



Teaching Strategies Preferences of Male and Female English Teacher in SMPN 4 Singaraja

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to obtain a profile of the most frequently used teaching strategies most frequently used by teachers based on the perspectives of two different genders; male and female. The strategies being observed were focused on the teaching strategies recommended by the new curriculum; Merdeka Curriculum. Data collection were done within 3 different instruments; teaching strategy checklist, observation checklist, and in-depth interview guide. This research involved one male teacher and one female teacher, conducted in SMPN 4 Singaraja. The findings showed that male teacher is tend to applied Deductive Application of Rules, a strategy part of Grammar Translation Method. On the other hand, female teacher sowed preferences in Guided Discovery strategy. Both of the teacher stated that the reason underlying their preferences is because of the material taught on the day and the students' characteristics. This research also found that both of the teacher frequently applied social affective strategy, where teacher maintain students' learning process by emphasizing the socio-emotional aspects. The findings can inform teacher training programs to tailor strategy selection based on both curriculum demands and the diverse instructional preferences of educators.

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INTRODUCTION

The education sector is experiencing significant transformation due to technological advancements, social change, and shifting workforce demands (Nguyen et al., 2020). The digital transformation, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has profoundly altered teaching and learning processes. Online and

hybrid learning modalities are increasingly replacing traditional classroom-based instruction, offering broader and more flexible access to education. Consequently, educational systems are being redesigned to better prepare students for the demands and challenges of global society. The current educational paradigm emphasizes the mastery of essential skills not only for academic achievement but also for enabling students to remain adaptable and innovative in a competitive labor market. To address the needs of the modern world and equip future generations with the competencies necessary for success, education must continue to evolve (Wang, 2012).

In response to the demands of the 21st century, the Indonesian government has introduced the Independent Curriculum (Masmida Putri et al., 2023). These demands encompass the mastery of core competencies, namely critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication. Critical thinking enables learners to assess information, solve problems, and make well-informed decisions in complex situations. Collaboration enhances teamwork and interpersonal abilities, which are vital in diverse professional environments where collective efforts drive success. Creativity fosters unconventional and innovative problem-solving, a skill increasingly valued in the contemporary job market. Effective communication is crucial for articulating ideas and engaging meaningfully with others across varied contexts. Together, these skills support academic achievement and align with the evolving needs of a global workforce, where adaptability and interpersonal competence are paramount (Zhou, 2023).

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum has introduced substantial changes in Indonesian education. As part of the Merdeka Belajar initiative launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, this curriculum grants teachers greater autonomy in conducting classroom instruction. One of its defining features is the flexibility to select teaching strategies and methods that suit the specific learning context and students' needs. Official data from the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2023 indicate that almost 70% of schools in Indonesia—equivalent to 84,034 institutions—have adopted the Merdeka Curriculum. Of these, 60 schools are located in Buleleng Regency, Bali, including SMPN 4 Singaraja. This A-grade school, situated in Sambangan Village, Buleleng Regency, employs 85 teachers, comprising 37 males and 48 females, with the English teaching staff consisting of one male and four female teachers. Preliminary research revealed that the teachers at this school are aware of the curricular reforms, including the government-recommended teaching strategies.

Teaching is an interactive process characterized by teacher–student exchanges (Rajagopalan, 2019), and teaching strategies refer to planned procedures aimed at facilitating students' attainment of learning outcomes (Hayati et al., 2021; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013). Based on their nature and development, English teaching strategies may be categorized as either classical or modern.

Classical teaching strategies position the teacher as the central figure in the learning process. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) describe these as “methods,” referring to collections of strategies underpinned by shared ideological principles. Classical methods include the Grammar Translation Method, which emphasizes reading, writing, and translation between native and target languages; the Direct Method, which promotes speaking and listening through inductive grammar instruction and everyday conversational language; the Audio-Lingual Method, which relies on repetition and drills for pronunciation and pattern mastery; and the Silent Way Method, which prioritizes learner autonomy with the teacher acting as a facilitator supported by tools and interactive media. Additional approaches include Desuggestopedia, which integrates music, art, and theatre to create a relaxed environment conducive to contextual conversation; Community Language Learning, a humanistic method where the teacher serves as a counsellor to promote verbal communication and reflection; Total Physical Response, which combines language acquisition with physical activity to foster auditory comprehension; Communicative Language Teaching, which uses authentic materials and interactive activities to build fluency; Content-Based Instruction, which integrates language learning with subject-matter study through thematic units; and Task-Based Language Teaching, which emphasizes real-world tasks and meaningful communication via collaborative activities.

In contrast, modern teaching strategies shift the focus toward student-centered learning. These strategies have emerged alongside technological integration and new pedagogical paradigms aimed at equipping learners with 21st-century competencies—collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and communication—so they are better prepared for the demands of contemporary society. In alignment with these goals, the Indonesian government developed the Merdeka Curriculum to encourage the adoption of such approaches. Hosaini et al. (2022) identify several methods aligned with modern strategies. Learning Strategy Training develops students’ cognitive, metacognitive, and affective skills through targeted techniques such as summarizing, questioning, and self-monitoring to enhance metacognition and self-regulation. Cooperative Learning promotes collaboration through small-group tasks, fostering both social and academic growth. Computer-Assisted Language Learning leverages computers and multimedia tools to enhance comprehension, retention, and collaborative learning, enabling self-paced study and instant feedback. Project-Based Learning engages students in extended, problem-solving projects that culminate in tangible outcomes. Differentiated Learning adapts content, process, product, and learning environment to match students’ interests, readiness, and learning styles. Discovery Learning encourages self-directed exploration of concepts, with teachers facilitating active engagement. Integrated Learning connects knowledge across disciplines to enhance

relevance and applicability. Flipped Learning uses digital resources for pre-class study, reserving classroom time for collaborative and applied activities. Competency-Based Learning evaluates students on their ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world contexts. Problem-Based Learning fosters inquiry, solution generation, and reflective thinking through complex, open-ended problems. Active Learning emphasizes participation and discussion to build understanding, incorporating small-group work, problem-solving, and feedback.

Despite the range of available strategies, teachers must consider various factors when selecting an approach, including gender-related differences. Gender refers to socially constructed behaviors and roles, distinct from biological sex but shaped by societal expectations (Eckert & McConnel-Ginet, 2013). Research indicates that linguistic behaviors differ by gender. Male teachers may demonstrate more dominant communication styles and engage less in discussions, whereas female teachers are often more verbally interactive and central in content delivery and classroom management. Males may use humor to assert status, while females are more likely to discuss personal topics to build rapport. Female teachers tend to be more collaborative and polite, whereas male teachers may adopt a more authoritative stance (Eckert & McConnel-Ginet, 2013). While female teachers tend to promote self-discovery, male teachers often act as primary sources of information (Lacey et al., 1998). Female teachers frequently favor active, participatory learning, while male teachers may dominate classroom discourse. Additional research in EFL contexts reveals nuanced gendered patterns: both male and female teachers use strategies such as instruction, discussion, and collaborative tasks (Ratnadi et al., 2014), but male teachers often engage in one-sided communication, while female teachers use more questioning techniques to guide learning (Erlinda Kurniatillah et al., 2024). Speech style analysis further suggests that male teachers may favor directness, while female teachers often employ emotionally nuanced, indirect communication (Mappaita et al., 2023). Textbooks have also been found to depict males as dominant problem-solvers and females as emotionally expressive (Wilfitri & Suganda, 2023). In formal versus consultative speech, males may lean toward a consultative style with sarcasm, whereas females tend toward a formal style with precise grammar and familiarity (Taslim et al., 2023). Gender differences also emerge in teaching reading and writing: male teachers may favor question-answer and memorization in reading comprehension, whereas females integrate games and strategies such as SQ4R (Ma'rifattulloh, 2019); in writing, guided writing and mini-classroom instruction produce gender-specific outcomes, while modeling and independent practice are gender-neutral (Martha & Ifeyinwa, 2024).

Despite this body of research, studies focusing specifically on gender-based teaching preferences within the Merdeka Curriculum framework remain scarce. Therefore, further exploration is necessary to understand male and female teachers' strategic choices in the context of this curricular reform. This study investigates the

preferences of male and female teachers at SMPN 4 Singaraja regarding teaching strategies following the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. By examining these preferences, the research aims to contribute to more effective and inclusive pedagogical practices and expand the literature on gender in education.

METHOD

This qualitative research study investigates the teaching strategies employed by male and female English teachers at SMPN 4 Singaraja after the implementation of the new curriculum; Merdeka Curriculum. After discussion about the convenience with the samples, this study came to conclusion with the focused on one female teacher and one male teacher, examining their teaching strategies used. To comprehensively investigate the teaching strategy preferences of male and female English teachers, this study employs a multi-faceted approach to data collection. Four primary instruments are utilized: a self-administered questionnaire named Teaching Strategies Checklist, which allows teachers to reflect on their use of modern teaching methods from the Merdeka Curriculum; an Observation Checklist, enabling the researcher to systematically document observed classroom practices; an In-depth Interview Guide, designed to explore teachers' underlying beliefs and motivations through semi-structured conversations; and Anecdotal Records, which serve to capture specific, noteworthy classroom occurrences that may not be captured by the more structured instruments. By integrating these various data sources, the study aims to develop a holistic understanding of the factors shaping teachers' instructional choices and practices.

The study employs an interactive data analysis method based on (Miles & Huberman, 1994). involving interactive cycles of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This approach allows for flexibility and interconnectedness between stages. To ensure trustworthiness, the study utilizes triangulation, specifically data triangulation (collecting data from teachers across different times and classes), investigator triangulation (analysis by three researchers), and methodological triangulation (using questionnaire, observations, and interviews).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table 1. Male Teacher Observation result

| Teaching Strategy | Checklist Data | Observation Data | Interview Data | Triangulation Summary |
|------------------------|----------------|------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Metacognitive Strategy | 57.14% | - | "To let students, plan their learning, it will take more time, since the students are still young, so I need to prepare it" | Moderate |

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|---------------------------|--------|---|--|----------|
| Cognitive Strategy | 75% | In some meetings, teacher remind students the use of particular grammar rules. | "I usually let them use the dictionary, giving them remedial etc. to strengthen the knowledge" | Moderate |
| Affective Strategy | 75% | In every meetings Teacher gave students a lot of praised if they achieved something. And bring a lot of jokes to class. | "I personally think that praised and jokes is a must to make students comfortable in learning" | Strong |
| Project Based Learning | 50% | - | "I applied it once last semester, by asking them to make video of procedure text" | Weak |
| Problem Based Learning | 88.89% | - | "I forget what material when did I used this strategy" | Weak |
| Discovery Learning | 100% | - | "I'll ask students to find the structure of a text" | Weak |
| CALL | 80% | Using projector in some class to share the material. | "I use this to make the class variated" | Moderate |
| Cooperative Learning | 100% | Teacher ask students to work with group in one meeting. But they choose the members by themselves | "I usually ask students to work with group so that they could share knowledge to each other" | Moderate |
| Active Learning | 100% | - | "I once applied, but students seem can't catch up with that" | Weak |
| Integrated Learning | 100% | - | "Usually I only applied two or three skills only. But it depending on the learning goals" | Weak |
| Flipped Learning | 100% | - | "Last time applied it in New Normal" | Weak |
| Competency Based Learning | 100% | - | "I applied it last semester when the material is text. I taught it one competency then one" | Weak |
| Differentiated Learning | 0% | - | "It's hard to implemented it because of the time limitation" | Weak |

From the Table 1 above we can see that male teacher had a strong preference in Social Affective Strategy. In this strategy teacher repetitively gave students praise and even some jokes to make them feel comfortable in learning. From the interview it was found that teacher applied this strategy due to the urgency to make students enjoy and love the learning process, especially English.

Excerpt 1

"It's an emotional approach, with the hope that by providing motivation, students can complete the assignments very well. With empathy, the desire to learn is surely to be there. I also give praise and rewards as a stimulus to encourage the children to feel comfortable learning. I never scold them, but they never absence to submit the assignments I give them. The children are still in a transitional period (from kids to teenager), so a closer (affective) approach is needed. No matter how bad their work was, don't judge it, always say it's good, but still insert feedback. They must still be embraced with empathy, so they remain in the mood to learn. If they are scolded, they will lose the mood to learn." **(Male Teacher Interview - On 20/01/25)**

From the explanation above teacher admit that in this age students need to be approached using an enjoy approach. This is aligned with the previous study by Dewaele et al., (2022) that mentioned teacher should help students feel motivated and comfortable in learning.

However, from the observation done within 339 minutes, male teacher showed a strong preference towards a classical teaching strategy; Deductive Application of Grammar Rules. This strategy is a part of Grammar Translation Method. In this strategy, teacher asked students to apply a particular language features into a sentence. In the observation session teacher directly asked students to apply simple present tense and making sentences contained particular pronoun. Teacher mentioned in the Interview that despite the new regulation of Merdeka Curriculum and its recommended teaching strategy, he still used the classical strategies due to the condition of his class.

Excerpt 2

"If I don't use this strategy, the children won't be able to understand the material. So, introducing them to patterns and grammar rules is essential. Perhaps in education levels with more intellectually advanced students, like at the university level, we can implement modern teaching strategies that don't focus on patterns. But here, with students in the current conditions, whom some of them didn't even receive English lessons in elementary school, it's quite difficult to abandon that classic strategy." **(Male Teacher Interview - On 20/01/25)**

Teacher stated that the used of Grammar Translation Method in his class happen due to the characteristics of students itself. Moreover, teacher also see that this strategy is still effective despite the new educational paradigm. This finding was supporting the study conducted by Rosi (2024) that also found Grammar Translation Method still applicable and effective to be applied in the modern class.

Table 2. Female Teacher Observation result

| Teaching Strategy | Checklist Data | Observation Data | Interview Data | Triangulation Summary |
|------------------------|----------------|---|---|-----------------------|
| Metacognitive Strategy | 100% | Teacher ask students what are their preferences of learning styles? | “This happened because I want to match the student’s expectation with my teaching styles” | Moderate |
| Cognitive Strategy | 100% | - | “I usually just give them some worksheets and additional notes to expand their knowledge” | Weak |
| Affective Strategy | 100% | Teacher always gave students a lot of praised if they achieved something. Teacher also responded students in funny way some time. | “I agree with the finding, I believe that social effective strategy must be really considered in learning.” | Strong |
| Project Based Learning | 100% | - | “I once tried it on the last semester, by asking them to make video” | Weak |
| Problem Based Learning | 100% | - | “I once ask them to argue and express opinion about a problem. But it was a simple problem, ” | Weak |
| Discovery Learning | 100% | Teacher direct students to discover the knowledge by themselves with some guides | “I believe that the knowledge that discovered by the students themselves, it will last longer than if I just” | Strong |
| CALL | 100% | - | “I rarely used this method because of the lack of facilities” | Weak |
| Cooperative Learning | 40% | - | “I usually ask students to work and finish a task” | Weak |
| Active Learning | 100% | - | “I very rarely implemented this because its hard since it doesn’t suit with my student’s characteristics” | Weak |
| Integrated Learning | 100% | - | “Usually I only applied two or three skills only. Either its receptive skills or productive skills” | Weak |
| Flipped Learning | 100% | - | “I applied this once in COVID 19 Pandemic” | Weak |

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|---------------------------|--------|---|--|------|
| Competency Based Learning | 75% | - | "I tried to apply it" | Weak |
| Differentiated Learning | 66.67% | - | "It's hard to implemented it because of the time limitation" | Weak |

From the Table 2 above we can see that female teacher had a strong preference in Social Affective Strategy, similar with male teacher. Interview was conducted to study the reason behind it. Teacher explained that she applied this strategy due to the urgency of understanding students' backgrounds and fostering a supportive and engaging classroom environment that are crucial for effective learning, especially in diverse socio-economic contexts.

Excerpt 3

"Personally, for me, every English teacher must apply social affective strategies. Children, especially in middle school, come in with the mindset that English is a difficult subject. If this is compounded by a teacher who creates a tense classroom environment and limits student activities, the students will not be able to learn. It really goes back to the teaching style of the teacher; personally, I don't like a class that is too serious, although in some matters I still maintain seriousness and need to keep control. I lean more towards social affective strategies. In addition, I also try to understand their family backgrounds. I happen to teach a class where the students come from different socio-economic backgrounds, and this affects their learning in class. I once taught a student who seemed very lethargic; when asked why, he said he hadn't eaten. If that's the case, no technique you use will be effective for him because his stomach is empty. So those kinds of things also need to be taken into account. When they are difficult to manage, instead of getting angry—which doesn't solve the problem—I prefer to invite them to meditate for 5 minutes or practice mindfulness. In vocabulary insertion activities, back in my day, we were asked to read and find difficult words, then write them down along with their meanings, and that was still effective. If this were applied in my current class, there wouldn't be any vocabulary that sticks with them. It's better for me to engage them in conversation and throw out questions like "What is this in English?" That way, the vocabulary will stick better for them. There have

been many changes in student characteristics over time. Perhaps 2 out of 1,000 students in this middle school can still apply the methods I used back then. I believe it is a significant responsibility for teachers; whatever approaches, methods, or techniques we choose, if we cannot master social affective strategies, the children cannot learn effectively. I may be lucky that I had experience working in an international school. I have seen firsthand the advantages of foreign teachers. They are very generous with praise. Even if a student changes just one small thing, they will receive a lot of praise for it. That is a value that our local teachers often lack. Yet praise can motivate and excite them. The way they treat students truly comes from the heart.” **(Female Teacher Interview – On 18/01/2025)**

From the explanation above teacher admit that she implemented the social affective strategies in her English class, emphasizing that understanding students' diverse socio-economic backgrounds and fostering a supportive classroom environment are essential for effective learning. By prioritizing engagement over rigidity, incorporating mindfulness practices, and recognizing the importance of praise, teachers can significantly enhance student motivation and learning outcomes. Teacher reflects on the evolving nature of student characteristics and stresses the responsibility of educators to adapt their methods to meet these changes, ultimately highlighting that genuine care and connection with students are vital for their academic success.

Moreover, from the observation done within 316 minutes, female teacher showed a strong preference towards a modern teaching method; Discovery Learning. The particular strategy applied by the female teacher is called Guided Discovery Learning. In this strategy, teacher asked students to discover the particular information or knowledges by themselves, However, in Guided Discovery Learning, teacher play a crucial role as a guide in the learning process. In the meetings being observed teacher gave students a lot of questions to help them scaffolded the information by themselves. Teacher mentioned in the Interview that she applied this strategy due to some reason, as follow:

Excerpt 4

"I believe that if the information comes from the students, it will stay longer in their memory. We shouldn't keep spoon-feeding them; there should be information that comes from themselves. I always try, when there's time and I'm not pressed, to invite them to discover knowledge together, even

as much as possible from things in their daily lives. Another point is that we should be able to insert humorous elements. For example, in the descriptive text material, instead of describing famous people, I provide an example about my dog. I will tell them that I have a dog named Sempol who has three legs. They will definitely ask where the other leg is; it was amputated. In the third year I taught them the descriptive text material, they still remembered the story of Sempol. That can be made up, but it will stick better with the children. It's a small thing that works. Rather than asking them to watch a video of Jokowi and asking them to describe him, it's less effective." **(Female Teacher Interview – On 18/01/2025)**

Teacher mentioned that the used of Guided Discovery Learning in her class happened due to the need of students itself. In her class, this strategy works better than a lecturing nor independent learning method. This finding was supporting the study conducted by Ashour (2022) and Zahara (2017) show that using guided discovery strategy had a positive impact on students especially in English classes. This study explored the nuanced differences in teaching strategies preferred by male and female teachers in secondary education, using data triangulation to ensure the trustworthiness of findings. The research employed questionnaires, observations, and in-depth interviews to analyze preferences and rationales behind these choices. Male teachers showed a stronger inclination toward deductive grammar teaching methods and often used social affective strategies for non-content purposes, while female teachers preferred guided discovery activities and emphasized creating supportive classroom environments to enhance students' enjoyment of learning. Both genders tailored their strategies based on student characteristics and learning goals, varying activities to maintain engagement and motivation. For example, male teachers utilized Grammar Translation Method (GTM) for grammar lessons but adopted mini-projects for teaching recount texts, while female teachers encouraged collaborative problem-solving in projects like advertisements. Both groups demonstrated positive attitudes toward students' social and affective aspects by using praise, humor, and reinforcement to foster comfort and motivation in learning environments.

Discussion

The findings align with previous studies, such as Eckert & Mcconnel-Ginet, (2013), which highlighted male teachers' tendency toward dominance and direct instruction and female teachers' preference for verbal communication and structured discussions. Additionally, research by Erlinda Kurniatillah et al., (2024) supported that

male teachers often use declarative speech for task instruction, while female teachers employ imperative speech to encourage discovery-based learning. Mappaita et al., (2023) found that male teachers focus on direct tasks to achieve specific learning goals, while female teachers integrate relatable examples from daily life to guide students toward answers. Contrary to Taslim et al., (2023) findings that male teachers use humor more frequently, this study observed female teachers blending jokes seamlessly into their interactions with students.

Gender also influenced teacher-student communication styles. Male teachers noted that female students were more hesitant to interact with them compared to male students, who felt more comfortable engaging in discussions. Female teachers believed their communication style was more talkative and inclusive with all students. These findings emphasize that gender plays a significant role in shaping teaching strategies, but educators adapt their approaches based on student needs and classroom dynamics to achieve effective learning outcomes.

The empirical evidence regarding gender differences in teaching strategies highlights significant implications for improving English language instruction. Male teachers tend to prefer deductive grammar application, while female teachers favor guided discovery, reflecting distinct pedagogical approaches. These findings can inform targeted professional development programs aimed at broadening teachers' instructional methods to address diverse student needs and learning styles more effectively. Additionally, the shared emphasis on affective strategies, such as fostering positive and engaging classroom environments, underscores the universal importance of creating supportive spaces for learning. By addressing gender-related preferences while critically examining their limitations, teacher training programs can equip educators with versatile strategies to personalize learning experiences and improve student outcomes. Future research should explore the intersection of gender with factors like teaching experience, subject expertise, and cultural context to further understand how instructional strategies impact student learning.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has explored the significant role that teacher gender plays in the selection of teaching strategies within secondary English language education. The findings reveal distinct preferences among male and female teachers, with males leaning towards deductive grammar application and females favoring guided discovery approaches. These differences highlight the necessity for targeted professional development initiatives that broaden educators' pedagogical repertoires, enabling them to incorporate diverse instructional methods tailored to various student learning styles and needs.

To apply these findings in practice, teacher training programs should focus on equipping educators with the skills to recognize and address gender-related preferences in their teaching approaches while promoting critical awareness of

their potential limitations. This will facilitate personalized learning experiences that cater to a wide range of student profiles, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes.

Further research is needed to explore the intersection of gender with other factors such as teaching experience, subject matter expertise, and cultural context. This comprehensive approach will enhance our understanding of instructional strategy selection and its impact on student learning, paving the way for more effective teaching practices in diverse educational settings. By continuing to investigate these dynamics, we can further refine our frameworks for teacher development and improve the overall quality of English language instruction.

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