Sociolinguistics in the Interaction of Typical Children with Children with Special Needs in Inclusive ECCE

Diana Romdhoningsih[1*]; Maulida Nur[2]; Rina Andriani[3]

[1,3]*Department of Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Universitas Bina Bangsa, Indonesia*
[2]*Department of Early Childhood Teacher Education, Universitas Bina Bangsa, Indonesia*
[1*]*Corresponding Email: nhadiana51@gmail.com*

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Abstract: This study examines social interaction between typically developing children and children with special needs (CWSN) in inclusive kindergarten settings, focusing on sociolinguistic aspects. The Research is urgent because understanding early communicative practices helps foster healthy social relationships; typical children's limited knowledge of how to interact with CWSN can lead to misunderstandings, exclusion, or barriers to learning. The study identifies and analyses language use, communication strategies, and social factors influencing these interactions. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed using participatory observation and in-depth interviews with teachers and parents. Data were analyzedanalyzed by examining linguistic and social patterns observed during natural interactions. Findings indicate that typical children predominantly employ three strategies: neutral responses, sympathetic responses, and spontaneous responses, which suggest a tendency toward social acceptance of CWSN and positive contributions to inclusion. However, teacher and parent facilitation remains essential to develop more reciprocal and interactive communication. The study recommends teacher training and parental involvement to strengthen inclusive communicative practices to support inclusive learning and development.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji interaksi sosial antara anak tipikal dan anak berkebutuhan khusus (ABK) di PAUD inklusi, dengan fokus sosiolinguistik. Urgensinya terletak pada kebutuhan pemahaman komunikasi awal yang mendukung hubungan sosial sehat; keterbatasan pemahaman anak tipikal terhadap komunikasi dengan ABK dapat menimbulkan salah paham, eksklusi, atau hambatan pembelajaran. Penelitian bertujuan mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis bentuk penggunaan bahasa, strategi komunikasi, serta faktor sosial yang memengaruhi interaksi anak tipikal terhadap ABK. Pendekatan bersifat kualitatif deskriptif dengan pengumpulan data melalui observasi partisipatif, dokumentasi, dan wawancara mendalam dengan guru serta orang tua. Analisis menelaah pola linguistik dan sosial yang muncul selama interaksi. Hasil menunjukkan tiga strategi komunikasi utama oleh anak tipikal: respon netral, respon simpati, dan respon spontan. Temuan mengindikasikan adanya penerimaan sosial terhadap ABK yang berdampak positif, meskipun peran guru dan orang tua penting untuk memfasilitasi komunikasi yang lebih interaktif dan inklusif. Rekomendasi mencakup pelatihan guru dan keterlibatan orang tua untuk meningkatkan strategi komunikasi, praktik inklusif, serta pengembangan media dan intervensi yang sesuai bagi ABK

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A. Introduction

ECCE represents the state's commitment to ensuring that all children, without exception, have access to meaningful education. This commitment aligns with international guidelines that emphasize the importance of inclusion and equity as fundamental principles in education systems worldwide (UNESCO, 2017). Within this setting, Children with Student Needs (CWSN) learn alongside typical children in the same space, interact with one another, and share learning experiences (Alfikri et al., 2022; Phangesti, 2023). These inclusive arrangements create unique social dynamics that are crucial to understand, particularly in terms of interaction and communication. One aspect that has received little exploration is how communication between typical children and CWSN occurs in inclusive kindergarten environments, especially from a sociolinguistic perspective (Mulyah & Khoiri, 2023; Saputra, 2016).

Language is central to building relationships, conveying ideas, negotiating meaning, and demonstrating social acceptance. When children with different language abilities interact in the same learning community, important questions arise about how they use language to adapt, understand, and form social relationships. Teachers in inclusive ECCE settings often face unique challenges in facilitating these interactions, particularly in balancing the diverse needs of typical children and CWSN (Agustin et al., 2020). Early childhood is a phase of rapid language development (Tondo, 2009; Massang et al., 2022), but for some CWSN, language development may progress at a different pace, with different structures, or with different communicative functions. This variability makes peer interaction a highly complex social space, especially between typical children and CWSN. In this context, sociolinguistics provides an appropriate approach to understanding how such differences are negotiated through language, how social norms operate in children's interactions, and how identity and meaning are constructed in their communication (Arsanti & Setiana, 2020; Mujib, 2009; Solihah et al., 2023; Agustin et al., 2018).

Communication in early childhood is not limited to verbal utterances; it also includes nonverbal aspects such as facial expressions, body movements, intonation, and silence, all of which form a symbolic network that reflects social relationships. Based on this background, this study aims to explore in depth the forms of communication that occur between typical children and CWSN in inclusive Kindergartens (Endu et al., 2023; Kristiana, 2016). The Research problems in this study include: (1) what forms of verbal and nonverbal communication emerge in the interaction between typical children and CWSN, (2) how social and cultural contexts Influence language use in these interactions, and (3) how social constructions of differences in language ability are formed in their daily communication processes. Verbal communication here includes simple language, intonation, and brief directives, while nonverbal communication encompasses gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact that reinforce messages in everyday interaction.

This study will examine how these communication strategies are applied and developed in inclusive environments, while accounting for the Influence of family, school, and community on interaction patterns and language use. Indonesia's collectivist culture,

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for example, emphasizesemphasizes the role of the extended family and community in shaping communication experiences and supporting the development of CWSN. Social constructions of differences in language ability are shaped by perceptions, interactions, and daily experiences involving typical children, CWSN, and their surrounding environments. Such perceptions, both positive and negative, play a critical role in shaping stigma or acceptance. By focusing on children's natural and everyday contexts, this Research seeks to uncover communication dynamics that are often overlooked in more formalistic classroom approaches. Understanding these dynamics is crucial, as inclusive education has the potential to transform the future of all children by fostering acceptance and social integration from an early age (Mustika et al., 2023).

B. Method

This study aims to explore sociolinguistic phenomena in interactions between typically developing children and children with special needs (CWSN). A qualitative approach was employed because its characteristics align with the exploratory nature of the Research objectives, which seek to understand meanings, experiences, and social interactions in natural contexts (Alwasilah, 2017; Moleong, 2018; Smith, 2018). The study was grounded in a phenomenological approach, specifically Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which emphasizes understanding social phenomena as experienced and interpreted by individuals in real-life situations that are holistic, complex, and contextually rich (Smith & Osborn, 2011; Alwasilah, 2017). Consistent with the idiographic orientation of IPA, this study involved a small and relatively homogeneous group of participants (Alwasilah, 2017; Moleong, 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2011). Participants were selected through purposive, criterion-based sampling, focusing on teachers with direct, sustained experience working with children with special needs in inclusive early childhood education settings. Four teachers who met these criteria participated in the study, and all were assigned pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

The Research was conducted in inclusive ECCE institutions located in Banten Province, specifically in Serang City, Cilegon City, and Serang Regency. In this study, teachers were positioned as the primary participants because they directly experienced, reflected on, and interpreted classroom sociolinguistic interactions. Children were not positioned as Research participants but served as the natural context of observation, allowing the researcher to capture situational interaction patterns that enriched the understanding of teachers' lived experiences and interpretations. This approach recognizes children's competence while maintaining ethical considerations in educational research involving young participants (Danby & Farrell, 2004).

Data collection was carried out through classroom observations, documentation of children's learning activities, and in-depth interviews (Alwasilah, 2017). Observations focused on naturally occurring interactions between typically developing children and CWSN, while documentation supported the contextual understanding of classroom practices. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured guidelines to provide flexibility

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and allow participants to articulate their experiences, perceptions, and interpretations from multiple perspectives (Moleong, 2018). Data analysis followed the systematic stages of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, beginning with repeated readings of interview transcripts and observational notes, followed by initial noting to identify significant statements related to sociolinguistic interactions. These notes were then developed into emergent themes, which were clustered within each case before being examined across cases to identify shared patterns and variations in meaning (Smith & Osborn, 2011; Moleong, 2018). To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was applied by integrating insights from interviews, observations, and documentation, ensuring that interpretations were grounded in multiple sources of evidence (Alwasilah, 2017). The overall Research process and analytical stages are summarised in the Research flow presented in this study.

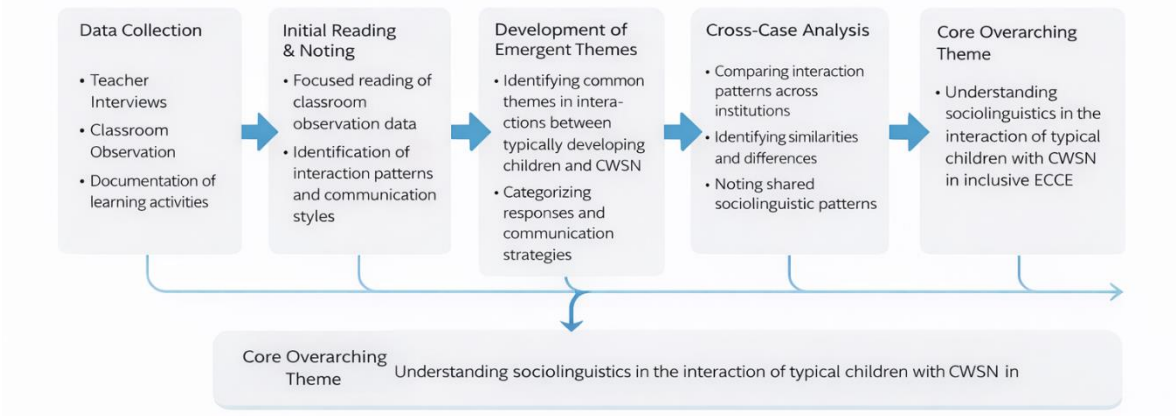

Figure 1. Research Flow of the Study

Figure 1 illustrates the Research flow of this study using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. The diagram presents the sequential stages of analysis, beginning with data collection through interviews, classroom observations, and documentation, followed by initial reading and re-reading, initial noting, and the development of emergent themes. The process continues with cross-case analysis across institutions. It culminates in the formulation of a core overarching theme that represents the sociolinguistic understanding of interactions between typically developing children and children with special needs in inclusive ECCE settings.

C. Result

The observations were conducted from June 2 to September 20, 2024. In addition, four teachers were interviewed using pseudonyms. For further analysis, the discussion of findings will be organized into several themes, namely:

Sociolinguistic Background of Four Early Childhood Education Institutions in Banten Province

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Sociolinguistic Background of Four Early Childhood Education Institutions in Banten Province interactions between typical children and CWSN are closely related to language use, which is influenced by various social background factors. Language functions within a social context, and social factors such as age, status, cultural background, and individual conditions Influence language choices and communication styles (Chaer & Agustina, 2010; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). In educational settings, particularly within inclusive Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions, sociolinguistics plays an essential role in understanding the dynamics of communication that occur between typical children and CWSN. Through sociolinguistic perspectives, educators can better understand how differences in social background, culture, and language ability shape children's interactions.

These differences produce distinct patterns of language interaction. In practice, interactions between typical children and CWSN often involve simplified language, repetition, and nonverbal expressions as forms of communicative adaptation. Typical children may adjust their word choices or use gestures to convey meaning, while CWSN may express their needs through crying, refusal, or physical actions. This illustrates that language functions not only as a communication tool but also as a medium for building social relationships, expressing emotions, and fostering acceptance within inclusive communities (Holmes, 2013; Fishman, 1972). Therefore, sociolinguistic analysis in inclusive ECCE settings is crucial for understanding how children with diverse abilities interact, negotiate meaning, and construct social cohesion through language.

Three inclusive ECCE institutions in Serang reflect different contexts. The state-run non-formal ECCE in Serang City serves typical children and CWSN in a shared classroom (3–4 years old: 17 students, 15 typical and two CWSN, G and I) supported by two teachers; the presence of CWSN (tantrums, speech delays, emotional regulation difficulties) produced varied communication patterns. Kindergarten P (a private formal unit under the YP Foundation) is located in the socially diverse Karundang community, where working- and middle-class parents accept learning alongside CWSN, allowing the school to foster meaningful social interaction. In Kragilan, a non-formal ECCE near industrial factories enrolls 120 students, but interaction with CWSN was limited because their classroom was separated from the main class.

Patterns of Interaction Between Typical Children and CWSN

Typical children often showed tolerance toward CWSN despite limited understanding, which is natural given that children at this age remain in the egocentric stage (Reis et al., 2022). This appeared when CWSN G disrupted or destroyed block structures: typical children reacted spontaneously (e.g., shouting or annoyance) yet restrained physical aggression, showing early self-control against reciprocal violence. They continued playing and did not wholly reject CWSN, expressions such as “It is okay” reflected acceptance and the ability to let minor conflicts pass (Kuutti et al., 2022). Simple greetings and invitations, such as “hi” or “come on, G. Let us race” served as invitations to play and sociolinguistic strategies to reduce interpersonal distance and build closeness (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

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Through play, children engaged in interpretive reproduction of peer cultural practices (Corsaro, 2012), these directive speech acts often initiated inclusive interaction. Reciprocal limitations emerged when one participant failed to respond, unreciprocated attempts led typical children to stop initiating, revealing a tolerance threshold and a breakdown of the cooperative principle (Grice, 1975). Teachers modelled and reinforced communicative patterns, scaffolding interactions for both typical children and CWSN. Overall, typical children tended to use inclusive language and showed spontaneous empathy, such as helping G locate a working tap, behaviours interpretable as politeness strategies to maintain harmony and minimise conflict (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 2013). These findings also inform practical guidance for teacher facilitation and inclusion. To provide a clearer overview of these dynamics, Table 1 summarises the interaction patterns observed between typical children and CWSN in the classroom.

Table 1. Interaction Patterns Between Typical Children and CWSN in Inclusive Classrooms

No	Interaction Pattern	Key Indicators (Observed)	Typical Outcome
1	Reciprocal Interaction (Two-way)	Typical children initiate and CWSN respond (verbal/nonverbal), simple turn-taking occurs	Engagement increases and interaction continues
2	One-way Interaction (Typical to CWSN)	Typical children invite/communicate but CWSN gives minimal or no response	Interaction stops quickly, CWSN remains passive
3	Supportive Interaction (Peer Assistance)	Typical children help, guide, or show patience toward CWSN during tasks/play	Positive inclusion and improved participation
4	Imitative/Reactive Interaction	CWSN imitates peers' actions or reacts strongly to peers' behaviour	Interaction becomes unstable, may trigger disruption
5	Corrective/Conflict Interaction	Peers correct/warn, show discomfort, or conflict emerges due to misunderstanding	Tension rises, teacher mediation often needed

Overall, the findings indicate that interaction between typical children and CWSN was dynamic and situational. Reciprocal and supportive interactions were more likely to occur during structured or enjoyable activities, where typical children actively initiated communication and provided assistance. However, one-way and imitative/reactive interactions emerged when CWSN showed limited responses or when peer behaviour triggered imitation, which sometimes led to disruption. Corrective or conflict interactions were mainly observed in moments of misunderstanding or unexpected behaviour, highlighting the need for teacher mediation to maintain inclusive communication.

Polarisation of Typical Children's Responses to CWSN

1. Neutral Response

Neutral responses appeared when some typical children reacted indifferently to G's behaviour (crying, tantrums, being aloof, insisting on using the water tap without water).

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This indicated acceptance and normalization of peers' different behaviours. Sociolinguistically, this neutral response can be understood as a form of interactional competence, namely the ability to adjust to the social context without excessive verbal or emotional intervention (Ninio & Snow, 1996). This is consistent with Chaer & Agustina (2010) view that language is not only about verbal utterances but also about the social attitudes and behaviours accompanying communication. For example, when G was crying and refused to be in class, his peers did not show anger but remained calm. This phenomenon aligns with Chaer & Agustina (2010) perspective that language and linguistic attitudes in society cannot be separated from their social context, in which children begin to learn to accept behavioural diversity within their small community.

Typical children's responses to CWSN during teaching and learning activities in inclusive classrooms were generally neutral, as evidenced by natural interactions without discrimination or rejection. For instance, when A (autistic) walked around during prayer, typical children only gave a brief reminder without prolonging the issue; when A lacked focus on Na, other typical children continued with their own activities; likewise, when Ir (physically disabled, speech impaired, physically weak) needed teacher assistance, typical peers remained calm and carried on with their work. Even when D, hyperactive, climbed onto a table, typical children gave a short warning before resuming their learning. This interaction pattern showed that typical children regarded the presence of CWSN as a regular part of classroom dynamics, as they were accustomed to teachers' consistent, equal treatment of all students, thereby creating a conducive, inclusive, and accepting atmosphere. Preschool children's attitudes towards peers with special needs are significantly shaped by the classroom environment and teacher modeling, which foster acceptance and positive interactions (Reis, Silva, et al., 2022).

When L threw tantrums or demanded something insistently, but did not face rejection, the situation was categorized as a neutral response. The children continued their activities openly. They demonstrated the ability to adjust their behaviour to the social situation without excessive verbal or emotional reactions. They continued their activities without showing rejection or anger. This indicated early social tolerance, namely the acceptance of peers' behavioural differences. From Piaget's perspective, children aged 2–7 years are in the preoperational stage, characterised by the development of symbolic thought through language, gestures, and expressions. Neutral responses, such as silence or continued play, can be interpreted as nonverbal cues of social acceptance, obviating the need for verbal utterances. This is further enriched by Vygotsky's view that social interaction is the medium for the development of language and thought. In inclusive classrooms, typical children's neutral responses reflect the result of social learning: not all peer behaviours require exaggerated emotional reactions (Troesch et al., 2016). Thus, neutral responses by typical children are not merely passive attitudes but part of the socio-emotional and linguistic development process appropriate for early childhood. This phenomenon shows that the inclusive environment fosters pragmatic competence, emotional regulation, and

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tolerance from an early age, which are crucial for the social skill development of typical children.

2. Sympathetic Response

Sympathetic responses appeared when typical children showed concern for CWSN through simple utterances or nonverbal expressions. For example, when G chose the wrong tap for handwashing, a typical child said, "This one has water." This was a form of linguistic sympathy (language as empathy), even though G did not respond. During playtime, G later showed a response to peer play, although he did not speak. According to Holmes (2013), language functions not only to convey information but also to build solidarity and demonstrate social relationships. The sympathetic responses of typical children demonstrated that language functions as a social adhesive in inclusive environments. Sympathetic responses were not limited to words but also included good attitudes, such as approaching G to play and inviting him with "Come on, G, let us race," even though G did not immediately respond. G eventually nodded and joined the race, which was their way of communicating. This interaction reflected variation in social response and passive acceptance. G's nodding and eventual participation were significant nonverbal communications in early childhood social interactions. In the context of language development in Kindergarten, such interaction is referred to as social speech, where language is used to build social relationships rather than merely to convey information (Wijiastuti et al., 2020).

Similarly, despite experiencing speech delay and limitations in verbal communication, the au responded with facial expressions and body movements. Sympathetic responses were built not only through verbal communication but also through positive attitudes. For example, Aw scolded his CWSN peer with "Do not run around." He did not show excessive emotional reactions; he simply reminded him and continued his activity. In another case, when Au received extra attention from the teacher after loudly banging on the desk, typical children were not disturbed and did not use harsh words. They remained quiet and focused on their tasks, showing acceptance of CWSN. This was also influenced by teachers' attitudes, who treated typical children and CWSN equally.

When typical children showed concern for CWSN through simple utterances or nonverbal expressions, this was categorised as a sympathetic response. For example, when R was listening to music and fell asleep on the teacher's lap, a typical child said, "R, wake up, do not sleep!" and R smiled. The teacher then added, "Come on, wake up." Such sympathetic behaviour could arise from observation and modelling. Children imitate patterns of care demonstrated by teachers or adults around them. This showed that inclusive environments allow children to learn positive social behaviours.

3. Negative/Spontaneous Response

Spontaneous utterances often appeared in early childhood because regulatory or interactional functions had not yet fully developed. Negative or spontaneous responses

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were evident when typical children reacted to CWSN's aggressive behaviour with similar actions. For example, when G knocked down building blocks, a typical child responded with a loud shout of "do not do that!" accompanied by an angry facial expression and even attempted to hit, though eventually restrained themselves. This phenomenon demonstrated that emotional language in typical children was still spontaneous, reactive, and not fully controlled. However, with teacher guidance and environmental Influence (parents), negative responses could be redirected into more constructive communication. The shout "do not do that!" was an expressive function of language, in which words were used to express emotions and feelings (Halliday, 1975). This showed that typical children's responses varied, ranging from spontaneous physical retaliation to self-restraint during conflict. Utterances such as "do not do that!" or complaints like "Well, it is okay" reflected the expressive and regulatory functions of language (Halliday, 1975), in which language was used to express emotions and regulate social behaviour. Moreover, Mu's report to G's parents indicated that typical children began to understand language as a tool for seeking solutions, not merely for venting emotions. This aligned with Holmes (2013) assertion that language functions to build solidarity while maintaining social harmony. With teacher and parental intervention, typical children's spontaneous responses could be directed toward more positive communication.

For instance, when G pulled another child's hair, the typical child responded by pulling back. The typical child could control their emotions with teacher intervention and understand G's condition. This showed that typical children's emotional language remained spontaneous and reactive but could be guided. It also illustrated that learning processes and environmental guidance shaped children's social interactions. Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015) emphasizedemphasized that language use (including emotional expressions) cannot be separated from the social context that shapes it. Typical children's negative or spontaneous responses to CWSN in inclusive classrooms were direct reactions to perceived disruptive behaviours. For example, when Aw (autistic) walked around during prayer, some typical children scolded him with "do not run around" as a spontaneous corrective. Similarly, when Di (hyperactive) climbed onto a table, other typical children immediately told him to get down. Such responses could be categorised as negative because they were expressed as prohibitions, though simple and not intended to belittle, but rather to maintain classroom order. Thus, the interaction between typical children and CWSN proceeded naturally, with spontaneity in a conducive atmosphere that did not lead to conflict.

Communication Strategies of CWSN

Children with special needs (CWSN) use communication strategies shaped by their individual needs, limits, and interaction styles. Often they show rejection through gestures or actions—shaking heads, pushing, or walking away rather than verbal refusal. Some prefer nonverbal means like pointing, body movements, or facial expressions over speech. They may react strongly to peers' behaviour and imitate actions without full understanding. Occasionally they follow teachers' instructions silently. Others employ attention-seeking

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behaviours, such as climbing on tables or making noise. Their engagement depends heavily on activity type: enjoyable or preferred tasks prompt more participation. Overall, CWSN communicate by expressing, rejecting, responding, and attracting attention via a mix of verbal, nonverbal, and situational actions aligned with comfort and condition. Examples include refusing learning areas with gestures, preferring finger-based signals, imitating peers who stand, obeying instructions nonverbally, or seeking attention by climbing—often remaining silent amidst peers' protests. These strategies require teacher awareness and tailored responses. To provide a clearer overview of these observed patterns, Table 2 summarises the communication strategies commonly used by CWSN in inclusive classroom settings."

Table 2. Communication Strategies of CWSN in Inclusive Classrooms

No	Communication Strategy	Description (Observed Behavior)	Example in Classroom Context	Purpose/Function
1	Non-verbal gestures	The child conveys meaning through body movements (pointing, nodding, shaking head, waving).	Pointing at a book/pencil when wanting to borrow it, nodding when the teacher asks "Do you understand?"	Replaces spoken language when verbal skills are limited
2	Facial expressions	The child uses facial cues to show emotions or responses.	Smiling when praised, showing confusion when instructions are unclear	Expresses understanding and emotions
3	Single-word / short utterances	The child responds using single words or short phrases.	"Yes", "No", "Want", "Done", "Again"	Quick and minimal responses
4	Echoing / repetition	The child repeats words/phrases spoken by the teacher or peers.	Teacher: "Sit properly." Child: "Sit properly…"	Maintains interaction and processes instructions
5	Asking for help (direct/indirect)	The child requests assistance either verbally or through cues.	"Teacher… help" / approaching the teacher while holding a worksheet	Gains support when facing difficulties
6	Requesting attention	The child tries to get the teacher's/peers' attention.	Calling a name, light tapping, raising a hand without speaking	Initiates communication or asks for a turn
7	Code-mixing / simplified language	The child uses mixed language or simplified sentence structure.	"Teacher, finish… done" / "I want that"	Facilitates message delivery with limited language ability
8	Using objects as communication	The child uses objects as a communication tool instead of words.	Holding up an eraser to signal a request, showing a bottle to ask for a drink	Compensates for limited verbal expression

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No	Communication Strategy	Description (Observed Behavior)	Example in Classroom Context	Purpose/Function
9	Silence / withdrawal response	The child remains silent or withdraws when pressured to respond.	Not answering questions, looking down, avoiding eye contact	Self-protection, anxiety, or lack of comprehension
10	Peer imitation (following friends)	The child imitates peers' words/actions to communicate socially.	Laughing when others laugh, answering "present" after classmates do	Social adaptation and classroom integration

As shown in Table 2, CWSN relied primarily on nonverbal communication strategies to express needs, emotions, and responses during classroom activities. Gestures, facial expressions, and object-based communication were frequently used as substitutes for verbal language, especially when children experienced speech limitations or difficulty regulating emotions. In several instances, CWSN responded through silence while still complying with teachers' instructions, indicating participation without explicit verbal engagement. The findings also highlight that rejection and avoidance behaviours emerged when tasks felt uncomfortable or did not match the child's preferences. Additionally, imitation and attention-seeking behaviours appeared as situational strategies, often triggered by peer actions or the desire to gain teacher and peer attention. Overall, these patterns suggest that CWSN communication in inclusive classrooms is highly adaptive and context-dependent, requiring teachers to recognise multiple forms of expression beyond spoken language.

Interaction Patterns of Typical Children with CWSN

The greeting interaction patterns between typical children and children with special needs (CWSN) in inclusive classrooms appeared straightforward, spontaneous, and often one-sided, with little or no reciprocity. Typical children tended to use short greetings or corrective expressions, for instance, scolding Alwian, who ran during prayer, with the sentence "do not run around," or reminding D, who sat on the table, with the phrase "do not sit on the table". There were also greetings with positive, sympathetic nuances, such as when a typical child enthusiastically mentioned the word "scissors" to encourage their peer to participate, or when Adam spontaneously exclaimed, "Iksan's birthday," which was then echoed by other children as a form of shared joy. Although these greetings often did not receive responses from CWSN due to limitations in concentration, language, or physical conditions, their presence indicated that typical children were accustomed to greeting, correcting, or expressing concern toward CWSN as a natural part of social dynamics in inclusive classrooms.

In various situations, typical children demonstrated tolerance even though their understanding of CWSN's behaviour was not fully developed. This is natural since children at this age are still in the egocentric stage. This was evident when G disrupted or destroyed block buildings: typical children showed spontaneous reactions (annoyance, shouting), but still chose not to commit violence, such as attempting to hit but refraining from doing so.

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This demonstrated self-control and an early understanding that aggressive actions cannot be reciprocated with aggression. Typical children continued playing, showing that despite minor conflicts, they did not entirely reject CWSN. Utterances such as "well, that is okay" reflected a process of accepting and letting go of minor conflicts without prolonging issues.

Simple greeting interactions such as "hi" or "come on, G, let us race" were invitations from typical children to CWSN to play together. In the sociolinguistic context, such speech acts were not merely invitations to play but also language strategies for building social closeness and reducing interpersonal distance (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). These greetings and invitations were part of directive speech acts, namely, utterances intended to Influence the interlocutor to act (in this case, to play together). Typical children displayed good initiative; in both learning and play outside the classroom, they were willing to greet or invite their CWSN peers without discrimination.

Reciprocal limitations in social interaction between typical children and CWSN were evident in the lack of responses and reciprocal communication in inclusive classrooms. For example, when typical children scolded Aw (autistic) with the utterance "do not run around," Aw did not respond; similarly, when Ar, who lacked concentration, stared at N, the interaction did not develop into two-way communication, as N remained indifferent and continued her activity. The same was observed when typical children sat with Ir (physically disabled), staying focused on their tasks without building conversation. These reciprocal limitations reflected common communication barriers in CWSN interactions, particularly those related to concentration, language ability, or physical conditions, resulting in interactions that often stalled in one-sided exchanges without continuity.

Reciprocal limitations occur when communication breaks down because one participant fails to provide verbal or nonverbal responses. This occurred when typical children attempted to engage or draw attention, but the CWSN did not respond. Such limitations led typical children to stop trying, as the absence of responses from CWSN signalled a limit to their tolerance in social relationships. Reciprocal limitations can be seen as a failure to uphold the cooperative principle (Grice, 1975), in which one participant fails to meet the communication expectations of the other. In this case, teachers taught typical children about proper communication patterns when interacting, offering examples and gradually reinforcing both typical children and CWSN.

Social interactions between typical children and CWSN in inclusive classrooms also showed patterns of negative or spontaneous responses occurring naturally. Negative responses appeared as brief prohibitions or direct corrections, such as when Aw (autistic) walked around during prayer and was scolded with "do not run around," or when Dilva, who was hyperactive, sat on the table and was reminded, "do not sit on the table." Meanwhile, spontaneous responses carried a more positive nuance, such as when a typical child eagerly said "scissors" to help a peer who struggled with the tool, or Adam spontaneously shouted "Iksan's birthday!" which spread to other children, creating a festive atmosphere. On the other hand, there were also neutral or reciprocal limitations, such as when Naira remained focused on learning despite being observed by Areta, or when D

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patiently waited for his turn to cut without eliciting reactions from nearby typical peers. This overall dynamic indicated that typical children were already accustomed to the presence of CWSN in class. However, their responses were sometimes corrective (negative) or spontaneous (positive); interactions continued naturally in a conducive atmosphere, thanks to teachers' consistent role in fostering an inclusive climate.

In social interactions, typical children tended to use inclusive language. Inclusive language meant they did not show striking differences or verbal rejection but stayed focused on their activities. Spontaneous empathy was also evident: typical children could show small acts of sympathy (e.g., pointing out a water tap) when G insisted on using the tap with no water. This was a natural, simple act of sympathy, providing helpful information without being asked. This phenomenon showed that typical children had the potential to build positive interactions through simple communication strategies, which could be understood as politeness strategies that maintain harmony and minimise conflict (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 2013). Through spontaneous interactions and expressions of empathy, typical children demonstrated early indicators of social acceptance toward CWSN.

Social Factors Influencing

Social factors in the interaction between typical children and CWSN became a decisive factor in the development of their communication. Reciprocal relationships in daily interactions, whether through greetings, spontaneous responses, or joint learning activities, provided important stimuli for CWSN to understand conversational norms, turn-taking, and appropriate language use in social contexts (Suciati, 2017). Based on the study, typical children frequently responded positively to invitations and greetings. These positive utterances were imitated and learned by CWSN. Conversely, if scolding, corrections, or neglect dominated interactions, they could trigger resistance, leading CWSN to rely more on nonverbal communication or physical behaviour (Salsabila et al., 2024). Parental support was also crucial, as the family was the first social environment shaping children's communication patterns. Parents who actively stimulated language at home, provided opportunities for interaction, and supported their children in school activities strengthened the communication skills developed in classrooms (Chaudhary et al., 2025).

Teachers' roles were equally significant, as they served as facilitators, creating inclusive environments, providing clear directions, and developing communication strategies tailored to each child's needs. Teachers who were consistent, patient, and able to mediate interactions between typical children and CWSN nurtured confidence and motivated CWSN to participate more actively in conversations (Khotimah et al., 2021). One respondent stated: “Teachers explain to typical children to communicate well with their CWSN peers without looking at their weaknesses. We emphasise that everyone is the same, and we never differentiate." Another respondent said: "In our school, children are already used to accepting CWSN; they never disturb them.” Peers also had a significant Influence, as CWSN tended to imitate the communicative behaviour of typical children. If the interaction they received was acceptance and support, their communication skills

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developed; however, if they received mockery or rejection, it could trigger resistance or withdrawal (Suciati, 2017).

Classroom social and cultural norms also shaped children's communication patterns. An open and inclusive classroom culture encouraged children to be more active in interactions, while rigid cultures emphasising verbal compliance often pushed children toward nonverbal communication. The socioeconomic and educational backgrounds of parents also affect the quality of children's communication. Parents with higher education and access to adequate resources tended to provide richer language stimulation, while families with economic limitations often struggled to provide optimal stimulation or therapy services (Ali et al., 2025). Furthermore, parents' readiness to enrol their children in schools with CWSN influenced teachers' readiness to teach inclusively and typical children's readiness to accept CWSN. This was evident from observations at one ECCE in Serang City, where the school was adjacent to a special school at the elementary and secondary levels. Parents who enrolled their children there were already prepared for them to study alongside CWSN. Thus, social factors, including family interaction, teacher support, peer Influence, classroom culture, digital media use, family socioeconomic background, and parental readiness, all interacted in complex ways to shape the communication strategies of CWSN in inclusive environments.

D. Discussion

The interaction between typically developing children and children with special needs (CWSN) in inclusive early childhood education (ECCE) environments is a sociolinguistic phenomenon shaped by differences in development, classroom culture, and the surrounding social context. The foundations of inclusive education emphasize that such interactions must be supported by appropriate pedagogical approaches and teacher preparedness (Sulaiman et al., 2024). Research findings indicate that typical children adapt their communication practices by using simplified language, repetition, and short utterances to maintain social closeness and harmonious interactions (Chaer & Agustina, 2010; Holmes, 2013; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). In contrast, CWSN children rely more on nonverbal and situational communication strategies, reflecting their still-developing linguistic abilities and a form of adaptation to the demands of social interaction (Fishman, 1972). The polarisation of typical children's responses into neutral, sympathetic, and negative or spontaneous forms indicates the development of pragmatic competence and emotion regulation in early childhood, where neutral and sympathetic responses contribute to social acceptance, while spontaneous responses serve as a mechanism for regulating behaviour in interactions (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Halliday, 1975). Although limited reciprocity often leads to one-way interactions, this pattern aligns with children's developmental stages and is mediated through social scaffolding in inclusive classrooms (Grice, 1975).

Furthermore, the roles of teachers, peer modelling, and family readiness in reinforcing inclusive communication norms confirm that sociolinguistic practices in early childhood education are not merely individual linguistic processes but rather social

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practices that support the early acceptance of diversity (Holmes, 2013). Research shows that the quality of participation and peer relationships significantly influences the social and communicative development of CWSN in inclusive early childhood settings (Kuutti, Sajaniemi, et al., 2022). The inclusive classroom culture observed in the three ECCE institutions also plays a significant role in shaping communication patterns. Teachers' openness, equal treatment of all children, and consistent modelling of positive communication reinforce inclusive linguistic practices among students. Children's peer cultures are constructed through collective actions and shared routines, which contribute to the formation of social norms in inclusive settings (Corsaro, 2005). Holmes (2013) emphasizesemphasizes that language serves to maintain social relationships; the findings of this study show that inclusive environments allow typically developing children and CWSN to develop solidarity through simple interactions. Additionally, socioeconomic influences and parental readiness also determine how children develop communicative competence. Families accustomed to inclusive interactions, such as those in schools near special education institutions, show greater acceptance, which, in turn, affects how children use language at school. Critical analysis of inclusive education implementation reveals that freedom of expression and appropriate developmental support are essential for maximizing the potential of both typical children and CWSN (Wijiastuti et al., 2020).

E. Implication

The urgency of this Research lies in the need to gain a deeper understanding of the sociolinguistic aspects that emerge in such interactions, given that communication is key to building healthy social relationships from an early age. This Research is expected to generate impact and provide recommendations that teachers can implement to facilitate inclusive communication in the classroom. The implications of this Research include: 1) theoretical implications, 2) practical implications, and 3) social implications.

The theoretical implications of this Research are to enrich sociolinguistic studies by confirming that the presence of children with special needs in inclusive classrooms influences the language interactions and communication patterns of typically developing children. The simple, repetitive, and sometimes one-way interactions between typical children and children with special needs broaden the understanding of communication patterns and language acquisition in early childhood. Thus, this Research strengthens and encourages the development of sociolinguistic theory, making it more relevant to the context of inclusive education.

In addition to theoretical implications, this Research also provides practical guidance for teachers in developing effective communication strategies between typical children and children with special needs in inclusive classrooms. One implication is the encouragement of innovation in teaching and learning media. The presence of children with special needs in the classroom challenges teachers to design more inclusive and effective teaching methods that meet the learning needs of all students. Furthermore, schools can utilise the findings of this study to strengthen inclusion programs through educator training. The

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results are also beneficial for parents and other stakeholders in supporting children's interactions at home, as well as for policymakers in designing inclusive early childhood education curricula that emphasise communication and interaction.

Meanwhile, the social implications of this study highlight the importance of inclusive interactions from an early age in building a more diverse society. Communication patterns between typical children and children with special needs in inclusive classrooms can foster empathy and tolerance while reducing social stigma associated with differences. A lack of understanding among typical children about how to communicate with children with special needs can lead to misunderstandings, exclusion, or obstacles to collaborative learning. Therefore, this Research contributes to creating an inclusive social environment and supports the acceptance of children with special needs in society.

F. Limitation and Suggestion for Further Research

The urgency of this study lies in the need to gain a deeper understanding of the sociolinguistic aspects that emerge in interactions between typically developing children and children with special needs, as communication is fundamental to forming healthy social relationships from an early age. This Research is expected to provide recommendations for teachers to enhance inclusive communication in the classroom. In addition, the study enriches sociolinguistic Research by showing that the presence of children with special needs influences the language patterns of typically developing children. Simple, repetitive, and often one-way interactions offer new insights into the development of communication and language acquisition in early childhood. The findings also demonstrate that communication patterns in inclusive classrooms can foster empathy and tolerance and reduce stigma toward differences. Conversely, a lack of understanding of how to communicate with children with special needs may lead to misunderstandings or exclusion. Therefore, this study contributes to creating a more inclusive social environment that supports the acceptance of children with special needs.

G. Conclusion

Communication interactions between typical children and Children with special needs (CWSN) in inclusive ECCE occurred in both verbal and nonverbal forms, with varying characteristics. Typical children predominantly used simple greetings, invitations, and brief corrective utterances, while CWSN used various communication strategies, such as rejection gestures, short verbalisations, and specific behaviours to attract attention. Typical children's responses to CWSN included three patterns: neutral, sympathetic, and negative or spontaneous. These communication dynamics demonstrated reciprocal limitations, as interactions were often one-sided, spontaneous, and inconsistent, indicating that children's pragmatic skills were still developing and influenced by social context. Supporting factors included the teacher's role as facilitator, parental support, and the collectivist culture of society that emphasizedemphasized togetherness. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors were CWSN's language limitations, typical children's lack of pragmatic

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awareness, and the scarcity of well-planned inclusive communication strategies. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this study emphasizedemphasized that language competence, social norms, interaction patterns, and culture influenced children's communication in inclusive classrooms. Therefore, implementing inclusive communication strategies early on is essential to strengthen social cohesion, foster acceptance, and create equal learning environments for all children.

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Author's Biography

	**Diana Romdhoningsih, M.Pd.** She is a dedicated academic who has been serving as a lecturer at Universitas Bina Bangsa since 2017. She holds both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Indonesian Language and Literature Education from Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa. Her continued pursuit of higher education at the same institution reflects a strong commitment to academic excellence and to advancing Indonesian language and literature education in Indonesia. Email: nhadiana51@gmail.com
	**Maulida Nur, M.Pd.** She is currently a lecturer in the Early Childhood Teacher Education program at Universitas Bina Bangsa. She earned her Master's degree in Early Childhood Education from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), Bandung. Email: maulida.cahaya11@gmail.com
	**Rina Andriani, S.Pd., M.Hum.** She is an academic with a strong interest in linguistics. Her career in education began during her undergraduate studies. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Indonesian Language and Literature Education from Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa. She later completed a Master's degree in Linguistics (Indonesian language) at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), Bandung. Email: rrinaandriani@gmail.com