

# Understanding the Role of Indonesian Language in Inclusive Education

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**Abstract:** The theme of inclusive education for children with disabilities is crucial due to persistent societal biases. Many children with disabilities lack access to formal education, with few specialized schools and qualified staff available. Using qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, and analyzed through educational psychology with a focus on language development, the research identifies key factors for successful inclusive education. Internal factors include health, intelligence, aptitude, interest, motivation, and learning styles, while external factors involve family, school, community, and neighborhood. The study highlights the vital role of special teachers who facilitate learning for students with special needs, such as those proficient in sign language, to ensure students grasp the material and achieve learning objectives.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Educational Psychology, Role Of The Indonesian Languages

## INTRODUCTION

Education and the process of personality formation are essentially developed by the most influential social institutions, namely family and school. There is intensive social contact and communication between teachers and students during the learning process. The interaction aims to form motivation that affects personality and mentality, the core of education is the development of students' mentality and personality (Septiarti et al., 2022). The educational process involves understanding the development that unfolds from social interactions between students at school (Suwarta et al., 2022).

Piaget explained learning as an interaction process of assimilation (adjusting new experiences to fit previous concepts) and accommodation (adjusting concepts to fit new experience concepts). The relationship between the two leads to short-term learning of mental development and long-term learning of students personality development (Paris et al., 2019, p. 12). Education trains respect and appreciation for differences, both gender and disability. Student interactions foster empathy, awareness of mutual respect, and gratitude for the blessing of a perfectly healthy body, helping other students' difficulties, whether disabled or not, instead of bullying them.

Social identity includes social identification, a unitary identity of self-description derived from membership in a social category (nationality, gender, race, job title, sports team, and temporary membership of a group) (Santoso, 2016, p. 230). The implementation of inclusive schools must initiate a culture of inclusion and a friendly environment for people with disabilities (Irvan & Jauhari, 2018). The identity of students with

disabilities can be introduced through inclusive education institutions, becoming an opportunity to fulfill the rights of children with disabilities to learn together at school.

Inclusive education gives students the right to access, attend, participate and succeed in school. A conducive learning environment supports the achievement of optimal learning goals (Pratiwi et al., 2022). Inclusive education emphasizes the inclusion of special students, groups of students into regular classes or schools. *Special educational needs and/or disabilities* (SEND), are an integral part of society, with special treatment they can play an active role in development (Kielblock & Woodcock, 2023).

Some humans are not born physically perfect, with physical or cognitive disabilities stemming from various genetic factors, accidents, external circumstances, or old age. In some cases the role of medicine or technology can eliminate these disabilities (Jaeger & Cythia Ann Bowman, 2005, p. 23). Moral values, individual, social life, and environmental awareness can be understood by students, and can be used by schools to construct morals in character education (Wibawa & Awaliah, 2023).

The concepts of inclusion are related to integration, mainstreaming, and are substantially different. In mainstreaming, students with disabilities are placed in special classes in regular schools, allowed to participate in some learning materials and classroom activities (Andriana & Evans, 2020). Students with intellectual disabilities require individualized teaching services, to accommodate different academic and non-academic abilities, in addition Law No. 13 of 2020 mandates appropriate accommodation in all pathways, levels, types of education, both inclusive and in special schools (Ishartiwi et al., 2023).

Learning in schools allows for student interaction. Such interactions influence students' disabilities and motivate them to participate more actively (Richardson et al., 2017). Inclusive education in formal schools is regulated by Government Regulation No. 70/2009, which stipulates that students with special needs and exceptional abilities are admitted to regular schools that have been designated as 'inclusive schools' and allocated additional funding (Zen & Ropo, 2023). According to the 1945 Constitution, people with disabilities are an integral part of society and enjoy the same rights and obligations as others, so it is important to observe the behaviour of educators when implementing inclusive education (Kurniawati et al., 2012)

Special education and disability have different implications for students with special needs and their families. Physical/mental disabilities must be studied from various perspectives and disciplines, in addition to biology and psychology, because disabilities involve social aspects (Rodriguez & Garro-Gil, 2015). The best method of education is through various and continuous discussions, because it allows everyone to feel valued and respected, so they can express their opinions (Suwarta et al., 2023).

The first consideration for choosing the theme of early inclusive education as the object of research is the society's perspective on disability. Most people have a negative view of disabilities, perceiving them as always dependent on others, troublesome, and unable to be independent. Secondly, in terms of disability education, most people with disabilities have not had the opportunity to receive education in formal institutions of special education, due to economic factors and low awareness of families, etc. Thirdly, the distribution of inclusive schools, currently there are relatively few special schools and teaching staff with special education qualifications.

Some research related to inclusive education, first *Who's included and Who's not? An analysis of instruments that measure teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education*. Most instruments use exclusive wording focusing on specific learners, there is no purely inclusive ideal instrument, new measurement instruments are needed, being fair to inclusive education for all students (Kielblock & Woodcock, 2023). Second, *Challenges and Strategies for Inclusive Education in Higher Education in Indonesia: A Literature Re-*

view. Three challenges to implementing inclusive education in higher education and four strategies to optimize inclusion services (Muhibbin & Hendriani, 2021).

Penelitian ketiga *Implementasi Pendidikan Inklusif Sebagai Perubahan Paradigma Pendidikan Di Indonesia*. Inclusive education requires supervision, mentoring and evaluation for positive progress, both in quantity and quality (Irvan & Jauhari, 2018). Fourth *Constructing inclusive teacher identity in a Finnish international teacher education programme: Indonesian teachers' learning and post-graduation experiences*. Describing the process of teacher identity construction into an inclusive teacher as *repositioning loop* (Zen & Ropo, 2023). Fifth *The Individualized Instruction Application For Personal-Social Skills Of Students With Intellectual Disabilities*. Suggestions to teachers, schools, and government, individualizing learning for intellectual disabilities is a major learning need, so it is important to improve teachers' competencies regarding learning assessment skills, planning, and implementing individualized learning (Ishartiwi et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, the theme of inclusive education has been analysed from the aspects of teacher attitudes towards inclusive education, challenges and strategies for optimizing inclusive education in higher education, implementation of inclusive education, reconstruction of inclusive teacher identity, and individual learning. There is still no analysis of aspects of the description of the inclusive education process, so researchers consider it important to understand the description of the inclusive education process. Research on the description of the inclusive education process and previous research has relatively differences in the theoretical aspects used, while the similarities between previous research and this study are using qualitative methods.

This research focuses on analysing the description of the inclusive education process. The purpose of this research is to analyse the current picture of the inclusive education process. The benefits of the research are as follows: 1. It is hoped that the description of the inclusive education process can be understood. 2. It is hoped that readers will be wiser and more objective when understanding the reality of the current inclusive education process. 3. Various solutions can be found related to the current problems of inclusive education.

Learning according to some experts: Hilgrad & Bower, (*to learn*) acquiring knowledge through experience, remembering, mastering experiences, and getting information or discovering, activities or activities and mastery of something. Sardiman, psychophysical activities towards the development of the whole person, efforts to master knowledge and part of the activities to form a whole personality. B. F. Skinner, the process of progressive adaptation of behaviour. James O. Wittaker, the process of forming or changing behaviour through practice or experience. It can be concluded, learning is a process of deliberate activities of the individual, these activities are interactions carried out by individuals (Asrori, 2020).

Factors that influence the achievement of student learning outcomes, namely: 1. Internal (comes from within). Health, intelligence and talent, interest and motivation, way of learning. 2. External (comes from outside the self): Family, School, Society, the surrounding environment. It is concluded that whether or not in learning, due to factors that affect the achievement of learning outcomes, namely internal and external (Asrori, 2020).

Factors that affect learning objectives at school are classified into two, namely 1. Within the individual who is learning (internal), including: a. physical (health factors, body defects). b. psychological (intelligence, attention, interest, talent, motive, maturity, readiness). c. fatigue. 2. Outside the individual (external), including: a. family (how parents educate, family economic conditions, home atmosphere). b. school (teaching methods, school discipline, curriculum). c. community (form of community life, friends hang out.). It is concluded that whether or not a person succeeds in learning is due to factors that affect the achievement of learning goals, coming from within and from outside oneself (Asrori, 2020).

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## METHOD

This research method is qualitative, which relies on human observation, both in its area and in its terminology. Aims to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject holistically, by means of descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and utilizing various natural methods (Moleong, 2021, p. 16).

The paradigm is a way of scientific analysis that allows all problem formulations to be answered properly, aiming to gain a comprehensive understanding of the analysis of the value aspects of inclusive education, and the factors that influence the inclusive education process in Indonesia. This research uses a descriptive qualitative study approach, through in-depth interviews and interpretation of events. The research instrument or tool is the researcher himself/human instrument, which functions to determine the focus of research, select informants as data sources, conduct data collection, assess data quality, analyze data, interpret data and make conclusions on its findings (Sugiyono, 2017, p. 222).

These steps are in accordance with Creswell's opinion that qualitative researchers see social phenomena comprehensively, see existing symptoms as a whole, means of exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups, inductive data analysis and obtained through literature studies, in-depth interviews, FGDs, and field observations (Creswell, 2009, p. 22). In-depth interviews were conducted with consideration of objectivity, depth of information and competence to seven resource persons with various professions in three cities: Surabaya, Yogyakarta and Sidoarjo. The interviews were conducted in one special school and two private primary schools as well as in three universities. The seven interviewees included: a lecturer with a disability, an inclusive language center translator, a special schoolteacher, an elementary school teacher, a doctor with a son classified as inclusive and an activist for inclusive education.

Supporting / secondary data is data related to the object of study, supporting the validity of the object being analyzed, divided into general and personal data. General data: books, papers, newspapers, magazines, meeting notes, official reports. Personal data: personal journals, diaries, letters, electronic mail (Creswell, 2009, p. 169). Supporting/secondary data in this study comes from various scientific journal articles and various books related to Inclusive Education / ABK / Disability.

Analyzing the object of study based on existing data, then analyzing it using a descriptive qualitative approach. Understanding the description of the inclusive education process involves interdisciplinary issues, so the analysis connects existing data and is in accordance with various literatures. The object of study is analyzed with the theory of Educational Psychology to understand the picture presented in the research. A systematic literature review, both quantitative and qualitative, was an important process in developing the conclusions of this comprehensive study, enabling the advancement of scientific theory and data-driven practice, both types of review were important to support the Organizational and Behavioral Psychology literature. (Harari et al., 2020). The research data was analyzed by explaining some of the interview excerpts related to the current inclusive education process or picture, as well as the information found during the FGDs.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Overview of the Inclusive Education Process*

An inclusive education system allows students from different backgrounds, including disabilities, to be in the same classroom, with equal opportunities to learn and interact. "Inclusive" education is a broad concept but focuses on providing opportunities for people with disabilities to get the right to education, just like non-disabled students. Inclusive education becomes part of formal schooling, through Government Regula-

tion No. 70/2009, emphasizing that students with special needs and extraordinary abilities will be accepted in regular schools. (Zen & Ropo, 2023).

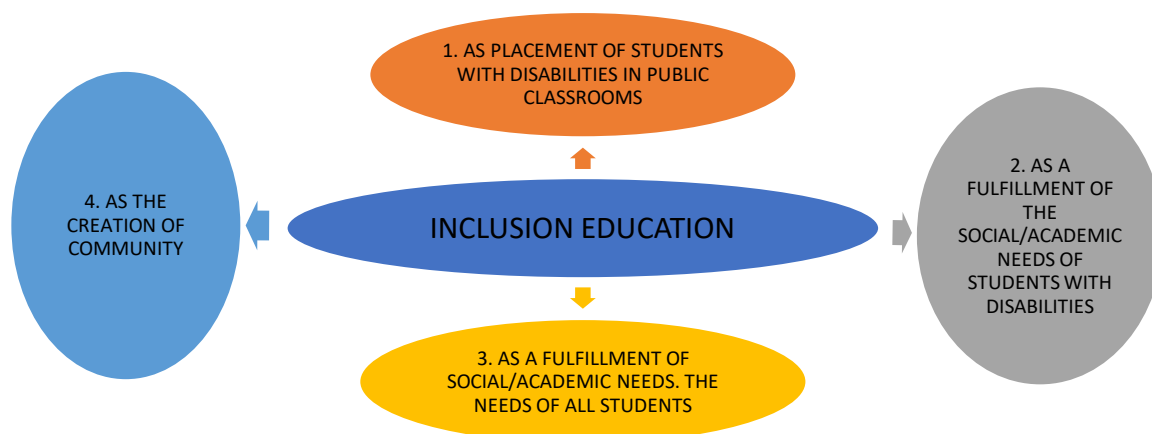
Based on the research data findings, the reality of the current inclusive education process includes: 1. Not all school infrastructure supports the inclusive education process. 2. Inclusive education today is relatively better than the reality 30 years ago. 3. There is a negative stigma associated with inclusive education. 4. There are inclusive children with various achievements and professions. This reality is an important task for all parties, so that inclusive education in the future can be better.

The description of the inclusive education process describes the reality of the important role of a specialized teacher in the classroom, in charge of facilitating the delivery of learning materials. Teachers who understand sign language can translate the main teacher's explanation to students, are in charge of reading, or writing answers for students. The role of the teacher is crucial, as it determines the achievement of learning objectives in general, enabling students to understand the learning material. The use of digital technology plays an important role, enhancing classroom rituals and interactions by giving students a figurative and literal voice, through changes in the interaction of students with disabilities, peers and teachers (Rizk & Hillier, 2022).

The role of sign language in the Inclusive education process as an approach to language learning and teaching, the social view understands language learning as a conditioned social practice related to learning with language use. (Jusslin et al., 2022b). It is important to understand the role of sign language in the inclusive education process, including aspects of educational psychology, namely analyzing the integral relationship of students, learning processes and teaching. The integral relationship of accumulated knowledge and wisdom is important for teachers when encountering teaching problems. Educational psychology provides guidance when making decisions, and a language to discuss educators' experiences and thought (Slavin, 2018, p. 35). Language learning as a social practice plays an important role in the learning process in special schools or schools that organize inclusive education. The process influences learning objectives and shapes students' personalities.

Social factors also influence students' language development, namely interaction with the surrounding environment, allowing for new language variations. A learning environment that is interesting to students, triggers them to undergo learning and understand the material wholeheartedly (Slavin, 2018, p. 291). Understanding the integrated learning process requires holistic skills, utilizing all personal abilities, then connecting the learning process to the student's environment (Jusslin et al., 2022a).

Graphic 1. Four Different Understandings of Inclusive Education



Four understandings of inclusive education: (a) as the placement of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, (b) as meeting the social/academic needs of students with disabilities, (c) as meeting the social/academic needs of students (d) as the creation of a community of learners with disabilities (Göransson & Nilholm, 2014). Definition of "inclusion" in relation to the placement of students with *special educational needs* (SEN) in general classrooms, to creating a welcoming community for all regardless of their backgrounds and abilities. Different understandings of inclusion should be seen as expressions of different views on school outcomes (Gülsün et al., 2023).

Learning is the process of forming or changing behavior through practice or experience. Learning is a process of deliberate activities of individuals, interactions of various individuals, aimed at understanding learning materials. This process is also found in the atmosphere of Inclusive Education in SLB or public schools that organize Inclusive Education, the learning process with the guidance of teachers.

The implementation of PPI/individual learning programs has been strengthened by the Ministry of Education and Culture RISTEK policy in the Director General of Education and Culture Regulation Number 10/D/KR/2017, concerning the 2013 PLB Curriculum Structure, that special education institution services implement PPI based on the results of the needs assessment. (Ishartiwi et al., 2023). Currently, some public schools have implemented inclusive education, although not all schools, due to the limited number of education personnel with special education competencies. There is a reality that not all inclusive/disabled children receive proper education services, either due to economic, social, cultural factors, etc.

The educational process and atmosphere in inclusive schools is relatively conducive and religious, including reading prayers at the beginning of learning, paying attention to teacher explanations, respecting and being polite and courteous to teachers, participating in school activities and culture, being disciplined with all school rules. All learning activities are followed by all students until completion, when graduation will be a moment to look forward to, because they are considered to have been able to internalize the values taught and are eligible to continue to higher school levels.

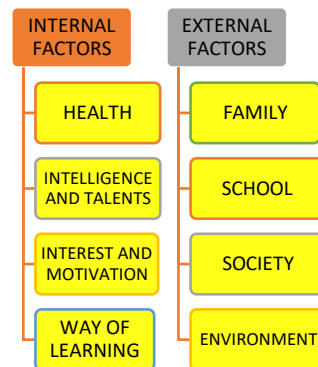
There are two important factors determining student success in the learning process, including internal and external, these factors are also found in Inclusive Education. Internal factors: Health, Intelligence and aptitude, Interest, and motivation, and learning styles. The following interview excerpts explain these factors:

*Pendidikan Inklusif merupakan sebuah sistem pendidikan yang diberikan kepada anak-anak yang memiliki ke-lainan istimewa. Pendidikan siswa inklusi bisa dilaksanakan dengan cara melatih kemampuan belajar anak sesuai dengan keterbatasan yang dia miliki. Sambil kita mencari bakat dan kemampuan istimewanya untuk meningkatkan kepercayaan dirinya (Rtn, 6 Juli 2023).*

*...penyandang disabilitas dengan keterbatasan yang ada selalu menghadapi tantangan dan kesulitan yang berbeda agar dapat terlibat secara aktif dalam proses belajar. Agar mereka dapat memaksimalkan potensi yang dimiliki, maka perbedaan kebutuhan penyandang disabilitas perlu difasilitasi melalui "reasonable adjustment" atau akomodasi yang layak. Akomodasi yang layak merupakan modifikasi atau penyesuaian yang tepat dan diperlukan untuk menjamin penikmatan atau pelaksanaan hak asasi manusia berdasarkan kesetaraan... (Wr, 8 Juli 2023).*

*...pendidikan inklusi membutuhkan adanya seorang guru khusus di dalam ruang kelas yang tugasnya untuk mem-fasilitasi penyampaian materi pembelajaran kepada siswa berkebutuhan khusus, misalnya seorang guru yang mengerti Bahasa isyarat yang dapat menerjemahkan paparan dari guru utama kepada siswa tuna rungu atau seorang guru yang bertugas membacakan atau menuliskan jawaban untuk siswa tuna netra (apabila dibutuhkan) (Fz, 11 Juli 2023).*

Graph 2. Critical Factors for Student Success in Inclusive Education



Internal factors determine student success in the learning process. Inclusive education provides the same learning to all students regardless of background, this aims to get them actively involved in the learning process. In reality, people with disabilities often face different difficulties. In order to maximize their potential, the needs of people with disabilities need to be facilitated through "reasonable adjustments" or reasonable accommodations, appropriate modifications to ensure the implementation of human rights based on equality.

Referring to interview data, there are several "modifications" that educators can make, both minor and major in order to optimize learning, both physical (infrastructure) and non-physical (information, learning methods, etc.). External factors: Family, School, Community, surrounding environment. The following is an excerpt from the interview on these external factors:

*...Sebaiknya ya saling bantu, dan di sini ada peran penting seorang guru. Ternyata banyak yang sudah sekolah di sekolah inklusi pindah ke SLB, karena ya mungkin saja tidak ada guru yang memiliki kompetensi seperti kebutuhan khusus anak tersebut, seperti itu. Peran budaya sangat menentukan, karena peran budaya ini saling menunjang, karena lingkungan masyarakat ini yang paling besar pengaruhnya terhadap suatu perubahan terkait derajat kualitas hidup ya (Swtr, 11 Juli 2023).*

*... Yang membuat saya terkesan atas sistem pendidikan inklusi yang sekarang ini terlaksana adalah adanya pemberian kesempatan kepada anak inklusi/ABK/Disabilitas, sehingga mereka mampu mendapatkan pendidikan yang sama dengan peserta didik lain. Sehingga proses kerjasama saat mereka dewasa, bisa dengan mudah dilakukan anak inklusi/ABK/Disabilitas tersebut (Rtn, 6 Juli 2023). ...Hambatan terbesar dalam pendidikan inklusif adalah "attitude" (attitudinal barriers) dari lingkungan. Baik guru, murid lain maupun orang tua murid dan seluruh pemangku kepentingan memiliki stigma negatif terhadap penyandang disabilitas... Hambatan kedua terkait dengan lingkungan fisik (physical barriers); fasilitas di lingkungan sekolah tidak seluruhnya dapat diakses oleh penyandang disabilitas. Misalnya tidak ada ramp/jalur landai, toilet bagi disabilitas, ruang laboratorium yang sempit sehingga pengguna kursi roda tidak dapat masuk, dll. Selain itu, fasilitas nonfisik seperti informasi yang dapat diakses oleh disabilitas netra dan disabilitas tuli yang terbatas (Wr, 8 Juli 2023). ...Partisipasi masyarakat merupakan komponen yang sangat penting bagi keberhasilan tujuan pendidikan inklusif. Karena dalam sekolah inklusif ini, sangat dibutuhkan kerjasama erat antara masyarakat/wali murid dengan pengajar di kelas untuk menciptakan dan menjaga suasana komunitas kelas yang hangat, bisa menerima keanekaragaman, dan menghargai realitas perbedaan (Awr, 17 Juli 2023).*

The important role of external factors was explained during the interviews. Sometimes teachers, other students, parents, and stakeholders have a negative stigma towards children with disabilities, i.e. they are considered incapable of doing any activities, so they do not need to be involved in the learning process. Sometimes they are also bullied by the surrounding environment, and there is still a relative unpreparedness

of the environment (both teachers and staff) to deal with children with disabilities. Another barrier (physical barriers) is that facilities in schools are not entirely accessible to people with disabilities. For example, not all schools have ramps, toilets for people with disabilities, narrow laboratory spaces that wheelchair users cannot enter.

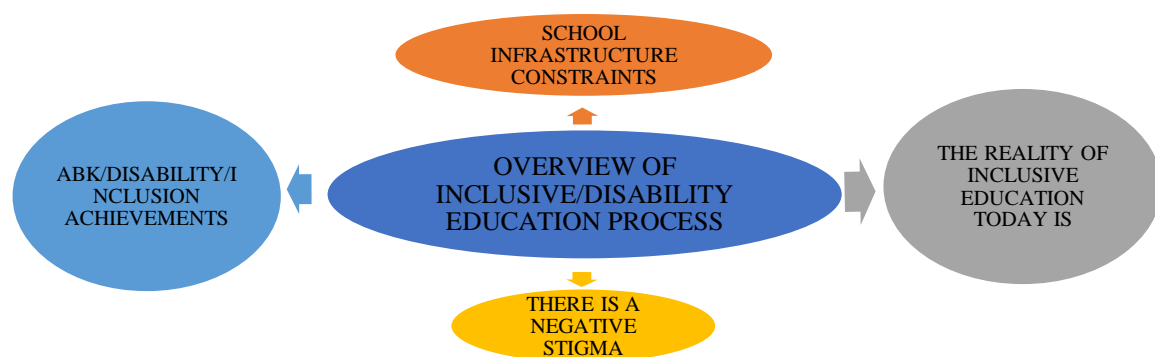
Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that whether or not a person succeeds in learning is due to factors that influence the achievement of learning outcomes, namely internal and external factors, as well as language/communication during learning. According to interview data, in addition to the physical prerequisites above, inclusive education requires a special teacher whose job is to facilitate the delivery of learning materials to students. The role of the teacher is very important because it determines the success of the learning objectives.

Society also plays an important role in achieving learning objectives, because students are also influenced by their surrounding environment, it helps shape their social sensitivity. Students' positive interaction with nature and the environment allows them to gain a lot of material and values, life experiences, especially morality and ethical values. These values sometimes cannot be found at school. Students can get a lot of valuable experience, know a lot of information related to the environment, these experiences help shape their character and personality.

Whether or not students succeed in learning is due to factors that affect the achievement of learning goals, both from within and from outside themselves. (Asrori, 2020). Based on the research data, several unique things were found related to the description of the Inclusive Education Process 1. Not all school infrastructure supports the inclusive education process 2. The current inclusive education realities are relatively better than 30 years ago 3. There is still a negative stigma related to inclusive education 4. There are inclusive / disabled children with various achievements and professions. This reality is an important task for all parties, so that inclusive education can be better in the future.

### Overview of the Inclusive Education Process

Graphic 3. Overview of the Inclusive Education Process



Inclusive education involves the educational rights of all students, the value of inclusion is related to the ideologies of interactionism and friendship, participation, democratization, benefits, equal access, quality, equality, and justice. Inclusive education is influenced by values and ideologies. Social skills of children with ID/intellectual disabilities require nurturing due to their cognitive limitations, requiring real-time modeling and encouragement. It is important for parents to provide opportunities for children with ID/disabilities to learn social skills, as it will broaden their access in the surrounding community.

The description of the inclusive/ABD/Disability education process explains the important role of specialized teachers during learning, tasked with facilitating the delivery of learning materials, using Indonesian



and sign language conversion skills. The role of the teacher is important because it determines the learning objectives. The use of digital technology also plays an important role, as it can enhance classroom rituals and interactions by giving students a figurative and literal voice, through changes in student, peer, and teacher interactions.

Language learning as conditioned social practice is a cognitive process related to learning. Language learning as a social practice is found in the learning process in special schools or schools that organize inclusive education and plays an important role in the knowledge transfer process. It is important to understand the role of sign language and Indonesian language conversion in the process of inclusive education for children with disabilities, namely understanding aspects of educational psychology, the integral relationship between students, the learning process, and teaching. The integral relationship of knowledge accumulation, wisdom, is important for teachers because it guides them when deciding on the issue.

Social factors that influence students' language development, namely interaction with the surrounding environment, allow for new language variations. An interesting school environment triggers students to undergo learning and understand the material wholeheartedly. Understanding the learning process in an integrated manner requires holistic abilities, being able to optimally utilize personal abilities, connecting the learning process with the environment.

Language acquisition is the process of mastering language naturally, obtained from the environment not because of deliberately learning it. Language acquisition is done through formal and intensive teaching, while language acquisition results from verbal contact with native speakers in the language environment. Language acquisition comes from cognitive maturation, language ability is formed by reasoning. The sequence of knowledge/cognitive development will determine the sequence of language development. Similarly, the language skills of students in inclusive education / children with disabilities / disabilities, are formed and acquired and developed during interactions at school.

## CONCLUSION

The educational process and atmosphere in inclusive education institutions is relatively conducive and religious, including reading prayers at the beginning of learning, paying attention to the teacher's explanation of the day's material, learning to respect and be polite and courteous to teachers, following the activities and culture of the school institution, disciplined by all the rules of the school institution. Two important factors determine the success of students in the learning process, including internal and external factors, these factors are also found in Inclusive Education. Internal factors: Health, intelligence and aptitude, interest and motivation, and learning styles. External factors (coming from outside the self): Family, school, community, surrounding environment. The description of the Inclusive/ABD/Disability education process explains the reality that there is an important role of special teachers in the classroom who are tasked with facilitating the delivery of learning materials to students with special needs, namely teachers who understand sign language. The teacher is able to translate the main teacher's exposure to students. The role of the special teacher is very important because it determines the achievement of learning, enabling Inclusive Education / ABK / Disability students to understand the learning material presented.

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