

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is going to give an explanation about the background of the research, research questions, purposes of the research, scope of the research, significances of the research, clarification of the key terms, the organization of the paper, and a concluding remark.

1.1 Background

The existence of English teaching and learning processes in a *pesantren* (an Islamic boarding school) is a response to the globalization, a demand of the community to balance the religious and general knowledge, and a *kyai*'s (a Muslim scholar and the founder and leader of the *pesantren*) awareness of the importance of English language in the modern era. Since the national curriculum only accommodates within school hours, most *pesantrens* develop their own curriculum, including the English curriculum which makes their curricula unique, different from one to another and becomes a characteristic of the *pesantren* itself. The uniqueness of each *pesantren* is influenced by the *kyai* because he is usually privately owned the *pesantren* and he becomes the one who makes decisions regarding the curriculum of the *pesantren* he leads (Dhofier, 1980).

Even though *pesantrens* are known as the traditional Islamic educational institution in Indonesia (Masqon, 2011), they have already considered a curriculum or a program as one of the important elements of *pesantrens* since their existence. Back in the days, the *pesantren* curriculum was based on the 'kitab kuning' (literally translated as 'yellow books' or classical Islamic textbooks) that their *kyais* mastered (Raihani, 2001). If students want to pursue different Islamic studies, then they should go to different *pesantrens*. It can be said that the *pesantren* curriculum was started by the content of the curriculum. When the content of the curriculum becomes the starting point in the curriculum development process, it is classified as a forward design (Richards, 2013).

There are five basic elements of *pesantren* tradition that differentiate *pesantren* among other Islamic education institutions, namely *kyai*, a *pondok*

(dormitories where the *santris* live), a mosque as the central of teaching and learning processes, *santris* (the students of *pesantrens*), and the teaching of ‘*kitab kuning*’ (Dhofier, 1980) as a typical content of *pesantren* curriculum (Raihani, 2012; Rasyid, 2012). In addition, *pesantrens* also have typical teaching methods in delivering curriculum contents known as *sorogan* (personal method) and *wetonan* (collective method in which *kyais* or leaders of *pesantren* reads and translates the Arabic text and *santris* or students of *pesantren* take notes). The main purpose of *pesantren* was to train their *santris* to be ‘*ulama* (Islamic scholars).

A modernization in all aspects of life contributes to the development of *pesantren* through the ages. As modernization applies, *pesantrens*’ curriculum changed in order to adjust into it. In the 1910s, madrasah system of education was introduced and conducted within the *pesantren* education system, teaching methods were reformed, and general subjects such as mathematics, geography, history, Dutch, English, biology, etc. became parts of curriculum contents of some *pesantren* (Dhofier, 1980; Zarkasyi, 2015). Moreover, the curriculum design moves from a forward design to a backward design, in which the curriculum developers determine the outcomes of their teaching and learning processes first, then determine the content and the processes in order to achieves those outcomes (Richards, 2013) which is also known as a systematic approach (Brown, 2001).

The change of the curriculum content classified *pesantren* into two types: *salafi* (traditional) and *khalafi* (modern) *pesantrens*. *Salafi* refers to those *pesantrens* that only teach classical Islamic textbooks and *khalafi* refers to those *pesantrens* that conduct social-natural sciences in their curriculum along with religious sciences within *madarash* (Dhofier, 1980). In addition, modern *pesantrens* (*khalafi*) grow and develop into at least two types. The first is the modern *pesantrens* that develop their own curriculum independently like *Pondok Modern Darussala Gontor* and the second is the modern *pesantren* that combine three curricula, the modern *pesantren* curriculum, the standardized national curriculum of Indonesia for the general subjects supervised under the Ministry of National Education, and the religious subjects supervised under the Ministry of

Religious Affairs. The last two curricula are used in conducting *madrasah* within *pesantren*.

A curriculum is considered as an important aspect of any education institution (Lau, 2001). People tend to make opinions of schools from how well they develop their school curriculum, which is also applied to *pesantrens*. There are four components of the curriculum; they are purposes, contents, methods, and evaluations (Posner, 1992). A curriculum is not a document, a plan, or experiences only but it refers to everything to run the education (Lengkanawati, personal communication, February 4th, 2016). In terms of *pesantren* education, a curriculum refers to everything to run a 24-hours education a day that cover purposes, contents, methods and evaluation because *pesantren* provides dormitories for their *santris*, so the *santris* are fully engaged in all education processes offered by the *pesantrens* from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed. Specifically, the English curriculum in this study refers to the English language program (Richards, 2001) of the modern *pesantren*.

When English becomes a part of the modern *pesantren* curriculum, it is conducted not only during the school hours but also outside the classroom activities which is not supported by the national curriculum of English. Yet, the English curriculum tends to have less time-allotment in the modern *pesantren* curriculum because its curriculum contents are dominated by religious subjects which are presented in Arabic. A comprehensive learning approach which is called an all-in-one system is applied in order to achieve the purpose of English learning in modern *pesantren*, which is to make English as a means of daily communication along with Arabic (Tahir, 2011).

The construction of the English curriculum within a modern *pesantren* curriculum was developed and introduced by *Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor* which was established in 1926 (“Pembukaan Kulliyatu-l-Mu’allimin Al-Islamiyyah,1936”, 2017). Later, this English curriculum becomes the blueprint of other modern *pesantrens* to adapt and develop their own curriculum of English. Consequently, the outcomes of the adaptation are varied according to the purpose and belief of the *kyai* as the curriculum decision-maker. Unlike English curriculum of Indonesia that applied nationally, English curriculum of modern

pesantrens tends to be locally developed, which is different from one to another because those *pesantren* are private Islamic education institutions, which have the authority to develop their own curriculum based on local contents.

In terms of English curriculum, the *pesantren* where this study takes place adapts the national curriculum of English and the English curriculum of one of the oldest *pesantrens* in East Java, which develops its own English curriculum. It is because this *pesantren* conducts formal education through *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* and *Madrasah Aliyah* which are supervised under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and informal education outside the classroom which were adapted from this oldest *pesantren*.

Therefore, an investigation on the English curriculum profile of this modern *pesantren* is required in order to get a clear and detailed description of English curriculum construction and development within a modern *pesantren* context. A review of the construction of the English curriculum at this modern *pesantren* is needed mainly because such research has never been conducted.

A curriculum profile is a part of a school profile that describes the current school curriculum, student characteristics, performance and perspectives (McCartney, 2018). It is used to monitor the school curriculum and its outcomes in order to improve the quality of the curriculum and ensure an optimal educational experience for the students. It is also used to trace changes in the curriculum and its outcomes over time and to note adjustment of content and process needed to evaluate the curriculum. The descriptive data of a curriculum profile can serve as a means for further analysis.

An English curriculum profile of a modern *pesantren* provides a description of the current curriculum construction of English used in the *pesantren*, student characteristics, performance, evaluation, and investigates the needs of *pesantren* in developing the English curriculum through curriculum analysis. The data can be used to improve the quality of the curriculum and to reform the English curriculum through curriculum reconstruction processes (Sundayana, 2016). This study is conducted in order to make sure that the English curriculum in this modern *pesantren* is to not only fulfill the *kyai's* expectations but also meet the requirements of national standard of English. The curriculum

profile of English language curriculum presents here does not only describe the component of the current curriculum but it also describes the curriculum design.

There are three curriculum designs as proposed by Richards (2013); they are forward design, central design, and backward design. It is important to know which English curriculum design the *pesantren* is using because each design reflects a different approach to the development of the curriculum. For example, a backward design that starts curriculum development from the expected learning outcomes leads to a systematic approach of curriculum development (Reisser & Dick, 1996; Sundayana, 2016). A coherence process of curriculum development leads to effective teaching and learning processes. Therefore, this study presents a comprehensive description of the English curriculum profile of one modern *pesantren*. Moreover, the curriculum development process takes need assessment into account. The need assessment helps curriculum developers to figure out stakeholders' preferences or to fulfill community expectations (Print, 1993). It is conducted in order to determine whether the expected learning outcomes are in line with the *santris*' current situation.

Furthermore, even though English is somehow a new thing in the curriculum content of *pesantren*, many alumni of modern *pesantrens* manage to continue their study taking English major at the tertiary level of education, either English literature or English education. The alumni compete with other students from general schools to enroll at this major. It means that they start their college life with the English knowledge they achieved from the *pesantren*. To what extent English teaching and learning processes in *pesantren* involve in the alumni's learning process in their higher education is interesting to be investigated; since there has not been any research found on this matter. Therefore, this study also investigates the alumni's perception of the English curriculum of this modern *pesantren*.

Thus, this study is conducted in order to provide a detailed curriculum analysis or a curriculum profile of an English curriculum at a modern *pesantren* and to find out the alumni's perspective on the curriculum.

1.2 Research Questions

This research is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the English language curriculum profile of a modern *pesantren* (an Islamic boarding school) in Indonesia?
2. What is the alumni's perspective on the English curriculum of the modern *pesantren*?

1.3 Purposes of the Research

There are two purposes for conducting this research.

The first is to investigate the curriculum profile of the English Language of modern *pesantren* in order to get more information about how and why English is taught in a modern *pesantren*. The investigation is conducted through the curriculum analysis as a part of the curriculum reconstruction process. This process enables researchers to figure out the current situation of the English curriculum in *pesantren*, the needs of *pesantrens'* stakeholders, and propose a reform of the English curriculum in *pesantren*. This way, the study is expected to be able to present a comprehensive English curriculum profile of a modern *pesantren*.

The second is to find out alumni's perspective on the English curriculum of a modern *pesantren* in order to investigate the outcomes of teaching and learning processes in this *pesantren*; whether the curriculum helps them to cope up with the English major curriculum at the tertiary level of education. It is also to investigate whether the English curriculum of a modern *pesantren* accommodates the students' needs as a part of the reconstruction curriculum process.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study conducts the first two stages of a systematic curriculum reconstruction model (Sundayana, 2006); they are analysis to the current curriculum used in the *pesantren* and the needs and situational analysis of the *pesantren*.

This study investigates the English curriculum construction of a modern *pesantren* by relying on data gathered from interviews to the purposive participants, documents that consist of curriculum documents, lesson plans, and

textbooks, and observation of both formal and non-formal activities of English teaching and learning processes in the *pesantren*. Modification of curriculum analysis of Posner's and Porter's works are used as guidelines in conducting this study (Sundayana, 2016).

Furthermore, the investigation of students' satisfactory of the modern *pesantren*'s English curriculum is conducted by a semi-structured interview that involves purposive participants with two requirements; first, the alumni completed their high school level at this *pesantren* and second, the alumni took English studies as their major in higher education level. The interview schedule used in this study is adapted from The Kirkpatrick's Four Level of Training Evaluation (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the discussion of English curriculum in modern *pesantrens* which has never been on the spotlight for it is usually covered by the religious curriculum within the *pesantren* itself and it is not under the supervision of National Curriculum of English. For professionals and institutions, the results of this study are expected to help modern *pesantren* that concern with English teachings and learnings to reflect their efforts in constructing their curriculum of English. Hopefully, through this research, the curriculum of English at modern *pesantrens* can be developed and improved to a better one since the investigation of the curriculum of English in this study also seeks the strength and weaknesses that the existing modern *pesantren* English curriculum has.

1.6 Clarification of the Key Terms

In order to give clarity to several terms used in this research, clarification is given to the terms as follow:

Pesantren and *pondok pesantren* are used interchangeably because it refers to the dormitories that are provided for their *santris* (students).

Modern *pesantren* refers to Islamic boarding schools that integrate traditional *pesantren* system of education and modern system of education, in this

case, ‘*madrasah*’, which is denoted by the teaching of *kitab kuning* (Islamic classical textbooks) and general subjects in the system.

Curriculum profile refers to a detail description of the purpose, content, method, and evaluation of the current curriculum or learning program used in a school that can be analyzed through curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation (Abdullah, Syahidin & Abdussalam, 2016).

Curriculum reconstruction is an evaluation process that is conducted through investigating the current curriculum, the needs assessment and the challenge that the new curriculum might get in the future (Sundayana, 2016).

Kyai is ‘*ulama* (an Islamic scholar) and usually, he is the founder and also the leader of a *pesantren*. In a *pesantren* education institution, the *kyai* is considered to be, as Dhofier stated, “the absolute source of power and authority” in all aspects of life in *pesantren* (1980). He is not the principle of the school/*madrasah* and his position tends to be higher than the principles of the *madrasah* in terms of policymaking. It is because the *madrasah* is a part of the *pesantren* system.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This thesis consists of five chapters. Each chapter covers different areas of the study.

Chapter I presents the introduction. It covers the background of the study, the research questions, the purposes of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, clarification of the key terms, the organization of the paper, and the concluding remark.

Chapter II presents the literature review. It provides all related theories that are used in this study. It covers reviews on theories of curriculum, curriculum analysis, curriculum design, curriculum structure, history of *pesantren*, and the development of *pesantren* in Indonesia.

Chapter III explains the research methodology used in this study. It covers the research method, data collection, procedure of data collection, data analysis, and procedures of data analysis.

Chapter IV presents the findings and the discussions of the study based on the research questions.

Chapter V describes the conclusion of the study and recommendations for further studies. The research will be then completed by the references and appendices.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has highlighted the introduction part of this research. The introduction covers the background, the research questions, the purpose of the research, significances of the research, clarification of the key terms, and the organization of the present research. The following chapter will discuss the literature review of the present study.