

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research, establishes the research rationale, objectives, questions, significance and the limitations of the study. This chapter introduces the stage for a comprehensive exploration of teachers' preferences in teaching strategies.

1.1 Research Background

The education sector is undergoing major changes due to technological advancements, social changes, and evolving workforce demands (Nguyen, et al., 2020). Digital transformation, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, has changed teaching and learning processes extensively. Online and hybrid learning are replacing traditional methods, providing broader and more flexible access to education. As a result, education is additionally being redesigned to be more effective in preparing students for the demands and difficulties that will arise in the global community. Today's educational system requires mastery of skills that are essential for academic success and for preparing students to be adaptable and innovative in a competitive workforce. To fulfill the needs of modern world and give the next generation the skills they need for the future, education must thus keep evolving (Wang, 2012).

In reaction to help students meet the 21st century demands, the Indonesian government implemented the Independent Curriculum (Putri et al., 2023). The 21st century demands refers to some core skills that must be acquire by students including critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication. Critical thinking allows students to evaluate information, address problems, and make

informed decisions in an intricate setting. Collaboration enhances teamwork and interpersonal skills, essential in diverse professional settings where collective efforts contribute to success. Creativity fosters unconventional thinking in students, enabling them to devise innovative solutions, a trait that is increasingly esteemed in the contemporary job market. Effective communication skills are essential for effectively conveying ideas and engaging with others across diverse contexts. These qualities work together to improve academic achievement and meet the changing needs of the global workforce, where interpersonal and adaptability skills are critical (Zhou, 2023). The Merdeka Curriculum, named after the principle of independence in education, emphasizes flexibility in both school and teacher practices when conducting the teaching-learning process (Tunas & Pangkey, 2024). Unlike the traditional curriculum it does not dictate every step of instruction but instead outlines six phases of learning goals. This flexibility allows educators to tailor their approaches to meet the unique needs and interests of their students. Furthermore, the Merdeka Curriculum places strong emphasis on process-based assessments, requiring teachers to evaluate the ongoing progress of their students rather than solely relying on final exam scores. Another key feature is the focus on student-centered learning, encouraging educators to foster the development of Pancasila Student Profiles, which aim to cultivate students with strong moral values and character traits aligned with Indonesia's foundational principles.

As previously noted, in this curriculum, teacher have their own authority to develop and implemented teaching strategies to help students meet the learning goals (Tunas & Pangkey, 2024). Numerous innovative teaching strategies have been recommended to be implemented in order to assist educators in addressing the

requirements of the Independent. Some strategies that were highly recommended include; Learning Strategy Training, Project Based Learning, Problem Based Learning, Discovery Learning, Computer Assisted Language Learning, Cooperative Learning, Active Learning, Integrated Learning, Flipped Learning, Competency Based Learning, and Differentiated Learning. These teaching strategies were developed in response to the integration of technology and the demands present-day education.

The strategies employed by teachers are crucial factors that affect the efficacy of the learning process, fostering academic engagement and a conducive learning environment (Savitri et al., 2022). Consequently, selecting the appropriate teaching strategy in the EFL classroom is crucial. An appropriate teaching strategy significantly influences students' understanding and success in learning (Apedoe & Schunn, 2013). The selection of instructional technique employed in the classroom is determined by the teachers' preferences.

Various factors can affect the selection of teaching strategies in the classroom, including the student's learning condition, the teacher's pedagogical proficiency, and the availability of supportive learning facilities (Mustika & Wardah, 2021). Another essential factor is gender. Numerous studies indicate that gender can affect multiple aspects of human behavioural patterns, including communication styles, fashion choices, pedagogical approach, student interactions, and teaching practices. Gender significantly influences teachers' practices for teaching strategies (Imran et al., 2024). Eckert and McConnell (2013) examine the various language behaviours of males and females, emphasising notable differences in their behavioral and mindset patterns across multiple contexts. They found that females are more

inclined to engage in conversation, typically emphasising social connection, whilst males are more prone to concentrate on activities and exert dominance in non-intimate contexts. Moreover, Afzal et al. (2023) observed that there are gaps based on gender in both the awareness and implementation of teaching strategies.

Nevertheless, extensive research on the alteration in teachers' instructional strategy preferences following the implementation of the Independent Curriculum doesn't seem accessible. This topic is very crucial to be investigated on how Indonesian teachers, modify their teaching strategies to align with contemporary needs, notably in English language instruction. The absence of comprehensive studies in this particular subject has significant opportunity for further research to address the gaps in the literature and offer deeper insights into how educators confront difficulties and opportunities in the 21st-century educational landscape. Sánchez-Cabrero et al. (2023) explain that considering gender in education is crucial for fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and empowered learning environment. By pinpointing areas for modification in teaching strategies, educational institutions can improve student learning outcomes. Furthermore, considering these preferences allows educational institutions to formulate policies that enhance diversity in learning strategies, cultivating flexible and inclusive learning environments.

Based on the data from 2023 cited from the official website of Education and Cultural Ministry, almost 70% school in Indonesia has been implementing The Merdeka Curriculum, with the specific number is 84.034 unit. Those number spread all over the country, with 60 school are from Buleleng Regency, Bali. One of school that already implemented this curriculum in Buleleng is SMPN 4 Singaraja. SMPN

4 Singaraja is an A Grade school located in Sambangan Village, Buleleng Regency. In SMPN 4 Singaraja they have total 85 teachers, with 37 Male teachers and 48 Female teachers. For English Teacher they have 5 In total, with 1 male teacher and 4 female teachers. Based on the preliminary research that have been done, the teacher in this school mentioned that they aware with the change in the curriculum, including the teaching strategies require and recommended by the government.

This study carried out at SMPN 4 Singaraja, because this school fulfill the research criteria; implement the Merdeka Curriculum, have both female and male teachers, and most importantly are able to cooperate in the study. This research aims to determine what are male and female teachers at SMPN 4 Singaraja preferences for teaching strategies, particularly following the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Considering the significance of teaching strategy in influencing students' learning experiences, a comprehensive understanding of these research can significantly enhance the advancement of more effective and inclusive education. This research can also enhance the broader literature on gender in education, an evolving field that necessitates additional empirical evidence. This research can serve as a foundation for creating profile of effective and preferred teaching strategies that enhances student learning outcomes and facilitates teachers' professional development. This study seeks to enhance the quality of English language learning by using effective teaching strategies tailored to students' condition and needs, while considering gender variables that may impact teaching preferences and efficacy.

1.2 Research Problem Identification

Research on teaching strategies has advanced significantly during the implementation of The Independent Curriculum. The emphasis of education has shifted to provide students with the competencies required for the 21st century, including critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication. These alterations undoubtedly influenced the teaching strategy selected by educators. Nonetheless, studies on gender disparities in English language teaching strategies preferences, particularly following the establishment of the Independent Curriculum, are hard to found. Based on study of several differences of genders, male and female teachers might employ distinct strategy regarding to the adaptation of new curriculum. This establishes a knowledge gap about how are the selection and implementation of contemporary teaching strategies. Additionally, the present literature frequently emphasises the preferences on specific one skill teaching in general, neglecting the potential impact of gender variations on decision-making and the implementation of new curriculum in Indonesia.

1.3 Research Problem Limitation

This study seeks to identify the teaching strategy preferences of male and female teachers in English language instruction at SMPN 4 Singaraja. It emphasizes the adoption of new strategies aligned with the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum. Both genders examined to gather the data, ensuring that whether both genders have differences in terms of modern English teaching strategy preferences. The other factors that might influence teaching strategy preferences of teacher are not discussed in this study. Moreover, due to the limited amount of the subjects, the

result of this study cannot be generalized beyond the research setting. The result of this study only represented the research setting.

1.4 Research Questions

From those explanation, the research questions can be concluded as follows:

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

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

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

1.6 Research Significance

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

(a) Theoretical Significance

The understanding of gender's influence on an English teacher's teaching strategy preferences can give a big contribution to the theory about effective teaching strategy in EFL context based on the gender for English teachers in Indonesia generally, and English teachers in Bali specifically. By relating those variables (gender and instruction) the contribution in English pedagogical fields be stronger.

(b) Practical Significance

For teacher; This study hopefully give contribution for English teacher to develop themselves, especially in selecting the teaching strategy for more effective English learning

For next study; This study hopefully be an empirical evidence for the next study that is related to gender influence in teaching and learning process, especially about teaching strategy preferences.

For English Language Education Department; This study aims to provide an understanding of teaching strategies for prospective English teachers in the English Language Education Department, so that the teaching learning process can be developed to be more effective.

