

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the researcher discusses about the theories that relates to the research that is conducted.

2.1 Teacher Role

2.1.1 Definition of Teacher

A teacher is a professional educator who holds the primary responsibility for leading and facilitating the learning process across all levels of formal education, from early childhood to secondary education. According to the Regulation of minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 26 year 2022 (PERMENDIKBUD), a teacher is defined as a professional educator whose main duties include teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students within formal education pathway. This definition highlights the teacher's essential role in ensuring that the teaching and learning process in meaningful, effective, and continuous.

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the quality of education and the development of future generations. Their responsibilities extend beyond classroom learning activities to moral training, emotional support, and the instilling of character values. According to Dirsa et al. (2022), teachers hold a strategic position in both education and society because they are not only transmitters of knowledge and skills but also moral guides and character builders. Teachers are viewed as professionals who inspire intellectual curiosity, nurture social and emotional growth, and instill positive values within students. They act as role models who shape learners into responsible, ethical, and reflective individuals capable of contributing meaningfully to their communities.

Meanwhile, the OECD (2019:30) in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) emphasizes that teachers in the 21st century must possess holistic competencies that encompass three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Teachers are expected to stimulate students' intellectual capacities (cognitive), foster positive attitudes and social behaviors (affective), and develop practical and collaborative skills (psychomotor). This perspective

reinforces the idea that educational success should not be measured merely by academic achievement but also by the teacher's ability to balance knowledge, attitudes, and skills in the classroom.

In line with this, UNESCO (2021:45) highlights teachers as key actors in the global transformation of education, serving as innovators, leaders, and facilitators of lifelong learning. Teachers are no longer confined to the traditional role of knowledge transmitters; instead, they are expected to cultivate reflective thinking, creativity, and adaptability among students in response to the challenges of the modern world.

From the above perspective, it can be concluded that teachers are professionals who bear a great responsibility in promoting the holistic development of students, covering the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. In the context of Special Schools (SLB), this responsibility becomes more complex, as teachers must adapt their teaching approaches to meet the unique characteristics and learning needs of students with special needs, ensuring that the learning process remains inclusive, effective, and meaningful for all.

2.1.2 Roles of Teacher and Function

A role refers to the specific behaviors characteristic of every civil servant according to their position or job. Teachers, who hold an honorable place in society, carry the responsibilities and functions of being educators, instructors, mentors, guides, trainers, and assessors.

English teachers have various responsibilities in the English learning process that require them to play a number of important roles. According Harmer in (Naibaho, 2019) the roles of the teacher consists of:

1. Teacher as Controller, The teacher is the one who served as the controller, and when the teacher acts as a controller, they are responsible in the class and also responsible for all activities that occur in the classroom.
2. Teacher as Organizer, Acting as an organizer in language learning in the classroom is one of the most important roles, in which case the teacher must organize the students as well as the very diverse activities in language learning. Usually activities in this field are

to provide information to students, telling them how to do things, varying their study groups either in pairs or groups and finally ending something typed something that ends or finishes.

3. Teacher as Assessor, One of the things students expect from their teachers is an indication that they are right or wrong when they speak the language they are learning. In this case we act as assessors. This means that as a teacher we have to offer feedback to students as they speak and correct their mistakes in using the language and assess them in a variety of ways.
4. Teacher as Prompter, The teacher has a role as a prompter for example in an activity or in a presentation. Students are silent do not remember what to say or just say they ran out of vocabulary when going to say something.
5. Teacher as Participant, A tradition that often occurs during a discussion, or a student role play is ongoing is the teacher as the organizer of the activities in the class just interferes with the affairs or simply gives feedback to the students or even justifies the wrong when after the discussion is over.
6. Teacher as Resource , In some cases, we do not need to apply the previously described roles. For example, when students are writing, or when they are involved in the presentation preparation that will be presented in the classroom or control them. In that case, the role of the teacher or when the teacher tries to control them, or try to encourage them, they will likely not welcome us, because in that case they need us as a source.
7. Teacher as Tutor, When students are working on a longer project, such as writing or preparing for discussion or debate, this is where a teacher acts as a tutor, working with a private or a small group, pointing them one at a time.
8. Teacher as Observer, In this role, Teachers here not only observe students to provide feedback. They should also pay close attention

to the success of the teaching materials and the activities they deliberately carry in the classroom so that they can all.

9. Teacher as Performer, Having learned that different teachers, acting are also different, and that they have different behaviors. It depends on what they will do. Suggestions, even though the teacher tells us which part to play, we should also be able to describe how they can play. Therefore, in an activity where students engage in a team game, it is appropriate that we act full of energy, encouragingly, clearly, and fairly.
10. Teacher as Teaching Aid, Regardless of the roles adopt in the classroom and how these roles are applied, teachers are also aids. In particular, we are actually very useful when all of us, using clowns or body movements, as language models, and as a provider of understandable input.

2.2 Learning Difficulties

2.2.1 Definition of Learning Difficulties

Learning difficulties are disorders experienced by students in the teaching and learning process, resulting in academic performance that is below their potential despite their best efforts. Learning difficulties include obstacles in reading, writing, arithmetic, language comprehension, and information processing, resulting in performance that is far below the child's potential. These difficulties also include the ability to learn English. Learning difficulties can be summarized as a variety of disorders in listening, reading, writing, and reading caused by various internal and external factors (Armella & Rifdah, 2022).

Learning difficulties are problems in the learning process that prevent students from participating in the learning process as well as other students, characterized by certain obstacles that prevent students from achieving the expected learning outcomes (Agustin, 2023). The causes of learning difficulties are divided into two factors, namely internal factors (originating from within the student), including physical condition, intelligence, maturity, talent, desire, and motivation, while external factors (originating from outside the student) include the family environment, school environment, and social environment.

The factors that cause learning difficulties are generally grouped into two categories, namely internal factors and external factors. According to Rachmadi et al. (2023), the causes of learning difficulties include internal and external factors, both of which contribute to the emergence of learning difficulties in students.

1. Internal factors (from within the student)

Internal factors that influence learning difficulties include: interest, motivation, physical health, intellectual ability, attitude, attention to learning, readiness to learn, talent, physical condition, and emotional factors. All of these aspects are directly related to the student's internal state, which can make it difficult for them to concentrate, understand the material, or be mentally and physically ready to learn, thus giving rise to learning difficulties.

2. External factors (outside the student)

External factors include: family environment, school environment, interaction with teachers, interaction with peers, facilities and infrastructure, technology and learning media, curriculum, learning environment at home, family economic conditions, and school education policies. These various external factors can create a learning environment that is not supportive, limit access to learning resources, or cause students to lose focus, thereby reinforcing learning difficulties.

Overall, internal and external factors are interrelated and contribute to students' learning difficulties. Effective handling requires an integrated approach, such as increasing student motivation and readiness to learn (internal) as well as improving the curriculum, facilities, and family school support (external), so that the learning process is more optimal.

2.2.2 Characteristics of Students Having Learning Difficulties

Determining whether a student falls into the category of learning difficulties is not simple because this condition can manifest in various forms and intensities, involving numerous cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and environmental factors. Therefore, the characteristics of students with learning difficulties often need to be identified through the results of observations, academic assessments, and an understanding of individual learning patterns. Several recent studies indicate that students with learning difficulties often exhibit the following characteristics (though not all may appear simultaneously):

Learning difficulties in students are often seen through obstacles in mastering basic literacy skills, especially reading and writing (Budiani, 2023). For instance, research on primary school students categorized as dyslexic shows that they struggle with correctly recognizing letters, spelling words, and reading fluently; even when they have been taught basic letters, they often “read” by spelling word by word, or reversing/transposing letters. This suggests that learning difficulties are rooted in aspects of phonological and symbol processing, not merely a lack of practice.

Students with learning difficulties not only face obstacles in mastering the subject matter, but also experience problems with attention and engagement during the learning process in class. Furthermore, according to Salsabil et al. (2025), these students tend to be slow in understanding instructions, require more time to process information, and are often easily distracted in the classroom environment. In a study on students with learning problems in junior high school, it was found that in addition to difficulty comprehending subject material, they also experienced concentration issues and limitations in academic social interaction.

The same applies in the context of “slow learners”: students require a longer time to absorb lessons compared to their peers, tend to be passive, and require repetition or different learning approaches (Pertiwi & Harsiwi, 2025).

In the context of writing, for example, characteristics in students with written expression difficulties (dysgraphia) or a combination of dyslexia & dysgraphia can include slow writing speed, letter or number errors, difficulty copying text, and difficulty constructing written sentences with correct structure and spelling (Nurfadhillah et al., 2022).

However, it must be emphasized that these characteristics are not uniform: each student may show a different pattern of symptoms some are more dominant in the reading aspect, some in writing, some in memory or processing, and some in the socio-emotional or motivational aspect of learning (Budiani, 2023).

Therefore, the identification and handling of learning difficulties need to be carried out individually, through comprehensive assessment that considers the

student's learning context, rather than merely evaluating based on academic results or general assumptions.

Although most research focuses specifically on the academic and cognitive aspects of learning difficulties, it is also important to note that these challenges often go hand in hand with broader developmental or behavioral problems.

Children with special needs, including those with learning disabilities, exhibit a variety of behavioral, emotional, and physical characteristics that require careful understanding. Mulyono in Rezieka et al. (2021), identified 17 key characteristics that are important to recognize to effectively support their learning and development, including:

1. Difficulty Communicating, Children have trouble speaking or expressing themselves, even at an age when they should be able to do so.
2. Learning Difficulties, They experience problems in basic thinking or information processing skills, often with average or slightly above-average IQ levels.
3. Physical Impairments, They have physical differences caused by nerve or organ disorders, often resulting from congenital conditions.
4. Defiant Behavior, They struggle to distinguish between right and wrong or between dangerous and safe situations.
5. Emotional Disturbances, They are easily angered, sad, or depressed without clear reasons, often feeling lonely or hopeless.
6. Difficulty Reading or Writing, They struggle to hold a pencil properly, write clearly, or read correctly.
7. Lack of Understanding of Directions and Time, They have confusion in understanding directions, time, or the sequence of activities.
8. Attachment to Routine, Particularly among children with autism, they become anxious or upset when their routines or activity sequences change.
9. Imitative Behavior (Echolalia), They frequently repeat words, songs, or phrases without understanding their meanings.

10. Talking Excessively, They talk continuously, sometimes using inappropriate or meaningless words without realizing it.
11. Nervous Actions, When anxious, they may perform random or repetitive movements, such as rocking their body or fiddling with their hands.
12. Easily Jealous, They feel unhappy or upset when others receive attention or something enjoyable.
13. High Sensitivity, They may be overly sensitive or, conversely, unresponsive to touch, light, or sound (sensory integration disorder).
14. Unexplained Reactions, They may suddenly laugh, cry, or get angry without an apparent reason.
15. Tendency to Be Introverted , They feel uncomfortable in crowded environments and prefer solitude; they may also experience anxiety around strangers.
16. Negative Thinking or Suspicion, They easily misunderstand situations or feel treated unfairly, which can trigger anger or frustration.
17. Self Harming Behavior, They cannot distinguish between safe and dangerous actions, sometimes scratching, hitting, or hurting themselves without realizing it.

2.3 Special Needs Students

2.3.1 Definition of Special Needs Students

Students with special needs are students who require special services or care to achieve optimal development due to their disabilities or unique characteristics (Yulita et al., 2025). Students with special needs are learners who show differences in physical, intellectual, emotional, or social developmental aspects compared to students in general. These differences can be in the form of limitations in learning ability, sensory impairments, behavioral disorders, or special needs in emotional and social aspects, thus requiring different educational services to develop optimally (Maryanti et al., 2021).

In the context of Special needs education, Children with special needs are children who, in terms of education, require specific services that are different

from those for typical children. These children with special needs have what is called barriers to learning and development (Setyaningsih et al., 2022).

Therefore, children with special needs are children who, due to unique physical, intellectual, emotional, or social conditions, require special educational services and approaches that differ from those provided to children in general in order to achieve optimal growth and development. This definition highlights the importance of recognizing individual differences and providing the necessary support so that every child can succeed according to their potential.

2.3.2 Classification of Special Needs Students

Students with special needs can be grouped into several types based on their classical intervention needs, although this grouping is not necessary for social purposes. First, mental disorders consist of high intelligence, low intelligence (including intellectual disability/tunagrahita), and learning difficulties. Second, physical disorders include physical impairments (Tunadaksa), visual impairments (Tunanetra), hearing impairments (Tunarungu), and speech disorders. Third, emotional disorders cover behavioral problems, concentration disorders (ADD), and hyperactive children (ADHD).

The types of children with special needs can be explained as follows (Setyaningsih et al., 2022):

1) Mental disorders

Mental disorders are related to a child's intellectual functioning and learning ability. They include high intelligence (giftedness), low intelligence (intellectual disability), and learning difficulties.

a. High Intelligence (Giftedness)

Gifted children have intelligence levels far above average and often show exceptional abilities in certain areas, such as mathematics, science, language, or the arts. They need special enrichment programs and challenging learning experiences to develop their potential fully. Without proper support, they may experience boredom or underachievement in regular classrooms.

b. Low Intelligence / Intellectual Disability (Tunagrahita)

These children have below-average IQ scores and face difficulties adapting to daily life. They may struggle with communication, self-care, and social interactions. Intellectual disabilities are usually categorized as mild, moderate, or severe, depending on the level of support they require. Early intervention and special education can help improve their independence and quality of life.

c. Learning Difficulties (Learning Disabilities)

Children with learning difficulties experience obstacles in hearing, speaking, reading, writing, counting, or reasoning due to differences in how the brain processes information, not because of low intelligence or sensory disorders. Common types include dyslexia (difficulty reading), dysgraphia (difficulty writing), dyscalculia (difficulty counting), and nonverbal learning disorders. They often demonstrate uneven academic abilities and may experience frustration and low self esteem. Early detection and intervention through remedial teaching, multisensory strategies, and collaboration between teachers, parents, and special education professionals are essential to help them reach their full potential.

2) Physical Disorder

Physical disorders refer to impairments that affect a child's body movement or sensory abilities, including the muscles, vision, hearing, and speech.

a. Physical Impairment (Tunadaksa)

Children with physical disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, polio, or muscle weakness, experience challenges in controlling body movements. They may require mobility aids (like wheelchairs or braces) and physical therapy to support daily activities and learning participation.

b. Visual Impairment (Tunanetra)

This category includes children who are blind or have low vision. They often learn using Braille, audio materials, or assistive technology like screen readers. Teachers must provide tactile learning tools and verbal explanations to ensure equal access to education.

c. Hearing Impairment (Tunarungu)

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing depend on sign language, lip reading, or hearing aids to communicate and learn. Inclusive classrooms should promote visual-based communication and supportive social interactions.

d. Speech Disorder

Speech-impaired children may stutter, have delayed speech, or produce unclear sounds. These difficulties can affect confidence and communication. Regular speech therapy helps them improve pronunciation and fluency in expressing ideas.

3) Emotional Disorders

Emotional disorders affect how children manage their feelings, behavior, and attention. These conditions often influence their social interactions and classroom participation.

a. Behavioral Disorders

Children with behavioral issues may act aggressively, defy rules, or show antisocial behaviors, which disturb the classroom environment. Consistent guidance, counseling, and positive discipline are essential to help them learn self-control and empathy.

b. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

Children with ADD have trouble maintaining focus and are easily distracted, especially during long or monotonous tasks. They usually benefit from short, varied, and engaging learning activities, as well as structured routines to help maintain concentration.

c. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Children with ADHD display excessive energy, impulsiveness, and restlessness. They often find it hard to stay seated or complete tasks calmly. Supportive classroom management, physical activities, and behavioral therapy can help them channel their energy positively and improve learning outcomes.

Emotional disorders are associated with behavioral and concentration problems, including behavioral disorders that cause inappropriate actions, concentration disorders (ADD) that make it difficult for children to maintain attention, and ADHD, which is characterized by hyperactivity and impulsivity.

Each type of disorder requires special attention, understanding, and educational adjustments. Teachers, parents, and peers play an important role in creating a supportive environment so that every child can reach their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally.

2.3.3 Teaching English to Special Needs Students

Teaching English to students with special needs is a teaching process that requires adjustments to the characteristics, abilities, and learning needs of students. Students with special needs have differences in cognitive, physical, social, and emotional aspects, so teaching English cannot be equated with teaching in regular schools. Therefore, teaching English in Special Schools (SLB) requires adjustments to strategies, methods, media, approaches, and assessments so that teaching objectives can be achieved optimally.

According Lituhayu (2017) in Dewi (2019) states that in teaching English to exceptional children (ALB), several teaching methods can be applied that are tailored to the characteristics and needs of students, including the following.

a. Direct Method

This method is carried out through repeated exercises (drills). The use of the direct method in teaching English can initiate students' awareness of learning and involve students in understanding the meaning of words and how to use them directly. This method is able to bridge the differences in students' abilities, both those with low and high abilities. Psychologically, this method drives the learning process from simple to complex and from concrete to abstract.

b. Total Physical Response (TPR)

The Total Physical Response method utilizes physical movements and body language in teaching English. This method is easy to apply, enjoyable, and effective, especially in teaching vocabulary. In addition, the use of physical activities can increase student engagement in learning. However, the application of TPR needs to be adjusted to the physical condition of students, for example, students with physical disabilities.

c. Lexical Approach

The lexical approach involves learning words or sentences in their entire context or through lexical fragments. This approach can be applied using media such as

comic strips, which help students learn English more naturally without excessive pressure.

In addition to teaching methods, the success of English language instruction for students with special needs is also supported by the use of teaching media. According Bransford (1999) in Dewi (2019) states that teaching media serves to reinforce the concepts and ideas conveyed to students, so that the teaching process can be two way, rather than one way. The teaching media used can be visual or audio visual.

a. Realia kits (Real objects)

The use of real objects helps students relate English language teaching to their surroundings and strengthens their memory of the material being studied.

b. Slides (Slide presentations)

Slides with large letters and attractive colors can increase student attention. This media can also be used for deaf students with adjustments to the teacher's facial expressions and body language.

c. Film strips (Short films)

Short films with clear visuals and a supportive atmosphere can help students record teaching information better.

d. Cards (Word cards)

Word cards are used to help students learn new vocabulary, either in the form of text or cards accompanied by pictures.

e. Interactive videos

Interactive videos can increase the motivation of ALB students in following English lessons and help students understand the material in a more interesting way.

In teaching English to students with special needs, teachers can use parallel learning approaches, individual learning, and the use of visual media according to the needs of students. Mulyono and Wekke (2018: 24) in Suharsih (2022) explain several teaching approaches that can be applied, including the following.

1. Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The Contextual Teaching and Learning approach relates teaching materials to students' daily lives. Teaching with this approach is characterized by lesson planning that considers students' mental development, the formation of independent learning groups, and attention to students with multiple intelligences.

2. Expository Approach

The expository approach emphasizes the role of the teacher in explaining the material verbally to students. In this approach, the teacher becomes the main source of learning. The characteristics of the expository approach include stimulating students through the use of real objects around them, the use of correct pronunciation, and the delivery of material in a structured manner through verbal explanations.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that teaching English to students with special needs requires adjustments to teaching methods, media, approaches, and assessments in accordance with the characteristics and needs of the students. This study is used as a theoretical basis for understanding the context of teaching English to students with special needs, which in turn becomes the basis for analyzing the role of teachers in overcoming difficulties in learning English in special schools. Some of the media that can be used in teaching English to students with special needs include the following.

2.4 Previous Studies

There are four relevant research studies that can be used as material for supporting and establishing the research gap of this study.

1. The first study is from Agustina et al. (2023) entitled "*Teachers' Roles in Overcoming Special Needs Students' Difficulties in Learning English at Elementary Schools in Bengkulu City.*" This study aims to examine the roles of English teachers in helping special needs students overcome learning difficulties in inclusive elementary schools in Bengkulu City. The research applies a qualitative approach focusing on the implementation of teacher roles based on Harmer's theory. The findings revealed that almost all ten teacher roles were implemented, namely controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant,

resource, observer, tutor, performer, and teaching aids. However, the tutor role was not applied in one of the schools because the students were assisted by shadow teachers. This condition indicates that the presence of shadow teachers influences the distribution of teacher roles in inclusive settings.

2. The second study is from Nurcholis et al. (2024), entitled “*The Implementation of Teachers' Roles in Teaching English for Inclusive Students' Perception.*” This study aims to identify the implementation of teacher roles in English teaching based on inclusive students' perceptions. The research uses a quantitative approach by analyzing the percentage of role implementation. The results show that five teacher roles were implemented, namely corrector (71%), inspirer (71%), culminator (65%), facilitator (24%), and evaluator (100%). The study recommends strengthening the facilitator role because its implementation percentage was still below 50%. This finding suggests that not all teacher roles are implemented optimally in inclusive classrooms.

3. The third study is from Azka et al. (2025), entitled “*Teacher's Roles in Teaching English to Students with Special Needs: Strategies, Challenges, and Impacts.*” This study is a systematic literature review that aims to explore teachers' roles, strategies, challenges, and the impacts of teaching English to students with special needs. The study identifies several common strategies, including Individualized Instruction, Differentiated Instruction, Multisensory and Visual Learning, and Collaborative Teaching. The main challenges were found to originate from student factors, followed by teacher factors and policy-related issues. The study emphasizes the importance of targeted teacher training, sufficient institutional support, and stronger interprofessional collaboration. However, this research does not provide direct empirical data from a specific Special Needs School (SLB) environment.

4. The last study is from Nurmayani et al. (2025), entitled “*Analisis Peran Guru dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Belajar Siswa Berkebutuhan Khusus di SLB Melati Medan.*” This study aims to analyze the role of teachers in improving the learning abilities of students with special needs in an SLB context. The research applies a qualitative approach. The findings indicate that the teachers' roles were relatively simple and not yet optimal. Teachers tended to use lecture methods with

minimal variation in media and teaching techniques, which affected students' focus and learning engagement. This study highlights the need for more varied and adaptive teaching strategies in special education settings.

The literature review indicates a gap in the research focus regarding teachers' roles in teaching English to students with special needs. Studies conducted by Agustina et al. (2023) and Nurcholis et al. (2024) examined teachers' roles in Bengkulu City; however, both were conducted in inclusive elementary school settings. In inclusive schools, the presence of shadow teachers may influence the implementation of certain roles, such as the tutor role, which differs from the context of Special Needs Schools (SLB). Meanwhile, Nurmayani et al. (2025) investigated teachers' roles in an SLB setting in Medan, but the study did not specifically focus on English language teaching or the junior high school level. In addition, the systematic review by Azka et al. (2025), although discussing strategies and challenges in teaching English to students with special needs, did not provide empirical data from a specific SLB context. Therefore, differences can be identified in terms of school environment (inclusive schools versus SLB), educational level (elementary versus junior high school), and subject specificity (general learning versus English language teaching). These differences highlight the need for further research focusing on English teachers' roles at the junior high level in Special Needs Schools (SLB).