CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction that covers the background of the study, the formulation of the problem, the objectives of the study, and the benefits of the study.

A. Background of the Study

English is a foreign language in Indonesia - the language being learned is not spoken in the local community. Under such condition, the students will have a little opportunity of conversing with native speakers. They, however, will have more access to the literature and periodicals, or scientific and technical journals, written in the language they are learning. Thus, the students have more opportunity in reading.

Reading is an important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language. Mikulecky (1986: 1) points out some reasons why reading is important when people are learning a new language. They are (1) reading helps people learn to think in the new language; (2) reading helps people build a better vocabulary; (3) reading makes people more comfortable with written English. People can read better English if people feel comfortable with the language; (4) reading may be the only way for people to use English if they live in a non-English-speaking country; and (5) reading can help if people plan to study in an English-speaking country.
In relation to the importance of reading, the teacher should develop students’ reading skill as the basic for practicing other language skills. For instance, the students can be asked to find the information from what they read to be written in journal, they are asked to read aloud to practice their pronunciation and so forth. In virtue of UN (National Examination), reading has to be taught to high school students. It is one of UN materials which take the major percentage of the overall items. In the National Examinations for SMK (Vocational School), there are 50 test items consisting of 15 test items of listening and 35 test items of reading. So, by developing students’ reading skill, it’s expected that they can deal with the UN.

In line with the reading purpose, Richard and Renandya (2002: 277) state the primary purpose of reading is reading for comprehension. Knowing main ideas in a text and exploring the organization of a text are essential for good comprehension. Besides, reading is proposed to: (1) search for simple information, (2) skim quickly, (3) learn from texts, (4) integrate information, (5) search for information needed for writing, (6) critique texts, and (7) to get general comprehension (Grabe & Stoller, 2002: 13). In short, the basic idea of reading is to enable the reader to understand the text to get the information.

It is stated in the SKL–Standar Kompetensi Lulusan for SMK’s students, in reading a passage, students are ideally able to identify main ideas, identify detail information directly and indirectly stated in a passage, find reference of pronoun, and determine the meaning of word or phrase based on the context.
In SMKN 1 Madiun, reading is taught as part of the English teaching. Teaching reading is not as easy as teaching other language skills as in reading activity, not only do students read the text but also understand it as well. The students are also expected to have some skills in (1) finding main ideas, (2) identifying detail information directly and indirectly stated in a passage, (3) finding reference of pronoun, and (4) determining the meaning of word or phrase based on the context. It shows that reading is a complicated skill covering many activities to comprehend the text.

In relation to teaching reading, the researcher found that the students of SMK I Madiun have difficulties in reading. The result of a preliminary study conducted by the writer at the eleventh grade students of Electrical Engineering Department Class XI TITL1 showed that the students’ achievement at reading was low. It is indicated by the obtained scores of reading comprehension in the preliminary test. The mean score for identifying main idea was 44.9, the mean score for identifying indirectly stated detailed information was 71.2, the mean score for identifying directly stated detailed information was 66.2, the mean score for test item on vocabulary was 42.9, and the mean score for test item dealing with pronoun reference was 50.0. The mean score for all indicators was 55.1. This mean was considered insufficient since it did not yet achieve the learning target of 75. From the obtained scores, it can be identified that there were 4 out of 33 students who succeeded or only 12.1% who were successful.

Based on the result of the preliminary study above, direct interview was done and the result showed that the students had difficulties in reading because
they could not comprehend the text. The students could not take the ideas that were directly and indirectly stated in the text. It seems that they did not know the detail of passage. In comprehending the indirectly stated information, students could not locate the detail effectively. They just focused their attention on understanding the meaning of sentences and trying to translate word by word. As the result they got difficulty in answering the comprehension questions. Furthermore, students could not make inferences that were implied in the text. They could not take a red-thread of what they have read.

There are some factors underlying the problems above. The teacher didn’t apply appropriate strategy in reading class. He just asked the students to read the text and answered the provided question. He didn’t get used to asking the students to identify the main idea and supporting ideas in the text. The activities done in the classroom is teacher-centered which does not give space for active students to participate in teaching learning process. It showed that teacher didn’t implement appropriate strategy in reading class.

There are also other factors underlying the problems above. First, the students did not try to become familiar with the organization and the general content of the material. They just read the text and translated word by word making themselves busy looking up the meaning of words in the dictionary or in their mobile phone. Secondly, they didn’t get used to doing prediction before reading. They read the text as it is instructed by the teacher. They didn’t think about the title which can help them make prediction about the passage they were going to read. Thirdly, students were not accustomed to making reports after
reading the text as the summary of what they had learned. It showed that they didn’t use strategy in reading the text.

Other factors underlying the problems are, firstly, most of the students did not actively involve in the discussion during the teaching and learning process. They thought that learning English is not worth-doing as most of them would not continue their study to university. They, however, gave much more attention to productive or practical lesson as they thought it gave them adequate skill which was very useful for them in looking for a job after they graduate from Vocational School. So, in teaching-learning process they just waited for the teaching explanation from their teacher. Secondly, they had low vocabulary mastery since they didn’t have reading habit. They just read their English books in teaching learning process and didn’t read it at home. Even, most of the students didn’t do their homework at home otherwise they just cited their friend homework before the English class was conducted.

Dealing with the teaching learning process, it didn’t run well as the teacher didn’t employ appropriate strategy in teaching learning process. It created the boring teaching learning process and low students’ participation in class. Lack of adequate good English text book as source of learning is also another factor which makes the teaching learning was not interesting for the students.

From the condition described above, it can be concluded that the students lack of knowledge on reading strategies and how to apply it as vehicle to comprehend English text. Good readers, actually, can select and apply proper strategy in learning foreign language so they can succeed in reading the text.
Considering the problems above, the researcher as their teacher proposes a certain strategy in order to solve the problem encountered by the students. It would be advantageous for the students when they are provided with the activities which help them to improve their ability to comprehend the reading text. One of reading strategies that can be used to bring about an improvement on the students’ reading comprehension ability is PQ4R strategy. PQ4R is an analytical reading procedure for leading students through the study of text systematically (Hayes 1992: 48). PQ4R strategy is a six-step system in which each letter stands for one of the steps preview, question, read, reflect, recite and review. Preview is dealing with gathering the information necessary to focus and formulate goals. Question is dealing with the reader’s mind to engage and concentrate. Read is dealing with getting the information around the mental structure a reader has been building. Reflect is dealing with trying to develop insight into the topic and make association among the important material noted while reading. Recite is dealing with retaining a reader’s mind to concentrate and learn as it read. Review is dealing with referring a reading text.

PQ4R strategy is an effective variation of SQ3R developed by Thomas and Robinson (Burn, et al., 1996: 428). Using PQ4R strategy, students are encouraged to give their ideas of what a text selection is about before and after they read it. It also prepares them for what is coming next. By doing so, students will have the description about the content of the text in detail.

To comprehend the text, PQ4R enables students to make prediction before reading. They should formulate some questions before having to read the entire
text. The formulated questions are used to predict the existing information in the text. Then the reading step is done to prove the prediction. Reading step provides opportunity for students to understand the text. Since the process of reading is done twice: in the first and in the middle of learning process, students can really get the information. Besides, students have also to understand the text by presenting a report after reading and in the last of the learning process they also have to summarize the content of the text. Through those processes, it is expected that the students will comprehend texts.

Using PQ4R, teachers can change their classroom teaching styles. The class changes from teacher-centered to students-centered. Teacher will be the manager who manages the activities in the classroom while the students will actively involve in the instructional process. By doing so, the students will be encouraged to learn.

Shortly, this study is focused on enhancing the students' reading comprehension by implementing PQ4R strategy.

B. Formulation of the Problem

It's nearly impossible for the writer to cover all the problems previously stated in the background of this study. Therefore, he would study:

1. Can PQ4R strategy enhance the students' reading comprehension?
2. How active are the students in learning in class when the teacher applies PQ4R strategy in teaching reading?
C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems formulated above, the objectives of this research are:

1. To identify whether PQ4R strategy can improve the students’ reading comprehension or not.
2. To describe how active the students are in learning in class when the teacher applies PQ4R strategy in teaching reading.

D. Benefits of the Study

The result of the study, hopefully, can give the benefits:

1. For the students:
   It can provide useful strategies for them in improving their capability in comprehending reading passage. It enables them to be more independent readers so they can improve their English by reading English text outside the classroom as they have known the useful strategy for reading text.

2. For Teachers
   This study provides teachers strategy which can be applied in their teaching learning process to improve their teaching quality. Applying this strategy, teachers can change their classroom style from teacher-centered to students-centered.
3. For others Researchers

This study provides some information dealing with teaching reading by using PQ4R strategy. It, hopefully, can be used as consideration in conducting study dealing with teaching reading in the future.