

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Literacy plays a very important role in education for the achievement of sustainable development goals where individuals have the ability to read, write, and the skills to understand and communicate information effectively in a variety of contexts (Frankel et al., 2016; Zua, 2021). Rossetto and Wyrä (2014) highlight that literacy includes not only speaking, listening, reading, and writing, but also navigating digital, visual, and multimodal texts, equipping learners to use language for diverse purposes. These skills are essential for individuals to fully participate in society, in education, access information and opportunities (Gee, 2012; Prawira et al., 2023). In addition, literacy development fosters critical and creative thinking, interpersonal communication, and teamwork skills, all of which are vital for future success (Ellis, 2023).

In the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context, literacy is particularly important as it serves as the foundation for mastering the English language, supporting the development of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills (Padmadewi et al., 2020). Among these skills, reading plays a key role, as it facilitates the acquisition of other language abilities (Ismail et al., 2017; Elleman & Oslund, 2019). Dewi (2022) explains that reading enables students to access information, driving their learning and

growth. However, many students struggled with reading development, and these challenges were even more pronounced among students with learning difficulties, such as those who potentially had dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty characterized by persistent challenges in word recognition, spelling, and decoding, often rooted in phonological processing deficits (International Dyslexia Association, 2012). These difficulties hinder reading fluency and comprehension, limiting vocabulary development and background knowledge. As Peer and Reid (2003) note, while many students experience literacy challenges, not all are dyslexic. Research has identified common literacy-related problems faced by dyslexic students, such as limited vocabulary, difficulties decoding texts, poor reading comprehension, and struggles with sentence structure and word recognition (Lestari et al., 2017; Prihatini, 2020; Hulme & Snowling, 2016). In writing, dyslexic students may require more time to revise their work, often producing results of lower quality compared to their peers (Morken & Helland, 2013). Moreover, dyslexic students may reverse letters (e.g., *b* and *d*), face spelling challenges, and exhibit difficulties with handwriting, working memory, and phonological encoding (Hebert et al., 2018). Since dyslexia is a complicated disorder, Budiani and Putrayasa (2023) claim that a person's IQ has no bearing on or influence over their dyslexia.

These cognitive difficulties often contribute to emotional and psychological challenges. Students with dyslexia frequently experience lower self-esteem, reduced self-confidence, and diminished self-efficacy, particularly in academic settings like EFL classrooms (Ridsdale, 2004; Glazzard, 2010; Stagg et al., 2018). The frustration

and anxiety resulting from repeated academic struggles can foster feelings of isolation, incompetence, and discouragement (Zdravkova, 2022; Riddick et al., 1999; Ihbour et al., 2021). These emotional difficulties can negatively affect students' motivation, engagement, and performance in learning English. Stevick (1990) defines self-esteem as the emotional self-assessment that influences behavior and motivation, while confidence, as noted by Piran (2014), directly affects students' willingness to participate in language tasks. Likewise, self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to accomplish tasks (Nur & Butarbutar, 2022), plays a key role in students' engagement and resilience in the EFL classroom. Given the intertwined nature of cognitive and emotional challenges in dyslexic students, the teacher's role is critical. Teachers must bridge the gap between identifying dyslexia and providing both academic and emotional support. Early diagnosis is essential, as it enables teachers to tailor their intervention. Teachers move from identification to intervention by first conducting assessments (e.g., early screening, diagnostic, phonological assessments) and then designing individualized strategies (Reid, 2011). These may include differentiated instruction such as explicit phonics teaching, multisensory instruction, task analysis, and field-dependent approaches (Witzel & Mize, 2018). In this regard, the implementation of inclusive education becomes essential. Inclusive education aims to ensure that all students, including those with learning difficulties like dyslexia, are provided with equitable access to learning opportunities and classroom participation (Ratnadi & Adnyani, 2023). Padmadewi et al (2024) emphasize that inclusive education is not only about physical access but also about adapting curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices to support diverse learners effectively.

However, addressing the academic needs alone is not sufficient. Teachers must also create emotionally supportive environments to help dyslexic students build resilience, self-esteem, and confidence, which are often undermined by their learning difficulties. This involves fostering a classroom culture where students feel safe, valued, and free from negative labels (e.g., “stupid”), while collaborating with peers and parents to support the student’s emotional well-being. In addition to these roles, EFL teachers must balance propositional knowledge (subject content, such as English language materials) with procedural knowledge (strategies to make learning engaging and accessible). Both academic and emotional support are vital for empowering dyslexic students to overcome barriers in English learning.

While various studies have examined EFL instruction for dyslexic students, exploring areas like pragmatic ability in adult learners, development of multimedia for dyslexic readers, or identifying teaching strategies such as task analysis and multisensory learning (Sari et al., 2021; Dewi, 2022; Al-Edris et al., 2023) few have explored the perspectives of teachers working directly with young learners who are potentially dyslexic in EFL contexts. Much of the existing research emphasizes pedagogical methods targeting literacy development (e.g., reading, writing, spelling), while less attention is paid to teachers' understanding of dyslexia and how they respond to the emotional and psychological needs of these learners.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by focusing on teachers' perspectives regarding their experiences teaching English to second-grade elementary students who are potentially dyslexic. Specifically, this study seeks to describe teachers'

understanding of dyslexia and how they approach both the academic and emotional needs of these students in the EFL classroom. By exploring these perspectives, this research contributes to a more holistic understanding of how teachers support young learners with dyslexia.

1.2 Problem Identification of the Study

The challenges of literacy faced by dyslexic students have been growing concern in education. Students who have dyslexia often struggle with basic tasks such as recognizing words, spelling and understanding text making it difficult for them to fully participate in learning process, and this is also applicable when learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). However, dyslexia are not just about reading, writing, spelling, and other difficulties, but it can also affect students' confidence, self-esteem and motivation (Ridsdale, 004; Glazzard, 2010; Stagg et al., 2018). While many studies focus on improving literacy skills, they often overlook the impact dyslexia can have on students' emotional well-being. Low self-esteem and anxiety can make it more difficult for these students to engage and succeed in language learning. Teachers play an important role in supporting dyslexic students, but many do not have the knowledge or understanding needed to identify and support these students. Without appropriate understanding, teachers may struggle to offer effective teaching strategies or provide the support these students need to thrive in the classroom.

To address this gap, this study was conducted in three selected elementary schools located in Buleleng Regency, Bali (SDN 1 Kaliuntu, SDN 1 Kampung Anyar, and SDN 3 Banjar Bali). These schools were chosen based on preliminary classroom

observations and interviews with classroom teachers who teach English, which revealed the presence of second-grade students exhibiting signs of potentially dyslexic. The selection of multiple schools was intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' perspectives across different educational contexts within the regency. Moreover, the focus on second-grade students was based on findings that children at this stage begin to develop core literacy and language skills, making early intervention vital. By investigating teachers' insights from these three schools, this study aims to uncover how they recognize and address both the academic and emotional needs of potentially dyslexic students in EFL classrooms.

Although research has examined teaching strategies for dyslexic students, it has often overlooked the importance of emotional support and creating an inclusive and supportive classroom environment. Additionally, there is a lack of research focusing on teachers' perception and how they address the unique needs of their potentially dyslexic students in studying English as a foreign language. Thus, this study describes classroom teachers' perspectives to their second-grade elementary school students who are potentially dyslexic. The aims in this study, focusing on their perceptions of dyslexia and how they support or treat their students who are potentially dyslexic in English learning. This area needs to be explored further to ensure that these students get the support they need right from the start.

1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research questions are:

- a. What knowledge do classroom teachers who teach English as a foreign language to second-grade elementary school students have about dyslexia?
- b. What treatment do classroom teachers who teach English as a foreign language to second-grade elementary school students provide to students who are potentially dyslexic?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research problems above, the objectives of this study as follows:

- a. To describe the knowledge of classroom teachers who teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to the second-grade elementary school students about dyslexia.
- b. To describe the treatment provided by classroom teachers who teach English as a Foreign Language to second-grade elementary school students who are potentially dyslexic..

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this research focuses on describing the knowledge of classroom teachers who teach English as a foreign language regarding dyslexia and how they treat students who are potentially dyslexic. This study was limited to second-grade classroom teachers who teach English as a foreign language at four primary schools in Singaraja city there are SD Negeri 1 Kaliuntu, SD Negeri 1 Kampung Anyar, and SD Negeri 2 Banjar Bali.

1.6 Significances of the Study

The significance of this study encompasses both theoretical and practical aspects, highlighting how it contributes, as presented in the section above.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significances

This study contributes to the development of knowledge on dyslexia and language learning by providing insights into the perspectives and understandings of teachers who teach potentially dyslexic students in early primary education. This study enriches the existing theoretical framework by focusing not only on the pedagogical aspects of dyslexia but also on the emotional and psychological impacts, such as self-esteem, confidence and motivation. The research addresses gaps in the current literature, especially regarding early diagnosis and intervention strategies for primary school children, by highlighting how teachers' knowledge and their treats affect dyslexic students' acquisition of English.

1.6.2 Practical Significances

In this section, the practical significance of this study in the context of teaching English to second-grade elementary school students who were potentially dyslexic was outlined. Practically, the findings not only offered new insights into the perspectives and practices of teachers when teaching dyslexic students, but also provided real benefits to three key areas: teachers, schools, and future research.

a. For the Teachers

This research offers valuable insights for teachers, by knowing their understanding and knowledge of potentially dyslexic students or dyslexic students. By learning how to identify and address the unique challenges faced by potentially dyslexic students or the characteristics possessed by those students, teachers can adapt or adopt their teaching methods to better suit these students' need. Not only focusing pedagogically on the student, but also creating a supportive learning environment that fosters the student's emotional well-being by addressing issues of self-esteem, confidence and self-efficacy.

b. For the Schools

This research can serve as a reference for schools in designing policies and programs that support dyslexic students, particularly in English language learning. Schools can use the findings to enhance teacher training programs, focusing on dyslexia awareness and effective teaching strategies for students with learning difficulties. Moreover, the school administrators or policymakers can develop teacher training programs that focus on early diagnosis and appropriate intervention strategies for dyslexic students and foster collaboration between teachers, parents, and peers to ensure that dyslexic students receive the necessary academic and emotional support to succeed.

c. For Other Researchers

For other researchers, this study serves as a foundation for future exploration into the relationship between dyslexia and EFL learning at the elementary level. It highlights gaps in current research, particularly in the area of early intervention

and emotional support for young learners who potentially dyslexic or young learners with dyslexia. The findings can inspire further studies to examine more effective teaching strategies, assessment methods, and the wider impact of dyslexia on language acquisition. Additionally, it encourages other researchers to investigate different educational settings and student populations, thus contributing to the development of a more inclusive approach to teaching English as a foreign language.

