

## APPLYING PQ4R STRATEGY FOR TEACHING READING

**Moh.Rodli**

[rodli2002@gmail.com](mailto:rodli2002@gmail.com)

English Teacher in MAN Mojokerto, Indonesia

**Abstract:** Despite receiving more attention than other language skills in English classroom, the result of students' reading comprehension achievement is still far from expectation. To help students comprehend English reading texts and have better achievement in reading skill, PQ4R strategy can be an alternative to offer. The PQ4R (also well known as SQ4R) strategy of comprehending reading material is an extension of SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review) This method involves previewing the reading material, questioning the reading, reading to answer the questions, reflecting upon the reading, reciting the reading, and reviewing the material. This method is useful for improving students' reading effectiveness in addition to help students better remember what they read. This paper highlights the PQ4R strategy and its use as an alternative to improve students' reading comprehension achievement.

**Key words:** reading comprehension, PQ4R Strategy

### Introduction

Reading is one of English language skills that are considered important for one's growth as an individual in many aspects of life. Every day we cannot escape from this activity. We read newspaper, report, messages, books, notes, and many other writings. That is why students are taught reading skill in English at school. By reading, the students will know how English is actually used in printed and written forms. According to Rivers (1981: 259) the most important activity in any language class is reading. Reading is not only a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also a means of consolidating one's knowledge of a language. In other words, reading activities can bring many benefits for students such as to get information, pleasure and knowledge.

Furthermore, according to Burns et al (1996: 5) the ability to read is vital to functioning effectively in a literate society. However, students who do not understand the importance of learning to read will not be motivated to learn. Djiwandono (1996: 62) states reading is an important activity and becomes more important in this modern world, where the development in every life aspect occurs very quickly. Besides, according to the

National Research Council (Almaguer: 2005) reading is essential for success in our society. Reading is also central to students' experiences in schools and everyday life. Thus, teaching students to read is a major task for English teachers today. Since students arrive at schools at different reading developmental stages, English teachers are faced with helping less capable readers improve their reading skills by providing the best reading instruction possible.

According to Bruder and Henderson (1988), the ability to read can be affected by some factors, such as linguistic aspects, prior knowledge, and reading strategy. Dealing with the linguistic aspects, mastering relevant vocabularies and structures becomes a basis for which a student decodes meaning from the text, and in turn, incorporates with what he or she already knows. Another factor is prior knowledge that students bring into reading. When students are reading a text, they are not passive; instead, they bring their prior knowledge to incorporate with new information within a text. Meanwhile, the use of strategy in reading brings about some benefits for which the students might as adjust their purpose for reading and as well become aware of what they were reading.

In case of the importance of reading, the students should be well prepared with the skill as early as possible in order that they are accustomed to comprehend what they read in their daily life. Leipzig (2001) states that in reading activity we are not only reading the text, but also trying to understand what we are reading. Reading requires words recognition, comprehension, and fluency. Djiwandono (1996) also states that to understand all types of information in an array of the text, it requires not only the reading activity, but also ability to understand the content. In addition, he states that without the ability to understand the content, one cannot absorb or comprehend a lot of information quickly, accurately, and easily. Accordingly, on the basis of the importance of reading, reading should become the main emphasis in English teaching program in Indonesia, particularly for the senior high school students. Yet it does not mean that the other skills of English like listening, speaking, and writing are not important.

Unfortunately, reading at the secondary and higher school still becomes problem for students. Alderson (1984) states that when the students are confronted with a reading text, they seem to read with limited understanding. Furthermore, Day and Bamford (2000) also claim that in general the students learning to read English as a foreign language find it a difficult process, and as a result, they do not enjoy it. Even if they are avid readers in their first language, all too often they do not become efficient readers of English. In relation to the insufficient reading ability of the students, some researchers claim that the students' proficiency in comprehending English materials is still far from being sufficient

(Sadtono, 1995). He finds that the weakness of senior high school students in reading comprehension is they do not know the essential information needed to understand a word, including how a word is combined with other words to make lexical grammatical patterns. They still have a habit of word-by-word reading, relying too heavily on individual word meaning.

Considering the above causes, it is necessary to implement a strategy that can help solve the students' problems in reading. One of the strategies that helps students understand reading materials is PQ4R (*Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite and Review*). PQ4R is the effective variation of SQ3R strategy which was developed by Thomas and Robinson (1972). It is step by step procedure used for reading through a text. It constitutes an analytical reading procedure to lead the students through the study of texts systematically (Hayes: 1992). It shows students how to cope with texts through a procedure of *Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, and Review*.

According to Logsdon (2007), PQ4R is a strategy that helps students focus on organizing information in their minds and make it meaningful. Furthermore, she points out that the PQ4R strategy is a good study skill that improves the students' understanding of the text and improves recall of facts by as much as 70%. This strategy can be adapted for students of all ages. In line with Logsdon, Hayes (1992: 48) maintains that PQ4R strategy can be applied for high school and college classes to make substantial use of textual materials and it can be used with individual students, small groups, and whole classes. Furthermore, he affirms that using PQ4R, students will gain experience with a strategy they can apply when they study on their own. Besides, Eanes (1997: 581) states that PQ4R strategy, the effective variation of SQ3R, will guide students in reading to fulfill purposes for reading and help students to identify important and meaningful information.

### **Reading Comprehension**

Reading is the process of recognizing, interpreting, and perceiving the written or printed material. According Braunger and Lewis (2001: 4) reading is a complex and purposeful socio-cultural, cognitive, and linguistic process in which readers simultaneously use their knowledge of spoken and written language, their knowledge of the topic of the text, and their knowledge of their culture to construct meaning with text.

Comprehension is necessary if one wishes to learn from textbooks and manuals, enjoy great literature, or simply follow directions in a cookbook. It constitutes an activity of associating or connecting a reader's ideas or thoughts with what an author states in print. Blair-Larsen and Williams (1999: 37) state that comprehension is a multidimensional

thinking process; it is the interaction of the reader, the text, and the context. They further point out that comprehension occurs when readers make critical connections between their prior knowledge and new-found knowledge in the text. While reading a text, readers activate their prior knowledge or schemata about a topic. In other words, when a reader or student encounters a reading text, he tries to associate his prior knowledge and what has been written in print. If this happens, it can be said that reading conveys understanding. Otherwise, reading without comprehension cannot be associated as reading since reading is directed to achieve comprehension.

### **Models of Reading Process**

To understand the content of a particular text, one must go through a process. During the reading process, a reader might use one, two, or combination of the two models. The models of reading process are bottom-up, top-down, and interactive model.

#### *Bottom-up Model*

The bottom-up model of reading ability is primarily concerned with the recognition of individual letters, phonemes and words. Gough, La Berge and Samuels as quoted by Cox (1999) state that bottom-up reading model views reading as a part to whole process. First, the reader learns to recognize letters, followed by words, and then words in context, until he or she finally begins to understand what is read. This model believes that the reading process begins with individual recognition of letter and phonemic counterparts. This knowledge then leads to the recognition of individual words of the text presented to the reader. Meaning of the whole text is a process of building understanding of individual letters to the word level, then to the sentential level, and finally the text level.

#### *Top-down Model*

The top-down model of reading process places the emphasis on the reader's active participation in the reconstruction of the meaning in the text. Stanovich as quoted by O'Malley and Pierce (1996) states that the model by starting with the reader's hypotheses and predictions about the text and his or her attempts to confirm them by working down to the smallest units of the printed page. Similarly, Cox (1999: 270) states that top-down reading views reading as part of language development and a process of hypothesis testing in which the reader's job is to make predictions about the meaning of what is being read.

#### *Interactive Model*

Cox (1999: 270) points out that interactive model views the reading process as an interaction between the reader and the text. The model allows for both bottom-up and top-down processing and is reflected in teaching approaches that emphasize direct reading

instruction of word identification skills, vocabulary, and word meaning and comprehension. Interactive model is suitable for skilled readers. For them, both bottom-up and top-down models of reading can occur simultaneously. It means that when such readers are confronted with the reading texts, they must activate both their linguistic competences and their schemata related to the text contents.

### **Levels of Reading Comprehension**

To know to what extent students have understood the content of the text, some experts have proposed some levels of reading comprehension. Four levels of comprehension as identified by Burns, Roe, and Ross (1996) are discussed. They are reading the lines (literal comprehension), reading between the lines (interpretive or inferential comprehension), reading for evaluation (critical reading), and reading beyond the lines (creative comprehension) each of which can be described in the following section.

#### *Literal Comprehension*

Burns et. al. ( 1996:255) explain that literal reading comprehension involves acquiring information that is directly stated in the text. It is a prerequisite for higher level understanding. To be better in this comprehension one should have a thorough understanding of vocabulary, sentence meaning, and paragraph meaning.

They also say that the basis of the literal comprehension is recognizing stated main idea and details. Details in reading mean the specific explicitly-stated parts of a paragraph or passage that contains the basic information. Main idea is the central thought around which a whole paragraph is organized. It is often expressed in a topic sentence.

Moreover, it is stated that recognizing and understanding the cause and effect relationship as well as sequence in a written passage is also important to be the basis of literal reading comprehension. Finding out the cause and effect relationship in the reading text is considered as literal skill when the relationship is explicitly stated. Sequence, the order in which events in a paragraph or passage occur, can be identified by time-order words, for example now, before, when, while, yet, after, and so on.

Further, they say that the next basis for literal reading comprehension is direction. The ability to read and follow directions is prerequisite for successful school work. It involves understanding details and sequence; therefore, the exercises under the headings are appropriate to use in teaching students to follow written direction.

#### *Interpretive/inferential Reading Comprehension*

Based on Burn et.al's opinion ( 1996:263), interpretive reading involves making inference or reading between the lines. Moreover, they explain that it is the process of

deriving ideas that are implicitly stated. Skills included in this comprehension are 1) inferring the implicit main idea of the passages, 2) inferring cause and effect relationship which are not directly stated, 3) inferring referents of pronouns, 4) inferring referents of adverbs, 5) inferring omitted words, 6) detecting mood, 7) detecting the author's purpose in writing, and 8) drawing conclusions.

### *Critical Reading Comprehension*

Critical reading is evaluating written material – comparing the ideas discovered in the material with known standards and drawing conclusions about their accuracy, appropriateness, and timeliness. The critical reader must be an active reader, questioning, searching for facts, and suspending judgment until he or she has considered all the material. Critical reading depends on both literal and interpretive comprehension, and grasping implied ideas is especially important.

### *Creative Reading Comprehension*

Creative reading involves going beyond the material presented by the author. Like critical reading, creative reading requires readers to think as they read, and it also requires them to use their imagination. Such reading results in the production of new ideas. To go beyond the material in the text, readers must make use of their background schemata, combining this prior knowledge with ideas from the text to produce a new response based on, but not completely dictated by, the text. Therefore creative readers must be skilled in the following areas : a) predicting outcomes, b) visualization, c) solving problems, d) improving story presentation, and e) producing new creations (Burn et.al, 1996:293-296).

## **The Nature of PQ4R Strategy**

According to Hayes (1992), PQ4R is an analytical reading procedure for leading students through the study of texts systematically. A variation of SQ3R, the PQ4R method shows students how to deal with texts through a procedure of Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, and Review. Students actively process the text content by an approach that closely resembles study routines traditionally advocated for studying texts independently. Practicing this approach in class, students gain experience with a strategy they can apply when they study on their own.

As an analytical reading procedure, PQ4R has students approach the study of a text as a set of tasks to be undertaken in a set routine. These tasks account for essential conditions of learning and effective problem solving. Students gain an understanding of the material presented, raise questions, read for information, ponder the information, restate it in their own words, and review their thinking about the material. PQ4R is for high school

and college classes that make substantial use of textual materials. It may be used with individual students, small groups, and whole classes.

### **Procedures of PQ4R Strategy**

According to Logsdon (2007), there are six procedures in implementing PQ4R strategy in teaching reading, *Preview*, *Question*, *Read*, *Reflect*, *Recite*, and *Review*.

*Preview* is a step involves previewing a reading, scan the title, section headings, and visual aids. Read the first and last paragraphs. This should give the reader a general idea of the purpose of the text and the major concepts to be covered. The information gleaned from the preview is used in the next step.

*Question* is a step involves predicting questions that may be answered in the text. Convert headings into questions or draw upon past experiences to form questions. Look for answers to the questions while reading in the next step.

*Read* is a step involves reading the complete text carefully, recording notes in the margin or underlining important information that answers the predicted questions.

*Reflect* is a step when information from the passage or article is linked together. The reader should attempt to develop insight into the topic and make associations among the important material noted while reading.

*Recite* is a step involves summarizing the main points and supporting details of the complete text. To involve more senses and improve understanding, say the summary aloud or write it down using an information organization tool like flowcharts and outlines.

*Review* entails highlighting key points of the text. Make sure the predicted questions have been answered and that the author's purpose is fully understood.

### **Benefits of PQ4R Strategy**

According to Logsdon (2007), PQ4R strategy is useful in improving the students' understanding of the text. Besides it also improves recall of facts by as much as 70%. Furthermore, the strategy is also useful for students with specific learning disabilities in [basic reading](#), [reading comprehension](#), and [dyslexia](#) need effective strategies to understand what they read and to remember details of what they've read. This strategy can also help non-disabled students improve reading comprehension and retention.

Hayes (1992) states that using PQ4R strategy; students actively process the text content by an approach that closely resembles study routines traditionally advocated for studying texts independently. Practicing this approach in class, students gain experience with a strategy they can apply when they study on their own. Moreover, he points out that



PQ4R is essential for effective problem solving. Besides, Students gain an understanding of the material presented, raise questions, read for information, ponder the information, restate it in their own words, and review their thinking about the material. It may be used with individual students, small groups, and whole classes.

### PQ4R Strategy in Teaching Reading

A model of PQ4R strategy for the teaching of reading can be developed into pre, while, and post reading activities (See Table 1 below).

**Table 1. Model of Teaching Reading Using PQ4R Strategy**

Reading Stage	Teacher's Activities	Students' Activities
<b>Pre-reading</b> Activating students' prior knowledge	1. Introducing the theme.	1. Attentively listening to the theme mentioned.
	2. Showing topic-related pictures to students.	2. Paying attention to the pictures shown.
	3. Asking students about the pictures.	3. Answering the teacher's question about the pictures.
	4. Connecting the pictures to students' real life by asking some questions to the students.	4. Responding to the teacher's questions.
	5. Introducing the instructional objectives.	5. Paying attention to the instructional objectives stated by the teacher.
* Preview Step	1. Distributing the text to the students and ask them to survey the reading assignment by skimming the text for an overview of main ideas.	
	2. Asking the students to look at heading and picture to try to identify what they will be reading about.	1. Reading the text to find out the main ideas.
* Question Step	1. Asking the students to make a list of questions they expect to be answered in the reading. Use heading to ask questions.	
	2. Giving time to the students to consider their questions, and let each student have an opportunity to write their question on their books.	1. Making prediction about the text by looking at the heading and picture and writing a list of questions they expect to be answered



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**Whilst Reading**

* Read Step	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asking the students to read the text</li> <li>2. Asking the students to look for the answer to the previously formulated questions</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reading silently the text.</li> <li>2. Finding the answer of the questions which they expect to be answered</li> </ol>
* Reflect Step	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asking the students to reflect what they have just read</li> <li>2. Asking the students to write the unexpected ideas</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students reflect what they have just read</li> <li>2. Writing unexpected ideas.</li> </ol>
* Recite Step	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asking the students' to think about the material and discuss in pairs with their friends or write down the main points they learned.</li> <li>2. Asking the students to explain it aloud or recite their notes aloud to their friends</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussing in pairs.</li> <li>2. Reading aloud their notes.</li> </ol>

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**Post-reading**

* Review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asking the students to reread to verify about their recite answer is correct and make sure they have main points of the text.</li> <li>2. Asking the students to answer these questions' to check their understanding of the text</li> <li>3. Closing the meeting.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Checking their answers</li> <li>2. Answering the questions</li> </ol>
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**Conclusion**

PQ4R (also referred to SQ4R) is one of reading comprehension methods that encompasses six activities – previewing or survey the reading material, questioning the reading, reading to answer the questions, reflecting upon the reading, reciting the reading and reviewing the material. This method appears to be the most appropriate for older students because it consists of the application of higher-level of metacognitive processes. Although this method is not a new method, it continues to be considered as an effective technique for helping students organize and retain information from texts (Anderson in Joseph, 2001). Furthermore, this method leads to a more active learning environment and deeper processing of information. Regarding the benefits, improving students' reading comprehension will be possible to achieve using this method.

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