

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher explains the research background, problem identification, limitations of the study, research questions, research objectives, and research significance.

1.1 Research Background

As an international language, English is used by nearly half of the world's population today (Daar, 2019). English has become an essential skill to master. Its influence extends to school curricula, allowing English education to begin at an early age (Ilyosovna, 2020). As a country that utilises English as a foreign language (EFL), the Indonesia government has implemented English learning by revising teaching strategies through the Minister of Education and Culture's Decree No.060/U/1993 dated February 25, which permits English instruction starting in elementary school to meet long-term national needs. Alwasilah (1997:89), as cited in Rachmajanti (2008), stated that the ultimate goal of English education in elementary school is for students to use English correctly and effectively in the era of globalization.

In the process of learning English, teachers and students play crucial roles in the success of education, yet challenges can arise from both sides (Songbatumis, 2017). The overcrowded classroom has reduced students' discipline and ability to receive the lessons (Malik et al., 2021). Additionally, according to Jon et al. (2021), common issues in learning English include (1) a lack of students' motivation to

learn English, (2) diverse backgrounds and characteristics among students, (3) ineffective use of teaching media, (4) teachers' poor preparation for lesson activity, (5) large class size, and (6) low teachers' motivation to teach in the classroom.

Students' diverse backgrounds and characteristics can make them have different educational needs, including students with special needs. Siahaan (2022), stated that students with special needs are students who experience disabilities in physical, intellectual, intelligence, developmental, and emotional disorders. Pratiwi & Mangunsong (2020) mention that students with special needs have various types. First, physical barriers (disability disability, visual and hearing impairment). Second, emotional and behavioural disturbance (attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), attention deficit disorder (ADD), conduct disorder (CD), asperger's syndrome, autism, and learning disabilities (LD)). Third, intellectual barriers such as Down syndrome (DS), mental retardation (MR), low achiever, and delayed or slow learner. In addition, according to Namkung & Peng (2018), learning disabilities are classified into several types based on specific difficulties, including reading disability, mathematics disability, and written expression disability.

Realizing the needs of the students, the Indonesian government proposes inclusive education. In recent years, the importance and development of inclusive education have received significant attention (Suryadi, 2023). The main impetus for the implementation of inclusive education is the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, which was held in Salamanca, Spain, in June

1994 (UNESCO, 2009). In Indonesia, inclusive education is based on *Permendiknas* No. 70/2009 article 3, which states, “Every student with physical, emotional, mental, social disabilities, or those with special intelligence and/or talent potentials has the right to participate in inclusive education in certain educational units according to their needs and abilities”(Arriani et al., 2022). Therefore, parents and students are not required to be concerned about education because inclusive schools provide a supportive atmosphere for all students, including students with special needs.

According to Derzhavina et al. (2021), inclusive education is an evolutionary step designed to increase wider access to quality education for students with special needs. Inclusive education strongly emphasizes that all students have equal rights in the learning process. On the other hand, Penner (2018) stated that an inclusive classroom is a structurally well-organized classroom designed with a subject and learning space atmosphere. This class is arranged to support an inclusive learning experience that learners can achieve irrespective of their prior educational background, social identity, or beliefs about success.

Nowadays, literacy is one of the essential skills needed by every individual (Apriliana et al., 2022). Students' literacy skills are crucial in determining their success in various fundamental subject fields (Childs, 2017). According to Oktariani & Ekadiansyah (2020), literacy is the ability of an individual to digest and understand the information while reading with the aim of acquiring knowledge and applying the knowledge along with their experience in the future. Nowadays, in the 21st century, literacy is believed to be closely related to a person's ability to gather and communicate information using technology (Pilgrim & Martinez, 2013).

It is evident that literacy skills are vital today; however, for some students, particularly those with a reading disability, mastering these skills can be challenging.

In inclusive education, teachers must be able to handle all the challenges and various students' needs, particularly students with reading disability. In the traditional definition, reading disability is defined as an unexpectedly low ability in reading, where the difference can be seen in academic achievement and intellectual ability despite having adequate learning opportunities, normal sensory functions, and no cultural deficiencies (Mathes & Denton, 2002). On the other hand, according to Erbeli et al. (2018) reading disability is not a specific deficit of a single indicator but rather a deficit arising from various combinations of indicators, such as unexpected difficulties with familiar words and in connecting written letters to their corresponding sound. These difficulties are often not related to intelligence but to how they process information. According to Lerner (2003), as cited in Lee & Yoon (2017), reading disability is the most common learning disorder experienced by students with learning disabilities, affecting more than 80% of students. This further implies that teachers bear a very heavy burden in teaching students with reading disability.

The characteristics experienced by one student with a reading disability may differ from those of another, depending on their various difficulties. According to Fauzi (2018), students with reading disability typically exhibit unusual reading habits, such as making errors in understanding words and text, display a range of symptoms, and show low academic performance. Additionally, students with reading disability often feel frustrated due to their inability to meet their

expectations as well as those of others. They also frequently face social relations issues, which develop more slowly, feel inferior, and are left behind. Although students with reading disability experience many learning difficulties, they will be able to succeed like regular students if they receive proper and appropriate support. A teacher must be able to deal with the challenges that arise and understand their students' needs by designing the learning process effectively and having appropriate teaching strategies.

Several studies have investigated the implementation of English teaching procedures, the challenges faced, or the strategies employed by the teacher to address existing problems for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom. A study by Akbari et al. (2019) evaluating the effectiveness of a working memory computer-assisted teaching program in enhancing reading abilities among students with a reading disability includes visual and auditory practices with several tasks such as square four x four, fixed and rotate, tables of meaningless numbers, tables of meaningless letters, and syllable assimilation-improvements in executive functions and reading performance evidence this program. On the other side, studies by Adao et al. (2023) and Serry et al. (2022) have been conducted, but do not explicitly address the teacher challenges faced by teachers when teaching English to students with reading disability. However, these studies do establish connections with the topic of the implementation of English teaching for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom.

Mauer (2024) and Ahammed (2021) also conducted studies investigating the challenges often faced and teachers' strategies to cope with these problems when teaching students with reading disabilities. These challenges include class

management, a lack of support, and several strategies, such as creating an inclusive environment, building background knowledge, supporting vocabulary learning, and reading comprehension.

However, several studies have focused on a single aspect of English teaching for reading disability, such as only investigating strategies for students with reading disability. In contrast, others have only addressed the problem that arises in English teaching for students with reading disability. Therefore, the previous research has been limited in comprehensively explaining overarching aspects of the implementation of English teaching in an inclusive classroom context, particularly regarding the procedure of English teaching, the teacher challenges in teaching English, and the strategies that the teachers use to cope with these challenges. Furthermore, research in implementing English teaching for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), such as in Bali, is even rarer, which will be investigated in the current study at SMP Negeri 1 Bebandem. The school has implemented inclusive education since 2021, embracing children with special needs, and has successfully graduated students to continue their education at higher levels. This school does not yet have a specialized teacher to handle children with special needs; however, optional support is provided by a homeroom teacher. The Homeroom teachers are responsible for monitoring, receiving reports from students and subject teachers, and maintaining good communication with parents. Other teachers also support children with special needs.

Currently, in SMP Negeri 1 Bebandem, there is one student with special needs in 8th grade who was diagnosed as a student with a reading disability. Based

on preliminary research, this student exhibits significantly different characteristics and abilities from their peers. This student has difficulty communicating with teachers, classmates, or other students, is introverted, and rarely socializes. Additional information obtained from interviews conducted with the student's homeroom teacher revealed that the father of the student with a reading disability also experiences difficulties, albeit at a more severe level. It was found that the parent has communication impairments, struggles to understand what others convey, and cannot read or perform basic mathematics. Consequently, when the father of the student with a reading disability visits the school to receive information about the child, they must be accompanied by a relative. This finding indicates the possibility of a genetic heredity factor contributing to the student's reading disability experience. This finding aligns with the research by Defries & Alarcón (1996), which suggests that genetic factors cause reading deficits in children with reading disability.

In the learning process, the student with a reading disability also struggles with reading abilities, difficulty in recognizing words, connecting letters to sounds, reading fluently, has low academic performance, is slow in processing and absorbing lessons, has poor memory, and rarely participates in class. This information was shared by one of the teachers who will later become the subject of this research and is willing to provide information and participate in the research.

Therefore, the researchers aim to investigate the English teaching procedure for students with reading disability, the teacher's challenges in teaching English, and the strategies that the teacher uses to cope with these challenges. This study is significant in helping teachers from other schools address students with reading

disability through appropriate strategies. As teachers, we need to understand how to implement effective learning processes and the strategies that should be employed when encountering challenges in the classroom. This is particularly important in light of government regulations that require teachers to possess the necessary competencies and provide appropriate instruction for students with learning disabilities, including students with reading disability.

1.2 Problem Identification

Currently, teachers are faced with the challenges of teaching English to students' needs, including those with reading disability. This aligns with the Indonesian government regulation that states every citizen has the right to receive education. According to Lerner (2003), of the various learning disabilities, reading disability is one of the types of disabilities that affects more than 80% of students.

Unfortunately, research on the implementation of English teaching for students with reading disability in Indonesia, especially in Bali, is scarce. Most studies are conducted abroad, which may not align with local educational practices. This limits teachers in Bali from accessing relevant information or references. Fortunately, SMP Negeri 1 Bebandem in Karangasem, Bali, has been practicing inclusive education since 2021, fully supported by all the teachers. The school addresses the Indonesian Ministry of Education's regulations for accepting students with special needs. Given the importance of inclusive education for students with learning disabilities and the limited research available, this topic warrants further investigation. The research will explore how the implementation of English teaching for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom context at SMP Negeri 1 Bebandem, focusing on teaching procedures, the teacher's challenges

in teaching English, and strategies employed by the teachers to address these challenges.

1.3 Limitations of the Study

Based on the problem identification outlined previously, this study is limited to one teacher, who taught English. The English teacher was the subject of the implementation of English teaching for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom context at SMP N 1 Bebandem. The implementation of English teaching that will be investigated includes the English teaching procedure for students with reading disability, the teacher's challenges in teaching English, and the strategies the teacher uses to cope with these challenges.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How is the implementation of English teaching procedures for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom context at SMP Negeri 1 Bebandem?
2. What are the teacher challenges in teaching English for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom context at SMP Negeri 1 Bebandem?
3. What are the strategies that the teacher uses to cope with these challenges in teaching English for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom context at SMP Negeri 1 Bebandem?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To identify the implementation of English teaching procedures for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom context at SMP Negeri 1 Bebandem.
2. To identify teacher challenges in teaching English for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom context at SMP Negeri 1 Bebandem.
3. To examine the strategies that teacher use to cope with these challenges in teaching English for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom context at SMP Negeri 1 Bebandem.

1.6 Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The theoretical contribution of this research is that the research findings are useful for developing theories that become research topics. This study can contribute to advancing knowledge about English teaching for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom context.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

The practical contributions of this study are:

1. For the Teachers

The result of this study can be used to provide an overview of English teaching procedures for students with reading disability, potential challenges that may arise, and the strategies the teacher uses to cope with these challenges in an inclusive classroom.

2. For Students

The results of this study are useful as additional knowledge about the English teaching procedure, the challenges, and the strategies used in teaching English for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom context.

3. For Other Researchers

The result of this study can provide additional knowledge for researchers to develop for other related studies. This study is also expected to be a reference and source of information about English teaching for students with reading disability in an inclusive classroom context.

