I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

California Task Force (2002:4) informs that the ability to read is crucial to the success of all students, and it is essential to succeed in society. Meanwhile, Krishnamoorty (2002:1) states that reading is one of the greatest pleasures, and reading also enhances many skills, e.g. thinking, language ability, and power of imagination. In addition, Trelease (2001:1) expresses in words that reading is a fundamental task that must be mastered by every student in order to able to functionally compete in society. Reading is fundamental for learning; unless a student learns to read, he or she will face severe obstacles in life.

UCCS (2002:4) expresses in words that PQRST can be used to help students encode information into their long term memory. PQRST is a method of reading so that the information that we read really enter our long term memory. It is a method which helps students read and comprehend effectively what they read. In other words, the reader is more likely to learn, and to learn, more, of the material he/she is reading. If we use this method, reading won't be a waste of our time. The PQRST reading method is a step-by step plan that has been proven to raise test scores for students who follow the steps.

Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn (2001:6) postulate several effective comprehension strategies as revealed by some research, namely; (1) teaching students to pinpoint hard-to-understand sections of text and then seeking solutions such as rereading, restating, and looking forward to other sections for clues, (2) using graphic organizers-it helps students focus on important points the author is trying to convey. These help students organize information to increase learning and retention, (3) answering questions –among several benefits, answering teacher's questions help students focus on important points in a text and read actively, (4) generating questions-students who are taught to ask their own questions become more active, involved readers, (5) recognizing story-students who can analyze a text in terms of its plot, characters, and other content categories and more likely to remember the story. They must also recognize text features in both fiction and nonfiction texts, and (6) summarizing-it encourages students to focus on the most important elements in a text and reprocess them through using their own words.

Based on the above mentioned effective comprehension strategies, this study applied most of the proposed strategies, especially (3), (4), (5), and (6). These strategies are considered most closely related to this study since this study is applying PQRST reading method.

In this study, the writer applied PQRST reading method to improve the second semester accounting students' reading comprehension achievement at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya."

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(1) did the second semester accounting students who were taught by using PQRST reading method showed significant different achievement in reading comprehension compared to those who were not, and (2) what were the effects of independent variables (gender, group, and pretest) to the dependent one (posttest)?

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Reading comprehension is understanding a text that is read, or the process of "constructing meaning" from a text (National Reading Panel, 2000). Comprehension is a "construction process" because it involves all of the elements of the reading process, working together. Reading comprehension is the process of understanding and constructing meaning from a piece of text. Connected text is any written material involving multiple words that forms coherent thoughts. Phrases, sentences, paragraphs and so on are examples of connected text that can be read with comprehension. Reading difficulties become most apparent when the reader is unable to grasp the meaning from a text passage. Reading comprehension may be affected by the difficulty of the text, the vocabulary words used in the text, and the reader's familiarity with the subject matter, among other factors (Royer, 2003:1). That is why the writer defines reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.

PQRST is based on work by Thomas and H.A. Robinson (1982), Spache and Berg and R.P. Robinson (1997). It is sometimes cryptically known as SQ3R (Choong, 2001:1). In this method there are five steps that should be followed, namely: Preview, Question, Read, Self-recite, and Test. According to Staton (1982), PQRST stands for Preview (getting the big or overall picture), Question (giving a purpose for reading and reading to answer questions), Read (reading carefully and reacting to what you read), Self-Recitation (helping to put what you are learning into long-term memory and avoiding passive reading on your part), and Test (checking yourself to see if you recall what was in it and what the important concepts were).

4.   METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The writer applied one of the quasi-experimental designs that is the pretest-posttest non-equivalent control group design. According to Campbell and Stanley (1963) cited in Gage (1971:217) can be presented as:

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01        X        02
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03                 04
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Where:

X	=	Treatment
01	=	Pre-test of experimental group
02	=	Post-test of experimental group
03	=	Pre-test of control group
04	=	Post-test of control group

B. Variables

In the study, the dependent variable was students' reading comprehension achievement (pos-test) while the independent variables were gender, group, and pre-test. To measure the differences between experimental group and control group, here the writer used the paired sample t-test with SPSS version 14 while to measure the contributions of gender, pre-test and

group (independent variables) to post-test (dependent variable), the writer used multiple regression with SPSS version 14.

C. Participants

Table 1
Population of the Study

No	Class	Female	Male	Number
1	2AA	20	8	28
2	2AB	23	7	30
3	2AC	22	7	29
Total		65	22	87

Source : Politeknik Negeri Sriwijya Palembang (2008-2009)

D. Sample

In this study, the writer took the sample by using purposive random sampling. On the basis of the their English average scores, finally class 2AA and 2 AC were chosen. 2AC was in the experiment class and 2AA was in the control class.

E. Techniques and Procedures of Teaching and Learning

The experimental group was given a treatment for about four months distributed into 16 meetings which included the meetings for pre-test and post-test; while the control group did not receive any treatment. The experimental group was taught the reading by using PQRST method.

Before the study began, the students were given a pretest containing a reading test. At the end of the course, the students were also tested with the same materials to find out if there was progress.

F. Instruments for Collecting the Data

The test consisted of forty items in the form of multiple choices. Before piloting the test, the writer distributed to 12 respondents. They are three lecturers of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University, three lecturers of English at PGRI University Palembang, two lecturers of English at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya Palembang, one lecturer of English at Politeknik Sekayu, two lecturers of English at Bina Darma University Palembang, and one lecturer of English at Sriwijaya University Language Institution Palembang.

The scales for classifying the eleven respondents' judgments about appropriateness and difficulty of test items can be seen in the following table.

Table 2
Scales for Levels of Item Appropriateness

No	Level of Item Appropriateness	
	Scales	Categorization
1	≥5 at very appropriate	A very appropriate item
2	≥5 at appropriate and very appropriate	An appropriate item
3	≥5 moderate	A moderate item
4	≥5 at inappropriate	An inappropriate item
5	≥5 at very inappropriate	A very inappropriate item

Table 3
Scales for Levels of Item Difficulty

No	Level of Item Difficulty	
	Scales	Categorization
1	>5 at very difficult	A very difficult item
2	>5 at difficult und very difficult	A difficult item
3	≥5 moderate	A moderate item
4	>5 at easy	An easy item
5	≥5 at very easy	A very easy item

G. Validity and Reliability of the Test

To obtain the content validity of the test, the writer distributed to 12 respondents. They were three lecturers of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University, three lecturers of English at PGRI University Palembang, two lecturers of English at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya Palembang, one lecturer of English at Politeknik Sekayu, two lecturers of English at Bina Darma University Palembang, and one lecturer of English at Sriwijaya University Language Institution Palembang. They were asked to determine the level of difficulty and the level of appropriateness of each item of the test.

To get a reliability coefficient of the test, the Split-Half method was adopted. The test was split on the basis of odd-numbered items and even-numbered items. Thus, the reliability coefficient of the two versions were computed by using a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (Rust and Golombok, 1989:160). The result of Pearson product moment correlation coefficient is 0.726.

The reliability coefficient (0.726) is the equivalent of one for a test of half size of the original test. This should be corrected, then the Spearmen-Brown formula was used to compute the reliability of the original test (Rust and Golombok, 1989:161), that is:

Table 4

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	.090
		N of Items	20
	Part 2	Value	.105
		N of Items	20
	Total N of Items		40
Correlation Between Forms			.570
Spearman Brown Coefficient	Equal Length		.726
	Unequal Length		.726
Guttman Split-Half Coefficient			.726

After finding out the correlation, the Spearman Brown formula must be applied.

$$r_{tt} : \frac{2\,r_{oe}}{1 + r_{oe}} =$$

$$: \frac{2(0.726)}{1 + 0.726} =$$

$$: 0.841$$

Note:

r_{tt} : the reliability of the original test

r_{oe} : the reliability coefficient obtained by correlating the scores on the odd items with the scores of the even items

Having looked at the time spent by the students in doing the try out, 57,5% could complete the test on time, or 85,5% could complete the test not later than ninety minutes, therefore, it was considered that it was not necessary to decrease the length of the test time-ninety minutes.

G. Techniques for Analyzing the Data

A t-test was used to examine more closely the group differences, and finally a multiple regression analysis was used to explore linear relationship between predictor and criterion variables   that is, when the relationship follows a straight line. Here the writer used SPSS version 14 to run analysis.

5.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part described the results of tests to the samples before and after treatment. The test given twice to the students were pre-test and post-test. The pre-test and post-test were the same. The collected data were analyzed to satisfy the objectives of the study.

1. The Statistical Strategy for Analysis of Students Test Results

To examine more closely the group differences, t-test is presented and finally the multiple regression analysis will be carried out to explore other possible factors that may affect the outcome of the experiment.

Table 5

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest	54.167	57	7.8650	1.0421
	postest	69.298	57	8.1526	1.0798

Table 6

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	pretest & postest	57	.843	.000

Table 7

Paired Sample Test

			Pair 1
			pretest - postest
Paired Differences	Mean		-15.1316
	Std. Deviation		4.4926
	Std. Error Mean		.5951
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	-16.3236
		Upper	-13.9395
t			-25.420
df			56
Sig. (2 tailed)			.000

Table 8
Means and Standard Deviation of Pre-test Scores for Reading Test by Groups

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest	experimental	29	54.569	7.8545	1.4579
	control	28	53.750	8.0075	1.5133

Table 9

Independent Samples Test

		pretest	
		Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	.039	
	Sig.	.845	
t-test for Equality of Means	t	.392	.392
	df	55	54.831
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.694	.698
	Mean Difference	.8190	.8190
	Std. Error Difference	2.1006	2.1013
	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower	-3.3906	-3.3924
		Upper	5.0396	5.0984

The First Output

The statistical summaries from both samples can be seen from the table 7. The pre-test for experimental group is 54.569, and the pre-test for the control group is 53.750. In other words, it can be said that the pre-test value obtained by the experimental group is higher that that of the control group.