

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews key theories supporting the development of supplementary reading materials based on the biographies of *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) figures. The discussion focuses on reading, supplementary reading, Approaches and Methods in English Language Teaching and the educational contributions of NU figures. These concepts provide the foundation for integrating culturally relevant content into English learning.

A. Reading

1. Definition of Reading

Reading is a process in which readers learn something from what they read and incorporate it into an academic context as part of education ¹. In the classroom, some teachers often use text or books as media to deliver the material of a subject. Furthermore, the teacher asks the students to read the texts to grab information so that they could understand the material.

People know that reading always deals with a text which is written in books, newspapers, magazines, and websites. Furthermore, written text has many varieties ² states there are two main categories of the varieties of written texts. The first is nonfiction such as reports, editorials, letters, greeting cards, diaries, journals, memos, messages, announcements, newspapers, journales, academic writings, forms, applications, questionnaires, directions, labels, signs, recipes, bills, maps, manuals, menus, schedules, advertisements, invitations, directories, articles, and dictionaries. The second is fiction such as novels, short stories, and comic strips or cartoons. From those genres of the written text read by the readers, the reader has to interweave their background knowledge to construct meanings after understanding the text to make a better concept of the readers thoughts. To construct meaning and conceive the researcher message from the text, the readers bring information, knowledge, emotion, experience, and culture to the printed words in order. The text does not by itself carry

¹ William Grabe, "Key Issues in L2 Reading Development," n.d.

² Gary J. Brown, "Beyond Print: Reading Digitally," *Library Hi Tech* 19, no. 4 (2001): 390–99, <https://doi.org/10.1108/07378830110412456>.

meaning³. Reading is a process of pronouncing sounds in a conventional way symbolized by a sign that is printed or written in a textbook⁴.

Based on the explanation, reading can be defined as an activity that constructs the meaning of a written text based on the reader's knowledge background to create a better concept so that the reader will learn new things from the information taken from the text.

2. Reading Skills

Reading skills refer to an individual's ability to apply a series of cognitive processes and strategies to effectively comprehend text. According to Keith Rayner⁵, reading skills enable readers to anticipate information, identify main ideas, organize and summarize reading content, monitor comprehension, and correct misunderstandings that occur during the reading process. These skills serve as an important foundation for teachers and researcher in determining appropriate learning strategies to assist students.

In the context of reading comprehension, there are several commonly used sub-skills, such as skimming, scanning, identifying main ideas, understanding supporting details, sequencing or understanding chronological order, making inferences, and vocabulary in context. Each skill has a different function in helping readers build an understanding of the text. Skimming helps readers grasp the general overview, while scanning allows them to quickly find factual information. Identifying main ideas and supporting details strengthens the ability to analyze the content of the reading. Sequencing helps readers understand the flow of time, especially in biographical texts. Meanwhile, inference skills and understanding vocabulary in context help readers grasp deeper and implicit meanings.

These various reading sub-skills are highly relevant to the development of supplementary reading materials based on biographies of NU figures, as biographical texts generally contain factual information, chronological life stories, character development, and implicit values.

³ Brown.

⁴ Luluk Choirun et al., "Designing ERT APPS (E-Reading Text) for Senior High School," *SCHOOLAR: Social and Literature Study in Education* 1, no. 3 (2021): 167–70.

⁵ Keith Rayner et al., "How Psychological Science Informs the Teaching of Reading," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 2, no. 2 (2001): 31–74, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1529-1006.00004>.

Students need scanning skills to identify important facts such as birth dates, historical events, or the contributions of NU figures. Sequencing skills are necessary to understand the development of a figure's life over time. Skimming and identifying main ideas help students grasp the major themes in a biography, while supporting details provide a deeper understanding of the figure's actions and influence. Inference skills enable students to interpret the moral values, leadership traits, and social contributions of NU figures more deeply. Interpreting vocabulary based on context is crucial because biographical texts often contain religious, historical, and cultural terms that require contextual understanding.

Mastering these skills not only improves students' comprehension of texts but also increases their engagement and interest in reading. In an academic context, reading serves as a means of acquiring new knowledge, and successful learning occurs when students are able to construct new understandings and apply them both in real-life situations and in academic assessments. Therefore, providing students with reading skills through structured supplementary materials—particularly those based on culturally relevant biographical texts of NU figures—will significantly improve their comprehension, critical thinking skills, and academic achievement. However, becoming a skilled reader requires consistent practice. Students must gradually engage in a variety of reading activities to develop the ability to interpret information coherently and meaningfully from the texts they read.

In conclusion, mastery of various reading sub-skills is a crucial factor in helping students understand biographical texts in depth and meaningfully. Supplemental reading materials based on biographies of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) figures can be an effective means of practicing these skills because their content is rich in factual information, chronology, and character values. By providing structured reading exercises based on these sub-skills, students can improve their comprehension, critical thinking skills, and overall academic readiness.

3. Type of Reading

According to Patel and Praveen⁶, there are some types of reading Such as intensive reading, extensive reading, reading aloud, and silent reading.

a. Intensive reading

Intensive reading is a form of reading that focuses on language and vocabulary taught by the teacher in class, and that language and vocabulary it is existence in poetry, novels, or other sources. For example, students focus on the linguistic or semantic details of a lesson, and focus on structural details such as grammar.

b. Extensive reading

Extensive reading is a type of reading in which learners read texts to have fun and develop general reading skills. For example, the students read as many different types of books as they do magazines, newspapers, and magazines as they can, mainly for fun, and only need a general understanding of the content.

c. Reading Aloud

Read Aloud reads out loud and clearly. For instance: Read poems, dialogues, and other types of texts. That's to say.

d. Silent Reading

Silent reading is designed to train students to read without a voice so that students can focus their attention or thoughts on it and understand it. Example: The students read a text by heart.

The researcher uses silent reading in the implementation of media. Because in the media, there is a reading exercise that is given several points then students can read with a focus on the reading, so it does not disturb their friends. And students can concentrate on answering questions that have been given to students.

4. Purposes of Reading

⁶ R. M. Wilson, *English Language, Year's Work in English Studies*, vol. 36, 1955, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ywes/XXXVI.1.44>.

As previously established, reading is an active and cognitive process that helps one derive meaning from a text. Thus, proficient readers are able to determine and define the reading goals in order to reflect on the reading job and draw an effective interpretation. As a result, it's critical that readers understand why they are reading. The following are the reading purposes that Grabe and Stoller⁷ looked into.

a. Reading to search for simple information

Reading to find basic information is typically done by scanning specific material and speculating where the important information is located until a broad concept is created. One instance of reading to get basic information is when someone looks up a person's phone number in a phone book by examining the specific details they require. This goal is typically shown in the lateral questions in a classroom setting.

b. Reading to learn from texts

Reading for learning usually takes place, particularly in academic settings. Since they must learn a significant amount of information from the specific text, readers must be able to organize the necessary information and retain the primary concepts and supporting facts. In order to convey the stronger conclusions, readers typically reread the material after reading it for learning purposes.

c. Reading to integrate information, write and critique texts

Academic learning also frequently involves reading for information integration, writing, and text critique. It implies that readers must read in order to choose, comprehend, and assess the data that is provided in the text. They can then choose what to include and how to incorporate it, which is necessary for many academic assignments.

d. Reading for general comprehension

The idea of broad comprehension, of which the construction of meaning is fundamental, is unquestionably the most significant reason to read. Because it underpins and supports the majority of

⁷ F. L. Grabe, W., & Stoller, "Teaching and Researching Reading," *Pearson Education*, 2002.

other reading goals, reading for general comprehension is both complex and essential. Finding the text's primary concepts and pertinent supporting ideas requires students to connect the text's material with their prior knowledge, which is essentially a cognitive activity. Put another way, students are not reading if they do not comprehend the text's meaning.

However, reading for general comprehension is the goal of reading at the senior high school level, as required by basic competence. Students must be able to recognize the main ideas, supporting details, vocabulary in context, social function, generic structures, and linguistic features of specific texts. Reading comprehension is also regarded as the fundamental goal of reading and the true essence of reading, as was previously noted.

In other words Grabe & Stoller⁸ highlight, reading for general comprehension involves a number of methods, such as the following, which illustrate the complexity of reading comprehension: a) stating the reason for reading, b) using prior knowledge to activate it, c) using the title to preview the text, d) making predictions about its content, e) verifying those predictions, f) remembering the meaning of words, g) asking questions about the text, h) figuring out the answers, i) connecting the text to prior knowledge, j) identifying the author's intention behind the text structure and summarizing information, k) drawing conclusions from the content, l) relating one section of the text to another, m) speculating a new word from the context, and n) reflecting.

To keep things simple, Grabe and Stoller⁹ go on to say that proficient readers engage in the following comprehension processes that require the active use of the previously mentioned cognitive processes: quickly identifying words, remembering word information, connecting pronoun references, constructing the overall structure of the text, integrating and restructuring information, and establishing main ideas and inferences. As a result, readers are considered proficient readers if they can predict, infer, and recall word meanings while integrating textual information with prior knowledge.

⁸ Grabe, W., & Stoller.

⁹ Grabe, W., & Stoller.

In conclusion, it is important to carefully consider the following reading goals before starting to read: reading for general comprehension, learning from texts, integrating knowledge, writing and critiquing texts, and searching for basic information. Reading for general understanding in the classroom is done, so that students, particularly those in their senior year of high school, can comprehend and know what they have read.

B. Supplementary reading

According to Atwell, N¹⁰. Supplementary reading refers to additional texts provided to students to enhance their understanding, enjoyment, and engagement with reading beyond the primary curriculum. These materials are designed to complement the main instructional content and offer diverse reading experiences.

1. Types of Supplementary Reading Materials

Supplementary reading materials serve as invaluable tools to enrich the learning experience by offering diverse perspectives, engaging formats, and opportunities to develop critical literacy skills. These materials are designed to complement the primary curriculum and foster a deeper appreciation for reading. Below are several types of supplementary reading materials, along with their significance and benefits:

a) Fiction books

Fictional books offer imaginative narratives that transport readers to different worlds, allowing them to experience diverse cultures, emotions, and perspectives. Genres such as fantasy, science fiction, historical fiction, and contemporary drama encourage creativity, empathy, and emotional intelligence. Fiction helps readers connect with universal themes, develop a deeper understanding of human experiences, and strengthen their ability to relate to others¹¹. Moreover, stories with relatable characters and settings engage readers, making learning enjoyable and meaningful.

¹⁰ N. Atwell, *The Reading Zone: How to Help Kids Become Skilled, Passionate, Habitual, Critical Readers*. (Scholastic, 2007).

¹¹ M. Nikolajeva, "Reading for Learning: Cognitive Approaches to Children's Literature.," *John Benjamins Publishing Company*, 2014.

For example, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling (Fantasy).

b) Non-Fiction Books

Non-fiction books provide factual, structured information that broadens knowledge and enhances academic skills. They cover a wide range of topics, including history, science, biographies, and self-help, offering readers insights into real-world issues and phenomena. These resources are particularly valuable for developing critical thinking and analytical skills, as they encourage readers to evaluate and synthesize information¹². For example, book *Hasyim Asy'ari: Kyai, Pemimpin, dan Pahlawan Nasional* oleh Abdul Mun'im DZ. Non-fiction materials also help students build subject-specific vocabulary and stay informed about global events and discoveries.

c) Magazines and Newspapers

Magazines and newspapers are dynamic sources of information that connect learners to current events, scientific discoveries, and societal issues. Articles often feature concise, engaging content that appeals to varied age groups, making them excellent tools for developing reading fluency and comprehension. Newspapers also provide authentic language exposure, enhancing vocabulary and critical analysis¹³. *Example National Geographic Kids (Educational Magazine for Children)*. For younger readers, age-appropriate magazines offer a mix of entertainment and education, motivating them to explore diverse topics.

d) Poetry and Drama

Poetry and drama cultivate an appreciation for the aesthetic qualities of language. Poetry, with its rhythmic patterns and figurative language, enhances phonemic awareness and expressive skills. It fosters emotional literacy by encouraging readers to connect

¹² N. K. Duke, “3.6 Minutes per Day: The Scarcity of Informational Texts in First Grade.,” *Reading Research Quarterly* 35(3), 202 (2000).

¹³ J. Suk, “An Investigation on Free Voluntary Reading of a Group of EFL Students ,” *International Journal of English Linguistics* 7(5), 1–10 (2017).

with themes on a personal¹⁴. Drama, whether read or performed, builds understanding of character development, narrative structure, and dialogue. Participation in drama activities also improves communication skills and teamwork. For example: *here the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein (Poetry for Children).

e) Graphic Novels and Illustrated Books

Graphic novels and illustrated books blend visual storytelling with textual content, making them highly engaging for diverse learners. They are particularly effective for reluctant readers and individuals who benefit from visual aids. According to Carter¹⁵, the combination of images and text supports comprehension by offering contextual clues and engaging the reader's imagination. These materials often tackle complex themes in an accessible format, encouraging deeper discussions and critical thinking. For example: "Si Juki" by Faza Meonk

f) Digital Resources

Digital reading materials, such as e-books, online articles, and interactive platforms, represent a modern approach to literacy¹⁶. They integrate multimedia features, such as audio narration, animations, and hyperlinks, which create an interactive learning experience. Digital tools also support accessibility by offering customizable font sizes, audio options, and language translations, ensuring inclusivity. Furthermore, platforms like digital libraries and educational apps provide a wide range of content, making learning convenient and adaptable to individual needs. For example: Google Classroom, Google Scholar, *Perpusnas Digital*, and *Sribd*

Based on the types, the researcher conducted non-fiction Books to develop Supplementary Reading Materials Based on Biographies of NU Figures for Islamic Boarding Schools in Tambakberas, because Non-fiction materials also

¹⁴ D. I Hanauer, "Poetry as Research: Exploring Second Language Poetry Writing.," *John Benjamins Publishing Company*, 2010.

¹⁵ J. B. Carter, "Carving a Niche: Graphic Novels in the English Language Arts Classroom.," *In Building Literacy Connections with Graphic Novels: Page by Page, Panel by Panel (Pp. 1-9). National Council of Teachers of English.*, 2007.

¹⁶ M. C. (2013). McKenna, "Digital Literacy.," *In Handbook of Research on Reading Comprehension (Pp. 1-22). Routledge.*

help students build subject-specific vocabulary and stay informed about global events and discoveries

C. Approaches and Methods in English Language Teaching

Teaching methods play a crucial role in English language instruction, as they determine how learning materials are delivered and how students engage in the learning process. In recent years, the development of language teaching methodologies has shifted from traditional form-focused approaches to more communicative, contextual, and learner-centered approaches. Contemporary studies emphasize that effective language teaching should not only focus on linguistic knowledge but also on meaningful communication, interaction, and real-world application. Therefore, understanding various teaching methods is essential to identify the most appropriate approach for enhancing students' language skills, particularly in reading comprehension¹⁷.

1. Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is one of the earliest methods in language teaching, focusing on the explicit teaching of grammar rules and the translation of texts¹⁸. This method aims to develop reading and writing skills through the analysis of linguistic structures. However, recent studies highlight that GTM tends to limit students' opportunities to use language communicatively and meaningfully, making it less relevant in modern language learning contexts that emphasize interaction and communication.

2. Direct Method

The Direct Method emphasizes the exclusive use of the target language in classroom instruction, aiming to create a natural language learning environment. Students learn through direct exposure, interaction, and contextual understanding rather than translation¹⁹. Although this method supports the development of speaking skills and spontaneous

¹⁷ Haifa Ali Salem Mansoor Al Awlaqi and Imam Ghozali, "Is Oral Communication Apprehension Reasonable?: A Study on Sociocultural Factors Among Indonesian EFL Learners," *REiLA : Journal of Research and Innovation in Language* 5, no. 3 (2023): 252–65, <https://doi.org/10.31849/reila.v5i3.16634>.

¹⁸ Sayeed Asif Akramy et al., "Afghan EFL Teachers' Perceptions towards Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) Afghan EFL Teachers' Perceptions towards," *Cogent Education* 9, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2127503>.

¹⁹ Sivaram Ambikasaran et al., "Fast Direct Methods for Gaussian Processes," n.d., 1–14.

communication, its effectiveness may be limited in large classrooms or in contexts where students have varying levels of proficiency.

3. Audio-Lingual Method (ALM)

The Audio-Lingual Method is based on behaviorist theory, which views language learning as a process of habit formation. This method relies heavily on repetition, drilling, and pattern practice to reinforce correct language use. While it can improve pronunciation and grammatical accuracy, recent research suggests that it lacks emphasis on meaning-making and critical thinking, which are essential components of effective language learning in modern educational contexts²⁰.

4. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) focuses on developing learners' communicative competence by encouraging the use of language in real-life contexts. This approach promotes interaction through activities such as discussions, role plays, and problem-solving tasks. Recent studies indicate that CLT enhances student engagement, motivation, and language use by shifting the focus from form to meaning, making it one of the most widely adopted approaches in contemporary language teaching²¹.

5. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Content and Language Integrated Learning is a dual-focused educational approach that integrates content learning and language learning simultaneously. Recent research emphasizes that CLIL enables students to develop both subject knowledge and language proficiency in a meaningful and contextualized manner²². It also promotes higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis and evaluation, as students engage with content through the target language. This makes CLIL particularly effective in reading instruction, where comprehension involves both linguistic and cognitive processing.

²⁰ Jurnal Suluh Pendidikan and E- Issn, "THE EFFECT OF THE AUDIO LINGUAL METHOD ON STUDENTS' SPEAKING ACHIEVEMENT" 9, no. 1 (2021).

²¹ Moh Abraham and Akbar Eisenring, "The Importance of Teacher – Students Interaction in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)," no. 2000 (2019): 46–54.

²² Keith Mathew Graham and L Quentin Dixon, "Language and Content Outcomes of CLIL and EMI : A Systematic Review" 11 (2018): 19–37, <https://doi.org/10.5294/laclil.2018.11.1.2>.

6. Task-Based Learning (TBL)

Task-Based Learning is a learner-centered approach that uses tasks as the core unit of instruction. In this approach, students use language to complete meaningful and goal-oriented activities, such as problem-solving or decision-making tasks. Recent studies show that Task-Based Learning enhances student engagement, motivation, and language proficiency by promoting authentic language use and interaction. Additionally, TBL supports the development of critical thinking and collaborative learning skills, making it highly relevant in modern language classrooms²³.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that traditional methods such as the Grammar Translation Method and Audio-Lingual Method are less suitable for contemporary language learning, as they focus primarily on linguistic forms rather than meaningful communication. In contrast, modern approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching, Content and Language Integrated Learning, and Task-Based Learning provide more interactive, contextual, and student-centered learning experiences.

In this study, Content and Language Integrated Learning is selected as the primary framework because it effectively integrates content and language learning. However, since CLIL requires practical implementation strategies, Task-Based Learning is employed as a supporting method. The integration of these two approaches has been shown to create a more effective learning environment by combining conceptual understanding with meaningful task-based activities.

D. The Story of NU Figures

The history of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is deeply rooted in the significant contributions of its three founding figures: KH Hasyim Asy'ari, KH Wahab Chasbullah, and KH Bisri Syansuri. Each of them played a pivotal role in advancing Islamic education in Indonesia, leaving behind a legacy that continues to inspire.

a. KH Hasyim Asy'ari: The Pioneer of Traditional Islamic Education

²³ Muhammad Badrus Sholeh, Kisman Salija, and Sahril Nur, "Task-Based Learning (TBL) in EFL Classroom : From Theory to Practice" 3, no. 4 (2020): 138–43.

KH M Hasyim Asy'ari was born on February 14, 1871 (coinciding with 24 Dzulqa'idah 1287 H) in Gedang Village, about two kilometers east of Jombang, East Java. He was given the name Muhammad Hasyim by his father, Kiai Asy'ari, the founder of Keras Pesantren, located 8 kilometers from Jombang. Hasyim's grandfather, Kiai Usman, was the founder of Gedang Pesantren in Jombang, which was established in the 1850s. Additionally, his great-grandfather, Kiai Sihah, was the founder of Tambakberas Pesantren in Jombang. From this family lineage, it is evident that Hasyim Asy'ari came from a renowned pesantren family. Socially, Javanese kiai (Islamic scholars) at that time were often bound by strong familial ties, which led to the belief that leadership in pesantren was a right reserved for kiai families.

From a very young age, Hasyim Asy'ari, who was given the title Hadratus Syekh (Great Teacher) by his fellow kiai, was known for his intelligence, diligence, and strong commitment to learning. At the age of six, he began studying religion under the guidance of his father, Kiai Asy'ari, in Keras Village, near Jombang, where his father had moved in 1876. He learned subjects such as theology, Islamic law, Arabic, tafsir (exegesis), and hadith. By the age of 13, Hasyim Asy'ari was already helping his father teach students much older than him. At 15, he began his education at various pesantren, moving between different religious schools in East Java and Madura.

In 1891, he studied at the well-known pesantren of Kiai Ya'kub in Siwalan Panji, Sidoarjo, East Java. After just one year at this pesantren, he married his teacher's daughter, Khadijah. This marriage was a gesture of respect and acknowledgment from the teacher to his student. In 1892, Kiai Ya'kub sent the newlyweds to Mecca to perform the Hajj and continue their studies. After spending seven months in Mecca, Hasyim Asy'ari's wife passed away, and he returned to Indonesia. Three months later, he traveled back to Saudi Arabia to continue his education. During his seven years in Mecca, Hasyim Asy'ari studied under scholars such as Sheikh Mahfudz al-Tarmisi, an expert in hadith, and Sheikh Ahmad Khatib from Minangkabau. Through his travels and studies at various pesantren both in Indonesia and

abroad, Hasyim Asy'ari's knowledge grew immensely. As Mahmud Yunus (1995: 234), an author and historian of Islamic education in Indonesia, commented, by the time Hasyim Asy'ari returned from Mecca, he was already filled with profound religious knowledge. This text seeks to trace, in reflection of the centenary of NU, the significant contributions of KH Hasyim Asy'ari to the development of education in Indonesia²⁴.

b. KH Wahab Chasbullah: Reformer of Islamic Education

KH Wahab Chasbullah, born on December 1, 1888, in Jombang, East Java, was a prominent Indonesian Islamic scholar who played a significant role in the development of Islamic education and the establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)²⁵. From an early age, he demonstrated a strong interest in religious studies. His initial education began in the pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), where he studied at the well-known Tebuireng Pesantren, which was led by his grandfather, KH Hasyim Asy'ari. At this pesantren, KH Wahab received foundational instruction in Islamic disciplines such as fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), tafsir (Quranic exegesis), hadith (Prophet Muhammad's sayings), and Arabic. His time at Tebuireng became a solid foundation for his intellectual and religious development.

KH Wahab showed remarkable intellectual abilities early on, particularly in his religious studies. After completing his basic education at Pesantren Tebuireng, he furthered his studies in Mecca, where he attended several prestigious religious institutions²⁶. In Mecca, he studied under prominent scholars, including Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, a well-respected Islamic scholar from Minangkabau. His experience in Mecca exposed him to diverse perspectives on Islamic teachings and deepened his understanding of the religion.

Upon returning to Indonesia, KH Wahab Chasbullah continued to contribute to the development of Islamic education. He not only taught at various pesantren but also played an active role in advocating for an inclusive approach to Islamic education. He emphasized moderation and tolerance

²⁴ Toto Suharto, "KH Hasyim Asy'ari Dan Peradaban Pendidikan Di Indonesia," NU Online, 2023.

²⁵ A. Wahab, A. Wahab, *KH Wahab Chasbullah: Teacher and Hero of Islamic Education* (Jakarta: Kompas publishing, 2011).

²⁶ M. Abdul Muis, *KH Wahab Chasbullah and His Contributions to Islamic Education in Indonesia*. (Malang: UMM Pres, 2020).

within the Islamic teachings. KH Wahab Chasbullah was instrumental in the founding of Nahdlatul Ulama in 1926, an organization that became a significant force not only in religious outreach but also in promoting the advancement of Islamic education across Indonesia. He is considered one of the key figures responsible for shaping NU into a large and influential organization in the realm of Islamic education in Indonesia.

c. KH Bisri Syansuri: Advocate of Women's Education

KH Bisri Syansuri, a prominent Islamic scholar from Indonesia, was born on 18 April 1889 in Rembang, Central Java. He was the son of KH Syamsul Arifin, a respected Islamic scholar and leader of a pesantren. From a young age, KH Bisri Syamsuri was immersed in an environment that deeply valued religious education. His first exposure to formal religious learning began at the pesantren led by his father, where he studied Islamic sciences such as fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), tafsir (interpretation of the Qur'an), and hadith (the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad).

After completing his early education at his father's pesantren, KH Bisri Syamsuri continued his studies at several other renowned pesantren in Java, including Pesantren Lirboyo in Kediri, which was known for its high level of scholarly excellence. His education at these pesantren focused not only on traditional religious texts but also on the application of Islamic teachings in daily life. KH Bisri's intellectual curiosity and religious discipline were further nurtured in these institutions, where he became well-versed in Islamic law and philosophy.

In his pursuit of knowledge, KH Bisri Syamsuri also journeyed to Mecca, where he studied at the esteemed religious institutions in the Holy City. During his time in Mecca, he was under the tutelage of distinguished scholars such as Sheikh Muhammad Amin al-Kurdi and Sheikh Abdul Wahab al-Syahrani. This exposure to a variety of Islamic traditions and teachings significantly broadened his intellectual horizon. After returning to Indonesia, KH Bisri Syamsuri became actively involved in educational and religious activities, founding and managing Pesantren Raudlatul Ulum in Rembang. He was a key figure in promoting Islamic education in Indonesia and was instrumental in the development of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). KH Bisri's contributions to both religious education and social reform were significant,

as he emphasized the importance of a balanced approach to Islamic teachings, integrating traditional Islamic knowledge with modern practices²⁷.

The educational legacies of KH Hasyim Asy'ari, KH Wahab Chasbullah, and KH Bisri Syansuri not only advanced Islamic education but also shaped the socio-religious identity of Indonesia. The pesantrens they established served as models of education that emphasized not only religious knowledge but also character building and community empowerment.

d. Why and When NU Was Founded

Nahdlatul Ulama was founded during a period of significant transformation in the Islamic world, particularly in the early 20th century. Modernist movements inspired by Middle Eastern reformers, such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, were gaining traction and advocating for a return to the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* while rejecting local traditions. These movements often criticized traditionalist practices, such as the veneration of saints and the use of local customs in Islamic rituals. In response, traditionalist scholars in Indonesia recognized the need for an organized effort to protect their religious identity. NU was thus born as a vehicle to preserve these traditions while adapting to the challenges of modernity.

Nahdlatul Ulama stands as a testament to the resilience of Indonesia's traditional Islamic heritage. From its inception in 1926 to its continued relevance in contemporary society, NU embodies the spirit of adaptability, inclusivity, and devotion to the principles of *Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah*. Through the contributions of its founders and leaders, NU has cemented its role as a cornerstone of Indonesian Islam and a guiding light for Muslims navigating the complexities of a changing world.

²⁷ A. Abdullah, *KH Bisri Syamsuri and His Influence on Islamic Education in Java*. (Yogyakarta: UGM Press., 2019).