to build meaningful interactions with students with diverse special needs. Despite facing various challenges, such as inconsistencies in sign language comprehension and limited parental involvement, teachers have shown their seriousness and creativity in creating an inclusive and effective learning environment.

These results confirm the relevance of symbolic interactionism theory, interpersonal communication theory, and communication accommodation theory in understanding communication dynamics in special education settings. This research highlights the importance of teacher adaptability, environmental support, and collaborative communication in the context of an inclusive classroom.

It is recommended that educational institutions provide regular training to special education teachers, increase parental involvement through the provision of easily accessible communication tools, and encourage collaboration between educators to strengthen inclusive learning outcomes. Advanced research involving more schools with a comparative approach can provide broader insights into communication practices in special needs education in a variety of contexts.

Suggestion

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher gave the following suggestions:

1. For special education teachers, especially those with hearing impairments, it is recommended to continue to improve communication skills through more varied sign language training, the use of visual-based learning media, and the development of communicative learning methods so that the learning process becomes more effective and inclusive.
2. For the management and management of SLB Fitria, it is necessary to provide supporting communication facilities, such as interactive teaching aids, visual modules, and special mentoring systems that facilitate teachers in understanding and meeting the needs of diverse students in the classroom.For the government and education policymakers, it is hoped that there will be regulations and special training programs for special education teachers who also have disabilities, so that they get maximum support in carrying out their duties. Moreover It is important to increase literacy about alternative communication for teachers and students with special needs

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throughout Indonesia.

3. For the next researcher, it is recommended to conduct a more in-depth study on the effectiveness of the communication model used by teachers with disabilities in managing inclusive classrooms and their impact on student learning outcomes. Follow-up research can also expand the scope of regions and types of disabilities to provide a more comprehensive picture.

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