Developing a Dyslectic Identity on Reddit

A thematic analysis of /r/Dyslexia

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ABSTRACT

Problems associated with dyslexia do not just limit oneself to reading and writing. Stigma and misunderstanding surrounding learning disabilities can also lead to insecurity, low self-esteem and in rare cases depression. Existing research often approaches dyslexia from a medical perspective which views dyslexia as a pathology and an individual problem. The reality portrayed in these studies is far from the lived experiences of many dyslectics themselves. Therefore, some voices suggest approaching disability from a social model, where disability is not caused only by someone's impairment, but through disabling barriers in society. Over the past two decades, the neurodiversity narrative has gotten more traction among researchers and people with learning disabilities. This relatively new discourse views dyslexia as a positive variation in the human brain, rather than a problem that needs to be corrected. Online communities, such as a subreddit, provide an opportunity for dyslectics to share their own stories about their learning disability. These online forums offer an interesting dataset as they can give a platform to voices which are often overlooked by dominant institutions. By conducting a thematic analysis of 100 posts and 2029 comments of the subreddit page /r/Dyslexia, this study answers the following question: How do members of the subreddit /r/Dyslexia share their experiences with dyslexia? The analysis of the dataset reveals that the posts on /r/Dyslexia can be categorized under the following four main themes: *Traditional view of Dyslexia, Dyslexia as a personal struggle, Dyslexia as a social issue,* and *the Embracing dyslexic identity* theme. The results show that the posts and comments on /r/Dyslexia are diverse as people use different narratives and conform to a variety of identities when discussing their experiences with dyslexia. Moreover, this research finds that /r/Dyslexia is a useful site for sharing and receiving social support. The findings of this research could be used to develop a better understanding of the day-to-day experiences of people living with dyslexia.

KEYWORDS: *Illness narratives, Collective Identities, Social model of Disability, Reddit, Social Support.*

Table of Contents

Contents

1. Introduction

Dyslexia is often approached from a medical paradigm. From this medical view dyslexia is seen as an individual problem that occurs when someone does not meet society's expectations of literacy (Collinson & Barden, 2016). In pedagogy, dyslexia is often treated through learning interventions and remedial teaching (Kearns et al., 2019; Ruijssenaars et al., 2008). Meanwhile, neuroscientists are trying to fix dyslexia by administering small electrical currents when reading that aim to rewire a dyslectic brain to improve their reading skills (Constanzo et al., 2018). These two examples of interventions suggest that the dyslectic brain needs to be fixed or corrected. However, research suggests that dyslectics do not unambiguously support this approach (Alexander-Passe, 2015; Griffin & Pollak, 2009). Dyslectics frequently see their learning disability as something positive and they do not want to change or cure their brains even if this would be possible (Alexander-Passe, 2015). They consider dyslexia to be an important part of their identity and losing it would feel like losing part of who they are (Alexander-Passe, 2015). This positive view of dyslexia sharply contrasts the medical approach that is set out to 'fix' someone's brain

The sentiment dyslectics expresses in Alexander-Passe's (2015) research relates to the ideas of the neurodiversity movement that has gained more traction since its conception in the 1990's (Clouder et al., 2020). The neurodiversity movement regards learning disabilities as a positive neurological difference rather than a disorder that needs fixing (Barden, 2012; Collinson & Barden, 2016; Macdonald, 2009a, 2009b, 2019). The voices of dyslectics that align themselves with the neurodiversity movement thus contrast the aim of neuroscientists and pedagogist to cure dyslexia. Despite the rise of the neurodiversity movement, the medical view of disability remains the dominant narrative surrounding dyslexia in society (Collinson & Barden, 2016). As the voices of dyslectics are not represented in the dominant discourse surrounding dyslexia, people might turn to online communities to share their experiences. Online communities are valuable sites for marginalised groups to find a sense of belonging and like-minded people (Jenkins, 1999). Disability communities in particular have been using online communities to emancipate themselves (Ellis & Kent, 2016; Kent, 2019; Olsson, 2012) and engage in activism (Ellis, 2019; Li et al., 2018).

In online dyslexia communities, people share discourses that go against the dominant idea of dyslexia being a problem that needs to be 'fixed'. One of these communities is the online Reddit forum /r/Dyslexia. The moderators of this community describe themselves as: "A community for Dyslexic spectrum redditors looking to help one another, or discuss issues related to the learning disability. We are proud members of the Neurodiversity Movement, which is also a part of Disability Rights Movement." (/r/Dyslexia, n.d.). As the moderators of /r/Dyslexia note to be part of the neurodiversity movement, the posts on this forum provide an interesting insight into a discourse that sees dyslexia as something positive rather than something that needs to be cured. To develop a better understanding of the discourses on /r/Dyslexia, the subreddit will be the subject of this study.

1.1 Research questions

To develop a better understanding of how people experience dyslexia, this thesis sets out to answer the following main research question:

How do members of the subreddit /r/Dyslexia share their experiences with dyslexia?

The main research question is supported by the following three sub-questions that have been inspired by theory:

1. *What narratives about dyslexia are present in /r/Dyslexia?*
2. *How are online identities expressed in /r/Dyslexia?*
3. *How is social support circulating in /r/Dyslexia?*

The first sub-question is approached using the narratives of the medical and social model of disability (Oliver, 1983), with the idea of neurodiversity relating to the social model of disability. The social model of disability is coined by Oliver (1983) to provide an alternative to the dominant medical view. This social model argues that disabilities do not stem from individual impairments, but from disabling barriers in society (Oliver, 1983, 2013). The social model has been embraced by disabled people's movements to promote accessibility and challenge the disabling barriers in society (Oliver, 2013). Moreover, Frank's (2013) illness narratives are used to develop a better understanding of how people tell the stories about their experiences with dyslexia.

The second sub-question concerns the identities that are present on /r/Dyslexia. To answer this question, the posts on /r/Dyslexia are compared to the collective identities described by Castells (2010). Castells (2010) states that there are three different types of collective identities. First, the legitimising identities are introduced by ruling institutions to vindicate their dominance to the rest of society. Resistance identities are then created by individuals who do not meet the expectations of those in power. People who subscribe to a resistance identity find support in each other and defend themselves from the legitimising identity. Finally, project identities promote completely new paradigms and aim to transform the dominant social structure. Besides Castells' (2010) collective identities, the concept of identity politics described by Anspach (1979) is used to understand how people on /r/Dyslexia are changing the views about dyslectics within their community and in the rest of society.

Finally, the third research question explores how social support circulates on /r/Dyslexia. Online communities are places where people receive support and understanding from others (Bundon, 2016; Coulson, 2005; Holbrey & Coulson, 2013; Parsons, 2019). To understand this complex concept, Cutrona and Suhr's (1992) typology is used to inform the analysis. They found that social support can be divided into the following five codes: informational support, tangible assistance, esteem support, network support, and emotional support (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992). With these supporting concepts, a thematic analysis is carried out.

1.2 Research design

The research question is answered by conducting a thematic analysis on posts and comments on /r/Dyslexia. The thematic analysis follows the guidelines postulated by Braun and Clarke (2006). It started with a deductive approach but with open eyes for data-driven codes that were not mentioned in the codebook. Using a deductive approach to thematic analysis, this investigation is able to use relevant concepts from literature to guide the analysis, allowing this research to build upon the findings of others. Using the guide from Braun and Clarke (2006) ensures that the analysis is conducted in a structured and thorough manner. This study used a purposive sample of 100 posts and their 2029 comments from /r/Dyslexia. Using a purposive sample ensures that only posts which are meaningful in relation to the research question are selected. The thematic analysis shows that the interactions in the dataset can be placed under four main themes: *The Traditional view of Dyslexia, Dyslexia as a personal struggle, Dyslexia as a social issue,* and *Embracing dyslexic identity*. These themes are used to help answer the research question formulated above.

1.3 Academic and social relevance

Research on dyslexia is predominantly conducted from a psycho-medical model which is a method that pathologizes the experiences of dyslectics (Macdonald, 2019). The examples given above from pedagogy and neuroscience are examples of this psycho-medical approach. These studies often project normative ideas of literacy on dyslectics, without listening to the actual experiences and needs of the group they are studying (Collinson & Barden, 2016; Macdonald, 2019). To do better justice to dyslectics themselves, this study applies a qualitative method that leaves room for incorporating the voices of how people experience dyslexia. Through its choice in methodology, this study fills in the gap of an underexposed, yet important, research area.

This research moreover contributes to the underexplored subject of Reddit. Massanari (2015) notes that Reddit, despite receiving attention from news outlets, has often been overlooked by academics. Reddit pages hosts countless lively communities in which people can, anonymously, share and comment on posts (Massanari, 2015). Online communities, like the groups found on Reddit, are particularly interesting for members of marginalised communities. Jenkins (1999) notes that individuals can use online forums to emancipate themselves and their community by forming connections and sharing information (Jenkins, 1999). This aspect is especially relevant to disabled people who often have difficulty finding community members in their own environment (Bogart, 2014). Reddit in particular can help people belonging to stigmatised identities, like dyslectics, feel confident to share their experiences as the anonymous nature of the forum protects them from potential negative consequences in their offline lives (Fritz, 2022). By focussing on a subreddit, this research contributes to the growing body of research on Reddit communities.

In addition to the academic relevance, this study is also socially relevant as the results of this research can be used to improve people's understanding of dyslexia. Dyslexia is surrounded by stigma and often misunderstood by the rest of society (Alexander-Passe, 2015; Griffin & Pollak, 2009). People tend to focus on the negative aspects associated with dyslexia and tend to see their biases affirmed when encountering dyslectics (Alexander-Passe, 2015). The current focus on 'curing' dyslexia contributes to this stigma as it implies that dyslexia is something inherently negative. Research has shown that when people develop a better understanding of what dyslexia entails, they have a more positive attitude towards dyslectics in their environment (Alexander-Passe, 2015). The results of this thesis show that there are alternative ways of discussing dyslexia. Having a better understanding of how people experience dyslexia could thus help educational professionals, policy makers, and employers to better accommodate dyslectics.

Increased understanding about the experiences of people on /r/Dyslexia can also provide more insight into how online communities are used to emancipate dyslectics by developing a more positive dyslexia identity. Previous research suggests that people with a positive disability identity generally have more self-esteem and higher satisfaction with life (Andrews et al., 2022; Bogart, 2014). A positive disability identity can be developed through involvement in the disability community and by engaging in disability pride (Bogart, 2014). The findings of the analysis on /r/Dyslexia show that the community can be used to develop such an identity.

1.4 Thesis outline

To contextualise the research question of this thesis, the theoretical framework in the next chapter provides more background information on dyslexia and social media. Besides, the second chapter elaborates on the concepts of narratives and models of disability, identities, and social support. These concepts are relevant as they are central to the research question and are used to guide the analysis on /r/Dyslexia. Next, the methodology chapter explains why a thematic analysis is the most suitable method when trying to better understand the experiences of people on /r/Dyslexia. This chapter moreover explains the purposive sampling method used to create the dataset and provides a step-by-step explanation of the thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) guide. The thematic analysis showed that the experiences of members of the /r/Dyslexia subreddit can be divided into four themes: *The Traditional view of Dyslexia, Dyslexia as a personal struggle, Dyslexia as a social issue,* and *Embracing dyslexic identity.* These findings are discussed in the results chapter along with the answers to the sub-questions. In the final chapter, the conclusion of this study is given. Moreover, the implications and limitations of this study are discussed and recommendations of future research are provided as well.

Before continuing with the rest of the thesis, it is important to make a note about language. Throughout the thesis, identity-first language is used to refer to dyslectics. This decision was taken to respect a trend in the neurodiversity movement in which people refer to themselves as ‘dyslectic’ instead of ‘person with dyslexia’ (Andrews et al., 2019). By emphasising disability as part of their identity, people highlight that it is an integral part of who they are (Andrews et al., 2019).

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, concepts and theories relevant to this research are explained in greater detail. In the first section, dyslexia and the discourses surrounding it are defined. This chapter then goes on to the theoretical background of disability studies and highlights the potential social media has within disability studies. An emphasis is placed on the significance of online communities for people living with disabilities. Finally, this chapter explains the concepts of disability models and narratives, online collective identities, and social support. These three concepts are used to guide the thematic analysis on /r/Dyslexia.

2.1 Literature review on dyslexia

The term dyslexia was introduced by German ophthalmologist Rudolf Berlin in 1887. In his, book *Eine besondere Art der Wortblindheit (Dyslexie),* Berlin (1887) describes several encounters with patients in his practice who had trouble reading despite their eyes being in good shape. By lack of a better term, Berlin coined the German term “dyslexie”, combining the Greek prefix “dys” and the Latin “legere”, meaning to read, to name this phenomenon. Since Berlin’s observations, dyslexia has moved on from the field of ophthalmology and gotten attention from scholars across many disciplines (Gay, 1993).

Even though different disciplines have concerned themselves with studying dyslexia, there is no consensus on the cause and definition of the learning disability (Gay, 1993; Kearns et al., 2019; Macdonald, 2009b, 2019). Most studies about dyslexia stem from the field of pedagogy and neuroscience (Barden, 2012; Macdonald, 2019). Neuroscientists view dyslexia as a neurological learning dysfunction where reading and writing difficulties stem from a problem in an individual’s brain (Macdonald, 2009a). Although there has not been conclusive evidence, neuroscientists believe that the cause of dyslexia can be found in the way dyslectic brains are wired differently (Gay, 1993; Kearns et al., 2019). In pedagogy, dyslexia is considered a specific learning disability in which students do not meet the expectation of literacy (Barden, 2012; Collinson & Barden, 2016; Gay, 1993; Macdonald, 2009a). This pedagogical perspective also contextualises dyslexia as a primarily individual problem where students have to adjust their learning strategy through remedial programmes aimed at correcting or overcoming dyslexia (Macdonald, 2009a).

There is much discussion about the definition of dyslexia. However, for legal reasons, dyslexia is often considered a learning disability which ensures that dyslectics receive accommodations (Alexander-Passe, 2015; Macdonald, 2009b). Some researchers (Elliot & Gibbs, 2008; Rice & Brooks, 2004) believe that dyslexia is not a disability and should be considered a general learning difficulty as the treatment of dyslexia is not different from people who have general issues with reading and writing. People proposing this anti-labelling notion, as mentioned by Macdonald (2009b), argue that there is no scientific basis to justify labelling children as dyslectics. Macdonald (2009b) however disagrees with the anti-labelling approach because it does not take the personal experiences of dyslexics into account. He argues that the label dyslexia can be extremely validating, and the term can be part of who they are (Macdonald, 2009b).

The anti-labelling approach ties in with the stigma that regards dyslectics as lazy or stupid (Alexander-Passe, 2015). Goffman (1990) states that stigmatised individuals might be perceived by others as possessing undesirable traits stemming from a non-standard attribute. Stigma is socially constructed and can lead to misconceptions, prejudices, and discrimination against a group of people (Goffman, 1990). In the case of dyslexia, stigma can lead to dyslectics being discriminated by an environment that views dyslexia as negative (Alexander-Passe, 2015). This negative view of dyslexia can cause anxiety, low self-esteem and in some cases even depression (Ruijssenaars et al., 2008). As a result of the misconceptions that surround dyslexia, dyslectics might choose to conceal their disability to avoid the negative connotations people associate with dyslexia (Alexander-Passe, 2015; Nalavany et al., 2015). Even though hiding one’s dyslexia makes it possible to avoid getting stigmatised, someone hiding their dyslexia might miss out on opportunities by not receiving sufficient accommodations for their dyslexia (Nalavany et al., 2015). Moreover, it has been found that dyslectics hiding their disability generally have a negative self-image as they miss out on support from their environment (Nalavany et al., 2015). This stigma surrounding dyslexia is in part maintained and nurtured by the medical view of dyslexia that often regards dyslexia as a problem (Alexander-Passe, 2015). Therefore, it is beneficial to the wellbeing of dyslectics to combat stigma and propagate a more positive view of dyslexia.

In the past two decades, voices have been critiquing the medical perspective of dyslexia (Barden, 2012; Collinson & Barden, 2016; Macdonald, 2009a, 2009b). Those voices follow a social model of disability and propose that dyslexia only becomes a problem in a society that privileges literacy focused on reading and writing over other types of communication (Collinson & Barden, 2016). As the term ableism is used to describe discrimination in favour of non-disabled people, Collinson and Barden (2016) use the term ‘lexism’ as a specific form of ableism against dyslectics. To challenge lexist ideas dominant in society, Collinson and Barden (2016) propose a social model of literacy where neurodiversity is embraced, and society recognises different models of learning. This approach to literacy is supported by the findings of Barden (2012), as he observed a group of dyslectic students who showed that there are alternative ways to demonstrate knowledge about a subject. These students were given the task to explore the topic of dyslexia and the freedom to choose how they wanted to present their findings. Instead of writing a traditional paper, they created a Facebook page where they shared posts, videos, and PowerPoints to inform others about dyslexia (Barden, 2012). During the weeks of the observation, Barden (2012) found that the interactions about dyslexia helped the students gain confidence and develop a more positive identity in relation to their dyslexia.

Given the uncertainty surrounding the definition and origin of dyslexia, the social model of literacy, as proposed by Collinson and Barden (2016), is used to interpret the data from a disability studies perspective. This chapter provides more background on the social model of disability and other concepts relevant to the analysis, but first social media and disability is discussed in the section below.

2.2 Social media and disability

Disability studies is an interdisciplinary academic field in line with the social model of disabilities seeking to study how subjects like politics, economics, and culture influence the lives of individuals with a disability (Ellis et al., 2019). Traditional mass media is an important topic within disability studies because these institutions can help shape attitudes and values towards people with a disability (Ellis et al., 2019). Popular media, often misrepresents people with disabilities (Ellis, 2019). Olsson (2012) notes that disability is either left out completely from popular media or people living with disabilities are depicted as two-dimensional characters where their disability makes up their entire identity. Oliver (1990) illustrates this phenomenon by explaining that, when characters with disabilities are introduced, media often portray them as either superhumans overcoming everything or as pathetic victims. This lack of proper representation can reinforce negative disability tropes that consider people living with disabilities as less than human instead of people with an identity besides their disability. People living with disabilities are not only misrepresented in media, but they are also often excluded from employment in media and denied opportunities to produce popular culture (Ellis, 2019).

In 1997, a new technology allowed people to not only link to a webpage, but to follow updates by subscribing to it (O'Reilly, 2007). The so-called blogs are part of an internet infrastructure O'Reilly (2007) named the Web 2.0. One of the main characteristics of the Web 2.0 is that collective intelligence is harnessed through powerful interactions on the internet. Where traditional media often does a disservice representing disability and reinforces problematic disability tropes (Ellis, 2019), social media offers people living with disabilities the chance to tell their own stories (Ellis & Kent, 2016; Kent, 2019; Olsson, 2012) and engage in activism (Ellis, 2019; Li et al., 2018).

Jenkins (1999) was one of the first scholars to recognize the potential digital media had to emancipate marginalised communities and help them find kinship online. Jenkins (1999) illustrates his point by describing how queer youth in the 1990's used the internet to connect to other queer individuals and avoid feeling isolated when they have nobody to turn to in their offline network. In another example, Olsson (2012) shows how social media culture helps create a disability identity and empowers people to create their own narratives outside of the traditional media structure. By looking at disability blogs, Facebook groups, and disability related videos on YouTube, Olsson (2012) showed the importance social media have to disability communities in that they give agency for people to tell their own stories and negotiate a more positive disability identity. Another opportunity digital media provides is that it allows people living with disabilities to participate in activism when accessibility barriers prevent them from advocating for themselves in person (Li et al., 2018).

Important to note when discussing the emancipating opportunities of social media is that digital media can also reproduce existing accessibility barriers in society. People with visual impairments, for example, may use screen readers to read text that is displayed on a computer screen. These screen readers are software programmes that turn text on a computer screen into speech or braille (American Foundation for the Blind, n.d.). Visual content on social media, however, rarely gets an alternative description, making pictures and memes often inaccessible for people using a screen reader (Gleason et al., 2019). Moreover, there is a financial factor that prevents some people from accessing the internet. People who do not have the financial means to own a computer and internet connection are also denied access from the internet (Kent, 2019). Finally, one needs the training and education to access the internet which is something older people are struggling with as they did not grow up around digital technology (Olsson, 2012). When discussing online communities on the internet, it is thus important to acknowledge that not everyone has equal access to these communities.

Zooming in on a social media site that is particularly known for its community aspect, Reddit is a platform for posting original and reposted content (Massanari, 2015). Users, called redditors, can subscribe to subreddits, which are spaces where posts on a topic are circulated. In a subreddit, people can share text messages, video's and pictures. People can then comment on the messages of the original poster, also called OP, and these posts can then be up- or downvoted by fellow redditors. An algorithm ensures that the most upvoted posts appear at the top of the page (Massanari, 2015). Next to upvoting, redditors also interact with the posts and with each other through lively comment sections under the posts (Massanari, 2015). Massanari (2015), a redditor herself, has comprised a comprehensive book on community and participatory culture on Reddit. She argues that, despite often being overlooked by academics, Reddit has been acknowledged by mainstream media as an important and engaged community (Massanari, 2015). Reddit is moreover an interesting subject of study as it is a great example of O'Reilly's (2007) Web 2.0, as there are no overly visible mediators on Reddit, making the conversations more democratic and allowing users to harness collective intelligence (Massanari, 2015).

In his research about the subreddit /r/neurodiversity, Fritz (2022) highlights how Reddit's format makes it extremely useful for studying unrestrained social interactions. /r/neurodiversity is a subreddit for people who subscribe to the idea of neurodiversity and where conditions like autism are regarded as neurological differences that do not require fixing. The pseudo-anonymity aspect of

Reddit allows people to share information freely, without feeling judged (Fritz, 2022). Through upvoting and giving out rewards, posts that displayed certain group values on /r/neurodiversity came to the surface (Fritz, 2022). Given that the Reddit posts on this page come up on search engines, information on /r/neurodiversity can be easily found and others can join the discussions on the subreddit, which further validated the information on the subreddit. Fritz (2022) argues that Reddit's characteristics create the conditions for defining the page as UNESCO intangible cultural heritage. Members of the /r/neurodiversity community celebrate neurodiverse heritage by sharing experiences and through interactions with peer-experts on the forum. Being recognised as UNESCO intangible cultural heritage could help the neurodiversity community to create awareness for neurodiverse identities (Fritz, 2022). The findings from Fritz's (2022) study underline the potential social media have for the neurodiverse people to share their experiences and find community online.

The section above shows the significance social media have for disabled people. Fritz's (2022) and Massanari (2015) moreover show how Reddit is an interesting medium to study through its strong communities and power to harness collective intelligence. The information from these studies is used to interpret the interactions on /r/Dyslexia.

2.3 Disability models and narratives

Frank (2013) and Kleinman (1988) both discuss illness narratives as a form of meaning-making and a way to help people to deal with their illness. People tell illness stories to repair the damage that an illness has caused and, on a more practical level, let others know what is going on with them (Frank, 2013). These stories aim to restore the lives that have been interrupted by an illness (Frank, 2013). Frank (2013) builds on Kleinman's (1988) work on illness narratives and distinguishes three types of narratives people use to tell their stories: restitution, chaos and quest narrative. When telling a story people combine and switch between the three narratives making each illness story unique (Frank, 2013). The three illness narratives provide a useful framework to interpretate the stories ill people are telling. Frank's (2013) narratives therefore are to guide the analysis on /r/Dyslexia. Before delving deeper into the three illness narratives, it is important to note here that illness is not the same as disability. However, as there is similarity in the way in which both ill and disabled people are subjected to the same narratives, Frank's (2013) Illness narratives can also be applied to disability (Garden, 2010).

The first narrative Frank (2013) describes is the restitution narrative. This narrative revolves around getting better again and the triumph of medicine (Frank, 2013). These stories are most loved by society, as narratives other than getting better cause discomfort among people in the ill person's environment (Frank, 2013). People like to believe that every illness can be cured. People going through illness are therefore expected to place themselves under the authority of a recognised professional (Frank, 2013). Restitution narratives, therefore, leave little agency for the ill person to tell their own story, as they are actually telling the narrative of the practitioner treating them (Frank, 2013). Often, the restitution narrative comes true as people do get better. The problem with the narrative comes to the surface when someone does not get better and the person that has been telling a restitution narrative has no story to fall back on (Frank, 2013), which is the case for those with permanent impairments.

Chaos stories are told when the teller does not believe the situation will ever get better (Frank, 2013). Frank (2013) notes how these stories are hard to listen to and are seldom told when they are occurring. People often tell chaos stories before or after the illness occurs as they do not have room to reflect on their situation while they are experiencing the chaos (Frank, 2013) Chaos stories are incoherent and show the vulnerability of the state someone is in (Frank, 2013). Unlike restitution narratives, people do not like listening to chaos stories as it undermines the modernist assumption that every illness can be cured (Frank, 2013). Even when it is hard to listen to chaos narratives, Frank (2013) notes how it is vital for the individuals telling these stories to be heard. Chaos stories have to be accepted first before someone can move on in finding other purposes in their ailment (Frank, 2013).

The final narrative is the quest narrative. The teller of a quest story accepts their illness and tries to find a reason or purpose for their ailment (Frank, 2013). Frank (2013) has specified the quest narrative further in three different facets. First, is the memoir quest narrative, this is the mildest narrative where experiences are told as they are without embellishment. The teller of these stories make the illness a part of their life's story (Frank, 2013). Second Frank (2013) describes the manifesto quest narrative. The manifesto narrative teller uses their story to let others know that society suppresses the reality of illness through their celebration of restitution stories (Frank, 2013). Finally, there is the automythology narrative where someone reinvents themselves after an illness (Frank, 2013). People telling these stories find purpose in their suffering and say they have become a better version of themselves due to their illness (Frank, 2013).

A practical implication of illness narratives can be found in a study by Hinson and Sword (2019), who looked at how narratives circulating on illness related Facebook groups help people to make sense of their illnesses. They find that illness related Facebook groups encourage interactions around the lived experiences of people going through illness as a response to traditional healthcare that often overlooks the voices of the people they are caring for (Hinson & Sword, 2019). The stories on Facebook can moreover teach readers how to better self-advocate towards their healthcare professionals and shared empathy can encourage people to better practice self-care (Hinson & Sword, 2019). Hinson and Sword's (2019) research shows that social media, such as Facebook, give people the power to tell their stories outside of the traditional healthcare networks. /r/Dyslexia similarly provides dyslectics a tool to share stories on their own terms.

Narratives are not exclusive to telling stories about one's illness as there are also different narratives surrounding disabilities. Gray (2009) notes that narratives surrounding disability are always changing. Since the 1970's, disabled people, disability rights activists, and their supporters have been promoting a new discourse around disability that aims to remove the negative value that is attributed to their disability (Gray, 2009). These narratives can propose an alternative to the dominant view in western society that disabilities can always be cured with medicine (Gray, 2009). To focus the discussion of disability narratives, the paragraphs below zoom in on three broad disability narratives that are relevant to the topic of dyslexia in particular (Macdonald, 2019).

The first narrative is the medical model of disability. From this perspective, disabilities are approached as a biological limitation of a person that requires fixing (Olsson, 2012). By trying to 'fix' an individual, the medical model considers someone's impairment to be the cause of disabling factors in a specific social context (Macdonald, 2019; Olsson, 2012). Macdonald (2019) notes that the medical model of disability considers dyslexia as a functional deficit created by a cognitive impairment that results in disabling factors such as the inability to write or read (Macdonald, 2019). The medical model implies that a universal standard of ability exists. When this standard is not met, disabled people are expected to adapt themselves to meet these standards (Macdonald, 2019). In the case of dyslexia, this means that when someone is not able to meet the standard for literacy, they are required to undergo treatment, like extensive remedial teaching, to reduce the symptoms of their dyslexia.

An alternative narrative of approaching disability is provided through the social model of disability. Oliver (1983) coined the term to offer an alternative to the dominant medical model of the time. The social model of disability is based on Marxist principles that consider disabilities to be created by the capitalistic society people live in (Oliver, 2013). This social approach regards that disabled people are not disabled because of their impairment, but because of the disabling barriers they face in society (Oliver, 2013). Therefore, the social model is more concerned with the social inclusion of people living with disabilities rather than trying to cure or fix them (Macdonald, 2019; Olsson, 2012). Through this model, disability is considered a social justice issue and the celebration of disability identity, pride, and culture is encouraged (Olsson, 2012). When approaching dyslexia from a social model, dyslexia is not caused by an individual's inability to read and write but caused by a system that was made for people without this condition and therefore excludes dyslectics.

Since Oliver (1983) brought up the social model of disability, the social model of disability has been fragmented into the relational model of disability, the affirmation model of disability and the neurodiversity movement (Macdonald, 2019). Although the social model of disability still holds up (Levitt, 2017), these fragmentations can be used to create a more complete approach to the social model of disability as they highlight certain aspects of disability that are not as pronounced in the original social model of disability. The relational model of disability highlights that the impact of impairment on someone's personal life cannot be overlooked (Macdonald, 2019). For dyslexia, this means also considering the emotional impact that stigma and social exclusion have on an individual. The affirmation model of disability goes one step further and regards impairment as a social construct and a critique of the idea that a normal body exists (Macdonald, 2019). They argue that medical labels are constructed through a cultural foundation and applied to people who fall outside society's definition of normality. In dyslexia this means that children who do not meet certain reading requirements at specific moments are labelled as abnormal. To combat the negative view people have of disability, the affirmation model of disability suggests a more positive view of disability. These two fragmentations of the social model of disability provide some interesting points of consideration when looking at the original social model. For this thesis however, the relational and affirmation model of disability are not used explicitly as they are still closely connected to the original model of disability. Instead, the neurodiversity movement, the third fragmentation of the original social model of disability, will be of focus to this thesis as it strongly connects to the case of dyslexia and the moderators of /r/Dyslexia write to be part of this movement in the page description.

The term neurodiversity was introduced by activists in the late 1990's and has gained increased attention from academics since (Clouder et al., 2020). Neurodiversity is an umbrella term developed to more positively describe people living with dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyscalculia, autistic spectrum, or Tourette syndrome and challenge the idea that a 'normal' brain exists (Clouder et al., 2020). Instead of medicalising these conditions, proponents of this paradigm regard them as natural differences that occur in the human brain (Clouder et al., 2020). They see neurodiversity as a positive attribute, much like biodiversity is also approached as a beneficial trait in humanity (Armstrong, 2012). As mentioned before, despite the exact cause and definition of dyslexia being unclear, neuroscientists have found that there is a difference in brain activity between dyslectics and non-dyslectics (Macdonald, 2009a). In addition, scientific research shows that neurodiverse students often excel in particular strengths such as dyslectics having more artistic abilities (Appleyard, 1997) and the capacity to understand complex tree-dimensional objects faster than individuals without dyslexia (Károlyi et al., 2003). As people from the neurodiversity movement regard dyslexia as a difference, they reject all medicalisation of dyslexia and stand up against discriminating barriers in society (Macdonald, 2019).

The disability models and narratives described above make up the first out of three concepts used to guide the analysis of the posts on /r/Dyslexia. Looking at the narratives present on /r/Dyslexia helps to understand how redditors talk about their disability and whether they approach dyslexia from a medical, social, or neurodiversity perspective. In the next section the second concept, online identities, will be discussed.

2.4 Online identities

According to sociologist Antony Giddens (1991), self-identity refers to the meanings people reflexively attach to the question of who they are. Through everyday choices presented by our late-modern society, people constantly reflect on how they define themselves (Giddens, 1991). Individuals can have multiple identities which are formed and applied in a community or specific social setting (Brown, 2015). Identity is key to disability studies as it can help us understand how social environments influence an individual's identity (Li et al., 2018). Disability narratives, as described in the sub-chapter above, aid people in forming their identity and the way they think of themselves (Dorfman, 2016).

One theory about how our identity is shaped is that of the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The social identity theory states that people from marginalised groups have different coping methods to deal with the stigma that is placed on their communities (Bogart, 2014; Nario-Redmond et al., 2013; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Disabled people often face stereotypes and stigma which challenges this self-concept (Goffman, 1990). To protect their self-concept, people in stigmatised communities have developed two main mechanisms to deal with the stigma placed on them. In the first mechanism, people adopt an individual coping strategy (Bogart, 2014; Nario-Redmond et al., 2013). In this mechanism, people dissociate themselves from the group they belong to and try to assimilate with the dominant group in society (Bogart, 2014; Nario-Redmond et al., 2013). These people often hope for a cure and adopt the negative assumptions associated with one's disability. The second mechanism is the collective response strategy to stigma (Bogart, 2014; Nario-Redmond et al., 2013). In this strategy, people affirm their disability identity by aligning themselves with the disability group, celebrating disability pride and finding benefits in their disability experience (Bogart, 2014). They moreover question society's stigmas and call for social justice for their community (Bogart, 2014; Nario-Redmond et al., 2013).

An example of a collective response strategy is that of deaf identity. Some members of the deaf community try to change the perceptions of deafness from being a tragic loss to deaf people being a minority cultural group (Sparrow, 2005). People who subscribe to this deaf culture reject attempts to cure deafness and note that deafness is only a disability in a society that was designed for the hearing (Sparrow, 2005). Another example of how identity can help disabled people is described by Dorfman (20126). Dorfman (2016) notices how people whose identity aligns with the social model of disability narrative are more critical on government agencies than people who follow the medical model of disability. Dorfman (2016) illustrates how identity is a valuable tool for people to emancipate themselves and protect themselves from negative treatment (Dorfman, 2016). Identity has also been described in relation to dyslexia. Barden (2012), observed how dyslectic students engage in identity work by discussing what dyslexia means to them. In doing so, these students became aware of their own dyslectic identity and created a more positive image of themselves as students (Barden, 2012).

Identity can also be used to mobilise people politically. Anspach (1979) uses the term identity politics to describe social movements whose participants try to change their self-conception and the societal conceptions of disability. He illustrates identity politics with his observations of the disability rights movements of the 1970's. At this time, people with mental and physical disabilities were protesting the image that they were 'helpless' and 'pitiful' and demanded to be acknowledged as an integral part of society (Anspach, 1979). By forming a collective identity, participants were able to politicise and stand up against this discourse. Anspach (1979) notices how, in the past, identities were often imposed upon people living with disabilities. However, through political activism, participants were able to take agency in forming their own identity, elevate their self-concept, and reject the roles that are imposed to them by society.

More on collective identities can be found in the work of Castells (2010). In his book *The Power of Identity,* Castells (2010) argues that identities are always constructed within a social structure that is rooted in a specific space and time. Individuals can identify themselves with the dominant identity or they might place themselves out of it (Castells, 2010). Castells (2010) distinguishes three different forms of identity building: legitimising identity, resistance identity, and project identity. Legitimising identities are introduced by ruling institutions to vindicate their dominance over the rest of society. Resistance identities are created by people who do not meet the expectations of those in power. People who subscribe to a resistance identity find support in each other and defend themselves from the legitimising identity. Finally, project identities promote completely new paradigms and aim to transform the dominant social structure.

A practical application of the work of Castells (2010) can be found in Antunes and Dhoest's (2018) research into a Facebook page for parents of autistic children in Brazil. Antunes and Dhoest's (2018) study shows that the identity models that circulate on this page can be grouped into Castells' (2010) three types of collective identities. First, they found the legitimising identity model where parents follow the medical view of autism (Antunes & Dhoest, 2018). Second, Antunes and Dhoest (2018) found that people who came to the Facebook group to find support to deal with their negative experience adhere to the resistance identity model. Finally, they found a small group of parents who proposed a completely different view of autism by acknowledging autism as a neurological difference (Antunes & Dhoest, 2018).

The concepts relating to identity, identity politics and the three collective identities proposed by Castells (2010) will be used to identify how the members of /r/dyslexia are presenting themselves in the group. The internet has been considered a place where both individual and collective identities are formed (Soriano, 2014), making this concept especially relevant to the topic of this thesis. In the next section, the third and final concept of social support will be discussed.

2.5 Social support

Social support plays an important role in people's life as it is a tool of dealing with stress (Turner & Turner, 2013). In a study exploring the relation between social support and the level of life satisfaction in Polish students with and without dyslexia, Kalka and Lockiewicz (2018) found that dyslectic students reported feeling lower life satisfaction levels resulting from experiencing lower levels of social support compared to their non-dyslectic peers (Kalka & Lockiewicz, 2018). The lower levels of perceived social support could be explained due to previous experiences of not meeting the expectations of teachers and parents at an earlier stage of their education (Kalka & Lockiewicz, 2018). The lack of social support in the offline environment of dyslectics could signify the importance of receiving social support through alternative venues, like online communities.

The concept of social support refers to the beneficial relationship between individuals in times of stress (Turner & Turner, 2013). As described in Turner and Turner's (2013) literature review, social support has its roots in sociology, but from the 1980's onwards the field of psychology has produced much research into the subject. Many of these studies hypothesise that the quality of social relationships might help people better cope with the exposure to stress and therefore relates to someone's mental health (Turner & Turner, 2013). In a recent study, Wang et al. (2018), for example, found evidence that perceived social support correlates with the poorer outcomes in recovery from depression. Moreover, Suri et al. (2019) found that perceived social support is a predictor of the level of loneliness among college students.

The concept of social support is very broad and can encompass different types of support. Therefore, Cutrona and Suhr (1992) developed a coding typology to study social support. Their framework has been proved to be successful and was adapted and used in many studies on the subject (Coulson, 2005; Holbrey & Coulson, 2013; Parsons, 2019). In their study, Cutrona and Suhr (1992) found that social support can be divided into the following five codes: informational support, tangible assistance, esteem support, network support and emotional support (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992). Informational support describes support that relates to individuals sharing knowledge and facts with each other. Emotional support is communication relating to encouragement, sympathy and understanding. Tangible support refers to the willingness to physically provide instrumental assistance. Esteem support is provided when building someone's self-esteem. Finally, network support is supporting an individual by connecting them to someone who can help (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992).

The studies discussed above have mainly focused on offline social support, however, the concept still holds true when applied to the online context (Coulson, 2005; Holbrey & Coulson, 2013; Parsons, 2019). Social support has recently gotten significant attention in relation to online health support groups. Parsons (2019) applied Cutrona and Suhr's (1992) coding typology to an online forum for women receiving or considering hysterectomies. When looking at the posts of 80 different women, Parsons (2019) established that women on the forum engaged in different types of social support with the most interactions falling under the category of emotional support. Parsons (2019) moreover found that the online interactions the women engaged in were valuable as they connected over their shared experiences. Additionally, Holbrey and Coulson (2013) demonstrate that social support on online health forums can build confidence in interactions with health professionals and overall help people deal with their conditions.

Besides the benefits of social support on online communities, there is also evidence that online forums may lead to damaging effects on members of the community. Coulson's (2005) analysis of an online support group for people living with irritable bowel syndrome acknowledged that misinformation sometimes circulated in the forum. Moreover, Holbrey and Coulson (2013) found that online support networks can also have a disempowering effect on people as users reported feeling anxious when reading about the problems of others. Or people felt rejected because they were not included in the conversation of others or they felt ignored when they did not receive any comments on their posts (Holbrey & Coulson, 2013).

The richness of literature on social support shows that the concept can be applied to both online and offline contexts. For the topic of the present study, it provides interesting insights into what kinds of social support circulate on /r/Dyslexia. Thus far there have been no studies looking into what kinds of social support circulates in online dyslexia communities.

2.6 Summary

Before moving on to the methodology of this dissertation, there are a few things worth highlighting from the theoretical framework. From the sections above it becomes apparent that disability studies and the social model of disability provide an interesting lens to analyse the dataset. The analysis of /r/Dyslexia is also inspired by the concepts of narratives, collective identity and social support. The three concepts all have their origins from the broad fields of disability studies or sociology. Despite them not being tailored to the topic of dyslexia, previous literature has proven that they can be applied to the context of this research.

In the following chapter, the methodology of this study is discussed in greater detail. The theory described above is used to justify the method and create a coding scheme that serves as a guide during the thematic analysis.

3. Methodology

This research aims to understand how people experience dyslexia themselves by conducting a thematic analysis on posts and interactions from the Reddit page /r/Dyslexia. The analysis is guided by looking at which narratives, identities, and social support types are present on /r/Dyslexia. In the chapter below, the choice for thematic analysis is motivated. Moreover, this chapter explains the sampling strategy used to collect the data and describes how the concepts have been operationalised. Finally, the method of analysis and credibility of this analysis are discussed.

3.1 Choice of method

Before delving deeper into the research design of this thesis, it is important to justify why a qualitative method is chosen to conduct the analysis. Sociologist David Silverman (2013) notes that a qualitative research design is most suited when trying to understand how people experience the world around them. Unlike in quantitative research, categories in qualitative research are not set in stone (Boeije, 2012). This allows a researcher to uncover new themes in the data and move beyond the rigid predetermined codes that are typically used in quantitative studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Medical research about dyslexia often projects normative ideas about literacy on dyslectics, without considering the perspective of people living with it (Collinson & Barden, 2016; Macdonald, 2019). Given that this study is particularly interested to understand how people on Reddit experience dyslexia, it is fitting to approach the subject with a methodology that leaves room for identifying new concepts from the data.

As described in the paragraph above, the chosen method makes it possible to find themes in an open manner. However, this does not mean that the analysis was purely inductive as concepts derived from the theory were used to guide the analysis. By starting from a deductive approach towards thematic analysis, this study was able to keep the focus of the analysis to the concepts of narrative, identity, and social support which were central to the research question. Deductive thematic analysis is a more structured form of content analysis when compared to an inductive approach. In a deductive analysis, some of the concepts are set in advance as the researcher makes a theory-driven coding scheme before exploring the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The data is then analysed using these predetermined codes. Fragments that do not fit into one of the categories are identified and studied to see if they represent a new code. Using predetermined codes made it possible to build upon the rich theories from disability studies and possibly extend existing research to the context of /r/Dyslexia. The approach also allows data driven concepts to be incorporated into the research, which is important given the underexplored nature of the dataset. However, to fully process the dataset, the deductive approach is complemented by a data-driven inquiry, which generated 106 open codes apart from the ones defined in the codebook.

The data in the sample of this study consists of posts and comments on the Reddit page /r/Dyslexia. The importance of using forum posts as a source of data was twofold. Firstly, as argued by sociologist Silverman (2002), using naturally occurring data allows someone to study phenomena in their natural context. By conducting a thematic analysis on Reddit posts the researcher looks at discussions as they naturally occur instead of interfering with them as is the case with qualitative interviews. Second, online communities have proven to be meaningful sources of support and information to people living with disabilities (Ellis & Kent, 2016; Kent, 2019; Olsson, 2012). The flexible nature of the method used in the analysis makes it possible to incorporate concepts that are not included in the original codebook.

The dataset is analysed using a thematic analysis method as developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is described by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) as a method for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data", through which it becomes possible to handle large quantities of information. One benefit of the method is that it can be applied to both data and theory-driven approaches, making it suitable for the thematic analysis used in this study. Moreover, the credibility of the method can be increased by meticulously describing and following an elaborate analysis strategy. This study uses the 6-phase guide to thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to analyse the data. More information on the application of Braun and Clarke's (2006) guide and a discussion of the credibility of this study are provided later in this chapter.

3.2 Sampling and data collection

For this analysis, 100 reddit's posts and their combined 2029 comments from the subreddit /r/Dyslexia are sampled. /r/Dyslexia is selected as the moderators mention that they are part of the neurodiversity movement, which leads to dyslexia being discussed from a wide array of perspectives and not just the medical or pedagogical view of dyslexia. In the page description, the moderators of /r/Dyslexia mention that the community is a proud member of the Neurodiversity Movement (/r/Dyslexia/, n.d). Another reason for choosing /r/Dyslexia is that it is a large community with 19.5 thousand subscribers and an active page receiving new posts every day (/r/Dyslexia/, n.d). /r/Dyslexia is a public page accessible without a Reddit account, making the posts on this channel available to almost anyone with a computer. People with a Reddit account can subscribe to the subreddit, create posts, up and downvote contributions of others, and engage in discussions. In addition to the general user agreement, the moderators on /r/Dyslexia also outline a couple of rules that people should adhere to when engaging in discussion. Some of the rules include that all redditors active on the page have to be respectful by refraining from posting inappropriate content and making unwanted grammar and spelling corrections in the comments. People also have to back up their claims and cannot post about unfounded theories. Other rules prevent the posting of spam or advertisement. According to the moderators, people not following the rules will see their posts removed (/r/Dyslexia/, n.d).

The 100 posts are selected on the basis of a purposive sample. Purposive sampling allows data to be selected as it illustrates an idea that is being explored in a study (Silverman, 2013). In the case of this thesis, posts were selected as they related to the concepts outlined in the theoretical framework of this study. When going through the post on /r/Dyslexia, search terms inspired by the concepts are used to look for meaningful interactions on the forum. To give some examples of how posts are found; the term ‘help’ is used to find interactions where social support is discussed. Terms like ‘neurodiversity’, ‘diagnosis’, and ‘symptoms’ are used to find posts on different disability narratives and ‘trauma’ and ‘experience’ are used to look for posts that could relate to identities. To avoid the sample being biased to one perspective, search terms are used that resulted in finding posts that were promoting several narratives and perspectives on dyslexia. When using a search term like ‘advantage’, for example, the search term ‘disadvantage’ is used as well to make sure that both posts that talked about advantages and disadvantages of dyslexia were included. Posts about practical matters such as how to improve spelling or how to download speech to text software are omitted from the dataset as they did not contribute to the discussion surrounding the concepts in the research questions. Moreover, only posts with more than 10 comments are included as the posts with more comments contain deeper discussions about people’s experiences. Each post on /r/Dyslexia automatically gets a message from a bot with a reminder to follow the community guidelines. These posts are not counted towards the minimum of 10 posts and are also not included into the 2029 total of posts. Finally, only posts between January 1st 2019 and April 5th 2022 are selected so that the data captures more recent discourses on the subreddit. The purposive sampling proved to be a great method of filtering out the posts that were not relevant to the research question.

Screengrabs of the selected posts and their comments were made and later compiled into one pdf file. Using screengrabs proved to be a great method of capturing the posts as they include the number of up- and downvotes, the dates of the posts and comments, and the badges each redditor collected. /r/Dyslexia also lets users customise their username by adding flair to their name. Flair is unique to each subreddit and helps users to express information about themselves (Massanari, 2015). Some of the flairs on dyslexia are “Dyslectic student”, “Dyslexia”, “Multiple” and other variations on how people on the page can define themselves. The flair proved to be helpful as it could be used to interpret the comments on the forum. The compiled pdf with the 100 posts was then imported into Atlas.ti which is a qualitative data analysis software that was used for the coding process.

3.3 Sensitising concepts

As mentioned in the paragraphs above, this research uses a deductive thematic analysis, as such theory is used to inspire the analysis of the posts on /r/Dyslexia. The concepts explored in the theoretical framework of this thesis are operationalised into an initial coding frame, where categories are identified and operational definitions for each concept are determined. The initial coding frame including a description of the codes can be found in Table 3.1, presented below.

Table 3.1 Coding Scheme

Concepts	Sub-concepts	Description
Narratives	Social Model of Literacy	Dyslexia as a result of lexist barriers in society/Collective approach to dyslexia.
	Medical Model of Literacy	Discussion of a medical/pedagogical approach to dyslexia, making it an individual problem.
	Neurodiversity	Positive description of dyslexia.
	Restoration Narrative	Focus on overcoming the difficulties caused by dyslexia.
	Chaos Narrative	Believing the situation will never improve.
	Quest Narrative	Finding a sense of purpose of their experience with dyslexia.
Identity (individual)	Identity politics	Interactions aimed to change the user’s self-conception and societal conceptions of the movement.
Identity (Collective)	Legitimising	Identities that follow the line of dominant institutions.
	Resistance	Identities that are created by those who do not meet the expectations of those in power.
	Project	Promotion of completely new paradigms and aim to transform the dominant social structure
Social Support	Information support	Support that relates to individuals sharing knowledge and facts with each other.
	Tangible assistance	Support that relates to physically providing instrumental assistance.
	Esteem support	Support meant to build someone’s self-esteem.
	Network support	Supporting an individual by connecting them to someone who can help.
	Emotional support	Communication relating to encouragement, sympathy and understanding

To explore the sub-question “What narratives about dyslexia are present in /r/Dyslexia?”, this research starts by building on the social and medical model of literacy, as described by Collinson and Barden (2016), to see whether the redditors of /r/Dyslexia see dyslexia as an individual or social issue. The narrative of neurodiversity is applied when redditors discuss being dyslectic as a positive trait. Furthermore, the three illness narratives by Frank (2013) are applied to the context of dyslexia and are used as a guide to understand how people tell their self-story in relation to dyslexia. The sub-question “How are online identities expressed in /r/Dyslexia?” is approached from both an individual and collective perspective. On an individual level, the concept of identity politics is used to understand how redditors’ self-conception is expressed. The collective identities are explored using Castells’s (2010) three collective identities models. Finally, the sub-question ‘How is social support circulating in /r/Dyslexia?’ is operationalised in Cutrona and Suhr’s (1992) five codes for social support. Apart from following the coding scheme, an open approach is kept to information that did not fit Table 3.1.

3.4 Method of analysis

The posts and comments in the dataset are analysed using thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight that a flexible method such as thematic analysis calls for a clear and systemic description of what a researcher is going to do in order to conduct a good analysis. Therefore, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six steps guide is followed to ensure that the analysis is up to standard. These six steps are chosen because it honours the inherent flexibility of thematic analysis while also ensuring that the process is transparent and controllable. The following paragraph explains what each step entails and illustrate how the six steps are implemented in the case of /r/Dyslexia.

In the first step of their guide, Braun and Clarke (2006) instruct that a researcher should immerse themselves in the data. Being dyslectic myself, I have been visiting /r/Dyslexia ever since I found out about the page three years ago. The personal affinity with the subject allows an in-depth immersion in the subreddit. In the process of looking for suitable posts, I took the immersion a step further as I was now reading the posts with an academic lens. With the help of a coding diary, remarkable fragments were noted down, making the data collection already part of the analysis.

The next three stages involve the coding process. In the second phase of the analysis initial codes are generated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Using the coding scheme in Table 3.1, an initial coding round is conducted. All fragments that can not be coded into one of the predetermined codes are analysed and given a new code. The third step involves categorising the codes into broader themes and seeing how these themes relate to each other. In the fourth step, the initial themes formed in the third step are reviewed and refined. This is done by, first, looking back at the extracts from each theme to see if they are coherent with the proposed theme and, second, making sure that the themes represent the scope of the data.

After the coding was concluded, in the fifth phase, the final themes are named and described, while ensuring that the themes are coherent and not too complex. In the last step of Braun and Clarke's (2006) guide, the results of the analysis are reported. The results are written down in the next chapter and are illustrated by data extracts from r/Dyslexia to demonstrate the prevalence of a theme. After the analysis, the following four themes raised from the dataset; *The Traditional view of Dyslexia, Dyslexia as a personal struggle, Dyslexia as a social issue,* and *Embracing dyslexic identity*.

3.5 Credibility and ethical considerations

Silverman (2013) states that improving the credibility of an analysis and moving beyond telling mere anecdotes can be achieved by following analytical strategies. Therefore, two of Silverman's (2002) suggested strategies were incorporated to increase the reliability of the analysis. The first method employed was the principle of constant comparison. With constant comparison the researcher always tries to find new cases to see if the created themes hold up (Silverman, 2013). By using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step approach to thematic analysis, constant comparison is pursued by going through the whole data set several times and constantly reflecting upon codes and themes before writing down the results.

The second strategy that is applied is the deviant case analysis, a method where cases that do not fall in line with the rest of the analysis are identified and further analysed (Silverman, 2013). An example of a deviant case was the discussions around diagnosis. On a first glance, the posts about diagnosis were thought to be aligned with the medical model of disability narrative as the need for a diagnosis suggests that there is a standard people deviate from. Some people were worried about their diagnosis and saw it as a tragedy. However, when looking closer into the comments, there seemed to be a group of redditors that was really happy with their diagnosis and shared that getting diagnosed was a validating experience for them rather than a personal tragedy. Therefore, the two types of reactions to getting diagnosed were separated into a group that followed a medical view of dyslexia and discussed the diagnosis in negative terms and a group that embraced the diagnosis, discussing the diagnosis through a social model of disability narrative.

When assessing the credibility of this analysis it is also important to consider the strengths and limitations of the method. Choosing a qualitative method allows for understanding the experiences of people on /r/Dyslexia on a deeper level than would be possible with a quantitative method. Moreover, by analysing online data, the writer of this thesis does not have to interfere with the content of the data. However, besides the strengths, one must also consider the weakness of the data analysed. As mentioned, Reddit is a pseudo-anonymous space making it almost impossible to collect demographic information on a specific subreddit. Proferes et al. (2021)

therefore suggest that researchers need to consider to what extent their sample is representative and generalisable. In the case of this thesis, it is not possible to generalise the findings outside of the page /r/Dyslexia. That said, the findings still show interesting insights into the experiences of people on /r/Dyslexia and are supported by literature. The results of the analysis are shared in the next chapter of this thesis, after a few ethical considerations that guide this research are discussed.

The posts in /r/Dyslexia often contain personal stories about trauma, mental health, and childhood experiences. Given the sensitivity of the topics discussed on the forum, ethics are an important topic to consider prior to conducting the analysis. Proferes et al. (2021) outline some important research ethics to consider when collecting data from Reddit. Proferes et al. (2021) highlight that, even though data on Reddit is public, researchers should still ensure that nobody is harmed as a result from the collected data. Therefore, the present study made sure that all identifying data are removed from the sample. Reddit is already a pseudo-anonymous space where users are encouraged to post under pseudonyms and not to share too much personal information (Massanari, 2015). Even though redditors tend to use pseudonyms, their usernames are not included when reporting the data to ensure that the data cannot easily be linked to a Reddit account. Subreddits can decide if they want the posts on their page to show up on search engines like Google. In the case of /r/Dyslexia, the moderators have decided to hide the posts from showing up on google, which may signal that the redditors on /r/Dyslexia are more private than other pages. Sometimes redditors revealed themselves by providing identifying data such as a name, age, and place of residence. Information that could reveal the identity of a redditor, has been anonymized in the results section and posts with such information are not directly quoted in the results to avoid tracing.

Moreover, it is important to highlight that posts without personal information were quoted directly without making any corrections. Two reasons justify this approach; first, making spelling and grammar corrections is ‘not done’ as the moderators on /r/Dyslexia tried to create a safe space for dyslectics by discouraging unwanted spelling corrections in the rules of the page. Second, some people on the page embraced their spelling mistakes in an effort to challenge our traditional idea of literacy. They purposefully did not edit their comments to show that they could be understood without writing perfect English. To honour their statement and in respect to the community, the posts have not been edited. Where missing contexts causes the fragments to be incomprehensible, an interpretation of the meaning is given in brackets by the posts.

Before moving on to the results it is important to disclose the positionality of the author (Qin, 2016). Being dyslectic myself, I have first-hand experience with many of the subjects discussed on /r/Dyslexia. Moreover, although I am not an active member of the neurodiversity movement, I do sympathise with their values. This connection to the research has helped me interpret the data as I was familiar with many of the topics discussed on /r/Dyslexia. However, during the analysis process, I have also reflected on my insider perspective and tried to ensure that the research was not biased to one perspective. Following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) instructions for thematic analysis provides transparency about the process and helps to ensure the process is structured and thorough.

4. Results and discussion

The thematic analysis on the 100 posts and 2029 comments on /r/Dyslexia results in 106 data-driven open codes in addition to the 15 initial codes that are derived from the theory. /r/Dyslexia proves to be a place where people can share their experiences with dyslexia and count on receiving social support from other redditors. The dataset on /r/Dyslexia also reveals to be diverse as a broad selection of discourses and narratives can be found on the subreddit.

After analysing these codes, four main themes can be distinguished; *The Traditional view of Dyslexia, Dyslexia as a personal struggle, Dyslexia as a social issue,* and *Embracing dyslexic identity*. The complete coding tree including examples of open codes can be found in Appendix A and a brief overview of the four themes and the corresponding subthemes can be found in table 4.1. This chapter tells the story of the four patterns that exist on /r/Dyslexia. The patterns are interpreted using the concepts related to identities, narratives and social support, which are previously introduced in the theoretical framework.

Table 4.1 – Overview results

Themes and definitions	**Sub-themes**
1. Traditional view of dyslexia Dyslexia as an individual issue which can be overcome by hard work and conventional learning interventions. People within this pattern have a medical view of disability and legitimise the dominant approach to dyslexia.	Restitution narrative
	Legitimising Dyslexia approach
	Treatment of dyslexia
	Dyslexia is not a big deal
2. Dyslexia as a personal struggle Within this theme dyslexia is seen as an individual problem and dyslectics struggle to meet social demands because of their dyslexia. They are in despair and come to /r/Dyslexia to find understanding and sympathy.	Sharing personal experiences
	Chaos narrative
	Finding support on /r/Dyslexia
3. Dyslexia as a social issue Dyslexia is a collective problem that is caused by barriers in society. /r/Dyslexia is their exhaust valve where they can share their experiences and find understanding in like-minded people.	Sharing experiences
	Being misunderstood
	Positive experience
	Being Disadvantaged
	Support on /r/Dyslexia
4. Embracing the dyslectic identity Creation of a new way of looking at dyslexia by cultivating a neurodiverse dyslectic identity. Besides promoting a new narrative around dyslexia which suggests social change and posits itself within the broader disability community.	Cultivating a Dyslectic identity
	Community on /r/Dyslexia
	Dyslexia as Disability

4.1 Theme 1: Traditional view of Dyslexia

The *Traditional view of dyslexia* is the first of the four themes. The comments and posts belonging to this theme mainly regard dyslexia as an individual problem which can be fixed through interventions like remedial teaching. People who support this narrative are often parents of a dyslectic child, although parents were a smaller group in the overall dataset. They come to /r/Dyslexia to find information about how to help their child improve in reading and writing. Educators are also represented in the traditional approach as they come to the forum to seek help for dyslectic students or give advice to others. Posts from dyslectics themselves can also be categorised under the traditional approach, mostly when dyslexics write about their success stories and how they overcome their learning difficulties. From the analysis, it becomes clear that the medical model of literacy (Macdonald, 2019) and Frank's (2013) restitution narrative are dominant within this theme. It also shows that the messages in the traditional approach share Castells' (2010) legitimising identity.

The *Traditional view of dyslexia* is in line with the medical model of literacy narrative where a dyslectic person is expected to adapt their learning strategy in order to fit the level of literacy that is demanded from society (Macdonald, 2009a). Comments in this theme include people exchanging information about learning interventions, remedial teaching, private education, alternative remedies, and medicine. The prominence of the medical view within this theme is illustrated by the following comment to a parent who asked advice for her dyslectic 3rd grader who was struggling to keep up in school:

> A private school for children with language based learning disabilities use Orton Gilligham, which is what it sounds like your child needs. Look at private speciality schools and speak with your accountant about the percent you can write off as a medical expense. This is what we are currently doing for our 8 year old dyslexic child. It's changed her life. She's a different kid. More confident than ever.

By advising that the original poster (OP) should consider private education based on the Orton Gilligham method, a type of remedial teaching that is frequently mentioned by parents in the dataset, this redditor follows a medical view narrative in suggesting that the 3rd grader's problems should be fixed.

The restitution narrative as described by Frank (2013) is the second narrative that is present in the traditional view of dyslexia theme. Where Frank's restitution narrative celebrates the triumph of medicine over illness, the restitution narrative on /r/Dyslexia celebrates the success of learning interventions that cause an individual to overcome dyslexia. These restitution stories are often success stories where individuals achieved academic or professional goals by working hard.

This narrative is illustrated in the following fragment of a comment by someone who posted about getting into medical school despite having ADHD and dyslexia.

> If you use it as an excuse you force yourself into that "i cant do it because i have dyslexia" box you have already lost. Dyslexia isn't a disability - Its a challenge that anyone can overcome (even you reading this). It may take more time and effort but you CAN do it…

In the case of this comment, the poster views dyslexia as a personal problem and does not mention the social barriers they might have had to overcome to get into medical school.

These stories are often followed by people who admire the OP for their triumph. Much like the restitution narratives described by Frank (2013), these success stories are well-loved by people who are struggling with dyslexia. Parents for example comment on the post saying that it brings them comfort to hear that there is someone who is doing well despite having dyslexia, which further illustrates how the discourses take a medical stand on dyslexia.

When looking at the analysis in light of Castells' three collective identities (2010), legitimising identity was present in 56 comments on /r/Dyslexia. Although the number of comments seems minor in relation to the full dataset, legitimising identities follow the discourses present in this theme and, thus, become relevant for the full understanding of the pattern. Legitimising identities on /r/Dyslexia support the dominant view of dyslexia as a pathology and an individual problem, as such, dyslectics are expected to keep up with their peers and undergo treatment. These dominant discourses from society are echoed by people on /r/Dyslexia by sharing stories about how they overcome dyslexia and by informing others on how to keep up with the social demands of literacy.

The discourse of wanting to be normal can also be seen in the way in which people reject the label of 'disability'. Because there are many different definitions used by policymakers to define dyslexia and because these definitions are different across cultures (Turner & Greaney, 2010), the discussion of whether to define dyslexia as a disability or not comes up frequently in the dataset. People who argue that dyslexia is not a disability often highlight that dyslexia can be overcome by hard work. Like is the case in this response to thread under the statement "Dyslexia is not a disability":

> It is not a disability under any circumstances, just a minor disadvantage. In some ways you will have to work harder than your classmates, but other things will be easier for you. You will have to practice patience with yourself and the people around you.

By rejecting the term disability and calling it a disadvantage, this commenter supports the idea that dyslectics should conform to societal demands of literacy instead of the idea that dyslexia is a learning disability that should be accommodated. Thirty comments in the dataset call dyslexia a ‘difference’. This is often done by people who do not want to call it a disability. Andrews et al. (2019) note that such euphemisms are often created by non-disabled people to paint a more positive picture of dyslexia. In their minds the word disability has a negative meaning as is the case in the following comment: “We've started calling it a learning difference”. Calling dyslexia a difference can also undermine the right for accommodations and special treatment for dyslectics and erase the struggle people had to go through in order to obtain those. Anspach, (1979) mentions how disability rights activists in the 1970’s reclaimed the term disability trying to change the social meanings attached to the term. In a society that preferred the use of euphemisms to assimilate disabled people into the dominant culture, actively using the word disability was an act of protest and a way to take agency in defining a new disability identity (Anspach, 1979). Considering the symbolic meaning of the term ‘disability’, calling dyslexia a ‘difference’ could be seen as a statement against the fight for identity politics.

Informational support in the traditional approach of dyslexia theme often includes recommendations for learning interventions in private education. Parents use the forum to share information about different treatment types with each other. In a total of 34 comments, parents encourage each other to get one-on-one tutoring or specialised private education to help their kids keep up with what is considered normal. Like the following redditor mentions: “My son has pretty much the same diagnosis and we paid for private, 1:1 tutoring to help him”. The advice aligns with the dominant structures in society and is aimed at bringing a child up to speed with the rest of their peers.

To sum up, the first theme shows how people continue the discourse which is dominant in society on /r/Dyslexia. An interesting observation is that mainly people who revealed themselves to be parents or teachers engage in these types of discussions. This observation is in line with the findings of Antunes and Dhoest’s (2018) application of Castells’ (2010) collective identities on a Brazilian Facebook group for parents of autistic children. They found the medical view of disability to be the most prominent on the Facebook group as parents wanted their children to be able to adapt to what is considered normal in society (Antunes & Dhoest, 2018). Besides parents, dyslectics can also be placed under this theme. This could be considered an individual coping strategy to deal with the stigma in society. Bogart (2014) notes that people choosing this strategy, often hope for a cure and try to assimilate with the dominant group. By sharing stories that align with Frank’s (2013) restitution narrative, people try to overcome their dyslexia and assimilate with the rest of society.

4.2 Theme 2: Dyslexia as personal struggle

The second theme, *Dyslexia as Personal Struggle*, relates to posts and comments in the dataset that shows people struggling with the legitimising culture described above. Their struggle comes to the surface in the many experiences of dyslexia that are shared on the forum. People share about their bad school experiences, being bullied by friends and teachers, struggling to keep up at work, and about having panic attacks because of their dyslexia. People's experiences with dyslexia are not just limited to reading and writing, as dyslexia can lead to anxiety, stress, and in some cases depression (Ruijssenaars et al., 2008). These descriptions of hardships are often answered with messages of emotional and esteem support from other members of the /r/Dyslexia group.

Within the second theme, people generally still follow a medical model of dyslexia narrative, which sees dyslexia as a pathology (Macdonald, 2019). However, different from the previous theme, they do not meet the demand of what society expects from them. Approaching the second theme from Castells' (2010) collective identities, the posts in the dataset suggest that people in the second theme fall under the resistance identity. From all collective identities, resistance identity is with 260 comments by far the most prevalent identity on /r/Dyslexia, followed by project (93) and legitimising (56) identity. Even though redditors in the *Dyslexia as Personal Struggle* theme still hold a medical view of dyslexia, they are resisting and struggling with the dominant culture. This resistance identity can be seen in the following posts by a redditor who does not meet the demands of their job due to dyslexia:

> I just joined this group and spent the night ranting and crying. Im 26 and really coming to terms with this. I have a high level of dyslexia and work in a high education field. It will never get better then it is and thats so fucking devastating to me. It doesn't matter how hard i try and the practices and system i put in place to minimise it. This is as good as it get but its never going to go away!

The comment above illustrates how someone can suffer from their dyslexia while also making dyslexia a personal problem as they work on themselves to minimise their dyslexia rather than calling out their employer for not accommodating their needs.

Failing to keep up with societal demands leaves people in this second theme in despair. The chaos narrative is the most prominent illness narrative as it is present in 59 comments, followed by the restitution narrative (47) and the project narrative (27). When people then turn to Reddit with their struggles, the telling of their story much resembles the raw and unfiltered chaos narrative Frank (2013) describes. In the online context of /r/Dyslexia, this translates to posts of people that use harsh words to describe themselves or their vexation with dyslexia. They also share their feelings as they are, without seeing a way out or any perspective of the situation getting better. The following quote is taken from a comment on a post of someone who felt frustrated because people tried to see dyslexia as a positive attribute.

> I hate it so much. I wish I could take some magic cure and be done with the whole thing. Everyone things [thinks] I'm an idiot because of it and in a way they are kind of right; I can't learn or do tasks as well as normal people. There are certain things no matter how hard I practice I will not be good at. It really does suck.

The comment shows that this person expresses their frustration and lack of perspective of getting better as a “magic cure” does not exist. Moreover, the comment shows that the redditor is still following a medical model of literacy as they are practising hard to improve their dyslexia. Unlike the comments that fall under the traditional view of dyslexia pattern, these comments show people failing to meet lexist societal demands.

Frank (2013) writes how it is important to listen and not steer away when chaos stories are told. People going through a chaos story need a listening ear and in the case of /r/Dyslexia, Reddit can provide this type of social support. When redditors share their stories of their experiences with dyslexia, these are often answered with comments containing social support. The two main types of social support connected to this pattern are emotional and esteem support.

Emotional support comments often express sympathy and understanding for the situation of the OP, as is the case in the following comment on a post from someone who did not have any offline friends who understood their struggle “Never fell sory for ranting We understand how hard it is to find another dyslexic in person just know you can always come to us :)”. Esteem support predominantly contains complements aimed to make the poster feel better, like is the case in the following post of a redditor responding to someone’s bad school experience: “I'm so sorry to hear about your experience. Just remember the adults who were supposed to help us (the teachers, assistant teachers etc) were the ones who failed you. YOU are not the failure. You're amazing!”. Given the many stories that are answered with kind and sympathizing comments, it seems that /r/Dyslexia is a place where people turn to when they need their stories to be heard.

In the *Dyslexia as Personal Struggle* theme a combination of the medical view of dyslexia and the resistance identity come together. Within this theme, people often rely on chaos narratives to tell their stories. Unlike Frank (2013) who argues that chaos stories cannot be told as they occur, a number of posts containing chaos narratives did seem to be told in real-time. These posts were often very raw and unedited. People telling chaos stories seem to be stuck in their offline lives and /r/Dyslexia can provide them with a listening ear. Kalka and Lockiewicz (2018) highlight that perceived social support can decrease the negative emotional experience associated with dyslexia. Given that this support is not always provided by one’s environment, getting sympathy might help them cope with their dyslexia.

4.3 Theme 3: Dyslexia as a Social Issue

The third pattern distinguished on /r/Dyslexia is characterised by people who, like redditors in the second pattern, share a resistance identity. The main difference between the patterns is that, instead of using /r/Dyslexia to share their internal struggle with dyslexia, posts in the *Dyslexia as Social Issue* theme turn their frustration outward and use the subreddit to share their experiences with dyslexia. Redditors in this pattern hold their environments responsible for creating their hardships, the majority of the posts seem to be aligned with the social model of disability narrative, which considers that disability is not caused by personal impairment, but by disabling barriers they face in society (Oliver, 2013). Looking at the posts, people on /r/dyslexia seem to be aware of the concepts of the social model of disability as the following comment under a post with the question of what you would like to tell your 7 year old self about dyslexia demonstrates:

> It is important to frame the discussion around access rather than deficate [deficit]. Disability arises from the way society treats people rather than the condition of the person themselves. This is called the social model of disability. For example a short sighted person who is denied glasses is disabled when trying to read but when given access to glassese they are not.

Besides the comment above, three other comments in the dataset have similar explanations of the social model of disability, suggesting that only a few people have a more advanced awareness of this view of disability. Other comments may not mention the social model of disability as directly as the previous comment, but their comments do suggest a similar understanding of disabilities being created by society, as can be seen in the following comment: “You aren’t broken. Google left handed complaints. The world was built with short cuts for non-dyslexics and right handed people. We can’t access the short cuts”. The allegory of left-handedness is used here to show that the world does not accommodate dyslectics.

How people express their resistance identity is also influenced by the social model of disability narrative as posts in this pattern often criticize their environment or society for the situation they are in. Many redditors share their experiences of being mistreated by an educator like this redditor who wrote while reflecting on their school experience: “The damage made by people, taken in the kid ages to our self-esteem, will never leave us”, or this person commenting that they just reported being dyslectic to the HR department of their company “The discrimination and the crap I take from my boss isn’t worth hiding it. Inevitably, it always comes up - my grammar, spelling, comprehension stink. From this point on, I’m not going to hide it”. Unlike the messages in the *Dyslexia as personal struggle* pattern, posts in *Dyslexia as social Issue* recognise that their problems are caused by lexist expectations from society. Redditors show their resistance identity by discussing instances of discrimination in the workplace or not receiving proper accommodations in school or university. Some comments in the dataset just mention these injustices, others discuss taking action to demand fair treatment. The following comment illustrates this practical approach as a redditor gives advice for a person who was almost fired from their job because of dyslexia related mistakes:

> Check your workers rights, see if they have a disability workers act to prevent discrimination at work for your disability. They shouldn't be able to fire you or harass you due to mistakes made as a result of the disability. It bugs me so much that so many work environments are so unaware.

Social support is also a principal element of the third pattern. Much like the previous pattern, esteem and emotional support is also prevalent in *Dyslexia as Social Issue* theme. However, in addition to esteem and emotional support, informational support also comes up frequently. Informational support in the *Dyslexia as social issue* pattern includes informing people about their rights. For instance, in the following quote where a university student is getting advice about how to get the university to give them proper accommodations: "discrimination against persons with disabilities act. I feel like they would go nuts for a case like this haha.". Later in the thread the OP responds that they are indeed planning to pursue the case, showing that /r/Dyslexia can empower people to stand up for themselves in the offline world.

The third theme shows how resistance identity and the social model of disability come together. A few people on /r/Dyslexia seem to have a more developed understanding of what the social model of disability is. Fritz (2022) finds similar peer experts on /r/Neurodiversity. The presence of these peer experts can help steer discourse on /r/Dyslexia. Besides, the information on the forum could also help members of /r/Dyslexia advocate for themselves offline. Hinson and Sword (2019) show that the interactions on Facebook groups for illness can help people vocalize their experiences and better advocate for themselves when meeting healthcare professionals. The presence of people encouraging each other to take legal action to enforce schools and employers to accommodate dyslexia suggests that interactions on /r/Dyslexia also stimulates people to stand up for themselves.

4.4 Theme 4: Embracing dyslectic Identity

The *embracing dyslexic identity* theme stands out from the previous four themes in that it proposes a completely new view of dyslexia. Redditors included in this theme view dyslexia through the neurodiversity narrative and encourage a more positive view of dyslexia, both inside the /r/Dyslexia community and in the minds of others. Within this last pattern, interactions are not just limited to sharing struggles with reading and writing at work or in school, but redditors reclaim dyslexia as something positive and use the forum to propagate their dyslectic identity. 17 comments discuss being proud to be dyslectic and 91 comments talk about the positive sides of dyslexia. They entice others to share their positive experiences as well, by asking questions like “What kind of good things came from being Dyslexic?” and “Is there any benefit to having dyslexia in your opinion?”. These questions are answered with comments like “I feel like it has made me more emotionally intelligent compared to my peers who are not dyslexic, also creativity. Naturally if somebody has a hard time solving a problem they tend to develop creativity to solve for it.” or “Dyslexics are often found to be better at problem solving, creative thinking, 3 dimensional processing to name just a few positive aspects”.

The sub-theme of being proud can also be seen in the way people prefer to use identity-first language to talk about themselves. Andrews et al. (2022) note that identity-first language has been used by disability activists to promote disability pride and emphasize disability as central to one’s identity. A similar sentiment can be found in the following fragment from a comment:

> The most help, affirmation, and understanding I have ever received has been from other disabled people. If my school and workplace rights are ever violated in the future, I can guarantee you that the people who advocate for me will be other disabled people. I am proud to be Dyslexic (and disabled) for these reasons!

This person regards their dyslexia as a source of pride and identifies themselves with the disability community, showing how they redefine the negative connotation society normally has about someone with dyslexia.

The sense of community /r/Dyslexia provides is also an important aspect of the *Embracing dyslectic identity* theme. /r/Dyslexia offers people a place to share ideas and connect with people who understand them, as can be seen in the following comment on a thread discussing the common problem dyslectics have with differentiating the letter q and p: “I have found my people. (cuddles up with everyone)”. Together, they have created a common language to talk about dyslexia. Redditors on /r/Dyslexia talk about “neurotypicals” or “lefties” (referring to people who rely on their left brains halves) to describe people without dyslexia. Another trend within this pattern is that people use “we” and “us” to discuss themselves. By talking in this way, they distinguish themselves further as a community. The comment below shows how someone is talking as part of the dyslectic community:

> As a people, life has probably taught most of us too not share that information with the world...... unless we're very, very comfortable with that person. So unless we're talking

> about dyslexia you're definitely going to see an under representation because we are hiding in plain sight.

This person moreover discusses a common experience among dyslectics of not disclosing that one is dyslectic. Alexander-Passe (2015) notes that dyslectics often choose to hide their dyslexia in fear of others thinking negatively of them.

Having this sense of social support can also be considered a form of emotional support as it shows the commenter that they are not alone. For instance, the comment below is posted under an original post about someone feeling like they were not intelligent enough due to failing a school exam: “…since you were recently diagnosed, welcome to the family :) You will find a lot of posts here that will most certainly help you out even more 🤙”. The commenter goes as far as to call the subreddit a family and mentions that the OP can find more support on other posts in the forum.

Besides having a dyslexia community, the fourth pattern also includes situating dyslexia within the broader disability movements. One of the ways in which this becomes apparent is by reclaiming dyslexia as a disability. Unlike in the *Traditional view of dyslexia* theme, people in the *Embracing dyslexic identity* theme stay away from euphemisms and prefer to consider dyslexia a disability. This can be seen in the following comment which was a contribution to the discussion if learning disabilities (LD’s) should be called a difference or a disability:

> Personally, I think it's dangerous to promote the whole "learning disorders aren't disabilities" thing, because if LDs aren't disabilities, they lose the protection they have. If LDs aren't disabilities, there is no reason for dyslexics to have extra time on tests, or to get spelling mistakes forgiven, or for them to not get fired for dyslexia-related reasons.

When discussing a positive view of dyslexia, people often shared their life’s stories in relation to dyslexia. These stories mostly follow the quest narrative as they come to terms with their dyslexia and try to give it a positive spin. Unlike was the case for restitution stories, where the story is told through the remedy and not through the person living it, or chaos narratives, when the story cannot actually be told, the quest narrative provides the storyteller with the opportunity to take agency to tell their own story (Frank, 2013). When discussing self confidence in relation to dyslexia, the following user writes:

> At this point I LIKE being dyslexic. See things differently and can think outside the box everyone else seems to be stuck in.
>
> It is a different way of viewing life. In times before modern rote learning the dyslexia people were the creative thinkers, the artists. Regular school sucks for dyslexic

> people. Real life is outside that mess. I hated school and really sucked with it. Since I have done a lot of studying things on my own and love it.

This redditor describes how they used to struggle with school, but now have a more positive outlook on dyslexia. Their quest narrative could be placed under the automythology facet of Frank's (2013) quest narrative, as they describe how they invented themselves in relation to their dyslexia.

Among the posts and comments in the dataset that fall under the *Embracing dyslectic identity*, the project identity is observed 93 times. Project identities take resistance a step further and, instead of just resisting the legitimising culture, they aim to change society as a whole (Castells, 2010). One practical example of how project identities can be observed in /r/Dyslexia is in the way people challenge the dominant views of dyslexia and what it means to be literate. The following redditor illustrates this example in a reply to a post about the benefits of dyslexia:

> I have found the most important thing to appreciate my neurodiversity is the complete and utter rejection of neurotypical social norms. Literally everything we are expected to do, every way we are expected to behave, are subjective social constructs. Made for neurotypicals! Not us!
>
> They don't work for us because our brains literally do not work in the same way. It takes some serious metacognitive processing to get to the root of all your internalised norms, but it will change your life.
>
> (If this sounds confusing, that's because I'm still figuring it all out myself and am having to make up the language myself)

This redditor's comment challenges dominant assumptions about literacy as something that has to be done in a certain way. This is in line with the social model of literacy suggested by Collinson and Barden (2016), who argue that dyslexia can only exist in an environment that privileges a certain type of literacy. Similar to the redditor above, they suggest a more inclusive approach to what it means to be literate (Collinson & Barden, 2016).

By combining the neurodiversity narrative and the project identities observed in the *Embracing dyslexic identity* pattern, Anspach's (1979) concept of identity politics becomes visible. Redditors negotiate a dyslectic identity through which they appear to be taking agency about how they define themselves. Contrary to the dominant ideas in society, people in the fourth pattern propose a more positive view of dyslexia, seeing dyslexia as a neurological difference instead of a deficit that should be overcome. /r/Dyslexia does not engage concrete actions to change people's views of dyslexia outside of the forum, as the occasional hashtag or petition did not really take off. However, by spreading awareness about the neurodiversity movement, redditors on /r/Dyslexia could be empowered to stand up to lexism in their offline environment. They use the subreddit to change how others view dyslexia, as the following redditor shows when explaining what they would tell their 7 year old self: “The main think [thing] is to let kids know it’s ok that their brain work differently than others”. In doing this, redditors on /r/Dyslexia try changing how the rest of society outside of the subreddit views dyslexia.

In the *Embracing Dyslexic Identity* theme, Castells’ (2010) project identities and the neurodiversity narrative come together. Interactions that fall under this theme suggest a completely different and more positive way of looking at dyslexia. This tendency aligns with the collective coping strategy to stigma concept (Bogart, 2014; Nario-Redmond et al., 2013). By celebrating dyslexia as a neurological difference, they reject the negative assumptions people have about dyslexia. The approach towards dyslexia in the fourth theme in the dataset furthermore resembles the culture of the deaf community as explained by Sparrow (2005). Like the deaf community, people on /r/Dyslexia also say that their condition is not negative and that it should be respected as a natural difference.

4.5 Summary and sub research questions

From the thematic analysis of the dataset from /r/Dyslexia, four different patterns come to the surface. The *Traditional view of dyslexia* is with 16.6% of the posts the least prevalent of the four themes in the dataset. Posts and comments that fall under this pattern are often written by parents or educators who want to ask practical information on the subreddit. The smaller number of posts associated with this pattern can be explained by the fact that information about traditional learning interventions for dyslectics are often already provided by legitimising institutions. Despite the smaller number of posts, it is still an important theme as it reflects the dominant narratives in the current society.

The second theme, *Dyslexia as struggle*, is together with the *Dyslexia as social issue* the most prevalent in the dataset, containing 29.9% and 29.0% associated comments respectively. Since people who struggle with the dominant structure cannot find support from institutions, they turn to /r/Dyslexia to find support in people wo are in the same boat as them. The second and third theme differ in the fact that people in the second theme have internalised lexist demands of society and view dyslexia as a personal problem, while people in the third pattern have adopted a social view of dyslexia and blame society for their struggle. Finally, with a prevalence of 24.5%, the *Embracing dyslectic identity* pattern suggest that some redditors on the forum hold a completely new view of dyslexia. People in the fourth pattern embrace their dyslexic identity and promote a more positive view of dyslexia, while still acknowledging the struggles of dyslectics in a lexist society.

The findings of the thematic analysis described in the paragraphs above can be used to answer the three sub-research questions. Approaching the dataset through the first sub-question 'What narratives about dyslexia are present in /r/Dyslexia?', it can be said that the medical and social view of dyslexia are both equally present on the subreddit. The medical model of disability can be observed in the *Traditional view of dyslexia* and *Dyslexia as personal struggle*. In the second theme, people seem to struggle with the narrative, but, nevertheless, view dyslexia as a personal problem. In the *Dyslexia as social issue* theme and *Embracing the dyslectic identity* theme, people acknowledge that dyslexia is a result of barriers in society that disadvantage dyslectics. Frank's (2013) illness narratives can also be applied to the data on /r/Dyslexia. People rely on the restitution, chaos, and quest illness narratives to tell their stories. The restitution narrative is often visible and admired by parents who enjoy the idea that dyslexia can be cured. The chaos narrative is most visible in the second theme, where people share their struggle with being dyslectic. Project identities are most visible in the third and fourth themes.

For the second question 'How are online identities expressed in /r/Dyslexia?' it can be said that all three of Castells (2010) collective identities are present on r/Dyslexia. First, the legitimising identity exists on /r/Dyslexia, but is not as prominent as the other two collective identities. Frequently, the posts that relate to the legitimising identity are parents discussing the symptoms of their children and not dyslectics themselves. The resistance identity is overall the most prominent. This can be explained as people who are not serviced by society's current approach of dyslexia use online forums as an alternative venue to share their experiences with dyslexia. Followed by the resistance identity is the project identity. Posts from the dataset that can be categorised under this theme take the resistance identity one step further and suggest a completely different and more positive view of dyslexia. Related to this project identity is the embracing of a dyslectic identity that comes up in the fourth theme. The proposed dyslectic identity includes people being proud of their dyslexia, engaging in a common language, and celebrating their strengths. Finally, identity politics can also be observed as people use the dyslectic identity to change the self-conception of others and propose a different way for society to look at dyslexia. Instead of being talked about, these redditors take action to create their own identity related to their dyslexia.

Finally, the question 'How is social support circulating in /r/Dyslexia?' is answered by looking at Cutrona and Suhr's (1992) concept of social support. In all themes, informational support (323 times) is the most salient support type on /r/Dyselexia, followed by emotional (161) and esteem (100) support respectively. Tangible support only occurs once in the overall dataset and network support is only mentioned seven times. For the first theme, informational support is most prominent. Most of the information is practical in nature. The second theme includes mostly esteem and emotional support as people were trying to sympathise with each other to make themselves feel better. A combination of informational, esteem and emotional support can be observed in the third theme as people tried to signal to others that they were being heard and share information about how to take legal actions against a school, employer or university to demand accommodations. In line with previous research into social support in online communities (Coulson, 2005; Holbrey & Coulson, 2013; Parsons, 2019), social support appears to concern a large amount of the interactions on /r/Dyslexia. For dyslexics, this can be considered extra valuable as studies have shown that dyslectics often do not feel supported in their offline environment (Kalka & Lockiewicz, 2018). As people frequently refer to each other as family, the sense of community and social support appears to be strong on /r/Dyslexia.

In the upcoming chapter, the main research question is answered. Moreover, the strengths and limitations of this study are discussed, and some practical implications of the results are given, as well as future lines of research.

5. Conclusion

Driven by the importance of developing a better understanding of the experiences of dyslectics, this study set out to learn more about the unique community on /r/Dyslexia. A thematic analysis based on the concepts described in the theoretical framework is conducted on 100 Reddit posts and their comments to develop a better understanding of how people on /r/Dyslexia experience dyslexia. The initial analysis of the dataset reveals a multitude of different narratives, identities, and forms of social support that are further analysed to expose four overarching themes in the data. In the previous chapter, the three sub-questions are answered. In this concluding chapter, the main research question is answered and a discussion of the implications of this study is given. Finally, the limitations and suggestions for future lines of research are provided.

To answer the main research question: ‘How do members of the subreddit /r/Dyslexia share their experiences with dyslexia?’, the analysis shows that there is not only one homogeneous experience that is present on /r/Dyslexia, but that individuals use different narratives, identities and forms of social support to discuss their experiences with dyslexia. Part of the narratives found on the subreddit were in line with the social model of disability as described by Oliver (1983, 2013). As the medical model of disability is still the dominant discourse among educators, employers, and researchers (Macdonald, 2019), people also use /r/Dyslexia as a venue to share alternative views of dyslexia. Although a minor amount of comments on /r/Dyslexia use the legitimising identity, as described by Castells (2010), the majority of the interactions in the dataset can be considered a resistance or project identity. This suggests that the forum is used by people whose experiences with dyslexia do not fall in line with what dominant institutions propagate. In agreement to Jenkins (1999), who suggested that online communities can help emancipate people in marginalised communities, it appears that /r/Dyslexia is a place where people can go to when their experiences with dyslexia are not reflected elsewhere.

Another key component of this research was the existence of the *Embracing dyslectic identity* theme, which is strongly aligned with the neurodiversity narrative. The posts in this pattern show that individuals try to adopt a more positive view of dyslexia, suggesting that /r/Dyslexia could be a platform where the narrative of neurodiversity is actively promoted. This theme also connects to existing research which suggests that affirming one’s disability identity can increase self-esteem (Bogart, 2014) and empower people to advocate for themselves (Darling, 2016; Nario-Redmond et al., 2013). Bogart (2014) notes that disabled people have trouble finding a community offline making it hard to form a disability identity. /r/Dyslexia could therefore help dyslectics find their community online, which in turn allows them to form a more positive dyslexia identity. Moreover, the *Embracing dyslectic identity* group aligns itself with broader disability movements, which could change the way dyslexia is viewed by society. The narratives in this theme go against the medical view of dyslexia in favour of a neurodiversity approach of dyslexia. By doing this, the fourth theme can be linked to the concept of identity politics. Anspach (1979) describes how activists promoted a disability identity to change how disability is viewed by society and to improve the self-concept of the members of their community. A number of posts on /r/Dyslexia also go against the view of dominant institution and promote a completely different view of dyslexia under members of the forum. Although the findings of this research suggests that the calls for social change are contained to the forum itself, efforts to promote a neurodiversity perspective could help emancipate the members of /r/Dyslexia and improve their self-concept.

Besides promoting new narratives, the results of the analysis suggest that being on /r/Dyslexia is also very useful for the people who were posting on the forum. Relying on different illness narratives, people tell their good, bad, light, and heavy experiences with dyslexia. Frank (2013) highlights the importance of listening to chaos stories. On /r/Dyslexia people are often uplifted by others responding to the stories they share when they feel down and desperate. The redditors telling chaos stories suffer from the way people at their school or workplace view dyslexia as negative. Others use the forum as a source of information or as an exhaust valve where they come to let out their frustration. These cases of social support thus point to a practical application of /r/Dyslexia.

To conclude, the analysis on /r/Dyslexia shows that there are different ways in which people experience dyslexia; *The Traditional view of Dyslexia, Dyslexia as a personal struggle, Dyslexia as a social issue,* and *Embracing dyslexic identity*. The dominant institutions in society have a very unnuanced view of dyslexia, where dyslexia is seen as an individual problem, mostly aligning with the medical model of disability (Alexander-Passe, 2015; Macdonald, 2019). However, the experiences shared by dyslectics on /r/Dyslexia are aligned with the neurodiversity approach as formulated by Macdonald (2019). They show that dyslexia is not always experienced as a problem, but that people can also see dyslexia as a positive difference in their brain. Furthermore, /r/Dyslexia is a place where individuals can find kinship and talk about the positives of being dyslexic. In doing so, the redditors on /r/Dyslexia create a positive dyslectic identity which, as argued by Bogart (2014), can be used to improve their self-concept.

5.1 Social and academic implications

The experiences of dyslectics have been neglected and overlooked by much of the research on dyslexia, resulting in a mismatch between available research and the needs of dyslectics (Alexander-Passe, 2015). Because the experiences of dyslectics are often overlooked, it can be questioned if the neuroscience and pedagogical approach aimed at solving dyslexia is desired by dyslectics themselves. From the diversity of perspectives expressed on /r/Dyslexia, a group of dyslectics who embrace their dyslexia as a positive comes to the surface. In line with earlier findings that most dyslectics would not want to be cured even if some sort of dyslexia panacea becomes available (Alexander-Passe, 2015), people on /r/Dyslexia embrace their disability and consider the source of their problem not in their individual impairment, but in disabling barriers in society. Individuals on the forum even make dyslexia part of their identity and they are proud of being dyslectics and being part of a dyslectic community. This view is in stark contrast with the underlying assumptions of research aiming to fix a 'faulty brain'. As such, this research shows the discrepancy between how dyslexia is often approached from neuroscience and pedagogy research on the one hand, and how people supporting a neurodiversity narrative do not view dyslexia as inherently negative on the other hand.

The findings of this research also reaffirm the place of dyslexia within the broader field of disability studies. Some researchers have argued that dyslexia is not a disability due to the lack of neurological proof and similarity to general difficulties with reading and writing (Macdonald, 2009a). However, based on the posts and comments in the dataset, many dyslectics seem to associate themselves with disability identity. Redditors on /r/Dyslexia often compare their experiences to those with other disabilities. Moreover, people highlight how receiving the diagnosis of dyslexia was validating for them. Further research into dyslexia should thus consider the importance of validating the experiences of dyslectics and recognising dyslexia as a disability.

A social implication of the findings of this thesis is that more needs to be done to tackle the misinformation and stigma around dyslexia. These incorrect perceptions of dyslexia, lead to discrimination as dyslectics can be denied job opportunities (Alexander-Passe, 2015), or college professors sometimes look down on dyslectics as they see dyslexia as an excuse to get out of work (Lock & Layton, 2001). The experiences described on Reddit also mention the negative effects of these stigmas among educators and employers. In order to provide people with a nuanced view of dyslexia, more should be done to fight the misconceptions, and highlight the strengths of dyslectics. The comments on Reddit could be used as a starting point to develop a better understanding about the hardships dyslectics are going through, and how dyslectics define themselves into a more positive light to combat the existing stigma.

Additionally, this study shows that /r/Dyslexia is a good environment for forming a dyslectic identity. As noted by previous research, a disability identity can lead to higher self-esteem and satisfaction with life (Andrews et al., 2022; Bogart, 2014). By forming a collective identity that celebrates brain differences and allows people to be proud of their disability, people on /r/Dyslexia might be able to improve their self-esteem. Bogart (2014) notes that disabled people often have trouble finding people with the same disability as them. /r/Dyslexia is accessible to everyone with an internet connection and could therefore be an accessible tool for engaging with this disability identity.

5.2 Limitations and future research

One of the most important limitations to this research is the restricted scope of the dataset. Due to time restrictions, this research could only afford to select posts that were relevant to the concepts central to the research questions. Using a purposive sampling method, relevant posts were found by searching on keywords that related to the concepts in the research question. This sampling method ensures that the data is manageable and relevant to the concepts but collecting data in this way excludes posts about topics that were not accounted for in the research question. Even though the search terms are carefully chosen to avoid bias and reflect the many perspectives on /r/Dyslexia, it cannot be guaranteed that all topics are included in the sample. Future research could employ a more inclusive sampling method which might result in a more representative dataset than the sampling method used in the present study.

Another limitation of this research is that it is not possible to generalise the findings from this study outside of the context of /r/Dyslexia. The pseudo-anonymous nature of /r/Dyslexia might lead to people being honest in sharing their experiences with dyslexia. However, this characteristic also makes it impossible to verify the demographics of the sample studied. Therefore, it is not possible to tell if the posts on /r/Dyslexia represent sentiments that exist in the broader population or if they are just unique for the specific Reddit page. However, Bryman (2012) states that findings of qualitative research are meant to be generalised to theory and not to broader populations. Therefore, this thesis focuses on how existing research compares to the context of /r/Dyslexia. As such, the limitations of the dataset do not discredit the findings.

A further limitation of looking at online communities are the barriers that prevent groups of people from participating on /r/Dyslexia. Even though Reddit can make information more accessible for people who cannot find it outside the online forum (Fritz, 2022), it has to be recognised that the internet also maintains barriers that exclude marginalised people from using it (Ellis & Kent, 2016; Gleason et al., 2019; Olsson, 2012). Not everyone has the physical ability or financial means to use the internet (Ellis & Kent, 2016). Moreover, all posts on /r/Dyslexia are in English, meaning that people need to be able to speak the language to participate. The barriers that prevent people to participate on /r/Dyslexia have to be considered when interpreting the data of this research.

The reliability of the results of this study also has to be questioned. Two of Silverman’s (2002) suggestions of improving the reliability of a qualitative study, constant comparison and deviant case analysis, are applied in this research. Despite implementing these suggestions, it cannot be guaranteed that someone replicating this study will find the exact same results. During the analysis, the data is interpreted as objectively as possible, but there is a chance that my own experience with dyslexia influenced the analysis. The method of constant comparison, should have minimised this personal influence as the data was critically evaluated throughout the process.

Additionally, I have disclosed my positionality towards the topic. It is nevertheless important to recognise that someone with a different background might land on slightly different results after analysing the same dataset.

When it comes to future lines of research, this thesis underlines Massanari's (2015) argument of Reddit being an interesting source of data and therefore deserves more attention from researchers. The analysis of /r/Dyslexia shows that the characteristics of Reddit make it especially suitable for studying marginalized communities. Given the stigma that surrounds dyslexia, people do not always feel comfortable sharing that they have a disability (Alexander-Passe, 2015). The pseudo-anonymous nature of Reddit could take this self-consciousness away and encourage people to be honest about their experiences. Another benefit is that a researcher can study interactions as they naturally occur, without having to interfere with the communities when collecting data. Given that there are many more unexplored subreddits relating to neurodiversity, future research could look into the data provided by these communities.

Finally, this thesis could help guide dyslexia research to better serve the group that is at focus in their study. The findings of the analysis of /r/Dyslexia suggest that people experience dyslexia in different ways. Research from the psycho-medical perspective often aims to cure or solve dyslexia. Underlying this psycho-medical approach is the message that dyslexia is a problem that needs to be 'fixed'. This psycho-medical view is in contrast with the voices of the group of dyslectics on /r/Dyslexia who are proud of their disability and who celebrate their dyslectic identity. Therefore, instead of assuming that dyslexia is a condition that needs to be cured, researchers could listen to the experiences of dyslectics to develop studies that better serve this group. Researchers could use the results of this analysis on /r/Dyslexia as a starting point to get a better grasp of the perspectives dyslectics have on their disability.

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Appendix A

Table A.1 **Coding tree**

Themes	Sub Themes	Codes
1 Traditional view of Dyslexia	Restitution narrative	Success stories
		Having to work harder
		Overcoming Dyslexia
		Not wanting any adaptations
	Legitimising Dyslexia approach	Parents and Teachers
		Testing
		Diagnosis
	Treatment of dyslexia	Remedial Teaching
		Costly methods
		Medication (In Dyslexia combined with ADHD)
		Learning strategy
		Private education
		Orton Gillingham
		Discussion of Remedies
	Dyslexia is not a big deal	Against Identity politics
		Disagreeing with Neurodiversity movement
		Doesn’t want to be diagnosed
		Dyslexia is not a disability
		Dyslexia is not an identity
		Parents denying dyslexia
2. Dyslexia as a personal struggle	Sharing personal experiences	Bad school experience
		Not achieving Goals due to dyslexia
		Description of online bullying
		Struggling to keep up
		Struggling at work
		Anxiety due to dyslexia
		Struggling with learning
		Issues due to late or missed diagnosis
	Chaos narrative	Describing Trauma
		Low self-esteem due to dyslexia
		Self-frustration
		Dyslexia causing panic attacks

		Comorbidities of Dyslexia
		Feeling Lazy or dumb
		Wanting to be normal
		Dyslexia as disadvantage
	Finding support on /r/Dyslexia	Needing a place to vent emotions
		Seeking encouragement from people who understand
		Emotional support
		Esteem support
3 Dyslexia as a collective struggle	Sharing experiences	Description of Bad school experience
		Description of being Belittled by employer
		Message about understanding from environment
		Understanding from teachers
		Overcoming shame
		humiliated by colleagues
		Belittled by friends
	Being misunderstood	Description of bullying
		Description of feeling offended
		Description of being perceived a stupid
		Experience of dyslexia being denied
		Description of being perceived a stupid
		Lack of understanding environment
		lack of understanding older generation
		Lack of understanding society
		Lack of understanding teachers
		Stigma around dyslexia
		Bad representation of dyslexia in society
	Positive experiences	Positive experience with employer
		Diagnosis as positive/validating experience
		Description of Positive school experience
		Description of Positive university experience
	Being Disadvantaged	Description of difficulty applying for jobs
		Description of dyslexia discrimination

		Lacking recourses university
		Bad government policy
		Describing of having to fight for accommodations
	Support on /r/Dyslexia	Discussing Judicial action
		Informing people about their rights
		Happy to find /r/Dyslexia
		Emotional support
		Esteem support
		Information
4. Embracing Dyslexic Identity	Cultivating a dyslectic identity	Proud to be dyslectic
		Identity first language
		Highlighting strengths
		Celebrating Neurodiversity
		Highlighting difference from neurotypicals
	Community on /r/Dyslexia	Common Slang
		Inside Humour
		Using “us” and “we” when discussing dyslexia
		Happy to be on /r/Dyslexia
		Sympathising with people
	Dyslexia as Disability	Comparing themselves with broader disability community
		Acknowledging the diversity of dyslectics
		Differently wired brain
		Discussion on what dyslexia is
	Pushing a new narrative	Empowering others
		Challenging the dominant view of dyslexia
		Creating awareness
		Educating people about dyslexia
		Advice on how to educate teachers
		Discussing accessibility
		Pointing out ableism
		Talk about changing society a
Miscellaneous		Defining dyslexia

		Description of experiencing Toxic Positivity
		Dyslectic friendly languages
		Dyslexia as hard to define
		Other LD
		Resources in University
		Network Support
		Tangible Support
		Support from institutions
		Technical resources