



## Analysis of Sign Language Skills in Improving Communication and Learning for Deaf Children

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### ABSTRACT

This study uses qualitative methods that aim to identify and describe how sign language skills improve communication and learning for deaf children. Data collection in this study is literature research, namely searching for research data and information through academic articles, books, references, and published materials contained in the library. The results of this study show that one form of communication used by deaf children is nonverbal sign language, and sign language is very important for deaf children who need special support because they cannot communicate like others. Deaf children usually encounter obstacles in the learning process such as when the interaction between the teacher and students is disrupted and students may not be able to understand the content delivered by the teacher. To achieve optimal learning, appropriate teaching methods and sign language are needed, namely SIBI (Indonesian Sign Language System) and Bisindo. Such methods help deaf students acquire language skills, improve communication skills, and facilitate the exchange of materials between teachers and deaf students. Therefore, in communicating with healthy people, it is necessary to communicate using sign language that can be understood by deaf people.

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## INTRODUCTION

Birth is an important event in human life, where a baby is born with a healthy and normal body, body parts and five senses that are complete and functioning properly. But many babies are also born with weak physical conditions or their five senses are incomplete and do not function properly. These are all fates that a person must accept. People with disabilities or children with special needs (ABK) are called people with physical disabilities and senses that do not function properly (Siti Mariah Ulfah and Siti Ubaidah, 2019). According to (Dewanti, 2019 in Sri Abdiningsih Masithah et al., 2023) Children

with special needs are children or individuals who have characteristics that are different from children in general, these children have physical, emotional and intellectual characteristics that are different from other children who are considered normal by the general public. There are many different types of people with disabilities, including deaf children who have partial or complete hearing loss, and usually have speech and language disorders. That is, they are also called deaf or speech impaired or mute.

Hearing loss is a condition where a person loses hearing and is unable to perceive various stimuli, especially through hearing (Hendrilianti 2016: 25 in Ika Andriani, 2019). Hearing loss in deaf children greatly affects their social-emotional development, because social interaction is limited and involves only deaf children's peers. In addition, they often feel suspicious and distrustful, irritable and offended, lack confidence, and others (Wardani, 2012: 5.22 in Ika Andriani, 2019). The disorder affects the development of deaf children in dealing with the environment and ultimately affects the personality development of deaf children in general.

In everyday life, children with special needs often have difficulty in communicating and interacting with the surrounding environment due to limited language skills, especially sign language. Communication plays an important role in human activities because good mutual communication allows efficient provision of information. These limitations can create gaps and errors in communication and the information received may be understood differently between a normal child and a child who has hearing or speech impairments. Because communication embodies the most important key to academic success along with the psychological and physical development of students with disabilities. Therefore, communication in educational activities must help people with disabilities in different situations to prepare for the future (Norifumi Aisyah and Farid Pribadi, 2022).

Sign language can be used as an alternative in speaking to deaf children. Sign language is an expression that is spoken and approved by users through hand and arm movements (Nur Wahyuni, 2023). According to (Wikipedia, 2022 in Siti Mariah Ulfah and Siti Ubaidah, 2019) sign language is a language that emphasizes manual dialogue, *gestures*, and lip gestures. Sign language is the language used by deaf groups for dialogue. Sign language has also become a tool for users to place themselves and get information. The basic difference between sign language and spoken language lies in the way it is produced and introduced. Spoken language is produced through sound (oral) and recognized through *hearing (hearing)*, while sign language is produced through hand

gestures (*gesture*) and recognized through sight (*visual*). So, spoken language is spoken-auditory language, while sign language is visual sign language.

Sign language is usually used by teachers when teaching and talking to deaf children, but is less proficiently introduced because sign language is still not used by some students as a means of communication. They still use sign language that they believe the other person will understand something they are talking about. This is due to teachers' lack of knowledge about sign language due to different educational backgrounds (Siti Mariah Ulfah and Siti Ubaidah, 2019).

Given the problems presented by the researcher, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "Analysis of Sign Language Skills to Improve Communication and Learning Skills of Deaf Children". The question asked in this study is how sign language interaction skills can improve the communication and learning skills of deaf people. The purpose of this study was to analyze how sign language interaction skills improve the communication and learning skills of deaf people.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is qualitative method. According to Bogdan and Taylor (Siti Mariah Ulfah and Siti Ubaidah, 2019), qualitative research is a research method that produces descriptive data in the form of written and oral words of people and observable behavior. The method used in this study is a literature review. The resulting data is analyzed in advance in detail. The use of data for literature research is carried out in official sources, namely research reports, notes / fields, official works, books / manuals or digital formats published by the government and related agencies. In order to remain relevant, data processing methods and techniques must be precisely determined. Data collection in this study is literature research, namely searching for research data and information through academic articles, books, references, and published materials contained in the library (Ruslan, 2013 in Norifumi Aisyah and Farid Pribadi, 2022). Literary research examines relevant and informative sources on the problem under study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Sign Language Skills of Deaf Children

Deaf children are children who have problems with their hearing organs and cannot speak clearly. Children with hearing loss are unable to learn languages and develop language skills like normal children. The acquisition of a child's first language occurs through complete communication. Complete

communication is a very efficient form of communication because it uses additional forms of oral or verbal dialogue by reading, writing, speaking, and reading using sign language instruction sheets such as natural language or sign language for deaf children, although the format is different (Neni Maisa Putri, 2022).

According to (Muhammad, 2022 in Eci Silpia and Ramadhanita Mustika Sari, 2023), sign language is a door that makes it easy to convey what you want to convey. Sign language is especially important for deaf people with special needs. Because, one of the most effective ways of communicating for deaf children is through nonverbal communication through sign language. This is because deaf children do not have the ability to communicate verbally like people in general.

According to (Purwowibowo et al., 2019) in determining the success rate and skills of sign language in the deaf, there are factors, namely the introduction of age-level language concepts. Here is an introduction to the age of learning and language concepts depending on the age of the child. 1) Ages 0 to 6, how to teach good language to deaf children at this age by focusing on numbers and alphabet material, including introducing numbers and letter forms. Because, children aged 0 to 6 years should not be focused on capturing word concepts. 2) Ages 6 to 10 years, in this age group it is necessary to instill basic word concepts in deaf children. When teaching, include one element of the picture as a word description. 3) Ages 10 to 12 years, deaf children at this age are expected to be able to recognize shapes in pictures and describe objects observed in simple sentences. Because at this age the emphasis is on forming sentences using SPOK (Subject Predicate Object Description) according to Indonesian rules. 4) Ages 12 to 16, at this age, deaf children are considered as adolescents who focus on language skills based on their own experiences.

Their vocabulary is vast and varied, allowing them to better understand sentences in paragraph form. 5) Age 16 years, deaf children aged 16 years and over experience rapid language development. When adding words, you should focus on figurative writing by normal people without hearing loss. This is because children's activities have a great influence on their language development. In addition, the way you communicate with others is also very influential.

These elements can help parents and teachers help children understand language concepts correctly. For deaf people, the understanding of language should not be the same as the understanding of language for non-deaf people. For deaf people, the focus of language use is on *gestures* to make certain

meanings and meanings. Indonesian sign languages include SIBI (Indonesian Sign Language System) and Bisindo.

SIBI is a communication that uses sign language used by the deaf. Which consists of *gestures*, hand activities, and lip movements, which are assembled in sequence and are useful for expressing Indonesian vocabulary (Vetra El Rahma et al., 2022 in Nur Wahyuni, 2023). According to Hanifa, SIBI is a form of language adapted from ASL (American Sign Language). SIBI is a form of sign language recommended by the government because it only requires one hand. However, this form of hand sign audio is rarely used in everyday life. Because, the structure of behavior is the same as everyday Indonesian that use prefixes and suffixes. SIBI is an official sign language with a basic and very complex vocabulary to explore (Hanifa, 2023 in Siti Mariah Ulfah and Siti Ubaidah, 2019). Deaf people feel that SIBI is not their language because it contains symbolic rules in interpreting vocabulary when communicating (Utami, 2016 in Sri Abdiningsih Masithah et al., 2023).

Bisindo stands for Indonesian Sign Language which is also the mother tongue of deaf friends, similar to Indonesian who have a natural way of communication between deaf people or the mother tongue of deaf friends. Bisindo occurs naturally in the deaf group and develops through observation and research. What is special about using Bisindo as a sign language is the facial and oral expressions produced. In addition, there are five commonly used parameters: position, hand shape, orientation, hand movements, and non-manual expressions. (Sri Abdiningsih Masita et al., 2023).

Bisindo like Indonesian in general, is used for interpersonal communication. Through Bisindo, deaf people can freely express their thoughts and feelings and manifest themselves as Indonesian citizens who are worthy and in accordance with their outlook on life and human rights. Deaf habits also vary greatly due to differences in hearing roles and communication methods. Deaf people use their eyes or sight to get information, while hearing people use their ears or voice. Bisindo varies in each region, but there are no problems in communication (Wicaksono, 2018 in Siti Mariah Ulfah and Siti Ubaidah, 2019).

### **Total Communication**

Deaf children also need language skills to communicate with others. Therefore, deaf children must form their language orally or use sign language to convey messages. Children with hearing loss are unable to learn languages, develop language skills, and usually cannot speak normally. The acquisition of the first language of deaf children occurs through total communication (Nur Haliza et al., 2020). Deaf children cannot hear well because of their limited hearing ability. This condition causes deaf children to face obstacles in

communicating and interacting with their social environment. That's why special education programs for deaf children are so important. Good and appropriate educational opportunities for deaf children should be based on their needs, abilities and difficulties (Halwati Noviandari and Agus Murshidi, 2019).

Total Communication is an approach to deaf education that focuses that all deaf children have authority over all methods and tools of communication to develop their language. He uses all communication in different language models, namely gestures, sign language, learning to speak, reading language, finger gestures, learning to read and write (Ayang Rutma Dewi, 2018 in Nur Wahyuni, 2023). Total communication is not a method of teaching communication, but can be likened to educational achievements to obtain beautiful communication skills (Nur Haliza et al., 2020).

According to (Nur Haliza et al., 2020) total communication has the following components: speaking, signing, spelling fingers, listening, reading aloud, and reading sign language. 1) Speaking is a spoken language expression that is processed using language tools that produce sounds. 2) Sign System, a. Signs and sign systems, or signs throughout communication, are placed or arranged in a system. Therefore, it is called a form of writing in which each teaching is based on a standard form or Indonesian rules. b. Components Semantic differentiation in gestures, when speaking the meaning of words is determined by segmental and hypersegmental sounds, which are supported by facial expressions, hand movements, forehead wrinkles, *gestures*, or body language. The system of auxiliary symbols to clarify meaning consists only of facial expressions, *gestures*, *gestures*, and flexibility of motion. c. Finger alphabet, is a finger movement shaped like a letter or number. Fingers are usually used to determine self-identity, abbreviations (words), acronyms, and words that do not have a sign. 3) Hearing, hearing plays a role in obtaining communication messages sent through sound elements in total communication. Usually, deaf people who can still hear partially, or people who wear hearing aids, receive hearing or hearing training from the Bina Komunikasi Perception of Sound and Rhythm (BKPBI). 4) Reading words, is a skill needed by deaf children using oral approaches to communicate and socialize. Reading language is part of overall communication. Text-to-speech is commonly used to retrieve information transmitted through voice, sign language, finger spelling, facial expressions, and sign communication. Speech reading is usually used to retrieve information delivered by communication through speech, gestures, finger spelling, facial expressions, and gestures.

## Learning for Deaf Children

Learning is the core activity of the educational procedure. Because, it can be expected that with this learning activity, educational goals will be achieved and there will be changes in student behavior. This also embodies the wishes of all parties should each student obtain good learning results according to their abilities. The learning process takes place because of the need to achieve a goal. However, many teachers fail in practicing their learning and fail to achieve the expected goals (Siti Mariah Ulfah and Siti Ubaidah, 2019). Disruption of the learning process of deaf children at school is usually caused by a disconnect in interaction between teachers and deaf children. Communication errors may occur during the learning process. That is, students may not be able to optimally receive the content taught by the teacher, so they may not fully understand the entire content. Worse yet, students as recipients of messages may misunderstand the content of the material, so that their understanding is far from what the teacher conveys (Wilda Fazmi Luvita et al., 2021).

In order to obtain maximum learning outcomes, it is necessary to have the right teaching style and in accordance with the needs of deaf children. Furthermore, it takes a classroom layout arrangement to brave learning procedures, devices in schools that collaborate with each other so that they can make learning activities for deaf children more optimal (Purwowibowo et al., 2019). According to (Wilda Fazmi Luvita et al, 2021) a good learning method is one that can be used if there are problems in learning and with the appropriate situation of students. In the sense that learning methods are used in learning problems for every child with special needs in certain personalities including the personality of deaf children. In learning activities, teachers provide learning materials orally or in writing and students are required to listen and capture the learning given by the teacher.

According to (Wilda Fazmi Luvita et al., 2021) there are several learning methods that can be used by deaf children. 1) Lecture method: This method is often used by teachers when teaching a material. In teaching this method to deaf children, they must use clear language so that students can hear and hear clearly the learning material delivered. Deaf children have hearing loss so they use visualization more than hearing. In this method, teachers use speech therapy techniques for deaf children, especially the use of sign language, namely SIBI (Indonesian Sign Language System) and Bisindo, to translate what students see into things that can be expressed in words. So they are able to understand the content of the teaching materials delivered by the teacher. 2) Question and answer method: This method plays an important role in fostering student involvement in the learning process and can stimulate student curiosity

about learning problems. In this method, teachers combine SIBI (Indonesian Sign Language System) and Bisindo sign language to make the classroom atmosphere more lively and lively through a question and answer format. 3) Discussion Method: This method is usually done by solving problems given by the teacher in groups and giving students the opportunity to speak in front of their friends and express their opinions. Deaf students are able to use their skills to argue and solve problems, and feel confident to present the results of their discussions in front of the class in their original language. 4) Drill Method: This method is especially important when used on deaf students. This is because it can improve the writing skills of students who are still stringing sentences back and forth and have limited vocabulary. 5) Reading method (assignment): This method is usually used when there is a time limit given to the student by the teacher. In assigning assignments, teachers use SIBI (Indonesian Sign Language System) and Bisindo to communicate with deaf students, so that there are no difficulties or errors in completing tasks, and tasks that must be completed. 6) Demonstration Method, in this method all students pay close attention to the demonstration carried out by the teacher and sing to the rhythm of the song based on song cues. After the teacher demonstrates, students imitate the activity with singing movements and singing the lyrics until they are able to do so. This method can also be used when reading the Quran.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that one of the learning methods used by teachers in learning for deaf students is always combined with SIBI (Indonesian Sign Language System) and sign language called Bisindo. In learning, we help deaf students acquire language skills, improve communication skills, and facilitate the exchange of materials between teachers and deaf students. Therefore, in communicating with healthy people, it is necessary to communicate using sign language that can be understood by deaf people.

## **CONCLUSION**

From this study, it can be concluded that deaf children are children who have hearing loss so that it is difficult to communicate and interact with their environment. Sign language is one way to facilitate communication for deaf children. One of the ways deaf children communicate is through nonverbal sign language, because they are not able to communicate like normal people who usually communicate verbally. Deaf children encounter many obstacles in the learning process. In particular, communication between students may be hindered and students may not be able to understand the content of the lesson delivered by the teacher. Teachers teach appropriate teaching methods through

sign language, namely SIBI (Indonesian Sign Language System) and Bisindo, to facilitate communication between teachers and the deaf and to transfer teaching materials between teachers and the deaf to achieve optimal learning.

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