

**ENGLISH TEACHERS' STRATEGY PREFERENCES IN ENGLISH CLASSES  
IN SMAN 1 TEJAKULA****Luh Lingga Dewi<sup>1</sup>, Luh Putu Artini<sup>2</sup>, Dewa Ayu Eka Agustini<sup>3</sup>**Email: [iluhlinggadewi@gmail.com](mailto:iluhlinggadewi@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [putu.artini@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:putu.artini@undiksha.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>, [eka.agustini@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:eka.agustini@undiksha.ac.id)<sup>3</sup><sup>1,2,3</sup>English Language Education, Faculty of Language and Art, Ganesha University Of Education**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to obtain the preference of teaching strategies most frequently used by male and female English teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula. The teaching strategies recommended by Merdeka Curriculum were the focus of this study. Through a qualitative method, data collection was conducted using 3 different instruments: teaching strategy checklist, observation checklist, and interviews. There were 4 subjects involved in this study: 2 male teachers and 2 female teachers. The findings showed that male teachers showed a preference for the Problem-Based Learning teaching strategy based on the grade level they taught. On the other hand, female teachers showed a tendency towards a combination of Project-Based Learning and Discovery Learning teaching strategies due to the ability or character of the students themselves and the grade level being taught. A unique thing was also found in this study, where male teachers and female teachers both like Cooperative Learning and Social Affective teaching strategies, where teachers utilize collaboration between students and emphasize the socio-emotional aspects of students during the learning process. However, it cannot be denied that challenges such as the lack of physical and non-physical school resources can affect the implementation of certain strategies. The findings are expected to be a reference for the development of teacher training programs and for improving the quality of English teaching in schools.

**Keywords:** Teaching Strategy, Curriculum Merdeka, Preferences, Gender, EFL**INTRODUCTION**

In today's educational era, English language skills have become one of the most important aspects in supporting the academic and career progress of students around the world. This is because English is an international language used to communicate with other people from all over the world and holds the status of Lingua Franca. Seeing this status, the Indonesian government delegates English education to all levels of school, starting from high school (Kurniati, et al., 2021). This aims to equip students with the skills needed to be able to interact effectively with individuals who have diverse language backgrounds. In addition, by mastering English, of course this will be able to improve the learning process of students in learning a wider foreign language that focuses on developing comprehensive communication skills. By integrating English education into the curriculum, Indonesian students can foster better global connectivity and improve their ability to navigate in a multilingual environment fluently (Isadaud et al., 2022).

English education in Indonesia is certainly undergoing a transformation, this can be seen from the significant changes in the national curriculum, especially the 2004 Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum. This important change is marked by the existence of the 2004 Curriculum or Competency-Based Curriculum (KBK) which formally integrates English as a regional language. Local content subjects at the elementary education level, which reflects the increasing awareness of the importance of these subjects (Kurniati et al., 2021). The aim of this curriculum is to improve students' communicative competence and foster an appreciation for cultural diversity. In the following years, the 2013 Curriculum introduced a more holistic approach to education, emphasizing character development in addition to academic achievement (Kaimuddin, 2014). This curriculum not only strengthens English language teaching, but also aims to develop critical thinking skills and creativity among students. Both curricula highlight the Indonesian government's ongoing commitment to improving educational outcomes and preparing students to become global citizens.

In addition to this transformation, the realization of the curriculum in Indonesian education then experienced quite significant changes with the Covid-19 pandemic. Where during the Covid-19 pandemic, all levels of education had to be closed, both teachers and students had to adapt to the distance learning system. This sudden change in the learning system has unknowingly brought with it the use of technology in the learning process (Kumaran & Peria Karuppan, 2022). The transition that students and teachers must go through towards distance learning is not easy. Many teachers are required to quickly learn new digital devices and methods and there are often cases where teachers use these media without proper training. Students also face challenges, especially those from low-income families who do not have access to the necessary technology or reliable internet (Gocotano et al., 2021). This also highlights the gaps that exist in Indonesian education.

However, the government can handle the inequality that occurs in the education sector well. Where, along with the improving world conditions, the Indonesian government then launched the Independent Curriculum which highlights the importance of 21st century skills: Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Creativity, and Communication (Alghamdi & Al-Ghamdi, 2021). In this situation, the traditional education paradigm is disrupted because it is proven that these skills are important to equip students to face future challenges effectively (Ramamonjisoa, 2024). Critical thinking allows students to analyze information, solve problems, and make the right decisions in an increasingly complex world. Collaboration fosters teamwork and interpersonal skills, which are essential in a diverse work environment where collective efforts drive success. Creativity encourages students to think outside the box and develop innovative solutions, qualities that are increasingly valued in today's fast-paced job market. Meanwhile, effective communication skills are needed to convey ideas clearly and interact with others in various contexts. Overall, these competencies not only enhance academic performance but also align with the demands of the evolving global workplace, which places a premium on adaptability and interpersonal skills (Zhou, 2023). When educators focus on integrating these skills into their teaching practices, they prepare students not only for academic success but also for meaningful participation in a rapidly changing world.

As mentioned earlier, the Independent Curriculum was introduced by the Indonesian government in response to the educational disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Putri et al., 2023). The aim of this curriculum is to provide a more flexible and student-centered learning experience. This curriculum allows educators to adapt their teaching strategies based on individual student needs and local contexts (Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022). The emphasis on essential learning materials, ensuring that students have sufficient time to develop basic

competencies such as literacy and numeracy, thus helping to prevent loss of learning focus are key characteristics of the Independent Curriculum (Rizky, 2022).

Along with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, the teaching and learning paradigm also needs to be changed (Salma & Yuli, 2023). Learning is required to combine project-based or problem-based learning, encouraging students to engage in real-world projects that foster critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. Teachers are empowered to apply various ways of teaching students, adapting lessons to meet the various abilities of students and creating a more inclusive learning environment. The curriculum also places a strong emphasis on character development, which aims to foster moral values in addition to academic skills.

This also has an impact on the field of English Language Education. Many new teaching methods and strategies have been created and introduced to help teachers meet the demands of teaching in the independent curriculum (Anisah & Qamariah, 2023). Some of them are Learning Strategy Training, Cooperative Learning, Computer Assisted Language Learning, Project-Based Learning, Blended Learning, Discovery Learning, Picture and Image, Non-Example, Contextual Teaching and Learning, and Problem-Based Learning (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). The emergence of new curricula and strategies has created challenges for teachers to adapt to students' needs.

The strategies implemented by teachers are one of the important elements that influence the success of the learning process to ensure academic engagement and a comfortable learning environment (Savitri et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important to choose the right teaching strategy in the EFL classroom. The right teaching strategy has a significant influence on student recognition and learning achievement. The selection of teaching strategies implemented in the classroom is based on the preferences of each teacher.

Many things can influence the preference of teaching strategies used in the classroom, such as the condition of students in the learning process, the teacher's ability to teach, and also facilities that support the learning process (Mustika & Wardah, 2021). In addition, gender is one of the most important factors influencing the choice of teaching strategies. Many studies have shown that gender can influence every aspect of a person including speech, clothing, pedagogical approaches, interactions with students and teaching strategy preferences. Gender plays an important role because teachers' teaching strategy preferences can be influenced by their differences (Song et al., 2022).

Eckert and McConnell (2013) explored differences in the linguistic behavior of men and women, highlighting significant differences in their communication styles across contexts. Their research showed that women tended to be more conversationally engaged, often prioritizing social interaction, while men tended to be activity-focused and show dominance in non-intimate settings. These findings can be applied to research contexts, suggesting that male teachers may exhibit more dominant behavior, engage less in dialogue, and prefer student-centered teaching strategies. Student-centered strategies prioritize students as the focal point of the educational process, with the teacher acting primarily as a facilitator. In contrast, female teachers tended to be more active in speaking, which is in line with a teacher-centered approach where the instructor plays a central role in delivering content and controlling classroom dynamics.

Gender differences based on Eckert and McConnell's research highlight the significant influence of gender on teaching strategy preferences among educators, revealing how these differences can shape classroom interactions and learning environments. As noted by Afzal et al., (2023), there are gender-based variations in the awareness and implementation of teaching methods. Therefore, it is important to examine how gender influences the teaching approaches

and strategies used by educators. Understanding these gender-based preferences can provide valuable insights into developing more inclusive and responsive teaching methods, thereby helping to shape more effective teacher training programs. This is also explained by Sánchez-Cabrero et al., (2023) that understanding gender in education is crucial because it can promote more inclusive, equitable, and empowering learning environments. By identifying areas where teaching approaches can be adjusted, schools can improve student learning outcomes. Furthermore, understanding these preferences allows educational institutions to create policies that encourage diversity in teaching strategies, which fosters adaptive and inclusive learning environments.

However, comprehensive research on the shift in teachers' teaching strategy preferences after the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is still difficult to find. This is of particular concern to researchers who want to explore the phenomenon of how Indonesian teachers, especially in Buleleng Regency, adapt their teaching approaches to meet the demands of the modern environment, especially in English language teaching. The lack of in-depth studies in this area opens up great opportunities to conduct further research, fill the literature gap, and provide richer insights into how teachers face challenges and opportunities in the post-pandemic and 21st-century education era.

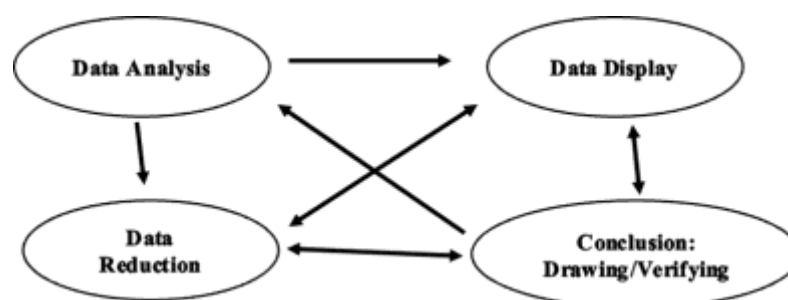
This research was conducted at SMAN 1 Tejakula. The need to find out whether male and female teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula have different preferences for teaching strategies, especially after the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and to find out what these preferences are and whether they are in accordance with existing theories about gender differences in teaching is the background of this research. This research was conducted by considering the importance of teaching strategies in shaping students' learning experiences, where a deeper understanding of the study can provide important contributions to the development of more effective and inclusive education, especially in Bali.

By examining gender-based teaching strategy preferences, this study can reveal differences in the use of teaching strategies between male and female teachers, which in turn can be used to improve teaching practices in the classroom. Furthermore, this study can identify and capitalize on the unique strengths of each gender in teaching, thereby creating a more balanced and productive learning environment. This study can also contribute to the broader literature on the influence of gender in education, which is still a developing field of research and requires more empirical evidence. Furthermore, if it is found that teaching strategy preferences differ significantly between genders, this can be used to develop training programs that are tailored to the unique needs and strengths of each gender. This study can also provide a foundation for developing more effective curricula, which not only improve student learning outcomes but also support teacher professional development. Overall, this study aims to improve the quality of English language learning by ensuring that the teaching strategies used are effective and appropriate to the characteristics and needs of students, while considering gender variables that may influence teaching preferences and effectiveness in the classroom.

## METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods, especially qualitative descriptive methods. Qualitative research engages directly with research subjects to gain a deep understanding of various aspects of social, cultural, and human life. The researcher chose the research location in one of the villages in Buleleng Regency, Bali, namely in Tejakula Village. The school that became the research setting was named SMAN 1 Tejakula. SMAN 1 Tejakula has a beautiful school environment and is one of the high schools that is the foundation of education in Tejakula Sub-district which of course has applied the Merdeka Curriculum after the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

Data collection methods allow researchers to collect data. Methods (rules or techniques) are abstract terms that do not exist in objects but can be observed through observation, investigation, questionnaires, documentation, and case studies. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of research results, researchers carefully select and use appropriate research instruments (Salmia, 2023). After collecting the data by observation and interview, the method used to analyze is interactive data analysis by Miles et al. (2014) its third edition. The researcher used audio recording to collect the data and transcribed it using this method. According to Miles (2014), Interactive data analysis is very suitable for observation, interviews, and artifacts to collect data. There are four types in the process of interactive analysis of data: data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions or verification (Miles et al., 2014). This is an illustration of an interactive data analysis below.



**Figure 1. Interactive Data Analysis**

From the figure above, the data analysis was conducted interactively. It means all the steps in the analysis data could be done and processed continuously. Each step in data analysis can be done one by one, but with the condition that the researcher lacks information in the data to be collected, but has already done data collection, data reduction, and data display, it can be interpreted that these steps do not have to be done sequentially. In addition, if the researcher has done data reduction and returns to the data collection step because the data is incomplete, it is fine because it can be concluded that each step is interrelated.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Male English Teacher Preferences

In exploring the preferences of male teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula, where from the results of the three instruments used by the researcher and the data triangulation table above for the two male teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula, it can be concluded that the exploration carried out on the choice of teaching strategies preferred by male teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula shows a tendency to apply Problem Based Learning and Cooperative Learning strategies. This tendency is supported by the Teaching Strategy Checklist (Table 4.1 and Table 4.7) which was filled out directly by the two male teachers, the Observation Checklist which was filled out directly by the researcher based on the results of observations (Table 4.2 - 4.5 and Table 4.8 - 4.11), then the results of the interview (Quote # 1-Quote # 4), and the Triangulation Table (Table 4.6 and Table 4.12). The selection and implementation of this strategy are certainly influenced by various factors, including the grade level taught, student character, and learning time, especially semester. The Problem Based Learning and Cooperative Learning strategies were chosen by the two male teachers considering that the class they taught was grade 12 and both strategies did not require much time in terms of preparation or implementation. This is in line with previous studies where the Problem Based Learning strategy can trigger students' ability to think critically and solve problems through stimulation of real situations which



require students to integrate various knowledge holistically (Barrows, 1996). In addition, Hmelo-Silver (2021) stated that the Problem Based Learning strategy has been shown to increase students' learning motivation and metacognitive skills which are very important in the context of language learning which requires contextual understanding and effective communication. Then, the Problem Based Learning teaching strategy facilitates problem solving which encourages students to think critically and creatively by presenting real situations as a learning context (Savery, 2006).

Along with this, Johnson and Johnson (1999) emphasized that the Cooperative Learning Strategy facilitates positive social interactions between students, fosters collaboration skills, and deepens understanding of the material through structured group discussions. Research by Slavin (1995) also confirmed the effectiveness of the Cooperative Learning strategy in improving learning outcomes and positive attitudes of students towards the subjects being studied. The phenomenon of collaboration between the Problem Based Learning and Cooperative Learning teaching strategies by MT1 and MT2 is able to create an active learning atmosphere and is able to facilitate various learning styles possessed by students effectively. In line with this, quoted from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2022), teachers and students are given autonomy by the Independent Curriculum to organize a more flexible and contextual learning process, so that cooperative learning and problem-based learning strategies are very relevant in improving the quality of learning and preparing students to become adaptive independent learners. This is also supported by the results of research by Putra (2023) which shows that the application of both strategies is effective in improving students' critical thinking and collaboration skills. The application of these two teaching strategies in grade XII, it is hoped that students will later have critical thinking skills and be able to collaborate better.

On the other hand, from the data obtained, in addition to finding teaching strategies that are preferred by the two male teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula. The researcher also found that there was an avoidance of teaching strategies by these two teachers. Where, the avoidance occurred in the Project Based Learning strategy. This strategy was avoided because it was based on time, especially in the context of a very short semester. As is known, the classes taught by these two teachers are class XII which is a class level that mostly focuses on existing exams. According to the two male teachers, Project Based Learning requires a long time to be able to implement it, both in terms of preparation and implementation. Therefore, this strategy is considered less suitable for use in this context. In line with this, Thomas (2000) stated that Project Based Learning provides an opportunity for students to be involved in deeper learning, but also requires a significant time commitment from teachers and students. This shows that although Project Based Learning strategies have the potential to improve students' conceptual understanding and critical skills, time challenges are a major barrier to their implementation in grade 12. Research by Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006) also emphasized that one of the biggest challenges in implementing Project Based Learning strategies is the need to manage time well, especially in a dense curriculum. In this context, teachers often feel pressured to complete lesson materials within a short deadline so that teachers tend to choose more traditional and direct methods. Research conducted by Zulfah (2021) reinforces this with the discovery that more conventional methods are chosen by teachers because they are worried about delays in completing the curriculum. Although student motivation and learning outcomes can be improved by using Project Based Learning, the use of time in carrying out projects is often an obstacle (Abidah, 2020). In this case, teachers will consider choosing alternative strategies that are more in line with the existing time estimates, such as Problem Based Learning and Cooperative Learning strategies where the use of time is quite flexible but students still get meaningful learning experiences. Thus, although the Project Based Learning strategy has many

benefits, the time challenge faced by teachers in grade 12 is an important factor that needs to be considered.

### **Female English Teacher Preference**

In exploring the preferences of female English teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula, the preferences of female English teachers do not seem to be much different from male English teachers. Where in this case, the researcher found that there were various interrelated factors that had a significant impact on the choice of teaching strategies used by the two female teachers in teaching English in class. From the results of the three instruments used by the researcher and the data triangulation table above for the two female teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula, it can be concluded that the exploration carried out on the choice of teaching strategies preferred by male teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula showed a tendency to apply Project Based Learning, Cooperative Learning, Problem Based Learning, and Discovery Learning strategies by FT1 and the same tendency except for the Problem Based Learning strategy shown by FT2. This tendency is proven and supported by several data, such as: in the Teaching Strategy Checklist (Table 4.13 and Table 4.19), both female teachers checked all the points. Then in the Observation Checklist (Table 4.14 - 4.17 and Table 4.19 - 4.23) which is filled based on the observation results, it is true that there is an application of a combination of these strategies during the learning process. And the last one is the Data Triangulation Table (Table 4.18 and Table 4.24) validates this tendency.

The selection and implementation of this strategy are certainly influenced by various factors, including teacher considerations related to the grade level being taught, student character, and the students' own abilities. The combination of several strategies chosen by the two female teachers is based on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum as the basis of education. In addition, they realize that the selection and implementation of teaching strategies are not just personal preferences but are based on the character and abilities of the students themselves. In the context of the Project Based Learning strategy, constructivist learning is facilitated by this strategy, which is in accordance with Dewey's theory (1938) which emphasizes learning through real experiences. Furthermore, the Cooperative Learning strategy is supported by Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development, which indicates that student interaction in groups improves understanding through peer assistance. The Project Based Learning strategy also allows students to develop critical thinking skills and creativity through real projects that are relevant to their lives (Thomas, 2000). The implementation of the Project Based Learning strategy in the Independent Curriculum has also resulted in excellent student activity, this was obtained from the results of research conducted by Ananda Putri Wulandari et al. (2023). Where the implementation of the Project Based Learning strategy in the Independent Curriculum resulted in very good student activity, with 91% positive responses, although there were still challenges in terms of facilities and project completion time.

In addition, research from Khodijah Rezhi et al. (2025) stated that the Project Based Learning strategy can increase the elements of creativity and the spirit of mutual assistance (mutual cooperation) of students according to the character of the Pancasila Student Profile, which is also relevant in the context of the Cooperative Learning strategy. Along with this, increased collaboration between students and the development of students' social skills have been proven effective from the implementation of the Cooperative Learning strategy (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). The selection of this strategy is in line with the findings of Slavin (1995), which states that the active learning approach is more effective if it is harmonized with the needs and characteristics of students. Meanwhile, students are able to understand complex ideas by solving contextual problems (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). And added to that is the discovery

learning strategy Which allows active participation from students through opportunities to explore, investigate, and discover concepts independently, thereby improving critical thinking skills and learning independence. Where, according to Bruner's theory (1961), in the discovery learning strategy, students are encouraged to be able to build their own knowledge through direct learning experiences which is in line with the 21st century learning style. Therefore, the combination of selecting Project Based Learning, Discovery Learning and Cooperative Learning strategies as well as Problem Based Learning is not only pedagogically relevant, but this combination of strategies is also able to meet student needs and the demands of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes independence, collaboration, and character development.

Moving on to the avoidance of teaching strategies, in FT1, the strategies that are reluctant to be implemented are the Computer Assisted Language Learning strategy and the Differentiated Learning strategy. These two teaching strategies are reluctant to be implemented due to limited facilities and if forced to be implemented will require a long time and are difficult to be implemented effectively. As with previous studies, the availability of high-quality computer hardware and software is the most crucial challenge in implementing the use of technology in education (Lee, 2000). In addition to obstacles in school facilities, time constraints are also an additional factor for FT1 to be reluctant to choose these two strategies. Park and Son (2009) revealed that one of the most common obstacles that affects the use of technology by teachers in the classroom is time constraints. Teachers feel that forcing to be able to implement these strategies will waste time where in terms of teaching, time itself has a fairly important role and of course learning will be ineffective. In terms of avoiding the Differentiated Learning teaching strategy, similar challenges arise. Research by Graham et al. (2021) showed that limited resources, student behaviour, and limited time were the main obstacles in implementing Differentiated Learning strategies. In line with that, the challenges of implementing Differentiated Learning in EFL classes were also revealed by research from Ayuningtyas et al. (2023). This study found that teacher unpreparedness, time consumption, class size and student diversity were some of the difficulties for teachers when implementing Differentiated Learning. Teachers find it difficult to adjust teaching methods to the individual needs of students in a limited time. Thus, limited facilities and time are the main reasons teachers do not implement CALL and Differentiated Learning strategies effectively.

Then, the avoidance of teaching strategies from FT2 is shown in the Problem Based Learning and Integrated Learning strategies. The main reason for the avoidance of these two strategies is the consideration by FT2 regarding the limited abilities of students and the characteristics of students in grade X which is a class that is still in transition from junior high school to senior high school. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, modern teaching strategies are recommended with the aim of helping students acquire 4C skills (Sartini & Mulyono, 2022). The strategies recommended by the curriculum require students to be active and critical in learning. However, in classes with low intelligence levels it will be very challenging (Hidayat et al., 2020). In addition, Bruner (1966) in his research revealed that students at this grade level are still in the cognitive development stage that requires more support in the learning process. Furthermore, in implementing the Problem Based Learning teaching strategy, the ability to think critically and have skills that may not be fully possessed by grade X students is needed (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). In addition, in line with this, research by Sari and Hidayati (2019) states that the application of the Integrated Learning teaching strategy in classes that have a low level of student readiness can result in frustration and confusion, which will ultimately hinder the learning process.



### Differences in Preferences of Male and Female Teachers

As mentioned in chapter 1, this study was conducted to investigate the teaching strategy preferences between male and female teachers at the senior high school level. The purpose of this investigation was to determine teachers' preferences for teaching strategies in the context of gender differences providing significant or specific strategy preferences and the reasons behind these preferences. The teaching strategy checklist was the first source of data filled in by each teacher. Where in this case, the preferences that emerged were still general insights that provided a picture of the frequency of teachers' interest or avoidance of modern teaching strategies recommended by the Independent Curriculum during the learning process. In addition, the data on the observation checklist became an indication of practical evidence and confirmed how the preferences filled in by male and female teachers on the strategy checklist were applied during the learning process in the classroom. In line with the two data instruments, interviews were conducted with each teacher to strengthen the findings of the strategy checklist and observation checklist. And finally, data triangulation was carried out to ensure the reliability of the researcher's findings.

Based on these data, it is known that the two male English teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula showed a tendency towards teaching strategies that focus more on structured and problem-based approaches that are effectively implemented by them, where the Problem Based Learning and Cooperative Learning teaching strategies are their choices. This can be seen in the preferences of these two strategies that have been apparent since the beginning of filling out the teaching strategy checklist and are reinforced by the statements of the two male teachers during the interview. Furthermore, the Problem Based Learning and Cooperative Learning teaching strategies were successfully implemented by them when teaching in class. Students who are active in interacting and discussing in groups are one example of the success of implementing this strategy. The reasons underlying the tendency towards the teaching strategies chosen by these two male teachers are based on personal preferences where these two male teachers feel that these strategies are suitable and that learning will take place effectively and no less importantly, they refer to the grade level they teach.

This finding is in line with the results of research conducted by Eckert and McConnell (2013), where in their findings it was stated that male teachers tend to focus on organized classroom management and learning approaches that emphasize concrete results. In line with this, Prensky (2011) also emphasized that male teachers tend to prefer a structured approach in the learning process, which in this context allows students to follow clear steps in completing tasks given by the teacher. In addition, other findings were also obtained by the researcher, where in terms of avoiding teaching strategies by the two male teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula, they were in line to be reluctant to apply the Project Based Learning strategy because it was based on time constraints, especially in this context the time in question was the current semester. Research by Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2006) also emphasized that one of the biggest challenges in implementing Project Based Learning strategies is the need to manage time well, especially in a dense curriculum. In this context, teachers often feel pressured to complete lesson materials within a short deadline so that teachers tend to choose more traditional and direct methods. Research conducted by Zulfah (2021) reinforces this with the discovery that more conventional methods are chosen by teachers because they are worried about delays in completing the curriculum. Although student motivation and learning outcomes can be improved by using Project Based Learning, the use of time in carrying out projects is often an obstacle (Abidah, 2020).

Moving on from male teachers, in female English teachers, researchers found a broader preference. This can be seen when the two female English teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula

showed a tendency to apply collaboration from several teaching strategies such as Project Based Learning, Cooperative Learning, and Discovery Learning teaching strategies. This can be seen from the activeness of students in conducting discussions, presentations on the material given, and successfully encouraging students to be able to think critically and be able to collaborate with other students. Seeing this, this finding is in line with another statement from Eckert and McConnel (2013) which states that the tendency in verbal communication and discussion is shown by women, this makes them more flexible in adapting various teaching strategies to meet student needs such as the two female English teachers who teach at SMAN 1 Tejakula. The preference of female teachers for this collaborative strategy is also related to research conducted by Eagly & Wood (2012), where in this context, this preference can be associated with a tendency towards empathy, concern for interpersonal relationships and a focus on emotional needs shown by women. Research by Clark & Millar (2014) also found that collaborative and problem-solving approaches are often chosen by female teachers because female teachers assume that such approaches are more appropriate for creating an inclusive learning environment. In addition, female teachers are often more reflective and sensitive to student needs so that the tendency to develop more varied and comprehensive teaching approaches is often done (Beutel and Anderson, 2008). Furthermore, it is stated in the theory of caring ethics by Gilligan (1982), relationships and contexts in decision-making are often put forward by women which can be interpreted as a more collaborative and diverse teaching approach. And something similar is also conveyed through the theory of "Doing Gender" by West and Zimmerman (1987), where the theory states that women are often associated with nurturing and collaborative traits which in this context can be seen in female teachers' preferences for student-centered teaching strategies and utilizing diverse strategies.

On the other hand, similar to the preferences of male teachers, female teachers also have teaching strategies that they are reluctant to use. For example, in FT1, Computer Assisted Language Learning and Differentiated Learning teaching strategies were not chosen due to lack of facilities and difficulty in implementing them effectively. The availability of high-quality computer hardware and software is the most crucial challenge in implementing the use of technology in education (Lee, 2000). In line with this research, Park and Son (2009) revealed that one of the most common obstacles that affects teachers' use of technology in the classroom is time constraints. Teachers feel that forcing themselves to be able to implement these strategies will waste time, which in terms of teaching, time itself has a fairly important role and of course learning will be ineffective. In terms of avoiding Differentiated Learning teaching strategies, similar challenges arise. Research by Graham et al. (2021) shows that limited resources, student behavior, and limited time are the main obstacles to implementing Differentiated Learning strategies. Furthermore, the challenges of implementing Differentiated Learning in EFL classes are also revealed by research from Ayuningtyas et al. (2023). This study found that teacher unpreparedness, time consumption, class size and student diversity are some of the difficulties for teachers when implementing Differentiated Learning. Likewise with FT2, due to the limited abilities of students and the level of students being taught, Problem Based Learning and Integrated Learning strategies were reluctant to be chosen by him. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, modern teaching strategies are recommended with the aim of helping students acquire 4C skills (Sartini & Mulyono, 2022). The strategies recommended by the curriculum require students to be active and critical in learning. However, in classes with low levels of intelligence it will be very challenging (Hidayat et al., 2020). In addition, Bruner (1966) in his research revealed that students in grade X are still in the cognitive development stage that requires more support in the learning process. Furthermore, in implementing the Problem Based Learning teaching strategy, the ability to think critically and

have skills that may not be fully possessed by grade X students is needed (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). In addition, in line with this, research by Sari and Hidayati (2019) states that the application of the Integrated Learning teaching strategy in classes that have a low level of student readiness can result in frustration and confusion, which will ultimately hinder the learning process.

In addition, there are interesting findings on the teaching strategy preferences chosen by male and female teachers, where similarities were found in the application of the Cooperative Learning teaching strategy by the four teachers during the learning process in the classroom. The reason for choosing this teaching strategy is on the basis of encouraging increased collaboration between students. Along with this, the study by Johnson and Johnson (1999) emphasized that the Cooperative Learning Strategy facilitates positive social interactions between students, fosters cooperation skills, and deepens understanding of the material through structured group discussions. Research by Slavin (1995) also confirmed the effectiveness of the Cooperative Learning strategy in improving learning outcomes and positive attitudes of students towards the subjects being studied. The phenomenon of collaboration between the Cooperative Learning teaching strategy and other teaching strategies by this teacher is able to create an active learning atmosphere and is able to facilitate various learning styles possessed by students effectively.

Another interesting finding, during the learning process, most teachers apply Social/Affective strategies in the classroom. Simple praise is often given by teachers when students achieve something as a form of appreciation such as "Good Job", "Great", "Very Good", "Wow, you guys are cool", etc. Jokes are also often made by teachers to lighten the atmosphere and make students more relaxed in following the lesson. In the interview session, all teachers generally stated that this strategy is very important to be implemented because it is one simple way to provide appreciation and help students get closer to the teacher. In addition, when the classroom situation is relaxed because there are jokes, the teacher is sure that students will like and enjoy the learning process itself which will later make students able to master each material given. The teacher also mentioned that the social affective strategy is one of the basic strategies that is important to be implemented in every meeting by every teacher. This is because praise and jokes greatly influence students' positive learning attitudes in the classroom. Especially for students who have low self-confidence and are slow in learning. Research on praise and humor conducted by teachers in the classroom, especially in high school environments, shows positive findings. As mentioned by the teacher, compliments and jokes can help students feel fun and motivated in learning, in line with the research of Iijima et al. (2020). To engage with students, it is proven that teachers must adjust their teaching style to improve communication (Hendrastomo & Januarti, 2023). The most effective way to communicate with junior high school students today is with a relaxed and non-dominating approach (Harahap et al., 2024). Therefore, giving compliments and jokes during learning can be considered an effective way to establish better relationships with students.

From the data collected and further analysis, it can be concluded that the teaching strategy preferences of male and female teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula are different. This difference is certainly based on various factors, ranging from each person's personal preferences which in this case refer to each person's gender sensitivity, the character or ability of the students themselves, the availability of time, and the facilities in the classroom. This finding is in line with research conducted by Astuti et al., (2019), where teachers will choose teaching strategies depending on the needs, characteristics, and fulfillment of learning objectives at each meeting. Discussing the influence of gender differences, each teacher acknowledged that in addition to the factors that exist in general, gender has the potential to be one of the factors in the differences in preferences for teaching strategies in teaching English

in the classroom. The teacher emphasized the impact of differences in teacher gender on their relationships with students. Where in this context, male teachers feel that female students feel a little awkward if they have a question or other things related to interaction with male teachers. Meanwhile, male teachers feel very close to male students in terms of discussion and interaction. In line with this, female teachers also believe that learning styles can be influenced by gender, where the teacher's communication style when teaching refers to the way the teacher interacts with his/her students in class. Female teachers believe that they may talk a lot with their students, both male and female students. Meanwhile, male teachers may be quieter, more assertive, and to the point. These different teaching strategy preferences can be interpreted as a reflection of the occurrence of different pedagogical approaches between male and female teachers. Male teachers tend to choose structured and problem-based strategies, while female teachers tend to be more open to the application of various existing strategies that can encourage students to explore and collaborate during the learning process. This is likely due to the influence of different communication and interaction styles between the two genders, where female teachers tend to create an inclusive and interactive learning environment while male teachers tend to create a competitive and to the point learning environment. These findings provide important insights for teacher professional development and more effective learning planning in the future.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussions, the researcher concludes that the preferences for teaching strategies differ between male and female English teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula. The study involved four teachers (two male and two female), with data collected through a teaching strategy checklist, observations, and interviews. Male teachers preferred Problem-Based Learning and Cooperative Learning, selecting them based on available time and the class level, while avoiding Project-Based Learning. Female teachers showed a broader preference for strategies like Project-Based Learning, Problem-Based Learning, and Discovery Learning. However, FT1 avoided Computer Assisted Language Learning and Differentiated Learning due to facility limitations and implementation difficulties, while FT2 preferred to avoid Problem-Based Learning and Integrated Learning based on student characteristics and grade levels. The differences in preferences were influenced by factors such as student characteristics, facilities, time availability, and gender. Despite these differences, all teachers used Cooperative Learning to encourage student collaboration. Additionally, teachers at SMAN 1 Tejakula applied social-affective strategies to enhance classroom atmosphere. These findings align with Eckert and McConnel's gender theory, suggesting that male teachers focus more on structured learning approaches with tangible results, while female teachers tend to engage in verbal communication, making them more adaptable to various teaching strategies that meet students' needs.

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