

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes the research background of the study, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations of the study, and the specification of the study.

A. The Background of the Study

Reading is an important part of the learning process and knowledge development. This is a fundamental skill that allows someone to access information, expand their knowledge, and interact with different perspectives. The ability to read and understand texts effectively is crucial for academic success as well as for personal growth and lifelong learning. For example, reading inspirational stories or biographies of famous people can instill a positive mindset, impart life principles, and encourage someone to achieve their life goals. Additionally, having good reading skills allows a person to develop critical thinking skills that are important in daily life and for independent learning. Reading as a tool to navigate complexity is becoming increasingly important in the era of globalization, where information flows rapidly across national borders.

English is considered a foreign language for Indonesian students, which presents its own challenges in achieving good reading skills. Students are in an environment where English is not used as the primary language in daily communication, making it less accessible and more difficult to master. This makes students need a more structured learning approach, such as the use of authentic materials, continuous practice, and support from teachers or a supportive learning environment¹. This approach can reduce students' difficulties in understanding English as a foreign language and provide them with better opportunities to build effective reading skills². Factors such as limited exposure to English, lack of vocabulary, and motivation levels often hinder students' ability to understand texts effectively³. As a result, to help Indonesian students improve their English reading skills, they need a supportive approach and environment⁴. To address these issues,

¹ & Renandya Richards, J. C., *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. (Cambridge University Press., 2002).

² D Nunan, *Practical English Language Teaching* (McGraw-Hill, 2003).

³ E Yulia, R., & Pratama, "Faktor-Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Kemampuan Membaca Bahasa Inggris Pada Siswa Di Indonesia.," *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa* 15(1), 78- (2017).

⁴ N. Arfianti, "Pengaruh Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Terhadap Keterampilan Membaca Siswa Di Indonesia.," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran* 50(2), 123 (2017).

creating a supportive environment and adopting instructional strategies, such as using authentic materials, continuous practice, and active guidance from teachers, are essential.

Reading comprehension is a crucial skill that allows students to understand the content of a text deeply⁵. This skill involves identifying main ideas, interpreting implied meanings, and drawing conclusions. For Indonesian students, mastering reading comprehension in English is particularly challenging due to differences in language structure and unfamiliar vocabulary. Structured learning methods designed to develop this skill can help students analyze and interpret texts more effectively.

The Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach is helpful in this case. CLIL is a method where students learn subject content (like history or biographies) in a foreign language in this case, English while also improving their English skills. Based on the British Council, CLIL focuses on four main areas: Content (the subject), Communication (using language), Cognition (thinking skills), and Culture (understanding different cultures). With CLIL, English is not just something to learn it becomes the tool students use to learn new information⁶.

In a CLIL-based lesson, teachers might choose a well-organized and interesting text (like a biography of a local NU figure), help students organize the ideas using diagrams or charts, and highlight important vocabulary or expressions. Students then do activities such as class discussions, presentations, or group tasks that use both the content and the language. This method connects learning to real-life and meaningful content. For example, reading about inspiring local figures makes students feel more connected and interested. This makes it easier for them to stay motivated, practice reading, and improve their English.

Supplementary reading materials customized to students' interests and requirements are one way to help them become better readers. Supplementary reading materials can consist of authentic texts, short stories, articles, or content

⁵ H. Widodo, H. P., & Haryanto, "Reading Comprehension Difficulties among Indonesian EFL Learners.," *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 10(2), 314 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v10i2.25616>.

⁶ Steve Darn, "Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)," n.d., <https://www.teaching-english.org.uk/content-and-language-integrated-learning-clil>.

tailored to students' proficiency levels⁷. By having access to supplementary reading, students are given opportunities to enhance their reading skills beyond core learning materials. This aligns with the goal of improving reading comprehension because supplementary reading helps students become more familiar with texts, identify main ideas, and infer meanings from the material⁸. Consequently, supplementary reading plays a significant role in supporting effective reading comprehension instruction. Furthermore, such materials can boost students' motivation, expand their vocabulary, and help them develop independent reading habits. Through this strategy, students can gain more confidence in understanding English texts and continuously improve their reading proficiency.

One type of supplementary reading material that can be used is the biographies of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) figures. This material can be adapted to support the learning process in schools located within the educational environment of Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas Jombang, including Islamic schools such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), and Madrasah Aliyah (MA), as well as other formal schools integrated with the pesantren. These schools are deeply influenced by the legacy and contributions of NU scholars, whose educational vision emphasizes character formation (*ta'dib*), spiritual refinement, and social responsibility. The biographies of leading NU figures—such as KH. Hasyim Asy'ari, known for his foundational work in pesantren education⁹ KH. Wahab Hasbullah, who contributed significantly to youth organization and Islamic nationalism, and KH. Bisri Syansuri, recognized for his progressive approach to fiqh and institutional development¹⁰ reflect values that are still practiced within the Tambakberas learning environment. Using these biographies as reading materials allows students not only to enhance their English reading skills but also to connect

⁷ N. B. Gilakjani, A. P., & Sabouri, "How Can Students Improve Their Reading Comprehension Skill?," *Journal of Studies in Education* 6(2), 229- (2016), <https://doi.org/10.5296/jse.v6i2.9201>.

⁸ B. Krashen, S. D., & Mason, "Extensive Reading and the Development of L2 Reading Comprehension: A Meta-Analysis.," *TESOL Quarterly*, 51(4), 879 (2017), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.298>.

⁹ KH. Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari, *Pendidikan Karakter Khas Pesantren: Terjemah Adabul 'Alim Wal Muta'allim* (Tangerang: Tira Smart, 2017).

¹⁰ M. van. Bruinessen, *NU: Tradisi, Relasi-Relasi Kuasa, Pencarian Wacana Baru*. (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2008).

with the cultural, spiritual, and historical heritage of their own educational setting, thereby supporting contextual and meaningful learning¹¹.

Introducing *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) figures has many benefits for students, especially in shaping strong character grounded in religious values. This aligns with the role of supplementary reading materials in the form of NU figures' biographies, which not only enhance students' reading skills but also present inspirational stories relevant to their cultural and educational backgrounds¹². Through these readings, students can learn from the exemplary lives of NU figures while honing their literacy skills through meaningful and contextual texts¹³. NU figures are known for their dedication to education, preaching, and striving for the benefit of the community³. By understanding their lives and struggles, students can gain inspiration to become individuals with noble character, care for others, and a strong passion for learning⁴. Additionally, learning about NU figures strengthens students' religious and national identity, which is essential for navigating the challenges of globalization without losing the cultural and spiritual values passed down by their predecessors⁵.

Aligns with a broader trend in educational research focusing on the development of supplementary reading materials tailored to specific student needs and contexts. Here are some relevant studies that provide insights into similar methodologies and objectives: Developing Supplementary English Reading Materials¹⁴. This study focused on creating supplementary reading materials for nursing students at SMK Teknologi Muhammadiyah. It utilized a Research and Development (R&D) method, emphasizing the importance of needs analysis and material evaluation. The study concluded that the developed materials significantly improved students' reading skills by aligning with their specific academic needs 2. Developing Supplementary Reading Materials for Grade 11 Students This research aimed at fulfilling specific educational needs through the development of

¹¹ Azyumardi Azra, *Islam in the Indonesian World: An Account of Institutional Formation* (Mizan Pustaka, 2012).

¹² A. Mujib, A., & Mudzakir, *Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Nilai-Nilai Keislaman*. (Jakarta: RajaGrafindo Persada., 2020).

¹³ M. Asrori, "Penerapan Teks Biografi Untuk Penguatan Literasi Dan Karakter Siswa Di Sekolah Berbasis Pesantren.," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, n.d.

¹⁴ Titin Suhartini Kaaba, "DEVELOPING SUPPLEMENTARY ENGLISH READING MATERIALS (A Research and Development Conducted at Nursing Department Grade X of SMK Teknologi Muhammadiyah Limboto) Titin Suhartini Kaaba" 02, no. 2014 (2017): 331–35.

supplementary reading materials tailored to multimedia study programs. It highlights the significance of aligning educational resources with student requirements, which is a crucial aspect when developing materials based on biographies for Islamic boarding schools.

Supporting students to learn independently is not always easy, especially when it comes to learning Arabic. The schools at *Pesantren* Bahrul Ulum in Tambakberas Islamic education environment are mostly influenced by a traditional religious approach, with a strong focus on classic Islamic books and deepening religious knowledge. Alongside this, general or formal subjects are also taught to prepare students to contribute to society and the nation. However, English is still not very popular among students, largely because of the lack of interesting supplementary reading materials in the classroom. This becomes a challenge for teachers who want to make English learning more engaging and meaningful.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher was interested in developing a product of supplementary reading to help teachers and students learn English language reading skills by using supplementary reading material. Based on the problem, the researcher will be researching some private and public senior schools at *pesantren* Bahrul Ulum in Tambakberas Jombang by the title “Developing Supplementary Reading Materials Based on Biographies of NU Figures for *Pesantren* Bahrul Ulum in Tambakberas Jombang”. Hope supplementary reading will be properly used.

B. The Question of the Study

Based on the research, the researcher found that some research questions will be discussed:

1. How is the development procedure of Supplementary Reading Materials Based on Biographies of NU Figures for *Pesantren* Bahrul Ulum in Tambakberas Jombang?

C. The Objective of the Study

Based on the research question, the researcher has some purpose. There are:

1. To reveal the development procedure, Supplementary Reading Materials Based on Biographies of NU Figures for *Pesantren* Bahrul Ulum in Tambakberas Jombang.

D. The Scope and Limitation of The Study

This study focuses on developing supplementary reading materials based on the biographies of three prominent *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) figures, specifically highlighting their contributions to education. The scope is limited to discussing their roles, philosophies, and efforts in the field of education, which are intended to inspire and enhance the moral and intellectual development of students in Tambakberas Islamic boarding schools. The three NU figures covered in this study are:

1. **Hadratus Syeikh K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari**

The founder of *Nahdlatul Ulama* and a pioneer of Islamic education in Indonesia. His establishment of *Pondok Pesantren Tebuireng* and his emphasis on combining Islamic and nationalistic values in education are central to this study.

2. **K.H. Wahab Chasbullah**

An educational reformer and activist, known for his role in establishing *Madrasah Nahdlatul Wathan* and promoting modern Islamic education while preserving traditional pesantren values.

3. **K.H. Bisri Syansuri**

A progressive Islamic scholar who contributed significantly to the advancement of pesantren education by incorporating formal learning systems and addressing contemporary issues in the curriculum.

The study focuses exclusively on the educational contributions of these figures and does not delve into other aspects of their lives, such as political or social activism. Additionally, the developed materials are tailored to the specific cultural and educational needs of students in Tambakberas Islamic boarding schools.

E. The Significance of the Study

This study holds significance both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of education by highlighting the importance of culturally relevant materials in teaching English reading comprehension, particularly in the context of Islamic boarding schools. It underscores the integration of local wisdom, moral values, and religious teachings within English supplementary reading materials, filling a gap in existing resources.

Practically, the study provides meaningful insights and resources for teachers, students, and future researcher, as outlined below:

1. For Teachers
 - a. The study equips teachers with culturally relevant supplementary reading materials that integrate the biographies of *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) figures.
 - b. These materials can be used to enhance English reading comprehension lessons while instilling moral and religious values.
 - c. It provides an alternative approach to teaching, fostering students' motivation and engagement through texts that resonate with their cultural and spiritual identity.
2. For Students
 - a. The study offers students meaningful reading materials that improve their English reading skills through exposure to inspiring stories of NU figures.
 - b. It encourages the development of critical thinking and moral awareness by learning from the values embodied by figures like Mbah Hasyim, Mbah Wahab, and Mbah Bisri.
 - c. These materials help students connect language learning with their cultural and religious heritage, making the learning process more relevant and motivating.
3. For Future Researcher
 - a. The study provides a foundation for further research on culturally relevant teaching materials in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).
 - b. It opens avenues for exploring other themes or figures in developing supplementary materials for various educational levels.
 - c. This research also highlights the potential of integrating local cultural elements into language education, which can inspire future studies in diverse contexts.

By addressing the needs of teachers and students while contributing to academic discourse, this study bridges the gap between language learning and cultural

education, ensuring a more holistic approach to teaching English in an Islamic boarding school

F. The Definition of the Key Terms

To make the discussion in this study clearer, several important terms are defined as follows:

1. Authentic Materials

Authentic materials are real-life reading or learning resources that were not originally made for teaching purposes. They can be taken from newspapers, magazines, stories, or online content that reflect how English is used naturally in daily life. Using authentic materials helps students improve their reading comprehension and makes learning more meaningful because the content feels real and relevant to their experiences.

2. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension means the ability to understand and interpret written texts effectively. It includes finding main ideas, understanding details, making inferences, and connecting what is read to prior knowledge. In the context of learning English as a foreign language, improving comprehension depends on using reading materials that match students' levels and interests.

3. **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an instructional approach in which students learn subject matter content and a foreign language simultaneously. CLIL emphasizes four key components, known as the 4Cs Framework: Content (subject knowledge), Communication (language use), Cognition (thinking skills), and Culture (intercultural understanding). Through CLIL, language learning becomes more meaningful because students use English as a tool for understanding academic content, promoting deeper learning, engagement, and real-world language use.

4. Supplementary Reading Material

Supplementary reading materials are additional texts or reading resources used to support the main textbook or lesson. These materials help students practice their reading skills, build vocabulary, and strengthen their comprehension. For students in Islamic boarding schools, supplementary materials that include local and cultural themes can make English learning more interesting and meaningful.

5. Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren)

An Islamic boarding school, or *pesantren*, is an educational institution where students live and study under the guidance of *kyai* (Islamic scholars). It combines religious and general education and emphasizes moral and spiritual development. The *pesantren* environment also supports literacy and the formation of good character among students.

6. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Figures

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) figures are respected Islamic scholars and leaders who played major roles in developing Islamic education and preserving the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah in Indonesia. Figures such as Hadratus Syaikh K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, K.H. Wahab Chasbullah, and K.H. Bisri Syansuri are known for their dedication to education, character building, and national awareness. Their biographies can be used as inspiring reading materials for students in *pesantren*.