

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

According to Harmer (in Cong Khanh, 2024), English teachers take on multiple roles in the classroom, ranging from facilitators to mentors, all of which contribute to students' learning experiences and language development. These roles require teachers to adapt their teaching strategies to meet students' needs and the evolving demands of the times. In an increasingly interconnected world, teachers' ability to adapt plays a crucial role in helping students develop their language skills effectively. Over time, teaching strategies in English language education have continued to evolve to meet both students' demands and the expectations of a global society.

In this context, 21st-century skills have become increasingly important in education. Abilities such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication are essential not only in academic settings but also in dynamic work environments (Jenna Buckle, 2024). Critical thinking involves deep reflection and analysis, enabling students to build knowledge and make well-informed decisions. Collaboration emphasizes teamwork, valuing diverse perspectives, and contributing to shared goals. Creativity fosters innovative problem-solving by encouraging originality, flexibility, and the ability to approach challenges with fresh ideas. Effective communication encompasses verbal, nonverbal, and digital literacy, allowing students to express ideas clearly, listen actively, and engage in meaningful

dialogue. By developing these skills, students become better prepared to face the challenges of globalization (Stanikzai, 2023).

In response to these demands, Indonesia has implemented the Kurikulum Merdeka, which aims to address modern educational challenges by providing a more flexible, student-centered approach that caters to individual learning needs. This curriculum grants greater autonomy to schools and teachers, allowing them to tailor learning experiences using innovative teaching strategies suited to students' abilities and learning styles. It also emphasizes project-based learning and the integration of digital technology to enrich the educational experience (Kemendikbud, 2022). Thus, this approach shifts the focus from purely academic achievement to equipping students with essential life skills for the future.

Kurikulum Merdeka promotes a flexible, student-centered learning approach that tailors teaching strategies to individual needs and equips students with essential life skills. This curriculum represents a progressive shift away from traditional educational paradigms, fostering an inclusive and empowering learning environment (Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022). By moving away from an exclusive focus on academic performance, it encourages teachers to adopt innovative and differentiated teaching strategies that accommodate different learning styles (Cardino & Ortega-Dela Cruz, 2020). This flexibility not only allows teachers to address unique classroom dynamics but also ensures that all students have the tools they need to succeed in modern society.

Alongside the adoption of Kurikulum Merdeka, the teaching-learning paradigm must also evolve. Learning should incorporate Project-Based Learning (PjBL) or Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which encourage students to engage in real-world

projects that foster critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. Teachers are empowered to provide differentiated instruction, adjusting lessons to accommodate varying student abilities and fostering a more inclusive learning environment. Additionally, the curriculum emphasizes character development, aiming to instill ethical values alongside intellectual skills (Wulandari & Nawangsari 2024)

This shift also impacts English language education. Various innovative teaching strategies and strategies have been developed to assist teachers in aligning with the objectives of Kurikulum Merdeka (Anisah & Qamariah, 2023). Examples include Learning Strategy Training, Project-Based Learning, Problem-Based Learning, Discovery Learning, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Cooperative Learning, Active Learning, Integrated Learning, Flipped Learning, Competency Based Learning, and Differentiated learning (Hosaini et al, 2022). However, the introduction of new curricula and teaching strategies has made it more challenging for teachers to adapt to their students' needs.

Teaching strategies play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of the learning process, as they foster academic engagement and create a comfortable learning environment (Ummi et al., 2024). Therefore, selecting an appropriate teaching strategy in the EFL classroom is essential. The choice of a teaching strategy significantly impacts students' comprehension and academic achievement. Moreover, teachers' preferences influence the teaching approach used in the classroom.

Several factors can influence teachers' preferences for teaching strategies, including students' learning conditions, teachers' teaching competencies, and the

availability of facilities that support the learning process (Mustika & Wardah, 2021). Another significant factor is gender, research shows that gender plays a significant role in shaping teaching styles and student perceptions in educational settings. Female teachers are more likely to adopt student-centered approaches and demonstrate higher gender-communicative competence than their male counterparts (Zhou & Xu, 2007; Akhmetova, 2017).

Eckert and McConnell (2013) investigated the different language habits of males and females, revealing significant variations in communication patterns across different contexts. Their findings suggest that females tend to be more communicative and prioritize social interaction, whereas males are more task-oriented and likely to exert control in non-intimate settings. These findings may extend to academic environments, indicating that male teachers may exhibit more dominant characteristics, engage in less discourse, and prefer student-centered teaching practices. In contrast, female teachers are more likely to engage in extensive verbal interaction, aligning with teacher-centered approaches where the teacher plays a key role in delivering information and managing classroom dynamics.

According to Zhou & Xu., (2007) gender differences significantly influence teachers' awareness and use of teaching strategies. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze how gender affects instructional styles and teaching strategies. Understanding gender-based teaching preferences can provide valuable insights into creating more inclusive and responsive teaching strategies, ultimately shaping more effective teacher training programs. This perspective is also supported by Sánchez-Cabrero et al. (2023), who argue that recognizing gender in education is essential for

fostering a more inclusive, transparent, and empowering learning environment. By identifying areas where teaching practices can be adjusted, schools can improve student learning outcomes. Additionally, recognizing these preferences enables educational institutions to develop policies that encourage diversity in teaching strategies, leading to more flexible and inclusive learning environments.

However, comprehensive research on changes in teachers' teaching strategy preferences following the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka still hard to find.

This is particularly significant for researchers interested in understanding how Indonesian teachers, especially in Buleleng Regency, adapt their teaching strategy to meet modern educational demands, particularly in English language education.

The lack of in-depth studies in this area presents opportunities for further research, filling gaps in the literature and providing deeper insights into how teachers navigate challenges and opportunities in post-pandemic and 21st-century education.

This study conducted at SMA N 4 Singaraja. It seeks to determine whether male and female teachers at SMA N 4 Singaraja have different preferences for teaching strategies, particularly after the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka. It also aims to identify these preferences and examine whether they align with existing theories on gender differences in teaching. Given the importance of teaching strategies in shaping students' learning experiences, a better understanding of these preferences could contribute to the development of more effective and inclusive educational practices.

By evaluating gender-based teaching strategy preferences, this study can identify differences in the teaching strategies employed by male and female teachers, which can then be utilized to enhance classroom teaching strategies.

Furthermore, it may uncover and leverage the unique strengths of each gender in teaching, leading to a more balanced and productive learning environment. This research can also contribute to the broader literature on gender in education, an evolving field that requires more empirical evidence. Additionally, if significant gender-based differences in teaching strategy preferences are found, this information can be used to design professional development programs tailored to the specific needs and strengths of male and female teachers.

### **1.2 Problem Identification**

During and after the pandemic, research on teaching practices expanded fast, particularly in terms of teachers adjustments to distant learning and digital technology. However, after the implementation of The Kurikulum Merdeka, the focus of education has changed to meet the demands of the 21st century, such as critical thinking skills, collaboration, creativity and digital literacy. These developments certainly affected the teaching strategies used by teachers. However, research on gender variations in English language teaching practices has been limited, particularly following the establishment of the Kurikulum Merdeka in Buleleng. Male and female teachers may utilize various ways for using technology and changing teaching strategies to meet 21st century requirements. This generates a knowledge gap in which gender-specific information influences teachers' choices while selecting and applying current teaching strategies.

Furthermore, current studies frequently focuses on broad contrasts between conventional and modern teaching techniques, without exploring how differences in gender may impact decision-making in these circumstances. This leads to a

misunderstanding of potential variations in teaching preferences between male and female teachers, which can have an influence on the success of applying teaching strategies in the classroom. This limitation affects the capacity to provide more specific recommendations and assist educators in establishing teaching strategies that are appropriate for their gendered characteristics and needs.

### **1.3 Limitation**

This study observed the classroom teaching strategies of male and female English teachers specifically in SMA N 4 Singaraja, focusing on teachers' preferences of teaching strategies. Additionally, this study doesn't assess student outcomes or attempt to generalize the findings beyond the context of this school. Instead, it focuses on identifying observable teaching strategies rather than examining their direct impact on student performance.

### **1.4 Research Problem**

From the explanation above, the research problem can be concluded as follow:

1. What are the teaching strategies used by the English male teacher in SMA N 4 Singaraja?
2. What are the teaching strategies used by the English female teacher SMA N 4 Singaraja?
3. How do the teaching strategies used by English male and female teachers differ in SMA N 4 Singaraja?

### 1.5 Research Objective

From the research question above, the objective to conduct this research are as follow:

1. To describe the preferences of male English teachers
2. To describe the preferences of female English teachers
3. To analyze the differences of English teacher preferences teaching strategy

### 1.6 Research Significance

This study gave some significance that can be divided into two parts, including:

#### 1. Theoretical Significance

An investigation into the impact of gender on an English teacher's preferred teaching strategies could make a significant contribution to the theory of effective teaching strategies in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for English teachers in Indonesia as a whole, and specifically for English teachers in Buleleng. By creating a link between gender and teaching, the influence on the field of English pedagogy increased.

#### 2. Practical Significance

##### a. For teacher

This research requires to give significant insights for English teachers to improve their professional growth, particularly in the area of selecting teaching strategy that encourage more successful English language learning.

##### b. For next study



This research aims to offer empirical data for future research on the impact of gender on the teaching and learning process, with a particular emphasis on preferences for teaching strategies.

c. For English Language Education Department

This study aims to give prospective English teachers in the English Language Education Department with an awareness of teaching strategies in order to establish a more successful teaching learning process.

