

# **Bahasa Melayu Kod Tangan (BMKT) and Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia (BIM): Two Different Hand Signal Codes for the Hearing Impaired in Malaysian Education**

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## **Abstract**

Hearing impairment is an area within special education. It is also one of the factors contributing to difficulty in learning at schools for children. Some students are also unable to communicate effectively with teachers. Previously in the Malaysian curriculum, there is only one hand signal code allowed in the curriculum for the Malay Language subjects which is the Bahasa Melayu Kod Tangan (BMKT) for the hearing impaired classroom. The BMKT is the government approved formalized language used for the Malay language hand signal code. Now, a new act has been passed, *Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 (Act 685)*, where it states that Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia (BIM) has been recognized as the official language for the deaf. This second hand signal codes is widely used by the deaf association in Malaysia, Malaysian Federation of the Deaf (MFD). The act shows that BIM could be implemented in schools, though schools have yet to use BIM in their curriculum. In Malaysia, the Malay Language subject in the education system is extremely important, as it is a compulsory pass subject. Students would need to pass this examination to receive their Malaysian Certificate of Education certificate. Linguistically, hearing impaired children are already having a tough time understanding the Malay subject, before adding on the two different hand codes. This qualitative research delves into the significance of both hand signal codes and teachers perceptions of the codes and how this affects their teachings in school.

**Keywords:** *Teacher, Hearing Impaired, Deaf, Special Education, Malaysia, Language*