CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a brief description of the entire content of this research. It consists of background, research question, research purposes, research significance, research scope, conceptual framework, and some previous studies.

A. Background

English is a Germanic language that originated in England during the early Middle Ages. English is also the primary language of instruction in practically all international organizations and media. According to Crystal (2003), English is used as an official or semi-official language in more than 70 countries and has a special status in over 100 others. As a result, English is a language frequently used in various global contexts. When people from different countries cannot understand each other's language, English serves as a standard communication tool. In Indonesia itself, English acts as a foreign language. The four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are given priority while teaching English to non-native speakers. The four skills above are separated into two categories: productive and receptive. Speaking and writing are productive skills, whereas reading and listening are receptive skills.

Reading is an essential skill that provides access to education and gives people the freedom to seek pleasure and information independently. According to Koda (2005), reading comprehension occurs when the reader synthesizes different information from the text and integrates it with their existing knowledge. The easiest and most cost-effective way to obtain information is to read. Readers can expand their knowledge, broaden their perspectives, and gain a deeper understanding of the world by reading (Johnson & Morrow, 1987). Reading has been crucial to language acquisition, particularly for those learning English as a foreign language (EFL). According to Troike (2006), reading is the most critical element for students to improve their proficiency in a second language (L2). This is because reading enriches vocabulary and helps students understand grammatical

structures, improve their comprehension skills, and broaden their understanding of the cultural context associated with the language.

In addition, many EFL students lack motivation to read English texts, primarily due to a lack of habit or difficulty in understanding reading materials in a foreign language. According to a survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS) in 2023, only approximately 10% of Indonesia's population regularly reads books. Additionally, Kusumarasdyati (2008) states that students' limited background knowledge, incapacity to comprehend the text's content, and the text's intricate organizational structure are the leading causes of their lack of interest in reading. However, extensive reading can be one way to overcome this problem. The purpose of extensive reading is to allow readers to choose the books they like, thereby increasing their motivation. Furthermore, extensive reading can enhance vocabulary acquisition, which in turn impacts comprehension. This aligns with a study by Liu & Zhang (2018), which found that extensive reading has a significant impact on the vocabulary acquisition of EFL learners. Additionally, reading frequency is a more reliable indicator of vocabulary size than being a native language speaker (Rodrigo, 2009).

Extensive reading is a reading technique where students read large amounts of text within a specified period, with a focus on general understanding rather than specific details. Day and Bamford (2004) define extensive reading as a strategy in which students read a large amount of material for general meaning, knowledge, and enjoyment. Data and general comprehension are key reasons for engaging in extensive reading. In addition, extensive reading is currently regarded as an approach to teaching reading in ESL and EFL contexts rather than as a reading style (Day & Bamford, 1998). Researchers in various languages have recognized extensive reading as a beneficial approach to promoting language growth and acquisition (Shih et al., 2018). Extensive reading entails reading for pleasure; students are unlikely to engage in extensive reading of a work they dislike, as enjoyment is a key component. Extensive reading offers numerous benefits, including improvements in reading skills. According to Smith (1996), adults who read more are thought to perform better in literacy because reading appears to have

an additive effect on literacy ability; that is, people who read more demonstrate stronger literacy ability.

Several previous studies have examined the impact of extensive reading on reading. The first study, conducted by Liu and Saad (2025), investigates the impact of extensive reading on vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and reading speed, and explores the effects of extensive reading on language learning. The study employs a systematic literature review methodology, analyzing peer-reviewed studies published between 2015 and 2024, and selecting ten high-quality studies through a rigorous keyword search and predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The study finds that extensive reading has a positive impact on vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, reading speed, and fluency. It is also an effective tool for incidental vocabulary acquisition and language learning. The study also finds that text difficulty and motivation are important factors in enhancing the effectiveness of extensive reading.

Then, Chan (2020) evaluated the effectiveness of extensive Reading (ER) in ESL/EFL contexts. The study critically reviews previous literature on extensive Reading (ER) in ESL/EFL contexts, analyzing empirical research and conceptual literature on the effectiveness of ER in improving motivation, reading skills, and language proficiency. The methods used in the study mentioned in the text include quasi-experimental designs, case studies, meta-analyses, surveys, and interviews. The study finds that extensive Reading (ER) has a positive impact on motivation, reading skills, and language proficiency; however, various mediating factors influence its effectiveness. ER is more effective in improving reading skills and language proficiency than other approaches, such as intensive Reading (IR) and traditional translation procedures.

Another previous study, conducted by Anindita (2020), investigated EFL students' perceptions of extensive reading practices, their preferred reading materials, and the benefits of extensive reading on their English skills. The study employed a qualitative method, utilizing a semi-structured interview as the primary data collection instrument. The participants were ten senior students from the English department at Universitas Negeri Surabaya who had previously taken an

extensive reading course. The results showed that the students have a good perception of extensive reading practices and prefer reading novels, news, and journals. They believed that extensive reading could improve their English skills, including writing, speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary mastery, and grammar.

The previous studies mentioned above show that extensive reading has a positive effect on students' reading skills. Extensive reading can help students become motivated to read more, assisting them in learning new vocabulary, increasing their reading comprehension, and fluency. Additionally, this research differs in several areas from the three previous studies above. This study aims to explore the reading experiences of EFL students in extensive reading courses, employing qualitative methods within a case study design. The research site and participants also differ.

According to the explanation above, the researcher plans to gather empirical information regarding students' reading and writing experiences in extensive reading courses. The research title is **"Exploring EFL Students' Reading Experiences in Extensive Reading Course: A Case Study to English Education Department Students in the Academic Year of 2022/2023."**

B. Research Questions

Regarding the issues mentioned above, this research poses the following questions:

1. How do students' reading skills develop after the extensive reading course?
2. How do students perceive their reading experiences of the extensive reading course?

C. Research Purposes

Seeing the research questions above, the purpose of this research is to cover:

1. To explore the development of students' reading skills after the extensive reading course.
2. To explore students' reading experiences of the extensive reading course.

D. Research Significances

This research has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this study can provide empirical evidence regarding the extensive reading approach in

improving language skills in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). It can help explain how the extensive reading process triggers the development of reading skills and enriches the related research literature.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to be helpful to teachers and other researchers. The present study aims to highlight the significance of the study below:

1. EFL Teachers

This research can help teachers select and implement effective learning strategies to enhance students' reading skills. By understanding students' experiences in the extensive reading program, teachers can design more engaging and motivating learning activities tailored to their students' needs.

2. Future Researchers

The results of this study can serve as a foundation for future researchers to explore various aspects related to the development of extensive reading. For example, other researchers can utilize the findings to develop more targeted research instruments, evaluate the effectiveness of various learning interventions, or compare the results across different cultural contexts.

E. Research Scope

This research focuses on students' reading and writing experience in the extensive reading course in the English Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. This study only considers students in the 2022/2023 academic year who completed the Extensive Reading course during the fourth semester.

F. Conceptual Framework

This research aims to explore the reading experiences of EFL students in an extensive reading course. The conceptual framework was related to students' reading experiences.

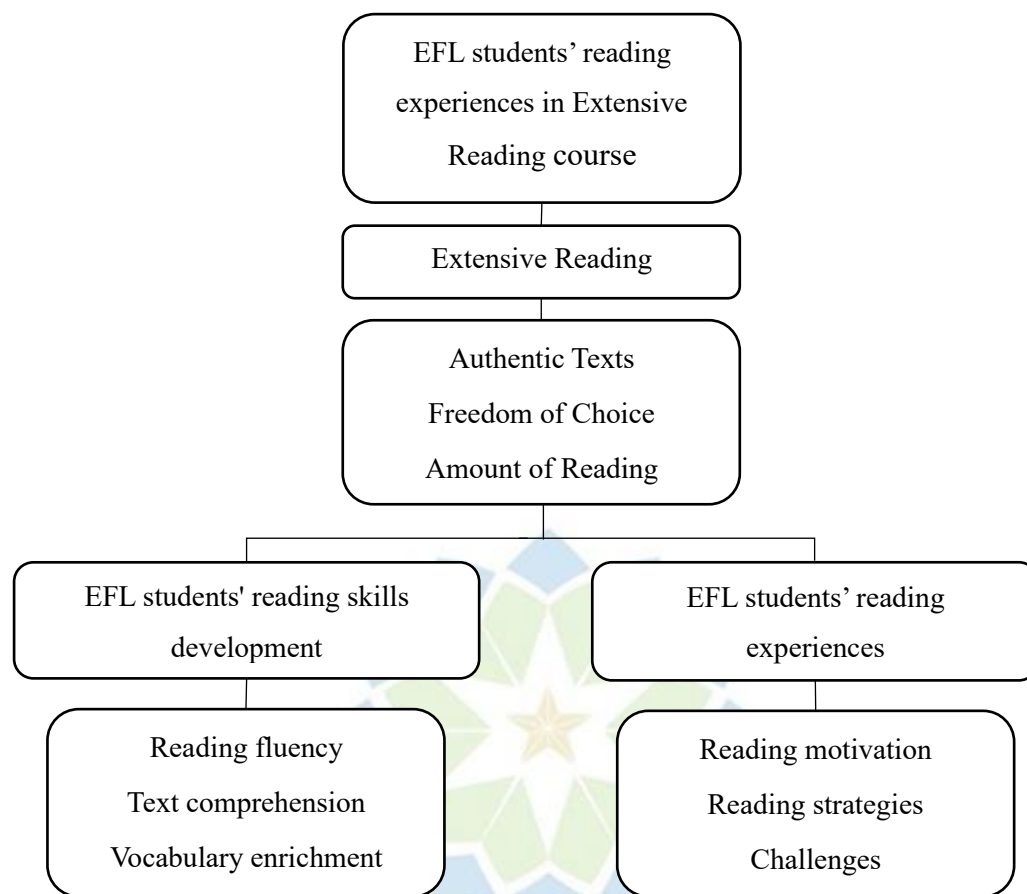The conceptual framework for this study is presented in the figure below.

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│   EFL students' reading  │
│  experiences in Extensive│
│     Reading course       │
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            │
┌─────────────────────────┐
│    Extensive Reading     │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Authentic Texts      │
│    Freedom of Choice     │
│     Amount of Reading    │
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Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationship between EFL students' reading experiences in an extensive reading course and their development of reading skills. In extensive reading courses, EFL students' reading experiences include their processes, challenges, and insights. Additionally, writing that demonstrates good writing skills should be well-structured, with relevant content, and the language used appropriately.

Extensive reading is a language teaching method that requires students to read a large amount of material to gain a general understanding from various texts, with the primary purpose of deriving pleasure from the text. According to Brown (2002), extensive reading is an endeavour to read widely to comprehend texts in broad terms (without delving into specifics). Extensive reading also allows readers to read the type of text that suits their interests. Authentic materials are suitable for

extensive reading, providing language learners with a more natural, relevant, and engaging reading experience. This motivates readers or students to read more often, so that it will become a habit. Authentic materials are more engaging for teachers, students, and publishers than conventionally structured materials (Gilmore, 2007). The wide variety of authentic materials originates from diverse sources, including literature, such as novels and short stories, as well as magazines, news articles, and social media posts.

Day and Bamford (2004) argue that extensive reading is an effective way to enhance reading proficiency and develop linguistic competence, encompassing vocabulary, writing, spelling, and reading skills. In extensive reading, the reader's motivation is very influential. Nishino (2007) found a relationship between motivation and completing a certain amount of reading in extensive reading. In Nishino's research, as students continued to read, their intrinsic motivation increased with achievement, enjoyment, and confidence in reading. Reading strategies in extensive reading can also help students understand the text. Raissi and Roustaei (2013) stated that explicit instruction of reading strategies improves reading comprehension and self-efficacy in EFL learners. Reading strategies enhance their cognitive abilities, making it easier for them to process various texts in their minds.

Nation & Waring (2019) note that extensive reading makes substantial contributions to the development of reading fluency. When students participate in sustained, extensive reading activities, they develop greater proficiency in recognizing words and phrases, which consequently enhances their overall reading fluency. Additionally, Edy (2014) states that extensive reading effectively improves students' reading comprehension skills for several reasons. First, it provides comprehensible input to improve general language competence. Second, extensive reading increases students' exposure to language and enriches their vocabulary. Third, extensive reading promotes enhanced writing skills and motivates students to read more. Fourth, it helps consolidate previously learned language. Lastly, the extensive reading program builds students' confidence in reading long texts, as they

become accustomed to reading in the program, making them better prepared for other materials, especially more complex texts.

Then, Keshmirshekan (2019) emphasizes that extensive reading (ER) is fundamentally based on Krashen's Input Hypothesis from 1982, which prioritizes comprehensible input as a crucial element in acquiring a second language. In extensive reading programs, this linguistic input is presented naturally without explicit instruction, enabling students to experience vocabulary and grammatical patterns repeatedly within meaningful contexts, thus strengthening both vocabulary memory and practical usage. Although extensive reading is widely recognized as a beneficial approach for improving students' language proficiency, its implementation is not without challenges. According to He and Green (2012), the implementation of Extensive Reading faced challenges, including reluctant readers, shifts in classroom culture, and students' academic pressure, despite its benefits in improving reading comprehension and language proficiency.

G. Previous Studies

This research is connected to various previous studies that have been conducted and have become references. The first study, conducted by Iwata (2022), examined the effectiveness of extensive reading (ER) on the development of EFL learners' sight vocabulary size and reading fluency. The study used a comparative design, with three groups of students engaged in either ER or IR for two semesters. The ER groups read graded readers and unsimplified texts, while the IR group received traditional grammar-translation instruction. The participants were 72 first-year Japanese female college students from the faculty of Economics (non-English majors). The results showed significant improvements in reading rate and vocabulary size for the ER groups (D and E). The traditional instruction group (A) did not show significant improvements in reading rate. The study also found significant differences in vocabulary acquisition and reading fluency among the groups, with ER groups showing greater improvement in high-frequency word acquisition and reading fluency.

The second study, conducted by Huynh (2022), explores postgraduate students' perceptions of extensive reading (ER) and its effects on reading comprehension.

The study used a mixed-method research design, collecting data from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The participants were 36 master's candidates at a university in Southern Vietnam. These students were studying the Master of Linguistics and were mostly teachers with experience in teaching English as a foreign language. A 20-item questionnaire was written in English and sent to 36 participants via Google Form, and three students were randomly selected for a semi-structured interview. The study found that extensive reading has a positive impact on reading development, increasing about 20% of reading proficiency. The study also found that students' attitudes were positively changed thanks to extensive reading and increased motivation.

The third study, conducted by Sun (2020), explores the perceptions of five secondary EFL teachers and eight students regarding a two-year extensive reading program in a Chinese secondary school. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews, journal readings, and documents as data collection instruments. The results show that teachers and students have positive attitudes towards ER and find it beneficial to their English lessons. The study also found that ER-related writing can serve as a form of constructive communication between teachers and students and that vocabulary is a common problem perceived by both students and teachers. The study concludes that extensive reading can benefit EFL learners in a Chinese secondary school, but its implementation requires careful planning, teacher guidance, and support. The study also highlights the need for teacher training in implementing ER.

This research is inspired by the previous studies above. These earlier studies demonstrate that extensive reading has a positive impact on students' reading and writing skills. Additionally, this research differs from the three prior studies in several aspects. First, this study's variables differ from those in previous studies, which aim to explore the reading experiences of EFL students in extensive reading courses. Secondly, the method used in this study differs from the one employed, as this study utilizes a qualitative method with a case study design, incorporating semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire for data collection. Third, the setting and participants in this study differ. It is located at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung,

with student participants majoring in the English education department in the 2022/2023 academic year. This study aimed to explore the reading of EFL students in the extensive reading course.