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The Experience of Symbolic Violence among Deaf Students in Disability-Friendly Universities: A Pierre Bourdieu Perspective

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Abstract
This research is driven by the contradictory phenomenon at University X, where its status as a "Disability-Friendly Campus" conceals underlying practices of marginalization within daily interactions. The study aims to analyze the mechanisms of euphemization, censorization, and misrecognition in perpetuating the dominance of hearing culture within an inclusive higher education setting. Adopting a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, data were collected through observations and in-depth interviews via WhatsApp text messages with 10 deaf students. Participants were selected using snowball. The data were analyzed interactively—including reduction, display, and verification—and sharpened using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence. This theory assumes that power dominance operates subtly through the internalization of dominant group values, which are perceived as natural or taken for granted (doxa) by the dominated group. The results indicate that the claim of inclusivity at University X remains confined to the physical dimension, while symbolic violence persists through: (1) euphemization in the form of "special" treatment that paralyzes agency; (2) censorization through inaccessible auditory communication structures; and (3) misrecognition, where students internalize systemic barriers as personal failures. The novelty of this study lies in its application of the symbolic violence perspective to examine the gap between idealized policies and the social realities experienced by deaf students, which are often overlooked in conventional studies focusing primarily on physical accessibility.

Keywords: Deaf Students; Disability-Friendly Campus; Pierre Bourdieu; Symbolic Violence,.

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Introduction

Higher education constitutes a fundamental right that must be accessible to all members of society without exception, including person with disabilities. The recognition and fulfillment of the rights of persons with disabilities are guaranteed within the national legal framework, including Law Number 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, which explicitly mandates the state to respect, protect, and fulfill these rights. The implementation of this regulation emphasizes the elimination of discrimination, the provision of reasonable accommodations, and the assurance of full participation in all aspects of life, including education (Aliyah, 2024). Therefore, educational institutions, including universities, bear both moral and legal responsibilities to create genuinely inclusive environments. These efforts must go beyond the mere provision of facilities, encompassing policy reform, curriculum adaptation, and disability-sensitive support services (Filippou et al., 2025).

In response to this mandate, many universities have committed to strengthening inclusive policies and programs in order to become "Disability-Friendly Campuses" (Mahaendrayasa et al., 2025). These institutions implement strategic policies and provide accessible facilities to ensure equal rights for all students. Beyond physical support, universities have also established Disability Service Units (DSUs), which function as coordinating centers for academic assistance and the provision of specialized support for students with

disabilities. These comprehensive measures are expected to foster a non-discriminatory academic ecosystem in which both structural and social barriers are minimized to support the academic success of every individual.

Despite the availability of structural measures and facilities, the lived experiences of students with disabilities in disability-friendly campuses are often still overshadowed by subtle forms of discrimination. Forms of implicit ableism manifested through stigma, ridicule, and social exclusion within peer environments create psychological distance and position accommodations as institutional burdens that implicitly blame individual limitations (Nieminen, 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2024). In the specific context of deaf students, these challenges become more complex due to the normalization of communication barriers, which forces them to continuously adapt independently within a predominantly hearing-centric environment (Percival et al., 2025; Rahma et al., 2020). This dominance of hearing culture results in a misalignment between available informational and physical access and the linguistic needs of deaf students, thereby limiting the realization of true inclusivity, particularly in social and cultural relations within the university.

The disparity between formal policy and social reality is evident in one public university in Surabaya (hereafter referred to as University X), which has long declared itself a Disability-Friendly Campus and serves as a national reference. As a pioneering institution, University X was selected as the research site due to its significant number of deaf students and the active role of its Disability Service Unit. However, the institution's identity as a "Disability-Friendly Campus" presents a profound sociological contradiction: the prominence of physical infrastructure and formal policies often conceals practices of symbolic violence embedded in everyday interactions. Therefore, this claim of inclusivity requires critical examination through the subjective perspectives of deaf students in order to identify the gap between ideal policies and lived realities. This contradictory phenomenon aligns with broader global academic discourse that increasingly questions the effectiveness of formal inclusion policies in addressing the actual experiences of persons with disabilities.

Research over the past five years, both nationally and internationally, indicates a shift from a focus on accessibility toward a critical examination of ableism, symbolic violence, and the gap between inclusive policies and the everyday experiences of students with disabilities in higher education. Studies across various countries demonstrate that, despite advancements in regulatory frameworks and facilities, students with disabilities continue to face stigma, bureaucratic burdens in accessing services, and assessment and pedagogical practices oriented toward the "able-bodied ideal student," positioning them as "the Other" and normalizing subtle exclusion within campus culture (Nieminen, 2023; Leonhardt, 2024; Nieminen & Pesonen, 2022; Marom & Hardwick, 2025). In Indonesia, even universities recognized as pioneers of inclusive education show that students with diverse disabilities continue to encounter challenges related to accommodation, social integration, and inconsistent institutional support, meaning that the ideal of a "disability-friendly campus" is often constrained by daily practices that remain insensitive to their linguistic and cultural needs (Rrofiah et al., 2023). Specifically, research on Deaf and hard-of-hearing students highlights that the primary barrier is not merely infrastructural limitations, but the inability of the hearing community to understand and respond to their communication needs, resulting in social invisibility and prolonged frustration (Tannenbaum-Baruchi et al., 2025; Batista & García, 2023; Thoutenhoofd et al., 2025). These findings open an important space for examining the experiences of symbolic violence among deaf students in campuses that formally claim to be inclusive.

Despite the growing body of research on accessibility barriers, a significant research gap remains in mapping how mechanisms of symbolic violence operate subtly within the daily social interactions of deaf students in institutions already labeled as "disability-friendly." This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the dimensions of power and the dominance of hearing culture, which are often taken for granted. The novelty of this research lies in its use of the concept of symbolic violence to analyze the contradiction between the structural establishment of University X and the linguistic-social marginalization experienced by deaf students.

Theoretically, this contradiction is examined through the operationalization of the concepts of euphemization and censoring within the field of University X, where the label "disability-friendly" risks functioning as a form of misrecognition of the hegemony of hearing culture. From a Bourdieusian perspective, symbolic violence occurs when dominant auditory habitus and capital establish doxa, or rules of the game, that marginalize the linguistic identity of deaf students (Bourdieu, 1991; 2001). Based on this background, the research question is formulated as follows: How do contradictions emerge between the claim of a Disability-Friendly Campus and the experiences of symbolic violence among deaf students at University X?

In line with this research question, the objectives of this study are to: (1) describe the social practices of deaf students within a disability-friendly campus; (2) identify the mechanisms of euphemization and

censoring in the perpetuation of symbolic violence against deaf students; and (3) analyze the occurrence of misrecognition of dominant structures within the disability-friendly campus field.

The significance of this study encompasses both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it is expected to enrich the sociology of education literature, particularly in deepening the analysis of symbolic violence in the context of disability in higher education. Practically, the findings are intended to serve as a reflective resource and provide concrete recommendations for University X and other higher education institutions in evaluating inclusive policies ensuring that they extend beyond the provision of physical facilities to address the deeper transformation of communication cultures and equitable social relations for deaf students.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of the essence of symbolic violence experienced by deaf students. A phenomenological approach was selected due to its strong emphasis on the subjective lived experiences of participants, enabling the researcher to bracket prior assumptions and explore the deeper meanings underlying the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Throughout the phenomenological process, the researcher maintained openness, reflexivity, and engaged in bracketing to minimize bias. This methodological choice is particularly relevant, as phenomenology allows for the unpacking of layers of symbolic violence that are often internalized and normalized within everyday academic routines.

The study was conducted at a university in Surabaya institutionally recognized as a disability-friendly campus (hereafter referred to as University X) over a two-month period (November–December 2025), during the active academic semester in order to directly observe interactional dynamics. The primary subjects of this study were deaf students actively enrolled at the university. Informants were selected using a snowball sampling technique, beginning with one deaf student who met the inclusion criteria, who then referred the researcher to other individuals with similar experiences (Naderifar et al., 2017). This technique was employed given the relatively closed nature of the deaf student community on campus, making researcher access more feasible through internal referrals among peers.

The main inclusion criterion required participants to have completed at least two semesters of academic study, ensuring that they possessed sufficient experience and understanding of campus dynamics. A total of ten deaf students were recruited as key informants to ensure sufficient depth of data and to reach data saturation. The academic background diversity of the ten informants is as follows:

Table 1. List of Research Subjects

No.	Research Subject	Age	Gender	Study Program
1.	AN	29 years old	Male	Bachelor's degree in physical education, health, and recreation
2.	AR	20 years old	Male	Diploma IV in Sports Coaching
3.	BP	21 years old	Male	Diploma IV in Graphic Design
4.	ES	20 years old	Female	Bachelor's degree in visual arts education
5.	SB	20 years old	Female	Bachelor's degree in culinary arts education
6.	OA	20 years old	Female	Bachelor's degree in visual communication design
7.	MN	21 years old	Male	Bachelor's degree in performing arts education
8.	VA	23 years old	Female	Bachelor's degree in information systems
9.	AD	22 years old	Female	Vachelor's degree in cosmetology education
10.	LS	22 years old	Male	Vachelor's degree in special education

Source: Researcher

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations. The in-depth interviews were conducted via text-based communication on the WhatsApp platform, enabling participants to express their thoughts without the constraints of verbal communication and allowing them time to reflect on their responses in written form. To ensure data validity, the researcher conducted member checking by returning interview narrative drafts to participants to confirm that the researcher's interpretations accurately reflected their lived experiences (Birt et al., 2016). Observations were carried out in academic settings such as classrooms, the Disability Service Unit (DSU), and public campus facilities to examine ongoing social and communicative practices.

In addition to primary data, secondary data were collected through documentation and literature review. The documentation included institutional policies, campus programs, and relevant case records. The literature review drew on scholarly articles and books related to the research topic. Throughout the research process, strict adherence to research ethics was maintained, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring participant anonymity, and safeguarding the confidentiality of all research data.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model developed by Miles & Huberman (1994), which comprises three interrelated processes: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The procedure began with downloading and organizing WhatsApp chat histories (exported chat) into a structured text format, followed by coding patterns of symbolic violence and categorizing the data based on Bourdieusian concepts. After data reduction and presentation in the form of phenomenological narratives, the subsequent crucial stage involved theoretical analysis using Pierre Bourdieu's framework of symbolic violence. By integrating the interactive model with Bourdieusian theoretical analysis, this study moves from the description of subjective experiences toward a more structured and theoretically grounded interpretation.

Results and Discussion

The Field of University X: Claims of Inclusivity versus Auditory Reality

From the perspective of Bourdieu (1984), a field is understood as a social space with its own internal logic, rules of the game, and power structures in which actors compete for position and recognition. In its public narrative, University X has positioned itself as a pioneer of inclusive education in Indonesia, a claim supported by various national accolades and progressive internal regulations. However, when this field is examined through the everyday experiences of deaf students, a stark discrepancy emerges between the "front stage" of formal inclusivity and the "back stage," which remains dominated by an auditory order (hearing culture). The field of University X is not merely a neutral space for knowledge transfer, but rather a symbolic battleground in which auditory capital—the ability to hear and communicate orally—remains the primary currency determining the degree of student participation.

The findings reveal that the structure of the field at University X continues to rely heavily on audio-based information transmission, which automatically positions deaf students in a subaltern position. Student AN (Undergraduate Program in Physical Education) provides a vivid account of navigating this field:

> "Honestly, being a deaf student on this campus is quite challenging in daily lectures. In class, lecturers often speak very quickly, so I struggle to follow without assistive tools. To avoid missing the material, I have to focus extra hard on visual elements like presentation slides or typed notes on my phone." (Interview, December 8, 2025).

This statement indicates that although deaf students occupy the same classroom as their non-disabled peers, the "rules of the game" within that space are still designed for those who can hear. Presentation slides often function merely as supplementary tools rather than as primary instruments capable of fully accommodating the auditory needs of deaf students. This phenomenon suggests that University X, as a higher education field, continues to normalize the dominant group's modes of learning, thereby compelling students with disabilities to exert invisible "extra effort" simply to attain parity with "normal" students.

This imbalance extends beyond the classroom into other sub-fields such as cafeterias and administrative offices, where the speed and dominance of oral communication become primary barriers. Student ES (Undergraduate Program in Fine Arts Education) describes her experience:

> "Studying here as a deaf student feels like constantly struggling in an environment that isn't friendly to our needs. For example, in the cafeteria, it's very noisy, so I have to type on my phone or just point when ordering food. When dealing with administrative matters, it's the same—I always have to take the initiative to ask staff to write things down, because they don't provide written information on their own." (Interview, December 6, 2025).

The noise in the cafeteria is not merely an acoustic disturbance, but a sociological boundary that limits deaf students' access to spontaneous social interaction. Similarly, the inability of administrative systems to proactively provide written communication forces students to "request" accommodations. Within a Bourdieusian framework of power relations, this positions them as supplicants rather than as rights-bearing subjects whose needs should be automatically fulfilled.

These findings resonate strongly with the study by Mahaendrayasa et al. (2025), which questions whether inclusive campuses in Indonesia are truly substantive or merely symbolic through the provision of physical facilities. Their study emphasizes that indicators of a disability-friendly campus must encompass more holistic dimensions, including information accessibility and policies that ensure students' rights throughout all institutional processes. The findings from University X indicate that the institution tends to be confined to physical inclusion (such as tactile paving or elevators), while neglecting "sensory inclusion" and "administrative inclusion." The following table outlines the comparison between policy claims at University X and the auditory realities identified in the data:

Table 2. Gap Analysis of Inclusion Practices at University X

Arena Dimensions	Claims of Formal Inclusivity	Auditory Reality (Data Findings)	Sociological Analysis
Classroom Pedagogy	An adaptive and disability-friendly curriculum.	The lecturer speaks quickly; assignment instructions are often given only verbally, without written notes.	The dominance of the auditory mode as the "language of power" in the classroom.
Social Interaction	Social integration without discrimination in campus public spaces.	Noisy public spaces create social isolation for deaf university students.	The creation of a "wall of sound" that obstructs the accumulation of student capital.
Administrative Bureaucracy	Equitable administrative services for the entire academic community.	Administrative staff are not proactive in providing written information; students must take the initiative themselves.	Symbolic violence through the requirement for students to adapt to an oral-based system.
Physical Environment	Implementing the Universal Design concept to facilitate mobility.	Lack of real-time visual instructions or scrolling text displays in strategic areas of the campus.	Inclusion is limited to physical aspects, overlooking functional auditory needs.

Source: Researcher

The comparative analysis indicates that the situation at University X extends and updates the findings of Riswari et al. (2022) regarding the existence of "management gaps" in the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia. At University X, this gap does not stem from a lack of institutional intention, but rather from the institution's inability to detach itself from an auditory "normalcy" paradigm. Deaf students frequently report that their presence is "less recognized" in activities that rely on rapid oral communication, such as seminars or organizational discussions. This finding aligns with Leonhardt's (2024) concept of "silent processes" in higher education, whereby discrimination does not occur through overt physical aggression or verbal abuse, but through the neglect of specific needs, obscured by administrative routines that are perceived as "normal."

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations within this field analysis. Despite the prevalence of symbolic shortcomings at University X, peer support emerges as a form of "compensatory social capital" for deaf students. Student AR (Applied Bachelor's Program in Sports Coaching) explained:

> "Because information in class is often not accessible to me, I frequently feel confused and miss important academic information. So, when there are announcements or assignments I don't understand, the only way is to directly ask my classmates. Fortunately, my friends here are kind and willing to help, so they act as a safety net for me so I don't completely fall behind." (Interview, December 6, 2025).

This finding supports the argument of Prasetyo et al. (2024) that peer social support often functions as the primary safety net for students with disabilities within systems that are not yet fully inclusive. The

limitation of this study lies in its strong focus on institutional structures, which may have resulted in the underrepresentation of micro-level resistance strategies employed by deaf students in navigating and contesting the field of University X. While University X symbolically claims to be a pioneer, in auditory terms it remains a highly challenging field for those who do not rely on spoken language as their primary mode of communication.

Habitus and Capital of Deaf Students in the Higher Education Field

The success or failure of deaf students in navigating the field of University X is highly contingent upon the conjuncture between their habitus and the volume of capital they are able to mobilize. Habitus, as conceptualized by Bourdieu (1984), refers to a system of internalized dispositions, a "structured structure" that functions as a generative and organizing principle of social practices. For deaf students, habitus is not merely shaped by the biological condition of hearing loss, but more profoundly by their long-term social experiences within environments that have been historically exclusionary. Within University X, this habitus manifests in highly specific survival strategies, ranging from extreme self-reliance to latent feelings of inferiority concealed beneath outward compliance.

Interview data reveal that the habitus of deaf students at University X is strongly characterized by an acute awareness of "difference," which must be compensated for through intensified effort. Student LS (Undergraduate Program in Special Education) reflected:

> "Living as a student with a disability in a campus environment that is not yet fully inclusive often feels extremely difficult and confusing for me. However, the various structural challenges and interaction barriers I encounter here have forced me to constantly adapt and rely on myself. Through this continuous daily struggle, I feel that my character and disposition have been shaped into someone much stronger and more independent" (Interview, December 6, 2025).

This statement illustrates the formation of a resilient habitus as a response to an unaccommodating field. At the same time, a subordinated habitus also emerges through the internalization of dominance exercised by non-disabled groups. Student AD (Undergraduate Program in Cosmetology Education) admitted:

> "Dealing with inaccessible campus facilities and unclear communication is exhausting and very stressful. Because I so often feel these difficulties, I once thought that all these obstacles were my fault for having a physical limitation. Rather than going through the trouble of protesting or demanding things from the university, I chose to stay silent, play it safe, and try to focus on the positive aspects." (Interview, December 6, 2025).

This finding aligns with Wachidah (2025), who describe the internalization of a subordinate position, wherein individuals with disabilities tend to avoid conflict and remain silent even when their rights are not fully met. In this case, Student AD's perception of their struggles as personal failure represents what may be termed the "purest form of symbolic violence," where individuals blame themselves for the system's inability to accommodate their needs.

With regard to capital, deaf students at University X face substantial challenges in accumulating symbolic and social capital. In Bourdieu's (1984), capital refers to resources that can be mobilized to secure advantages within a given field. For deaf students, cultural capital (knowledge and competencies) often fails to convert into symbolic capital (recognition) due to linguistic barriers. Student AN (Undergraduate Program in Physical Education) described their experience in group discussions:

> "Whenever there is group work, I sometimes feel as if I am not really acknowledged by my peers. When they debate or talk, they do it very quickly through spoken communication, as if my opinions are not important for the majority group to hear. They exchange ideas rapidly without giving any pause or opportunity for me to respond through notes or writing." (Interview, December 8, 2025).

In this context, the speed of oral communication operates as the dominant cultural capital. Although AN possesses strong ideas (embodied cultural capital), the absence of rapid spoken communication skills renders them effectively "symbolically impoverished" in the eyes of their peers.

A deeper analysis of economic and cultural capital reveals a contradictory pattern. While deaf students come from diverse economic backgrounds, limited access to high-quality hearing assistive technologies or professional sign language interpretation services forms of economic capital that can be converted into technical cultural capital significantly undermines their confidence. At the same time, there are creative

attempts to convert cultural capital into domains that privilege visual competencies. Student VA (Undergraduate Program in Information Systems) explained:

> "Because the university consistently sets oral communication as the primary standard, I once felt extremely discouraged to the point that I could not accept my identity as a deaf person. It was painful to feel isolated and to see hearing peers able to do things so easily, while I wanted to be like them. But behind those feelings of insecurity and helplessness, I realized I could not dwell on them for too long and had to stay motivated so I would not fall further behind." (Interview, December 6, 2025).

This strategy reflects an effort to shift the "arena of struggle" from the auditory domain to the visual domain, where deaf students hold a comparative advantage. The table below outlines the differentiated composition of capital among deaf students at University X.

Table 3. Analysis of Capital and Challenges Faced by Deaf Students at University X

Types of Capital	Forms among Deaf University Students	Challenges at University X	Symbolic Effect
Cultural Capital	Proficiency in sign language; visual skills (graphics/photography).	The academic arena continues to prioritize auditory (oral) linguistic capital.	Visual skills are often considered "secondary" to verbal abilities.
Social Capital	Peer network of students with disabilities; volunteer support.	Limitations in building an extensive social network due to communication barriers in public spaces.	Reliance on "note-takers" or friends to navigate information.
Economic Capital	The ability to afford hearing aids or hearing therapy.	The cost of higher education and expensive supporting equipment often place a burden on families.	Students from low-income families are increasingly marginalized in academic competition.
Symbolic Capital	Identity as an "outstanding student" in non-academic fields.	The stigma of "disability," which is often associated with helplessness or pity.	The emergence of "proof fatigue" (having to work harder to gain recognition).

Source: Researcher

These findings reinforce the study by Rahma et al. (2020), which examines school wellbeing among students with disabilities, highlighting that feelings of satisfaction and comfort within the university are strongly shaped by how social relationships (*loving*) and self-actualization (*being*) are accommodated by the institution. At University X, the wellbeing of deaf students is disrupted by the presence of an "extra burden" that they must carry. As noted by Leonhardt (2024), this burden includes *invisible labor* the often-unrecognized work that students with disabilities must perform merely to gain equal access to information as their peers. For instance, Student ES is required to consistently sit in the front row and rely heavily on intense visual concentration in order to avoid missing course material. This effort is not only cognitively demanding but also physically exhausting. This analysis demonstrates that although University X provides scholarships or infrastructural support (institutional capital), deaf students are still required to pay a disproportionately high "participation tax" in the form of depleted physical and mental energy.

Critically, this analysis of habitus and capital reveals that the institutional claim of being "disability-friendly" at University X often fails to penetrate the level of habitus. While the university may attempt to modify formal regulations (the field), the underlying perceptions of lecturers and staff toward the capabilities of deaf students remain largely unchanged. Student ES recounted a lecturer's remark suggesting that it was acceptable for them not to participate in a presentation due to their limitations. Although this statement appears supportive on the surface, symbolically it constitutes a subtle exclusion from the arena of academic competition, ultimately fostering feelings of powerlessness and social alienation.

This finding aligns with the argument of Tannenbaum-Baruchi et al. (2025), which suggests that institutional support lacking sensitivity toward student agency can paradoxically reinforce marginalization. Thus, the habitus of deaf students at University X can be understood as a habitus in continuous struggle for

symbolic recognition within a field where auditory capital is implicitly constructed as the "gold standard" of academic legitimacy.

Mechanisms of Symbolic Violence: Euphemization and Sensorialization

The mechanisms of symbolic violence at University X operate subtly through processes of euphemization, whereby acts of marginalization are framed within a rhetoric of empathy that ultimately neutralizes student agency (Bourdieu, 1991). Student BP (Applied bachelor's degree in graphic design) recounted an experience of such euphemization enacted by a lecturer:

> "There was a lecturer who once said, 'It's okay if you don't participate in the presentation you have your limitations.' The intention may have been good, but it actually made me feel separated from my peers, as if I was incapable of even trying." (Interview, December 6, 2025).

This statement illustrates how soft, seemingly considerate language is deployed to disqualify active participation in academic processes. Rather than constituting genuine support, such practices represent a form of "gentle violence" that is largely imperceptible because it operates through socially legitimized expressions of care. At a symbolic level, the institution constructs deaf students as inherently "incapable" subjects, cloaked in a misdirected discourse of compassion.

Beyond euphemization, practices of sensorialization understood as constraints that emerge automatically from the structure of the social space manifest through administrative interactions that inadvertently undermine students' dignity and intellectual capacity (Bourdieu, 1991). Student AR described:

> "Whenever I handle administrative matters, campus staff often immediately speak very slowly while exaggerating their lip movements. Honestly, this makes me uncomfortable, because it feels like they assume I cannot understand anything. In fact, my cognitive abilities are completely normal. I just need information to be delivered through writing or clear visual communication." (Interview, December 6, 2025).

Such practices convey a symbolic message that hearing impairment is automatically associated with reduced cognitive ability, rendering assistance interactions patronizing and condescending. Student MN (Undergraduate Program in Performing Arts Education) added:

> "Sometimes the excessive attention from people on campus actually makes me feel constantly singled out. What seems like care ends up making me feel even more incapable. It's as if my abilities are immediately underestimated just because I am deaf." (Interview, December 6, 2025).

These conditions effectively create a "wall of sound" that prevents deaf students from being recognized as autonomous and competent subjects within the academic field.

Critically, these findings reinforce the argument of Wachidah (2025) that symbolic violence operates through practices that position persons with disabilities as mere "objects of pity." The rhetoric of being "disability-friendly" at University X, rather than dismantling inequality, often reproduces the stigma that deaf individuals are inherently inferior to normative standards of ability. This suggests that discrimination in higher education has shifted from overt exclusion to a more insidious form of "inclusive hospitality" that, paradoxically, restricts meaningful participation.

Euphemization, in this sense, becomes highly effective in sustaining social hierarchies precisely because it is embedded within the language of inclusivity, making it difficult to contest openly. This study therefore underscores that accommodation policies at University X remain confined to the provision of physical or material compensation, rather than extending toward systemic transformation at the level of sociolinguistic interaction. The manifestations of symbolic violence experienced by deaf students do not occur explicitly, but are instead embedded within everyday practices that are normalized within the institutional culture. Euphemization appears through actions that seem "kind" yet diminish student agency and independence, while sensorialization operates through inaccessible communication structures that constrain full participation. These two mechanisms are mutually reinforcing in reproducing auditory dominance, positioning deaf students as subjects who must continuously adapt to a fundamentally non-inclusive system. Accordingly, Table 4 illustrates that symbolic violence within a "disability-friendly" campus is not merely an individual issue, but a structural condition reproduced through practices that are widely perceived as natural and legitimate.

Misrecognition: The Normalization of Auditory Dominance

Misrecognition refers to a condition in which inequality and power relations are perceived as natural, legitimate, and taken for granted (Bourdieu, 1991). In this context, misrecognition occurs when deaf students internalize the dominance of auditory culture as a normative and universal standard that they are expected

to meet. Student AR (Applied Bachelor's Degree in Sports Coaching) reflected on their experience of missing verbal instructions:

> "I once felt that the difficulty was entirely my fault… the campus environment often sets verbal communication as the standard." (Interview, December 6, 2025).

This acknowledgment reveals the operation of *doxa* beliefs that are perceived as self-evident truths and thus remain unquestioned (Bourdieu, 1991) where the "ideal student" is implicitly defined as one who can speak fluently and comprehend spoken instructions instantaneously. Consequently, when deaf students fail to keep pace with this communicative norm, they do not interpret it as a systemic failure of the institution, but rather as a personal deficiency.

The destructive consequences of this misrecognition manifest in forms of self-blame and deep-seated doubt regarding one's identity. Student ES (Undergraduate Program in Fine Arts Education) admitted that when confronted with limited accessibility, they tended to resign themselves and internalize responsibility:

> "Because accessibility on campus is not proactive, I once blamed myself. I felt that all my academic difficulties were entirely my fault. The environment, which is dominated by 'auditory culture,' made me think that missing information was purely due to my own limitations, even though the real issue lies in the system. Because of these inaccessible conditions, my classmates often had to check with me just to make sure I understood assignment instructions." (Interview, December 6, 2025).

Similarly, Student OA (Undergraduate Program in Visual Communication Design) described an internal emotional conflict:

> "The campus standards, which are heavily verbal, once made me reject myself because of my hearing impairment. I felt sadness when I experienced isolation and saw how easily non-disabled peers could engage in activities. However, amidst this sense of helplessness caused by structural inequality, I realized I could not dwell in disappointment. I had to suppress my ego and maintain motivation so as not to give up." (Interview, December 6, 2025).

This sense of "helplessness" is a direct outcome of symbolic violence that reshapes how individuals perceive themselves. Students come to accept barriers to access as normal and regard auditory privilege as an unquestionable norm. Critically, this analysis demonstrates that the dynamics observed at University X align with Leonhardt's (2024) concept of *"silent processes,"* whereby higher education institutions implicitly establish normative baselines that privilege those with standard bodily and cognitive capacities. Deaf students are thus trapped in a condition of *invisible labor*, continuously required to adapt to a system that was not designed for them. These findings extend the discourse on inclusive education in Indonesia by showing that the central challenge lies not merely in the availability of facilities, but in what may be termed *cognitive violence*—a form of domination that normalizes exclusion at the level of perception and belief. The internalization of campus doxa and the resulting self-blame experienced by participants are further elaborated in the following table.

Table 4. Misrecognition of Deaf Students at University X

No.	Research Subjects	Misrecognition
1.	AN	Feeling an "extra burden" to prove one's abilities are on par with those of non-disabled people. There is a sense of self-blame: "sometimes I feel that the obstacles I face are my own fault or personal limitations."
2.	AR	Campus Doxa: The ideal student is one who is "active in speaking, quick to grasp concepts, and capable of fluent verbal communication." Internalizing systemic failure as a personal shortcoming: "whenever I struggled, it was my own fault" (regarding assignment information).
3.	BP	Internalization of Doxa: Feeling compelled to work harder on group assignments to avoid "becoming a burden" to non-disabled peers. Viewing the difficulty of keeping up with coursework as a natural consequence of one's disability.
4.	ES	Feeling they "lack an equal footing" in social activities and voluntarily "withdrawing" or limiting their participation confirms the doxa that such social spaces do not belong to them.

5.	SB	Experiencing deep emotional conflict (self-doubt)—specifically, an inability to accept oneself due to limitations—and feeling sadness upon seeing non-disabled friends engage in activities that one ought to be able to do as well.
6.	OA	Tends to blame oneself when falling behind in group discussions and views oneself as less capable of keeping up with the pace of campus communication.
7.	MN	They regard the loss of information resulting from oral communication as normal for deaf students, and therefore rarely raise objections.
8.	VA	Feeling less quick to act than other students and viewing the delay in obtaining information as a personal shortcoming rather than a structural obstacle.
9.	AD	Internalizing the notion that communication difficulties are a risk that must be accepted, thereby not always demanding better accessibility.
10.	LS	Feeling the need to work twice as hard to gain the same recognition as non-disabled students, while also facing oral communication standards as the benchmark for academic success.

Siurce: Researcher

This table demonstrates that the misrecognition experienced by deaf students at University X constitutes an internalization of auditory cultural dominance that has become doxa within campus life. Students not only confront structural barriers, but also undergo a psychological process in which they accept oral communication standards as the unquestioned ideal. This condition fosters self-blame, feelings of inferiority, and withdrawal from social spaces, ultimately reinforcing their subordinate position within the academic field. Thus, Table 5 confirms that symbolic violence does not stop at the level of external interaction, but extends into how students perceive themselves and their social positioning, enabling inequality to be reproduced in subtle yet enduring ways.

The Contradiction of Inclusivity Claims: From Physical Inclusion to Symbolic Exclusion

This final discussion unpacks a fundamental contradiction at University X between the establishment of physical infrastructure and the persistence of symbolic exclusion in everyday interactions. While the university has provided accessible facilities such as guiding blocks and mobility-friendly building designs, these measures do not automatically translate into meaningful inclusion. Student BP, for instance, shared a discouraging experience of being "rarely spoken to" during group activities due to their deafness. This highlights that mere physical presence within the same classroom does not guarantee equal social recognition. In this context, inclusion operates administratively, while symbolic exclusion continues relationally among students.

This disparity creates a sharp gap between the institutional label of a "Disability-Friendly Campus" and the lived experiences of students, which are marked by significant "extra burdens." Student AN explicitly noted the additional effort required to demonstrate participation compared to non-disabled peers, while Student ES must consistently sit in the front row to follow verbal instruction. Deaf students even compare University X with institutions such as Universitas Brawijaya, which are perceived to provide more effective communication access. The absence of proactive support systems indicates that inclusivity at University X often remains limited to fulfilling formal legal requirements (Aliyah, 2024).

Comparative analysis shows that these findings support the work of Mahaendrayasa et al. (2025), which questions whether inclusive campuses truly embody inclusion or merely provide physical facilities. A genuinely inclusive campus should integrate clear input–output policies, adequate funding support, and adaptive curricula. At University X, the absence of substantial curricular adjustments forces students with disabilities to conform to standard academic expectations without sufficient social capital support. This condition reinforces the argument of Rrofiah et al. (2023) regarding the significant gap between institutional perceptions of inclusivity and the lived realities of students. Symbolic exclusion persists because institutions often assume they have achieved inclusivity once physical infrastructure is in place.

When situated within broader academic discourse, the practice of euphemization manifested in forms of "special treatment" or academic dispensations from lecturers further reinforces the argument of Wachidah (2025). They contend that symbolic violence frequently operates by positioning persons with disabilities as mere "objects of pity." Policies that appear "supportive," such as exempting deaf students from presentation requirements, in fact constitute subtle forms of exclusion that undermine student agency within the academic field. This aligns with Nieminen's (2023) critique that non-transformative accommodations can reinforce ableist stigma. Institutions often believe they have fulfilled their obligations through leniency or exemption,

when in reality such practices reaffirm the subordinate positioning of students with disabilities as inherently "incapable" of equal participation.

On the other hand, practices of sensorialization experienced in everyday bureaucratic interactions such as the imposition of oral communication or exaggerated lip articulation illustrate the operation of *silent processes* as conceptualized by Leonhardt (2024). These auditory communication barriers compel deaf students to continuously adapt to a highly hearing-centric system. As noted by Tannenbaum-Baruchi et al. (2025) and Batista & García (2023), this condition forces deaf students to bear *invisible labor* that drains physical and mental energy simply to access basic information that should be guaranteed as a right. The absence of proactive visual communication structures within administrative services reveals that, behind the façade of physical inclusivity at University X, auditory dominance continues to operate as doxa systematically marginalizing linguistic identities and constraining meaningful participation for deaf students.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the claim of a "Disability-Friendly Campus" at University X remains marked by a fundamental contradiction between formal inclusion and the lived experiences of deaf students. While structural support and physical infrastructure are present, everyday social practices within the academic field continue to be dominated by auditory culture, thereby reproducing forms of symbolic violence. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's framework, the findings reveal how mechanisms of euphemization and sensorialization operate subtly in daily interactions through practices such as "special treatment" that ultimately restrict participation, as well as inaccessible communication patterns. Furthermore, processes of misrecognition are evident, wherein deaf students internalize structural barriers as personal shortcomings rather than recognizing them as systemic failures. This contradiction stems from the persistent dominance of auditory habitus and capital as the primary standard within higher education, indicating that existing forms of inclusion have yet to reach substantive transformation at the level of culture and social relations. Based on these findings, this study recommends the need for a systematic transformation that extends beyond the provision of physical infrastructure toward the reconfiguration of communicative culture and inclusive pedagogy. This includes the development of visually accessible information systems, disability-sensitivity training for lecturers and administrative staff, and the strengthening of adaptive academic policies. Practically, higher education institutions must shift from a paradigm of mere "accommodation" toward one of "equitable participation," by positioning students with disabilities as active agents in policy-making processes.

Nevertheless, this study is limited by the relatively small number of participants and its focus on a single institutional context, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences across different settings. Future research is therefore encouraged to expand the scope of investigation, include a broader range of participants with diverse disabilities, and explore the role of digital technologies as emerging forms of capital in challenging the dominance of auditory culture in higher education.

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