

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

English has become the primary language for international communication in today's globalized world, making it a crucial component of education. (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). Its widespread use across countries has strengthened its role as a global lingua franca, enabling people from diverse linguistic backgrounds to exchange knowledge and information effectively (Septiani et al., 2019). Consequently, many educational systems have incorporated English as a compulsory subject at both the junior and senior high school levels, reflecting its growing significance in academic and professional contexts (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). Despite its importance, learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) presents a range of challenges. Students are expected not only to develop linguistic competence but also to understand the cultural perspectives, patterns of thinking, and social behaviors associated with the language, making the learning process both linguistically and culturally demanding (Widiati et al., 2018).

As the global landscape shifts, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, teaching strategies have improved. According to Susanto (2022), a significant new approach, known as 21st-century learning, was widely embraced in educational settings, particularly in Indonesia, during the pandemic. Consequently, all educational activities are designed to develop these 21st-century skills (Kustiawan et al., 2022). There are various interpretations of what constitutes 21st-century skills. At its core, 21st-century skills center on the 4Cs, which are increasingly significant in language education. The 4Cs refer to critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication abilities. Moreover, learning in this era prioritizes a student-centered and focuses on cultivating skills that meet contemporary needs. It also promotes the integration of digital technology into the teaching and learning process, thereby transforming how students and educators communicate and access information.

The strategy for teaching English is a crucial element that educators must consider. When instructing EFL students, it is essential for teachers to select appropriate strategies that cater to their students' specific needs. As noted by Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2013), a teaching strategy encompasses the actions teachers take in the classroom to help students achieve their learning objectives. Similarly, Hayati et al. (2021) describe teaching strategy as teachers' efforts to guide students towards meeting their learning goals by following a set of planned steps.

The Minister of Education in the Republic of Indonesia has initiated the Merdeka Curriculum, which focuses on developing life skills in alignment with 21st-century learning principles. This curriculum introduces a more flexible learning approach that aims to enhance students' competencies and character (Muin et al., 2022). Preliminary observations at SMPN 6 Singaraja, a school already implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, indicate that it has been designated as a “*Sekolah Penggerak*.” This program is part of the *Merdeka* Curriculum initiative, which aims to fulfill the vision of Indonesian education to create an advanced, sovereign, and independent Indonesia by developing *Pancasila* Students. The results of preliminary observations, which included both classroom observations and interviews conducted in the school environment, revealed that SMPN 6 Singaraja needs to provide additional resources for teaching English to boost students' interest in learning the language.

The educational framework in Indonesia has undergone numerous revisions to enhance the overall quality of the national education system (Sari et al., 2023). The *Merdeka* curriculum represents an advancement over the 2013 curriculum, prioritizing the cultivation of broader, more profound student competencies and character development. Unlike the 2013 curriculum, which primarily emphasized a teacher-centered model focused on student competence, the *Merdeka* curriculum balances both competence and character growth, equipping students to tackle the challenges of the 21st century through a student-centered approach.

In addition to the curriculum, the approach to language teaching has evolved over time. Presently, English language lessons are tailored to address students'

communication requirements through various strategies and methodologies. Teachers have three primary responsibilities: determining what to teach, deciding how to teach, and establishing what to assess (Ratminingsih, 2021). While students previously acquired languages using the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), many struggled to effectively apply the skills they learned in the classroom to real-world conversations (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Therefore, teachers should explore and incorporate a range of methods to achieve their objectives in English language instruction.

According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013), the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) has been used by language instructors since the 20th century to help students read and appreciate literature in foreign languages. This approach involves a thorough examination of the target language's grammar rules. After gaining a solid grasp of these rules, learners use this knowledge to translate texts and sentences between their native and target languages (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, the method proved ineffective at equipping students for practical communication in the target language. As a result, the Direct Method (DM) emerged as a more popular alternative.

The Direct Method (DM) is not a novel approach, as its concepts have been employed by language instructors for many years. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013), the core principle of the Direct Method is quite simple: no translation is permitted. This method's name reflects its intention to teach the target language directly through demonstrations and visual supports, avoiding any dependence on the students' first language. Throughout the 20th century, several teaching methods emerged, including the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), Total Physical Response (TPR), Community Language Learning (CLL), Suggestopedia, and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), among others.

.In the 21st century, a variety of methods and strategies have emerged, including cooperative learning, computer-assisted learning, computer-assisted language learning, project-based learning, blended learning, discovery learning, contextual learning,

problem-based learning, and picture & picture learning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Moreover, research indicates that teachers' experience levels also affect the data. According to Gatbonton (2008), experienced teachers often possess practical, stable understandings due to their extensive, relevant teaching backgrounds, whereas novice teachers are more prone to unrealistic perceptions of teaching due to their limited experience.

Zhang, L.J., and Zhang, D. (2020) note that experienced teachers occupy the later stages of a developmental continuum, whereas novice teachers are positioned at the beginning. Experienced educators have completed various teacher-preparation courses and are expected to implement new pedagogical strategies, leading to more consistent thought processes and classroom decisions. In contrast, novice teachers, who are just beginning their careers, are still acquiring the necessary pedagogical skills for effective instruction. As noted by Freeman (2001), novice teachers typically have about 3 years of experience. This aligns with Tsui's (2003) description of novice teachers as those who have recently entered the profession, typically with fewer than 3 years of teaching experience. On the other hand, experienced teachers are defined as those with at least 5 years of teaching experience.

Preliminary observations of the school environment and classroom conditions, supported by interviews with English teachers, indicated differences in the teaching strategies employed by novice and experienced teachers. The initial findings suggested that experienced teachers generally emphasized teacher-led instruction and direct explanation of learning materials. In contrast, novice teachers appeared to integrate more technology, such as smartphones and projectors, into classroom activities and were more likely to implement student-centered learning approaches. These observed differences motivated the researcher to further investigate and compare the teaching strategies used by novice and experienced English teachers in the classroom

From this point, the researcher can identify differences in the teaching strategies employed by novice and experienced teachers. No previous studies have been carried out at this school. Future research will focus on the teaching strategies used by novice

and experienced teachers at SMP N 6 Singaraja and will be beneficial to the community. Consequently, this study aimed to analyze and compare the teaching strategies of novice and experienced teachers in teaching English at SMP N 6 Singaraja. This research has the potential to serve as a foundation for developing a more effective curriculum that enhances student performance and supports teachers' professional growth. Nevertheless, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the cognitive processes of novice versus experienced teachers, and these processes have not been thoroughly documented.

1.2 Identification of Research Problem

Teaching English in the 21st century, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, requires a creative and flexible approach to the significant shifts in education. As a result, successful teaching methods substantially influence students' skill levels and overall academic achievement. Teachers are pivotal in this process, and their learning styles might impact their teaching approaches and efficacy. An analysis of the disparities in teaching preferences between novice and experienced teachers can provide valuable insights into the progression of teaching methods and how to effectively assist teachers at different points in their professional journeys.

Learning styles apply to individuals' preferred cognitive processes and approaches to assimilate information and gain knowledge. The modalities encompass visual, auditory, reading/writing preference, and kinaesthetic modes. Teachers' preferences can impact their instructional approaches, management of the classroom, and interactions with students within the educational setting. A significant concern is the divergence in teaching preferences between novice and experienced teachers. Novice teachers may continue exploring various instructional methodologies to determine the most effective approach for themselves and their students. They will likely strongly depend on their recent training, which frequently focuses on contemporary educational theories and methods. Experienced teachers, on the other hand, are likely to have developed more consistent and individual teaching methods, potentially combining conventional and contemporary approaches.

The primary objective of comparing teacher preferences is to optimize student results and foster higher levels of engagement. Diverse instructional methodologies can result in disparate levels of student achievement in acquiring the English language. Novice teachers who employ innovative teaching approaches may be able to captivate students effectively, but they may also require additional classroom management abilities that are often acquired via experience. Utilizing the refined techniques of experienced teachers may enhance writing skills, but there is a possibility of reduced engagement if they excessively depend on conventional approaches. Identifying these problems might provide valuable insights for developing policies and practices that maximize teaching effectiveness.

1.3 Problem Limitation

It is important to recognize many limitations while comparing the learning preferences of novice and experienced teachers for teaching English in SMPN 6 Singaraja. The study's findings' generalisability, validity, and reliability can be affected by these limitations. A notable limitation is the sample size and its representation of the demography. Suppose the study comprises a sample of teachers that is not representative or includes only a tiny number. In that case, the findings may need to be more applicable to a broader population of teachers from SMPN 6 Singaraja. For example, if the sample is taken from a specific geographical area or educational institution, the findings may not accurately represent the variety of learning preferences in diverse environments.

Another limitation pertains to the dependence on self-reported data, a practice frequently employed in research investigating instructional preferences. Teachers must accurately analyze and describe their teaching preferences, considering potential biases, lack of self-awareness, or the inclination to present themselves in a positive light. The presence of subjectivity in the data can distort the results and result in inaccurate conclusions on the disparities between novice and experienced teachers.

Moreover, when examining the teaching preferences of novice and experienced teachers in teaching English at SMPN 6 Singaraja, it is crucial to consider these limitations. To overcome these problems, it is essential to use a well-planned study design, reliable data-gathering methods, and a thoughtful analysis of the results. This will improve the accuracy and relevance of the research. To enhance its effectiveness in comprehending teacher development and instructional practices within the framework of learning preferences, the study can make a more impactful contribution by recognizing and addressing these limitations.

1.4 Research Questions

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

1. How are the strategies used by novice teachers in teaching English in SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja?
2. How are the strategies used by experienced teachers in teaching English in SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja?
3. How do novice and experienced teachers differ in teaching English in SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To describe in more depth the strategies used by novice teachers in teaching English.
2. To describe in more depth the strategies used by experienced teachers in teaching English.
3. To describe the differences between novice and experienced teachers in teaching English.

1.6 Research Significance

Further investigation is required to compare the instructional approaches teachers employ while teaching English as a foreign language, considering their varying levels

of teaching expertise. Understanding the contrast in teaching approaches between novice and experienced teachers can offer valuable insights for selecting appropriate instructional methods that enhance learning outcomes. Hence, it is imperative to carry out this research due to its significant theoretical and practical advantages:

1.6.1 Theoretical Benefits

Understanding the contrast in teaching methodologies between novice and experienced teachers might offer fresh perspectives on more efficient English teaching techniques, particularly for SMPN 6 Singaraja. Therefore, this study can provide a basis for creating English teaching practices more suited to the needs of students with different degrees of teachers experience.

1.6.2 Practical Benefits

a. For teachers

This research aims to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in effectively instructing English as a foreign language, particularly in identifying instructional methodologies that facilitate students' attainment of learning goals.

b. For future researchers

This study is expected to serve as the initial stage in further investigating the contrast between the instructional approaches of novice and experienced teachers in English language teaching.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1.7.1 Conceptual Definition

a. Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies refer to the deliberate actions taken by teachers to assist students in achieving the intended learning outcomes through a predetermined sequence of instructional activities (Hayati et al., 2021). Larsen-Freeman and Anderson

(2013) also define teaching strategies as the practical implementation of language teaching methods that reflect teachers' classroom behaviors and instructional principles.

b. Novice Teacher

According to Freeman (2001), novice teachers are teachers with relatively limited teaching experience, generally within the first three years of their teaching career.

c. Experienced Teacher

Rodríguez and McKay (2010) define experienced teachers as teachers who have taught for a considerable period and are capable of motivating students, maintaining classroom management, and adapting instruction according to classroom situations.

1.7.2 Operational Definition

a. Teaching Strategies

In this study, teaching strategies refer to the instructional strategies employed by novice and experienced English teachers during English teaching and learning activities at SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja. These strategies were identified through classroom observations, interviews, document checklists, and anecdotal notes based on the teaching strategy indicators adopted in this study.

b. Novice Teacher

Novice teachers refer to the English teachers at SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja who met the criteria of novice teachers established in this study and participated as the research subjects.

c. Experienced Teacher

Experienced teachers refer to the English teachers at SMP Negeri 6 Singaraja who met the criteria of experienced teachers established in this study and participated as the research subjects.

