

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Review

1. Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

The primary subject of this research is a student with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). According to Kamp-Becker (2024), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects an individual's ability to communicate and interact socially. ASD is characterized by difficulties in two-way communication and social interaction, as well as restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities. The term “spectrum” indicates the variation in symptoms and abilities in individuals with ASD. Understanding ASD is crucial for teachers who teach students with this condition, as its characteristics can impact the learning process in the classroom.

Students with ASD often have more difficulties in social interaction and communication than other students. Cognitively, they may struggle with skills such as managing tasks, planning activities, controlling impulses, processing information, and understanding spoken language. Because of these difficulties, students with ASD often depend on teacher guidance and find it hard to complete tasks independently, especially in language learning that relies on oral instructions. In terms of behavior, they may show repetitive actions, strong interests in certain topics, and sensory sensitivity, which can reduce their focus during classroom activities. Therefore, students with ASD need clear and direct instruction in basic communication skills, such as how to ask and answer questions, to help them participate more actively in language learning (Mahoney, 2019). The teachers’ role can have significant impacts if they know the character and how to teach ASD students in a proper way.

Students with ASD learn in different ways from non-autistic students because they process information differently. Many students with ASD prefer visual learning, which means they understand and remember information better when it is shown in visual forms. Fitzgerald (2023) states that many autistic children learn

best through visual information because it helps them remember the material more easily. For this reason, visual supports such as written instructions, pictures, and diagrams are very helpful in the learning process. In contrast, learning may be less effective when teachers use only verbal explanations, as some students with ASD have difficulties in understanding spoken information.

In addition to learning styles, students with ASD also require a structured learning environment and consistent routines. Visual aids, such as graphic organizers, help students categorize information and understanding relationships between concepts more clearly. Regular routines and predictable environments also help students with ASD navigate the often challenging transitions between activities. Using a visual schedule allows students to understand the sequence of activities and prepare for changes, while unstructured assignments and sudden changes can hinder student concentration and engagement in learning (Fitzgerald, 2023).

Emotion dysregulation is identified as one of the major causes of challenging behavior in children and teens who have ASD. Nuske et al. (2023) explain emotion dysregulation as difficulties in controlling and adjusting emotional reactions to different situations. Emotion dysregulation often results in sudden emotional outbursts and other challenging behaviors. Challenging behavior is often observed when students are exposed to situations that are beyond their capacity for managing emotions. This means that behavior problems in the classroom are not always intentional but may happen because students cannot manage their emotions well.

Stress happens to all students include students with ASD Nuske et al. (2023) stated that students with ASD experience higher levels of stress because they may face communication difficulties, understanding people's behavior, responding to demands, dealing with sensory sensitivity, changes, and social expectations. These situations may become overwhelming and can result in emotional and behavioral problems when students are unable to manage the stress effectively. This explanation aligns with Baskerville's (2014, as cited in Milides, 2022) "Stress Bucket" concept, which explains that stress gradually builds up through factors such as changes in routine, sensory difficulties, uncertainty, classroom situations,

emotional pressure, and increasing learning demands. When the stress becomes excessive, the “bucket” overflows through emotional dysregulation, loss of focus, and challenging behaviors. Figure 2 explains this concept in more detail.

Figure 1
Stress factors affecting students with ASD



In English classes, students with ASD face both advantages and challenges in learning English as a foreign language. One key advantage is the use of repetition and visual materials. Maysuroh et al. (2024) explain that teachers frequently repeat instructions to help students focus and understand the material. This suggests that repetition significantly assists students with ASD in language comprehension. Furthermore, the use of visual materials, such as audiovisual aids, is widely used in learning because students with ASD tend to learn more effectively through visuals. Clear and consistent language delivery also supports learning, as clearly presented words and sentences help students follow the flow of English lessons. However, students with ASD also face several difficulties in English classes. Speaking skills are a major challenge, especially for students with speech delays, which can limit spoken language production. Furthermore, limitations in communication and social

interaction impact student engagement in interactive activities and group work.

Listening skills are also often a barrier, as students with ASD have difficulty understanding spoken language, making listening activities without appropriate support less effective in the context of learning English as a foreign language (Maysuroh et al., 2024). Based on research conducted by Ali & Saad (2022), the reading abilities of students with ASD often show a gap between decoding and comprehension. Students can read fluently and recognize words well, but have difficulty understanding the deeper meaning of the text. They tend to understand the literal meaning, but experience obstacles when they have to make inferences or understand implied meanings. Furthermore, research conducted by Ali & Saad (2022) also shows that students with ASD face challenges in organizing ideas and maintaining focus during literacy tasks. Difficulties in language development impact their ability to construct sentences and comprehend the content of reading materials comprehensively. Therefore, additional support from teachers is essential, including assistance during learning activities, the use of structured learning environments, and visual schedules to help students achieve reading skills appropriate for their grade level.

Besides needing support to understand language, students with ASD often need help expressing their understanding through speaking and writing. Vogindroukas et al. (2022) explained that many students with ASD have difficulty communicating ideas or knowledge that they actually understand using the language forms commonly expected in the classroom. This challenge becomes more noticeable during assessment because most assessment methods still rely on students' speaking and writing abilities. As a result, teachers need to consider whether assessment results truly reflect students' understanding or simply show their difficulties in expressing their answers. Therefore, Yuniari & Sudarmawan (2023) emphasized the importance of using more flexible assessment methods that allow students to demonstrate their understanding in different ways.

2. Teaching English to Students with ASD

Teaching students with ASD needs to be based on clear and consistent principles because their learning characteristics differ from those of students in

general. Edelson (2022) explains that students with ASD often experience difficulties processing information and maintaining attention during learning. This condition requires teachers to design learning in a planned manner, not spontaneously. Therefore, teaching principles are an important foundation for supporting the engagement of students with ASD in the classroom.

One of the main principles in teaching students with ASD is clear instructions delivered in a simple and gradual manner. Furthermore, a clear learning structure and the use of consistent routines help create a predictable and safe learning environment for students. Edelson (2022) also emphasizes the importance of consistency in learning delivery to reduce student confusion and anxiety. The principle of repetition of instructions or information plays a role in helping students with ASD understand and retain learning material.

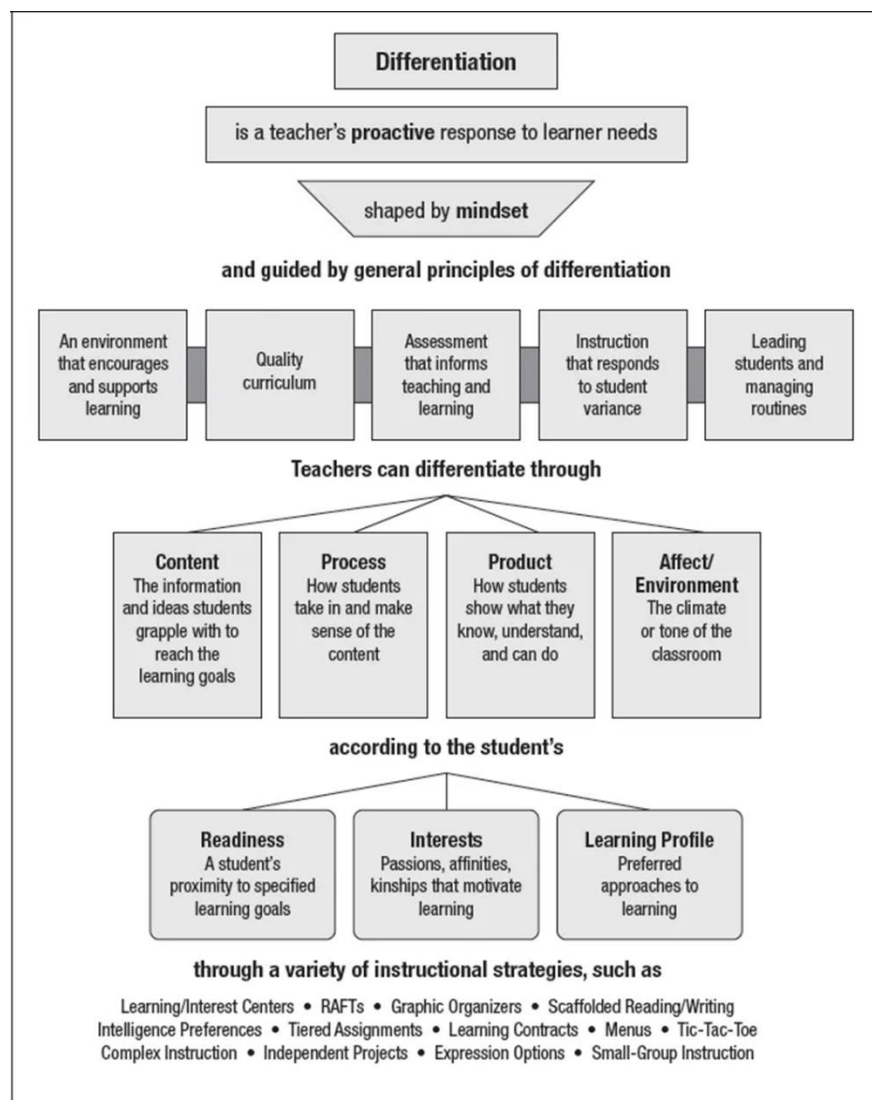
Teachers can apply the teaching principles by using visual aids to assist ASD students in learning English, because most ASD students have a good ability to process visual information (Hume et al., 2021). For example, graphic organizers can help students understand lesson material in a clear and structured way. For ASD students with communication difficulties, teachers can use augmentative and alternative communication systems like Picture Exchange Communication Symbols (PECS), which assist in communication using pictures. Teachers should also provide visual instructions by breaking complex tasks into small and simple steps. This helps students follow the lesson more easily and become more independent in the classroom.

In addition to providing clear instructions and consistent routines, teachers need an approach that accommodates individual differences among students. Differentiated instruction is a learning approach that aims to adapt teaching to the diverse needs, abilities, and characteristics of students in the classroom. This approach is based on the understanding that students do not learn in the same way or at the same level of readiness. Learning needs to be designed flexibly so that each student has the opportunity to engage and develop optimally. In this context, differentiated instruction considers student differences as the primary basis for planning and implementing learning (Tomlinson, 2001). Therefore, teachers should

be flexible in designing the learning instructions to maximize the student understanding. Figure 2 below illustrates Tomlinson's model, which explains how teachers adjust content, process, product, and classroom environment to respond to learner differences.

Figure 2

Conceptual Model of Differentiated Instruction



In practice, differentiated instruction is implemented through adjustments to several key components of learning, including content. Content refers to what students learn or the learning materials provided by the teacher. Tomlinson (2001)

explains that content adjustments can be made by varying the level of difficulty, depth of material, and how students access learning information. These adjustments aim to ensure that the material learned aligns with students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles so that students can learn the same concepts through materials tailored to their learning needs. Differentiated instruction also emphasizes adjustments to the process, namely, how students learn, process, and interpret learning materials. Tomlinson (2001) emphasizes that students need different opportunities to make sense of the information or concepts they learn. Therefore, teachers can provide a variety of activities or information processing methods to help students understand the material more effectively. The next component of differentiated instruction is the product, which refers to how students demonstrate what they have learned as a result of the learning process. According to Tomlinson (2001), the product does not have to be the same type of assignment for all students, but can be tailored to each student's abilities, interests, and learning profile. Product variation allows students to express their understanding through various forms of learning outcomes. This adjustment aims to provide a fair opportunity for each student to demonstrate their learning achievements.

When using differentiated instruction for students with ASD, teachers need to understand each student's interests and learning needs. One common characteristic of students with ASD is having a strong interest in specific topics or activities (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). When these interests are included in classroom activities, they can help increase students' attention and motivation to learn (Tomlinson & Moon, 2017). For this reason, teachers can adapt learning materials and media to match topics that students enjoy, which may help them become more involved in the learning process. Sandra and Kurniawati (2021) also noted that this approach can help students feel more comfortable when working on new or challenging language tasks.

Differentiated instruction is relevant in teaching English to students with ASD because it accommodates the differences in their learning needs and characteristics. Adapting learning through content, process, and product allows teachers to tailor materials, activities, and assignments to the abilities of students with ASD.

Research shows that this approach helps students with ASD learn more comfortably and engage in learning. In the Indonesian context, Azzahra et al. (2023) found that implementing differentiated instruction supports the understanding and participation of students with ASD in the learning process.

However, implementing differentiated instruction in teaching English to students with ASD in the Indonesian context still presents various challenges for teachers. Azzahra et al. (2023) point out that teachers need to continuously adapt content, process, and product to suit the students' conditions and classroom situations. Teachers are also required to use appropriate strategies so that students with ASD can express their understanding of English without pressure. Therefore, it is important to examine the challenges faced by teachers and the strategies they use in teaching English to students with ASD.

In addition to visual support, teachers can use differentiated instruction to meet the diverse learning needs of students with ASD. This approach requires teachers to be flexible and adjust their teaching methods, learning materials, and classroom activities based on each student's needs and abilities (Sandra & Kurniawati, 2021). According to Tirich (2025), differentiated instruction allows teachers to make changes to their teaching when students experience difficulties. As a result, students can receive support that is more suitable for their individual learning needs.

A good understanding of students' emotional conditions and learning characteristics also helps teachers provide more effective support. This idea is reflected in Antecedent-Based Intervention (ABI), which focuses on identifying and reducing possible triggers before they lead to challenging behaviors (Nuske et al., 2023). Through closer interaction with students, such as in small-group or individual learning activities, teachers can monitor students' needs and make adjustments when necessary. Nuske et al. (2023) found that ABI is an effective strategy for supporting students with ASD. Overall, combining differentiated instruction, visual support, and proactive strategies can help create a more inclusive learning environment where students can learn at their own pace and according to their abilities.

3. Teachers' Challenges in Teaching Students with ASD

Teachers in regular classrooms with an ASD student often face instructional challenges because students with ASD usually need instructions that are more structured, repeated, and easier to understand than those given to other students. Azka et al. (2025) found that teachers need to make significant adjustments to their teaching because students with ASD often require extra support to understand instructions and process information. In the same way, Apriliyanti (2022) reported that teachers need to use engaging media and visual aids, as traditional verbal instruction is often not effective for these students. These findings suggest that teachers face challenges not only in adapting learning materials but also in providing continuous support during the learning process. In this study, such instructional demands may become even more challenging when teachers work with students with ASD in regular classrooms.

To support the learning needs of students with ASD, teachers often use visual media, nonverbal communication, and technology in English classes. Apriliyanti (2022) found that teachers use pictures, videos, and nonverbal signals to help students understand instructions more clearly. Likewise, Jannah and Hidayat (2025) found that technology can make learning materials more interesting, but it does not always lead to higher student participation. These findings show that media and technology can help teachers explain lessons, but they may not be enough to keep students actively involved in learning. In this study, the success of these strategies may depend on how well teachers combine them with a personal approach that meets the needs of each student especially the with ASD one.

Besides student-related factors, teachers' limited professional skills can also create challenges when teaching students with special needs. Fahmi et al. (2024) found that many teachers have difficulty choosing and adapting teaching methods because most strategies are designed for regular classrooms, while training related to special needs education is still limited. In the same way, Malkawi et al. (2023) reported that curriculum adjustments, technology use, and administrative tasks can reduce teachers' ability to provide consistent instruction. These studies suggest that there is still a gap between what teachers are expected to do and the support they

receive. In this study, this gap may affect teachers' ability to respond effectively to the learning needs of students with ASD in regular classrooms.

Limited institutional support often encourages teachers to find their own ways to manage a regular classroom with an ASD student. Sandra and Kurniawati (2021) found that when professional training is not sufficient, teachers often rely on self-learning and classroom experience to develop suitable teaching strategies. This effort can be strengthened through collaboration with parents and families, who provide important information about students' learning needs (Brahim, 2022). These findings suggest that the success of teaching a student with ASD depends not only on school policies but also on teachers' efforts to improve their skills and work closely with students' families.

School support and available facilities play an important role in helping teachers manage a regular classroom with an ASD student. Fahmi et al. (2024) found that limited learning materials, a lack of visual supports, and changing curriculum policies made it difficult for teachers to provide consistent instruction. Likewise, Nascimento et al. (2025) reported that limited collaboration with other professionals reduces teachers' opportunities to develop strategies that match students' individual needs. These studies suggest that teachers often have to deal with various learning challenges on their own because institutional support is not always available. In this study, such conditions may affect teachers' ability to effectively support students with ASD in regular classrooms.

Additionally, monitoring and assessing the progress of students with ASD can be difficult because their learning outcomes are not always easy to measure using standard assessment tools. Solo et al. (2025) found that limited assessment instruments make it difficult for teachers to measure students' progress and evaluate whether their teaching strategies are effective. In addition, Maryam et al. (2024) reported that limited time and heavy workloads often prevent teachers from monitoring student development regularly. These findings suggest that effective assessment depends not only on suitable instruments but also on teachers having enough time and capacity to conduct continuous evaluation. In this study, such assessment challenges may affect teachers' ability to adjust learning strategies based

on the needs of students with ASD in a regular classroom.

B. Study of Relevant Research

Several studies related to teaching English to students with ASD have been conducted by various researchers. Maysuroh et al. (2024) investigated appropriate strategies for teaching English to students with ASD and explored the challenges faced by teachers. Using a qualitative case study design, the research focused on an English teacher at SLBN 01 East Lombok, a special needs school in Indonesia. The findings revealed two main challenges, namely, students' difficulty in maintaining attention and language delay. The study also found that teachers applied strategies such as improving oral language comprehension, integrating visual media, using differentiated instruction, and collaborating with other educators. However, the study was limited to a special school context and did not explore broader teaching settings. Therefore, the present study seeks to expand the scope by examining the experiences of an English teacher teaching students with ASD in a public junior high school, as well as in informal home tutoring settings.

Furthermore, Lasintia et al. (2021) examined the implementation of English teaching strategies for students with ASD at a special needs junior high school in Curup, Bengkulu. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the study collected data through interviews and document analysis. The findings showed that the teacher applied strategies such as developing oral language comprehension, using echolalia techniques, and implementing the Picture Exchange Communication System. Although the study clearly described instructional strategies, it did not discuss in detail the challenges faced by teachers in the classroom. To complement this gap, the present study investigates both the challenges and strategies experienced by English teachers in inclusive school contexts.

In addition, Sandra & Kurniawati (2021) explored the use of differentiated instruction for students with ASD in an inclusive elementary school in Yogyakarta. Through classroom observations and interviews, the study found that differentiated instruction was mainly used to modify assessment and provide additional support during lessons. These practices helped students better understand instructions and complete classroom tasks. However, the study did not examine in depth the broader

challenges faced by teachers or compare practices across different educational settings.

Overall, previous studies have primarily focused on teaching strategies in special-needs schools, with limited discussion of teachers' challenges in public schools and informal learning environments. Therefore, this study aims to examine both the challenges and strategies of English teachers in teaching students with ASD in a public junior high school in Tasikmalaya and in home-based tutoring settings in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of real classroom practices.