

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITY
TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY**

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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TANJUNGPURA UNIVERSITY
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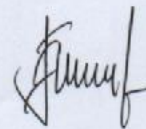
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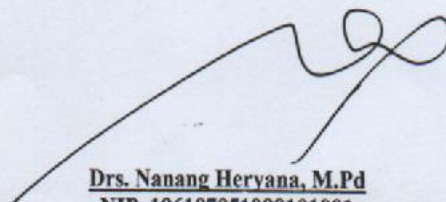
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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY

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Abstract

This research focused on increasing students' speaking ability by using Information Gap Activity. This research was conducted to the eleventh grade students of SMA Santo Paulus Pontianak in Academic Year 2013/2014. The purpose of this research is to find out the effectiveness of Information Gap Activity in improving the students' speaking ability. Since the purpose of this research is to find out the effectiveness of a technique, the researcher decided to conduct Pre – Experimental research with pre – test post – test model. The data were collected through speaking performance of pre – test and post – test. Then, they were analyzed by using formula of mean score, *effect size*, and *t – test*. The finding showed that the students' speaking ability improved. Through the results of the calculations above, it can be concluded that Information Gap Activity is effective in improving the speaking ability of students of SMA Santo Paulus Pontianak in academic year 2013 / 2014.

Keywords: *Information Gap Activity, Speaking Ability*

Background

As the English Foreign Language learners, the students in Indonesia need to be able to perform their English knowledge or mastery in front of other people. It is because through this way people will admit the students' achievement in English; how well they have mastered it. One English skill that can be used to show their English mastery is speaking skill. Through speaking, learners can present their English ability. Through speaking too, their English ability will be directly measured by other people who hear their speaking. Therefore, mastering speaking is important since it is the proof of English mastery. In relation with the speaking condition above, the researcher also found the similar problems among students in Pontianak toward English. Based on the observation while doing the teaching practice in SMA Santo Paulus, there found that the students did not speak English, even when they were in English subject. They spoke Bahasa Indonesia, and there were some of them even spoke Chinese language. Then, in

order to clarify the situation, the researcher did some interview with the students about the case. Regarding to the students' response, they felt anxious to speak. They felt unconfident to speak English because they were not good at pronouncing the words and catching the information or ideas from their interlocutor that made them could not communicate in English. These problems made them afraid to speak English, even they evaded to use English orally. Information Gap Activity is very powerful. Through this activity, the students will be motivated to speak English. They also will be encouraged to speak since they feel in the same position, which is they need information from each other (Bailey, 2005). It is in line with Harmer (2001) who states information gap is where two speakers have different information, and they need to share what they have in order to complete the task or problem. In IGA, the students are working together to find each other information. By working together, they try to solve the whole

(Jones, 1995). They also will create the feeling of togetherness and interdependence.

By applying Information Gap Activity, the researcher found out that the students' speaking ability improved. It means that Information Gap Activity was effective to improve the speaking ability of students of SMA Santo Paulus. Their problems related to anxiety and disability to catch information was solved through this technique. Since the focus of this research was to find out the effectiveness of Information Gap Activity in improving students' speaking skill, the researcher formulated the research problem, as follow:

"How effective is the use of Information Gap Activity in increasing speaking ability on the eleventh grade students of SMA Santo Paulus Pontianak in academic year 2013/2014?"

The research purpose is the specific goal or aim of the study which is used to identify, describe, or predict a solution to a situation (Burnsand & Grove, 1993, p. 43). Referring to its definition and research problem, the purpose of this research was to present the effectiveness of Information Gap Activity in improving speaking ability on the eleventh grade students in SMA Santo Paulus Pontianak in academic year 2013/2014.

A hypothesis is often described as an attempt by the researcher to explain the phenomenon of interest (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005, p. 8). There are two kinds of hypothesis : null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis. Referring on these kinds, the hypotheses in this research are stated as follows:

Null hypothesis is the general statement or default position that there is no relationship between two measured phenomena (Wikipedia). The two measured phenomena in this research are Information Gap Activity as the

technique to improve speaking ability, and the students' speaking ability. Based on that definition, therefore, the Ho of this research is "Information Gap Activity is not effective in improving speaking ability on the eleventh grade students of SMA Santo Paulus Pontianak in academic year 2013 / 2014".

In contrast with Null Hypothesis, Alternative hypothesis is defined as the expected result of the research which is assumed to be true. Based on this definition, therefore, the Alternative hypothesis of this research is "Information Gap Activity is effective in improving speaking ability on the eleventh grade students of SMA Santo Paulus Pontianak in academic year 2013 / 2014".

According to Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger (2005, p. 42), a variable is anything that can take on different values. Thus, referring to its definition, the variables formulated in this research are:

Independent Variable

Independent variable is the factor that is manipulated or controlled by the researcher (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005, p. 42). Independent variable in this research is Information Gap Activity which is trusted can improve students' speaking ability.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is a measure of the effect of the independent variable (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005, p. 44). Dependent variable in this research is the students' speaking ability.

In order to clarify the focus of the research, the researcher provided some terminologies, as below:

Information Gap Activity (IGA), is the technique to enhance students' speaking ability through an activity of interviewing each pair in turn. The purpose is to fill in or complete the missing information in order to

comprehend the message of the information. In this research, the researcher used IGA as the chosen technique to enhance students' speaking ability by presenting its effectiveness.

Pre – experimental Study is the research methodology which has three steps in the implementation: pre – test, treatment, post – test.

Speaking is an active English skill that requires the English users to actively use the English for communication. Speaking is also called as productive skill because the language is generated by the language users. It means that they produce the language, not receive it. As foreign language, speaking English, especially at school, is still rarely done by students because they are difficult to pronounce the words. Therefore, in order to make the students get accustomed to speak English, the English teachers must encourage them by using powerful and effective techniques or strategies during the English lesson. One of the example of the effective technique is Information Gap Activity (IGA), as the researcher used in this research.

Speaking ability is the capability of the English users to speak in English fluently and grammatically. Students who have good ability in speaking, they can express or share their thoughts and feeling undoubtedly. Besides, other people who are listening to their speech understand what they speak about.

Effectiveness in this research is defined as an output of analyses that measure the quality of the achievement of the Information Gap Activity (IGA) as the trusted technique to improve students' speaking skill. Effectiveness is measured by the range of *effect size* which is described as high, middle, or low effectiveness.

Eleventh Grade of Santo Paulus Pontianak is the grade that the researcher chose as the sample of the research. In specific, the researcher

chose Eleventh Grade of Social Science class of Santo Paulus Pontianak

Santo Paulus Pontianak is a Secondary High School which is located in Jl. A.R Hakim 92 Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat

Based on that thinking, in this research, the researcher implemented Information Gap Activities. The researcher followed the concepts of IGA implementation, and applied them in the research. The implementations of IGA in this research are as the following:

The students were divided into pair based on their seats. This was aimed to make them feel more comfortable since they were closer to their seat-mate.

The teacher distributed a gapped text about hortatory exposition. Each pair was given a similar text with different blanks.

Then, the students had to their partner in order to fill the blanks. The students were given 15 minutes to ask each other in the pair. And because the blanks were different for each pair, the students had to take turn delivering the questions.

After 10 minutes, the students were asked to make up their text, such as tidying the information, and also to comprehend the text in order to perform in front of their friends. The students were given 10 minutes to do this activity.

Finally, the students individually came in front the classroom presenting the result of their interview. For the presentation, the students were given 2 minutes to speak in front of the class telling the hortatory text with their own words.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages which emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. It is also referred to as "Communicative Approach". According to the communicative

approach, in order for learning to take place, emphasis must be put on the importance of these variables:

Communication: activities that involve real communication promote learning.

Tasks: activities in which language is used to carry out meaningful tasks supports the learning process.

Meaning: language that is meaningful and authentic to the learner boosts learning.

METHODOLOGY

The method of research chosen by the researcher was a pre – experimental research. This method was considered suitable for this research because the researcher would like to find out the effectiveness of Information Gap Activity in improving students' speaking ability. The researcher used IGA as the independent variable to manipulate the students' ability in mastering English speaking as the dependent variable. As Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2000) says that the most important element of experimental research is that investigators deliberately control and manipulate the conditions which

determine the events in which they are interested in.

According to deMarrais and Lapan (2004, p.336), pre-experimental designs are “those in which a treatment is applied but the basis for judging the effectiveness of the treatment is inadequate.” A pre-experimental study is a research that has no control group. It focuses on the final result from the whole samples. Pre – experimental uses pre – test, treatment for all samples, and post – test.

The researcher decided to choose pre-experimental because it emphasized on the effectiveness of technique that was used as treatment. And, the researcher in this research wanted to know the effectiveness of Information Gap Activity implemented to enhance speaking ability of the students of SMA Santo Paulus Pontianak. The design of pre – experimental research methodology which was used by the researcher was the one-group pre-test post-test design. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2000, p.213) represented the one-group pre-test post-test design as the following figure:

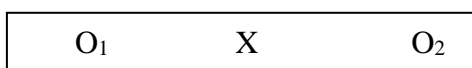


Figure 1. one-group pre-test posttest

The design illustrated above is described as follows: O_1 is the pre-test in the form of speaking test to measure the students' ability in speaking before giving treatment. X is the treatment; the treatment is the technique chosen by the researcher that was Information Gap Activity. O_2 is the post-test to measure the students' ability in speaking after giving treatment. Comparing O_1 and O_2 is to calculate the students' mean score of pre-test and post-test. After conducting the post test, the researcher counted the results, and then compared them. The researcher would see whether Information Gap Activity had been effective or not in enhancing students' speaking ability after comparing the results of pre and posttest.

In conducting the research, the researcher did the following steps:

Did pre – test (O_1). The pre – test was done in form of speaking test. The students did the test individually. They were given 2 minutes to talk about the topic given. However, before doing the test, the students were given 10 minutes to prepare their performance. In pre – test, the researcher scored them with scoring criteria that had been provided. The criteria were fluency, information completeness, pronunciation, and grammar.

Did the treatment (X). The treatment was done after the researcher had the result of pre – test. The treatment was the way to solve the problems in a research. It usually used techniques or strategies. In this research, the treatment was a technique, namely Information Gap Activity (IGA). This activity was trusted to enhance students' speaking ability.

Did post – test (O_2). Post – test was given after the treatment was done. It was a test like pre – test. The post – test was a speaking test done individually. The students were given 2 minutes to present their work. The researcher scored the post – test based on the

scoring criteria: fluency, information completeness, pronunciation, and grammar.

Compared the result of pre – test and post – test, and found the effectiveness of Information Gap Activity.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

From the data analysis, the students' speaking ability increases after being treated by Information Gap Activity. It is shown from the result of the calculation of students' score from pre – test and post – test. The result also shows Information Gap Activity is effective for improving students' speaking ability which is proved by *t – test* and *effect size*.

In this research, the researcher took one meeting to conduct pre – test. The result of pre – test, then calculated as the starting data of the research. It was resulted the mean score of pre – test was 61.19. Then, the researcher conducted one meeting to do the treatment by using Information Gap Activity, and to conduct post – test. In the treatment, firstly, the researcher explained hortatory exposition in short. After that, the researcher conducted the Information Gap Activity.

Discussion

Students were active during teaching and learning process. They also motivated in learning, they were interested in doing the activity of finding information from their friends. They were active asking their pair in order to fulfill their information. At the end of the treatment, the researcher asked the students about their opinion of using Information Gap Activity. They said Information Gap Activity was interesting and exciting. Furthermore, they said Information Gap Activity encouraged them to speak English since

they needed to ask the information from their friend in order to fulfill their missing information. Lastly, the students said through doing Information Gap Activity, they were able to understand the content of the text because they read the text more than once. So, they comprehend what the content was.

After doing the treatment, the researcher conducted the post-test. It was applied to check the students' ability after being treated through Information Gap Activity. Then, researcher calculated the mean score of post-test by dividing the total score of post-test with the whole number of research sample that is 40 students. It was resulted the mean score of post-test was 80.94. It showed that the students' mean score of pre-test had improved from 61.91 in pre-test to 80.94 in post-test.

The mean scores above were not only the evidence of the improvement of students' speaking ability, the researcher also found that Information Gap Activity is a powerful technique to improve speaking ability from the result of *t* – test and effect size. From the result of *t* – test which is 16.8, it can be seen that Information Gap Activity is powerful because the *t* – test score is higher than *t* – table, which is 1.685 at 0.05 with the degree of freedom (df) = $N - 1$ (40 – 1). It means that the implementation of Information Gap Activity as technique to teach speaking and improve the speaking ability is powerful.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher made some conclusions as follows: First, Information Gap Activity can be used as the appropriate technique to encourage students to speak and improve their speaking ability. Information Gap Activity is powerful to increase the speaking ability of students

of SMA Santo Paulus Pontianak. Second, it can be seen from the result of the students score of post-test is better than their score in pre-test before giving the treatment. The significant difference of students ability can also be proved by the *t*-test (16.8) which is higher than *t*-table (1.685). The alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. It is proved by the result of the effect size of Information Gap Activity which is 2.65 ($ES > 0.5$). This score is categorized as high. Third, it means that the use of Information Gap Activity is high effective to teach speaking to students of SMA Santo Paulus Pontianak.

Suggestions

Referring to the result of data analysis and the conclusion of conducting the research, in this case the researcher would like to provide some suggestion as follows: Teachers are suggested to use Information Gap Activity as one of the teaching techniques to help the students improve their speaking ability. Teachers are suggested to provide more creative, innovative, interesting and enjoyable media as the variation to support the implementation of Information Gap Activity.

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