

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

Language is an important tool for communication. In a society, communications are able to show the psychological skills of each individual. In an era of globalization where English has become the status of an international, global, and world language, learnt and spoken by millions around the world, English language also plays an important role in education. Recognizing the importance of learning English in this era of globalization has led English to be one of the essential subjects for students in both junior high school and senior high school levels (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022).

Teaching English as a second or foreign language in junior high schools is a critical area of focus in education systems worldwide. This stage of education often marks a transition for students, where foundational language skills are further developed and refined to prepare them for higher education and professional communication. However, teaching English does not come without its challenges. Teachers must be able to choose and implement appropriate teaching strategies that align with students' unique

characteristics and needs. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) state that teaching strategies are the planned actions teachers take in class to help students achieve learning goals. The ability to select appropriate teaching strategies is equally essential for both novice and experienced teachers. Tsui, A.B. (2003) stated that novice teachers are usually termed as teachers who have just commenced their teaching, with limited (usually less than three years) teaching experience, whereas experienced teachers are defined as teachers who have many years of teaching experience (usually at least five years of teaching experience). Furthermore, novice teachers who are still building their teaching experience, need to explore, try out, and adjust different approaches to discover what works best for their students. Meanwhile, experienced teachers must also avoid becoming stagnant by continually updating and adapting their strategies to respond to changes in students' needs and learning contexts. No matter how long they have been teaching, every teachers needs to be creative in how they plan and apply teaching strategies. Brown (2007) emphasizes that successful teachers are those who can creatively combine different methods, techniques, and learning activities to make lessons more meaningful, engaging, and effective for students. Without creativity and appropriateness in choosing strategies, learning goals may not be achieved optimally.

Indonesia's educational curriculum has changed in a number of ways to accomplish these objectives. In the years before the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, Indonesian schools were using the 2013 Curriculum (K-13). In order to foster character development, this curriculum places a high

priority on the four fundamental competencies of students such as spirituality, attitude, knowledge, and skills. As a result, students can fully develop other skills such as building a good character, becoming proficient in science, and having unique abilities based on their capabilities (Sari, 2022). The Covid-19 pandemic brought major changes to education. Teachers were required to adapt rapidly, think creatively, and design innovative learning experiences including the use of online technology. During the pandemic, schools used an emergency curriculum focused on essential material only (Academic Review of Merdeka Curriculum, 2024). Even after the pandemic, digital technology remains an integral part of classroom learning.

To respond to new challenges, Indonesia now implements the Merdeka Curriculum, which allows teachers more freedom to design lessons and choose materials that suit students' needs. This curriculum promotes flexible, student-centered learning that develops essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity, often referred to as the 4C skills (Academic Review of Merdeka Curriculum, 2024). These values are also in line with the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, the vision of an ideal Indonesian student: faithful, devoted to God Almighty, noble in character, independent, cooperative, globally minded, critical in reasoning, and creative. Teachers are expected to design and conduct learning that cultivates these characteristics in every student. To achieve these goals, both novice and experienced teachers are expected to not only follow the curriculum but also be creative in selecting, adapting, and combining appropriate teaching strategies in curriculum that can help students learn

actively, meaningfully, and effectively. Using the right strategies can make students more engaged, motivated, and able to deeply understand what they learn.

Therefore, this study aims to compare the teaching strategy of novice and experienced teachers in the context of teaching English in junior high school. Novice teachers and experienced teachers have different teaching strategies, this study explore how their teaching strategy preferences impact their teaching methods and effect. Tsui, A.B. (2003) stated that novice teachers are usually termed as teachers who have just commenced their teaching, with limited (usually less than three years) teaching experience, whereas experienced teachers are defined as teachers who have many years of teaching experience (usually at least five years of teaching experience).

According to the latest data released by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in 2024, approximately 73% of schools in Indonesia, equivalent to more than 300,000 educational units across the country, already implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, 41,342 of which are Junior High School level. This is part of the government's efforts to promote student-centered learning and *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. This expanded implementation has reached various regions, including Buleleng Regency, Bali, where approximately 65 schools have switched to this curriculum.

One of the schools actively implementing Merdeka Curriculum in Buleleng is SMPN 5 Singaraja, an A accredited junior high school located in Penglatan village, Singaraja City, Buleleng Regency. SMPN 5 Singaraja

currently employs 55 teachers and 19 staff, totaling 74 educational staff. Among these 55 teachers, at least this school has 7 English teachers, consisting of 5 experienced teachers and 2 novice teachers who are directly involved in adapting teaching practice to suit the curriculum's demands. Based on a preliminary survey with several English teachers at SMPN 5 Singaraja, it was found that although teachers are aware of the shift to the Independent Curriculum, they still face challenges in selecting and implementing appropriate teaching strategies that align with the new paradigm of independent and differentiated learning. The differences of how novice and experienced teachers plan and implement these strategies are an interesting phenomenon at this school. Novice teacher still figuring out which methods best fit the new curriculum, while experienced teacher still rely on their previous teaching habits or adapt more confidently based on their pedagogical knowledge.

Exploring teaching strategy preferences between novice and experienced English teachers at SMPN 5 Singaraja is necessary because teaching strategies directly shape students' learning experiences and outcomes. Understanding these preferences can help identify what works well in the classroom, what challenges teachers face, and how professional development can be directed to support teachers to become more effective and creative in using their strategies. Furthermore, this research will provide valuable insights about how teaching strategies can be personalized to student characteristics while upholding the vision of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*.

Comparing the learning preferences of novice and experienced teachers in the context of teaching English in SMPN 5 Singaraja reveals several critical issues. This research aims to explore the differences in strategy preferences between novice and experienced English teachers at SMPN 5 Singaraja, with a focus on how these strategies align with the demands of 21st-century learning, especially in a post-pandemic Covid-19. The insights gained from this research will contribute to the ongoing discourse on educational innovation and the future of English language teaching in Indonesia and beyond. By bridging the gap between novice teachers' and experienced teachers' wisdom, educational institutions can foster a more effective and dynamic learning environment for students.

1.2 Identification of Research Problem

The 21st century has brought significant transformations in the field of education, driven by advancements in technology, globalization, and evolving societal needs. The global pandemic of Covid-19 further accelerated the need for innovative teaching strategies, pushing teachers to adapt quickly to new learning environments and to reconsider traditional pedagogical approaches. The teaching of English in junior high schools, particularly at SMPN 5 Singaraja, faces challenges related to the diverse teaching strategies employed by novice and experienced teachers. These differences in strategy preferences can impact student learning outcomes and the overall effectiveness of English language instruction. Understanding these variations is crucial to improving teaching practices and ensuring that all students receive high-quality education.

Novice teachers often rely on theoretical knowledge and recent training, which may lead them to favor modern. However, their limited classroom experience might hinder their ability to adapt these strategies effectively to the real-world classroom environment. Experienced teachers, on the other hand, might prefer more traditional, teacher-centered strategies such as direct instruction or the grammar-translation method. Their approach may be shaped by years of teaching in SMPN 5 Singaraja. However, they may also be less inclined to adopt newer, more innovative teaching strategies. There may be limited opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing between novice and experienced teachers at SMPN 5 Singaraja. This gap can prevent the mutual exchange of effective teaching practices, hindering the overall development of a cohesive and supportive teaching community.

By identifying these issues, SMPN 5 Singaraja can take steps to bridge the gap between novice and experienced teachers, promoting a more unified approach to English language instruction that benefits all students. The findings of this research will not only shed light on the current state of English language teaching at SMPN 5 Singaraja but will also provide a framework for other schools to consider when evaluating and implementing teaching strategies that are aligned with 21st-century learning objectives. As education continues to evolve, it is crucial that both novice and experienced teachers are equipped with the knowledge and tools to effectively engage their students and foster a learning environment that supports the development of essential skills for the future.

1.3 Problem Limitation

When conducting a comparative study on the learning preferences of novice and experienced teachers for teaching English in Junior High School several limitations must be acknowledged. These limitations can affect the generalizability, validity, and reliability of the study's findings.

Another limitation involves the reliance on self-reported data, which is common in studies examining teaching preferences. Teachers may not accurately assess or report their own teaching preferences due to biases, lack of self-awareness, or the desire to present themselves in a favorable light. This subjectivity can skew the data and lead to incorrect conclusions about the differences between novice and experienced teachers.

Furthermore, while comparing the teaching preferences of novice and experienced teachers for teaching English in SMPN 5 Singaraja can provide valuable insights, mindful of these limitations are necessary. By acknowledging these limitations, the study can contribute more effectively to the understanding of teacher development and instructional practices in the context of learning preferences.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on background of the study above, the research question can be seen as follows:

1. What are the teaching strategies used by the English novice teacher in SMPN 5 Singaraja?

2. What are the teaching strategies used by English experienced teachers in SMPN 5 Singaraja?
3. How do the teaching strategies used novice and experienced teachers differ in SMPN 5 Singaraja?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To describe in more depth the strategy preferences used by novice teachers in teaching English at SMPN 5 Singaraja.
2. To describe in more depth the strategy preferences used by experienced teachers in teaching English at SMPN 5 Singaraja.
3. To describe the differences between novice and experienced teachers' preferences in teaching English at SMPN 5 Singaraja.

1.6 Research Significance

This research is significant as it addresses the gap in the literature concerning the specific strategy preferences of novice and experienced English teachers in junior high schools. By systematically comparing these preferences, the study aims to contribute to a better understanding of effective English teaching practices and how they evolve with experience. The findings could be instrumental in shaping teacher training programs, informing policy decisions, and ultimately improving the quality of English education at the junior high school level. Therefore, this research has great urgency to be conducted with the following theoretical and practical benefits:

1.6.1 Theoretical Benefits

Understanding the comparison of teaching strategies between novice and experienced teachers can provide new insights into more effective approaches to teaching English, especially for SMPN 5 Singaraja. Thus, this study can serve as a foundation for developing English teaching strategies that are more adaptive and responsive to the needs of students with varying levels of teacher experience.

1.6.2 Practical Benefits

a. For teachers

This research is expected to help teachers in the process of learning and developing to become reliable teachers in teaching English as a foreign language in this modern era, especially in determining teaching strategies that can help students achieve learning objectives.

b. For future researchers

This study is expected to be the first step to further explore the comparison of novice and experienced teachers' strategies in teaching English.

c. For English Language Education Departments

This research equips future teachers with knowledge of effective teaching strategies for better classroom success.