A. Background of the Research

In facing the alteration of the curriculum from teacher-centered learning to students-centered learning, the learners should take their responsibility of their own learning. No more learners viewed as passive recipient of information, but as active interpreters and processers of knowledge, which they seek based on their own interest and need (Ikonen, 2013). The idea that learners need to be able to take control over their own learning to be successful not just in class, but also to learn independently without a teacher inside the class, has become widely accepted in language teaching (Benson in Novitas, 2011). Autonomous learners entail great responsibility about planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating learning process. They should be aware of their own thinking, to be reflective and strategic, and direct their motivation toward valuable goals (Zarei and Gahremani, 2010). Autonomous learning can lead the learners to know what they learn and how they learn it. Besides that, it helps them to study in whole situation in the learning process on their own and decide the direction of their own learning.

Since language learning has become an essential component in people’s live, educational research has emphasized the need for students
to take responsibility for their own learning (Nematipour, 2012). The language learners take whole responsibility of their learning situation such as determining his own objective, defining the content to be learned, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring the procedure, and evaluating what they have acquired. Holec (in Wang, 2010) claimed that the final aim of foreign language teaching is to awaken in students how to learn the language. Because learning language can continue after finishing classes without the teacher. Learners can learn by themselves outside learning process in the classroom activities. Hence, the knowledge and skill are acquired in the classroom can be developed based on the situation that arise outside the classroom. Learner autonomy is no just a goal for highly committed students completing optional courses, but should be seen as an essential goal of all learning (Cotterall in Harmer, 2000). Increasing learning autonomy is an achievement of all the lessons that learners get. Especially in language learning, learners should have real progress to use the language in real life. To develop learners’ progress, they should develop their learning strategies too, so that as far as possible they become autonomous learners. Autonomous learners do not only involve to take responsibility in their own learning process, but also they have responsibility to learn beneficial independently.

Indonesia has English as foreign language that the learners do not get the language outside the classroom activities for communication. There should be dealing in teaching learning process with the what is
taught and how the language is to be taught for the learners. As we know that in learning English, learners should have four skills. They are writing, speaking, reading, and listening. Wallace in Nunan (1991) stated that reading is purposeful, it can help us to achieve things. Reading is one of receptive skill in learning English, therefore it becomes vital skill to the learners because it is an interactive process which allows the readers to access information. By reading, learners can get information in written forms, among them are newspapers, books, and magazine. Learners can get updated and in contact with knowledge regarding many issues because of reading. In reading activity, there are some benefits that reading is a key to learners gain in reading ability, linguistic competence, vocabulary, spelling and writing (Brown in Hilmansyah, 2015).

Reading needs to be involved to learners in learning language because it has interrelationship with other skills. Reading will be developed best in association with writing, listening, and speaking activities (Brown, 2007). Besides that, it can be interactive language teaching for the learners in learning process, this skill can be habit individual for the learners without any direction of teacher’s role in the classroom hence, learners to be enhanced in both extensive and intensive reading. The teachers can help learners to encourage them to choose for themselves what they read and to do for pleasure and general language improvement. The improvement of learners in reading can give them the best achievement in language learning. Dafei in Rahmawati and Mulyani
(2011) claims that the more autonomous a learner is the higher his/her achievement will be. Autonomous learners in reading should have awareness that they have to develop specific skills in reading, such as skimming which is reading for general understanding, scanning that is reading for specific information, reading for detailed comprehension or reading for interference, and attitude. Learners who have autonomous in reading will enhance their ability in other skill when they get specific skill in reading or they can comprehend the text by reading intensively or extensively.

The reading activity has an important role for the learners in learning language caused it has necessity reasons that need to be improved. The first is learners need to read English text to master other aspect of the language. Second, better readers usually gain more vocabulary from their reading activities and are more familiar with the grammar of the language they are reading, which is useful for language acquisition. Third, the presence of good reading materials can introduce interesting topics, stimulate discussion, excite creative responses, and provide trigger for interesting lessons involving various language skill (Murdibjono in Rahmawatin and Mulyani, 2011).

Based on the previous study which is done by Budhiarti, 2016, learning autonomy is rarely implemented in English language learning. Learners are lack of awareness to study independently outside the learning process. They have not had responsibility of their own learning yet. On
the other hand, this research is done to know autonomous learning in reading class as specific skill that is concerned by the researcher, such as willingness of learners in reading, learners’ awareness in reading independently, and the benefit of learning in reading. From those questions, the researcher is interested in having a research on “Learning Autonomy in Reading (A Descriptive Study on Seventh Semester of English Education Students in University Muhammadiyah of Purwokerto in the Academic Year of 2016/2017).

B. Reason for Choosing the Topic

The reason of choosing the topics are described as follow:

1. Reading is an individual habits that can involves learner to learn independently without the teacher inside the classroom activities. The learners can get knowledge from reading in many resources they can get. By reading, learners can enrich linguistic knowledge.

2. Learning autonomy is regarded as the goal of today’s language education. As foreign language, learning English is not only done in the school activities but it takes challenge for the learners to continue learning after leaving school. It takes more learners’ responsibility in their own learning process for their language acquisition.

C. Research of Problems

This research is conducted into a question:
How far do learners develop their learning autonomy in reading?

D. Aims of the Research

This research was conducted to investigate how far learners develop their learning autonomy in reading on Seventh Semester of English Education Department students in Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto in the academic year 2016/2017.

E. Clarification of Term

In recent years, there is move away from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning or autonomy. Holec in Yan (2012), defined autonomy as the ability to take charge of one’s own learning. Onozawa cited, the idea of autonomy has been as connected with the concept of self-directed learning, learner training, independence, interdependence, and individualization. In one hand, autonomous learners are freely apply their knowledge and skill outside the immediate context of learning.

One of the discernible areas of gap in the literature on reading comprehension and learner autonomy is that although many scholars have identified reading comprehension as one of the most crucial language skill, few have engaged themselves with ways of bringing about autonomous reading (Zarei and Gahremani, 2010). Reading comprehension is not just looking up into the words and sentences in the text, but it is recognizing and understanding the text comprehensively. It helps the earners to pick up new words, syntax, and writing style.
F. Contribution of Research

The study was mainly aimed to show learners’ learning autonomy in reading. It is expected that the study would have contribution to the English teaching and learning literature on autonomy in reading skill for the learners. These are some specific contributions:

1. The study may arise learners’ awareness of autonomy in reading.
2. The study may give opportunity to teachers to explore their ability in enhancing learners’ willingness to more autonomous in reading learning process.
3. The study may give indication about the important of reading independently to enrich learners’ knowledge.