

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the study, statements of the research problem, objectives of the study, significances of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is a system or symbol which permits people to communicate or interact with others. Related to language as a system in social interaction between human being in this world, there are four basic language skills which people should have; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those four basic language abilities are very important since they are needed to understand, to process, and to produce both spoken and written language. There is a consensus which connects language and children. Language is gained and obtained since a child is in mother's womb. Children learn a language with the expectation that they can communicate and express their perspective of the world which they saw with their friends or people around them easily.

However, not all children have the language abilities well like others. There are some children who have difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, and/or even writing. There are some problems on their visual and auditory processing. Those two things are important to process and decode the words, numbers, and even symbols. Furthermore, they are also needed to transfer the

information which they have seen or heard to be a spoken and/ or written language. This problem on language learning is called dyslexia.

The word dyslexia is derived from the Greek prefix *dys* which means difficulty and the root-word *lexis* which means word or language (Field, 2003). It can be best translated as difficulty with words. Dyslexia is considered as a language disorder which affects language learning such as sounding out words, spelling words, reading quickly, writing words, pronouncing words when reading aloud, and understanding what was read (Field, 2003). Dyslexia is a serious problem since its symptoms cannot be seen and detected before the children are in school age (Society for Neuroscience, 2004). Children with this language impairment do not like to learn language through reading and writing because of their weakness in decoding the letters, symbols, words, phrases, and even sentences.

Related to dyslexia impact on language learning including reading and writing, this study only focuses on writing process since writing is one of important activities on language learning. It is needed to transfer the information which they have seen or heard to be documented. In addition, writing is a complex activity on language learning since it needs the other abilities to write letters, numbers, symbols, words, phrases, and even sentences such as ability to read well, ability to understand the sequence of letter in a word, ability in using symbols, correct punctuation, and capital letters, ability to combine words into a correct sentence, and also ability to use correct grammar in a sentence. Yet, dyslexics have them in low quality. Since dyslexics have problem in writing, there

are several mistakes which are commonly made by dyslexics. Dyslexics usually have illegible handwriting and take a long time to form letters and to write assignments. They also have difficulties in using punctuation, including capitalizing the first word in a sentence or using end punctuation (International Dyslexia Association, 2008). This kind of disability is called dysgraphia or writing disorder. Since writing disorder which is caused and made by dyslexics, the term becomes dyslexic dysgraphia. The teachers, parents, or doctors can diagnose children suffering dyslexia or dyslexic dysgraphia from their handwriting or their writing process. In short, writing process can be an early action to detect and diagnose children with this language impairment.

Writing error and children are two things which cannot be separated. Children often make more mistakes in writing than adult do because children have limited knowledge about writing and its technique. Error in writing made by children who suffer dyslexic dysgraphia is not a simple mistake (Mississippi Department of Education, 2002). Transfer, insertion, replacement, elimination, condensation, reversal, wild guessing, and mirror imaging are several characteristics of writing error made by children who suffer dyslexic dysgraphia. In short, teachers or parents should learn and know in depth the specific characteristic of an error in writing which signs children suffer this language disorder in order to detect and prevent their children from this language disorder.

On the other hand, there are some people including parents who are not aware with dyslexic dysgraphia symptoms. Dyslexic dysgraphia symptoms which are undiagnosed can cause a lot of frustrations and anxieties in the individuals

involved (Riddick & Edwards as cited in Glazzard, 2012). Dyslexic dysgraphia is a 'hidden' disability, as there are no obvious external signs for people to recognize (Riddick as cited in Glazzard, 2012). It is not like some other disabilities, as for example down syndrome, or cerebral palsy which people can recognize from the moment they see them. People can get confused and assume different reasons for the children's poor performance in school. That is why, when dyslexic dysgraphia is undiagnosed, the characteristics like 'stupid', 'thick', and 'lazy' are commonly used to describe students with dyslexic dysgraphia. People who are not aware about dyslexic dysgraphia cannot find any other explanations for them who are not doing well at school. Lack of assessment may result in low self-esteem compared to non-dyslexic students (Humphrey as cited in Glazzard, 2012). On the other hand, lack of appropriate help and support can have long-term effects for people with dyslexic dysgraphia when reaching adulthood (Morgan & Klein, 2000).

It can be seen in a case in which there are several famous people who suffer this kind of language impairment. They are: Agatha Christie (novelist), Albert Einstein (scientist, mathematician), and Thomas Alva Edison (light bulb inventor). Agatha Christie is a famous novelist during 20th and 21st centuries because of her brilliant thoughts. She had different and creative writing style which contributed to literature world. While she was on her popularity, she was detected to have acquired disorder known as dyslexic dysgraphia since she was not able to understand anymore all of the written words which are enclosed in her novels. Similar to the previous problem, Albert Einstein is a famous scientist with

all of his brilliant experiment and theories. Yet, many people do not know that he suffered dyslexic dysgraphia since he was at school age. He failed some of his exams because of his disabilities in understanding and recognizing words and even sentences. Another famous person suffering dyslexic dysgraphia is Thomas Alva Edison. He is also famous because of his brilliant theories in scientific field. However, under his brilliance in scientific field, he was diagnosed to suffer from dyslexic dysgraphia during his childhood years. He was not able to write well since writing a simple word is a hard task for him (Davis, R.D., & Braun, E.M., 2010). From those three examples, we can draw a conclusion that dyslexia especially dyslexic dysgraphia is not related to physical handicapped.

The writer is interested in this topic because dyslexic dysgraphia is an issue of language impairment which is hard to be diagnosed. Many parents who have children with this language impairment do not know that their children are dyslexic children. So, it can be said that dyslexic dysgraphia becomes a collective and serious problem.

Another reason which encourages the writer to conduct this study is that dyslexic dysgraphia is a special phenomena of learning disability in Asia. From the census which has been conducted by Juken Consultancy Incorporation, there are up to 15 percent of children in Asia have been affected by learning difficulties in one form or another and 60 to 80 percent of these children suffer from a specific learning or literacy problem which is called dyslexic dysgraphia (Juken Consultancy Sdn Bhd, 2004).

Related to the previous explanation above, to gain a deeper understanding of dyslexic dysgraphia, the writer uses Levinson's Dyslexia Syndrome (1994) and Lerner's Perception in Dyslexia (2006) as the theories to analyze the characters suffering dyslexic dysgraphia in *Backwards: The Riddle of Dyslexia* and *Like Stars on Earth* the movies. *Brian Ellsworth* and *Ishaan Awasthi* as the characters suffering dyslexic dysgraphia have difficulties in writing since they made many mistakes when they wrote the letters, symbols, numbers, and words. The writer conducts this study to find out the language or the lexical items produced by *Brian Ellsworth* and *Ishaan Awasthi* which make it differs from the normal person by seeing and classifying the types of mistake which they made in writing based on Levinson's theory (1994). Furthermore, they also had a difficulty in understanding the information which they obtained. It is because there is a problem on their visual and auditory process. To find out the factors which cause *Brian Ellsworth* and *Ishaan Awasthi* make many mistakes on his task, the writer analyzes that problem by using the theory of Lerner's Perception in Dyslexia (2006).

There are several researchers who have conducted a study about dyslexia. They discussed the types of dyslexia, writing errors made by dyslexic students, environmental factors which cause dyslexia, and also teaching method for dyslexic students. Dyslexia affects three important aspects; reading, writing, and arithmetic. Children with dyslexia can be cured by using Gillingham and Stillman teaching method as shown in *Like Stars on Earth* the movie (Aini, I.N., 2010). Another research showed that dyslexic children have many difficulties mainly in reading since their environment condition contributed to their language

impairment like dyslexia as shown in *Backwards: The Riddle of Dyslexia* the movie (Rizka, H., 2012). While, another researcher found that writing error made by dyslexic students is caused by their weakness in spelling words (Nurchaerani, M., et al, 2013). Those three studies did not either discuss the types of mistake made by children suffering dyslexic dysgraphia specifically in writing error based on Levinson's Dyslexia Syndrome theory (1994), the internal factors causing children who suffer dyslexic dysgraphia have difficulties in writing based on Lerner's Perception in Dyslexia theory (2006), nor using two movies as source of data.

1.2 Statements of Research Problem

Related to the description of the background of the study above, the writer formulated these following problems:

1. What are the types of mistake in writing made by the characters suffering dyslexic dysgraphia in *Backwards: The Riddle of Dyslexia* and *Like Stars on Earth* the movies?
2. What are the factors which cause the characters suffering dyslexic dysgraphia in *Backwards: The Riddle of Dyslexia* and *Like Stars on Earth* the movies have difficulties in writing?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Related to the statements of the research problem above, this study is intended to:

1. Explain the types of mistake in writing made by the characters suffering dyslexic dysgraphia in *Backwards: The Riddle of Dyslexia* and *Like Stars on Earth* the movies.
2. Explain the factors which cause the characters suffering dyslexic dysgraphia in *Backwards: The Riddle of Dyslexia* and *Like Stars on Earth* the movies have difficulties in writing.

1.4 Significances of the Study

The significances of this study are to give contributions both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to give significant contribution to strengthen the understanding of writing dyslexia or dyslexic dysgraphia theory. This study is expected to enrich the theoretical framework on language learning process especially on writing process produced by children who suffer dyslexic dysgraphia as something which should be discussed deeply.

Practically, this study is supposed to help people in knowing the dyslexic dysgraphia syndrome by increasing the awareness of dyslexic dysgraphia as a learning disability among the study participants. Simply by participating in this study, awareness of dyslexic dysgraphia will be increased. Increasing awareness of dyslexic dysgraphia can lead to be the prevention for children being overlooked when needing assistance and intervention of services for children identified with this learning disability. Besides, it can stimulate psycholinguistic lecturers to explain and give examples about dyslexic dysgraphia broadly in class.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is in psycholinguistics which only focuses on writing error made by the characters suffering writing dyslexia or dyslexic dysgraphia in *Backwards: The Riddle of Dyslexia* and *Like Stars on Earth* the movies based on Levinson's Dyslexia Syndrome theory (1994), and also the factors which cause the characters suffering writing dyslexia or dyslexic dysgraphia in *Backwards: The Riddle of Dyslexia* and *Like Stars on Earth* the movies have difficulties in writing based on Lerner's Perception in Dyslexia theory (2006). The writer uses those two movies since they have the main characters who suffer dyslexic dysgraphia namely *Brian Ellsworth* in *Backwards: The Riddle of Dyslexia* movie and *Ishaan Awasthi* in *Like Stars on Earth* the movie.

This study is limited on the letters, symbols, numbers, words, and/or phrases written and produced by *Brian Ellsworth* in *Backwards: The Riddle of Dyslexia* the movie and by *Ishaan Awasthi* in *Like Stars on Earth* the movie which describe their syndrome of dyslexic dysgraphia and the factors which cause them have difficulties in writing.