CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter takes up the main content of this research, including the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significances. conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

English teaching or learning in the Arabic Language Education department is part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This classification indicates that English instruction is specifically designed to meet the academic and professional needs relevant to the field of Arabic Language Education (Agustina, 2014). As stated by Basturkmen (2006), ESP refers to language instruction that is tailored to the specific purposes and contexts in which the language is used. Accordingly, the teaching and learning of English in the Arabic Language Education program must be aligned with and relevant to the disciplinary content and objectives of the students' field of study.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a form of language teaching approach whose implementation focuses on the specific needs of students. The ESP approach should be tailored to English learning objectives that are relevant and applicable within academic or professional contexts, particularly for students outside of English-major programs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The implementation of ESP typically begins with a need analysis aimed at identifying the English language skills and materials required by the learners. This process involves a comprehensive identification of both students' target needs and learning needs, which together provide the foundation for designing relevant and effective instructional practices. Chemir and Kitila (2022) noted, the data obtained from a needs analysis assists instructional designers in prioritizing the development of academic English skills and materials based on students' actual requirements. Therefore, customized ESP teaching based on needs analysis information based on relevant disciplines or professions, makes

it more practical and purposeful for students' academic or professional use of English.

English learning in the Arabic Language Education Department aims to enhance students' ability to communicate effectively in both written and spoken forms, which is essential for mastering English teaching materials (Al-Mahrooqi, 2012). This learning process extends beyond writing activities that emphasize grammar and vocabulary proficiency; it also incorporates listening, reading, and speaking skills as integral components of English instruction for Arabic Language Education students. Grabe (2010) specifically emphasizes that the ability to read English is important for language acquisition, especially in academic contexts. Within ESP, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a specialized branch that focuses on developing English skills necessary for academic tasks such as reading literature, understanding research articles, writing papers, and giving presentations. At the very least, English skills as tool for Arabic Language Education students to understand and access scientific reading sources, books, research articles, academic literature in English that are related to and support their learning process (Ilmiani et al., 2022). Therefore, English learning in this department is not solely aimed at developing general language competencies, but more importantly, at strengthening students' reading skills to facilitate their academic and scientific advancement.

However, mastering English, especially reading skills is not without challenges, especially learning English as a foreign language at the university level. Reading comprehension difficulties are commonly experienced by students who are more accustomed to using their mother tongue or who study foreign languages other than English, such as those in the Arabic Language Education Department. These challenges include limited vocabulary, difficulty understanding word meanings, trouble inferring meaning from complex sentences, inability to identify main ideas within paragraphs, and the lack of learning materials that align with their academic needs (Ummul Baiti & Meilina Sofa, 2023). The difficulties and challenges faced by non-English major students in Indonesia are the lack of support in terms of methods,

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teaching materials, and motivation when learning, which makes non-English major students less rich in English vocabulary, not interested in English reading activities, to a lack of knowledge of understanding meaning in the form of sentences (Dardjito et al., 2023). Students in the Arabic Language Education Department are no exception to these challenges, particularly in terms of their ability to comprehend English-language literature that is relevant to their field of study and essential for their academic development.

Several researchers have conducted similar studies. Rizqiani and Novitri (2023) conducted a study on 'developing a needs analysis framework for critical literacy in EFL reading classes', involving 82 English Education students and 3 lecturers from two private universities in Yogyakarta. Using an R&D approach with both qualitative and quantitative analysis, the study examined target and learning needs related to reading skills and material expectations. The findings identified nine essential components for curriculum development, such as reading topics, sources, text length, activities, and assessments, and highlighted the importance of teacher-student collaboration to achieve effective reading comprehension outcomes (Rizqiani & Novitri, 2023).

Further relevant research includes a study by Al-Shboul (2022), which explored the perceptions of 14 pre-intermediate students in Jordan regarding the role of English proficiency in learning Arabic. Similarly, a study by Anggraini et al. (2024) examined the attitudes of 38 English Language Education students from two academic reading classes at Ahmad Dahlan University towards English academic reading. Both studies investigated students' perceptions of the need to master English language skills for academic purposes. The findings of both studies revealed positive aspects: students agreed about the importance of English language proficiency to achieve specific study goals (Al-Shboul, 2022). However, both showed the same thing that students face similar challenges in mastering English, mainly due to a lack of vocabulary knowledge and not being used to reading texts in an academic context (Anggraini et al., 2024).

Previous research highlights a distinction between this study and earlier studies, particularly regarding the scope and focus of needs analysis in English reading skills and reading materials for academic purposes, which remains relatively underexplored. Most existing studies have predominantly concentrated on the needs of English major students, often involving participants at the early stages of their university education. In contrast, the present study narrows its focus to a specific group of participants—students from the Arabic Language Education department—whose academic needs have not been widely investigated in previous literature. The selection of fourth-semester students of the Arabic Language Education Program as participants in this study was based on their considerable academic experience in college, especially in English language learning. Thus, their academic experience is expected to provide meaningful and realistic insights into the identification of appropriate English reading skills and materials that can support the development of their academic competence (Mearman & Payne, 2023).

Based on the purpose of knowing the needs of supporting the learning process of non-English classes, a needs analysis is carried out in a structured manner to explore accurate information on the "necessities", "lacks", and "wants" needed by students (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). In addressing these needs, Nunan (2004) emphasizes the importance of identifying learning needs, which encompass several key components: input, referring to the learning materials and resources provided; procedure, which involves the methods and techniques employed in the learning process; setting, denoting the learning environment and interactional context; the role of the teacher as a facilitator and guide; and the role of the students as active participants in constructing knowledge.

Thus, based on the above background, this study aims to fill the gap in the research focus, namely the target needs and learning analysis that focuses on the specific needs of English reading skills, and the types of reading materials needed to support students learning process. Accordingly, this study, entitled

"Needs Analysis of English Reading Skills and Materials for the Arabic Language Education Department", adopts a qualitative case study approach. The research analyzes data obtained from student responses through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to gain comprehensive insights into their academic English needs.

B. Research Questions

Based on the research background, the researcher formulated the problem by making the following research questions are:

1. What are the target needs of English reading skills and materials for academic purposes as required by students in the Arabic Education Department?

2. What are the learning needs in English Reading for academic purposes as required by students in the Arabic Education Department?

C. Research Purposes

According to the research questions above, the purposes of this study are as follows:

1. To describe the target needs in English reading skills and materials for academic purposes required by students in the Arabic Education Department.

2. To identify the English reading learning needs for academic purposes of students in the Arabic Education Department.

D. Research Significances

The significance of this research lies in its potential contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field of education, encompassing both theoretical and practical aspects.

1. Theoretical Significance

Based on a theoretical perspective, this study aims to contribute to the educational theoretical framework regarding the necessity of English for non-English majors, particularly in contexts where English functions as an academic tool. Specifically, this study explores the perceptions of

fourth-semester students in the Arabic Education program concerning the importance of English reading skills and materials, and their role in supporting academic success. The findings of this study serve as a valuable reference for future research on the interplay between language proficiency and educational contexts, emphasizing the significance of the appropriateness of English reading skills and materials.

2. Practical Significances

Practically, the findings of this study can contribute to the field of education, particularly by assisting educators and curriculum developers in identifying and refining English language requirements in classrooms for non-English major students.

a) For Lecturers

The findings of this study offer valuable insights for lecturers in the Arabic Language Education and English Language Education study programs regarding students' perceptions and the challenges faced by non-English major students in developing reading comprehension skills and identifying appropriate English reading materials. These findings serve as a reference for lecturers in designing more effective instructional materials and learning activities that are aligned with students' specific needs, thereby contributing to the improvement of language education quality within the study programs.

b) For Curriculum Developers

Practically, the findings of this study provide valuable insights for ESP curriculum developers, particularly in the Arabic Language Education Department, in identifying the specific English language needs of their students. By focusing on English reading skills, the study aims to enhance students' comprehension of academic texts relevant to their field of study, thereby supporting their academic learning processes more effectively.

c) For Students

The findings of this study are significant for students to emphasize the necessity of developing English reading skills that are directly aligned with their academic demands. By identifying both their target needs and learning needs, students are expected to engage more actively with relevant English reading materials, enhance their comprehension of academic texts, and foster greater confidence in employing English as an essential tool to support their disciplinary learning.

E. Conceptual Framework

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a specialized branch of English language teaching that focuses on developing language skills tailored to the specific needs of learners, particularly in academic and professional contexts. ESP teaching emphasizes the adaptation of English language skills to meet the specific requirements of academic or professional needs, rather than a general approach to language learning alone (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). ESP involves adapting English instruction to align with learners' professional and academic needs, with a focus on relevant language skills (Mohamed & Alani, 2022). Therefore, ESP is not merely the teaching of general English, but rather a targeted instructional approach that addresses the specific language needs of learners based on their disciplinary or professional contexts.

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) constitutes a central branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that emphasizes the mastery of language skills within academic settings. The principal aim of EAP is to equip students with the ability to comprehend, analyze, and produce academic texts in English, thereby enabling them to participate effectively in scholarly activities such as engaging with scientific literature, composing academic papers, and contributing to academic discussions (Hyland, 2006). In this respect, EAP highlights not only the development of linguistic competence but also the

cultivation of cognitive and academic strategies that facilitate students' access to and processing of information from diverse English-language sources.

In the context of Arabic Language Education, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) plays a significant role in equipping students with the necessary English language skills to meet academic demands. Reading skills, in particular, are essential, as they form the foundation for language comprehension and acquisition (Grabe, 2010). A lack of sufficient instruction in reading skills, especially for students in non-English majors, may hinder their ability to understand academic texts in English, thereby limiting access to broader information relevant to their field of study (Mukhlif Al-Kalefawi & Nasser Al-Amrani, 2021). For students majoring in Arabic Language Education, these academic texts often include materials related to Islamic literature and Arabic linguistics, many of which are published in English. Mastery of reading skills is therefore crucial in supporting their academic development and addressing their specific learning needs.

The needs related to reading skills and reading resources for students in the Arabic Language Education program can be identified through a needs analysis. As stated by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), needs analysis is a fundamental component in designing language learning programs that effectively address the specific requirements of learners. This study specifically conducts a needs analysis of fourth-semester students in the Arabic Language Education program at Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University Bandung. The purpose of this analysis is to obtain comprehensive information regarding students' needs, which can serve as valuable input for curriculum developers and material designers in planning relevant and engaging English language instruction (Normawati & Nugrahaeni, 2023). By conducting this analysis, the study aims to explore the students' necessities, challenges, and preferences concerning English language skills—particularly reading skills—and to determine the types of reading materials that are aligned with their academic field. This is essential for enhancing their reading comprehension and supporting their academic development.

The needs analysis in this study, focusing on reading skills and reading materials, was conducted through two main dimensions: target needs analysis and learning needs analysis. Emphasizing target needs is crucial because the required reading skills and materials for Arabic Language Education students are primarily directed toward academic purposes. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) defined target needs analysis as the process of identifying what learners are expected to accomplish in their target situation, which encompasses three components: necessities, lacks, and wants (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). In contrast, learning needs analysis addresses how students can learn most effectively to achieve these objectives. It involves various aspects, including input in the form of relevant academic reading materials; procedures in the form of systematic learning strategies; settings that facilitate both individual and collaborative learning; the role of teachers as facilitators and providers of resources; and the role of students as active participants who construct knowledge through practice and interaction (Nunan, 2004). Therefore, conducting a comprehensive needs analysis—both in terms of target needs and learning needs—among fourth-semester students of the Arabic Language Education Program represents a significant step in designing English language instruction that is effective, contextually relevant, and aligned with their academic demands.

Mastery of English reading skills is essential for students in the Arabic Language Education program, given the extensive amount of literature and academic resources available in the English language. Reading skills include skills in identifying main ideas, understanding vocabulary based on context, recognizing text structure, making inferences, and interpreting arguments (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). In this context, reading comprehension emerges as the primary objective. Reading comprehension refers to the ability to understand, interpret, and derive meaning from written texts, enabling learners to connect new information with prior knowledge, draw inferences, and critically analyze the content to grasp the overall message intended by the author (Nussy & Pekpekay, 2024). Within the framework of English for Specific Purposes (ESP),

these reading skills are particularly vital for non-English major students, such as those in Arabic Language Education, in order to effectively access and engage with English-language sources relevant to their academic discipline.

English reading materials refer to reading sources or texts that are used to develop and practice reading skills. These materials may include textbooks, scientific journals, academic articles, and other forms of literature relevant to students' fields of study (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Well-designed and customized reading materials, developed based on students' specific needs, have been shown to enhance learner engagement, promote independent learning, foster motivation to read in English, and improve overall language competence (Ngabalin, 2023). Based on the context of the scope of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), the selection of appropriate reading materials for Arabic Language Education students is one that must be tailored to their ability level and academic needs to make learning more contextual and effective.

A qualitative case study approach was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon within its real-life context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study used this approach to enable the researcher to explore the needs and experiences of Arabic Language Education students in learning English, especially reading skills and materials. Creswell & Poth (2018), also state that data collection in qualitative involves interviews and documentations as the main methods. Therefore, this study utilized questionnaires, interviews, and documentations to gather comprehensive and nuanced data concerning target and learning needs analysis of Arabic Language Education students in relation to English language learning relevant to their academic field.

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English for Specific Purposes
          ↓
English for Academic Purposes
          ↓
English for Arabic Education
       Department
          ↓
    Needs Analysis
       ↙        ↘
Target Needs Analysis    Learning Needs Analysis
  ↙    ↓    ↘                  → Input
Necessities  Lacks  Wants      → Procedure
                               → Setting
                               → The Role of Teacher
                               → The Role of Students

English Reading        English Reading
    Skills                Material
       ↘                  ↙
      Qualitative Case Study
              ↓
Need Analysis of English Reading Skills and Materials for Arabic
                  Education Department

(A Case Study of Fourth-Semester Students in The Arabic Education
Department State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung)
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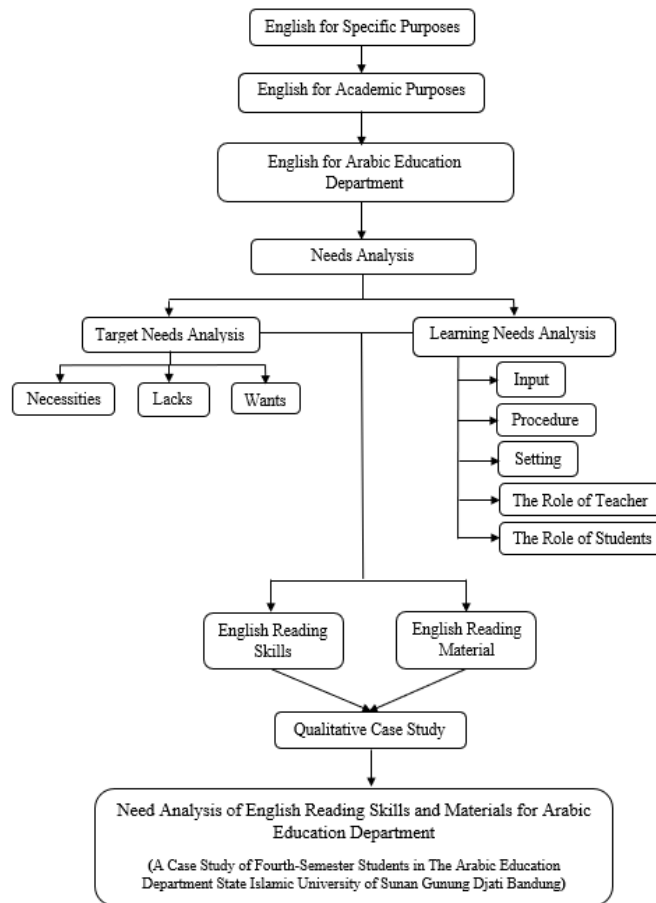
Figure 1. 1 Conceptual Framework

F. Previous Studies

The earlier study shows that other authors have conducted similar research with equally fascinating outcomes. The authors of this paper build upon previous studies addressing a similar topic, specifically focuses on conducting a "Needs Analysis" of English reading skills and reading materials for students of the Arabic Education study program. This study aims to support their ability to comprehend English reading sources relevant to their field of study, thereby contributing to the development of their academic knowledge. Several relevant previous studies include:

First, a study from Syaifuddin, Asi, N., & Karani, E. (2022), entitled *English Reading Materials in Vocational High School: A Need Analysis*, primarily

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focused on identifying the English language needs of vocational high school students in Kapuas District, particularly in agriculture and plantation programs, with the aim of informing curriculum development. The study was conducted online in Kapuas District, involving students from several vocational high schools selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed via Google Forms to explore students' needs, limitations and their expectations regarding English language learning. A descriptive quantitative method was employed in the study. The findings showed that students had low English proficiency, limited vocabulary (mostly less than 100 words related to agriculture), and faced challenges in reading due to lack of motivation, vocabulary, and effective strategies. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of customized materials and needs analysis to improve English language teaching in vocational contexts (Syaifuddin et al., 2022).

Second, a study conducted by Iryanti, N., & Oviyanti, F. (2024), on *Students' Perspective Toward The Importance of English Learning for Arabic Language Education Students*. These perspectives on the importance of English learning for academic purposes in speaking skills. Focusing on second-semester Arabic education students who had taken an English class at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, the research used a qualitative approach with observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The findings revealed that, despite limited fluency, students improved their English speaking skills through group presentations and individual assignments, highlighting the value of practicing in real communicative situations to build confidence and competence. In addition, this study states that English language skills are indispensable in various needs of other disciplines, such as in the Arabic Language Education major (Iryanti et al., 2024).

Third, a study conducted by Alsabatin, Nureldeen, Eskander, & Nasr, (2023) on *Arab EFL Learners' Reading Ability in English and Arabic*. This study analyzed the relationship between the dependency between English (L2) and Arabic (L1) skills in EFL students at Saudi Universities. This study

highlights whether students' English (L2) reading ability is significantly correlated with their Arabic (L1) ability. A systematic review of this study was conducted using a quantitative approach by administering two standardized reading tests in English and Arabic to 36 Saudi University students studying English language and literature. They asked the participants of the study to take a standardized EFL test to assess their proficiency level and test the cummin Threshold hypothesis. The results of the study showed that reading ability in EFL and Arabic were moderately correlated only at advanced EFL proficiency, which was in accordance with Cummin's hypothesis. Thus, it is recommended to develop Arabic reading skills and exposure to rich vocabulary in Arabic and English from young learners (Alsabatin et al., 2023)

Fourth, a study by Al Aghar, T., Demirci, H. C., Houjeir, R., McMinn, M., & Alzaabi, A. S. (2023), investigates Arabic teachers' perceptions of extensive reading practices in higher education in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The research aims to understand the benefits, methods, motivations, and challenges of implementing extensive reading (ER) in the educational context. The study also aims to develop an Arabic online reading tracking tool similar to English tools and provide practical suggestions for enhancing ER programs. The research uses a mixed-methods approach, using an online questionnaire to gather data from Arabic teachers in UAE institutions. The study found that Arabic teachers in UAE acknowledge the benefits of ER for language skills but face challenges in its implementation, such as students' lack of interest, time constraints, and difficulties in motivation and assessment. While most teachers promote wide reading and use methods like reading journals and quizzes, few hold post-reading discussions. The study calls for institutional support and collaboration among educators to overcome these challenges and improve ER programs (Al Aghar et al., 2023).

Fifth, the study from Nureldeen, W. A., Alsabatin, H., Al-Sartawi, A., & Al-Mawadieh, R. S. (2024), on *EFL Learners' Attitudes toward Reading in both English and Arabic*. This study examines the reading attitudes and self-perception of Arab EFL learners towards English (L2) and Arabic (L1),

focusing on affective factors and the relationship between reading proficiency in the two languages. The research, which uses a mixed-methods approach, involved 36 intermediate and advanced university students from Egypt and Saudi Arabia, all native Arabic speakers studying English as a foreign language. Data was collected through standardized reading comprehension tests, a questionnaire with Likert scale items, and open-ended interviews. The findings highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of reading attitudes and motivation in bilingual and multilingual contexts, emphasizing the influence of emotional, cultural, and proficiency factors. The research also underscores the weak correlation between attitudes in L1 and L2, hence the importance of customized teaching strategies, and the need for more comprehensive, cross-cultural, and objective research to better understand and improve reading engagement (Nureldeen et al., 2024).

Based on these previous studies, it can be concluded that the present research addresses an area that remains underexplored. While previous studies have similarly analyzed the perspectives of students, teachers, or lecturers regarding specific needs in English language skills, which mostly focus on students in Arabic-speaking (L1) countries attending English courses at their universities. However, this study specifically investigates the needs of fourth-semester students in the Arabic Language Education program through a structured needs analysis that examines students target needs and learning needs concerning English reading skills and appropriate reading materials. The primary aim is to find out how English reading skills and materials contribute to supporting their academic development. Utilizing a qualitative case study approach, this research provides valuable insights for lecturers and curriculum developers in designing English learning programs, particularly reading instruction, that align with the academic needs and contexts of these students.