A. Reading Comprehension

1. The Nature of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of understanding and constructing meaning from a piece of text. Simanjuntak (1988: 4), states that reading comprehension is most likely to occur when students’ are reading what they want to read or at least what they want to see some good reasons to read. Harris and Sipay (1980: 179), who say that reading comprehension ability is taught to be a set of generalized knowledge acquisition that permits people to acquire and exhibit information gained as a consequence of reading language.

From the definition above, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is only a term referring to read skill through the important thing is not on the pronouncing or load reading, but it is the understanding taken into consideration. Comprehension includes recognizing and understanding a main idea and related details. A good recognized that many ideas are implied and he must read between the lines to get the full meaning.

2. Major Components of the Reading Comprehension

The component of reading is very important because it will support the success in comprehending reading material and contributing way to read. According to Leu (1987: 30-38), there are six components of reading:
a. Decoding Knowledge

Decoding knowledge refers to the knowledge use by the reader in determining the oral equivalent of the written word.

b. Vocabulary Knowledge

The knowledge about word meaning used to determine the appropriate meaning for a word in particular context.

c. Discourse Knowledge

Knowledge of language organization is a unit beyond the single sentence level. It includes knowledge of the structural organization of different type of reading.

d. Readiness Aspect

It traditionally refers to the student’s ability to read and understand a particular selection.

e. Effective Aspects

Effective aspects of comprehension include a reader’s attitude and interest in reading. These increase motivation and facilitate reading comprehension. In the field of reading, there is a substantial agreement that decoding, vocabulary, syntactic, discourse readiness, and effective aspects all exist in the mind of readers and contribute to reading comprehension (Leu and Kenzar, 1987: 39).

f. Syntactic Knowledge

Knowledge of sentence syntax, or word order, is also crucial for the comprehension process. Syntactic knowledge includes understanding word order rules that exist within sentences and permit the reader to determine
the grammatical function and often the meaning and pronunciation of words.

3. The Importance of Reading

Reading is very important in a study and society because there are many books, references, and instructions which are written in English. So, students who have lack of reading skill have difficulty to understand them. Besides, reading is also the main skill to reach a successful study. Students who only confine in what their teacher gives in the class without having an effort to read much reference will not pass and succeed in time. Roman in Tarigan (2004: 9) states:

“Reading is very important part in our life. Through reading people can explore the world, countries that have never visited before, the minds and ideas of great people in the past, and all of which will enrich our experience. For the students, reading is also something crucial and indispensable since the success of their study depend for greater part on their ability to read. If their reading is poor, they are very likely to fail in their study, or at least they will have difficulty making progress. In the other hand, if they have a good reading ability, they will have a better chance to succeed in their study.”

It means that reading is very important to get information and knowledge. Information and knowledge are needed to support one’s life for a success.

4. The Aim of Reading

There are some aims of reading (Tarigan, 2008: 9).
a. Reading to Details of Facts

The students read to get or know the invention that have been done by the writer or solve the problems of the writer.

b. Reading for the Main Ideas

The students read the text to know “why is the topic good or interest, next analyze the problems on the story and then make summaries of the story.”

c. Reading for Sequences Organization

The students read the text to know “what is happening in each part the story in every episode; solve the problems of the story.”

d. Reading to Classify

The students read the text to classify some information or action of the writer in the text paragraph.

e. Reading for Inference

The students read in order to find out the conclusion from the action or ideas in the text.

f. Reading for Comparing

The students read to compare the plot of the story or content whether having similarity with him or even contrast.

5. Reading Technique

Reading techniques play an important role in understanding reading materials. Students would not use the same kind of reading technique in studying a book on science and magazine or newspaper.
Krashen, and Tarrel in Ginting (2007: 8-9) distinguish at least four types of reading techniques. They are scanning, skimming, extensive reading, and intensive reading. The description of four techniques is as follows:

a. Scanning

Scanning is a technique that is used to look for detailed information from the material. This technique is also used by students if they want to look for words, fact, date, time, and a part of idea that they need accurately.

b. Skimming

Skimming is a technique that is used to explore reading material rapidly to look for the gist of the main idea. Readers can get main idea rapidly by unifying words, phrases, and sentences.

The aims of skimming are
1) getting the preview specific information in paragraph, quotation, alignment, or references,
2) getting the main idea rapidly and the important grains from specific text,
3) examining or check whether the material can be ignored or should be read because of necessary, and
4) using the accurate time or in order word; because of time compulsion because the readers very busy.

c. Extensive Reading

Extensive reading is rapid reading for main ideas of a large amount of texts (books, long articles, or essay, etc.). The most extensive reading is performed outside a classroom. Technical, scientific, and personal reading
can be extensive when it is simply striving for a global or general meaning from longer passages.

d. Intensive Reading

Intensive reading is reading for complete comprehending/understanding of an entire text. Intensive reading calls students’ attention to grammatical forms, discourse makers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meanings, implications, rhetorical relationship and the like.

B. Analytical Exposition

1. The Nature of Analytical Exposition

The main focus in this research is analytical exposition text. According to Anderson Mark (1997: 122), an analytical exposition is a piece of text that presents one side of an issue.

2. Generic Structure of Analytical Exposition

The steps for constructing an analytical exposition text according to Anderson (1997: 124), there are three generic structure of analytical exposition text. Those are as follows:

a. Introductory Statement in Title

An introductory statement that gives the author’s point of view and previews the argument that will follow in some texts, the opening statement may be ‘attention grabbing’
b. Series of Arguments to Convince Audience

A series of arguments that aim to convince the audience, pictures might also be used to help persuade the audience.

c. Conclusion Reinforces the Author’s Point of View

A conclusion that sums up the arguments and reinforces the author’s point of view.

3. Language Features of Analytical Exposition

The language features that are usually found in an analytical exposition text according to Anderson (1997: 124), are as follows:

a. The use of words that show the author’s attitude (modality)

b. The use of words that express feelings (emotive words)

c. The use of words to link cause and effect.

4. Type of Analytical Exposition

There are many different types of analytical exposition text, according to Anderson (1997: 123), are as follows:

a. Advertisements

b. Editorials

c. Spoken arguments

d. Legal devences

5. Assessing Reading Comprehension of Analytical Exposition Text

According to Brown (2004: 187-188), the micro and macro skills below represent the spectrum of possibilities for objectives in the assessment of reading comprehension.
Micro skills

1) Discriminating among the distinctive graphemes and orthographic patterns of English.

2) Retaining chunks of language of different lengths in short-term memory.

3) Processing writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.

4) Recognizing a core of words, and interpret word order patterns and their significance.

5) Recognizing grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc), systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization), patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.

6) Recognizing that a particular meaning may be expressed in different grammatical forms.

7) Recognizing cohesive devices in written discourse and their role in signaling the relationship between and among clauses.

a. Macro skills

1) Recognizing the rhetorical forms of written discourse and their significance for interpretation.

2) Recognizing the communicative functions of written texts, according to form and purpose.

3) Inferring context that is not explicit by using background knowledge.

4) From describing events, ideas, etc., infer links and connections between events, deduce causes and effects, and detect such relations as main
idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.

5) Distinguishing between literal and implied meanings.

6) Detecting culturally specific references and interpret them in a context of the appropriate cultural schemata.

7) Developing and use a battery of reading strategies, such as scanning and skimming, detecting discourse markers, guessing the meaning of words from context, and activating schemata for the interpretation of texts.

Based on the Brown’ classification above, macro skills and micro skills will be used to evaluate students’ reading comprehension in pre-reading activity as follows:

1. Micro Skills
   a. Identifying referents of pronoun.
   b. Using context to guess meaning of unfamiliar words.
   c. Understanding cohesive in written discourse and their role in signaling the relationship between and among clauses.

2. Macro Skills
   a. Skimming text for the gist and for the main idea, scanning text for specific information (names, dates, key words).
   b. Understanding given information stated in the passage.
   c. Understanding context inference that is not explicit by using background knowledge.
The researcher used multiple choice-questions to evaluate students’ reading comprehension. The traditional multiple choice-questions “Read a passage and answer some questions” technique is undoubtedly the oldest and the most common (Brown, 2004: 204). It is used because it recovers macro skills and micro skills that are used to evaluate students’ reading comprehension.

C. Small Group Discussions

1. Definition of Small Group Discussion

Group discussion is one technique of the cooperative learning that is used by teachers in particular subjects. This technique is proposed by Slavin. Slavin in Elliot et al. (1996: 355) stated that in an attempt to develop techniques designed to further cooperative learning, he proposed that students should work in small (four-member) groups of mixed ability, including one high achiever, two average achievers, and one low achiever.

Small group discussion is an effective technique of reading class in comprehending analytical exposition because a group discussion consist only four to five students. According to Roe et al. (1995: 332), in implementing cooperative learning techniques, teachers should explain the process and its purpose to their students. The cooperative learning process includes the discussion and sharing of ideas with students as active participants.
2. Teaching Analytical Exposition Reading Using Small Group Discussion

a. Steps:

The following steps in using discussion technique for teaching reading are quoted from Hasibuan and Moedjiono (1985: 23-24):

1) The teacher proposes the problem/text to be discussed and gives a necessary direction to the students how to solve the problems.

2) The teacher and the students determine the main problems together, and the problem that will be discussed have to be clearly formulated in order that the students can get a good comprehension.

3) The teacher asks the students to answer the question individually.

4) The students are lead by the teacher to make the discussion groups, choose the discussion leader (leader, secretary), arrange the seats, the place, etc. some criterion to choose the discussion leader are that, he/she should:

   a) master the discussion problem,
   b) be “authoritative bearing” and his friends like him,
   c) speak fluently,
   d) be distinct, fair, and democratic in taking the measures.

5) The students discuss an issue/text in their group to get appropriate answer while the teacher walks around from one to another group and takes care that each of member has active participation. Each of members has exactly known the discussion material and how to discuss.
The discussion has to run in the free situation, and every member has the same right to speak.

6) Then, each group has to report their discussion result, and other groups give reaction, protest or questions.

7) Finally, the students make a note about the discussion result, and the teacher collects the discussion result from each group.

b. Procedure:

1) Teacher shows a picture with the text in big size to the students and gives some questions to stimulate them to tell their arguments based on the picture orally. Example Questions:

   T : Do you know who are in this picture?

   S : The children.

   T : Do you know what are they doing?

   S : They are playing outside and they are wear hat.

   T : Tell me your arguments why are they playing outside and why are they wear hat when they are playing outside?

2) Then, the teacher invites some students to give their different arguments.

3) Next, the teacher asks the students to make a conclusion based on their arguments.

4) Teacher tells the material that day is analytical exposition text. The teacher gives explanation about the definition, generic structure and language features of analytical exposition text.
5) Teacher divides the students into some groups. Every group consists of 4 students which have different ability. The smartest student in every group became the leader.

6) Teacher distributes the same text of analytical exposition text with the title “Cars Should Be Banned from Cities” to every groups, then asks the students to read, to discuss the text and answer the questions with their group by giving their own ideas one by one so that all of students participate and active in the discussion. It will make them easier to comprehend the text.

7) Teacher asks groups to report the result of their answer loudly, and the other students have to pay attention, if there is any different answer with other groups, they may debate, clarify, give opinion, and criticize.

8) The teacher observes the groups discussion to make sure that all members of group participate in their own discussions.

3. The Advantages of Small Group Discussion for Teaching Analytical Exposition Reading

Small Group Discussion is very useful technique in learning process. It has many advantages for the students. There are six kinds of excess Small Group Discussion technique for teaching analytical exposition reading, namely:

a. Sharing ideas and experiences from group

b. Being able to improve the comprehension of important problems
c. Allowing everyone to participate in an active process

d. Being appropriate to convey the information

e. Training the students to critical thinking

f. Developing their team work ability

g. Being able to foster or guide a spirit of cooperation

Small Group Discussion is one of the teaching techniques used in communicative language teaching. Small Group Discussion is the most communicative activity. It is not limited by a special topic, but all topics that are considered it. Small Group Discussion is also a very effective way to solve the problem. Each person has different idea, information and opinion. So, Small Group Discussion is a good technique to solve the problem together.

D. Previous Relevant Research

The researcher is Novi Fajar Reni, the title of her thesis is “Improving Student’s Participation in Procedure Text Reading Comprehension Lessons Through Small Group Discussion” (A Classroom Action Research at the 7th Grade of SMP Negeri 3 Purwokerto. The purpose of this research was to improve students’ participation in procedure text reading comprehension lesson or to solve the problem which faced by the students. The method of this research was Small Group Discussion. And then, the result of this research was call success because after conducting classroom action research at SMP N 3 Purwokerto, the students’ participation improved well.
Hopefully, the implementation of Small Group Discussion in the current research can improve the students’ comprehension especially in analytical exposition. Besides, this research is expected that the students are able to solve the problems that they face in reading comprehension.

E. Basic Assumption

Small Group Discussion is one technique that can stimulate students’ cooperation and comprehension in class reading activity, especially in comprehending the analytical exposition text. By applying the discussion technique, the students can share their experiences or opinions with their friends in their group. The students can give experience, input, information, message or argument one another which they don’t know before.

Hopefully, through applying Small Group Discussion technique, subject can improve the students’ reading comprehension and solve the problems that faced by the teacher.