DYSLEXIA, AWARENESS AND DISCRIMINATORY POTENTIAL

Perceptions of dyslexia among teachers in primary schools in Prishtina

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ABSTRACT

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<th>Tittle</th>
<th>Dyslexia, awareness and discriminatory potential: Perceptions of dyslexia among teachers in primary schools in Prishtina</th>
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<td>Author</td>
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<td>Kerstin Gynnersted</td>
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<td>Key words</td>
<td>Dyslexia, teachers awareness, children with dyslexia, normalization/SRV, attribution theory.</td>
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Background
The most common reading disability is dyslexia. This reading disability encompasses various symptoms such as poor spelling outcomes, reading fluency and difficulties in expressing oneself. Failure to diagnose children coping with dyslexia is a potential risk of discrimination and social exclusion.

Aim
The aim of this Master thesis is to explore if the primary school teachers in Prishtina are conscious of the term dyslexia. This provides a better understanding of teacher’s perceptions about dyslexia and to which extent they are aware of it. An additional purpose is to investigate teachers’ awareness of their responsibilities to provide equal opportunities for these children.

Method
A qualitative research, using an open-ended and semi-structured questionnaire had been utilized to collect data about teacher’s awareness and knowledge concerning dyslexia and its issues. The texts provided by the surveys were subjected to thematic analysis.

Result
The results of the presented qualitative research helped to understand the awareness of the primary teachers in Prishtina concerning the term dyslexia. The findings showed that most of the teachers heard about dyslexia, but demonstrated clear misconceptions of what dyslexia is. Even though the majority of teachers had misconception of dyslexia, more than half of them considered their role as very important to provide equal opportunities for children coping with dyslexia.

Conclusion
One of the significant findings to emerge from this thesis is that the primary teacher's of Prishtina have misconceptions about dyslexia. The results of this study support the idea that due to the lack of knowledge among teachers about dyslexia, children coping with dyslexia might be at risk of discrimination and exclusion comparing to other children.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................... 1

1. INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................................. 1
   1.2 The choice of the field of study ................................................................................................. 2

2. BACKGROUND ................................................................................................................................ 4
   2.1 The definition of dyslexia .......................................................................................................... 4
   2.2 The relation between dyslexia and measurement of intelligence quantity (IQ) .................. 6
   2.3 Early identification of dyslexia ................................................................................................. 6
   2.4 Misconceptions concerning dyslexia ......................................................................................... 7
   2.5 Background on teachers training (education) in Kosovo ....................................................... 8
   2.6 Elementary and high school education in Prishtina ............................................................... 8
   2.7 Kosovo and children with disabilities ..................................................................................... 9
   2.8 Research on Children with Reading Disabilities in Kosovo ............................................... 9
   2.9 The legislation on the rights of children with disabilities .................................................... 9

3. DEFINITION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM ........................................................................... 11

4. AIM ................................................................................................................................................ 12

5. THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE ................................................................................. 13

6. METHOD ......................................................................................................................................... 16
   6.1 Instrument ................................................................................................................................ 17
   6.2 Informants/subjects .................................................................................................................. 17
   6.3 Data Analysis ............................................................................................................................ 18
   6.4 Research ethical considerations ............................................................................................... 19

7. RESULT ............................................................................................................................................ 21
   7.1 “I understood that dyslexia is a disease” ................................................................................ 21
   7.2 “According to my experience, dyslexic children are more self-withdrawn if compared to other children…” ................................................................................................. 22
   7.3 “There are different causes like: born with a hole in mouth palate, small tongue, nose inflammation…” ........................................................................................................... 23
   7.4 “I know that it can be treated” .................................................................................................. 23
   7.5 “I don’t think there is an advantage for these children. Whereas for disadvantages there are a lot” .................................................................................................................. 24
   7.6 “Dyslexic children often look like they are more creative and they perform better in arts” ........................................................................................................................................... 25
   7.7 “They need more care and better treatment” ...................................................................... 25
   7.8 “No I did not have any courses for children with special needs” ....................................... 26
   7.9 “It can be said that after the family, the teacher has a big role to the students” ............... 26
   7.10 The school’s role of children with dyslexia ........................................................................ 27

8. DISCUSSION .................................................................................................................................. 30
   8.1 Discussion of methods ............................................................................................................ 30
   8.2 Discussion of results ................................................................................................................ 31
   8.3 Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 35

REFERENCES

*Appendix 1. Open-ended questionarie
*Appendix 2. Letters to teachers and director
1. INTRODUCTION

“A teacher sent the following note home with a six-year-old boy: “He is too stupid to learn.” That boy was Thomas A. Edison”. Thomas A. Edison

This Master Thesis analyses the awareness of the term dyslexia as a reading difficulty among the primary school teachers in Prishtina, Kosova. The empirical research focuses on the investigation of awareness of primary school teachers concerning the term dyslexia. The goal of the research is to find out if the teachers are aware of the term dyslexia, and understand their perception about dyslexia and children with dyslexia. There is no previous research concerning the awareness of primary school teachers for dyslexia in Prishtina nor Kosovo. The lack of information by teachers about this impairment and the different issues it presents could potentially hinder normal educational and psychological development of children coping with dyslexia. These children could be unintentionally discriminated and not included equally in class, which can cause social problems in their later life. Knowing that education has a significant impact upon quality of life of a person, the lack of a proper education in children with dyslexia may hinder their development and therefore result in their exclusion in the society. The lack of knowledge concerning dyslexia threatens the success in schools, employment and may cause social segregation (EDA, 2013). Therefore the knowledge of teachers concerning dyslexia is of high importance for these children to have a better life. This research can also contribute in the inclusion process of children coping with dyslexia in mainstream school. Teachers with up-to-date knowledge of dyslexia can be of good help for children who face such a challenge.

After the war of 1999 in Kosovo, there has been an increased recognition for children with disabilities and their needs (Kosova Education Center, KEC, 2006). Considerable actions took place in an effort to promote equality for all citizens and prevention of exclusion, in the Kosovar education system (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007). Despite the investment, Kosovo is far behind in comparison to affluent countries in understanding children’s needs and their inclusion in the education system (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007).

Dyslexia is the most common reading disability (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2004; Bishop & League, 2006; IDA, 2012). Fifteen to twenty percent of the population copes with different symptoms of dyslexia, such as poor spelling, reading fluency and difficulties in expressing themselves (IDA, 2012; LD Online, 2007; Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz, 2003). “The disorder has lifelong persistence, reading retardation being merely one of its manifestations” (Ramus, et al., 2003, p. 841). These difficulties in spelling and fluent word recognition that correlate to poor phonological processing, characterize dyslexia as a specific learning difficulty (IDA, 2008; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2005; Snowling, et al 2011). The intelligence remains not affected as people with dyslexia often can have talents in different fields such as art, design, computer science, music, sales and mechanics. (IDA, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003).

In the past years, there has been an extensive recognition of specific learning difficulties. While the academic apprehension of these learning and reading difficulties increased, the standards and quality of professional practice and intervention are unclear (Kirby, Davues, & Bryan, 2005). According to various research studies done in UK and USA, there is a lack of
awareness and clear misconception among teachers relating the specific learning difficulty called dyslexia (Roper, 2010; Reid, 2005b; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005). This lack of awareness among teachers might obstruct understanding of the children’s needs and lead to frustration and anxiety (Reid, 2005b).

This presented master thesis consists of a conducted qualitative research in the field of dyslexia and teachers’ awareness of it. Initially it gives the reader a short introduction to the presented study and its choice. Literature review discusses the background on the reading impairment. Through my work, the reader will get the opportunity to get familiar with the term dyslexia and provide up-to-date information of this field, its definition and manifestations.

Since there is limited prior research concerning children coping with dyslexia in Kosovo, I will provide information concerning children with disabilities in Kosovo and their legal rights for school education. This information is a relevant contextual background in qualitative methods.

I will account of the purpose of the study, the research questions and methods. I deliver a thorough description of the results of the empirical research and discuss them further. This study will emphasize the participants perspectives and knowledge regarding dyslexia.

1.2 The choice of the field of study

Various reasons determined my choice of investigating the awareness of dyslexia among primary school teachers in Prishtina. The first reason is my academic curiosity and interest within the field of children with disabilities and their right of social inclusion. My enthusiasm about understanding the issues concerning the children with disabilities, increased during my studies of International Social Work program at Linnaeus University. Getting familiar with Swedish Welfare system, as a fruitful example for many developing countries, and knowing the poor conditions in Kosovo, especially when it comes to children with disabilities, motivated me to study the awareness of teachers concerning dyslexia in children.

The poor conditions in Kosovo, and the lack of research studies concerning disabilities in general and specifically learning disability known as dyslexia, call for various research studies. Hardly any research has been carried out in Kosovo concerning children with dyslexia. Only one research was conducted on children with dyslexia in Kosovo (Avdyli & Cueto, 2012). This research is relatively recent, and its purpose was to compare the reading abilities between children coping with dyslexia and those not coping with dyslexia, in Albanian speaking population. Thus, a need of research studies concerning these children and children with all kinds of disabilities in Kosovo is evident.

Parents and meaningful others are the primary subjects children would communicate. Another affluent social agent with whom children interact, are school teachers. Since the pedagogues have a significant role in children’s development, it is meaningful to learn more about teachers awareness of the term dyslexia, and find out what knowledge do they possess concerning this particular learning disability. Knowing the state of the education system in Kosovo, made me curious to understand if the teachers are aware of the term dyslexia.

The issues that come with dyslexia can improve if awareness of dyslexia is increased. “Without sufficient knowledge in this area, failure in school, employment, general
communication impairments and social segregation are common threats, with well-known consequences in the lives of those affected, their family members and society"(EDA, 2013 p.1). Nirje 1969, points out the importance of children with disabilities and their needs. Normalization/ SRV is a main component in the field of learning difficulties (Yates et al., 2008). Normalization suggests that people with learning difficulties should enjoy the good things in life as close as other people in society (Walmsley, 2001). According to Nirje, 1966 having a normal life for children with disabilities same as other children is what normalization principle strives for. This means that they should enjoy the good things in life same as other people. It is crucial to let the children with disabilities find their own personal abilities. It is very important to let them experience their personal qualities so they can build their self-image. Whereas, dismissing and ignoring their personal qualities leads to stress, unhappiness and confusion. “Childhood is a highly developmental period of great importance for learning about one's own personal abilities and potentialities, for obtaining understanding of oneself, and for building self-confidence that can serve as a sound basis for life after the school years" (Nirje 1969, p. 20). From this perspective, it can be claimed that the teachers lack of knowledge concerning the children's needs in this case children with dyslexia, can result in ignoring their needs and therefore children might end up being discriminated or excluded. According to Reid, inclusion is a process that flourish over time and "depends on the preparation and the foundation that have been put in place" (Reid, 2005a, p.100). Other studies also agree that the principle of inclusion is for the schools to offer a proper environment for children (Clark, Dyson & Millward 1995; Jenkinson, 1997). These definitions recognize the effort that needs to be given to prepare conditions so that the inclusion of these children can happen. Preparing the conditions for these children means matching the educational needs of these children (Reid, 2005a). From this perspective schools as institution should strive in progressing social inclusion by offering better environment for these children. If the teachers are not aware of dyslexia it can obscure their abilities as teachers to recognise the needs of these children. This lack of knowledge among teachers is a social problem since it can affect the childrens personal achievement and later on in their life. Failing to understand the needs of these children by responsible actors such as teachers, the society can neglect to fully include fifteen to twenty percent of the pupils in the education process. The extent of this non-inclusion can have major social implications beside the personal issues faced by the individuals coping with this disability.

In the following section, I will elaborate and define dyslexia. A review of the salient development in the fields will be presented with various research studies concerning dyslexia, its symptoms and difficulties.
2. BACKGROUND

In this section, a description of dyslexia is provided. This includes an account on the ongoing process of the exposition of dyslexia by different researchers. Symptoms, factors and research findings are illustrated to introduce the reader with dyslexia as a specific learning disability. Additional subsections of this chapter include references to the academic concept of intelligence quantity, the importance of early identification of dyslexia and the ideas teachers have concerning dyslexia.

2.1 The definition of dyslexia

The definition of dyslexia has been debated for a long time (Snowling & Duff & Petrou & Schiffeldrin, 2011). Researchers have tried to define dyslexia by applying various theories (Ramus et al., 2003). However, there are three prominent theories used in different studies: the phonological theory, the magnocellular theory and the cerebellar theory.

1.) The Phonological Deficit Theory, hypothesizes that, among people coping with dyslexia, the deficiency in phonological (sound of spoken words) awareness can be found (Ramus et al., 2003). Phonological awareness deficit is the difficulty of detecting the sound structure of spoken words (Swan & Goswami, 1997). So the deadlock of recognising the sound of words that are spoken is known as phonological awareness deficit.

2.) The Magnocellular Theory postulates that there is a deficiency in the development of the brain's magnocellular (visual) systems (Ramus et al., 2003). "The magnocellular theory postulates that the magnocellular dysfunction is not restricted to the visual pathways but is generalized to all modalities (visual and auditory as well as tactile)" (Ramus et al., 2003, p. 843). According to this theory the visual systems as well as other modalities such as auditory and tactile are dysfunctional when talking about people coping with dyslexia.

3.) Cerebellar Deficit Theory is the third theory of dyslexia which proposes "the biological claim is that the dyslexic's cerebellum is mildly dysfunctional and that a number of cognitive difficulties ensue" (Ramus et al., 2003, p. 843). This theory asserts that dyslexia is caused by a mild dysfunction in cerebrum (part of the brain that involves motor control and cognitive functions) which can result in cognitive obstacle.

According to Ramus et al., (2003), various researchers criticized these three theories. The Phonological theory’s weakness is that it fails to show the case of motor and sensory deficiencies in people coping with dyslexia. The cerebral theory weakness, on the other hand, "is that the causal link postulated between articulation and phonology relies on an outdated view of the motor theory of speech, according to which the development of phonological representations relies on speech articulation" (p. 843). The third theory, magnocellular theory, it is unique since it covers all occurrences of dyslexia. However, this theory has as well been criticized "...number of failures to replicate findings of auditory disorders in dyslexia" (Ibid. p. 843). The Phonological Deficit Theory is the most supported theory by different studies whose findings show that dyslexic individuals are particularly impaired in processing the phonological information (Ibid.). The difficulties in spelling, fluent word recognition etc., were found in correlation to poor phonological processing (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2005; Snowling, et al 2011; Ramus, et al., 2003). Savage, Frederickson, Goodwin, Patni, Smith & Tuersley, (2005) indicate a strong support to this
assumption provided by developmental research. In comparison to above-average readers, poor readers lack the phonological skill (Savage et al., 2005).

In the past, the definition of dyslexia described a reading disorder in which reading achievement is significantly below the level of general intelligence (e.g. DSM-IV, American Psychiatric Association, 1994; Rutter & Yule, 1975). However, with time passing there has been a change over this view of dyslexia, especially in the case of discrepancy between reading achievement and intelligence. "Recent definitions of dyslexia have abandoned the need for reading to be significantly below general intelligence, and have adopted a dimensional view of dyslexia with phonological processing as a core deficit" (Snowling et al., 2011, p. 158). In many studies, dyslexia is defined as a phenomenon with a discrepancy between intelligence quantity and reading difficulties (Ramus, 2003; Snowling, Duff, Petrou, Schiffeldrin, & Bailey, 2011b; Stanovich, 1994). This thesis applies the definition of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA), which supports the recent definitions. The reason this definition was chosen is because IDA is considered to offer a wider definition of dyslexia including issues of spelling and other language processing difficulties (Washburn, Joshi, & Binks-Cantrell, 2011):

"Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge (IDA, 2012, p. 1).

For a better overview on different views of the definition of dyslexia, see (Sanders, 2001). From the phrase in the quotation above we understand that dyslexia is a disability that is specific and unique in comparison to other learning disability (LD) categories. LD surrounds difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, writing and mathematics (Lyon et al., 2003). In Shaywitz (2003) work, it is cited that reading and speaking rely on the phoneme; however, reading is not natural yet speaking is. The study of Williams&Lynch, (2010) suggest a different view, in some cases reading, writing and spelling are not the only characteristics of dyslexia, but speaking as well. Williams&Lynch (2010), claim that this occurs in cases where intelligence and educational opportunities are as an influence. This shows that children who do not have the education opportunity to improve their academic skills might also result in difficulties, in oral expression(Ibid.). Functional brain imaging research confirms dyslexia as being neurobiological in its origin (Ramus, et al., 2003). "Converging evidence using functional brain imaging in adult dyslexic readers shows a failure of left hemisphere posterior brain systems to function properly during reading"(Lyon et al., 2003, p. 6). According to Lyon et al., (2003) with the use of brain imaging in people coping with dyslexia, one can see failure in their left hemisphere of the brain which involves language skills.
2.2 The relation between dyslexia and measurement of intelligence quantity (IQ)

As mentioned above, new definitions of dyslexia disregard the assumption that reading is compatible with below average intelligence. It approves that dyslexia is a deficit in processing phonological information (Snowling et al., 2011). These findings claim that intelligence is not affected by dyslexia and people coping with dyslexia can often be gifted in areas such as art, design, computer science, music, sales and mechanics (IDA, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003). As Solvang (2007) states, the American dyslexia activist Ronald Davies (1995) assumes that people coping with dyslexia learn differently and are neurologically different. They have above average abilities, which are rarely, valued or developed in school, such as artistic abilities and creativity (Solvang, 2007). According to the same source, many researchers think that reading difficulties can occur at any level of IQ (Ibid.). Researchers claim that children coping with dyslexia execute poorly academically with average or above average intelligence (Williams & Lynch, 2010). When children face reading and writing problems and these problems are due to their inability of word-level decoding this is identified as dyslexia (Solvang, 2007).

Nowadays there is a lot of critiques on the concept of excellence deriving from intelligence quantity. There are other types of intelligence such as social and emotional learning which were neglected by the education system but, seem to account for excellence and distinction (Basu & Mermillod, 2011). One of them is emotional intelligence (EI). Self awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and handling relationships are five domains of EI identified by Salovey and Mayer (1990). In Basu & Mermillod (2011) study, the importance of emotional intelligence is equal to the importance of IQ. "EI may be as important as or even more important than cognitive intelligence". (p. 182). The intelligence quotient is in discrepancy with dyslexia and early identification of this reading disability is important for improvement of the academic life of children coping with dyslexia (IDA, 2012; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2004; Ramus, et al 2003). More about early identification of dyslexia is going to be presented in up coming subsection.

2.3 Early identification of dyslexia

Dyslexia is considered to be hereditary and is inherited within families. “It is now well established that dyslexia is a neurological disorder with a genetic origin, which is currently being investigated” (Ramus, et al 2003, p. 841). Dyslexic parents are likely to have dyslexic children (IDA, 2012; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2004; Ramus, et al 2003). Given that their parents cope with dyslexia, a child is at fifty percent risk at developing reading difficulties (Vellutino, Flenowling, & Scanlon, 2004). However, children coping with dyslexia can improve their state. They can improve their reading skills if early intervention occurs (IDA, 2012; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2004). With proper help, many people coping with dyslexia can learn to read and write well (Bishop & League, 2006; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Schatschneider & Torgesen, 2004; IDA, 2012). Several studies e.g. Scarborough, (1990); Snowling, Gallagher & Frith, (2003), show that children who are diagnosed with dyslexia at eight years of age, had difficulties in letter recognition ability at around 4-5 years of age. The phoneme awareness develops at around age 5-6 years (Snowling et al., 2011). Findings indicate that children who are at risk of dyslexia can be identified earlier than the age of eight years. Identification could happen by "simple tests of letter knowledge and phoneme awareness at the beginnings of reading" (Ibid. p.158). Such examinations might provide a good indication of children risk of dyslexia.
Early identification and intervention could provide the key in helping individuals with dyslexia achieve in school and life (Bishop & League, 2006; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Schatschneider & Torgesen, 2004; IDA, 2012). The ambition is for early identification of dyslexia "so that intervention can be put in place to prevent or limit reading difficulty" (Snowling et al., 2011, p. 158). According to Fuchs & Fuchs, (2006) this way of approaching the problem is more effective than "waiting for children to fail in their reading before a ‘diagnosis’ of dyslexia can be made" (Snowling et al., 2011, p. 158). This indicates that an early intervention is a crucial factor in improving academic achievements and well-being in their future life.

2.4 Misconceptions concerning dyslexia

This section of the research focalise on misconceptions concerning dyslexia especially among teachers. There are numerous studies done for educators awareness and understanding of learning disabilities in general (Kirby et al., 2005; Wight & Chapparo, 2008). However, there is a lack of research done for the awareness of teachers concerning the needs of children coping with dyslexia (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005). One of the researchers that do concentrate on dyslexia and teachers understanding of dyslexia is that of Wadlington & Wadlington (2005), “What Educators Really Believe about Dyslexia”.

Wadlington & Wadlington (2005) conducted a study were they compared the perception and knowledge of dyslexia among 250 participants at a southern regional university and faculty members in US. Their study included various categories of educators such as school administrators, elementary general teachers, university faculty teachers, special education teachers, secondary general teachers and speech therapists. They developed a 30-item survey, which they named it as Dyslexia Belief Index (DBI). In their study Wadlington & Wadlington (2005) found that the educators had insufficient knowledge concerning dyslexia and most of them misunderstood the case of dyslexia. According to their findings clear misconception was found in most of the educators, Wadlington & Wadlington (2005) determined that there is a need of handing out more information and trainings to the educators concerning this reading specific learning disability called dyslexia.

Another research that pint points the importance of teachers awareness and knowledge concerning children coping with dyslexia is the project of Ashburn & Snow, (2011) “Dyslexia: Awareness and Intervention in the Classroom”. The project held in California, Sacramento, was created for elementary, secondary and special education teachers. These two authors created the project, and the purpose of it was to "provide teachers with the information they will need about dyslexia: what it is, risk factors for it, prevalence, co-morbid conditions, and early identification" Ashburn & Snow, (2011. p.). They prepared a 4 hour training workshop with a presenter's manual, handouts, slides, and presenter notes, which could be presented by school psychologists. In their literature review, it is stated that teachers do have misconceptions about dyslexia. Thus, they created this project, with its aim to give the teachers a better understanding about dyslexia.

The study of Washburn et al., (2011), “Teacher Knowledge of Basic Language Concepts and Dyslexia”, is another study with a purpose of identifying teachers knowledge about different language concepts and dyslexia. The participants in this study were elementary school teachers. The participants were collected form two data groups. Group one consisted of 99 participants and was from 10 different schools of the district in a Midwestern state in the United States, group two, consisted of 86 participants from an urban school district in
Southwest United States. In this study, the researchers found that the teachers carried a common misconception of what dyslexia is. They were confusing dyslexia with a "visual processing deficit rather than phonological processing deficit" (Washburn et al., 2011, p. 165).

Another study/dissertation was conducted in China for teachers perceptions of children with dyslexia (Lee, 2009), “Teachers' perceptions of students with dyslexia in a local primary school”. Lee, (2009) obtained the perceptions of students with dyslexia from ten Chinese and English Language teachers. The teachers were working in a local primary school, in Hong Kong. Except qualitative interviews, Lee also used the DBI tool to measure the perception of teachers concerning dyslexia. Using the DBI tool, it was "found that all language teachers held a number of misconceptions about dyslexia, but they had a better understanding of teaching strategies for dyslexic students" (p.1). However, from the qualitative interviews he found out "the collaboration and cooperation between different school stakeholders was not well-developed and exam-oriented learning atmosphere restricted how teachers perceived and helped dyslexia” Lee, (2009, p.1). There are also some other research studies which are not particularly about teachers awareness concerning dyslexia but they relate to teachers and students coping with dyslexia (Johan et al., 2010). To best of my knowledge there is no European research in english concerning teachers awareness of dyslexia among children.

As stated previously, there is a lack of research studies concerning the knowledge of dyslexia among teachers. It is as well assumed that there is a lack of research on dyslexia’s awareness and knowledge among educators in Kosovo. Since the focus of this thesis is on the awareness to the special needs of children coping with dyslexia in Kosovo, the following part contains a description of Kosovo’s situation concerning children with disabilities. The next subsections will describe in short paragraphs relating the background of the Faculty of Education in Prishtina, statistics of elementary and high school education in Prishtina, the work that Kosovo has done through this time for children with disabilities and what the legislation claims to offer for these children.

2.5 Background on teachers training (education) in Kosovo

The education/training of teachers, with higher education degrees started in late 1958. However, the university level of teachers education was created in 2002. The elementary study program was approved by the University Senate the same year. The study of the Faculty of Education started in late 2002. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo decided for the Faculty of Education to use this program in the study years 2003/2004 (University of Prishtina, 2008).

The study program of the academic year 2007/2008 of the Faculty of Education according to University of Prishtina, (2008) includes four years of studying. Every year is devised in two semesters. According to University of Prishtina, (2008), in the third year, VI semester, there are two courses that include special education and methodology and the difficulties in learning. However both of these two courses are elective courses, which means that the students can choose if they want to take these courses or chose another course.

2.6 Elementary and high school education in Prishtina

According to the Education statistics in Kosova 2012/2013, elementary and high school education includes the mandatory education with nine years of education. It is divided into
two levels: first level includes the elementary education which is years from 1-5 of education and second level which includes the high school education, with 6-9 years of education. This includes the children with the age groups of 6 to 15 years old (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2013).

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology develops policies, drafts and it implements legislations for the education system in Kosovo. However, the municipalities have the power to run the local interest while applying the policies set from the state (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2013).

2.7 Kosovo and children with disabilities

In the last decade, Kosovo has shown certain recognition for children with disabilities and their needs (KEC, 2006). Reasonable activities were designed to advocate equality and inclusion for all people, in the Kosovar education system (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007). Diverse national and international organizations coordinated seminars, with the objective of increasing awareness to the rights of the children in the education (KEC, 2006). However, the children’s needs and their inclusion in the education system, in Kosovo are quite behind when comparing to developed countries (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2007). In scholastic terms, there is a considerable lack of research and literature, about children with disabilities and their current situation in Kosovo. Unfortunately, there was no possibility to find more information on children with disabilities in Prishtina or Kosovo in general.

2.8 Research on Children with Reading Disabilities in Kosovo

As mentioned earlier, during the literature search only one study was found concerning reading disabilities in Kosovo, (Avdyli & Cuetos, 2012), “Reading difficulties in Albanian”). The aim of their study was to compare the reading abilities between Albanian dyslexic children with other nondyslexic children of the same age. There were 264 participants in the study, where 114 were children with reading disabilities and 150 of them were children with no reading problems, between the age of 6 to 11 years old. What is important to emphasize regarding this study is that, these researchers explained that there is a difference between Albanian language and English language when it comes to dyslexia. Albanian language is part of shallow orthography with other languages such as German, Italian etc., and in these languages the reading speed deficit is what characterized dyslexia. Shallow orthography is based on the written words where the words are easy to pronounce. Whereas in for opaque orthographies where English languages takes place, reading speed are not mentioned since reading accuracy plays a role in dyslexics speaking this language (Avdyli & Cuetos, 2012). In contrast to shallow orthography, in opaque orthography the pronunciation is more difficult based on how the words are written.

2.9 The legislation on the rights of children with disabilities

According to the UN convention on the Rights of the Children (Article 2.1), education, rehabilitation, socialization and integration, of children who are coping with exceptional needs, are of high value:

*States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of*
the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status (UN Convention on the Rights of the Children, 1990, p. 2).

According the the above citation, a state has to guarantee the rights of all children in its dominion. The republic of Kosovo acknowledged the above-cited article, from the convention on Children’s rights, in article 40 of its Preuniversity Education Act:

It is the explicit intention of this Law that the principle of inclusive education should be applied in the Republic of Kosovo as best practice in accordance with international norms as set out in the UNESCO Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Statement of Salamanca (1994), the UN Convention of the Rights of Disabled Persons (2007) and other relevant international conventions or recommendations (Assembly, Republic of Kosovo, 2011, p. 27).

In this paragraph, the republic of Kosovo ratifies among other conventions, the UN convention of the rights of the children, while creating a policy safeguarding the principle of inclusive education and equal opportunities. The aforementioned law, article 3, specifies in addition that:

It shall be the general duty of the Ministry, the municipalities, the educational and/or training institutions and all other bodies engaged in the provision of pre-university education, as regulated by this Law and other applicable laws, to plan and deliver an efficient, effective, flexible, inclusive and professional service designed to provide all pupils with equal opportunities in access to education in accordance with their specific abilities and needs and to promote their educational and social development (Assembly, Republic of Kosovo, 2011, p. 4).

According to these Legislations, social policies should be enacted in order to provide teachers with sufficient expertise in helping children with different needs. The acts previously mentioned guaranty rights of inclusion, regardless of children’s special needs. However, there is a discrepancy between these policies to the situation in practice (KEC, 2006). Lack of funds, research and awareness concerning to the importance of prevention in the field of learning disabilities in Kosovo (Ibid.), may account for the gap between reality in practice, and the relevant regulations. This gap may imply that children coping with dyslexia are in the vulnerable position and at risk of exclusion in future life. To this end dyslexia relates not only to a physical impairment but is likely to originate to social exclusion. This may be a result of restricted possibilities to participate fully in society. The limited possibilities available for the individual's choices, the individuals determination over her or his life, and the negatively negotiated identity may results in exclusion (Dominelli & Campling, 2002). In the next chapter, there will be a description of definition of the research problem where the study aim and research questions are presented.
3. DEFINITION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the past several decades, learning difficulties received substantial comprehension. While the academic knowledge of specific learning difficulties is growing, standard of professional recognition is still unclear (Kirby, et al., 2005). Research studies show that there are misconceptions, lack of awareness and knowledge among educators concerning dyslexia (Roper, 2010; Reid, 2005b; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005). This lack of awareness among teachers does not help to understand the needs of children, and this can result in anxiety (Reid, 2005b). According to Wadlington & Wadlington (2005), dyslexic student’s self-esteem can be fragile, and the teacher’s attitude towards them plays a significant role during their studies. Educators, who acquire knowledge and training, may have better chances to identify children who may be coping with dyslexia, meet their diverse needs, and many mediate the adjustment of those needs. This research will focus on teacher’s awareness concerning children coping with dyslexia in Kosovo. In the coming chapter, the purpose of this thesis will be described more thoroughly with the added research questions.
4. AIM

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the awareness of primary school teachers of the term dyslexia. Additional information will be gathered concerning their knowledge concerning dyslexia. More specifically, the plan is to provide a better understanding of educator’s perceptions about dyslexia and children coping with it. The research is additionally focused on the awareness of teachers in Prishtina regarding their responsibilities and roles in providing equal opportunities and approaches that meet the needs of all children. As well as to see, if they have any education regarding children with special needs.

Following the aim described above, this research focuses on the following questions:

- What are the conceptions among primary school teachers, concerning dyslexia?
- Are the teachers aware of characteristics indicating suspected dyslexia?
- Are the teachers aware of the needs of children who are coping with dyslexia?
- Do they get any education during their studies concerning children with special needs?
- What do they think is their role as teachers in providing equal opportunities for these children?

Next chapter will describe the theoretical frame of reference used for this study. To get a sufficient answer to these questions, it is important to use a suitable method of research. In the following section, the method of this master thesis will be described in details.
5. THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

In the section, I will specify the main debates in the field of inclusion of children with learning difficulties. I will emphasise the significance of lack of awareness among primary school teachers concerning dyslexia. This includes concepts such as normalization, social role valorization (SRV) and attribution theory.

Normalization/ SRV is a salient component in contemporary debates and practice in the field of learning difficulties (Yates et al., 2008). With its origin form Scandinavia; normalization suggests that people with learning difficulties should enjoy the good things in life as close as other people in society (Walmsley, 2001). Walmsley (2001) cites Nirje, (1980, p.33) and generalize the concept of normalization as relevant for people with intellectual disabilities, as applicable to the situation of people coping with learning difficulties:

*The normalization principle means making available to all mentally retarded people patterns of life and conditions of everyday living, which are as close as possible to the regular circumstances and ways of life of society (p. 33).*

Later on this definition was changed as follows:

*The normalization principle means that you act right when making available to all persons with intellectual or other impairments or disabilities patterns of life and conditions of everyday living which are as close as possible to or indeed the same as the regular circumstances and ways of life of their communities (Nirje, 1992, p.16)*

The benefits of normalization process are that it helps in social integration. "Isolation and segregation foster ignorance and prejudice, whereas integration and normalization of smaller groups of mentally retarded improve regular human relations and understanding, and generally are a prerequisite for the social integration of the individual" Nirje (1969, p.). According to Nirje, normalization principle has various attributes. Normalization principle means to have a normal rhythm of life for people with disabilities a normal routine of everyday life, to have a normal life experiences as other “normal” people. These attributions are very important according to Nirje since they contribute on the developments of independence of the "retarded" people, helping their self-confidence etc. Nirje (1969), points out that normalization principles not only helps out people who are mildly or profoundly retarded but also those who work with them and their parents. (Nirje, 1969). Normalization principle is serviceable in all groups of people meaning in every society. Nirje, (1969) shows eight characteristics of what normalization principles means:

1. "Normalization means a normal rhythm of the day for the retarded". It means having a normal rhythm of the day as others such as getting up in the morning, eating. Having the same routines as other people do.

2. "The normalization principle also implies a normal routine of life". Having to go to work and come back home, (these should be different places not same place). Work where they get the experience that their job is meaningful and important part of life.

3. "Normalization means to experience the normal rhythm of the year". Here, he includes having the normal rhythm of enjoying family holidays and vacations.
4. "Normalization also means an opportunity to undergo normal developmental experiences of the life cycle": Here Nirje, (1969) gave four important subsections a.) children should have a friendliness atmosphere with strong help in sensory stimulation, and give great surroundings to help them nourish their knowledge and skills; b.) youth should enjoy the good life equally to other youth by giving their proper conditions that are structured for youth people. It is important for their development to have a good life at school and outside school. c.) This is a period transition from adolescent to adulthood, the period which is very fragile for people with disabilities. For their achievement, it is important that other people such as parents, relatives and institutional staff to have more cautious attitude towards them; d.) for the old people with disabilities who cannot work, to offer them to live in facilities that are close to their places where they spend their adulthood.

5. Here Nirje points out that normalization principle also means "the choices, wishes and desires of the mentally retarded themselves have to be taken into consideration" and that these should be respected from others.

6. "Normalization also means living in a bisexual world". They should be mixed with both sexes e.g. the facilities staff should be of both sexes.

7. The economic conditions should be considered as very important as well. "A prerequisite to letting the retarded obtain an existence as close to normal as possible is to apply normal economic standards".

8. In the end normalization principle suggest that the "standards of the physical facilities, e.g. hospitals, schools, group homes and hostels, and boarding homes, should be the same as those regularly applied in society to the same kind of facilities for ordinary citizens" (Nirje, 1969).

Later on the notion of normalization was re-conceptualized as Social Role Valorization (SRV), which suggest “the use of culturally valued means in order to enable, establish and/or maintain valued social roles for people” (Wolfensberger & Tullman, 1989, p. 211). Wolfensberger changed the name of normalization to SRV as more focused on all devalued and deviant people rather than only to people with intellectual disability. It is important to mention that SRV supports two types of groups: those who are already devalued in society and those who are at risk of being devalued in society. According to Wolfensberger (1983), Nirje focused more on human rights and equality while SRV basic aim is that people should enjoy social valued roles in society. The concept of SRV means that society should strive to give a positive social role to devalued individuals, by enjoying acceptance in society, respect, education, self belonging and other things that make them feel valued in society. SRV "can help not only to prevent bad things from happening to socially vulnerable or devalued people, but can also increase the likelihood that they will experience the good things in life" (Osburn, 2006, p. 5). This strategy aims to improve these individuals’ social image and develop their personal competencies through integration into society, by having access to ordinary vocations, education and housing. Individuals can engage in social activities that are socially valued (Wolfensberger, 1983). Both normalization and SRV movements have achieved great success last decade by helping devalued people towards successful integration on society (Culham & Nind, 2003). These two concepts are used in this study to show the importance of knowledge concerning dyslexia among teachers so that children coping with dyslexia can be socially valued as other children. Children coping with dyslexia are very much at risk of being devalued and excluded from their rights as students because of their difficulties. With
Normalisation/SRV goal, the teachers must obtain knowledge of dyslexia, so they help these children to be accepted in school and later on in life.

Another important concept related to this thesis is the notion of attribution theory. Initially Heider, (1958) purposed the psychological theory of attribution. He explained how attribution theory suggests that people try to decide why people do what they do. Later this theory has been extend by Weiner, (1980) to encompass problems of social psychology. Weiner, (1980) focused the attribution theory on self-concept and achievement:

*Causal attributions determine affective reactions to success and failure. For example, one is not likely to experience pride in success, or feelings of competence, when receiving an ‘A’ from a teacher who gives only that grade, or when defeating a tennis player who always loses...On the other hand, an ‘A’ from a teacher who gives few high grades or a victory over a highly rated tennis player following a great deal of practice generates great positive affect.* (Weiner,1980 p. 362).

According to Weiner, (1980) success is usually attributed to internal, stable, uncontrollable factors such as the abilities of students who are high achievers. Failure might be attributed to the internal, unstable, controllable factors such as effort, or it might be attributed to external factors such as luck. The same applies to children who are coping with dyslexia. If these children have continuous difficulties in reading while other peers do not have they will perceive themselves as poor readers. This self-perception of being poor readers can result in acceptance of failure. Attribution theory also deals with the difference of high achievers and low achievers. It explains how, high achievers see themselves as successful, and if they fail, it is because they have bad luck and it does not affect their self-esteem. However, low achievers put the blame on their selves. In this case, children coping with dyslexia, if they have difficulties in reading, it is because they are poor readers and that is why they have low self-esteem. Thus, the awareness of teachers is important so these children can be helped to have better expectations of their selves so they can have a better life.

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, educators may obtain misconceptions, lack of awareness and lack of knowledge concerning dyslexia (Roper, 2010; Reid, 2005b; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005). Wadlington & Wadlington (2005) found that most of the educators had a poor understanding of dyslexia. According to Wadlington & Wadlington (2005), dyslexic student’s self-esteem can be fragile, and the teacher’s attitude towards them plays a big role during their studies. The teachers attitude who lack knowledge of dyslexia can be explained by the attribution theory. Tetlock, (1985) agrees with Heider, (1958) that attribution theory explains the phenomenon where people draw conclusions form their observations of the actor’s behavior. There is a systematic bias in this process, where the person has the tendency “to overestimate personality or dispositional cases of behavior and to underestimate the influence of situational constraints on behavior” (Tetlock, 1985, p. 227).

In this chapter, I presented Normalization/ SRV as an important component in the sphere of learning difficulties. I also suggest how attribution theory can be used to explain teachers (who lack awareness of dyslexia) perception of children coping with dyslexia.; and how these children perceive themselves. The following chapter will describe the method used for this thesis.
6. METHOD

Word qualitative refer the importance on the qualities of individuals and on action and contest that are not experimentally measured in premises of quantity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). While quantitative research, focus on statistically based investigation, the qualitative research gives a in-depth understanding of concepts (Tewksbury, 2009). Qualitative research is focused on finding out how others experience life. It "refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things." (Berg, 2007, p. 3). Qualitative research is used in many disciplines, "anthropology, education, nursing, psychology, sociology, and marketing regularly use qualitative methods to address questions about people’s ways of organizing, relating to, and interacting with the world" (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2012, p.1) This study used a flexible method, using an open-ended and semi-structured questionnaire. Open-ended questions in contrast to closed questions allow the respondent to respond without any restriction giving the researcher unexpected answers (Robson, 2002).

Data concerning teachers' awareness of dyslexia was obtained from twenty-seven school teachers. The surveys were sent to four prominent elementary schools in Pristina. Some of the participants could not access computers and internet. Therefore, the surveys were delivered in two ways: via e-mail to participants that have frequent access to e-mail communication, and to those who do not have e-mail addresses the surveys were handed to their schools. Ten teachers' email addressees were obtained by four different schools. The surveys were sent to these teachers, but only two of them replied. Out of the twenty-seven who answered directly or via email, only sixteen participants completed the whole answers. The other nine respondents did not answer the whole survey beside the demographic part, and two of the participants were disqualified. These nine participant who did not complete the whole questionnaire said they never heard about dyslexia. Two participants were omitted from the analysis since they “copy-pasted” information about dyslexia directly from different Albanian internet webpages. These two disqualified participants were those who answered via email. At last, twenty-five of participants were included in the analysis.

Because of some personal reasons at the time when doing this thesis, it was not possible to travel to Kosovo. This was the reason of choosing to use a self-completion method. The surveys that were handed out directly to the teachers were enabled by my sisters, a cousin and a friend who live in Pristina. These persons will be referred to as volunteers in the rest of this thesis. The volunteers that helped in this thesis had academic degrees and were previously involved in research studies meaning they had experiences in distributing surveys.

The survey questions should be arranged in a way that can help the researcher answer the research questions and complete the purpose of the study (Robson, 2002). The demographic items included questions referring to their gender, age, where and when did they obtained their degree, what is their major and years of their teaching experience. Whereas the other items are in a relation to the five research questions (please see the five questions in the aim section). From twenty items, the question one to nine (please see Appendix 1) were constructed to get information of participants general knowledge of dyslexia, symptoms, causes, treatment, advantages/disadvantages, academic problems and differences between children coping and those not coping with dyslexia. From question ten to thirteen the participant had the possibility to show us what do they think about children's needs, their role as a teacher when they encounter children coping with dyslexia in their class and their opinion
about school’s role regarding these children. The accounts produced by these items provided a deeper understanding of teacher’s point of view. The answers were subjected to a thematic content analysis. In order to show the intended study, two pilot questionnaires were distributed and analyzed. The pilot questionnaires helped the researcher to richten the survey by modifying some of the questions that the respondents did not answer, or thought were unclear. Therefore, more explanations were given in some items based on the feedback on the pilot questionnaire. Namely, some language related issues were edited while the content of the questions remained the same. These pilot questionaries were included in the data as well because the changes to the final questionnaire were minor.

6.1 Instrument/tool

The lack of research about children with learning disabilities in Kosovo creates a possibility to discover a lot of unexpected answers regarding dyslexia. The researcher is not aware if and what misconceptions about the dyslexia exist. Therefore, a qualitative tool consisting of 20 items was developed. These items were inspired from the Dyslexia Belief Index (DBI) tool of Wadlington & Wadlington (2005). The DBI tool is of a quantitative nature, and in the very start of this research this tool was seen as an effective mean to achieve the given aim since the DBI tool was used in other similar research studies (Lee, 2009). However, it was discovered that the tool is being rified after contacting the authors for permission of use. A new qualitative tool was developed, due to the reasons mentioned earlier. The questions were adapted to the context of Kosovo and included more content derived from the literature about dyslexia such as IDA, (2012); Shaywitz & Shaywitz, (2004); Wadlington & Wadlington, (2005); Shaywitz, (2003); Savage et al., (2005); Shaywitz & Shaywitz, (2005); Snowling, et al (2011); IDA, (2008); Bishop & League, (2006); LD Online, (2007); Shaywitz, (2003); Vellutino et al., (2004). The tool was constructed in Albanian language as the native language of the participants is Albanian. The researcher adapted the items to the local linguistic appropriateness. As mentioned earlier Avdyli & Cuetos, 2012 explained that there is a difference between Albanian language and English language when it comes to dyslexia. Albanian language is part of shallow orthography, and for the languages that are part of this group the reading speed deficit is what characterized dyslexia. Shallow orthography is based on the written words where the words are easy to pronounce. Whereas for opaque orthographies where English languages takes place, reading speed is not mentioned since reading accuracy plays a role in dyslexics speaking. In contrast to shallow orthography, in opaque orthography the pronunciation is more difficult based on how the words are written. In the DBI tool, there were some questions that related to english speaking people, which in this case were not taken in consideration. This is the reason why the items were adapted in the local linguistic appropriateness. These 20 items consist of questions that can give a better perspective on the teacher’s knowledge about dyslexia in general.

6.2 Informants/subjecs

This thesis focused on a group of primary school teachers located in the area of Prishtina, which is the central metropolis of Kosovo. The study took place in four primary schools of Prishtina. The participants teach from first to the fifth year of elementary school. Teachers from different gender and age groups were chosen to participate in the study. Eighteen of them were female teachers while seven were men. Their age was between 25-65 years old. Five of participants were of 51-65 years of age, with high school diploma. They did not have a bachelor degree. Seventeen participants had a bachelor degree from Pristina University with
a major in Primary Education. Other three participants had their degrees in other areas such as Philosophy and Social Science. Table 1 shows an overview about the participants’s demographic, academic and professional background. In this thesis, the demographic data was used to see if there is a difference between the respondents point of view concerning dyslexia. The analysis of the data will be described in the next coming part of this thesis.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic items</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Working Experience</th>
<th>Education/Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>20-35</td>
<td>36-50</td>
<td>51-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Table 1 shows the demographic items of twenty-five participants who answered the questionnaires. The table divides the gender and shows how many male and female participants took place in this study. Further it shows their age, working experience as teachers and their education state.

6.3 Data Analysis

In this section, the process of data analysis will be described. This study used an open-ended and semi-structured survey, following, a thematic content analysis. “Content analysis is most conveniently used with textual types of data such as open-ended survey questions or print media of various sorts” (Kondracki et al., 2002, p. 224). Thematic content analysis pursues to estimate the basic understanding of subjects, "generally for survey or experimental purposes" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 192). Markel (1998) uses thematic analysis from a qualitative and semiotic perspective where the meaning of the symbol has been analyzed. Thematic analysis gives the opportunity to recognize, analyze and report the themes of data Braun & Clarke (2006). In doing thematic analysis, according to Braun & Clarke (2006) one should follow six phases. These six phases were used to conduct the analysis of the data in this thesis, which are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Phase of Thematic Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:</td>
<td>Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generating initial codes:</td>
<td>Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Searching for themes:</td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reviewing themes:</td>
<td>Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire at a set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Defining and naming themes:</td>
<td>Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each phase.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of the selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 2 is retrieved from Braun & Clarke (2006) study, to show how the thematic analysis of this thesis was conducted.

Wordle, a "web-based tool for visualizing text " (Viegas et al., 2009) was used in order to do a text visualization of the themes that participant used to describe dyslexia. Various people who use the internet use this tool (Ibid.). The answers to the first question of the survey - Have you ever heard about dyslexia? If yes, what do you know about it? - were used as input in Wordle webpage. Wordle shows the words that were used most frequently, and it emphasizes these words in the text via font size. By visualizing the text, Wordle gives the reader an idea of what type of answers the participants gave to the question. In results chapter, the reader have the opportunity to see the figure of Wordle used for this thesis.

6.4 Research ethical considerations

Ethical issues are very important when doing a research study. A cautious ethical assessment has a great role on the quality of a research study Gustafsson & Hermerén &Petersson, (2006). As the ethical aspect of any research study is of high importance, it is relevant to mention that ethical aspect concerning the protection of participant’s confidentiality is as much considered in this study. The ethical considerations in the empirical research are important to refrain situations of stress and tension (Robson, 2002). Because of the importance of participant’s confidentiality, during the creation of open-ended and semi-structured questions and the whole course of the study, the aspect of ethical issues where given a serious thought and was taken into account.

The ethical part is considered in this study by giving special attention to ensure the respondents that the research is confidential. Before sending the questionaries’ to the teachers, the approval of the directors of the schools was required (see Appendix 3: letter of permission from directors and teachers). The teachers were asked in the beginning if they wanted to participate in a study, which they agreed. The teachers were informed why the researcher could not be there and hand out the surveys directly and the teachers showed a positive understanding of the researchers absence. After the directors and teachers approval the surveys were handed to the teachers where they were informed and reassured about their anonym responses. The teachers were familiarized in details about the purpose of the study. Clear instruction was given in the questionnaire to introduce the teachers with the study and the questionnaire form. Most importantly they were informed that their participation is voluntarily and ensured free will to respond and to leave the questioner without any hesitation of any kind. The participants had the chance to fill the questionaries’ in school where the questionaries’ were handed, but they also had the chance to take the survey at home if they were busy during their working hours. There were envelopes attached together with the surveys so when the teachers are finished responding the answers they could close the envelope and hand it over. This was due to assuring the teachers that their answers are going to be first checked by the researcher. The two respondents, who answered via email, did not
have to give their email address to the researcher. Their answers were submitted via the contact of the researcher who work as a teacher in one of the schools where the research was conducted. As mentioned earlier in the method part the surveys that were handed out directly to the teachers were enabled by volunteers of this thesis. All of them had academic degrees and were previously involved in research studies. The participants answers were not affected in any way since they did not know the volunteers who handed out the surveys. The teachers did not hesitate to give their answers to the volunteers who helped with handing out the surveys. The answers retrieved from the school where one of the volunteers works as a teacher, were also not affected by the fact that she is a teacher of the grade six to nine school years. Meaning that the teachers did not know the volunteer as they work different age groups and shifts. The participants were also informed that their self-completed questionaries’ will be used and shared with the thesis supervisor and the staff of Linnaeus University where the researcher is going to defend the Master thesis.
7. RESULT

The results are the fundamental part of the study. The researcher should be careful in assessment of the results (Vetenskapsrådet, 2006). This chapter discussesses the results of the qualitative analysis. The study was conducted in pursuit of a better understanding, of teachers’ awareness and knowledge about the term dyslexia as well as the needs of children coping with dyslexia. During the analysis of the data one could find some alarming responses which shed light on the topic in focus. The result section is divided in subsection according to the identified themes.

As mentioned in the method part, there were twenty-seven primary school teachers who participated in this study. During the analysis of the data, it was found that nine of the participants never heard about dyslexia, while two of them were disqualified. Since these nine participants did not hear about dyslexia, they did not fill out the survey except the demographic items and the first question, which they answered as “No I never heard about dyslexia” (p9-17). The volunteers reported that the participants asked them if they can leave the questionary blank if they did not know what to write. The disqualification of both participants who answered through electronic mail occurred since they copied information from Internet concerning dyslexia and then added the copied answers on the questionnaires as their own. While trying to analyze their answers, a suspicion of copied material was raised. After searching the Internet using the same sentences found in the respondents answers, it was found that they copied the paragraphs from different webpages on Internet and then passed to the questionnaire. Other respondents said they heard about dyslexia, but they showed a clear misconception of what dyslexia is, and what their role is if facing pupils coping with this learning disability. In the following, some of these misconceptions will be explained using thematic analysis methodology.

7.1 “I understood that dyslexia is a disease”

In this subsection, there will be a presentation of respondents point of view concerning their knowledge of dyslexia. Of the sixteen participants who completed the whole questionnaire, over half of them referred to dyslexia using various terms such as disability, disorder, speaking difficulty, and delay in reading, special disability, difficulty, stumble, psychological occurrence, difficulties in understanding (p3, p5, p6, p7, p8, p18, p20, p21, p23, p24, p25). Dyslexia was describes as a disease according to two teachers (p 2&4). They referred to dyslexia as a disease which is related to memory, the development of the brain and physical development in comparison with other children and those with speaking problems. One participant defined dyslexia as a psychiatric disorder which results in slow function of apprehension:

“Some of the knowledge that I have read form internet I understood that dyslexia is a disease that occurs in children and adults as well...The consequences are in memorizing, reading slowly and sometimes difficulties in creating sentences” (Participant 2).

“It’s a disease of those who have problems in speaking” Participant 4.

“Dyslexia is a psychic disorder that is manifested with slow function of cognitive system of the individual” (Participant 22).
These suggestions are not in accordance with research studies concerning dyslexia, where they claim that dyslexia is a reading disability with difficulties in spelling and fluent word recognition (IDA, 2008; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2005; Snowling, et al 2011). Less than half of respondents defined dyslexia as a difficulty in speaking, stumble in understanding, lacking the spelling skill, disability in remembering and disability in learning the words etc. (p3, p5, p6, p7, p8, p18, p20, p21, p23, p24, p25). While these participants had somewhat an idea of what dyslexia might be, there were other respondents who had alarming misconception about dyslexia by defining it as: a disease, problem with mouth, a hole in the mouth, psychiatric disorder, stumble in logic reading, disability in getting information, etc. (p2, p4, p7, p8).

7.2 “According to my experience, dyslexic children are more self-withdrawn if compared to other children…”

The teachers had the opportunity to write their perception about children who are coping with dyslexia and its symptoms. One third of participants described them as children with speaking and learning difficulties, slow readers, who need more time to process the study work, with low self-esteem and self-withdrawn, isolated and who hesitate to communicate and be active during study hours (p3, p1, p2, p7, p18, p20, p22, p24, p25):

“According to my experience, dyslexic children are more self-withdrawn if compared to other children. When they read you can notice their hesitation and concern. But when it comes to playing and having fun with other toys with their friends they are normal” (Participant 3).

“I think that a child with dyslexia have a stumble in reading and maybe even when they know how to read they hesitate” (Participant 24).

Interestingly, two of the participants indicated that these children are no different when comparing with others expect the reading problem, and that they should be treated equally as others, (p21, p23).

“…I think that a child with dyslexia is different only when spelling and reading come to place” (Participant 23).

As it is shown in earlier chapters, dyslexia is characterized with poor reading fluency, poor decoding abilities and difficulties in self-expression (IDA, 2012; LD Online, 2007; Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz, 2003).

A small number of those surveyed suggested that intelligence plays a significant role when it comes to dyslexia. According to them dyslexia is connected to intelligence, indicating that children coping with dyslexia have below average intelligence. These suggestions are not in accordance with the claims of various research studies where it is said that intelligence is not affected by dyslexia (IDA, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003). The single most striking response to emerge from one respondent was the belief that children coping with dyslexia do not know how to recognize a human from other species (p4). Same participant indicated that if speaking is not developed the intellectual aspect as well remains undeveloped:

“Lack of speaking, they don’t know how to differ a person in comparison with other species. Without speaking one cannot be developed in intellectual way, education,
culture, science, and technology. Every nationality have its own speaking and based on this language it develops its culture, so language is the base of human development” (Participant 4).

The majority of the respondents did not mention anything about the intelligence of children coping with dyslexia. The analysed data showed that there were two participants who suggested that intellectually children coping with dyslexia are no different from other children (p3, p23).

7.3 “There are different causes like: born with a hole in mouth palate, small tongue, nose inflammation…”

This subsection presents the results obtained from analysis of item (5), where the respondents commented on the cause of dyslexia. The minority of respondents/those who responded the whole questionnaire claimed to have no knowledge about the cause of dyslexia. The other participants expressed the belief that dyslexia can be caused by: high fever, small tongue, damages during labor, psychological problems, brain problems, development factors, hearing problems, social factors, inflammation in nose, nose hemorrhage etc. (p4, p6, p18, p21). While all of these assumptions are not in a correlation to what it is said in the earlier research studies concerning the cause of reading disorder dyslexia, there were only five of the participants who assumed that dyslexia can be inherited or caused by genetic factors (p3, p5, p7 p23, p25):

“There are different causes like: born with a hole in mouth palate, small tongue, nose inflammation, nose hemorrhage etc” (Participant 4).

“The causes can be: genetics, premature birth and damages during labor. these children can be noticed thorough: they have problems with palate (have holes or are very soft), small tong etc”. (Participant 7).

“I think that it is inherited” (Participant 23).

Suggestions such as children with dyslexia have holes in their mouth, have small tongue, nose inflammation, nose haemorrhage, children of premature birth, have had damage during labor, show a clear misconception of dyslexia and its causes. Dyslexia is a reading disability which is inherited within families (IDA, 2012; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2004; Ramus, et al 2003; Vellutino, et al 2004).

7.4 “I know that it can be treated”

The participants were asked to express their opinion about the treatment of dyslexia. As many as seven of the participants, who heard about dyslexia, showed that they did not know if dyslexia could be treated (p1, p6, p8, p19, p20, p22, p25). Whereas the majority of those who responded indicated that there should be a consultation with professionals. They even expressed their conception of the treatment and possible interventions for children coping with dyslexia. They indicated that dyslexia should be treated by specialized people in otolaryngology, psychology, defectology, doctors, experts of this area and by parents and society (p3, p4, p5, p7, p18, p23). One participant commented that dyslexia should be treated by specialists of this area by using with medical remedies, “in severe cases with surgical intervention” (p7). Three other participants indicated as well that dyslexia can be treated. One
of them stated that if its earlier identified it is possible, and another one said it can be treated but not totally vanished:

“It can be treated but this disorder should be identified as early as possible so that it can be treated by professionals of this domain” (Participant 2).

“I don’t have information if this disease can be treated but I think that there should be a special pedagogue besides teachers to determine if the child is touched by this disease” (Participant 1).

“I believe that dyslexia can be treated but not disappeared totally, but it can be improved with trainings in talking and reading. If it is severe it needs surgical intervention in that part of the brain where is not functioning” (Participant 21).

Ten out of sixteen of respondents who commented on this question believed that dyslexia can be treated. This shows strong evidence that teachers are not aware of the treatment of dyslexia since according to research studies there is no treatment of dyslexia. “The disorder has lifelong persistence” (Ramus, et al., 2003, p.841). However, some respondents were loosely correct as dyslexia’s severity can be reduced if identified early in children’s life (IDA, 2012; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2004).

7.5 “I don’t think there is an advantage for these children. Whereas for disadvantages there are a lot”

The analysis of the respondents assumptions concerning academic problems, advantages/disadvantage toward children coping with dyslexia was assessed. Most of the teachers showed knowledge about the academic problems that children with dyslexia might have. These problems that children coping with dyslexia encounter are of various sorts. They have problems in reading, learning, expressing themselves, hesitating during class, concentration problem, writing-reading problems, and problems in socializing (p5, p6, p18, p20, p21, p22, p24). Two participants claimed that children coping with dyslexia might have problems of adapting to the school environment and that some of these children might even “abandon the school” (p8). “These children have problems that deal with the adaptation in the school environment” (p7). Another one commented that the problems that children coping with dyslexia might have at school is because they have lower intelligence than others; “When the intelligence is lower than average” (Participant 4).

When asked if there are advantages and disadvantages of children coping with dyslexia, their responses were mainly about the disadvantages.

“It doesn’t have advantages” (Participant 1).

“I think that there is no disease that has advantages, especially when it’s about stagnation in development of brain-memory”, (Participant 2).

“I don’t think there is an advantage for these children. Whereas for disadvantages there are a lot” (Participant 6).

“Disadvantages are multiple” (Participant 22).
According to different studies individuals coping with dyslexia often can be gifted in various areas such as art, design, computer science, music, sales, mechanics etc. (IDA, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003). Based on the respondents answers it is evident that they have distorted perceptions of the subjects, pointing out that dyslexia has only disadvantages. However, in twenty-five participants included in this study, three out of sixteen that filled out the whole questionnaires believed that besides their disadvantages, children with dyslexia can be gifted with other skills:

“In games and other skills they are more alive/energy” (Participant 3).

“I don’t think that they have advantages, but it is said that these children can be very bright” (Participant 8).

“Intelligence is equal to other normal (random) children, but they can be backward in reading, expressing themselves” (Participant 24).

7.6 “Dyslexic children often look like they are more creative and they perform better in arts”

The teachers had to express their ideas about the differences between children coping and those not coping with dyslexia. Most of the teachers described the first as more self-withdrawn, unsecure, with difficulties in speaking, reading and learning, with lack of attention, lonely, children that need more time for learning (p3, p5, p6, p7, p8, p18, p19, p22, p25). Children coping with dyslexia can have a vulnerable self-esteem (Wadlington&Wadlington 2003). According to these participants, children who are not coping with dyslexia do not have these problems. There are no differences between these children, expect that children coping with dyslexia need more help to improve their reading (p21, p24). There were also two other participants who expressed a positive comment describing children with dyslexia as creative and skillful outside the learning scope (p3, p20):

“Children with dyslexia are more withdrawn in learning, whereas in playing are more skillful. Non-dyslexic children are the same in learning and other skills” (Participant 3).

7.7 “They need more care and better treatment”

When the teachers were asked about the needs of children coping with dyslexia the majority suggested that these children have their own needs. Some of the opinions, were academic oriented indicating that these children need more time to solve their problems at school, need maximal engagement (p19, p20, p21, p23). Others focused more on the medical aspect expressing that children coping with dyslexia have the need to be treated from experts, they need support from psychologists, pedagogue and “research centers of this occurrence” p25 (p4, p5, p25). It is important to mention that there were also comments of the sort that children coping with dyslexia need moral support, love, they need to be prioritized by parents, society and school, they need care from the school, parents, society, more commitment from the teachers, their inclusion in education, and appropriate environment to answer their needs (p3, p6, p7, p8, p18, p22):

“They need care from their parents, social environment and school environment”(Participant 3).

“Take big steps that children can be included in education”(Participant 7).
“Appropriate environment and an environment that would understand their needs and that will give conditions for these children to develop” (Participant 22).

The first two participants explained how these children should have a special treatment from teachers in class, and that teachers should have special approaches to them while not making them feel different from other children (p1, p2).

7.8 “No I did not have any courses for children with special needs”

The participants were asked if during their education they had courses for children with special needs. They also had to add their opinion on the importance of having these courses during their education. They had the opportunity to answer freely by showing their ideas and opinions of what do they think its best for children coping with dyslexia. Almost all of participants who answered the survey claimed they did not have courses for children with special needs. Only one of them claimed to have had one course concerning children with special needs during the master studies:

“I as a teacher have had one course while i was studying for my Masters and some seminars from different places: inside the country and outside ” (Participant 5).

“No I did not have any courses for children with special needs” (Participant 6).

“We didn’t have and I think that it is necessary to have courses” (Participant 24).

Five of respondents are teachers who have a high school diploma. This shows that they did not have courses concerning children with special needs. Four of the respondents did not possess a degree of Education. They had different degrees such as Social Science, Philosophy. A somewhat encouraging fact is that Faculty of Education provides single subject (elective) courses about children with special needs and learning disabilities in it’s last semester of the program (University of Prishtina 2008). However, the issue is that not all prospective teachers will chose any of those courses. (University of Prishtina 2008).

7.9 “It can be said that after the family, the teacher has a big role to the students”

When asked “What is the teacher’s role if they encounter children with dyslexia in their class?”, nine of the respondents expressed their role as very important. They pointed out their role as crucial to help find ways for these children to improve in learning aspect. They suggested that their role as teachers is to answer the children’s needs in learning direction, and make them feel as equal as possible by not discriminating them (p2, p3, p6, p8, p18, p20, p22, p23 p24):

“I think that the teacher’s role is important because we have to find adequate ways that can answer the needs of children...to find better ways in improvement of their knowledge in general” (Participant 2).

“In the class the teacher should work together with all, so the children cannot notice a discrimination towards them...(Participant 3).

“It can be said that after the family, the teacher has a big role to the students” (Participant 6).
“The role of the teacher is to work more and longer with them. To have patients and be able to work with them” (Participant 22).

“To be more careful towards him...to not criticize etc.” (Participant 24).

“To identify these children...” (Participant 25).

According to these opinions, one third of the teachers in the survey showed their motivation to help these children to improve their academic and life achievements. Even though they have misconceptions concerning dyslexia in general, it is important to mention that some of the teachers believe that their role is important to help these children improve, so they do not feel discriminated.

A small number of those who responded had a different opinion about this issue. Four of the participants expressed their role as messengers, saying that they should contact the children’s parents and guide them to consult with psychologists, doctors and other experts so the children can get help (p1, p4, p5, p7):

“First we have to talk to the parents, so that the child can be consulted with logoped, because we don’t have logoped in ours schools” (Participant 4).

“To guide the child look for help from experts of this area” (Participant 5).

“The first step is to consult with the parents, logoped and psychologists” (Participant 7).

The results show that these teachers believe they do not have a lot of power to help these children in this issue. Their only duty is to contact the parents or guide children to seek for help from professionals. In Wadlington&Wadlington (2003) study, it is also suggested that children coping with dyslexia are vulnerable, and teachers attitude plays a great role on their performance. The overall response to this question was very positive. Only one participant did not answer in this question (p19).

7.10 The school’s role of children with dyslexia

When the subject were asked about the school’s role of children with dyslexia, the majority suggested the school’s role as multiple. According to their suggestions, in order to have inclusion in schools it is important to treat children with equality and provide them with conditions of the sort that can help improve their learning during school years. The teachers gave ideas about improving the conditions of the schools by employing professionals to deal with children coping with dyslexia (p3, p4, p5, p6, p8, p18, p19, p20, p21, p22, p24, p25). They also suggested that schools should organize courses for teachers, so they can be informed about these disabilities and to support the children coping with dyslexia by giving them good environment etc:

“The schools role is to give information about dyslexia and that these persons should be treated the same way as other children. To prepare the teachers how to behave with these children” (Participant 21).

“If we want inclusion in schools, there should be trainings for teachers in improving their abilities to work with these children” (Participant 7).
“Every school should have their policies for these kids so they won’t be stigmatised. To protect them from discriminations that these children can face” (Participant 22).

Thirteen out of sixteen respondents suggested that, in order to have included and non-discriminated children, the school has the role to provide the appropriate conditions for the teachers. Only one of them did not answer this question (p23).

The last item allowed the respondents to add any additional comment they had about dyslexia or the study. Only five of the participants commented on this item (p3, p4, p7, p18, p24). One participant expressed acknowledgment for the study (p4). The other participant added that the information concerning dyslexia was taken from internet “Hopefully that with what I looked on the internet I’ve achieved to answer your questions” (p24). The other three showed enthusiasm for improvement for the future concerning the situation of these children. One of the respondents commented that Kosovo’s poor political and economical condition affect the lives of children coping with reading disabilities. The subject indicated that the chances of improvement of conditions for these children are low. All five of participants who commented on this question showed a willingness to improve their knowledge concerning dyslexia. They suggested that improvement of their knowledge can be possible if there are different seminars, trainings and different lectures concerning children with disabilities offered from schools, so they can be ready to meet these children’s needs:

“It is known that Kosovo is a poor country. The possibilities for this category of children are few. My opinion is that these children should be treated equally and not be isolated from the society” (Participant 3).

“Improvement of knowledge for including these children. The teachers should have seminars and have courses that can help them deal with children with this disorder” (Participant 7).

An analysis of the demographic part was also assessed. The purpose was to find out if there were any differences between the answeres of the teachers with various ages and educational degrees. Five teachers were between 51-65 years of age and had only high school diploma. However, these teachers had more working experience then other teachers that participated in this study. It is important to mention that these five teachers had a colourful opinion on the matter of dyslexia comparing with others who were younger and had higher educational degrees. This might indicate that their long working experience as teachers helped them meet various students, and they had better chances to meet children coping with dyslexia. There was no other difference on the respondents that related to their personal data.
As mentioned in the method section, the answers from question one were used as input to create a visualization in Wordle (Viegas et al., 2009). From Figure 1, we can understand that most of the themes that were used to answer this question were difficulties, speaking, reading, disability, disorder, etc. The result of this visualization of themes is in correlation to the results shown in first subsection where the teachers referred to dyslexia using various terms such as difficulties, disability, disorder with speaking and reading difficulty.

In previously mentioned chapters, we understood that there is lack of funds, research and awareness concerning the field of learning disabilities in Kosovo (KEC, 2006), which makes us understand that the conditions for these children in Kosovo are in bad shape. This assumption is supported by the empirical research done for this study in the above citations of teachers.

The analyzed data indicates that beside the nine participants who were not aware of dyslexia, the other teachers showed a somewhat knowledge of the term dyslexia. In other questions, where they had to give a wider knowledge about dyslexia and children coping with dyslexia, some alarming misconceptions were found. The alarming misconceptions found in this study and the fact that one third of participants did not even fill out the whole form show a considerable lack of knowledge of dyslexia among the primary school teachers of Prishtina.
8. DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this study is to analyze the awareness of the term dyslexia by primary school teachers in Prishtina. Additional information is gathered concerning their knowledge about dyslexia. Respectively the purpose is to provide a better understanding of participant’s perceptions about dyslexia; to recognize if they are aware of their responsibilities to provide equal opportunities and teaching approaches that meet the needs of all children; as well as to see if they have any education regarding children with special needs. To fulfill this aim, I collected information concerning their knowledge and exposure to the needs of children coping with dyslexia. The present study shows that primary school teachers of Prishtina are not fully aware of the term dyslexia. The study also found a presence of clear misconceptions among teachers concerning dyslexia and its manifestations. However, some of the teachers are aware of the children's needs and consider their role as educators as very important to help these children cope better with their reading disability. Some of these teachers feel their role is to direct children’s parents to a psychologist or other professionals, without being too much involved in the process of helping them cope with their disability. This final section begins by highlighting the methods and the results of this study. The results obtained from questionaries answer the research question. They are discussed in detail after elaborating the methods used for this study. In the end, a brief conclusion of the study is described.

8.1 Discussion of methods

In this subsection, the discussion of methods is presented. Various issues regarding the choices of research methods and in some cases their subsequent adaptations are elaborated here. The trustworthiness of the result using this method is also discussed. It continues by showing the strengths and weaknesses of the method used in this thesis.

This study is a qualitative study that uses an open-ended and semi-structured questionnaire. Open-ended questions in contrast to closed questions allow the respondent to respond without any restriction giving the researcher unexpected answers (Robson, 2002, p. 275). As presented in the method section, a qualitative tool consisting of 20 items is developed. This tool is inspired by the DBI quantitative tool (Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005). A detailed literature review revealed that the DBI quantitative tool was used extensively in studies sharing similar goal to the one presented in this thesis. In the very beginning, the plan was to create a quantitative study by using the DBI tool. However, the different nature of Albanian language meant that a lot of the items from DBI would need to be adapted. After contacting the authors for their permission to use the tool, I found out that the tool is in the process of being refined. These reasons made me change the method of my study and decided to use it only as an inspiration. As mentioned in previous sections, the lack of research studies concerning teachers knowledge of dyslexia made it hard to find an ideal tool for this study. However, using the DBI tool as an inspiration and combining it with theoretical knowledge from related literature concerning dyslexia I created a 20 items tool that was adapted to the context of Prishtina. As it shown in chapter two, dyslexia can vary in its nature between various languages. The DBI tool contained some questions that related to english speaking people, which were not taken in consideration since the place where the study took place is Albanian speaking language. The survey questions are created and arranged in a way that can help the researcher answer the research questions and complete the purpose of the study (Robson, 2002, p. 241). A pilot questionnaire is crucial for the design and development of a study. For a good design, it is also crucial to have the questionnaire tested on family, colleagues etc (Wellington & Sczerbinski, 2007). Thus, to test its trustworthiness a pilot
questionnaire was conducted prior to the study, and it was tested among friends, family and then among two primary school teachers in Prishtina. The pilot study helped in improving the questionnaire, i.e., it aided in making the questions more understandable and less ambiguous.

Questionnaires are mainly used for quantitative research, but can also be qualitative, where they seek to find out perceptions or peoples opinions of an issue. (Wellington & Sczerbinski, 2007). Questionnaires especially open-ended can be time consuming for the respondent and difficult to answer. Thus, it is important not to create a large number of questions. In this thesis, the questionnaire does not consist of too many questions. The advantage of a questionnaire is the administration of the data (Wellington & Sczerbinski, 2007). It is important for the design of questionnaires to start with straightforward closed questions and continue with open-ended questions in the end (Wellington & Sczerbinski, 2007). The same principle has been applied in this thesis as well; the questions start as closed questions and continue with open-ended. The closed questions seek the matter of fact and open-ended require opinions and feelings about the issue (Berg, 2007).

The results of the study might have been different if an additional open-ended interview were to be assessed. Two teachers got help from the Internet when filing out the questionnaire. This might hide the exact extent of the non-awareness of the teachers, as a it is unclear how many respondents took answers from the Internet before or at the time of filling the questionnaires. As mentioned before, the surveys were handed in two ways: via email and directly. One third of the teachers who got their questionnaires directly, did not answer immediately. They took the questionnaires at home and then handed them out after several days. This is why an interview would be a better choice of finding out the awareness among teachers concerning the term dyslexia. Of course not all the question could be learned or copied completely, especially the ones pertaining to the teacher's personal opinion regarding children coping with dyslexia. So, not all the answers were taken from the Internet. It is clear that at least one third of the participants who did not answer the whole form did not check the answers from the Internet and did not ask for help anywhere.

Two important limitations need to be considered. First, the small sample of participants is one of the limitations of this study. Second, being unable to handle the surveys by my own is also a limitation of the study. The study could be richer if there were a larger framework of a qualitative study by including rural school teachers. Urban schools are known for a better education system and more professional teachers. Therefore, it would be an extensive work if the rural schools were involved in this study, to see if there is a difference between the teachers awareness and knowledge concerning dyslexia. However, since there is a lack of research concerning dyslexia in Kosovo, starting from one point is a good process.

8.2 Discussion of results

After sampling the data, an analysis of the data was assessed. During the analysis of the data, various unexpected responses were found, resulting in a very interesting outcome. The result of the analyzed data was split in subsections giving every question of the survey an important part of the study. In this study, it was found that nine out of twenty-seven participants never heard about dyslexia. These nine participants left most of the survey questions blank. They only filled-in the demographic part and the first question, which they answered as “No I never heard about dyslexia”. It was reported that the teachers asked if they could leave the questioneer blank if not feeling sure what to write. This shows that the teachers were willing
to respond but were not able to fill out the form since they were not aware of the term dyslexia. Two out of twenty-seven participants were disqualified. The reason behind the disqualification of these two participants is the copied information concerning dyslexia. They copied from Internet and then added the answers on the questionnaires as their own. Both of these participants answered through electronic mail, so it is believed that they had enough time to check the Internet to find information about dyslexia in different Albanian websites. While trying to analyze their answers, a suspicion of copied material was raised. I copied the teachers written paragraphs and passed in the Internet. It was clear that the same paragraphs were also present in some Albanian websites. Moreover, two other participants who said they heard about dyslexia, confirmed that the Internet alone was the source where they got to raise their awareness of dyslexia. What is most striking of this result is that these Albanian websites contain misconceptions on information concerning dyslexia. If non-official Albanian websites are the main source of information concerning dyslexia for teachers, and if these websites contain wrong or misleading data, consequences for the children might be dire.

The results of the study indicate that two third of the teachers are aware of the term dyslexia, with nine of them confirming they never heard of it. The results also show a clear lack of awareness of this learning difficulty among primary school teachers. They have clear misconceptions of dyslexia, its characteristics and manifestations. Answers to the first question (see Appendix 1), suggest that most of the teachers believed that dyslexia have to do with reading problems, spelling, speaking, learning etc. Some of them labeled dyslexia as a learning disability. This is supported by various authors where they claim that dyslexia is the most common reading disability that is characterized by symptoms such as such as poor spelling, reading fluency and difficulties in expressing themselves (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2004; Bishop & League, 2006; IDA, 2012; LD Online, 2007; Shaywitz, 2003). These difficulties in spelling and fluent word recognition that correlate to poor phonological processing, characterize dyslexia as a specific learning difficulty (IDA, 2008; Wadlington & Wadlington, 2005; Gabrieli, 2009; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2005; Snowling, et al 2011). What is considered as an unexpected result is that the minority of the respondents referred to dyslexia as a disease, psychiatric and psychological disorder with pathologic causes such as born with a “whole in a mouth palate”, “small tongue”, “nose inflammation”, “nose hemorrhage”. It was expected to have a misconception of dyslexia, however, not with such alarming results where teachers refer to it as a pathologic problem.

When asked if they are aware of the disadvantages and advantages of children coping with dyslexia, the aim was to find out if the teachers are aware that these children can be gifted with other skills. The teachers showed that they were not aware that these children can have skills in other fields. According to research study people coping with dyslexia have above average abilities. These skills like artistic abilities and creativity are rarely developed in schools (Solvang, 2007).

The analysis of results showed that there are misconceptions about dyslexia's characteristics among primary school teachers. Even though most of them mentioned, reading, spelling and learning as a difficulty of dyslexia, they also emphasized "speaking" as a difficulty of dyslexia. According to researchers, the speaking is not the prior difficulty of dyslexia as more of a consequence of the difficulty of reading. According to IDA's definition the reading problem "can impede the growth of vocabulary" (IDA, 2012, p. 1), children coping with dyslexia can end up having difficulties in growth of vocabulary. However, it does not mention that these children might have problems in speaking. However, Williams & Lynch (2010) point out that a characteristic of dyslexia is not only reading, writing and spelling but speaking as
well, but this is influenced by intelligence and educational opportunities. Williams & Lynch's (2010), findings are particularly interesting in the context of this thesis, especially the mentioning of educational opportunities which relates to the teacher's awareness and inclusion of these children in the educational system.

Some of the teachers who responded to all the questions suggested that the children's needs are very important. They said that teachers should be trained and well informed to address the children's needs. They even showed motivation and enthusiasm of changing the conditions for these children, by requiring from their schools to change the environment and make it more welcoming and helping. Even though the teachers are not informed of dyslexia and other learning disabilities they are willing to help these children and give their best to make these children feel equal to others. However, there were some of the teachers who suggested that these children's needs are to be addressed by professionals. A possible explanation for this might be that the teachers think they cannot help these children, and that is why they need to be treated by professionals. This indicates that teachers are not aware of the nature of dyslexia, and as a result, they are not aware of these children's needs. That is why some teachers are not familiar about their responsibilities towards such children. If the teachers are aware of dyslexia and its manifestations, they might be able to have better approaches towards these children. With wider knowledge of dyslexia, they can help these children in many ways without thinking that these children need only professional help.

During the analysis of the data, it was found that primary school teachers of Prishtina do not have courses for children with special needs during their education. Most of the teachers who had their degree in Education claimed they did not have such courses at all. Their claim is also supported by the data found in the website of Faculty of Education. According to Faculty of Education program, the students have the opportunity to take courses for children with special needs and learning difficulties. However, these two courses are available only as a single subject courses in the last semester of the final year of study. These two courses are not provided by the Faculty as mandatory courses. It is the prospective teachers who have to decide if these courses are important or not to take during their studies. This shows why all the teachers claimed they did not have courses concerning children with learning difficulties. They also claimed that they did not have courses or seminars after their employment concerning children with learning disabilities.

The teachers were asked to write about their school's role concerning children with dyslexia. According to their responses not one of the four schools in Prishtina offer any environment about these children. Concerning the role of schools for children with learning disabilities, the respondents showed a real enthusiasm of what the schools should offer to improve children's needs. The majority of teachers expressed the school's role is to offer the proper conditions so these children can have a better life. They suggested that schools should offer trainings and seminars to prepare the teachers to work with these children. This shows that the teachers despite their lack of knowledge concerning dyslexia recognise their role as very important in helping these children improve in their academic and life courses.

The legislation of Kosovo claims to offer childrens rights of education and inclusion. The Preuniversity Education act, article 3 specifies that it is of "Ministry, the municipalities, the educational and/or training institutions and all bodies" duty to ensure effective, inclusive, professional service and equal opportunities for all children in case of education "in accordance with their specific abilities and needs" (Assembly, Republic of Kosovo, 2011, p. 4). It can therefore be assumed that if the teachers do not have courses for pupils with special
needs during their education and their career as teachers and if the schools do not provide good environment for these children, the Preuniversity Education act is just a written act that does not apply in practice.

The demographics part of the questionnaire revealed some interesting results about the realtion between the teachers working experience and their knowledge concerning children coping with dyslexia. The longer experienced teachers with only high school diploma, showed a wider capacity of knowledge concerning children with difficulties in learning than those with higher degrees and less experience as teachers. This indicates that the teachers who had a longer working experience had the chance to meet various children. Its their experience that made them more aware of children with learning difficulties and their needs. This finding rises concerns about the readiness of younger and future teachers to face the described challenges.

As mentioned in the theoretical background, many research studies related to the teachers awareness concerning dyslexia in children suggest that there are misconceptions among these educators (Wadlington and Wadlington 2005; Ashburn & Snow, 2011; Washburn et al., 2011 Lee, 2009). This support the findings of this study where it is shown that there are misconceptions among teachers relating dyslexia in children. However, this thesis revealed rather serious misconceptions of dyslexia among teachers in Prishtina. With these findings in mind and the theory of inclusion of children with dyslexia discussed in the Chapter 5, it is clear that without teachers basic knowledge concerning learning disability such as dyslexia, the children cannot enjoy the good things in life and cannot be included as same as other people in society. Normalization principle according to Nirje (1969), claims that people with disabilities should enjoy the good things in life as same as other people. They should have the normal rhythm of life same as other people do. With the teachers lack of knowlwe, the children coping with dyslexia might not have an equal opportunity to normal rhythm of life as other children. Normalization principle and its purpose show the importance of teachers knowledge of dyslexia and their approach to these children. Giving a warm environment and supporting the nourishment of these children's knowledge is also another characteristic of Normalization principle. Another very important notion which was a refined aproach of Normalization that describes the importance of valuing devalued people, is SRV concept. The concept of SRV means that society should strive to give a positive social role to devalued individuals, by offering acceptance in society, respect, education, self belonging and other things that make them feel valued in society. This can be possible only if the teachers are aware of children with dyslexia and their needs. For them to be aware of their needs, they have to possess proper knowledge concerning dyslexia. If the teachers cannot give their best in class, by offering various approaches to all children then many of these children with limited possibilities can end up excluded and discriminated. Attribution theory which is used in social psychology, explains the phenomenon where people draw conclusions form their observations of the actor’s behavior (Tetlock, 1985). There is a systematic bias in this process, where the person has the tendency “to overestimate personality or dispositional cases of behavior and to underestimate the influence of situational constraints on behavior” (Tetlock, 1985). Because teachers are not aware of dyslexia's nature, children might get victimized as described by the attribution theory which is discussed in detail in Chapter 5. The teachers lack of knowledge concerning the nature of dyslexia can impact on their judgment towards the children’s behavior and lead to ignoring them in class which means discriminating or excluding them from other children who do not cope with these problems. Some of the teachers showed a little bit knowledge of dyslexia by describing their working experience. They mentioned cases where they had children who were self-withdrawn and had
low self-esteem in class. The attribution theory suggests that high achievers and low achievers experience failures and success differently. It explains how low achievers put the blame on themselves, in contrast to high achievers. It can be suggested that children coping with dyslexia with their reading difficulties can blame themselves, thinking they are poor readers. The awareness of teachers is thus important to help these children have better expectations of themselves so they can have a better life.

Even though the rights of inclusion to education and rights of people with disabilities are well defined in legislation of Kosovo, and despite the increased recognition of children rights on inclusion there is a significant gap between theory and practice concerning these issues. Teacher's misconceptions concerning dyslexia shows an urgent need to make changes such as preparing them to work with these children, so they do not feel left out academically and socially. It is of high importance for these children to be treated as properly as possible in school and outside the school so they can be included in society. As it is mentioned in early chapters, the education has an important role upon the quality of life of a person. The teachers lack of knowledge concerning dyslexia is a social problem since it can affect in the development of children's learning skills, and have negative influence further in their life. The lack of sufficient knowledge concerning dyslexia may cause social problems, such as failing in education, employment and segregation of society. These common threats affect not only those coping with this learning disability but their families and the society as well. The immature linguistics skill can have an negative affect on the social life of a person, and this is a social matter of social work.

8.3 Conclusion

This thesis has analysed primary teachers awareness of the term dyslexia in children. Additionally the study set out to gather information concerning their knowledge and exposure to the needs of children coping with dyslexia; to provide a better understanding of participant's perception about dyslexia, their responsibilities, and their roles as teachers to offer equal opportunities to the needs of children coping with dyslexia. One of the significant findings to emerge from this thesis is that the primary teacher's of Prishtina have a clear misconception of dyslexia. The results of this study support the idea that the lack of knowledge among teachers about this term places these children at risk of being discriminated and excluded from academia and society.

The findings from this study make several contributions to the current literature. First it is the only study in Prishtina that deals with teachers knowledge concerning dyslexia. Second, it deals with children coping with dyslexia and the possibility of getting discriminated and excluded. Third, it analyses the application of Kosovo's legislation in context of existing international norms and standards. Kosovo's legislation is well defined concerning various roles of different state institutions in ensuring inclusion for children coping with different disabilities, but such claims of Kosovo's legislation are not applied in practice.

The lack of literature and research studies related to the current condition of Kosovo concerning teachers and children with learning disabilities is a drawback. However, this drawback proves the need for more research in this direction, which is exactly what this thesis is doing. Notwithstanding these limitations, the findings of this thesis point out on a direction that primary teachers of Pristina have a lack of awareness concerning dyslexia.
More information on teachers awareness of dyslexia would help to establish a greater degree of accuracy on the matter of children with dyslexia and their needs. This study open the possibility for many various future works. First, it gives space to research the primary school teachers education system. It would be interesting to investigate how they get prepared during their studies to meet all children's needs. Second, a wider study concerning teachers awareness concerning dyslexia in children is appropriate, including schools from rural areas. Third, and more importantly a research for the conditions of children with dyslexia and their rights of inclusion in society would be more than needed since there is a lack of research concerning children with dyslexia.
REFERENCES

Books and articles:


*Internet resources:*


European Dyslexia Association (2013). *International Organisation for Specific Learning*


Appendix 1: 20 items of open-ended questionnaire

Dear primary school teachers,

This survey is a part of the master thesis project at the Linnaeus University in Sweden, which focuses on recognizing the awareness of primary school teachers regarding the term dyslexia. It involves teachers that teach the children of grades 1-5 school years. I hope that you will take time to fill out this form.

This survey consists of 14 questions where you can answer while writing. You will be able to answer also 6 demographic questions. The survey should not take longer than 15 minutes. Your participation is voluntarily and your answers are confidential. Your responses will be used and shared with my dissertation supervisor and other staff at Linnaeus University in Sweden.

Your answers will advocate us identify the dyslexia awareness among teachers. This can also help raise the awareness of dyslexia among teachers and consequently improve the conditions of children with reading problems in mainstream schools.

I look forward to learning about your perceptions of dyslexia. If you have any questions regarding this study and the survey you can contact me on qkrht08@student.lnu.se.

Age:

Gender:

When did you finish your education?

What country and University did you get your degree?

What is your major?

How long have you been working as a teacher?
1. Have you ever heard about dyslexia? If yes, what do you know about it?

2. If you had to explain the term "dyslexia" to a friend, how would you explain it?

3. How would you describe a dyslexic child?
4. How will you know if a child might have dyslexia?

5. What might cause dyslexia?
6. Do you know if and how dyslexia can be treated?

7. What are the advantages/disadvantages for children coping with dyslexia?
8. Name some of the academic problems that dyslexic children have?

9. What are the differences between a dyslexic child and a non-dyslexic child?
10. What kind of needs do children with dyslexia have?

11. What is the teacher’s role if they encounter children with dyslexia in their class?
12. What is the school's role if it encounters children with dyslexia?
13. During your education, did you take courses on children with special needs? If no, why? And do you think that these types of courses should be compulsory?

14. If you have something to add, please do so:

Thank you for your participation.
Best regards,
Qefsere Jusufi
Dear school director,

This project focuses on recognizing the awareness of primary school teachers regarding the term dyslexia. It involves teachers that teach the children of grades 1-5 school years. This survey consists of 14 questions where you can answer while writing. The teachers will be able to answer also 6 demographic questions. The survey should not take longer than 15 minutes. **The teacher’s participation is voluntarily and their answers are confidential.**

Allowing this project to continue its work will advocate us identify the dyslexia awareness among teachers. This can also help raise the awareness of dyslexia among teachers and consequently improve the conditions of children with reading problems in mainstream schools.

If you have any questions regarding this study and the survey you can contact me on qkrht08@student.lnu.se.

Thank you for your participation.

Best regards,
Qefsere Jusufi

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Dear primary school teachers,

This survey is a part of the master thesis project at the Linnaeus University in Sweden, which focuses on recognizing the awareness of primary school teachers regarding the term dyslexia. It involves teachers that teach the children of grades 1-5 school years. I hope that you will take time to fill out this form.

This survey consists of 14 questions where you can answer while writing. You will be able to answer also 6 demographic questions. The survey should not take longer than 15 minutes. **Your participation is voluntarily and your answers are confidential.**

Your answers will advocate us identify the dyslexia awareness among teachers. This can also help raise the awareness of dyslexia among teachers and consequently improve the conditions of children with reading problems in mainstream schools.

I look forward to learning about your perceptions of dyslexia. If you have any questions regarding this study and the survey you can contact me on qkrht08@student.lnu.se.

Thank you for your participation.

Best regards,
Qefsere Jusufi