

# Bilingual / Bicultural Education for Children with Hearing Impairment

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**Abstract**—Similar to other students, students with hearing impairment in inclusive schools should receive adequate support systems to overcome various difficulties, especially in terms of communication. Learners are no longer homogenous; however, in reality teachers in inclusive schools tend to be unprepared for providing services to learners with hearing impairments in their inclusive classes. Teachers sometimes emphasize the use of oral communication by ignoring the manual approach. Regarding this matter, bilingual/bicultural education for children with hearing impairment can be an alternative of teaching and learning. This research aims to examine bilingual/bicultural education for learners with hearing impairment in an inclusive school setting. It adopted the systematic literature review (SLR) approach using PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method to investigate the literature focused on the alternatives modes of communication. The bilingual/bicultural philosophy is the liberation of individuals in their choice of communication modes that can be used separately or even combined without any limitations or dichotomies. In order to achieve effective communication, teachers are faced with various choices, namely among (1) Auditory System; (2) Speechreading; (3) Manual Codes; (4) SIBI/Bisindo; or other alternative approaches to achieve bilingual/bicultural education for children with hearing impairment. The implications of this research is teachers' attitude in determining effective communication modes.

**Keywords**—*bilingual/bicultural education; children with hearing impairment*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Professionals in the field of education consistently paradigm the use of manual communication approaches and maintain strong opposition to the use of formal cues. Opposition consisting of educators of children with hearing impairments, do not agree with the use of cues because they only represent one system of gestures. Historically, advocates of such a view, considered that children with hearing impairments must be "normalized" by learning to speak. As for supporters of the oral approach, make a move namely the elimination of Sign Language. This effort was carried out with the introduction of early detection, intensive use of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and genetic engineering. Amid these conflicts, Bilingual / Bicultural Philosophy emerged. Bilingual / bicultural philosophy is the liberation of individuals related to

the selection of communication modes that can be used separately or even combined without any restrictions or dichotomies. Based on achieving effective communication, teachers are faced with various choices between (1) Auditory System; (2) Speechreading; (3) Manual Codes; (4) SIBI / Bisindo; or other approach choices that can be used as alternatives to realize bilingual / bicultural education for children with hearing impairments. The use of the terms "bilingual" and "bilingual / bicultural" to refer to the use of classes from two languages and two cultures, namely the deaf culture and the culture of those who hear [1].

Bilingual / bicultural education developed by Miller & Moors in Mazurek & Winzer, agreed to have two languages namely national language and English as a second language [1]. Actually, parents who have hearing impairments already provide a bilingual environment for their children. But the difficulty is in oral language [2]. So, there must be restrictions between language and communication. Language is a form of communication, whether it's oral, written or a sign, which is based on a symbol system [3]. Vygotsky believes that children use language not only for social communication, but also for planning, monitoring their behavior in their own way [4].

This study aims to examine bilingual / bicultural education for students with auditory barriers in inclusive school settings. Although it is still a debate and needs to be re-researched, construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct, its meaning and implementation. So there needs to be a research gap which is limited to the choice of communication modes are (1) Auditory System; (2) Speechreading; (3) Manual Codes; (4) SIBI / Bisindo; or other approach choices that can be used as alternatives.

## II. MODES OF INSTRUCTION

In 1960, children's education with hearing impairments was only oral. Without exception, regular school programs do not allow cues in class. This practice also applies to all schools.

In 1975, there was an extraordinary shift in classroom learning. About 2/3 of children with hearing impairments are taught through some form of manual communication (cues) and the rest through an oral approach.

The total communication term popularized by Holcomb, was described as a philosophy that would combine all forms of

communication [5]. The total communication approach is more humanistic, where the goal is that children who experience hearing difficulties in communicating are not just cues, but also take advantage of all the media but can use everything that can be used as a medium of communication so that effective communication occurs among children who have hearing problems or with a wider listening community. Total communication means totality or completeness in communicating without limitation. However, in practically, this is not the case, and the term total communication ultimately reconciles with simultaneous communication terminology. Total communication means totality or completeness in communication, without restrictions. However, in practice, this interpretation often does not occur, and the term total communication is finally coupled with the terminology of simultaneous communication.

### III. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND ISSUES

In general, although a part of educators agrees that the introduction of manual communication in learning is an increase in inflexibility, which the emphasis is only one learning model or approach to communication. The development and acceptance of the English-based signaling system represents significant progress. Although its effectiveness still needs to be questioned regarding representation and understanding.

Manual coding in the second language, English, cannot represent the full language. Likewise, with Indonesian (*Bahasa*), especially the slang language in interacting every day. This criticism becomes artificial, which made a mismatch of elements in grammatical. However, most educators will agree that natural signaling systems are far more sophisticated.

Educators of children with hearing impairments are basically faced with four communication options that can be used separately or in combination. These options are briefly presented as follows:

- **Auditory System:** This unisensory approach prioritizes hearing optimization. The use of vision in training is emphasized. The approach to this intervention is through early identification, installation of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and intensive training and learning that emphasize the children with hearing impairments can be restored to hearing function. This argument is effective for children with hearing impairments that can still be optimized for the rest of their hearing, not with children with severe hearing impairments.
- **Speechreading:** Speechreading usually optimizes visual-auditory in typical "verbal" instructions.
- **Manual codes:** A method of teaching or training children with hearing impairments to communicate with finger signals or spelling. The understanding of sign language or manual according to A. Van Uden means language by hand, although in reality, face and arm expressions are also used or played a role [6].
- **SIBI / Bisindo:** Basindo was originally from a child's natural cues collected and used locally. Then

improvements are made with the existence of SIBI. After that, Bisindo emerged from the community of children with hearing impairments. Until now, Bisindo has not been legalized and its appearance has also been motivated by community protests of children with hearing impairments because they were not involved during the formulation of the implementation of the SIBI concept. Various developments in communication media, especially the manual communication strategy in the form of sign language (Basindo, SIBI, Bisindo), have resulted in improvements to various aspects such as its function, readability, etc. especially in language development.

### IV. BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT: TWO PERSPECTIVES

Among educators with hearing impairments and adults, it is generally agreed that bilingual / bicultural education must have two languages. They also agree that children with hearing impairments must be "exposed" to adults who experience hearing and cultural aspects of the deaf community. There are developing issues, including:

- **Communication Parents with children:** specifically communication between typical parents and children with hearing impairments.
- **Language:** Sign language must be "promoted" as the main language of children with hearing impairments.
- **The SIBI program is integrated into educational programs** that involve children with hearing impairments.
- **To what extent the program designed especially the second language can provide insight for educators who work with children who experience barriers of hearing.**

Two basic positions are presented regarding the application of a bilingual / bicultural education system for children with hearing impairments. All communication must involve sign language as the medium of instruction in this case SIBI as a formal sign. The next step is the suggestion to incorporate formal sign language into an inclusive model depending on individual and situational needs.

### V. MAJOR ISSUES

When children are identified as having severe hearing impairments, parents must be informed about the bilingual choices are available to their child. The choice is not precluding the development of speech and hearing abilities but choices that open communication from the time the hearing loss is identified. Most parents who have hearing impairments already have the skills to provide a bilingual environment for their children. At this point, it is useful to make a difference between language and communication. Because language development is a side-product from the communication and development process.

Parents have the legal and moral right to decide what type of communication should be used by their children who have

hearing impairments, and professionals have a responsibility to provide information to parents for assist them in making choices based on the individual needs of a child at a certain point of development.

Although it may be difficult for some professionals to admit that parents know more about their child than even other people or the professionals. If parents choose a bilingual program, they must be aware that other choices are available.

Regardless of the mastery of sign language by parents, every effort must be made to ensure that the environment including schools and families are bilingual / bicultural. The bilingual environment can be built in various ways. Children with hearing impairments must be at home as a natural environment, not just as an instructor or facilitator.

#### VI. FAMILY SYSTEMS

When parents decide they want a bilingual / bicultural environment for their children, they must be sure that they do not choose one language or one culture over another.

#### VII. EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Children with hearing impairments must be admitted to school in order to have equal access to communication including all aspects of the school environment. Regular schools also must offer bilingual / bicultural programs by adding material to the curriculum about the deaf community, formal sign language and the cultural richness of "deaf". It is very important to build a system of sign language that is

complete, natural, and many users, which can be used for all aspects of communication [1].

#### VIII. CONCLUSION

Bilingual / bicultural education for children with hearing impairments began to gain popularity in the last decade of the 20th century, long after the emergence of bilingual education for children who heard. Bilingual / bicultural education emerged as a form of resistance to the legitimacy of sign language and the expanding deaf community that developed. This shift was caused the community began to embrace the philosophy of diversity.

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