



The portrayal of deaf character in the children's book entitled *Dancing to the Beat* (2021)

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ABSTRACT

Researchers have analyzed the portrayal of characters with disabilities in children's and adolescent literature. However, studies examining the portrayal of deaf character in children book is extremely limited, despite an increased inclusion of deaf characters in children's literature over the past two decades (Golos & Moses, 2011). The present study analyzes the portrayal of deaf character and the way meanings are constructed in children's picture book entitled *Dancing to the Beat* (2021). The study employed a qualitative approach and was framed by theory of characterization (Reams, 2015). In addition, visual grammar (Kress and Leeuwen, 2006) and Cerrato's (2012) meaning of colors are applied to analyze the visual text. The results indicate that the deaf character is portrayed through highlighting Deaf culture instead of medical impairment model. From fifteen pages analyzed, there are eleven pages which belong to Deaf culture and four pages to medical impairment. Thus, Deaf culture characteristics appeared more frequent than the medical impairment as it can be seen through her environment's acceptance. The deaf character showed as a positive role model with self-confidence, optimism, enthusiasm and hard work through her behavior in facing her challenges. In addition, the book highlighted the importance of the role of adult and peer in deafness environment and inclusive education.

Keywords: Character; characterization; deafness; deaf culture; visual grammar

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INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs are defined as individuals who experience sensory disabilities. One of the sensory disabilities is deafness. Schmucker (2019) stated that "Approximately 466 million people of the world's population (5.0%) have disabling hearing loss, therefrom, 34 million children." (p. 1). Unfortunately, the big number of the hearing loss or deafness in children apparently has not been given attention needed in society (Bornstein, 2018).

Most families are not well-informed in raising deaf children. According to Hadjikakou and Nikolarazi (2008), the immense majority of deaf children (90–95%) in US are born to hearing parents. Most of the number are likely to have had little or no experience with the norms, values, language, and culture of the deaf community. In other words, they are lack of information that will help them open up their deaf child's world. Thus, children with deafness need to have role model who can ease parents' fears and show them that deaf and hard of hearing children can and do lead successful lives just like the hearing people.

One of the ways to provide a role model for children with deafness is through representation. The medium of the representation can be established in children's picture book. By presenting a deaf character as a role model in children's books, deaf children who read the book will be implicitly provided the same right since education is important both for the disabled and hearing children. Furthermore, it is important to provide children with disabilities with role models who have a similar language and cultural background in children books (Wolfe-Webb, 2021). In this case, deaf people deserved the same right and can serve as positive role models.

Unfortunately, the experiences of being a deaf have been little explored in the literary works especially in Indonesian children's book. To the researcher's knowledge, studies on deafness can be categorized into studies on representation in children's books (Brittain, 2004; Golos & Moses, 2011), representation in films for children (Safran, 1998; Wahyuningtyas, 2014; Wolfe-Webb, 2021) and empirical studies on deaf children (Hurlock,

2010; Nunes et al., 2001; Cillessen, 2011; Snow, Tabors, and Dickinson, 2001). Hence, this research looks into *Dancing to the Beat* by Sarah Fauzia (2021), which deals with deaf character. It is a children's picture book which was written in English by an Indonesian author. Different from other children's books, this book presented a deaf young girl as a main character in Indonesian setting, specifically in elementary school.

The current researcher framed the study with theory of characterization (Reams, 2015) which functions to get deeper analysis about the character as a subject in the story. Thus, the character's development is more explored. Regarding the visual text, the analysis is based on visual grammar (Kress and Leeuwen, 2006) and meaning of colors by Cerrato (2012) to specifically analyze and discover the underlying meaning in the pictures. In order to analyze the deafness in the story, two models of deafness: medical impairment (disability) and Deaf culture by Golos and Moses (2011) are used. Medical impairment is viewed as a deficit and the individual is viewed as having a medical problem (Lane, 1992). The characteristics or codes are parents grieving about hearing loss, misconceptions, labeling as hearing impaired, focus on the deaf character's inability to hear or speak, the deaf character functioning as if hearing, and communication strategies (e.g., speaking). Meanwhile, Lane (1992) defined Deaf culture as one of models of deafness that Deaf people can and do lead full lives as they are. The characteristics of Deaf culture are Deaf adults or Deaf children interact with hearing people, the existence of technology for the Deaf, mentioning of Deaf community (e.g., Deaf theater, Deaf poetry), sign language, residential schools for the Deaf, communication strategies (e.g., using sign language), also hearing parents accepting deafness (Golos & Moses, 2011).

By analyzing both verbal and visual texts, this research tries to fill the gap in the studies on deafness in children's literature.

METHOD

This study is intended to examine how deaf character is portrayed through character's characterization and find constructed meanings from the story of *Dancing to the Beat* (2021). To achieve the intended goals, a qualitative approach is used to conduct the present study.

According to Maxwell (2012), qualitative analysis focused on events or people that are accentuated more on words. Since the researcher focused on the characters' development in the story, the qualitative approach is used to identify the characters and the events that occurred in the story.

The data source for this research are in the form of texts: narrations and dialogues. Additionally, to

support the identification of characters' characterization, some pictures in the *Dancing to the Beat* (2021) are also presented. *Dancing to the Beat* (2021) is a children digital book that exposes issues around hearing loss in an elementary school setting. The book is a translated version from the original version entitled *Tarian Sunyi* (2021). It has 29 pages. The book was originally published on Let's Read, written by Sarah Fauzia, and created by Asia Foundation through The Litara Foundation. It tells a story of a deaf young girl named Mentari. She wants to learn to dance, but she is not sure she can. However, she decides to try. She cannot hear the music, but can feel the vibrations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to the analysis, it was revealed that the deaf character is portrayed through highlighting Deaf culture instead of medical impairment.

In order to reveal the way deaf character is portrayed and to find the potential meanings, an analysis of characterization (Reams (2015) and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar were conducted. To be more comprehensive, Cerrato's (2012) meaning of colors was also used. In this analysis, the data are constituted of narrations, dialogues, and pictures that display characterization. Thus, the findings are arranged on characterization and classified based on the character's deafness model. The analysis will then examine through the visual grammar and meaning of colors.

Characterization as a Means to Portray Deaf Character

A person or someone who plays a role in a story is called as a character. Therefore, characterization is more about how one character is being presented in a story. Reams (2015) stated that characterization is a way to show what and how a character is like through the process of shaping, developing, and presenting a character. Thus, the characterization process is identified in the different models of deafness that the character experienced to explore and analyze characterization.

In the story of *Dancing to the Beat* (2021), a deaf character named Mentari is portrayed in an Indonesian primary school setting and interacts with the hearing characters: Tara and Galuh (her friends), Miss Ayu (her teacher), and her mother. According to the storyline, characterization is developed through the characters' deafness experiences which fall into two models of deafness namely Deaf culture and medical impairment.

Characterization as Part of Deaf Culture

In Deaf culture model, Mentari's characterization does not only rely on Mentari's communication

strategy but also her teacher, peers and her mother's acceptance. It is in line with Golos and Moses (2011) that Deaf culture model can be marked by its characteristics: hearing parents accepting deafness, Deaf adults or Deaf children interact with hearing people, technology for the Deaf, mentioning of Deaf community (e.g., Deaf theater, Deaf poetry), ISL (Indonesian Sign Language) or BISINDO (Bahasa Isyarat Indonesia), residential schools for the Deaf, and communication strategies (e.g., using ISL). Some characteristics of Deaf culture appeared in eleven images. The first Deaf culture model in the book is presented in the picture below:

Mentari

In the Figure 1, Mentari is described as a girl with long dark brown hair, chubby cheeks, black eyes and tanned skin. The readers can directly notice the character is an Asian girl, specifically an Indonesian one. Moreover, her name is Mentari. The picture shows Mentari as a deaf character. This can be seen through the hearing aid she uses. The way Mentari's look using hearing aid belongs to Deaf culture which one of its characteristics or marks is the existence of technology for the Deaf (Golos & Moses, 2011).

Figure 1

Mentari's characterization as part of Deaf culture by using hearing aid



Can she be like them? Is dancing difficult?
Maybe Mentari can join a dancing class at her school.

In terms of visual grammar, the picture is directly indicated that viewers or readers are able to know more about Mentari, the main character. Moreover, the picture is located on the early pages, the second page. Thus, the character is significantly introduced to the readers. This can be viewed from the size of frame of the picture which refers to medium close-up shot. Then, the placement of the main object, Mentari, is located in the center which is considered as the core of the information and margin is subservient to its center. Lastly, the picture uses the angle of 'eye-level'. It indicates the power relation between Mentari as the represented participant and

the readers are equal. It is in line with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar. The choice of dominant color in the drawing is earth tones and it also can be seen from the beginning to the end of the story. According to Cerrato's (2012) meaning of colors, earth tones mean calm. The story itself tells about a deaf main character which has not been widely exposed in picture children's books. Therefore, the calm from the earth tones leads the readers especially children to receive messages easily and comfortably.

In the text, Mentari is indirectly questioning her ability to dance but then showing her confidence to try. This is strengthened by what is written in the text, "Can she be like them? Is dancing difficult? Maybe Mentari can join a dancing class at her school." (Fauzia, 2021, p.2).

In addition, another characterization as a part of Deaf culture is presented on the following data:

Figure 2

Mentari shows her courage to learn dancing as a deaf child



Mentari wants to try. She dares herself to enter the hall.

Narratively, the picture shows Mentari's direct characterization development. After doubting her ability and deciding to join the dancing class, she enters the hall bravely as it stated in the text, "Mentari wants to try. She dares herself to enter the hall." (Fauzia, 2021, p.4). The text focuses on her courage as a deaf character who tries to learn dancing.

Her characterization is also confirmed in the picture which used low angle. It lets Mentari to have more power than the readers. In other words, Mentari's courage becomes to be a special attention. In addition, on the other part of the picture, readers can see colorful abstract lines which is placed on the right. The placement is called as New (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). It represented something viewers have not known or not introduced yet and gives another attention. It means that the colorful abstract lines which is placed on the right is intended to be introduced for the first time in the above page then becomes to be another attention. The colorful

abstract lines are the visual symbol of beats or vibrations of the music. The choice of dominant color in the drawing is earth tones again which allow the readers, especially children, to receive messages easily as the color is presented as calm and friendliness (Cerrato's, 2012).

Figure 3

Mentari's performance on dancing



Mentari feels the music beat in her heart. She also feels the vibrations in her feet.

In this final picture shows Mentari's performance on Balinese dancing, complete with the costume. This picture is implicitly indicated her big progress after a series of challenge to dance. By exercising and helps from her teacher, friends, and mother she proves that she is capable to dance as a deaf child. This is strengthened by how the shot puts the subject, Mentari, on the center. The picture is also a wide shot which lets the viewers to see a whole look of Mentari. The choice of background color is colorful. Each color presents certain emotion which has stated in Cerrato's (2012) meaning of colors. In this page, there is magenta (love), beige or earth tone (calm), orange (playfulness, yellow (optimism and happiness), green (growth), blue (confidence) and purple (creativity). It is indicated that Mentari's emotion on this stage is passionate, confident and happy.

Narratively, it is written that Mentari feels the music using other sense which is her sense of touch. She focuses on the beats of the music instead of the sounds, "Mentari feels the music beat in her heart. She also feels the vibrations in her feet." (Fauzia, 2021, p.23).

Mentari and her teacher (Miss Ayu)

The above page shows Mentari and the teacher, Miss Ayu's characterization in Deaf culture. Their indirect characterization is established from how Miss Ayu welcoming Mentari on her dancing class. Furthermore, she explains Mentari's curiosity about a big black box she points to as stated in the text, "We are dancing to music coming out of the box. That is called a speaker," (Fauzia, 2021, p.6). Thus, this

implies that adult accepts deafness. In terms of direct characterization, another mark of Deaf culture is strengthened by how Mentari answers in sign language as her communication strategy as it is mentioned in the text.

Figure 4

Mentari's characterization as part of Deaf culture by giving acceptance from the teacher



"Hi, do you want to join this class?" Miss Ayu asks Mentari.

Mentari answers in sign language,

"Yes, I want to try." She points to a big black box.

"What is that?" she asks.

"We are dancing to music coming out of the box. That is called a speaker," explains Miss Ayu.

In another stage, the interaction between Mentari and Miss Ayu accepting deafness is confirmed through the choice of shot. It is a [medium wide shot](#) or also called medium long shot which frames the subject from roughly the knees up. The shot means to not only focus on the main character but also to the surrounding. In this case is Miss Ayu and the speaker. In addition, the drawing puts earth tones as its dominant color like some previous pages.

Figure 5

Teacher helps Mentari to learn dancing



The girls start practicing again. Miss Ayu tells Mentari when to begin dancing.

Mentari is glad. The signal from Miss Ayu is really helpful.

The same as the previous data, in this page, the characterization of the teacher as a helpful and supportive teacher is directly written in the text, "Miss Ayu tells Mentari when to begin dancing. Mentari is glad. The signal from Miss Ayu is really helpful." (Fauzia, 2021, p.18). Furthermore, the text mentions that Mentari is glad receiving Miss Ayu's help to make her easier to follow the beats of the music.

The drawing also strengthens how Mentari follows Miss Ayu's signals to dance and how she can follow the entire dancers in the class including Tara and Galuh. In this case, it can be seen through how the shot highlights Mentari. It is done to give special attention to readers about Mentari's progress to dance after being helped by Miss Ayu.

Figure 6.

Mentari's characterization as part of Deaf culture by giving acceptance from peers



Thump...thump...
Mentari closes her eyes so she can feel the vibrations.
But—FLOP!
Mentari bumps into her friends.

Mentari and her peers (Tara and Galuh)

The same as the previous picture, the characterization is focused on Mentari and the surrounding which shows as her classmates, Tara and Galuh. In this case, visually, the pictures use wider shot. The second picture uses high angle perspective to make the subject, Mentari, seem implicitly vulnerable after what has happened on the first picture. It tells that Mentari closes her eyes in order to feel the vibrations more of the music. But she accidentally bumps into Tara and Galuh. Deaf culture is indicated from her friends' understanding after the little incident as it is directly mentioned in the text, "Thank goodness Tara and Galuh are understanding." (Fauzia, 2021, p.15).



"Open your eyes, Mentari!" says Galuh, laughing.
Thank goodness Tara and Galuh are understanding.

Another characterization as part of Deaf culture in the book is revealed from how Mentari and her classmates, Tara and Galuh interact at school, especially their acceptance to Mentari. In the above picture, Tara and Galuh seem to be helpful as the characterization is directly described through the text, "Mentari's friends help her lift the speaker." (Fauzia, 2021, p.17). They help Mentari to move the speaker closer so she can feel the beats or vibrations.

Visually, their expression and gesture directly show the readers positive and happy energy as they are smiling while helping each other. Their emotion is highlighted by the shot. The picture used eye-level angle and the objects placed on the center. The choice of angle and placement are intended to focus on Mentari who is helped by Tara and Galuh to move the speaker closer. Frequently, this book uses earth tones as the dominant color as it can also be seen in the image below. figure 7

Figure 7

Tara and Galuh help Mentari to move the speaker



"One, two, three! Up!" Mentari's friends help her lift the speaker.

Mentari and her mother

Characterization in Deaf culture in the book is also revealed from how Mentari and her mother interact at home. The text mentions that Mentari keeps practicing at home with her mother's support. Her mother supports Mentari by telling her that music has different tempos and beats since Mentari can learn the dance from vibrations more than the sound. The second picture also implies her mother existence is accompanying her while she keeps practicing her dancing. The visual grammar analysis of the pictures also refers at how they interact. Mother gives supports to Mentari and Mentari accepts her existence. The first picture focuses on the object placement which is on the center. It means Mentari and her mother are the core information of the picture while on the second picture focuses at Mentari keeps practicing her dancing in front of her mother and surrounded by colorful abstract lines. The lines are the symbols of her energy, bright and enthusiastic.

Figure 8

Mother helps Mentari to practice at home



Mentari feels the beat getting faster, then slower.

She keeps practicing her dancing. Her movements follow the beats of the music.



Mentari keeps practicing at home.

Mother tells her that music has different tempos and beats.

Mentari can feel that.

Mentari, mother and Miss Ayu

The figure 9 is the last page of the book which shows Mentari's development in performance of Balinese dancing with the presence of her mother and Miss Ayu. It is directly written in the text that Mentari as a deaf character can finally dance just like her hearing friends in the class, "Mentari can do it!" (Fauzia, 2021, p.23).

The drawing pictures Mentari and her friends are dancing on the stage in front of the people. It seems like Mentari is dancing well since it is confirmed through Mentari's mother and Miss Ayu's responses who are obviously seen between the audiences. Her mother claps her hands while Miss Ayu gives her thumb up. According to visual grammar, the picture uses low angle to indirectly give more power on Mentari's performance.

Figure 9

Mother and Miss Ayu's support in Mentari's dancing performance



One, two, three. Sprinkle the flowers!

Mentari can do it!

Characterization as Part of Medical Impairment

In this study, besides characterization as part of Deaf culture, there are also some marks of medical impairment. The marks or codes are mostly appeared from Mentari's experiences who cannot hear sounds clearly.

Mentari

Medical impairment model of deafness is first appeared when Mentari enters the dance class. According to Golos and Moses (2011), one of the characteristics or marks of medical impairment is the deaf character's inability to hear or speak. In this case, it is in line with the mark that is implicitly written in the text, "Mentari feels pounding in her feet! She also feels her heart beating. She sees her friends dancing in the same rhythm as the pounding she feels." (Fauzia, 2021, p.5). It refers that Mentari focuses on the beats of the music instead of the sounds. Moreover, it is directly written that she feels music with other sense which is her touch and vision.

The way how the picture shot also strengthens her strategy to feel the music. It uses low angle which focuses on the speaker beats and feet that implies both of the elements has power.

Figure 10

Mentari shows her medical impairment by focusing on vibration



Thump...thump!

Mentari feels pounding in her feet!
She also feels her heart beating.
She sees her friends dancing in the same rhythm as the pounding she feels.

Figure 11

Mentari does not realize that music has started



Mentari gets ready to dance.

Suddenly she realizes the other girls are already dancing.

"Oh, the music has already started?" Mentari asks, confused.

The same mark as the previous data, her medical impairment is also indirectly written above, "Oh, the music has already started?" (Fauzia, 2021, p.9). This reveals that she cannot hear the sounds of the music when it is already started. Moreover, it is directly

written in text that she is confused, "Mentari asks, confused." (Fauzia, 2021, p.9).

Visually, it can be seen that Mentari shows confused expression while Tara and Galuh seem happily follow the music and dance.

Figure 12

Mentari's characterization as part of medical impairment as she cannot follow the dance



Mentari keeps trying to dance with the others. But why are her movements always different? Mentari dances the wrong way, again and again.

Another data reveals her characterization as part of medical impairment from the text, "Mentari dances the wrong way, again and again." (Fauzia, 2021, p.10). It is obviously stated that Mentari cannot follow the sounds nor the beats of the music before Miss Ayu appears to help by giving her signals.

It is then implicitly reveals from the picture which showed Mentari's gesture that looks around and seems confused. The high shot of the picture also refers to her vulnerable expression and the wide shot strengthens the difference between what happen to Mentari and the other dancers.

Mentari and her peers (Tara and Galuh)

The final page of Mentari's characterization as part of medical impairment analysis focuses on Mentari and the surrounding which shows as her friends, her classmates, Tara and Galuh. Narratively, the direct characterization of Mentari is portrayed when she accidentally bumps into her friends after closing her eyes, "Mentari bumps into her friends." (Fauzia, 2021, p.14). The accident happens because she is medically cannot hear the sounds as clear as the vibrations. As it indirectly written in the text, "Mentari closes her eyes so she can feel the vibrations." (Fauzia, 2021, p.14). Therefore, she closes her eyes in order to feel the vibrations more.

The picture uses low angle to make the drawing of incident becomes center of attention and again, the drawing puts earth tones as its dominant color.

Furthermore, Tara and Galuh are placed right on the middle of the picture to strengthen that they are bumped by Mentari.

Figure 13

Mentari bumps into Tara and Galuh



Thump...thump...

Mentari closes her eyes so she can feel the vibrations.

But—*FLOP!*

Mentari bumps into her friends.

Possible Meanings from The Characterization

The present researcher further analyzed the importance of the role of adult and peer in deafness environment and inclusive education in Indonesia as the possible meanings from the characterization below:

Intensifying Adult and Peer Roles in the Deafness Environment

In the analysis of characterization, it is highlighted that the presence of the teacher, mother and peer are needed. From the analysis, it is constructed that the roles of them need to be intensified in supporting Mentari. Furthermore, the role of adults and friends as a meaning to be supportive system is identified from the portrayal found in characterization analysis. In the story, it shows that the presence of the teacher is escalated when Mentari cannot follow the beats then the teacher helps her by giving her signals. The presence of mother is obviously needed when Mentari keeps practicing from home. Then, the significant presence of peers was seen when Mentari shows her medical impairment model of deafness and it is found out that her friends can accept and understand that.

The Role of Teacher

The analysis of characterization led to the importance of teacher's role in deafness environment. In the book, it is identified that the teacher took the biggest part in resolving challenges that Mentari face as a deaf character in dancing class. Therefore, the role of

the teacher is considered crucial since the teacher had certain position and power to rule the class.

In the book, the teacher, Miss Ayu, did not physically present in all Mentari's deafness experiences. The teacher's characterization established by her presence in resolving the problem as it is showed how the teacher dealt with Mentari's deafness in Deaf culture. She welcomed Mentari in the dancing class and taught her who can only clearly feel the music through vibrations by using communication strategy, giving her signals when to begin dancing. Mentari then felt glad of her helpful actions. She finally could follow the movements just like the other dancers in the class. This showed that the teacher accepted her deafness and this is categorized as Deaf culture.

Thus, the teacher's role is functioned as the supervisor who had the power to rule the class. It is also implied that teachers can help to promote a general positive attitude toward deaf classmates (Nunes et al., 2001), especially when both deaf and hearing children need to interact with same hearing-status peers.

The Role of Parents

The next constructed meaning from the story of *Dancing to the Beat* (2021) is the role of the parents. In the story, the mother is mostly appeared at the house. This implied that there is an exchange of role between parents and teacher significantly from school to house. Although the mother's presence seems to be less frequent than that of the teacher's, the implication of the presence of mother still plays a significant role. Especially, at the end of the story, the mother who appears with the teacher between the audiences to support Mentari's performance extends the role of the power from teachers and parents. This also contains underlying meaning that the role of teacher and parents shared similar control and responsibility over children.

Mother's role is implied through her action in pictures and narration which belongs to Deaf culture. When her presence appears at home, she tells Mentari that music has different tempos and beats, she also frequently accompanies Mentari who keeps practicing dancing. After that, Mentari's energy get increased when she is practicing. She seems to be energetic and enthusiastic.

According to the findings, besides giving examples of good behaviors, parents with hearing or deaf children should educate their children by talking with their children or by doing things together. Even as simple as reading books together that does not only tell about hearing children but also raise issues about disabilities, in this case is deafness. It is done to introduce the children about the multicultural world that is represented in stories. It is to provide the same right to the deaf children which is in line with Snow, Tabors, and Dickinson (2001) that providing children

from multicultural backgrounds with role models who have a similar language and cultural background is important. Furthermore, showing respect for deaf people and their culture through improved portrayals is forever a learning process (Wolfe-Webb, 2021). In this case, deaf people deserved the same right and can serve as positive role models. This may help both deaf and hearing children to identify positively with the deaf community and culture. One of which is by presenting a deaf character as a role model in children's books.

The findings in the role of parents then intensifies the constructed meaning from the characterization in the portrayal of deaf character in the book. Parents play the most important role in educating their children. Children tend to identify and imitate what parents do at home, therefore, deaf children's optimistic traits in schools can happen as the children mostly supported by the parents from home. The statement is in line with Hurlock (2010) that the construction of personality lies in how parents and other family members play in providing parenting and interacting with their hearing or deaf children. In this case, parents should be the example for the children and educate the children from discussions and picture books.

The Role of Peers

Besides the role of adults, peers also played significant role in supporting deafness acceptance in children. Peer relations defined as relations among equals. In this case is between Mentari and her classmates, Tara and Galuh. Peer relationships according to the findings are Mentari's first true experience with acceptance relationships. Acceptance is believed as a unique dimension of peer status (Cillessen, 2011). It is typically measured with peer nominations or ratings. Then, acceptance is indicated as a measure for likability and social preference. It can reflect relationships in the class.

In the book, peers' acceptance is showed in medical and Deaf culture. Tara and Galuh as the representatives of her classmates who understand that Mentari cannot hear sounds clearly. When Mentari accidentally bumps into Tara and Galuh, they prefer to understand and help Mentari to lift the speaker and move it closer to her so she can learn the dancing through vibrations of the music instead of being mad. This is an obvious acceptance of peers. It is revealed that deaf child in the current study was accepted by hearing peers, though other studies found them to be neglected and rejected.

Thus, the book completely portrays the importance of teacher, parents, and peers' role in educating and spreading awareness of deafness around children since the findings stressed the need for supervising deaf children. Their roles are functioned to provide the same right to the deaf

children without showing any abusive acts and discrimination. Therefore, they are supposed to be good examples in the society.

Promoting Inclusive Education in Indonesia

According to the analysis, the book completely portrays the need of inclusive education which supports students with disability to have equal opportunities in accessing education and learning. Moreover, in Indonesia, there is a law regarding to inclusive education. It is regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009 which explains that children with disabilities physically, emotionally, mentally, and socially are provided the widest opportunity to obtain quality education in accordance with their needs. The law also explained the implementation of education that respects diversity and does not discriminate between children with disabilities or without. Unfortunately, the representation of deafness especially in children book in Indonesia is still sparse. The concept of inclusive education then needs to be intensified in Indonesia.

Inclusive education provides opportunities for students with disabilities to study together with students without disabilities. Thus, they get the same rights, justice, and wider access to education and social activities. The good impacts of inclusive education can be seen from the analysis of children's book, *Dancing to the Beat* (2021). Mentari as the deaf character can finally realize her dream to dance. She performs together with hearing children. Along her learning, her character's development is constructed as positive traits. She shows her self-confidence, bravery, friendship, optimism and the most important thing is happiness.

CONCLUSION

Deafness is a medical condition when people have profound hearing loss, which implies very little or no hearing. The phenomenon of deafness in children does not get much of attention. Moreover, only few studies have analyzed deafness in children which is represented in children's literature. Therefore, the study of deafness in children's book is conducted in order to raise awareness of deafness and how people should respond to it. In this study, a children's picture book *Dancing to the Beat* (2021) is chosen to be analyzed because of its issues about deafness in Indonesian setting. Framed by the theory of characterization (Reams, 2015), and multimodality based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar and supporting tool by Cerrato's (2012) meaning of colors, the analysis identifies the way the deaf character portrayed from the characters' experiences. In addition, the portrayal of the deaf character in the chosen story has created alternative meanings.

The findings revealed that Mentari's characterization is constructed by her deafness experiences in medical impairment and Deaf culture. In this case, Deaf culture characteristics appeared more frequent than the medical impairment as it can be seen through her environment's acceptance. At the school, the teacher welcomed her and taught her to dance. She knew that Mentari need to be supervised yet Mentari had a great determination to dance until finally Mentari could perform dancing well just like the other dancers. It is indicated that the behavior of the teacher is affecting the students, in this case is the deaf child as the teacher holds a powerful position in the classroom. In this stage, Tara and Galuh as her classmates showed their peers acceptance. They understood that Mentari cannot hear sounds clearly but feel vibrations. The mother herself significantly presented when Mentari was home. In addition, Mentari's characterization as a deaf character showed self-confidence, optimism, enthusiasm and hard works through her behavior in facing her challenges to dance.

As a final remark, it can be concluded that the portrayal of deaf character in the book is revealed from the characterization analysis that focused on the characters' experiences and development in medical impairment and Deaf culture. Furthermore, teacher, parents and peers play significant role and inclusive education is well portrayed in the story.

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