

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

In this era of globalization, mastering English plays a crucial role in accessing vast information, engaging in global communication, and fostering cross-cultural collaboration. English has become the most widely used language in the world, serving as a bridge for individuals to exchange ideas and participate in international discussions. The importance of English extends beyond education, influencing various aspects of professional and social life. The ability to communicate effectively in English enables individuals to connect with people from different linguistic backgrounds, broaden their understanding of diverse perspectives, and enhance their capacity to engage in meaningful discussions. Furthermore, English proficiency can contribute to cultural appreciation, as it allows individuals to explore literature, music, and films from different regions, fostering a deeper understanding of global traditions and values. Many prestigious universities worldwide use English as the medium of instruction, making English proficiency a crucial requirement for students who wish to pursue higher education. The ability to comprehend academic texts, participate in discussions, and write effectively in English significantly determines students' academic success.

Moreover, in the job market, English skills are often a key criterion sought by multinational companies, as they facilitate effective communication in diverse work environments. Professionals with strong English proficiency

have greater access to job opportunities, career advancement, and international collaboration. Therefore, learning English is not only beneficial for personal development but also essential for navigating the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly interconnected world, where cross-border cooperation and knowledge exchange play a vital role in progress and innovation. This underscores the importance of learning foreign languages, especially English. An expert once stated, "A person who does not know foreign languages does not know his own language" (Handayani, 2016:102-106). This statement highlights the idea that understanding a foreign language can deepen one's comprehension of their native language. When someone learns a foreign language, they often become more aware of linguistic structures, grammar, vocabulary, and underlying rules. As a result, they gain a better understanding of how their native language functions. Without knowledge of a foreign language, individuals may use their mother tongue automatically without considering these aspects, leading to a less profound understanding of their own language. These arguments further reinforce the statement that mastering foreign languages, particularly English, is essential, as it has become the most widely used language globally and is often referred to as the *global lingua franca*, (Tamrin and Yanti, 2019:61-72).

In learning English, there are four key skills that must be mastered: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are interconnected and contribute to overall communication ability. However, this study focuses on reading skills, as they are essential for understanding various types of texts,

both in academic contexts and everyday life. Through reading, individuals can expand their vocabulary and grammar knowledge while acquiring new information, ideas, and perspectives that enrich their intellectual insight. The reading process involves cognitive engagement, analytical thinking, and comprehension skills, enabling individuals to interpret and synthesize information effectively. Additionally, reading helps develop critical thinking skills, allowing individuals to evaluate different viewpoints and make informed decisions based on reliable sources of information.

The importance of reading interest extends to all aspects of personal and professional activities. A strong interest in reading enables individuals to satisfy their curiosity, seek knowledge, and acquire information, skills, and experiences. A person who reads frequently and extensively will gain new knowledge from various media, both print and electronic, (Ruslan and Wibayanti, 2019:767). Reading also plays a crucial role in lifelong learning, as it encourages individuals to stay informed about current events, technological advancements, and scientific discoveries. Given the significance of reading, teachers must implement effective strategies to develop strong reading skills in students. From the discussion above, several statements emphasize that reading is essential for academic success and career development, highlighting its role in acquiring knowledge and enhancing cognitive abilities, (Hoerudin, 2017:02). Additionally, individuals with strong reading habits are better prepared to adapt to new learning environments and face professional challenges, (Hoerudin, 2017:1-12). Furthermore, cultivating a reading culture

from an early age can provide long-term benefits in academic and professional achievement, (Hoerudin, 2014:103).

One effective strategy for improving reading skills is extensive reading, which involves reading complete texts with the aim of quickly and efficiently understanding the overall meaning or general content. The purpose of extensive reading is not only to acquire information but also to develop enjoyment and overall comprehension. This strategy encourages students to engage with texts in a positive and stress-free environment, enhancing both their language skills and enthusiasm for learning. Several experts have stated that extensive reading helps students build fluency and comprehension skills by exposing them to a wide range of texts, (Tarigan, 2008). Furthermore, other researchers have argued that this approach allows students to develop confidence in reading, as they can focus on understanding the overall message rather than worrying about individual words (Day and Bamford, 2015). In addition, extensive reading promotes independent learning, encouraging students to explore texts based on their interests and preferences, (Sheu, 2003:8-26).

In addition to enhancing language skills, extensive reading significantly influences students' interest in reading. It provides them with natural exposure to vocabulary and language structures, which are essential for overall language development. By focusing on general comprehension and reading for enjoyment, this strategy creates a stress-free learning environment, allowing students to improve their fluency and understanding more naturally. Experts

have stated that extensive reading helps students develop intrinsic motivation for reading, making them more likely to engage with texts beyond the classroom, (Grabe and Stoller, 2016). This motivation fosters lifelong reading habits, contributing to continuous learning and personal development. Furthermore, extensive reading enables students to develop a deeper appreciation for literature, broadening their knowledge and understanding of various cultures and historical contexts.

Extensive reading is one of the most effective methods for building vocabulary, enhancing overall comprehension, and increasing students' interest in reading. By engaging with a wide variety of texts in large volumes, students can acquire language implicitly through context, ultimately helping them understand the language without relying on direct translation. Additionally, extensive reading fosters a positive attitude toward reading, develops good reading habits, and expands vocabulary as well as knowledge of language structures.

Furthermore, extensive reading supports the development of fast and efficient reading skills, which are highly beneficial in academic contexts. By interacting with diverse texts, students can overcome challenges in text comprehension. An expert has stated that the practice of extensive reading helps students improve reading speed and comprehension simultaneously, making them more skilled in handling complex texts, (Brown, 2016). Moreover, extensive reading encourages independent learning, as students can explore texts that match their interests and proficiency levels, ultimately

leading to greater engagement with reading materials. Another expert highlights that exposure to diverse reading materials allows students to recognize common patterns in language use, improving their ability to comprehend new texts with ease, (Nation, 2009:170-171). Additionally, an expert emphasizes that extensive reading helps students acquire language naturally, making the learning process more enjoyable and effective. As a result, students become more confident in their reading abilities and develop a stronger connection to the language, (Richards and Schmidt, 2010). From these statements, it can be concluded that extensive reading broadens students' knowledge, enhances language comprehension, enriches vocabulary, improves sentence structure awareness, and increases students' interest in reading. Repeated engagement in an enjoyable activity strengthens motivation, making knowledge acquisition more effective and reinforcing cognitive development.

Based on the discussions above, the researcher has designed this study with the aim of to know how the implementation of extensive reading can enhance students' reading interest, particularly among university students enrolled in the Extensive Reading course at Artha Wacana Christian University in Kupang. In this study, the researcher will examine how extensive reading strategies are applied in the classroom and conduct interviews with students to gather their perspectives. Through this research, we will gain insights into how teachers implement the strategy, the types of reading materials used, and how students engage with texts. The data will be collected using Interviews, as this method allows for an in-depth exploration of students' perspectives on how

extensive reading strategies influence their reading interest. Additionally, the study aims to determine whether these strategies encourage students to read more frequently and develop a more positive attitude toward reading.

Based on the brief descriptions above regarding how extensive reading activities can influence students' reading interest and benefit language learning, the researcher has formulated the following research title: "An Analysis of Students' Reading Interest Through Extensive Reading Course at UKAW Kupang in Academic Year 2024/2025." This title reflects the researcher's intention to explore the impact of extensive reading on students' motivation to read and their engagement with texts in the context of higher education. Further details regarding the conceptual framework and the step-by-step formulation of this research will be explained in detail in the main sections of this proposal.

1.2. Research Problems

Based on the issues presented in the background, the researcher formulates the research problem as follow: What are the students' perceptions of reading in the Extensive Reading class at Artha Wacana Christian University Kupang?

1.3. Aims of Study

Based on the problem statements above, the researcher formulates the aim of study as follow: To identify and analyze students' perceptions of their reading interest in the Extensive Reading class at Artha Wacana Christian University Kupang.

1.4. Significance of Study

This section contains the theories that support this research and the benefits it produces.

1.4.1. Implication

This research is supported by Nation (2009:170-171) argues that extensive reading is a highly effective approach for language acquisition. It allows learners to encounter a wide variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures in context, leading to improved language proficiency. By focusing on reading for pleasure and overall comprehension, students not only enhance their reading skills but also develop a positive attitude toward reading, which can significantly impact their engagement and motivation in learning.

1.4.2. Application

a) For Teacher

This research is expected to provide insights for English teachers on the use of extensive reading strategies in teaching reading skills. Teachers can use these findings to enhance their teaching methods and make learning more contextual and relevant for students.

b) For Students

Students can benefit from the use of extensive reading strategies, which can increase their motivation and interest in reading.

c) For Schools

The results of this study can serve as a basis for schools in designing a more effective curriculum or learning programs by utilizing extensive reading strategies, thereby improving the overall quality of English language learning.