

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

English is recognized as a world language or international language, including Indonesia. One of the requirements in Indonesia is that all teachers must teach English to students at all school levels, from elementary school to high school (Kurniati et al., 2021). This is because Indonesia recognizes English as a lingua franca, which means people use it to communicate with different native speakers. It aims to equip students with the skills that will be necessary if they ever encounter a native speaker. Besides, English provides several benefits for students, namely improving students' abilities in other foreign languages and developing students' communication skills comprehensively. According to Isadaud et al., 2022 stated English integration in the curriculum can help Indonesian students become more globally connected and enhance their ability to perform well in multilingual environments.

English courses have been added for a long time in Indonesia, but since the Kurikulum 2004 and Kurikulum 2013, there have been significant differences from before. In Kurikulum 2004, or Competency-based Curriculum (KBK), the English language has been marked as a local content subject from elementary school, which means there is a significant shift for students (Kurniati et al., 2021). The second is Kurikulum 2013, which emphasizes how to help students develop their critical thinking and creativity besides the students studying the English language. Thus, both curriculum signify that Indonesia wants to improve education outcomes and

prepare students for citizenship.

Indonesia has continued to use Kurikulum 2013 until the COVID pandemic attacks in the world, one of them being Indonesia. The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes to Indonesian education; one example is that learning was conducted online, which meant schools in Indonesia were closed. According to Kumaran & Periakaruppan (2022), the sudden changes marked the beginning of frequent technology in teaching and learning. Therefore, the Indonesian government made an emergency curriculum.

The government designed an emergency curriculum to help students minimize their lost learning. In practice, teachers and students struggle with using technology in learning because they lack proper training. In addition, students who come from low-income families lack access to necessary technology or reliable internet (Gocotano et al., 2021), which contributes to inequalities in education and affects the loss of learning.

In response to this shift, the *Kurikulum Merdeka* promotes a more flexible and student-centered approach to education. It focuses on nurturing students' competencies, interests, and character by giving them the freedom to explore subjects they are passionate about, while also encouraging teachers to adapt their teaching to meet students' individual needs creatively (Fitriyah et al., 2022). Moreover, the curriculum prioritizes core areas like literacy, numeracy, and digital technology, aiming to minimize learning loss and better equip students for the demands of a technology-driven society (Carreon, n.d.).

With the introduction of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which focuses on building 21st-century skills, English teaching in Indonesia has begun to shift. The Indonesian

government empowers teachers to use various teaching methods, adapt lessons to meet students' diverse abilities, and create a more inclusive learning environment. Thus, Anisah & Qamariah (2023) state that many new teaching methods and strategies are helping teachers teach in Kurikulum Merdeka. Some of these include Learning Strategy Training, Cooperative Learning, Computer Assisted Language Learning, Project-Based Learning, Blended Learning, Discovery Learning, Picture and Picture, Example Non-Example, Contextual Teaching Learning, and Problem-Based Learning (Larsen & Anderson, 2013). The emergence of this new curriculum and these strategies has created challenges for teachers to adapt to students' needs.

According to Savitri et al. (2022), teaching strategy is one of the most important aspects influencing student learning success. This is supported by Mahayanti et al. (2020), who note that the educational paradigm has shifted significantly from being teacher-focused to student-focused, placing less emphasis on teaching and more on the learning experience. Therefore, teachers should select the most effective teaching strategies to ensure student success. The character of the teacher significantly affects students' acknowledgment and achievement of learning. The teacher's preferences are based on the chosen teaching strategy.

Teachers' preferences can be influenced by many factors, including the student's condition in the learning process, the teacher's ability to teach, and the facilities that support learning (Mustika & Wardah, 2021). Another crucial factor is gender. Many studies show that gender can affect various aspects of human behavior, including communication, pedagogical approaches, interactions with students, and preferences for teaching strategies. Supported by Song et al. 2022, gender is an important aspect that influences teaching strategies based on differences.

Eckert and McConnell (2013) highlight the differences in communication styles between males and females. Males are more likely to focus on their activities, while females tend to engage in conversation. Another finding is that male teachers exhibit more dominant behaviors, less communication, and student-centered teaching, while female teachers are typically more active in communication, engage in teacher-centered teaching, and control classroom dynamics.

Supporting this, Sánchez-Cabrero et al. (2023) show that understanding gender in education is crucial for creating a more inclusive, equitable, and empowering learning environment for students. There are gender-based differences in awareness and application of teaching methods, as pointed out by Afzal et al. (2023). Consequently, it is crucial to understand how male and female affects educators' teaching methods and strategies. Schools can enhance student learning outcomes by identifying areas where teaching strategies can be modified. Moreover, by recognizing these preferences, educational institutions can create policies that promote diverse teaching philosophies, resulting in inclusive and adaptable learning environments.

A preliminary observation at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan highlighted clear differences in teaching styles between the male and female English teachers. The male teacher tended to adopt a more individualistic approach, focusing primarily on content delivery with minimal student interaction. In contrast, the female teacher employed a communicative and interactive style, actively encouraging student participation and classroom discussions. The school has four English teachers (two male and two female), but only two were assigned to teach English to 7th and 9th graders; no English teacher was assigned to the 8th grade during the observation period.

Although the school has 25 computers available to support the Kurikulum Merdeka implementation, none of the English teachers utilized this technology in their lessons. SMP Negeri 2 Sawan was selected as the research site because its English teachers have over five years of experience, making them suitable candidates for examining teaching strategies under the new curriculum.

However, research on teaching strategies following the implementation of the independent curriculum is difficult to find, especially regarding male and female teacher differences, to examine variations in teaching strategies. This motivates researchers to explore the comparison of teachers' strategies concerning the independent curriculum and traditional curriculum in English subjects in Buleleng regional schools, specifically at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan.

This study can help enhance classroom teaching practices by analyzing and identifying how male and female teachers employ different teaching strategies. Additionally, by recognizing the male and female teacher's strategies in teaching, the teacher can discover ways to balance and strengthen the unique strengths of male and female teacher. The impact of male and female in education is an evolving field of study that requires more empirical support, and this research can contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this area. Furthermore, training programs can be developed to address the specific needs and strengths of males and females. If significant differences in teaching strategy preferences are identified. Moreover, this research can lay the groundwork for creating a more effective curriculum that improves student learning outcomes while supporting educators' professional development. The overall goal of this study is to elevate the standard of English language instruction by ensuring that the employed methods are efficient and suited

to the needs and characteristics of the students, while also considering male and female factors that may influence the effectiveness and preferences of the teaching strategies.

1.2 Problem Identification

Teaching strategies have developed rapidly, resulting in significant changes in approaches before and after the pandemic. The post-pandemic teaching strategy is an independent curriculum that emphasizes the development of 21st-century skills in students. Consequently, research comparing teaching strategies in Buleleng is limited, particularly regarding differences between male and female teachers. The few studies available indicate that male and female teachers employ different strategies, both in using technology and adapting teaching methods to meet 21st-century needs. This creates a disparity in knowledge about male and female teachers, which affects the learning strategies they choose.

Moreover, the literature frequently emphasizes general differences between traditional and modern teaching approaches, often overlooking how gender differences can impact decision-making in these contexts.

The lack of understanding of the differences between male and female teachers in choosing teaching strategies in the independent curriculum can obstruct the development of more targeted recommendations and hinder support for educators in creating teaching methods that align with their gender characteristics needs.

1.3 Limitation

The limitations of this study were related to the scarcity of sources concerning male and female presence in modern teaching strategies. Consequently, the analysis of the results lacked depth due to this limited source material. Additionally, the study

only involved a sample of teachers from SMP Negeri 2 Sawan, Buleleng. Therefore, the findings could not be generalized to all teachers. Furthermore, other factors, such as teacher experience, cultural background, and resource availability, were not further analyzed in this study.

1.4 Research Questions

From that explanation, the research questions were concluded as follows:

1. What teaching strategies used by the English male teacher in SMP Negeri 2 Sawan?
2. What teaching strategies used by the English female teacher in SMP Negeri 2 Sawan?
3. How did the teaching strategies used by English male and female teachers differ in SMP Negeri 2 Sawan?

1.5 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were:

1. This study described the preferences of male English teachers in SMP Negeri 2 Sawan.
2. This study described the preferences of female English teachers in SMP Negeri 2 Sawan.
3. This study described the differences in English teacher preferences in teaching strategy in SMP Negeri 2 Sawan.

1.6 Research Significance

This study presented two types of significance: theoretical significance and practical significance. The explanation is as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

The study examined the various teaching preferences for strategies and their implementation in the English as a Foreign Language classroom setting. The analysis and results of this study contributed to enriching the sources of effective teaching strategies implemented by gender.

2. Practical Significance

a. For teacher

The study provided references for teachers selecting the most suitable teaching strategies based on their specific characteristics and needs. It improved the effectiveness of teaching in the classroom.

b. For further researcher

This study could serve as empirical evidence for further research on how male and female affects the effectiveness of teaching English as a Foreign Language.

c. For the English Language Education Department

To enhance the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, this study aimed to provide aspiring English teachers in the English Language Education Department with an understanding of effective teaching strategies.