

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study, presenting its background, the rationale for choosing the topic, research questions, research objectives, and the profound significance of the study in the context of Islamic education and multimedia-based teaching.

1.1 Background of the Study

In this era of globalization, English plays a vital role in international communication. As a global language, English is widely used by people worldwide. Salomone (2022) stated that about 1.5 billion, or roughly 20% of the total world population of 7.7 billion, use English, including native and non-native speakers. Therefore, various fields, especially education, make this language the primary means of instruction and communication. As Kurniawan (2023) mentioned, “Learning English has become a necessity due to the prevalence of English-authored higher education materials.” By mastering English, students and teachers can easily access a broader range of educational resources and establish communication and collaboration with colleagues from different regions around the world. For students in Indonesia, this serves as a reminder that Indonesian students need to develop strong English language skills to face global challenges in both education and their professional careers. Consequently, English language proficiency is a crucial competency for students in Indonesia to compete effectively with those from other countries.

The success of English language learning is not only supported by the curriculum and facilities; teachers also play a very important role in supporting the success of this learning process. Teachers not only have a role in delivering material, but also play a role in various learning activities. Brown (2007) states that teachers have five roles in learning, namely controller, director, manager, facilitator, and resource. With the diversity of teachers' roles, their knowledge, beliefs, and experiences can influence how they teach, determine strategies, and create an effective learning environment. This aligns with what Sudirman et al.

(2022) stated: teachers' beliefs about students will influence how they teach, respond to students' actions, assess students' understanding, and engage in professional development. This is also reinforced by what Robbins and Judge (2024, p .212) state, that perception influences a person to make a decision. Therefore, exploring teachers' perceptions is necessary to understand how English language learning takes place in various school contexts. This is especially true in Islamic-based schools, which have different characteristics from public schools.

In the context of Islamic-based schools such as Islamic senior high schools (Madrasah Aliyah), English language teaching has its own characteristics. An Islamic senior high school, often referred to as a Madrasah Aliyah (MA), is a level of education that focuses not only on academics but also on strengthening Islamic character across all subjects, including English. This aligns with the decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 347 of 2022, which states that Madrasah Aliyah graduates should possess a moderate religious attitude, integrity, respect for diversity, social awareness, and critical thinking skills to face global challenges (*Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2022*). Therefore, English teachers in Madrasah Aliyah must align their teaching with the Islamic context without compromising the main objectives of English language learning.

However, in the teaching process, English language teaching in Islamic-based schools still faces various challenges. One of the main obstacles is that many of the English teaching materials available today reflect Western culture. Some materials even cover celebrations that are not relevant to Islamic culture, such as Easter and Valentine's Day, so teachers must explain cultural and religious aspects to students (Hassim & Abdul Aziz, 2021; Sadri, 2024). This is certainly a challenge for teachers to maintain the characteristics of an Islamic-based school without neglecting the development of students' English language skills. Astuti et al. (2024) stated that the lack of support in providing Islamic-based materials makes it difficult for teachers to find teaching materials that align with the philosophy of Islamic education. This shows that the process of teaching English in Islamic senior high

schools is not without obstacles. Thus, it is important to understand teachers' perceptions of English teaching in Islamic senior high schools and the challenges they face in the process. Through a deep understanding of teachers' perceptions, we can gain a realistic picture of teaching practices, teachers' beliefs, and the challenges they face.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of English language teaching and learning in Islamic-based schools (Idris et al., 2024; Fariza, 2022; Huda, 2023; Hasyim et al., 2024; Astuti et al., 2024; Herlinda & Yakoh, 2024; Sadri, 2024). These studies do discuss the process of teaching English in Islamic schools. However, there are still a few studies that highlight the perceptions of English teachers in Islamic schools, especially in Islamic high schools in Garut. These factors highlight the need for further research to explore this matter. Given the gaps in previous research, this study aims to explore English teachers' perceptions of the English language learning process in Islamic senior high schools, focusing on their experiences and the challenges they face in the process. This research is expected to provide educators in Islamic schools with insights into how English is taught in Madrasah Aliyah, thereby improving the quality of teaching.

1.2 Reason for Choosing the Topic

In choosing this research topic, several main aspects have been considered by the researcher, including:

1.2.1 Personal Experience

The selection of this topic also departs from the personal experience of researchers who have studied at Madrasah Aliyah. This raises curiosity: how should English learning in Islamic schools still maintain the essence of Islam in every aspect of learning?

1.2.2 Relevance to the Educational Context

This research topic was chosen to contribute to the field of English Education, particularly in Islamic-based schools, to understand how English teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and experience in teaching English at Islamic senior

high schools. Recognizing the lack of relevance of learning materials is a challenge for teachers to adjust their teaching process to incorporate English instruction without compromising Islamic values.

1.3 Research Question

This research is based on two main questions formulated as follows:

1. What are English teachers' experiences of teaching English at Islamic senior high schools in Garut?
2. What challenges do they face in teaching English at Islamic senior high schools in Garut?

1.4 Research Objective

To ensure a clear direction for this study, the researcher formulated the following research objectives:

1. To explore English teachers' experiences of teaching English at Islamic senior high schools in Garut.
2. To identify the challenges faced by English teachers in teaching English at Islamic senior high schools in Garut.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of teaching practices that are in line with the characteristics of Islamic-based schools. In addition, this study can be a reference for other researchers who are interested in conducting research in the field of English Education in Islamic-based schools, especially at the Islamic senior high school or Madrasah Aliyah level.

Practically, this study can serve as input for policymakers in Islamic-based schools in developing a comprehensive curriculum to support English teaching in Islamic-based schools. Additionally, this study can serve as a reference for teachers to develop innovative English learning strategies that align with Islamic rules in Islamic-based schools.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

1.6.1 Scope

This study focuses on teachers' perceptions and challenges in the process of teaching English at Madrasah Aliyah in Garut Regency. The scope of the study is limited to:

1. Teachers' Perceptions

According to Robbins and Judge (2024), perceptions are shaped by various characteristics of the perceiver, such as past experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge or expectations (p. 203). Referring to this view, the present study limits its scope to teachers' practical experience in teaching English and managing classrooms in Islamic schools. Experience is considered most relevant to understanding how teachers view and implement the English language teaching process.

2. Teachers' Challenges

The challenges faced by teachers include various obstacles in implementing English teaching at Islamic senior high schools in Garut.

1.6.2 Limitations

The researchers acknowledge that this study has several limitations that require consideration. First, the study was conducted in only three Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) in Garut Regency, with five teachers as participants. This limited number and location of participants are certainly not representative of all Islamic schools, especially those located outside Garut or at different educational levels, which may have significant differences.

Second, the data collection technique used in this study was solely through interviews, without direct observation of classroom learning processes. Therefore, this study remains limited to teachers' perceptions, as it does not directly observe the implementation of teaching and learning activities.

Third, this study focused solely on teachers' perceptions, thus not exploring the perspectives of other parties, such as students, principals, or parents, who also play a role in the learning process.

The researchers hope that these limitations can serve as considerations and references for future research, which can be conducted with a broader scope, involving more participants, using diverse data collection techniques, and considering the perspectives of others to achieve more comprehensive results

1.7 Definition of Terminologies

To clarify the meaning of the terms used, this study defines several key concepts as follows.

1.7.1 English Teachers

In this study, English teachers refer to teachers who teach English at Islamic senior high schools in Garut.

1.7.2 Perceptions

According to Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary (Oxford University Press, 2008), perception is an idea, a belief, or an image you have as a result of how you see or understand something.

1.7.3 Islamic Senior High Schools

Islamic Senior High Schools, or Madrasah Aliyah, are an advanced level of education that builds upon Islamic junior high schools or MTs, providing not only academic education but also religious education, and are under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2022), Madrasah Aliyah, abbreviated as MA, is a formal educational unit that organizes general education by applying Islamic religious values at the secondary education level, serving as a continuation of Junior High School, MTs, or other equivalent forms.