

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The present study focuses on investigating how Pomodoro technique can help students improve their EFL reading comprehension. This chapter covers the background information of why this study is conducted, the research question, the aim, the scope, the significance of the study, the clarification of key terms used in the study, the organization of the paper, as well as the concluding remarks.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Reading comprehension, as one of the principal abilities in learning English for foreign language (EFL) students, requires effective strategies in the practice, as it has been considered to be one of the important factors for successful learning. McNeil (2011) stated that various strategies can help students in repairing breakdowns in the activity by deliberating actions used to monitor and oversee those attempts at repair. Time management practice, as one of these innovative reading comprehension strategies, is suitable to control students' obstacles during reading and proved to have a clear influence with their achievement (Britton & Tesser, 1991). Some studies support this statement by claiming that there is a significant association between students' performance and their time management ability. According to Adams and Blair (2019), this skill has a positive impact on students' learning and outcomes due to their consciousness control of time. Individuals who are skillful in time management will value the time they have, using it efficiently and effectively (Thomack, 2012). In line with this, Ling et al. (2009) stated that students who have the capacity to manage their time efficiently will develop good study habits and strategies for success. On the other hand, other students who perceive poor time management are less likely to develop good study habits and can be related to particular negative examination outcomes.

However, an interview with a teacher in a senior high school in Depok shows that some problems in students' reading comprehension are caused by the lack of time management skill. Students who may face more challenges in

identifying the direct and indirect information of the text tend to struggle in maintaining their focus and concentration during the reading activity due to the continuous reading session. This happens because when students are asked to do the reading activity continuously without breaks, some distractions, such as their desire to pause reading and play around with their friends, getting bored or out of focus, or doing other activities that prevent them from being productive and motivated in the reading will increase (Browne, 2018, as cited in Shinoda, 2020). It can be concluded that their problems in staying focused and getting rid of distractions arise due to the lack of the time management skill. This led to the following discussion regarding the most suitable time management type that can be successfully applied in the reading comprehension for students in EFL context, since there are a lot of time management techniques people have used that differ from the personality characteristics, productivity issues, and the business needs. One of those techniques is the Pomodoro technique that was developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s.

Cirillo (2006) introduced Pomodoro time management technique as a simple tool/process for improving productivity by dividing the working/studying sessions into several time intervals consisting of focused study sessions, short breaks, and long breaks in order to enhance the focus and concentration on one task and cutting down interruptions. This concept lines with a claim stated by Duke and Pearson (2017) and Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) that good readers are not only processing text in their mind during the reading, but also during the short breaks taken while they read the text to achieve better comprehension. Therefore, Pomodoro technique's emphasis on the importance of short and long breaks during reading with customized duration appeared to be acceptable and suitable to encourage students to be good readers and eventually can improve their reading comprehension.

Various studies on reading comprehension strategies have been conducted to overcome the problems that students often face in order to enhance their reading comprehension, such as silent reading, predicting, skimming, using semantic mapping, and creating mental imagery (Block & Duffy, 2008; Brown & Lee, 2015).

Despite this, there appears to be a lack of published research that addresses innovative reading comprehension strategies using time management techniques, especially Pomodoro. Shinoda (2020) investigated the effect Pomodoro technique has in improving students' reading ability during Covid-19 pandemic, emphasizing the use of Pomodoro technique in enhancing students' reading ability during online learning. His findings showed that the implementation of Pomodoro technique in improving students' reading performance was successful. Furthermore, he stated that Pomodoro technique has been proven to solve the lack of motivation and productivity problems, for both online and face-to-face learning during pandemic and non-pandemic situations. The findings are supported by a note that students are required to follow the rules of Pomodoro technique to achieve better results in their reading activity. In addition, Usman (2020) in his research about the use of Pomodoro technique to help undergraduate students manage a technology-based multitasking during self-assessment study reported that Pomodoro technique is helpful in managing their multitasking in some aspects. The findings addressed that according to some participants of the study, some aspects of Pomodoro technique have contributed to effective multitasking, such as the break time and Pomodoro's attempt to postpone distractions. However, this study was not in the field of EFL reading comprehension context.

In response to the lack of reading comprehension strategy issue using Pomodoro technique in EFL classrooms that has been explored by other scholars, this present study is conducted to fill in the gap by investigating how the implementation of Pomodoro time management technique can help students improve their reading comprehension in EFL context.

## **1.2 Research Question**

According to the background, this study is conducted to answer the formulated research question as follows:

1. How can Pomodoro time management technique help EFL students improve their reading comprehension?

### **1.3 Aim of the Study**

Related to the research question, the purpose of this study is to investigate how the implementation of Pomodoro time management technique can help EFL students improve their reading comprehension. Firstly, the significant difference of their reading test score was examined to ascertain if the technique implementation may improve their reading comprehension. Then, students' perceptions and behavior during the technique implementation was analyzed to seek for an in-depth explanation of the reading comprehension aspects that are supported by the technique.

### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on finding out how the implementation of Pomodoro time management technique can help students improve reading comprehension in EFL context, concentrating on students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade in a senior high school in Depok, West Java, Indonesia. In this research, students, as the participants, performed a reading test before and after implementing the technique. A classroom observation and students' grouped interview were also involved in this study. Furthermore, as this research emphasizes in seeking the reading comprehension and competencies improvement in four specific reading micro skills; finding detailed and implied information, as well as finding synonyms and antonyms. The type of text students read while using this technique is not limited to a specific type of text. It flexibly follows the type of text that students are learning during the period of the study, they are recount text and narrative text.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Referring to the aim and the scope of the study, the findings of this study are expected to be beneficial for some aspects, especially in theoretical and practical significance as elaborated below.

Theoretically, this study is expected to provide references and information regarding the use of a reading strategy tool that is quite unfamiliar in EFL classrooms, namely Pomodoro time management technique, to improve students'

reading comprehension. It is also expected to describe students' problems encountered while reading that prevent them from achieving good reading comprehension.

Practically, this study is expected to contribute to EFL teacher's attempts to overcome students' problems while reading by providing guidance about Pomodoro time management technique as an innovative tool for reading comprehension strategy.

### **1.6 Clarification of the Key Terms**

There are some operational terms used in this study: Pomodoro technique and EFL. Each term is defined as follows:

- a) Pomodoro (Italian: tomato) technique is a time management tool that is named after a kitchen tomato-shaped timer (Wang et al. 2010). The basic concept of this technique is to divide a working/studying session into several time intervals, including focused study session, short break session, and longer break after four focused study and short break sessions. This study investigated in which way the students use Pomodoro technique to break down reading activity into several focus and break sessions, in order to enhance focus and reduce distractions while reading.
- b) Time management technique is the process of using time effectively and accomplishing what must be done in the time available (Thomack, 2012). Time management in this study refers to the Pomodoro technique as a time management tool used in EFL students' reading classroom.
- c) English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a term used to describe learning and using English for non-native speakers in a non-English speaking country (Nordquist, 2020). In this study, EFL as in EFL reading comprehension refers to the non-English speaking students' reading comprehension in the area of the study.
- d) Reading comprehension is the ability to construct and integrate the meaning of written text that involves at least three dimensions: the reader, the text,

and the activity (Iwai, 2009; Snow, 2002). Reading comprehension in this study refers to EFL students' ability to comprehend English text taught in the classroom.

### **1.7 Organization of The Paper**

This study was organized into five chapters consisting of several subchapters for each that has the capacity to explain and describe its contents in detail. The chapters were organized as follows:

Chapter I is the Introduction. This chapter contains the background of the study, the research question, the aim of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, the clarification of the key terms, the organization of the paper, and the concluding remarks.

Chapter II is the Literature Review. This chapter explains the foundation of theories that are relevant to the research topic. It discusses the nature of reading comprehension in EFL classrooms that also contains the concept and reading comprehension strategy in EFL context, time management in EFL students' learning, Pomodoro time management technique followed by its concept and process, Pomodoro technique as a tool for reading comprehension strategy, and the concluding remarks. Moreover, this chapter contains previous related studies integrated in the subchapters as well.

Chapter III is the Research Methodology. This third chapter describes the procedure of conducting this research used by the researcher. It includes the research design, the hypothesis of the study, the research site and participants, the data collection technique, the research procedure, the data analysis technique, and the concluding remarks.

Chapter IV is the Results and Discussion. This chapter presents the analysis of the data taken, the data interpretation, and the elaboration of the data along with its discussion to answer the research question.

Chapter V is the Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations. This last chapter contains the conclusions of the research, the implications provided by

the research, and the recommendations for further research based on the findings of the study. This chapter includes the limitation of this study as well.

### **1.8 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has presented the introduction of this study entitled ‘The Use of Pomodoro Time Management Technique to Help Students Improve EFL Reading Comprehension’ including the background of the study, the research question, the aim of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, the clarification of key terms, and the organization of the paper.