

COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN SOCIAL INTERACTION OF INCLUSION CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY

Fransisca Iriani R. Dewi¹, Grasella A. Pangandaheng², Darren Melvin³, Upie Fitri Nurqalby⁴, & Griselda Artha Daeli⁵

¹Undergraduate of Psychology, Universitas Tarumanagara, Jakarta
Email: fransiscar@fpsi.untar.ac.id

²Undergraduate of Psychology, Universitas Tarumanagara, Jakarta
Email: grasella.705200176@stu.untar.ac.id

³Undergraduate of Psychology, Universitas Tarumanagara, Jakarta
Email: darren.705200152@stu.untar.ac.id

⁴Undergraduate of Information Technology, Universitas Tarumanagara, Jakarta
Email: upie.535200068@stu.untar.ac.id

⁵Undergraduate of Psychology, Universitas Tarumanagara, Jakarta
Email: griselda.705200072@stu.untar.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Communication is a two-way interactive process found in everyday life. The role of communication in social relations functions to maintain social balance. In education, communication is used for the learning and teaching process in the classroom. The communication process of inclusive children experiences barriers to inability to communicate and socialize because it is difficult for others to understand. Based on observations made at SDN X Sijuk, some inclusive children have below-normal learning abilities and difficulties in social interaction. Inclusive children at SDN X Sijuk When in class, it is difficult to participate in learning activities with regular friends, which affects social interaction between peers. The research aims to find out and explain the communication skills of inclusive children and the communication skills of inclusive children when carrying out social interactions at SDN X Sijuk. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with two data sources, primary and secondary. The research subjects consisted of 6 students from class II to class IV. Data collection techniques are observation, interviews, and documentation. The results illustrate that the subject needs help communicating appropriately and correctly with the teacher and the people around him. Inclusion children at SDN X Sijuk are unable to communicate reciprocally and are unable to initiate communication or initiate verbal and non-verbal communication.

Keywords: communication skills, social interaction, inclusive children, case study, qualitative

1. PREFACE

Communication is an individual activity to receive and exchange information by involving interaction (Caropeboka, 2017). Communication is essential because it makes it easier for individuals to work together and build relationships in various fields. In education, communication is used for the learning and teaching process in the classroom. This, communication has been taught early to achieve optimal social development. Some of the stages in communication are (a) encoding in the form of incoming messages; (b) decoding the exchange of information; (c) conveying feelings (involving emotions); and (d) specific goals and conveying ideas (Gardner, 2003). Suherman (2020) also divides the stages of communication; namely, in the first stage, there is contact with individuals. This contact is used as a first impression before communication. If the first impression is wrong, the communication will not run smoothly. Furthermore, stage two is an introduction between individuals. At this stage, each individual will know the actor with whom they will communicate superficially. After the introduction, they will make friends; if this friendship fails, there will be a split.

Communication effectiveness or success will be seen when the above mentioned communication processes can be fulfilled. If it is not fulfilled, it will cause communication disorders or misunderstandings between the giver and the catcher of the message. Communication disorders can occur when one cannot understand the information provided. For example, inclusion students who experience problems when understanding and expressing information. In Rahayu's research (2014), which is related to inclusion, students describe that teachers have difficulties communicating. Communication is only one way, so the teaching and learning process is disrupted. About 84% of teachers need help teaching inclusion students (Husadani & Wiliyanto, 2023). Therefore, the communication between teachers and inclusion student experiences obstacles in the learning and teaching process.

Inclusion students experience obstacles related to emotions, behavior, social interaction, and communication (Julianingsih, 2022). This difference is certainly visible with normal students when communicating. Inclusion students have limitations in communication and social interaction, namely in verbal and nonverbal communication and eye contact. Nonverbal communication is usually unconsciously learned directly and continuously. Therefore, inclusion children need special assistance and learning approach strategies in the field of communication so that they can learn independently and socialize with others.

The State Elementary School X Sijuk also feels the communication difficulties of inclusion students. Their ability to communicate is limited, so teachers have difficulty teaching them. Finally, the class becomes ineffective in learning and teaching activities. In connection with these problems, the research team wants to examine the communication patterns of inclusion students at SDN X Sijuk. Furthermore, the researchers will discuss and study teachers' difficulties in teaching inclusion students. Later, we will discuss teaching alternatives to help teachers provide teaching for inclusion students. Thus, this research helps describe inclusion students' communication conditions and provides solutions to establish communication with them.

Communication

Communication comes from the Latin "communication," which means "sharing" or "belonging together." According to Harold Lasswell, communication is defined as a process of who, what, with, what effect, and what results. Meanwhile, according to Barnlund, communication is a process driven to reduce the sense of uncertainty that arises, a means to act effectively in maintaining or strengthening the ego (Wiryanto, 2006). Thus, it is concluded that communication describes the process, means, and goals to be achieved in communicating. The character of communication can be described as (a) communication as a process; (b) communication has a purpose; (c) communication requires cooperation from the actors involved; (d) communication is symbolic; (e) communication is transactional; and (f) communication penetrates the factors of space and time.

In the process, communication is a verb in English. "Communicate" means (a) to exchange ideas; (b) to make known and the same; and (c) to have a sympathetic relationship. The meaning of communication is that first, the process involves the exchange of symbols or signs, both verbal and nonverbal; second, there is togetherness between the sender and the recipient of the message. Communication is oriented towards similarity in interpreting a symbol to create a relationship of

togetherness, familiarity, or intimacy between the parties carrying out communication activities. When we communicate, we are trying to foster a commonness with someone.

Autism

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects individual behavior and communication and is characterized by deficits or limitations in social-communication skills and repetitive behaviors that are usually detected at the age of 1 to 3 years (Santrok, 2014). Nurfadhillah's research (2021) shows that children with autism require very complex handling with the active role of parents and teachers in many matters related to communication and social interaction development. The teacher's communication skills in guiding autistic students can be concluded by the fact that in the learning process, the teacher looks patient and more active because autistic students are always absorbed in their world, making students look unfocused on learning and not understanding the material presented.

The results of Boham's research (2013), some of the problems that are generally found in children with autistic disorders are in the social and communication aspects, which are very lacking or slow, as well as repetitive or repetitive behavior. We can observe this situation in children such as the child's inability to establish reciprocal social interactions properly and adequately, lack of eye contact, facial expressions that are less cheerful or lively and less directed limb movements, unable to play with peers so that they look alone or tend to be loners and cannot even empathize or feel what other people feel. According to Sidik (2016), games with peers can improve the communication skills of children with autism. With this game, the two subjects slowly showed changes in communication skills for the better. The subject has become accustomed to showing the desired object and expressing his wishes verbally to friends or people around him.

When discussing the definition and some of the conditions included in it, many of us may wonder about the cause of this condition. Due to the complexity of autism, there is no single cause for this condition, but there are several things that may be a factor in ASD, such as environmental and genetic factors (Mayo Clinic, 2018). The genetic factors of autism range from inherited genetic variations to de novo genetic factors or mutations in the individual's gene sequence (Rylaarsdam & Gamboa, 2019). For example, Weiss found in Santrock (2014) that mutations in either the duplication or loss of a section of DNA in chromosome 16 can increase an individual's tendency to develop ASD by 100-fold.

Apart from genetic factors, there are also environmental factors that can affect or exacerbate existing genetic factors. Based on an article published by the Mayo Clinic (2018), there are currently several things that experts and researchers are studying to determine the environmental factors that cause the condition, such as air pollution, viral infections, certain medications, or complications during pregnancy. In addition, these environmental influences can occur not only during pregnancy but also during the birth process and after birth (Karimi et al., 2017).

As we all know, the growth and development of individuals, especially psychological disorders, cannot be separated between genetic and environmental factors. Similarly, with ASD conditions, where it is likely that genetic factors influence the percentage ratio of around 40 to 80%, and the

rest can be caused or exacerbated by other factors such as the environment (Rylaarsdam & Gamboa, 2019).

Alternative Augmentation Communication (AAC)

Alternative Augmented Communication (AAC) is a medium introduced in 1950 to assist individuals in speaking (Mirenda, 2017). The media used can be sign communication, such as hands, pictures, and technology. This helps inclusive children communicate and interact with others. According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), KAA can stimulate social skills, school learning development, and independence. Nowadays, AEC is built using technology to increase its effectiveness. Alternative augmentative communication is associated with assistive communication and is used to express ideas and emotions. People with disabilities can benefit from AAA for school, work, and daily activities. In general, KAA techniques are divided into two categories: assisted and unassisted. Assisted communication involves using some external device or equipment, ranging from simple drawing boards to complex computer-based devices that produce synthesized speech output, and unassisted communication can be achieved without any additional equipment and relies solely on the individual's own body (Smith et al., 2005).

The importance of using KAA in children with special needs can make it easier for teachers to communicate with children with special needs when learning takes place. This is in line with research conducted by (Saleh & Mutahara, 2023), which states that the use of communication assistance applications shows an increase in communication skills in autistic children. The use of AAC with smartphone application media has an impact on increasing the willingness to interact with others; children can convey wishes, and the communication opponent understands the message conveyed by the child so that they can communicate with others.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

According to Creswell (1998), qualitative methods are divided into: (a) biography; (b) phenomenology; (c) grounded theory study; (d) case study; and (e) ethnography. The research design uses case studies, aiming to observe symptoms that are phenomena, existing conditions or relationships, developing opinions, ongoing processes, consequences, or effects of ongoing trends. Thus, a case study explores a phenomenon at a certain time based on the results of observations and interviews in the field.

This research was conducted at SDN X Sijuk, with the research subjects being six inclusion students who experience difficulties communicating at SDN X Sijuk, grades 2 and 4. The research team took participants in these classes because there are only inclusion students in these classes, so this is an opportunity for the research team to conduct case study research.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out utilizing observation and interviews. Observation activities were conducted to observe the communication skills and social interactions of inclusion children at X Sijuk State Elementary School. Observation activities are carried out by inviting inclusion children to play using alphabet and calculation educational play tools, talking directly, observing inclusion children, and then checking according to the symptoms that appear. Interviews were conducted with teachers and parents of inclusion children by asking questions about the research. This study conducted face-to-face interviews to obtain

information directly from the closest source. The instrument used to collect data in this study is a non-test instrument. The types of instruments developed are interview guidelines and observation.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews and observations at SDN X Sijuk, it was found that the communication skills of inclusion students were hampered. This is based on when researchers asked simple questions, but they did not understand the questions. When conducting interviews, their gaze is not focused, and they have not been able to respond according to what is being asked. Sometimes, they are just silent, making it difficult to respond when communicating. Thus, it can be concluded that the ability of inclusive students at SDN X Sijuk is limited, especially when engaging in social interaction.

Social interaction is a relationship between individuals and groups that occurs reciprocally. In the case of SDN X Sijuk, the social interactions experience obstacles because they find it difficult to express their feelings towards each other. Therefore, they need a medium to channel what they feel like the games presented by the research team. The game given by the research team contains visual and sound elements so that inclusion students can focus on the team. In addition, based on a study from Özyurt & Eliküçük (2020) found that alternative augmentative communication media can help inclusion students concentrate. The form of the game is PECS, a smartphone application that contains elements of images and colors. Augmentative and alternative communication systems using portable computer-based voice communication aids can assist inclusion students in developing communication and language skills.

KAA is currently used to assist inclusion students in communicating with each other because technological development facilitates it. The KAA technique is divided into two parts: with assistance and without assistance. The use of assistance involves some computer-based tools, while unaided relies on the individual's body (Smith et al., 2005). The importance of using KAA in children with special needs can make it easier for teachers to communicate with included children. This is in line with research conducted by (Saleh & Mutahara, 2023), which states that the use of communication assistance applications shows an increase in communication skills in autistic children. Therefore, the use of KAA can help inclusion students interact.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's results, it can be concluded that several inclusion children have good communication skills to respond according to the teacher's wishes and play with their peers. However, it cannot be denied that inclusion children at SDN X Sijuk experience deficiencies in establishing social interactions due to difficulties in communicating verbally and non-verbally, such as minimal facial expressions, voice intonations that tend to be small, and lack of reciprocity when conversing. Therefore, for the principal of SDN X Sijuk, it is hoped that there is someone who is an expert, for example, a BK (Counseling Guidance) Teacher who certainly understands more about the problems experienced by inclusion children and their handling. It is hoped that teachers will guide inclusion children in social interactions so that the communication skills of inclusion children at SDN X Sijuk can be improved.

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