The Use of Information Gap Activity to Improve Speaking Ability of the Second Year of SMPN 34 Pekanbaru In Making Information Questions

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Abstract**:** *The research is a classroom research that was conducted based on the problem occurred at the eighth grade students of SMP 34 Pekanbaru at studying the improvement on the ability of the eighth grade students of SMP 34 Pekanbaru in speaking in making information questions. Besides, knowledge in making information questions is mostly improved after being taught by information gap activity method. The participants were 34 students from VIII 2 of SMP 34 Pekanbaru. This research was conducted in two cycles. The data collection technique was obtained through (1) observation sheet which was applied to know the students and teacher performance during the teaching and learning process, (2) test was done to measure students' achievement, and (3) field note was obtain information about teacher, the students activities and performance in the teaching and learning process during the implementation of picture series. The research finding can briefly explain as follow: first the student's students speaking ability could be improved by using information gap activity method. Before the research was done, the average score of students was only 35.92 in pretest. After the research was done for cycle 1, it improved to77.19. Then, In cycle 2 increased up to 85.5. The observation sheet and field note result showed that the used of information gap activity make the teaching process more effective and it also helped students' improve their speaking ability and more active in learning process. This improvement happened because this information gap activity method is appropriate to be applied to the class.*

Keyword**:** *information gap activity, information questions, students' speaking ability*

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas yang dilaksanakan berdasarkan masalah yang terjadi pada siswa kelas delapan SMP 34 pekanbaru; seperti siswa yang mempunyai kemampuan lemah dalam pengucapan bahasa inggris, sehingga mereka mendapat nilai yang rendah. Maka dari itu, penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan tujuan meningkatkan kemampuan siswa SMP 34 pekanbaru dalam mengucapkan bahasa Inggris dengan menggunakan metode aktifitas mencari informasi yang hilang. Selain itu, dengan menggunakan metode tersebut juga dapat meningkatkan aspek kosakata. Peneilitian dilaksanakan dalam tiga siklus. Pengumupulan data di peroleh melalui; (1) lembar pengamatan yang dilaksanakan untuk mengetahui pelaksanaan siswa dan guru saat proses belajar mengajar berlangsung, (2) tes yang dilaksanakan untuk mengukur kemampuan siswa (nilai siswa), dan (3) kertas catatan yang memperoleh informasi tentang siswa dan guru saat proses belajar mengajar berlangsung selama penerapan metode. Secara singkat, hasil penelitian ini dapat digambarkan sebagai berikut; pertama, kemampuan pengucapan siswa dalam bahasa inggris menggunakan metode ini meningkat. Dimana, sebelum penelitian ini dilaksanakan, nilai rata – rata pre-test siswa yang dapat diperoleh sementara adalah 35.92. Setelah penelitian ini dilaksanakan dalam siklus pertama, nilai rata-rata siswa meningkat menjadi 77.19 kemudian di ciklus kedua meningkat menjadi 85.8. Peningkatan ini terjadi dikarenakan metode gambar berseri ini sangat sesuai diterapkan didalam kelas.

***Kata kunci* :** *Kemampuan Pengucapan, ,Metode information Gap Activity, Penelitian Tindakan Kelas*

INTRODUCTION

Based on Junior High 'the school based curriculum 2013', teaching English at Junior High School is aimed at the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They should be taught integrated. The curriculum contains standard competency, and each standard competency should reflect the four language skills. For example, if the teacher teaches a descriptive text, she should include it in listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities on the topics.

To achieve the objective of teaching English, an English teacher should be knowledgeable about how to deliver teaching materials to his/hers students. One of the ideas is by asking questions. Asking questions gives opportunities to students to practice their English, especially the speaking skill.

Making questions is not less important than making statements. We ask questions to know one's identities, to know an address, to know how to do things, to know reason, and to satisfy curiosity, etc. So to conclude, making questions is a way to provide answers and provide all the details needed to find the answers. So important is the skill of making questions that it is said "the quality of an answer depends on the quality of the question." Because most of students do not know what the characteristic of questions are, or whether the question is specific or not?

Considering the fact above asking questions take an important part in education. This students are able to master how to make questions. Related to the aims above, Junior high school students should be able to express and use language in form of transactional, interpersonal, and monologue speaking by asking questions.

Although the curriculum 2013 should aim at the four language skills, teaching English at junior high school tends to emphasize speaking skill. But some students were bored in learning speaking. They frequently felt sleepy in the class so they did not pay attention to the teacher's explanations. In other words, teaching and learning process could not run well.

Teaching materials also influenced students' motivation in speaking. In this case, the teacher only uses the materials which were just stated in one book and did not consider about whether it was an appropriate to the student or not. The mistakes in choosing speaking materials can make students bored and find it difficult to pronouns sentences. That was why; the speaking material should be authentic and interesting for students.

Furthermore, teacher's strategy in speaking should give the significant effect to students' success in speaking. Usually, the teachers use the strategy that is easy for them to use in class. They asked students to read the text and practiced the dialogue, and if students found difficulties, the teacher would explain it.

Based on the explanation above, teachers' strategy in teaching speaking skill covered both learners and materials problems. Appropriate teaching strategy can influence students' language aspects. Through appropriate teaching strategy, the teacher can increase students' interest, motivation; they can modify speaking material and speaking skill. Therefore, based on writer teaching practice at SMP N 34 Pekanbaru, the writer found problem were caused by inappropriate teaching

strategy used by the teacher in teaching speaking. As a result, the students had low motivation, low interest, and also low speaking skill. To solve the problem, there are some strategies that teacher could use in teaching speaking, such as; information gap activity, role play, simulation, games, pair work, picture dictation and so on.

From the statement and the phenomena above, the researcher consider that the strategy needed to be changed in order to solve the problem related to students' speaking skill. The writer was interested to use information gap activity strategy in teaching speaking because this strategy can interested students to make questions easily.

An Information Gap is a lack of information between two or more people. In Information Gap Activities, 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. Students work in groups of two or more. Each student has some, but not all, of the information needed for the activity. As partners to each other to fill in the "gaps" of missing information, they acquire communication skills in a way that is authentic and meaningful (Basturkmen, 1994).

Moreover, based on the writer's teaching practice at SMP N 34 Pekanbaru, most of students did not know how to make information questions in a dialogs and they could not express their ideas fluently, could not use appropriate grammar. They produced wrong pronunciation, and they used inappropriate vocabularies. In conclusion, it was believed that information gap was effective to solve the problem rather than other strategies in teaching speaking. Considering the great importance of making questions in life especially in language learning, it is important to find out an effective way of how to learn and teach this topic. The need for this discussion is even greater as we will see in Chapter 2. That there are two other kinds of questions.

So, the writer is interested in conducting a research about improving students' speaking ability in constructing information questions using information gap activity. The title of the research is **"Using Information Gap Activity to Improve Speaking Ability of the Second Year Students SMP N 34 Pekanbaru in Making Information Questions".**

METHODOLOGY

In this research, the writer uses classroom action research. Mc Niff (1992) in Arikunto (2006:102) states that action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in a social (including educational) situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out. It consists of planning, acting/implementing, observing, and reflecting. This study focused on improving students' ability in using WH-questions. The result was the students can master WH-questions in the sentence.

Participants

The participants in this research were the students of SMP N 34 Pekanbaru. The writer took the students of grade VIII. The total number of class was 34 students. The reason for taking this class as participants because the problems were found in this class. By applying information gap activity, it was hoped that the students' speaking skill would be improved.

Instruments Techniques and Analysis

In getting the data, the writer used three instruments. The instruments are the speaking test for pre-test and post – test, observation for teacher and students, and field note. The test was one of the instruments to measure students' ability in speaking. The writer collected the data by giving picture series to students that is related with the topic in the class individually after they were worked in pairs.

There were 2 kinds of observation sheet. They were teacher's observation sheet and student's observation sheet as it is a process in collecting data technique. The last instrument was the field note, qualitative data was used by a field note since it was impossible to record all specific thing happened in the class. The writer was helped by collaborators to note down what were going in the classroom during the technique in learning process.

In analyzing the data, the writer computed the real score of each student and found out the score of the class and also the percentage of the students score in speaking. The minimum criteria of achievement of English subject used in the research were 80. While for qualitative data, it was gathered through record in the observation sheets both from the teacher's observation and student's observation sheet. Last but not least, the data also taken from field note. The field note stated the unusual things happened during the teaching and learning process.

Finding and Data Instruction

The writer collected the data of the research by applying three steps, administered pre-test to the participants before applying information gap activity method, conducted two cycles of treatments (two meeting for each cycle) in teaching speaking by using picture series, and gave post – test after each cycle done to measure the students' improvement after the information gap activity method applied. The writer also presented the result of the test showing the students' ability in each term of speaking. In speaking, the students were assessed in five terms, they are: structure, intonation, and pronunciation.

The Analysis of Observations Result

Pre-cycle was conducted on Wednesday, August 27th, 2014. There were 28 students who took the test. A test was given by the researcher before conducting the action research. The purpose was to know how far the students speaking skill in making information question.

The pre test result would be compared to the students' test result aster using technique to know the improvement of students' ability in using information question. The following are the results of the student's pre-test:

Table 1. Students' Speaking Ability Level in Pre-test

Score	Ability level	Frequency	Percentage
80-100	Good to Excellent	0	0%
60-79	Average to Good	0	0%
50-59	Poor to Average	0	0%
0-49	Poor	28	100%

From the table above, it is clearly seen there were no one of students get 'poor to average' ability level to 'good to excellent' ability level. But all of them (28 students) get 'poor' ability level. Besides, the writer also shows the data based on the four aspects of speaking in making information questions as in the followings:

Table 2. Students' Ability in Each Aspect of Speaking in Pre Test

No	Aspects of Speaking	R1	R2	R3	Mean Average score	Mean Total Score (Total/28)	Ability Level
1	Grammar	2,95	3,05	3,05	3,0	60,3	Average-Good
2	Pronunciation	2,38	2,45	2,48	2,43	48,67	Poor
3	Accuracy	2,9	3	3	2,97	59,3	Poor-Average

From the table above, it could be seen that the total score in the aspect of 'grammar' was 60.3%. Then, 'pronunciation' was 48.67%, 'Accuracy' was 59.3% 'intonation' was 60.39%.

In the pre-test, the students spoke in pairs to make a conversation using information questions. In addition, they just talked about common questions such as; 'What is your name?' and so on. There is no limited time for speaking, but they mostly took 30 seconds to 1 minute only. In that duration, the students made several pauses because they had nothing to say, many redundancies, and produced uncompleted meaning from their speaking. In short, from this situation, it can be concluded that the students' speaking ability was very low because their scores were still below of Minimum Standard of Mastery (KKM) which was 80.

a. The Result of Research in Post-test 1 (cycle 1)

After 1st, 2nd, and 3rd meeting, the writer conducted a post-test in fourth meeting to know the ability of the students after they were taught by information gap technique and followings are the students speaking ability level in post test 1:

Table 3. Students' Speaking Ability Level in Post-test 1

Score	Ability level	Frequency	Percentage
80-100	Good to Excellent	5	17.85%
60-79	Average to Good	23	82.14%
50-59	Poor to Average	0	%
0-49	Poor	0	0%

From the table above, we can see that 5 students (17.85%) reached "good to excellent" level, 23 students (82.14%) reached "average to good" level, and none of them reached the 'poor to average' and 'poor" level. In other words, the improvement occurs in the post test 1.

To complete the data, below the writer also includes the data based on the four aspects of speaking in making information questions below:

Table 4. Students' Ability in Each Aspect of Speaking in Post Test 1

No	Aspects of Speaking	R1	R2	R3	Mean average score	Average Score (Total/28)	Ability Level
1	Grammar	3,4	3,3	3,33	3,33	66,5	Average-Good
2	Pronunciation	2,78	2,9	2,93	2,87	57,3	Poor-Average
3	Accuracy	3,78	3,8	3,75	3,78	75,5	Average-Good

From the table above, the mean score of each aspect from each raters are presented, it could be seen that the mean total score based on three raters in aspect of 'grammar' are 66,3. Then, 'pronunciation' are 57,3, 'accuracy' are 75,5,

Based on the data above, the comparison of the students' speaking ability from their pre-test scores to the post test scores of cycle I was clear. In addition, the writer and collaborator found that teaching speaking by using information gap technique in learning process at cycle 1 could improve students' speaking ability in each aspects of speaking. Fortunately, the improvement of the scores was quite significant because during the three times treatments in this first cycle, the students showed their interest in learning by information gap technique. But the problem was only 5 students (17.85%) who reached Minimum Standard of Mastery (KKM) which was 80.

From the students' test result on cycle I, it can be seen that the students still had problems on two aspects of speaking in making information questions, because the averages were still below of KKM 80, even the students' test results on those skills were categorized average to good. But the more focused was on word order and tense. So, it was the focus of the writer and collaborator to be improved in cycle II.

a. The Results of Research in Post-test 2 (cycle II)

After teaching the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd meetings, the writer conducted the post-test 2 in the 4th meeting to know the ability of the students after they were taught by using information gap technique and the result can be seen from the table below:

Table 5. Students' Speaking Ability Level in Post-test 2

Score	Ability level	Frequency	Percentage
80-100	Good to Excellent	25	89.28%
60-79	Average to Good	3	10.71%
50-59	Poor to Average	0	0%
0-49	Poor	0	0%

From the table above, we can see that 25 students (89.28%) who reached "good to excellent" level, 3 students (10.71%) who reached "average to good" level, and there was no student who reached "poor to average" level and ' 'poor' level. In other words, the improvement occurs in the post test 2.

To complete the data, the writer also includes the data based on the four aspects of speaking in making information questions below:

Table 6. Students' Ability in Each Aspect of Speaking in Post Test 2

No	Aspects of Speaking	R1	R2	R3	Mean average score	Mean total score (total/40)	Ability Level
1	Grammar	3,73	3,6	3,63	3,65	73	Average-Good
2	Pronunciation	3,03	3,13	3,03	3,06	70	Average-Good
3	Accuracy	4,3	4,03	4,1	4,14	82,8	Good-Excellent

From the table above, the mean score of each aspect from each raters are presented, it could be seen that the mean total score based on three raters score in aspect of 'grammar' is 73. Then, 'pronunciation' is 61, 'accuracy' is 82,8.

The Analysis of the Post-Tests Data

The average score of post-test sequence can be seen in table 4.24 below:

Table 7. The Average Score in Pre-Test and Post-Test

The average of pre-test	The average of post-test I	The average of post-test II
35.92	77.19	85.8

From the data above, the average score of pre-test is 35.92. The average score of post test I is 77.19. Thus, the different mean between pre-test and post-test 1 were 8,9 points; it means the improvement was really high. It might be because students were completely hard to speak up before treatment. In addition, they did the post test in group discussion but they were scored individually. The improvement from the average of post test I (65,4) to post test II (85.8).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the data analysis of the Pre-test, Post-test 1 and Post-test 2 in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that using Information Gap Activity successfully improved the speaking ability of the eighth year (VIII 2) students of SMP 34 Pekanbaru in learning English. It is proven by the increase of average scores of the students from 35.92 in pretest, 77.19 in post test 1, then 85.8 in post test 2 This improvement happened because this picture series teaching aid is appropriate to be applied to the class.

In addition, based on the data analysis of students' observation sheet, it can be concluded that there was a good improvement of students' activities during the teaching and learning process from cycle 1 (68,1%), cycle 2 (78,1 %) and to cycle 3 (85,9%). Besides that, based on the data analysis of teacher's observation sheet, it also proved that there was a good improvement from the teacher's activities in Cycle 1 (94,45 %) to cycle 3 (100%).

Moreover, the aspect of speaking that can be improved well is vocabulary. Then followed by fluency, comprehension, pronunciation and finally grammar. There were also some factors that influence the increasing of the students' speaking ability, such as the students were excited in explaining because they could share their imagination and ideas with friends. They have confidence to speak up by looking at the pictures given. Besides that, students have more flexibility and freedom to express ideas. Picture series not only provide students with the basic materials but also stimulate their imaginative powers. It helps students to be inspired to have more creative ideas. In addition, the students are

motivated and interested in the teaching and learning process. Thus, using picture series successfully improve the students' speaking ability.

Recommendations

In teaching English, the teacher must create fun atmosphere, enjoyable, amusing and interesting situation as possible as the teacher can. The enjoyment is the important thing that hopefully will have good effects on the education. In other word, the teacher should make the teaching learning process enjoyable, because students love to play and learn best when they enjoy theyselves.

The researcher considers some suggestions in order to improve motivation in speaking skill, especially for the teacher, the students, and the reader. The researcher's suggestions are as follow:

1. For the teachers:
- Teacher should have some strategies and ways to enrich their English teaching techniques.
- Teacher is suggested to be creative in teaching speaking, because by giving interesting technique, the students will have an interest to learn more.

2. For the students:
- Students should be brave in speaking. Because in speaking, a person should at least can carry out a conversation fluently.
- Students could study and learn to improve their ability in speaking, for English by improving their knowledge from the media such as English newspaper, radio, television, etc.
- Students should be more confidence in speaking foreign language being learned, they need to avoid feeling scared or shy of doing grammatical errors, wrong dictions and bad pronunciation while they are trying to speak English, because they should at least have an interest to speak first, for then they should try and learn hard to solve their problems.

Finally, the researcher realizes that this final project is far from being perfect. So that, constructive critics and advice are really expected for the perfection of the final project. Hopefully, this final project will be useful for all of the teachers.

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