

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Education and tourism are two important sectors that can support each other to improve the quality of human resources and the regional economy. Integrating information about local tourist attractions in English for primary education teaching materials can provide multiple benefits. Students not only learn about vocabulary and improve their reading skills, but also recognise and appreciate their local wealth. This can generate a sense of pride and awareness of the importance of preserving and promoting local tourist destinations.

Literacy skills in Indonesia, especially among students, remain a major concern. A large-scale study conducted in 2021, by the INOVASI program revealed that only 39% of second-grade and 55% of third-grade students reached the minimum literacy proficiency levels, showing significant learning losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic (INOVASI, 2021). Additionally, a PIRLS-aligned study conducted in 2023 in East Lombok found that the reading comprehension effectiveness of fourth-grade students was only 34.9%, and only 0.51% of students reached international benchmark levels of comprehension (Hamzanwadi University, 2023). Furthermore, the most recent PISA 2022 results published by the OECD showed that 15-year-old Indonesian students scored an average of 359 in reading, far below the international average of 476, with around 75% of students failing to reach the minimum proficiency level (OECD, 2022). These findings confirm that literacy development among Indonesian students is still far from optimal and requires serious attention, especially at the primary education level. Therefore, this study focuses on the development of literacy skills among elementary school students as a crucial step to support their academic success.

Vocabulary and reading are two essential language skills that can be integrated into primary education teaching materials, especially those related to local tourism. Vocabulary refers to a set of words that includes single words, phrases, and idioms known and used by individuals or groups in both spoken and

written communication. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and serves as the foundation for the development of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. This is supported by Nation (2013), who states that having an adequate vocabulary enables students to comprehend texts more effectively and enhances their ability to communicate in real-world contexts. Meanwhile, reading is an active and complex process that involves word recognition, comprehension of meaning, and interaction between the reader and the text. Reading is not merely about decoding words, but also about connecting information from the text with prior knowledge to build meaningful understanding. Anderson et al. (2020), emphasize that reading is not only a tool for gaining information but also a means of fostering early critical literacy. Therefore, integrating vocabulary and reading instruction within local contexts, such as regional tourism, can be an effective strategy to improve students' language skills while also instilling an appreciation of local culture.

Bengkalis, a district rich in tourism potential and with its stunning natural beauty, diverse local cultures, and unique attractions, has great potential to become a sought after tourist destination for both domestic and international visitors. Nevertheless, it has not been fully utilized. According to several sources, one of which is from Kompasiana written by Sigit (2022), there are aspects that are considered important from a tourism object, namely good facilities. tourist attraction managers must also pay attention to the aspects of the facilities provided to visitors so that they are satisfied after visiting Pantai Indah Selatbaru. The visitors of the tourist attraction should have been given qualified facilities because they have paid the entrance ticket. If the facilities provided by the manager of the tourist attraction are lacking, it is feared that it will reduce the value that can cause the closure or bankruptcy of the tourist attraction.

One innovative way to achieve this is through the development of teaching materials or edu book that can be used in the education process, especially for primary students. By having this at the young age, it is expected to introduce bengkalis tourism potential to primary students as well as to improve their English. According to Kartikasari, Kustiono, and Utomo (2020), demonstrated that

integrating local wisdom into learning materials increases student engagement and improves learning outcomes. In the context of this study, vocabulary is introduced through reading texts and activities related to Bengkalis tourism attractions, making the vocabulary not only easier to understand but also more relevant and interesting for students. However, the teaching materials that contain local wisdom are difficult to find. Based on pra observation done in SDN 27 Air putih Bengkalis, a teacher said that there is no teaching materials that integrate both vocabulary and reading that use local context in term of regional tourism in Bengkalis.

Even though Bengkalis has rich local potential, it is still difficult to find teaching materials that match this potential. A preliminary observation at SDN 27 Air Putih Bengkalis showed that there are no textbooks or supporting materials that combine English vocabulary and reading with local tourism topics. This lack of materials is connected to the low level of students' awareness. For example, research by Nasution et al. (2023), on the development of Selat Baru Beach tourism found that activities to increase awareness in schools and the community are still very limited. In addition, a study on mangrove ecotourism in Bengkalis explained that community groups in villages like Sebauk and Teluk Pambang are active in protecting and promoting mangrove tourism. However, these good efforts have not yet been included in school learning materials.

By including topics about local tourism in English learning, this Edu Book aims to help students not only improve their English but also build pride, identity, and care for their environment. Learning vocabulary and reading through real and familiar topics gives students two important benefits: stronger language skills and deeper understanding of their own cultural and natural heritage in Bengkalis.

Therefore, making a Bengkalis tourism attractions Edu book for primary students containing tourism information in Bengkalis is the focus of this research. With a fun and informative approach, it is expected to be used as a medium to introduce Bengkalis tourism since the young age and also as English learning materials to improve primary students' literacy skills especially in vocabulary and reading.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

The problem of the study was formulated into “How are the processes of making a Educational Book for Primary Students to promote reading and vocabulary by using local materials”.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This edu book is considered a kind of learning material. It is meant to add to the curriculum by offering interesting information about Bengkalis’s tourist spots, but it is not a main teaching resource. This means the book might not cover topics in depth or fully align with core educational standards. It is designed to enhance students' learning with cultural and local insights, but should be used along with primary teaching materials for a complete educational experience.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to make an English educational book entitled “Bengkalis Tourism Attraction Educational Book for Primary Students” which introduces local tourist destinations using simple English texts and vocabulary based learning. The book is designed to help students improve their reading skills and expand their vocabulary through materials that are familiar, engaging, and culturally relevant.

1.5 Significances of the Study

1.5.1 Significance for the Readers and Students

This study provides useful learning material for elementary school students to improve their English skills, especially in reading and vocabulary. Through interesting topics about local tourism in Bengkalis, students can learn English in a fun and contextual way while also gaining knowledge about their cultural environment.

1.5.2 Significance for the Researcher

This study allows the researcher to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their English education at Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis. It also serves as a motivation to be more creative in developing educational content and to improve the researcher’s own English proficiency and instructional design ability.

1.5.3 Significance for English Teachers

This book can be used as a supplementary teaching material to support English learning in primary schools. Teachers can apply it to enhance students' vocabulary mastery and reading comprehension through interactive and locally relevant content.

1.5.4 Significance for the Local Government and Tourism Promotion

This study can serve as a medium to promote Bengkalis tourism in a unique and educational way. By integrating tourism content into English learning materials, it indirectly introduces the beauty and uniqueness of Bengkalis to younger generations and can support local tourism campaigns in the long term.