

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter show an introduction of this study. This chapter presents the research background, problem identification, research limitation, research question, the purposes of the study, and research significance.

### **1.1 Research Background**

Learning English is one of the crucial aspects to be studied. This is because English is widely used language worldwide (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). In addition, Ratminingsih (2017) argued that English is used to communicate between two citizens of different languages. In line with that, according to Septie et al. (2019) English has become a lingua franca as it serves as a tool for exchanging information globally. It means that English is used as a common language for communication among people from different background of their mother language. Furthermore, recognizing the importance of learning English in this era of globalization has led English to be one of the essential subjects for students in every levels of education (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022).

Although Indonesia is not a country that uses English as the main language, however English is very important to learn. English as a foreign language has been implemented in the education curriculum in Indonesia since independence (Ratminingsih, 2017). In Indonesian curriculum, English has become a foreign language subject that has been studied from elementary until university level (Mardiani & Hanifah, 2023). The existence of English subjects in Indonesia is

intended in an effort to prepare the Indonesian generation to be able to develop in the international arena (Apipudin & Saputra, 2023). Furthermore, being fluent in English provides a great opportunity for the younger generation to meet the challenges of work in multinational companies and makes it easier to connect with the world (Andayani, 2022).

The importance of learning English in Indonesia can be seen from the reform of the education curriculum. According to Setiawan (2021), initially English was not required to be taught at the primary level, but was taught in secondary schools which aimed to prepare students to facilitate international relations. Then based on the curriculum 1994 revision, English began to be taught at the primary level (Jayanti & Norahmi, 2015). Furthermore, the importance of learning English is also seen in the 2013 curriculum, English is a compulsory subject at the education level by emphasizing students' communication skills in a global context (Setiawan, 2021).

Since the COVID 19 outbreak brought a significant effect on education. All educational institutions are required to carry out learning activities from home with online media (online learning). Online learning that took place during the COVID- 19 period had various impacts on the learning process of teachers and students. For example, there is a significant use of technology in facilitating the learning process (Putri et al., 2021). On the other hand, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it makes students lose their motivation in learning (Engzell et al., 2021).

Despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indonesian government created a Merdeka Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) that aims to overcome the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the field of education. In this curriculum,

teachers are given freedom and flexibility in developing and implementing the learning process according to the needs of students and the learning process (Masita et al., 2024). The learning process in this curriculum focus on student-centered learning, flexibility, the use of digital technology, and holistic competency development (Haq & Wakidi, 2024). In addition, Arsyad & Fahira (2023) explained that the Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that optimizes students' time in deepening concepts and skills, where these skills must meet the demands of the 21st century, these skills include: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Therefore, in this process, teachers have a very important role in determining teaching strategies that can support the development of these curriculum.

As previously stated, in the Merdeka Curriculum teachers have the discretion to choose the strategies used in their classes. Several teaching strategies have been developed to meet the demands of learning in the Merdeka Curriculum. Some of the recommended strategies in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum according to Hosaini et al.(2022) are; Learning strategy training, Project based learning, Problem based learning, Discovery learning, Computer-assisted learning, Cooperative learning, Active Learning, Integrated Learning, Flipped learning, Competency based learning, Differentiated Learning.

The selection of teaching strategies is one of the most important aspects that affect student success during the learning process. The use of appropriate learning strategies will have a positive impact on student understanding, and can increase student learning motivation (Zaid et al., 2019). Moreover, the right teaching strategy can help students develop skills, and stimulate students to engage in

learning activities. Therefore, students are not only silent and receive information, but students play an active role during the learning process (Laila et al., 2020).

The use of teaching strategies in the classroom is based on teacher preferences. Teacher preferences in this research means that teachers have the authority to choose and implement teaching strategies that they believe are effective in helping students achieve optimal learning outcomes. These preferences include choices of teaching strategies based on students' conditions and backgrounds, teachers' understanding, and facilities (Mustika & Wardah, 2021). In this case, each teacher may have different preferences for teaching strategies, including novice and experienced teachers.

Several researchers have defined experienced teachers and novice teachers. For example, according to Rakib et al. (2016) experienced teachers are teachers who have had a long teaching experience and have had achievements throughout their career as a teacher. Meanwhile, novice teachers are teachers who have just graduated and are undergoing a transition from being a student of teaching to becoming a real teacher who teaches in the classroom (Kadel, 2023).

Meanwhile, Burns & Richards (2009) explored in more depth the differences between novice and experienced teachers. The differences are seen in the length of the teaching period. A novice teacher is a teacher who is still in the early stages of teaching and still gathering knowledge to deliver learning material in class. At this stage, novice teachers are still in the process of building basic teaching skills and adapting to the classroom environment. Meanwhile, an experienced teacher has completed hundreds of hours in the classroom, enabling them to understand classroom learning patterns and student characteristics. Therefore, Burns &

Richards (2009) highlight that novice teachers and experienced teachers are seen based on the length of the teaching period.

Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that novice and experienced teachers are differentiated based on the length of teaching experience and achievements obtained. However, in this study, the limitation of novice and experienced teachers is seen from the length of teaching experience in line with the theory of Burns & Richards (2009).

Several studies were conducted to find teachers' strategies in teaching, especially between novice and experienced teachers. For example Koni & Krull (2018) found that novice teachers tend to use teaching strategies written in the syllabus, and emphasize student reflection and motivation. Whereas experienced teachers focus on using active strategies.

However, research discussing the teaching strategy preferences of novice and experienced teachers in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) is still rarely found. Therefore, this research aims to describe the choice of English teaching strategies by novice and experienced teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The limited research in this context provides an opportunity to conduct further studies to fill the literature gap and deepen insights into teaching strategies in this era.

Based on data obtained from the Ministry of Education and Culture website as of 2023, there are 370,520 schools that have implemented Merdeka Curriculum. One of the schools that has implemented the curriculum is SMPN 1 Payangan. SMPN 1 Payangan is an A accredited secondary school. The school has 4 English teachers, which consists of 1 novice and 3 experienced teachers. However, this



study used 1 novice and 1 experienced English teacher as research subjects.

This study carried out at SMPN 1 Payangan, because this school fulfill the criteria of the research; using Merdeka Curriculum, there are novice and experienced English teachers who are willing to help with this research. This school was chosen as a research setting that aims to describe the teaching strategy preferences between novice and experienced English teachers, particularly during the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Based on preliminary research, teachers mentioned that they are very aware of students' English language needs. Moreover, they are also aware of the development of education and the implementation of teaching strategies in accordance with curriculum development. The teaching strategies chosen by both experienced and novice teachers can influence student engagement, understanding of the material, and students' critical thinking abilities.

Through this research, it is expected to provide a description related to the selection of strategy preferences of novice and experienced teachers in teaching English. Knowing the differences in teaching strategy preferences between novice and experienced teachers can provide an overview of the strategies preferred and often used by both teachers that are believed to be effective for implementation in the classroom. Additionally, this research can contribute to the large literature on the differences in the length of teaching experience.

## **1.2 Identification of Research Problem**

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum has driven significant developments in teaching strategy research. This curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning and 4C competencies (communicative, creative, collaborative,

critical thinking) needed in the 21st century. This development requires teachers to be able to choose teaching strategies that can cover the demands of the Merdeka Curriculum. However, research that specifically examines the teaching strategies used by novice and experienced teachers in the Merdeka Curriculum is still difficult to find. This creates a gap in the literature regarding the strategies used by the two teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

### **1.3 Limitation of the Research**

Although some researcher argues that one of the criteria for experienced teachers is the existence of various achievements that have been achieved during the teaching period. However, the limitation in this study is in terms of the length of teaching service of teachers who are not yet certified and have been certified as the main criteria in this study. In addition, the limitations of this study include the limited theories that address teaching strategies by novice and experienced teachers in Merdeka Curriculum. And also, this study aims to describe the preferences strategies of novice and experienced teachers in teaching English at SMPN 1 Payangan. The limited number of subjects and research time make the results of the study cannot be generalized. Moreover, this study does not explain the relationship between teaching experience and the teaching strategies chosen and does not explain the influence of teaching experience on the choice of learning strategies.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Based on the background and identification of the problems that have been described, this study is motivated to examine the strategies of novice and experienced English teachers in Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, this study poses the following research questions:

1. What are the teaching strategies used by novice English teacher in the Merdeka Curriculum at SMPN 1 Payangan?
2. What are the teaching strategies used by experienced English teacher in the Merdeka Curriculum at SMPN 1 Payangan?
3. How do novice and experienced teachers differ in teaching English in the Merdeka Curriculum at SMPN 1 Payangan?

### **1.5 Research Objectives**

In line with the research questions above, three research objective can conclude bellows:

1. To describe the strategy preferences of novice teacher in teaching English in Merdeka Curriculum at SMPN 1 Payangan
2. To describe the strategy preferences of experienced teacher in teaching English in Merdeka Curriculum at SMPN 1 Payangan
3. To describe the differences in strategy preferences between novice and experienced teachers in teaching English in Merdeka Curriculum at SMPN 1 Payangan

### **1.6 Significance of the Research**

Based on the research questions above, this research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits as follows:

#### **1.6.1 Theoretical Significance**

An understanding of English teachers' preferred teaching strategies based on their length of teaching experience can make a significant contribution to academic theories on effective English teaching strategies. In addition, this study is expected to be a reference for conducting further research related to novice



and experienced teachers' strategies in teaching English.

### **1.6.2 Practical Significance**

a. For Teachers:

This research is expected to provide more in-depth knowledge for novice and experienced teachers in choosing the best English teaching strategies according to their preferences in order to improve the quality of learning.

b. Future Research:

It is hoped that this research can be the first step for further research in conducting literature studies that discuss teaching strategies used by novice teachers and experienced teachers

