

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of theories proposed by experts relevant to the research topic. The literature review delves into teaching English as a foreign language and students with special needs, defining these terms and exploring various types. Additionally, it examines the concept of students with special needs, specifically those with autism spectrum disorder. It investigates the challenges faced by EFL teachers in teaching English as a foreign language, along with potential strategies, drawing from existing studies to give an overview of current issues. Furthermore, it analyzes previous studies to offer additional data and insights essential to this research.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Teaching English as a Foreign Language

English is widely considered a crucial skill with significant importance in various aspects of life. It serves as a tool to bridge communication gaps and opens up numerous opportunities. Therefore, the acquisition and mastery of the English language are highly regarded as valuable assets that can provide individuals with broader chances and prospects in multiple domains (King, 2018).

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to the pedagogical practice of instructing individuals in English in regions where it is not the primary language (Hussain & Khan, 2024). Teaching English as a foreign language has evolved significantly over the years. It has shifted from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered one, focusing on real-life language use, spontaneous language, authentic materials, and learner-centered processes (Al-oglah, 2018; Rahmanita et al., 2019). Incorporating a culturally sensitive approach enhances students' cultural competence and job orientation, fostering curiosity and openness (Kostikova et al., 2018). Utilizing multimodal texts like videos and songs in language teaching can consolidate meanings and representations effectively, contributing to a meaningful teaching-learning

process (Masinde et al., 2023). While student-centered learning is prevalent, teachers still play crucial roles in managing classrooms, applying teaching methods, and preparing materials for multidirectional communication, emphasizing communicative competence and social norms (Pratiwi & Busyairi, 2021). Overall, a holistic approach that integrates language skills, cultural awareness, and innovative teaching methods is essential in teaching English as a foreign language.

The Indonesian government has recognized the importance of English as a global language and has taken steps to ensure that students receive quality English language education. They have implemented various rules and policies regarding English as a foreign language (EFL). One of the main regulations is the Ministry of Education and Culture's decision to include English as a mandatory subject in the national curriculum. This means that all students in Indonesia, from elementary to high school, are required to learn English.

In the field of teaching English as a foreign language, teachers need to have effective classroom management skills. As Brown (2001) suggested, teaching involves guiding students in acquiring new skills, providing instruction, imparting language knowledge, and promoting comprehension. Therefore, teachers must be creative in their approach to classroom management, ensuring that students feel comfortable and interested in the subject matter, particularly English. This can be achieved by employing innovative techniques that capture students' attention and foster their engagement in the learning process.

In learning a language, four basic language skills that are important: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Sharma & Puri, 2020). The teaching methods used in language teaching have evolved with various approaches and theories shaping their development and implementation. Setiyadi (2020) discussed several teaching methods that have been developed over time. These methods include:

1. Grammar-Translation Method: This traditional method focuses on translating sentences between the target language and the native language, emphasizing grammar rules and vocabulary.
2. Audio-Lingual Method: This method emphasizes listening and speaking skills through repetitive drills and dialogues.
3. The Silent Way: This method encourages students to discover and produce language on their own, with minimal intervention from the teacher.
4. Total Physical Response (TPR): TPR uses physical movement and gestures to help students understand and internalize language.
5. Communicative Language Teaching: This method focuses on real-life communication and interaction, encouraging students to use English in meaningful contexts.
6. Task-Based Language Teaching: This method involves students working on real-world tasks that require the use of English, such as problem-solving or role-playing.

Mastering English is essential for accessing a wide range of opportunities and bridging communication gaps (King, 2018). The shift towards a learner-centered approach in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) underscores the importance of holistic teaching methods that prioritize practical language use and cultural sensitivity (Al-oglah, 2018; Rahmanita et al., 2019). The Indonesian government's inclusion of English in the national curriculum reflects the global acknowledgment of English proficiency as a crucial skill (Ministry of Education and Culture).

Effective classroom management, as highlighted by Brown (2001), is fundamental for guiding language acquisition and enhancing comprehension. Teachers need to employ innovative strategies to engage students and create a supportive learning environment. Utilizing diverse teaching methods, such as the Grammar-Translation Method and Communicative Language Teaching, can significantly improve English instruction by fostering both language proficiency and cultural competence (Sharma & Puri, 2020; Setiyadi, 2020). Incorporating multimodal resources like videos and songs can enrich the learning experience

by reinforcing meaning and increasing student engagement (Masinde et al., 2023). These varied teaching strategies contribute to a more effective English language instruction, which is essential for developing global communication skills.

In conclusion, mastering English is a key to unlocking diverse opportunities and overcoming communication barriers (King, 2018). The move towards learner-centered teaching approaches emphasizes the need for methods that blend real-life language use with cultural understanding, better preparing students for the global job market (Al-oglah, 2018; Kostikova et al., 2018; Rahmanita et al., 2019). By adopting a comprehensive and adaptable approach to EFL instruction, educators can address learners' diverse needs and support their success in mastering English.

2.1.2. Students with Special Needs

Special needs students refer to individuals who require additional support and accommodations in their educational settings due to physical, cognitive, emotional, or developmental challenges (Nugraha et al., 2023). These students require special classes, teaching techniques, materials, and facilities to support their learning. Hofmann and Müller (2021) specified students with special needs typically exhibit limited cognitive abilities, which can be attributed to intellectual deficits and related biological factors. These limitations may result in reduced linguistic abilities, impacting language development and social interactions. However, there are indications that language skills can be improved in individuals with intellectual disabilities, even in adolescence and adulthood. Despite these challenges, creating positive social learning opportunities through specific arrangements and interactions can benefit students with special needs in their language development. Students with special needs are those who have disabilities and therefore require special education services to address their specific needs arising from these disabilities.

In the world of education, students with special needs are often referred to as exceptional students. This term involves individuals who have unique conditions affecting their physical, mental, intellectual, and/or social

development. As noted by Nugraha et al. (2023), special needs students are individuals who have different needs compared to most students. These needs can be related to physical, mental, emotional, or social aspects. Special needs students may require extra help or special services to learn effectively. They could have conditions like learning disabilities, physical challenges, or behavioral issues. Each special needs student is unique, and they may need specific support to succeed in school. Furthermore, special needs students can be classified into various categories based on their specific challenges and disabilities. Nugraha et al. (2023) covered some common classifications of special needs students including:

1. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): ASD students have difficulties with social interaction, communication, and may exhibit repetitive behaviors.
2. Learning Disabilities: Students with learning disabilities struggle with acquiring and processing information, which affects their academic performance in areas such as reading, writing, and math.
3. Intellectual Disabilities: Students with intellectual disabilities have limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, which can impact their overall cognitive abilities and daily functioning.
4. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): Students with ADHD have difficulties with attention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, which can affect their ability to focus and engage in learning activities.
5. Sensory Impairments: Students with sensory impairments, such as visual or hearing impairments, require specialized support and accommodations to access information and participate in educational activities.
6. Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: Students with emotional and behavioral disorders may show challenging behaviors, have difficulties regulating emotions, and require interventions to support their social and emotional well-being.

In conclusion, students with special needs are individuals who may face challenges or have special talents in areas such as cognition, vision, hearing, speech, socialization, or mobility. As a result, these students require special

education to help them unlock their full potential and achieve optimal development.

Special education refers to instruction that is specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of exceptional students. This type of instruction may involve the use of specialized materials, teaching techniques, equipment, or facilities (Nugraha et al., 2023). For example, students with visual impairments may require reading materials in large print or Braille, while students with hearing impairments may benefit from hearing aids or instruction in sign language. Students with physical disabilities might need access to special equipment, and those with emotional or behavioral disorders may require smaller, more structured classes. Additionally, students with special gifts or talents may benefit from opportunities to engage with professionals in their respective fields. The goal of special education is to provide these students with the support they need to maximize their potential and succeed academically.

2.1.3. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Students

Autism is a lifelong condition. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) refers to a group of pervasive developmental disorders (PDD) that have a significant impact on various aspects of an individual's life, including social interactions, language skills, and behavior (Smith et al., 2012). According to Simpson (2001) stated that children and youth with ASD are considered a distinctly unique group, even when compared to other children with disabilities (as cited in Smith et al., 2012). This statement highlights the exceptional characteristics and specific challenges faced by individuals with ASD. The complex nature of ASD sets it apart from other developmental disorders, making it crucial to recognize and address the unique needs of these students when providing support and interventions. Furthermore, Brahim (2022) stated that ASD students often have difficulties with attention and may have unusual responses to sensory stimuli. They may also experience anxiety in certain situations. These characteristics can have an impact on their behavior and learning abilities. Thus, EFL teacher who engages with ASD students' needs personalized language instruction to meet their individual needs. It is important to thoroughly investigate the preferences

of these learners to carefully plan the language teaching context (Gałązka & Dick-Bursztyn, 2019).

According to Pratt et al. (2017), individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) present a range of characteristics affecting their social communication, speech/language, behavior, executive functioning, and learning abilities. Despite the diversity within the spectrum, several commonalities exist:

1. **Social Communication Impairments:** All individuals with ASD encounter challenges in social communication, manifesting in difficulties with play skills, responding to social cues, interpreting body language, maintaining conversation topics, and understanding social signals.
2. **Speech/Language Impairments:** People with ASD may face issues in receptive and expressive language. Some individuals with ASD communicate verbally, while others are nonverbal and require alternative communication methods. Nonverbal individuals may exhibit: (1) delayed or absent spoken language skills affect around 20-30% of the ASD population, and (2) reliance on alternative augmentative communication (AAC) tools like sign language, pictures, or voice output devices due to a lack of effective communication means. Verbal individuals may display: (1) delayed or immediate echolalia for interactions, self-regulation, or self-stimulation, often using dialogues from media sources, (2) repetitive use of non-echolalic language patterns for various functions like starting or maintaining conversations, (3) idiosyncratic speech patterns, including inappropriate word choices, (4) grammatical structures that may seem immature (e.g., telegraphic speech) or pedantic (e.g., monologues with advanced vocabulary), and (5) atypical use of pitch, intonation, rhythm, or stress in speech, such as monotone delivery or hyper nasal tones, with declarative sentences ending in a questioning tone. Both verbal and nonverbal individuals may encounter challenges with receptive language, including: delayed vocabulary acquisition, difficulty following instructions, struggles with abstract concept comprehension, challenges in interpreting social nuances like sarcasm and humor.

3. **Restricted Repetitive and Stereotyped Behaviors:** Individuals with ASD often engage in repetitive behaviors, adhere to routines, exhibit fixed interests divergent from peers, and experience sensory sensitivities across various modalities.
4. **Executive Function Impairments:** Challenges with executive functioning, such as rigid thinking, problem-solving difficulties, attention span, and task organization, are prevalent. Sequencing, planning, reasoning, and flexibility may also pose challenges.
5. **Learning Characteristics:** While individuals with ASD may excel in rote memory, they may struggle with working memory and processing multiple stimuli concurrently. Visual learning methods, structured routines, and consistent teaching approaches can enhance their learning experiences.
6. **Additional Considerations:** Some individuals with ASD may have concurrent conditions like seizures, mental health issues, eating/sleeping disorders, and self-injurious behavior, further impacting their learning and social functioning.

Diagnosing ASD poses challenges as there is no singular medical test for confirmation. Instead, healthcare professionals rely on observing a child's developmental history and behaviors to reach an accurate diagnosis. Although ASD detection may occur as early as 18 months, a reliable diagnosis by a seasoned professional typically emerges around age 2, with some individuals receiving diagnoses later in life. Timely diagnosis is vital to ensure individuals with ASD access timely interventions and support to realize their full potential. The diagnostic process for ASD encompasses several stages:

1. **Developmental Monitoring:** This continual process involves tracking a child's progress and achievements in areas like play, learning, speech, behavior, and motor skills. Parents, caregivers, and healthcare providers can engage in developmental monitoring, utilizing tools such as the CDC's Milestone Tracker app.

2. **Developmental Screening:** This structured assessment occurs at designated ages per the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), typically at 18 and 24 months. Screening tools compare a child's development with peers, addressing language, motor skills, cognition, behaviors, and emotions.
3. **Developmental Diagnosis:** Following potential concerns raised during screening, a specialist evaluation by professionals like developmental pediatricians, child psychologists, or speech-language pathologists may be necessary. This evaluation entails detailed assessments through tests, observations, and questionnaires to determine if the child meets ASD diagnostic criteria.

It's essential to recognize that a preliminary screening test does not equate to a diagnosis; it signals the need for further assessment by a specialist. The diagnostic process also considers various conditions now categorized under ASD, such as autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), and Asperger syndrome. In essence, prompt and precise ASD diagnosis facilitates access to tailored interventions and support services, aligning with individual needs (“Screening and Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder,” 2022).

Teaching English to autism spectrum disorder students (ASD) poses several challenges. These challenges include understanding the unique strengths and needs of each student with ASD (Brahim, 2022). Due to the varied behaviors and characteristics of learners with ASD, it has been found that some teachers face challenges in personalizing teaching and learning materials to cater to the individual preferences of these learners (Hashim et al., 2021). In Ramadhani et al.'s (2019) study related to the challenges faced by the English teacher for ASD students, it was found that another challenge in determining the appropriate teaching aids for ASD students to attract their attention. Moreover, the teacher also encountered challenges in delivering structured instruction for new vocabulary, which should be complemented by visual aids. Additionally, the teacher faced difficulty in finding appropriate objects to stimulate students' expression.

To address the challenges of teaching English to students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), this study proposes a theory adapted from Ikhtiar and Parveen (2023) about framework of inclusive English language teaching strategies for ASD students. Six core elements identified by Ikhtiar and Parveen (2023) include personalized support and services, systematic instruction methods, structured learning environments, specialized curriculum content, functional approach to addressing problem behaviors, and active family involvement in the educational process. These elements are essential in developing instructional programs tailored to the unique needs of ASD students, promoting their progress and success. By using this theory, the proposed framework aims to create inclusive and effective learning environments that support the holistic development and academic achievement of ASD students. This approach was served as the data collection theory for the research, providing a comprehensive foundation for effective English instruction for ASD students.

In summary, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a lifelong condition impacting social communication, behavior, and learning abilities (Smith et al., 2012). Individuals with ASD exhibit unique characteristics such as social communication impairments, repetitive behaviors, and sensory sensitivities (Pratt et al., 2017). Diagnosing ASD involves developmental monitoring, screening, and formal evaluation by specialists to ensure timely interventions (“Screening and Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder,” 2022).

Teaching English to ASD students presents challenges in understanding their individual needs and preferences, personalizing teaching materials, and delivering structured instruction (Brahim, 2022). Addressing these challenges requires tailored teaching strategies and interventions to support their learning (Ramadhani et al., 2019). By recognizing and accommodating the diverse needs of ASD students, educators can create inclusive learning environments conducive to their academic and social development.

2.1.4. EFL Teacher Challenges and Strategies in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, numerous challenges and obstacles are faced by teachers worldwide. One of the primary challenges faced by EFL teachers is the language barrier between the students and the teacher (Abrar et al., 2018). Non-native English speakers often struggle with pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary (Thane, 2023), making it difficult for teachers to convey complex concepts and ensure effective communication in the classroom. Additionally, cultural differences may also contribute to misunderstandings and hinder the teaching-learning process (Sarı & Yüce, 2020).

Another significant problem faced by EFL teachers is the lack of motivation and engagement among students. Keeping students motivated and engaged in learning English as a foreign language can be a challenge for teachers, as they need to find innovative and interactive teaching methods to sustain student interest (Reddy, 2022). Furthermore, Reddy (2022) studied the inadequate resources and materials available for EFL instruction pose considerable challenges to teachers. Teachers may face challenges in accessing and utilizing appropriate teaching resources, such as textbooks, audiovisual materials, and technology, which can impact the effectiveness of English language instruction.

Despite the challenges faced by teachers, effective teachers can overcome these obstacles and create a positive learning environment. To gain a deeper understanding of the difficulties associated with teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), it is crucial to examine the characteristics and qualities that make EFL teachers effective. Effective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers possess a blend of key traits that lead to successful teaching and learning outcomes. One crucial element is classroom management, which is essential for creating a conducive learning environment (Hussain, 2023; Macías, 2018). Effective classroom management captures students' interest and engagement, facilitating better learning in EFL classes. Additionally, fostering

student independence is a vital characteristic of effective EFL teachers, as it empowers students to take ownership of their learning process (Hussain, 2023). On the other hand, Zurrahmi and Triastuti (2022) discovered that effective EFL teachers possess certain qualities. Firstly, they are friendly and approachable, creating a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere. Secondly, these teachers employ a range of teaching methods to cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. This variety keeps the students engaged and motivated. Additionally, a study by Rianti et al. (2020) indicated that, according to the students, ideal teacher was someone who demonstrates personal attention, is approachable, empathetic, motivating, delivers clear and understandable instruction, is enthusiastic, has a good sense of humor, is assertive, humble, and patient. Lastly, effective EFL teachers provide opportunities for students to actively use English in meaningful activities, fostering language acquisition and practical application.

Teaching English as a foreign language requires various strategies to be effective. According to Reddy (2022), there are several strategies that teachers can implement to enhance English language learning in the classroom. Firstly, teachers should be made aware of the significance of utilizing educational aids to facilitate effective learning. This can be achieved by providing professional development opportunities and training sessions for teachers to improve their knowledge and skills in using educational aids. Secondly, teachers should focus on building strong relationships with their students to create a comfortable and welcoming classroom environment. By fostering friendships with students, teachers can create a sense of ease and trust, which can positively impact students' learning experiences. Thirdly, teachers should develop teaching materials that incorporate authentic resources. This can include using real-world materials such as newspapers, magazines, and videos, which can make the learning experience more engaging and relevant for students. Lastly, teachers should strive to create a supportive classroom environment that motivates students to learn. This can be achieved by encouraging, positive reinforcement, and creating opportunities for active

participation in the learning process. Positive feedback from teachers can serve as encouragement for students. Syakira and Nur's (2022) study demonstrated that students found the teacher's oral corrective feedback helpful in improving their English skills, particularly in responding accurately to the teacher's prompts. The study also highlighted the significant impact of teachers' beliefs on their corrective feedback practices, especially when using a customized teaching approach. By implementing these strategies, teachers can play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of English language instruction.

In conclusion, the field of EFL teaching faces various challenges that impact the effectiveness of English language instruction. By addressing these challenges and implementing effective strategies, EFL teachers can create a more engaging and productive learning environment for their students.

2.2. Study of the Relevant Research

Before undertaking the current research, the researcher conducted a review of previous studies related to special needs students and EFL Teachers' and strategies. The following order will be used to discuss these previous studies:

This study is relevant to the research done by Utami et al. (2021) regarding the problems and solutions of EFL Teachers to students with an intellectual and developmental disability in a specialized school in Malang. This study's result showed that the problems faced by the teachers were related to their English proficiency, teaching methods and media used, and students' ability to learn. Meanwhile, the most common solution used by the teachers was repetition in teaching and practicing, as students had difficulties understanding and remembering the lesson. Other solutions included using YouTube videos, English learning applications, posters, and BSE (*Buku Sekolah Elektronik* or Electronic School Textbook).

Apriliyanti (2023) conducted a study to explore the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English to special needs students and the strategies they employ to address these challenges. The research revealed that one of the main obstacles encountered by teachers is the students' tendency to be easily distracted during the learning process. To overcome this, teachers need to utilize interesting and

innovative teaching materials to capture the students' attention. Visual media, such as videos and pictures, were found to be effective in facilitating English language learning. Additionally, maintaining intense eye contact was identified as a way to ensure students' focus on the learning task. The study also observed that calling students by their full names and making direct eye contact can aid in effective communication and English language acquisition.

Linusi et al. (2022) conducted a study that also examined the challenges, solutions, and factors influencing the teaching of English to special needs students. The difficulties identified in the study encompassed classroom management issues, lack of communication skills, and deficits in reading and writing abilities. The factors contributing to these difficulties were categorized into external and internal factors. External factors included the special needs students' ability to grasp the learning process, while internal factors focused on the teachers' lack of expertise in handling students with special needs. The researchers proposed several strategies to address these challenges, including the use of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, the employment of double assistants, and the provision of private assistants. These strategies aim to enhance classroom management, communication skills, and overall language development for special needs students in the English language learning context.

Brahim (2022) studied the challenges encountered by EFL teachers who teach students with special needs, specifically autism spectrum disorder (ASD) students, including managing inappropriate behaviors and addressing the specific needs and support requirements of ASD students. To effectively handle these barriers and meet these challenges, Brahim (2022) further stated EFL must receive comprehensive in-service training. This training should equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively manage behavioral issues and provide appropriate support to ASD students.

Another study by Ramadhani et al. (2019) found that teachers found the difficulties identified in teaching English to students with autism spectrum disorder included a lack of teaching aids and visual materials to engage students effectively, difficulty in providing structured instruction of new vocabulary with visual support,

struggles in finding appropriate objects to stimulate student expression, inadequate facilities and resources to support the learning process, and insufficient teacher knowledge and training in effectively teaching students with autism. Furthermore, the suggested strategies included providing adequate teaching aids and visual materials, utilizing projectors and other visual tools to capture students' attention, offering structured instruction of new vocabulary with visual support for improved comprehension and retention, incorporating suitable objects to facilitate student expression and communication, ensuring teachers receive proper training to enhance their skills in teaching students with autism and enhancing the availability and accessibility of resources and facilities to support the learning process for both teachers and students.

To conclude, the research conducted by Utami et al. (2021) and subsequent studies by Apriliyanti (2023), Linusi et al. (2022), Brahim (2022), and Ramadhani et al. (2019) shed light on the challenges faced by EFL teachers in teaching English to autism spectrum disorder (ASD) students and special needs students. These challenges encompassed issues related to English proficiency, teaching methods, media usage, classroom management, communication skills, and student learning abilities. The identified solutions included repetition in teaching and practicing, utilization of YouTube videos, English learning applications, posters, and electronic school textbooks (BSE), as well as the implementation of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, the employment of double assistants, and comprehensive in-service training for EFL teachers. Additionally, the studies emphasized the importance of providing adequate teaching aids, visual materials, structured vocabulary instruction, and suitable objects to enhance student engagement, comprehension, and language acquisition. By addressing these challenges and implementing the suggested strategies, EFL teachers can effectively support the learning process and promote the language development of students with autism and special needs.

There are limited numbers of studies regarding the challenges and strategies of teaching English to students with special needs. Moreover, the existing studies vary in the educational levels that exist. To enrich the literature in this topic, this

research focused on investigating teaching English to students with autism spectrum disorder by primary educational teacher. In this study, the researcher aims to explore the challenges and encountered by teachers in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) using the framework of Ikhtiar and Parveen (2023) These factors will serve as the foundation for the research investigation. Subsequently, the researcher developed a set of research interview guidelines based on these sub-indicators to gather comprehensive insights from teachers regarding the challenges they face and the solutions they employ in their EFL classrooms.