

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter presents background of the study in the first section. It is continued with several fundamental sections. They are provided in the following order, research questions, limitation of the problem, hypothesis, research objectives, and the research significances

1.1 Background of the Study

Learning English becomes meaningful and effective if students are given the opportunity to link their school activities to real-life experience. Students will also relate to the learning material when it is close to their life. For students of Islamic school, the material that is given is expected to be both contextual and in line with their need as Muslims. Therefore, due to its contextual content, Islamic texts are offered as one of the alternative to be used in teaching English in Islamic school, which is for teaching reading in particular.

English in a general school and an Islamic school is usually different in terms of the materials used. Islamic school teachers tend to insert the Islamic knowledge and values on the English learning since the teaching and learning process must enroll the school policy where the school uses Islam as the foundation of the whole teaching and learning process. It is in line with Yaacob and Embong (2008) who state that Islamic schools, either public school or private, are obliged to implement a curriculum that is integrated and strive to comprehend the aim of Islamic education. However, Nashrudin (2015) explains that it is possible to accommodate two learning goals in the English teaching and learning in Islamic school, which are the national goals in general, and the school curriculum goals in particular.

Students of Islamic school are expected to have modern knowledge with solid Islamic foundation, so it is necessary for them to have the opportunity to learn English and have good comprehension on it while gaining sufficient Islamic knowledge and values at the same time. This can be done by incorporating Islamic material selections, like biographies of important Muslims, both past and present, biographies of the prophets of Allah, e.g., Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the companions, and Muslim women.

Given the fact that teaching students about Islam is obligatory for Muslim teachers and that the values of Islam should also be inserted on any subject learned at school, teaching English in Islamic middle schools is beneficial. Since students of Islamic schools have high interest on topics related to their belief, inserting Islamic messages and values in English is accessible for the teachers. The use of Islamic texts that contain Islamic messages and values does not only make the students more motivated but also learn in a more meaningful way. This is in line with Douglass et al. (2005 in Salahuddin, 2012) who stated that pulling together subjects such as science, language arts, social studies and Islamic Studies in the curriculum to teach a related topic or theme enhances learning in three ways: (1) by making learning meaningful, (2) providing motivation to learn, and (3) serving as a model for implementing life. Thus, integrating Islamic teaching to English will make the learning of the students of Islamic schools become meaningful, motivational, and also give them values to be implemented. In short, using Islamic texts for teaching reading on the English lesson at Islamic school is beneficial for the teachers. Teachers can use Islamic texts to have the students learn and remember new vocabulary and grammar structures, and practice their reading while having more meaningful learning at the same time.

The use of Islamic texts for teaching reading has also attracted many researchers to explore it deeper in their studies. The research they conducted varies from the use of Islamic texts in teaching reading in middle school, to the use of Islamic texts in teaching university students in Indonesia and Malaysia. Their results are in line with the explanation above that the use of Islamic texts is considered able to motivate students and improve their reading comprehension.

However, it has never been further investigated on the significant improvement of using Islamic reading texts on the students' reading comprehension at middle school level. That is why the use of Islamic texts on students' reading comprehension at middle school, particularly in Islamic school must further be inquired.

Thus, based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested to investigate the effect of teaching reading using Islamic texts on the students' reading comprehension and their attitude toward the Islamic texts given to them.

1.2 Research Questions

In line with the background aforementioned, this study attempts to address the following research questions:

1. What does the effect of teaching reading using Islamic texts on the students' reading comprehension?
2. What are students' attitude toward Islamic reading texts given to them?

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This study was conducted to find out the effect of teaching reading using Islamic texts on the students' reading comprehension and to find out students' attitude on the Islamic reading texts given to them. In order to make the research specifically focuses on certain problem, the researcher limited the study on the use of Islamic narrative texts in teaching the third year students of an Islamic middle school in Bandung.

1.4 Hypothesis

Given that Islamic text can be beneficial to be used for teaching reading in Islamic schools based on numerical previous studies and underlying theories, it is hypothesized that there is a significant difference between reading post-test scores of experiment (taught using Islamic texts) and control group (taught using general texts).

1.5 Research Objectives

In line with the research questions stated, the objectives of this research are:

- 1 to find the effectiveness of teaching reading using Islamic texts on the students' reading comprehension
- 2 to know the students' attitude toward Islamic reading texts given to them

1.6 Research Significances

The significances of this research are depicted in two ways: Theoretically, the findings are hoped to give insight for English teachers, especially of Islamic schools, in selecting reading texts that can help their students increase their competence of comprehending texts with maximum progress. Further, this study is expected to contribute to the development of EFL reading instruction, particularly in the contexts of Islamic Schools.