

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In today's globalized world, early proficiency in English is increasingly recognized as a critical component of academic success and future opportunities (Waluyo & Panmei, 2021). For young learners, particularly those in second grade, early exposure to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) can play a pivotal role in fostering foundational language skills. Introducing EFL at an early age involves focusing on fundamental aspects such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening skills. For second-grade students, this includes engaging activities designed to enhance phonemic awareness and auditory discrimination (Coskun & Dikilitas, 2022).

However, the challenge becomes more complex when addressing the needs of students who exhibit signs of dyslexia. Dyslexia is a learning disorder where the person has difficulty reading, writing, and recognizing words. Students with dyslexia sometimes struggle with phonological awareness, which is the capacity to detect and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. Students with dyslexia often struggle with distinguishing and processing sounds, which can impede their ability to grasp new language structures and vocabulary (Zhao et al., 2024).

The most common problems experienced by people with dyslexia are poor phonological working memory storage capacity and a lack of higher-level language skills that focus on understanding the deep structures of language (Kizilazlan & Tunagur, 2021). Dyslexic students may have trouble spelling and recognizing familiar words, which can further hinder their literacy development and significantly hinder their literacy development (Squire, 2009)

Students with dyslexia often face challenges in traditional educational environments, impacting how they view themselves and their abilities. Research has shown that students with dyslexia may experience lower self-esteem compared to their peers who do not have learning disabilities (Zdravkova, 2022). With lower confidence levels in their academic abilities, they may need to improve their skills and abilities, especially in areas related to reading, writing, and language learning. An individual's self-efficacy, which is the belief in their ability to accomplish a task or be successful in a particular situation, can be impacted by dyslexia. Students with dyslexia may find specific academic assignments more challenging, reducing self-efficacy in those areas (Yuen et al., 2008).

Student peers also play a significant role in helping dyslexic students navigate the challenges they face in the classroom. Peers can provide social support, encouragement, and assistance with academic tasks, which can help dyslexic students feel more included and motivated to participate in classroom activities (Williams et al., 2024). Bond & Castagnera (2006), states that peer support, such as peer mentoring, can play an important role

in supporting the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

In Singaraja, Bali, several public primary schools have implemented an inclusive education approach to support students with special needs, including potentially dyslexic students. In Indonesia, early detection of dyslexia is still limited, especially in early childhood, even though early intervention can improve learning outcomes by up to 70% (Rofiah, 2015). The limited early detection of dyslexia in children is also due to a lack of teacher training and a lack of local research into the perspectives of students and their peers (Dirgayunita et al., 2022). Understanding the perspectives of early grade students and their peers can reveal factors that influence learning, such as peer support or teacher strategies in learning activities.

To address this gap, this study was conducted in two selected primary schools located in Singaraja, Bali, namely SDN 1 Kaliuntu, SDN 1 Kampung Anyar. These schools were selected based on initial classroom observations, interviews with classroom teachers teaching English who uncovered students in third-grade showing signs of dyslexia, and the Dyslexia Early Screening Test (DEST). The selection of several schools was intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the perspectives of potentially dyslexic students and their non-dyslexic peers. In addition, the focus on third-grade students was based on the finding that children at this stage begin to develop core literacy and language skills, making early intervention important.

Several studies have examined the challenges faced by dyslexic students, but these studies often overlook the importance of emotional support from potentially dyslexic peers and creating an inclusive and supportive classroom environment. By investigating the perspectives of both potentially and non-potentially dyslexic students, this study aims to uncover what challenges potentially dyslexic students face as well as how their non-potentially dyslexic peers treat them. With a focus on the context of literacy, including challenges in English lessons, this research explored students' learning experiences, social support from peers and strategies that helped them in the classroom.

1.2 Problem Identification

In the context of inclusive education in Indonesia, particularly in Singaraja, early detection of dyslexia in primary school students still faces some significant challenges. Third-grade students (aged 8-9 years) are at a critical phase of literacy development, where signs of dyslexia, such as difficulty reading, spelling or comprehending text, begin to become more apparent (Zdravkova, 2022). However, in many primary schools in Indonesia, including in Singaraja, early detection of dyslexia is still rare due to the lack of teacher training to recognize such signs and the limited availability of screening tools suitable for early childhood (Dirgayunita et al., 2022). As a result, potentially dyslexic students often go unidentified, which can hinder their academic and social progress.

The lack of understanding of students' and peers' perspectives is also an important reason for this research to be conducted. Research on dyslexia in Indonesia focuses more on clinical approaches or teacher-based interventions, while the perspectives of potentially dyslexic students and their non-dyslexic peers are rarely explored (Kusuma, 2012). Understanding third-grade students' learning experiences and perceptions of their peers can provide important insights into the academic challenges and social dynamics in inclusive classrooms. The lack of data on these perspectives makes it difficult to develop strategies that meet students' needs.

In some public primary schools in Singaraja, English lessons are introduced in third-grade as part of the local curriculum. However, for potentially dyslexic students, the introduction of foreign language vocabulary and structures adds complexity to literacy, such as difficulty reading or spelling English words (Cidrim & Madeiro, 2017). The lack of customized teaching strategies for dyslexic students in English lessons can complicate their challenges in the classroom.

In the process of selecting research location, several public primary schools in Singaraja could not be used as subjects, because they did not have students with signs of dyslexia, did not provide English lessons for third-grade, or the schools were not responsive when coordinated. As a result, this study was limited to two public primary schools that met the criteria of having potentially dyslexic third-grade students and EFL lessons in the class.

Based on these issues, this study needed to be conducted to identify the perspectives of potentially dyslexic third-grade students and their peers in two public primary schools in Singaraja. By understanding the challenges of literacy (especially in the context of EFL) and social interaction among peers, this research is expected to generate practical recommendations for teachers and schools to improve inclusive education at the early childhood level.

1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research questions:

- a. What are the problems that third-grade elementary school students who are potentially dyslexic face in learning English as a foreign language?
- b. How do non-dyslexic students treat the potentially dyslexic students in English classes?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- a. To describe the problems faced by third-grade elementary school students who are potentially dyslexic in learning English as a foreign language.
- b. To describe how non-dyslexic students treat the potentially dyslexic students in English classes.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on the perspectives of potentially dyslexic third-grade students and their non-dyslexic peers regarding the challenges faced by potentially dyslexic students and how non-dyslexic students treat their dyslexic peers. This research was conducted in two public primary schools in Singaraja, there are SD Negeri 1 Kaliuntu, and SD Negeri 1 Kampung Anyar.

1.6 Significances of the Study

1.6.1 Theoretical Significances

This study enriches the inclusive education literature by exploring the perceptions of third-grade primary school students with potential dyslexia regarding the challenges they face and how their non-dyslexic peers treat them in EFL learning. By focusing on the perceptions of non-dyslexic students, such as their views of peers in reading or spelling English vocabulary, this study fills a gap in the literature that still rarely highlights peer perspectives in the context of EFL in primary schools (Kusuma, 2012). This study also reinforces theories on the importance of early detection of dyslexia at 8-9 years of age, as a critical phase of literacy development (Zdravkova, 2022). The results of this study can be used as a foundation for further studies on EFL teaching strategies based on non-dyslexic students' perceptions or the impact of peer perceptions on inclusive learning in Indonesia.

1.6.2 Practical Significances

In this section, the practical significance of this study will be outlined in the context of the perspectives of potentially dyslexic third-grade primary school students and their non-dyslexic peers. The findings not only provided new insights into students' perspectives when learning English as a foreign language, but also offered tangible benefits to three key areas: teachers, schools and future research.

1. For the Teachers

This study can provide teachers with insights into the perceptions of potentially dyslexic third-grade elementary school students and non-dyslexic students in EFL learning. By understanding potentially dyslexic students' specific challenges, such as difficulties understanding English vocabulary or sentence structure, as well as non-dyslexic students' perceptions of their peers' difficulties, teachers can design more inclusive teaching strategies. For example, teachers can use multisensory methods, such as picture word cards or interactive learning apps, to help dyslexic students, as well as utilize the positive perceptions of non-dyslexic students to encourage collaboration in EFL group work, thus improving classroom engagement and learning outcomes.

2. For the Students

For potentially dyslexic students, this research helps create a more supportive learning environment by increasing non-dyslexic students' understanding of the literacy and English language

challenges their friends face. By exploring the perceptions of non-dyslexic students, such as their views on their friends' difficulties in reading texts or spelling English vocabulary, this research encourages non-dyslexic students to provide practical support, such as helping to explain vocabulary or reading EFL task instructions. This support can increase dyslexic students' confidence and motivation in learning. For non-dyslexic students, this understanding helps them develop supportive attitudes and collaboration skills, which enriches their learning experience in an inclusive classroom.

3. For Other Researchers

Practically, this study provides guidance for other researchers to develop EFL teaching strategies that utilize the perceptions of non-dyslexic students in supporting their potentially dyslexic friends. By providing data on non-dyslexic students' perceptions, such as their willingness to help friends in EFL tasks, this study can inspire the development of peer-based interventions, such as group collaboration training for elementary students. This study also encourages other researchers to explore the implementation of inclusive education, for example through the development of appropriate EFL learning aids for dyslexic students.