CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Inclusive education is intended to provide equal learning opportunities for all learners, including students with special educational needs, within mainstream school environments. In Indonesia, the implementation of inclusive education has been reinforced through various national regulations that prioritize accessibility, active participation, and educational equity for learners with disabilities. Nevertheless, the realization of these policy objectives in everyday classroom practice remains challenging, particularly in English language instruction, which predominantly depends on auditory and oral communication skills.

Inclusive education can only be implemented effectively when schools are well prepared in various aspects, including human resources, instructional materials, teaching strategies, and supporting facilities. The level of school readiness plays a significant role in ensuring the successful implementation of inclusive practices. Although SD N 2 Bengkala has been officially designated as an inclusive school, particularly in integrating deaf students with regular students, the actual readiness of the school in conducting inclusive English instruction still needs to be critically examined.

Furthermore, the readiness of an inclusive school is not merely determined by its formal status, but is strongly influenced by teachers' competencies, the availability of inclusive learning media, classroom management practices, and institutional support. Therefore, this study aims to explore the extent to which SD

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N 2 Bengkala is prepared to implement inclusive education in the context of English teaching by analyzing the supporting and inhibiting factors experienced by English teachers in inclusive classroom settings.

The teaching of English in inclusive elementary classrooms involves unique pedagogical challenges, especially when deaf and mute students are taught together with mainstream learners. While students with hearing and speech impairments rely heavily on visual input, sign language, and contextual support, English language learning traditionally emphasizes listening and speaking competencies. This contrast creates significant instructional challenges for teachers, who are required to modify teaching strategies, learning materials, and classroom interactions to address diverse learning needs without excluding any students.

SD N 2 Bengkala, situated in North Bali, is well known for its commitment to inclusive education, particularly in integrating students with hearing and speech impairments into regular classrooms. Despite this recognition, empirical studies that specifically examine how English teachers at the elementary level manage inclusive classrooms in this setting remain limited. Existing research on inclusive education in Indonesia has generally concentrated on policy issues, classroom management, or students' perspectives, whereas investigations into subject-specific instructional practices, especially in English language teaching at inclusive primary schools, are still scarce.

Furthermore, prior studies frequently identify broad challenges in inclusive education, including limited instructional resources, inadequate teacher training, and variations in students' abilities. However, there is a notable lack of qualitative

research that explores in depth the specific factors that support or hinder English teachers in implementing inclusive instruction for deaf and mute learners alongside mainstream students. This gap highlights the need for context-based research that documents teachers' experiences, instructional adjustments, and professional decision-making within inclusive English classrooms.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the supporting and inhibiting factors in teaching English for inclusive education at SD N 2 Bengkala, North Bali. By emphasizing teachers' perspectives and classroom practices, the study seeks to contribute empirical insights to the field of inclusive English language education and offer practical recommendations for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers to enhance inclusive instructional practices at the elementary school level.

According to Ainscow (2020) inclusive education is an approach that emphasizes the importance of providing equal opportunities for all students, including those with special needs, to learn in the same environment as their peers. This concept emerged alongside the growing recognition of the right to equal education for everyone, regardless of differences. The implementation of inclusive education in English language teaching presents unique challenges, involving various factors that may either support or hinder the learning process. (Failasofah et al., 2024).

Based on the conceptual definition presented, it can be concluded that the implementation of inclusive education involves various potential challenges, such as addressing students' diverse abilities, social backgrounds, and other inequalities. This situation requires teachers to possess specific pedagogical

competencies, including effective classroom management skills. Numerous studies have examined inclusive education for students with special needs, many of which aim to enhance their academic performance. Previous research has also explored teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward their competence and the perceived benefits of inclusive education, particularly in the context of Bali. Although there is limited research specifically focusing on teachers' perspectives regarding inclusive English language teaching, existing studies consistently suggest that educating children with special needs in mainstream classrooms presents several challenges (Padmadewi et al., 2024)

Teaching English as a second language presents distinct challenges, particularly for students who experience communication difficulties, such as those who are deaf or mute. In such contexts, teachers are expected not only to master the subject matter but also to design strategies, learning tools, and instructional methods that suit the specific needs of their students. Teaching English in inclusive elementary schools requires additional attention and adaptability due to the diversity of student characteristics, including those with hearing, visual, autistic, or intellectual impairments. Therefore, English teachers are expected to demonstrate flexible pedagogical skills and employ adaptive methodologies. According to Sari and Yulianti (2021), the main challenges faced by teachers in inclusive settings include insufficient specialized training, a lack of learning media that support students with disabilities, and complex communication barriers.

According to Florian and Spratt (2013), Inclusive education is founded on several core principles, including accessibility, diversity, participation, and student

support. The principle of accessibility emphasizes the importance of creating a welcoming learning environment for all learners, including those with physical or cognitive challenges, by providing accessible materials and facilities. Diversity, within the context of inclusive education, acknowledges that each individual possesses unique characteristics and learning styles; therefore, teaching methods must be adapted to meet the specific needs of every student. Furthermore, the principle of participation underscores the importance of encouraging the active involvement of all students in the learning process, both academically and socially, to help them reach their full potential. To ensure the effective implementation of these principles, a sustainable support system is essential—one that includes well-trained teaching staff and flexible instructional methods that are responsive to the needs of all learners.

Inclusive education aims to create a learning environment that respects diversity and meets the needs of all students, including those who require special support. In Indonesia, the commitment to inclusive education is reflected in regulations such as the Law on the National Education System and Law No. 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities. However, its implementation in elementary schools still faces various challenges, including structural issues such as inadequate facilities and a shortage of professional staff, as well as cultural and societal perceptions toward children with special needs. Furthermore, practical challenges such as insufficient teacher training and limited understanding of differentiated instructional approaches further complicate the implementation of inclusive education policies.

One educational institution that has adopted the concept of inclusion is SD Negeri 2 Bengkala, located in Buleleng Regency, North Bali. This school is well known for its success in integrating students with hearing impairments and is often referred to as a *Kolok* school, where students with and without disabilities learn together. English teachers at this school face significant challenges, including differences in students' cognitive and communication abilities, limited access to appropriate teaching materials, and a lack of professional training in implementing inclusive approaches to English instruction. Despite these challenges, the institution benefits from several supporting factors, such as strong support from the school principal, collaboration among teachers, and high learning motivation among students.

Therefore, the research entitled —*Supporting and Hindering Factors in English Language Teaching for Inclusive Education at SD Negeri 2 Bengkala*‖ is considered highly important to be studied in greater depth. This study aims to investigate the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the implementation of inclusive education, particularly in English language teaching. SD Negeri 2 Bengkala serves as the research site due to its unique context as an inclusive school for students with hearing impairments. What distinguishes this study from previous similar research is that most earlier studies only identified supporting factors without providing a detailed explanation of how inclusive education is implemented. In contrast, this research examines both the supporting and inhibiting factors experienced by the teachers and the school, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the inclusive education process at SD Negeri 2 Bengkala.

The implementation of inclusive education in English language teaching involves various approaches designed to support students with special needs in learning effectively. According to Shahzad and Qayyum (2024), One of the methods that can be applied is thematic learning, which enables students to learn English in contexts that are closely related to their daily lives. This approach not only increases student engagement but also helps them connect language concepts to real-life experiences, making the learning process more meaningful. In addition, differentiated learning strategies play an essential role in inclusive education, where teachers adapt instructional techniques, materials, and tasks according to students' individual abilities and learning styles. For instance, some students may comprehend information more effectively through visual media, while others benefit more from discussions or hands-on learning activities. Furthermore, the use of assistive technologies such as screen reader software, translation applications, or multimedia-based learning tools can serve as valuable alternatives for students who face learning difficulties, particularly those with reading or writing challenges. By implementing these strategies, teachers can foster a more inclusive learning environment and ensure that every student, regardless of ability, has equal opportunities to learn.

According to Zakariyah (2024), Inclusive education not only has several enabling factors but also faces various obstacles that can reduce the effectiveness of English language teaching in inclusive settings. One of the main challenges often encountered is the limited availability of resources, such as the lack of textbooks specifically designed for students with diverse needs and insufficient access to technology that supports the learning process. Inadequate resources may

hinder students from fully comprehending the material, particularly those who require learning materials in more accessible formats, such as large-print books, audio resources, or assistive learning software. Furthermore, the heavy workload of teachers represents another significant challenge, as they are responsible not only for delivering instructional content but also for adapting teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of all students in the classroom. Without sufficient support, teachers may find it difficult to provide individualized attention, especially to students who require specialized approaches. Another obstacle is the lack of professional training for educators on strategies and best practices in inclusive education. Many teachers have not received adequate preparation to address the varied learning needs of their students, making it challenging to implement effective and truly inclusive teaching methods.

Rizkyah (2024), found that successful English language teaching in inclusive environments is influenced by various interrelated factors, including teacher competence, inclusion-oriented school policies, and the availability of adequate resources. The role of teachers is vital in creating a supportive learning atmosphere for all students, including those with special needs. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to have a thorough understanding of each student's characteristics and learning needs, as well as to receive appropriate training in inclusive teaching strategies. With such expertise, teachers can adapt instructional approaches, learning materials, and assessment methods to align with students' individual abilities and learning styles.

Moreover, school policies that promote inclusion are essential to ensuring equal learning opportunities for all students. Such policies may include the

establishment of special support programs, flexibility in curriculum design, and the cultivation of a school culture that values diversity. Furthermore, the provision of adequate resources such as accessible learning materials, assistive technologies, and inclusive facilities further strengthens the implementation of inclusive education. By combining well-trained teachers, supportive school policies, and sufficient resources, English language teaching in inclusive contexts can become both effective and beneficial for all learners.

Based on the findings obtained from direct observations at the research site and interviews with the principal of SD Negeri 2 Bengkala regarding the implementation of inclusive education at the school, several important issues were identified that form the basis of this research. The results of the initial observation revealed that the process of English language learning at SD Negeri 2 Bengkala remains inconsistent due to the presence of both supporting and inhibiting factors originating from various stakeholders, including the English teachers themselves.

1.2   Problem Identification

The problems that prompted the researcher to conduct this study are as follows:

Inclusive education is relatively new for most schools in Indonesia. Previous studies have shown that many teachers are not yet fully prepared to implement it. Therefore, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the actual situation in schools regarding the implementation of inclusive education in English language teaching, it is essential to identify both the supporting factors that assist teachers and the inhibiting factors they encounter during the teaching and learning process.

By identifying these factors, stakeholders can formulate effective solutions to improve the quality of inclusive education, particularly in the context of English language teaching.

1. The pre-observation results also indicate that most parents do not fully understand the concept of inclusive education. Therefore, understanding how parents support their children's learning in inclusive settings, as well as identifying the barriers they perceive in maintaining the continuity of inclusive education, needs to be further analyzed for future recommendations.

2. Considering the results of the pre-observation, most students are also not yet ready for inclusive education. Therefore, identifying the supporting factors that motivate students in inclusive settings to learn English, as well as the barriers faced by both regular and special needs students, becomes essential information for improving the quality of inclusive education implementation.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the supporting factors that assist teachers in teaching English within an inclusive education setting in SD Negeri 2 Bengkala, Buleleng?

2. What are the inhibiting factors that teachers encounter during the English language teaching process in inclusive education in SD Negeri 2 Bengkala, Buleleng?

1.4   Research Objectives

Based on the formulation of the problems mentioned above, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate the supporting factors that help teachers in teaching English within an inclusive education setting in SD Negeri 2 Bengkala, Buleleng.

2. To investigate the inhibiting factors that teachers face during the English language learning process in inclusive education in SD Negeri 2 Bengkala, Buleleng.

1.5   Research Significance

1.5.1 Theoretically Significance

This research contributes to the advancement of theory and academic studies in the field of English language teaching and inclusive education. By identifying the factors that support and hinder the process of learning English in inclusive classrooms, this study expands the previously limited body of literature on inclusion. The findings of this research may also serve as a valuable reference for future studies focusing on adaptive learning techniques, teacher training, and the development of an inclusive English curriculum at the elementary level.

1.5.2 Practically Significance

a. For English Teacher

This study provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges and opportunities encountered by English teachers in inclusive classrooms. By understanding the factors that support and hinder the teaching process, teachers can evaluate and design more effective instructional methods to

better accommodate students with special needs.

b. For School

The results of this study can provide valuable recommendations for schools in formulating more effective support programs, including specialized training for teachers, the provision of relevant learning materials, and the enhancement of collaboration between general teachers and special education assistants. Furthermore, this study can serve as a reference for improving internal school policies to strengthen the implementation of inclusive practices.

c. For Future Researchers

This study can serve as a foundation for future researchers interested in exploring English language education within the framework of inclusion. The topic remains broad and therefore warrants further investigation, whether through a more comprehensive qualitative approach, classroom action research, or the development of innovative inclusive learning methods.