

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITIES TO
IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING AND READING SKILLS**
*Implementasi Information GAP Activities untuk Meningkatkan Keterampilan
Berbicara dan Membaca Siswa*

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to know whether or not the use of Information Gap activities improves students' accuracy in speaking skill that cover three elements of accuracy; vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar; and to know whether or not the use of Information Gap activities improves students' literal comprehension in reading skill. This research applied a quasi experimental design; the non equivalent control group design. It used two groups; experimental groups and control group. The data obtained from the test was analyzed quantitatively and then its' result was compared with t-table to know whether they were significantly different or not. The data showed students' mean score of accuracy in speaking skill and literal comprehension in reading skill improved after teaching by using Information Gap activities. In experimental class, the students' accuracy of pretest was 1.55 and improved to be 3.06 in posttest, students' literal comprehension of pretest was 0.82 and posttest was 3.21. In control class, the students' accuracy was 1.90 for pretest and 2.32 for posttest; students' literal comprehension was 1.63 for pretest 2.27. These findings indicate that the mean score of posttest was greater than pretest for that both class. However, the students' mean score in experimental was greater than control class where accuracy ($3.06 > 2.37$) and literal comprehension ($3.21 > 2.27$). It meant that implementing Information Gap activities were effective to improve the students' speaking and reading skills.

Keywords: *Speaking and reading skills, accuracy, literal comprehension, Information Gap Activities*

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui apakah penggunaan kegiatan Informasi Gap meningkatkan akurasi siswa dalam keterampilan yang mencakup tiga unsur akurasi berbicara; kosakata, pengucapan, dan tata bahasa; dan untuk mengetahui apakah penggunaan kegiatan Informasi Gap meningkatkan pemahaman literal siswa dalam keterampilan membaca. Penelitian ini menerapkan desain kuasi eksperimental; desain kelompok kontrol non setara. Ini digunakan dua kelompok; kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol. Data yang diperoleh dari tes dianalisis secara kuantitatif dan kemudian 'hasilnya dibandingkan dengan t-tabel untuk mengetahui apakah mereka berbeda secara signifikan atau tidak. Data menunjukkan akurasi nilai rata-rata siswa dalam keterampilan dan pemahaman literal berbicara dalam keterampilan membaca membaik setelah mengajar dengan menggunakan kegiatan Informasi Gap. Di kelas eksperimen, akurasi siswa pretest adalah 1,55 dan ditingkatkan menjadi 3,06 di posttest, pemahaman literal siswa dari pretest adalah 0,82 dan posttest adalah 3,21. Di kelas kontrol, akurasi siswa adalah 1,90 untuk pretest dan untuk posttest 2,32; pemahaman literal siswa adalah 1,63 untuk pretest 2,27. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata dari posttest lebih besar dari pretest untuk kedua kelas. Namun, nilai rata-rata siswa dalam eksperimen lebih besar dari kelas kontrol di mana akurasi ($3,06 > 2,37$) dan pemahaman literal ($3,21 > 2,27$). Ini berarti bahwa pelaksanaan kegiatan Informasi Gap yang efektif untuk meningkatkan berbicara dan membaca keterampilan siswa.



Kata Kunci: *Berbicara dan keterampilan membaca, akurasi, pemahaman literal, Informasi Gap Aktivitas.*

Speaking and reading are important skill in learning English. These skills are also known as integrated skills. Integrating the skills in English can develop communicative competence because it focuses on the realistic communication, which is the main pursuit of teaching and learning in the modern society. “Real success in English teaching and learning is when the learners can actually communicate in English inside and outside the classroom” (Davies & Pearse, 2000: 99).

Meanwhile, reading is a necessary skill that any learner needs. Unfortunately, how to teach reading has not been given due care in our schools. In the past, according to the traditional view, reading begins with the child’s mastering the names of the letters, then mastering the letter sound relationships, then learning some easy words in isolation, and finally reading simple stories with highly controlled vocabularies (Harp, and Brewer, 1996).

In relation to the researcher teaching experiences and primary observation of the second grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Sinjai, there are some problems that the researcher found in teaching speaking and reading in the classroom. The first, the students always do mistake in grammar and pronunciation aspect. They do not pay attention to the sentence structure and correct pronunciation. The second, the students are afraid of making mistake in speaking English. After reading, the students are lack of opportunity to practice, and some teachers are hardly to choose and create teaching techniques and teaching activities. Moreover, the result is that students hate to read, they only read the required textbook in order to be able to set for the achievement routine exams. In such case, students lacked motivation to read, even if they read, they show negative attitudes. The last, many students who struggle to learn how to be able to read, with appropriate instruction, to compensate for initial reading problems by becoming accurate decoders, but fail to reach a level of sufficient fluency to become fast and efficient readers (Adams, 1990).

In solving these problems, it is necessary to choose appropriate teaching technique that can cover all the problems and the teachers are demanded to create some strategies or activities which can explore the students’ speaking and reading



skills. One of the activities that can be used to teach both of the skills is Information Gap activities.

CONCEPT OF SPEAKING AND READING

According to Hornby (1995:826) speaking is making use of words in an ordinary voice, offering words, knowing and being able to use a language expressing one-self in words, and making speech. Therefore the writer infers that speaking uses the word and produces the sound to express ourselves either ideas, feeling, thought and needs orally in an ordinary voice. Furthermore, success in communication is often dependent as much on the listener as on the speaker.

Walter (1973:11) states that speaking is one way of learning about one self. In speaking, someone must face problems that have history and relatively to other people, groups, and the predictions we have formed for living together. While Tarigan (1990:3) states speaking that is gotten by the children preceded by listening skill. After getting the language input the students are able to master speaking skill. So that, speaking is the way to express our idea and feeling to one another. On the hand, reading involves the identification of recognition of printed or written symbols, which serve as stimuli for the recall of meanings. The resulting meanings are recognized into thought processes according to the purposes that are operating in the reader (Tinker, 1975). In addition, Harris and Sipay (1979) in Burns (1984) defines reading as the attaining of meaning as a result of the interplay between perceptions of graphic symbols that represent language and the memory traces of the reader's past verbal and nonverbal experiences.

INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITIES

Information gap means “a gap between the two (persons) in the information they possess, and the conversation helps to close that gap so that now both speakers have the same information” (Harmer, 1991:48). Or a particularly interesting type of task is that based on the need to understand or transmit information---finding out what is in a partner's picture, for example. Variation on this is the opinion gap where participants exchange views on the given issue (Ur, 1996:281).

Information Gap activities take place between students, not between a student and a teacher, though a teacher can certainly demonstrate the activity. The two students will be asking each other questions to which they don't know the answer.



The goal of the activity is for the students to discover certain information, whether about the other person or related to a specific activity.

Information gap activities are those in which students exchange information in order to complete a required lesson plan activity. Most information gap activities are done in pairs, with each student having a part of the information (Sasson, 2008).

In an information gap activity, one person has certain information that must be shared with others in order to solve a problem, gather information or make decisions (Neu & Reeser, 1997). These types of activities are extremely effective in the L2 classroom. They give every student the opportunity to speak in the target language for an extended period of time and students naturally produce more speech than they would otherwise. In addition, speaking with peers is less intimidating than presenting in front of the entire class and being evaluated. Another advantage of information gap activities is that students are forced to negotiate meaning because they must make what they are saying comprehensible to others in order to accomplish the task (Neu & Reeser, 1997).

In addition, information gap activities can also reinforce vocabulary and a variety of grammatical structures taught in class. They allow students to use linguistic forms and functions in a communicative way. These activities bring the language to life for students. Grammar is no longer a concept they have difficulty applying to their speaking. Students have the opportunity to use the building blocks of language we teach them to speak in the target language (Raptou, 2001).

Information gap activities should be implemented via some strategies, which will provoke learning by “a large extent to a learner’s own personal ‘investment’ of time, effort, and attention to the second language in the form of an individualized battery of strategies for comprehending and producing the language” (Brown, 2001:60).

1. Pair work or group work. In order to elicit information and opinions from their fellow peers, the learners need to interact among themselves.
2. Personalization and individualization. Information gap activities collect views not only from others, but from one’s own contributions as well.
3. Interest. Interest is particularly important for the implementation of information gap activities.



4. Variety. A variety of information gap activities and techniques are always essential in all teaching and learning.
5. Open ending. This means “the provision of cues or learning tasks which do not have single predetermined ‘right’ answers, but a prospectively unlimited number of acceptable responses”(Ur, 1996:309).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a quasi-experimental design; the non-equivalent control group design (Gay et.al, 2006:258). It used two groups; experimental groups and control group. Both groups were given pretest and posttest. The pretest was conducted to find out the prior knowledge of students while posttest was conducted to find out the progress of English teaching focus on speaking skill of accuracy (vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar and reading skill of literal comprehension. The design is formulated as follows:

Table 1. A-quasi experimental design

Experimental group	O1	X1	O2
Control group	O1	X2	O2

(Gay et. al, 2006:258)

The research used two kind of instrument, namely speaking in the form interview test and reading test consisting of pretest and posttest. The pretest was used to identify the students’ basic performance in speaking in terms of accuracy, and reading skill in terms of literal comprehension. The posttest was administered to know whether or not the students gained progress in speaking and reading skills through Information Gap activities.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After conducting the test and treatment, the data shows the students’ mean score of accuracy in speaking skill and literal comprehension in reading skill improved after teaching by using Information Gap activities. In experimental class, the students’ accuracy of pretest was 1.55 and improved to be 3.06 in posttest, students’ literal comprehension of pretest was 0.82 and posttest was 3.21. In control class, the students’ accuracy was 1.90 for pretest and 2.32 for posttest; students’ literal comprehension was 1.63 for pretest 2.27. These findings indicate that the mean score of posttest was greater than pretest for that both class. However, the students’ mean score in experimental was greater than control class where accuracy



(3.06>2.37) and literal comprehension (3.21>2.27). It means that implementing Information Gap activities were effective to improve the students' speaking and reading skills. In experimental the t-test was higher than t-table (11.305>2.045), and in control class the t-test was also greater than t-table (2.094>2.045). However, comparing the result in experimental and control class, they show that the value of t-test of experimental is greater than the value of t-test of control class (11.305>2.094).

Students' literal comprehension of t-test of experimental class was 7.378 and t-table was 2.045. The-test of control class was 3.315 and t-table was 2.04. It proves that the t-test was greater than t-table after implementing treatment in the classroom. However, comparing the result in experimental and control classed, they show that the value of t-test of experimental was greater than the value of t-test of control class.

The frequency and percentage of the students' improvement in term of accuracy in pretest are low. The data analysis shows that most of the students in experimental and control group are in very poor classification. There are four classifications of the students score. The highest score of pretest is 57.6% (19 students) in experimental class in which the score is classified as average. Then, the lowest score is 3% (1 student) in which classified as poor. It indicates that both of the groups still needed to be improved. The aggregate percentage of students both of the groups generally tend to spread in high achiever category. Then, in posttest the aggregate percentage of experimental group, categorized as high achiever was 63.6 percent (21 students) and low achiever was 5 percent (15.2 students). While in Control Group, categorized as high achiever was 36.4 percent (12 students) and low achiever was 3 percent (1 student).

The students' frequency and percentage improved in term of literal comprehension in pretest and posttest. The data analysis shows that most of the students in experimental and control group are in low achiever. There are four classifications of the students score. The highest score of pretest is 27.3.6% (7 students) in experimental class in which the score is classified as average. Then, the lowest score is 3% (1 student) in which classified as poor. The researcher interprets that both of the groups still needed to be improved by applying some teaching



strategies in learning process at the classroom. In posttest, the students' percentage and frequency improve, where the aggregate percentage of students both of the groups generally tend to spread in high achiever category. The aggregate percentage of Experimental Group, categorized as high achiever was 63.6 percent (21 students) and low achiever was 5 percent (15.2 students). While in Control Group, categorized as high achiever was 36.4 percent (12 students) and low achiever was 3 percent (1 student).

The score distribution for Experimental group and control group on literal comprehension in posttest showed the difference from the pretest. After the treatment conducted, both of them showed an improvement but in experimental group gave higher achievement than control group.

CONCLUSION

The use of Information Gap activities in teaching speaking could improve the students' speaking accuracy consisting of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. It can be proved that the mean score of the students' posttest in experimental group which applies Information Gap activities is higher than Conventional Technique in control group.

The use of Information Gap activities in teaching speaking could improve the students' reading skill in term literal comprehension. It can be proved that the mean score of the students' posttest in experimental group which applies Information Gap activities is higher than Conventional Technique in control group.

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