CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the introduction of the research study, which covers the background of the study, identification of the study, limitations of the study, statements of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, and definition of critical terms.

1.1 Research Background

One of the most important things to learn is English. The global use of English as a language is the reason for this (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). Furthermore, in this age of globalization, English is regarded as the universal language of communication. This assertion is consistent with the findings of (Septiani et al., 2019), which suggested that English has emerged as a worldwide language of communication. Given the significance of acquiring English in this globalized period, junior and senior high school students now consider English to be one of their core subjects (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022).

Therefore, it is necessary to develop a curriculum to be implemented in schools. The curriculum is a crucial instrument for educational success. It is challenging to achieve the educational objective without a suitable curriculum (Sari, 2022). According to Law No. 20 Year 2003, a curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements pertaining to the purpose of content and subject matter that serve as guidelines for the implementation of learning activities in order to accomplish specific educational objectives. Indonesia

has changed and improved its curriculum on multiple occasions throughout its educational history in an effort to maximise results by adjusting the curriculum as time has progressed. Curriculum modification based on understanding of global challenges, scientific and technological advancements, and social change and development in Indonesia (Sari, 2022).

Previously, the curriculum used was the curriculum 2013. In order to accomplish students' character development, this curriculum employs a scientific approach based on the four competencies concerning the implementation of four aspects of spiritual, attitude, knowledge, and skills. As a result, it might support the growth of other capabilities in a variety of aspects (personality, mastery of knowledge, and specific skills), which can be best suited depending on the particular competency. It is also anticipated that this curriculum will address the issues and demands of raising the standard of education in Indonesia (Sari, 2022).

However, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit Indonesia, the curriculum also changed. This was done because the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally reshaped many aspects of teaching and learning (Yi & Jang, 2020). So on march 24, 2020 the minister of education and culture of the Republic Indonesia issued circular number 4 of 2020 concerning The implementation of education policies in an emergency for the spread of COVID. In this circular it was explained that the learning process is carried out at home through online/distance learning carried out to provide a learning experience meaningful to students (Sari, 2022). In online/distance learning, some teachers have offered synchronous classes via video conferencing

software (e.g., Zoom), and others have created online classrooms where students can engage in asynchronous learning activities (Yi & Jang, 2020). But unfortunately, in the findings of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia on August 7, 2020 it was explained that teachers experienced difficulties in managing distance learning during the pandemic because they tended to complete the competency achievement indicators set out in the curriculum. Therefore, based on the recommendations from expert the government issued a new curriculum policy called as emergency curriculum (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020a & 2020b). According to the official policies enacted by the government, emergency curriculum gives the school to develop their own curriculum flexibly and contextually at school level. Regarding the policy it is considered that the government offers three possible preferences for the school. First, schools are allowed to implement the existing curriculum of 2013. Second, schools are allowed to use the emergency curriculum design from the government. Third, schools are allowed to design their own contextual curriculum to cope with the specific situations and needs of their students, parents, and teachers. In response to this policy, most of the schools choose to use the national curriculum of 2013 and the emergency curriculum. At this case, emergency curriculum policy offers a new design and structure of the curriculum by eliminating several inessential content knowledge and skills in the list of basic competencies in each subject of the 2013 national curriculum (Suksesi & Subkhan, 2022).

Until early 2022 after the COVID-19 pandemic which required all activities including the learning process to be carried out online, the Indonesian Minister of Education initiated a policy regarding the use of a new curriculum called the Merdeka Curriculum as an alternative in restoring the condition of education in Indonesia (Rizaldi & Fatimah, 2022). The government itself targets that the merdeka curriculum will be implemented comprehensively by 2024 at all levels of education in Indonesia, starting from primary and secondary schools (Barlian et al., 2022). An merdeka curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intra-curricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies (Anwar, 2022). Teachers have the flexibility to choose various teaching tools so that learning can be adapted to the learning needs and interests of students (Kasnowo & Hidayat, 2022). According to Jojor & Sihotang (2022), one of the things that is facilitated and emphasized in the merdeka curriculum is to place more emphasis on project-based learning that can be done by students in various conditions (not only focus in class). This is supported by Marisa (2021), who states that the concept of independent learning is very suitable today because society 5.0 tries to combine the development of technological advances that can help solve problems and the social needs of individual life.

During and after the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers have become increasingly aware of the use of technology that can make learning more innovative, and can design activities that improve students' abilities. Therefore, a new paradigm known as 21st Century Learning started to be

heavily used in the sphere of education during the pandemic, particularly in Indonesia (Susanto et al., 2022). The way that teaching strategies are used in 21st century learning has also changed significantly. The emphasis of the twenty-first century is on cultivating the "4Cs," or critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills, which are pertinent to a society that is constantly changing. All learning activities are now focused on acquiring these 21st century skills due to a shift in the educational paradigm (Kustiawan et al., 2022). Education no longer just focuses on content mastery, but also on developing soft skills, which are essential for overcoming global challenges.

Therefore, when instructing EFL students in English, teachers must consider their strategy and be able to select the most effective teaching strategy based on the needs of their students'. A teacher's action in the classroom to assist students in achieving the learning objective is referred to as a teaching strategy (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Furthermore, based on the steps the teacher has personally planned, a teaching strategy is the teachers endeavor to assist students in achieving the learning objective during the learning process (Hayati et al., 2021).

Teachers often develop preferences for certain teaching strategies, leading them to select methods that they believe will be most effective in fostering student engagement and learning outcomes. Teaching strategy preferences will be based on the teacher's experience, the subject matter being taught, and the specific needs of their students (Hayati et al., 2021). Based on experience, teachers are divided into 2, namely novice and experienced teachers. Novice teachers (defined as those with less than three years'

classroom experience) tend to be concerned with carrying out their images of teaching by managing the classroom and controlling students. Whereas experienced teachers (defined as those with five years or more in the classroom) tend to concern themselves with the purposes and objectives of their teaching and how they may be accomplishing them (Carter & Nunan, 2001).

Several studies have been conducted to find teacher strategies in teaching, especially between novice and experienced teachers (Koni & Krull, 2018; Sun & Zhang, 2022; Surma et al., 2022; Torabzadeh & Tavassoli, 2021). The results of several studies found that novice teachers with limited classroom experience often gravitate toward structured, teacher-centered strategies that offer clear guidance, as their cognitive load is higher while they are developing classroom management and pedagogical skills. In contrast, experienced teachers drawing on accumulated knowledge and self-efficacy, are more likely to prefer flexible, student-centered approaches that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving. So that in practice, novice teachers tend to stick to their initial lesson plans even when unexpected circumstances in student learning occur. While experienced teachers are more flexible in making adjustments in their plans to meet student needs (Koni & Krull, 2018).

It is important to examining how teachers' experience can influence their teaching strategies in the classroom. This is because teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement (Podolsky et al., 2019).

With experience, teachers can sort out strategies that work well for specific topics and student groups (Orlich et al., 2010).

Although several studies have explored teaching strategies based on teacher experience, research focusing on the preferences of novice and experienced teachers within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum remains limited. The urgency lies in providing insights into how teachers with different backgrounds select appropriate learning strategies to meet the demands of 21st-century English language instruction. Such understanding is essential for optimizing curriculum implementation and enhancing student outcomes. This study addresses that gap by investigating how teachers with varying levels of experience choose effective strategies in the EFL classroom. The findings are expected to deepen understanding of the relationship between teaching experience and instructional choices, serving as a foundation for more targeted teacher training programs and offering valuable input for educational policy related to professional development.

This study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Sukawati because this school is one of favorite school in Gianyar Regency. Besides, based on the preliminary observation and interview that had been done with the English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Sukawati, it was found that there are English teachers with diverse backgrounds, including novice teachers and experienced teachers, who meet the criteria of this study. This study aims to examine the differences in teaching strategy preferences between novice and experienced teachers, particularly during the implementation of merdeka curriculum. 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 study, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of how teaching experience influences the selection of teaching strategies was gained. Additionally, this research can contribute to the large literature on the differences in teaching experience. Thus, the aim of this study is to identify the teaching strategies used by teachers in teaching English within the merdeka curriculum which focuses on 21st century skills, based on differences in teaching experience, to better meet students' needs.

1.2 Identification of Research Problem

During and after the pandemic, the implementation of the merdeka curriculum requires educators to make adjustments to distance learning and the use of digital technology. Thus, a new paradigm known as 21st Century Learning emerged, which emphasizes the development of "4C" or critical thinking skills, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Of course, this will affect the teaching strategies chosen by teachers. However, the main problem in this study is the lack of research that specifically analyzes the preferences of English teaching strategies used by novice and experienced teachers during the implementation of the merdeka curriculum that emphasizes 4C. Although there has been research that discusses teaching strategies in the 21st century learning period, most of these studies do not discuss more specifically the differences in teacher experience. Therefore, there is still a gap regarding the differences in teaching experience that influence the selection and use of teaching strategies that emphasize the 4C

concept during the implementation of the merdeka curriculum. Therefore, this study aims to explore more deeply the differences in teaching strategies used by novice and experienced teachers in teaching English at SMA Negeri 1 Sukawati.

1.3 Limitation of Study

There are some limitations to this study. The study was conducted in one high school in Gianyar Regency, SMA Negeri 1 Sukawati, where the sample size was limited. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to a larger context.

1.4 Research Questions

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

1. What are the strategies used by novice teachers in teaching English in SMA Negeri 1 Sukawati in the implementation of Merdeka curriculum?
2. What are the strategies used by experienced teachers in teaching English in SMA Negeri 1 Sukawati in the implementation of Merdeka curriculum?
3. How do novice and experienced teachers differ in teaching English in SMA Negeri 1 Sukawati in the implementation of Merdeka curriculum?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To describe a more comprehensive explanation of the strategies used by novice English teachers in the implementation of Merdeka curriculum.

2. To describe a more comprehensive explanation of the strategies used by experienced English teachers in the implementation of Merdeka curriculum.

3. To describe the differences between novice and experienced English teachers in the implementation of Merdeka curriculum.

1.6 Significance of the Research

Research comparing teachers' strategies to teaching English as a foreign language within the context of their varying teaching experiences is lacking. In the meanwhile, selecting the best teaching strategies to promote more effective learning can be made easier by being aware of how novice and experienced teachers differ in their strategies to teaching. It is therefore imperative that this study be done in order to gain the following theoretical and practical benefits:

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of this study lies in understanding how the level of teaching experience influences teaching preferences and pedagogical practices. This is because experienced teachers demonstrate a greater capacity for reflective practice, adaptability, and deeper engagement with a variety of teaching strategies than novice teachers. This difference also underscores the importance of professional development that takes into account the developmental stage of teachers, helping novice teachers progress to more complex and dynamic teaching methods as they gain experience and confidence.

By comparing teaching strategy preferences between novice and experienced teachers, this study is expected to broaden the understanding of effective language learning strategies based on differences in teacher experience to achieve learning goals.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For teachers

In particular, this study is anticipated to assist teachers in identifying instructional strategies that can support students in meeting learning objectives as they progress through the process of becoming competent teachers of English as a foreign language in the current day.

b. For future researchers

The results of this study are expected to be a reference and add new findings in the field of English language learning, especially regarding teaching strategies used by novice teachers and experienced teachers that can be disseminated. So that future research can investigate which specific strategies lead to improved student learning outcomes at different stages of a teacher's career.