USING INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE THE SPEAKING SKILL OF THE SECOND GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 13 PEKANBARU

Sardo Nababan, Dr. Effendy Gultom, M.A
Sardonababan01@gmail.com, effendygultom@gmail.com,
CP. 082285075459

English Study Program
Language and Arts Department
Faculty of Teachers Training and Education
Universitas Riau

Abstract : *This classroom action research was aimed to know whether information gap activities can improve the students' speaking skill of the second grade class VIII-4 of SMPN 13 Pekanbaru. This research was done in for times-treatments in one cycle. Thirty nine students were participated in this study. The data were collected from several sources; students' speaking score, observation sheets, and field notes. The result showed that the mean score of post-test (71.8) was higher than mean score of pre-test (36). The observation result also showed that the there was an increase number of students' participation in every single activity. We can see that there was an increasing average number from beingin the pre-test 80% and become 100%. It means that more than all of the students were active in teaching and learning process. It can be conclude that information gap activities can improve the students' speaking skill of the second grade class VIII-4 of SMPN 13 Pekanbaru.*

Keywords: *Speaking Skill, Information Gap Activities*

MENGGUNAKAN INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITIES DALAM MENINGKATKAN KEAHLIAN BERBICARA SISWA KELAS DELAPAN DI SMPN 13 PEKANBARU

Sardo Nababan, Dr. Effendy Gultom, M.A
Sardonababan01@gmail.com, effendygultom@gmail.com,
CP. 082285075459

Program Studi Bahasa Inggris
Jurusan Bahasa dan Seni
Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan
Universitas Riau

Abstrak: Penelitian tindakan kelas ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah metode information gap dapat meningkatkan keahlian berbicara siswa kelas VIII-4 SMPN 13 Pekanbaru. Penelitian ini terdiri dari empat kali tindakan dalam satu siklus. Tiga puluh sembilan siswa berpartisipasi didalam studi ini. Data dikumpulkan dari beberapa sumber; skor kecakapan berbahasa siswa, lembar observasi, dan catatan lapangan. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata tes akhir (71.8) lebih tinggi dari nilai rata-rata tes awal (36). Hasil observasi juga menunjukkan bahwa ada sebuah peningkatan pada partisipasi siswa-siswa didalam setiap kegiatan. Kita bisa lihat bahwasannya ada kenaikan jumlah rata-rata dari 80% sebelum perlakuan tindakan kelas dan menjadi 100% setelah perlakuan tindakan kelas . Itu berarti lebih dari semua siswa aktif didalam proses belajar dan mengajar. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa metode information gap dapat meningkatkan keahliah berbicara siswa-siswa kelas VIII-4 di SMPN 13 Pekanbaru.

Kata Kunci : Keahlian Kerbicara, Information Gap

INTRODUCTION

In learning English there are four basic language skills to be learnt by students in order for them to gain competence language skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Richard 2008). These skills are related to one another. However, speaking is the most important aspects for most learners. We know that language is a tool for communication and it is true since in real life, most communication is done through speaking, people can talk about their business, share their ideas, tell their experience, and so on by speaking. In addition, the mastery of speaking is a priority for many foreign language students. Therefore, the students sometimes reflect their success in language learning based on how much they improve their speaking ability (Richards, 2008: 19).

The learning process that have been done so far in junior high schools just focuses on reading, grammar, vocabulary memorization, etc. However when it comes to speaking, the students are asked to read the available conversation's texts, often the teachers asked the students to read out loud because they just think that it can improve the students' speaking ability. This condition also occurs in one of the best junior high schools in Pekanbaru, SMPN 13 Pekanbaru. Based on the classroom observation and interview with the English teacher, Mrs.Esteti.S.Pd, most of the students in her classes are quite smart at the aspect of reading, grammar and vocabulary. However, speaking is still hard for the students, even the smartest students who have a high score in reading and writing test also do not want to speak in front of the class without texts on them. Other than that, the teacher also said that the students sometimes get nervous or hesitant when the teacher urged them to share their thought or ideas about something in English. Those problems can be seen from the following phenomena. The first, the students almost never practice their speaking skill in the class, in fact speaking can only be improved by practicing, Thornbury (2005:125) said in his research that the often the learners practice the language, the easier will it be for them to use the language itself. It means that if the students often practice the language, gradually it will be easier for them to choose the appropriate words and produce the real pronunciation while speaking. The second, the teacher do not have enough knowledge about the methods that can be applied to improve the students' speaking skill, as it stated before that the teacher just asked the students to read the text out loud. The third, the effect of why the students always nervous or hesitant while speaking is because they just afraid in making mistakes in pronunciation and grammar, as a result, it just effects the students' performance. As Williams (2005: 35), on his research found that the brain will be hard to produce and receive the information when someone get nervous or hesitant about something, it is because the adrenaline makes the ability of the brain not working 100% as it is when someone feel relax. So it just makes the students having a difficulty to achieve speaking skills.

Based on the phenomena above, the researcher tries to find an effective solution to improve the students' speaking skills. Speaking activities should provide sufficient time for students to practice the target language. The activities also should motivate students, so that they can enthusiastically engage in learning process. The English teacher also need to contribute by giving the appropriate feedback that help students in the activity (Harmer, 2004: 87).

One of the best techniques in teaching speaking is information gap activities. Information gap is a lack of information between two or more people. In this activity

not everyone knows the same things and people do not always have the same information in front of them, therefore communication is needed to complete the task. This technique is very useful because students practice their speaking in a natural way, as (Raptau, 2001) stated that information gap techniques are not scripted or rehearse, involve spontaneous learning and dialogue, and give the students a chance to practice what they have learnt. It is clear that in this technique the students must use their knowledge and practice it for several times in order to give a proper question. In addition the mentality or the bravery in speaking would be built up since this technique is about interaction.

METHODOLOGY

This research belongs to classroom action research. Kemmis (1988) states that the action research planner is to guide for teachers and administrators interested in improvement and change in their schools. This research was conducted at SMPN 13 Pekanbaru. Population is the whole research subject (Arikunto, 2006). The population of this research was all of the second grade students of SMPN 13 Pekanbaru with the total number of the students was 394 students. Class VIII-4 was taken as the sample of the research. The number of the students in this class consist of 36 students. The data were collected by using qualitative and quantittative data. In qualitative data, the researcher use, observation sheet and field note while in qualitative data, the researcher used a work sheet and asked the students to speak in front of the class, and being assessed by the rater. To find out the average score of students' speaking skills. The formula is as in the following:

a) To know the real score of the students, the following formulla will be used:

$$RS = \frac{TS}{25} \times 100\%$$

Where:
RS = Real Score of each individual
TS = Total Score of the aspects of speaking

b) To know the students' average score in the tests, the data will be analyzed by using this formula:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Where : $\bar{X}$ = The average of the test
$\sum X$ = The total score of the test
N = The number of students

(Hatch and Fardhy, 2002 : 55)

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

1. The Result of The Test
    In this research, the researcher found that there was an improvement in students' students speaking skill by applying information gap activity. It could be seen from the students' speaking score from the pre-test to post-test. Here is the table of students' students speaking score.

A. The Results of Pre-test
Table 1. Students' Pre-test Score in speaking

Students	Total Score	Average Score
All Students	**1412**	**36**

        Based on table 1, the students' speaking ability in the pre-test is poor. It can be seen from the result of the average score of the students which is 36, while the minimum criteria of English subject in SMPN 13 is 70, so it can be concluded that the students score is still so far from the criteria of achievement of English subject at SMPN 13 Pekanbaru.
        The table below shows the classification of the student's ability level in speaking,

Table 2. Students' Pre-Test Scores and Their Ability

No	Score	Ability level	Frequency	Percentage
1	81-100	Excellent	1	2.6
2	61-80	Good	5	12.8
3	41-60	Mediocre	13	33.3
4	21-40	Poor	6	15.4
5	0-20	Very Poor	14	35.9
Total			**39**	**100**

        Based on table 2. there is only 1 student that could achieve the excellent level, 5 students could achieve the good level, 13 students achieve the mediocre level, 6 students were in the poor level and there were 14 students in the very poor level. This data shows that most of the students were in the very poor level, and the researcher needs to help the students to improve their speaking ability.

B. The result of treatments

<p align="center">Table 3. Students Speaking Score in each Meeting</p>

Students	Treatment	Total Score	Average Score
All Students	1st Meeting	1712	43.9
All Students	2nd Meeting	1936	49.6
All Students	3rd Meeting	2216	56.8
All Students	4th Meeting	2756	70.6

Table above shows that the students' speaking ability level in the first meeting change become in the mediocre level. The average score of the students is 43.9. In the second meeting, it shows that the students' speaking ability is improved. It can be seen from the average score which is 49.6. So, it can be concluded that the students speaking skill is improved eventhough the level of students' speaking score is still in mediocre level. Again, it is still far from the minimum criteria of achievement for English subject of SMPN 13 Pekanbaru. The table also shows that the students made a significant improvements in the third meeting, it can be seen from the level of the students which is 56.8. However, the students still did not achieve the minimum criteria of English in SMPN 13 PEKANBARU which is 70. So the researcher needed to continue to give the treatments in the next meeting In the fourth meeting, there are a significant improvement. The speaking score of the students is 70.6 while the minimum criteria of English subject is 70, so it can be concluded that speaking score in the last meeting is higher than the KKM of English in SMPN 13 Pekanbaru. So, the researcher decided to stop doing the treatment and decided to do the post-test

C. The Results of Post-test

<p align="center">Table 4. Students' Post-test Score in speaking</p>

Students	Total Score	Average Score
All Students	**2148**	**71.8**

Based on table 4, the average score of students at the post-test is 71.8. The students gain the significant improvement in each component of speaking. Students got better in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension compared to the pre-test. The classification of students' ability level in speaking at the post-test can be seen as follow

Table 5. The Students' Average Score in Each Component of Speaking at the Post-Test

No	Score	Ability level	Frequency	Percentage
1	81-100	Excellent	9	23.10
2	61-80	Good	19	48.70
3	41-60	Mediocre	8	20.50
4	21-40	Poor	3	7.70
5	0-20	Very Poor	0	0
Total			**39**	**100**

Table 19 shows that 9 students are in the excellent level, 19 students are in the good level, 8 students are in the mediocre level, 3 students are in the poor level, and there are no students in the very poor level. Most of the students are in the good level. This data shows that the researcher succeeded in helping the students to improve their speaking skill by using information gap technique.

D. Comparison between Pre-test and Post-test
Chart 1 Students' Improvement in Aspects of Speaking
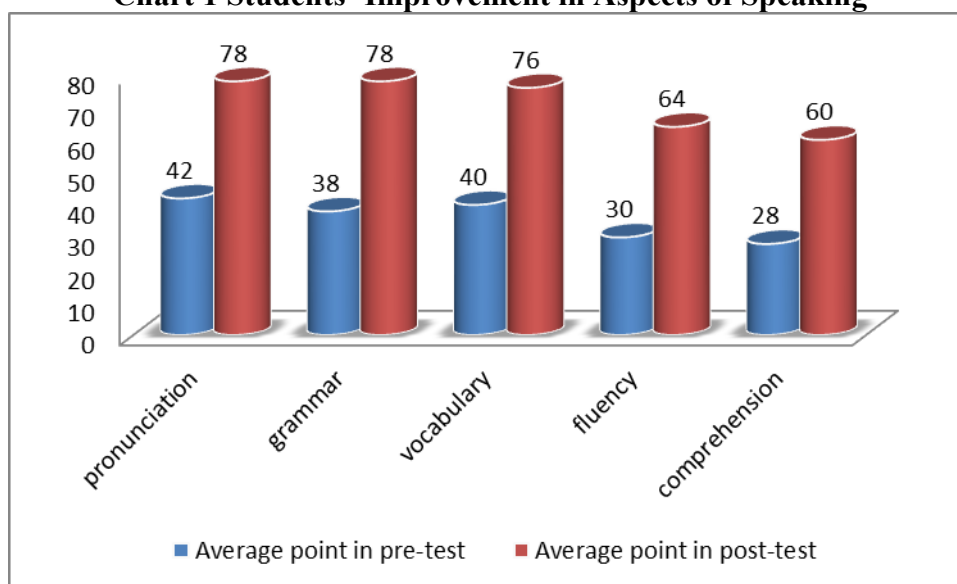
Based on Chart 1, It can seen that the students' ability in aspects of speaking is better at the post-test compared with the pre-test. Students' ability in pronunciation aspects improved from 42 becomes 78. It means that there are only few students who have pronunciation problem. In grammar aspect, the students ability is improved from 38 become 78, almost all of 39 students are good in grammar. It means that students did not find difficulties in grammar, in vocabulary, the students' ability improve from 40 become 76. Students' average score in fluency at the pre-test is 30 and the post-test become 64. In comprehension aspects the students' average score are improved from 28

become 60 at the post-test. Based on the result in table 1 and table 4. It can be conclude that the improvement of the students spaking skill between the pre-test and pot-test is 35.8.

2. The Description of field notes

In improving the teaching and learning process in each meeting, the researcher made field notes to see what happened to the researcher and to the students. And the field notes were filled by the collaborator or English teacher. The result of field notes can be seen in appendix 8.

Based on the field notes, the researcher concludes that at the beginning of the meeting, some of the students did not interested in the learning process, because they still confused of teachers explanation, in addition they still shy to perform in front of the class, the same thing happened to the researcher, he found it difficult to follow all of the teaching procedure and there were some of the procedures that did not followed. As a result, the learning process did not work well. In the second meeting there were still some difficulties faced by the students in understanding their friends' sheet and felt shy to perform in front of the class, however in the third and fourth meeting, they felt comfortable and enjoyed the learning process.

3. Reflection

The writer and the collaborator reflected the students' achievement in speaking at the end of the cycle. The writer made a reflection to consider whether the research would be continued to the next cycle or not. The writer analyzed the data both quantitative and qualitative. The observation and field notes showed that the students and the teacher were active in teaching and learning process. The students average score in the post test showed the significant improvement and reach the minimum criteria of achievement (71.8>70). The different point between the student average score in the post-test and the minimum criteria of achievement was 1.8 points. Therefore the writer considered not continuing to the next cycle and the writer was successful in applying information gap activities to the second year students of SMPN 13 Pekabaru to improve their speaking ability.

4. Trustworthiness

After applying all stages of Information Gap activities to the second year students of SMPN 13 Pekanbaru, the writer found out some weaknesses during the process, they are:

1. In the first meeting, the researcher faced the difficulties in applying the strategy because the students did not know the strategy implementation yet.
2. In the first meeting the researcher found it difficult to control the students, the students were very noisy they did not understand about the strategy.
3. In the first and the second meetings, the researcher found some difficulties in applying this strategy because some of the students preferred to talk with their friends than discussing the lesson.

However, the writer also found some weaknesses as in the following :
1. At the first meeting, the research found difficulties in controlling the classroom because there were some students made noise when the teacher explain the material.
2. There were some students cheated to their friends because they do not really find speaking is interesting
3. The researcher also faced difficulty in guiding the students to read because some of them do not like reading, especially reading some materials which were written in English.
4. Some students were shy and not confidence to speak in front of the class

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

Conclusion

Based on the Data analysis presented in chapter IV it can be stated that the use of information gap activities was successfully improved the students speaking skills, The improvement of the students can be seen from the score of the students. From the data, the students' average score in pre-test was 24.5 (poor), it is still far from the minimum criteria of achievement of the students, which is 70, then after conducting some treatments the students speaking score changed into 74 (good). The students' participation in the learning process also improved in each meeting, it can be seen from the observation sheet results which shows that the students participation improved from 85% at the first meeting become 100% at the last meeting, it is showed that the students were active in the learning process.

From the explanation above, it can be conclude that the students' speaking ability of SMPN 13 Pekanbaru were increased after doing some treatments by using information gap technique, and the students seem interested in participating in the learning process.

Recomendation

After conducting the research the researcher would like to give some suggestions to the English teacher and the other researchers.

1. To other researchers
   In conducting this research, there are some obstacles that appeared like the time and class management. The researcher hopes that the other researchers who will conduct the same research can consider that and try to avoid it. Thus, the researcher also hopes that this research can be used as one of references for other researchers who conduct the similar research study related to the improvement of the students' speaking.

2. To the English teacher

An English teacher should give the students more chances to practice their speaking, thus, the teacher need to apply the students-centered activity instead of the teacher-centered activity. The teacher may use some methods to teach speaking skills, one of them can be an information gap technique. Information gap technique will be an effective method to improve the students speaking skill if it is done properly.

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