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THE STRATEGY IN INCREASING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY BY APPLYING INFORMATION GAP TECHNIQUE

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Abstract

Information gap technique is a technique that encourages students to ask each other in completing the blank information in the table. The objective of the study is to find out whether there is a significant difference in speaking performance between students who are taught using Information gap Technique and those who are taught using Grammar Translation Method. Speaking performance of second grade students of SMAN 2 Kuala was unsatisfactory; therefore, it was suggested that a specific treatment of learning process needs to be applied. The research design of this study is a true experimental research in which experiment class and control class design are used. The sample of the study is XI IPA2 (25 students) as the experimental class and XII IPA3 (25 students) as the control class. The instrument of the study is test. The data was analyzed through statistical formula. The data showed that the Z-score of pre-test of experimental and control group was 1.7 (Z count $<$ Z table) in which Z table is 2.04. It means that there was no significant difference between two scores of both classes. However, Z-score for the experimental class and control class was 4.3 (Z count $>$ Z table) which indicated that there was a significant difference between experimental and control group post-test. In line with the result of the study, it is suggested that Information Gap Technique must be applied as an alternative technique in teaching speaking. In conclusion, the research hypothesis (H_a) is proved that the use of Information Gap Technique provides a positive contribution in increasing students' speaking ability.

Keywords: *Information Gap Technique, speaking, experimental research.*

INTRODUCTION

As it is suggested by National Education Standard Agency (BSNP, 2006, p. 126) the aim of teaching speaking at senior high school level is to develop students' communicative competence in the form of spoken for accomplishing informational literacy. To achieve the objective, teachers are suggested to design the communicative activities in teaching and learning process. Teachers are also expected to modify teaching materials creatively since it brings students to learn in contextualize condition thus the materials can be adapted easily. However, based on preliminary research at SMAN 2 Kuala, most of English teacher applied Grammar Translation Method as the primer method in teaching English. Freeman (1986, p. 4) mentions that language which is learned through GTM leads students to the following problems: (a) GTM makes students to forget the materials easily due to students are not active during teaching learning process (b) GTM decreases students' motivation that reduce the development of critical thinking (c) GTM encourages students to cheat each other

since the result of translation is the same, and (d) GTM provides no communicative learning activity in the classroom thus students feel bored and not enjoyable.

Referring to the problem mentioned above, the appropriate technique is required to be applied. The technique is considered as the problem solver since the technique increases students' critical thinking, develops students' communicative competence, and enlarges students' interest in learning speaking. One of them is Information Gap Technique.

Information gap technique can be defined as one of the techniques in which students get missing information so that they have to question each other in completing the task. In this case, students communicate with their classmates to fill in the gaps. Neu and Reeser (1997) stated that in an information gap activity, one student has certain information that must be shared with others in order to solve a problem, gather information or make decisions. These types of activities are extremely effective in the L2 classroom. It gives 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 activity is that students are forced to negotiate meaning because they must create what they are saying comprehensible to others in order to accomplish the task.

Furthermore, Information gap activity is determined as an activity in which the students are given an opportunity for extend speaking practice, represent real communication which increase motivation, require sub-skills such as clarifying meaning and re-phrasing (Hamer, 2007). Moreover, research by Raptou (2002) showed that Information gap activity can also reinforce vocabulary and a variety of grammatical structures taught in class. It allows 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 with in applying their speaking.

In short, information gap technique is a communicative exercise in which each of two paired students has information. It is only through "negotiation of meaning" that the information transactionis made possible. Negotiating meaning presupposes speakers to be able to make use of a series of communication strategies: asking for more clarification, paraphrasing, and using their circumstance condition. Therefore, Information Gap Technique is considered as the appropriate technique in teaching and learning communication since through this technique the teachers can create the natural situation in the classroom and make the students get involved with the materials.

METHODS

The research design of this study is an experimental research. The objective of this study is assessing the impact of Information Gap Technique application at second grade students of SMAN 2 Kuala, Nagan Raya. It is located at Jl. Nasional-Sp4, Pulo Ie Village, Kuala Subdistrict. The population of this research was all second grade students of SMAN 2 Kuala and 50 of them were decided as the sample. The sample was XIIPA2 as the experiment class while XIIPA3 as the control class.

RESULTS

The result of the research showed that:

Table 1. Statistical summary of the pre-test of experimental group and control group.

	Experimental Group (EG)	*Z-Score*	*Control Group (CG)*
N (Number of Students)	25	1.7	25
R (Range)	35		34
X (Mean Score)	52.3		52.1
S (Standard Deviation)	10.17		8.70

The statistical summary presented in the table above illustrates that the number of students in the experimental group is the same as control group (35 students). The range score of control group is smaller than experimental group but the score is considered as the normal score since there are no extreme scores. The calculation of the range is obtained by subtracting the highest score with the lowest score of the test. Thus, for the pre-test of the experimental group the range is 70 – 35 = 35 while for the pre-test of the control group the range is 69 – 35 = 34.

Furthermore the mean score for experimental group is 52.3 and for the control group is 52.1. The distribution indicates that the score of two groups are not widely scattered. The standard deviation for the experimental group is 10.17 while for the control group is 8.70. Z-score of the experimental group and control group is 1.7 thus the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2. Statistical summary of the post-test of the experimental group and control group.

	Post-test of Experimental Group (CG)	*Z-Score*	*Post-test of Control Group (CG)*
N (Number of Students)	25	4.3	25
R (Range)	40		35
X (Mean Score)	67.4		55.8
S (Standard Deviation)	10.64		8.76

Based on the data in the table, the range of post-test score of experimental group is 40 which is obtained by subtracting 80-40 and the range of post-test score of the control group is 34. The standard deviation of experimental post-test score is 10.64 while the standard deviation of control group post-test is 8.76. The standard deviation of experimental post-test is better than the standard deviation of control post-test. It indicates a significant difference between two scores.

The researcher further found that the score of Z-score showed a great significant difference between the post-test of experimental group (4.3) and the post-test of control group (4.3) in which the score is outside the given limit (-2.04 and 2.04) since the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected it can be conclude that the use of Information gap Technique become the alternative in teaching speaking rather than Grammar Translation Method. In other word, the two groups are significantly different which means that the data proves the treatment has given a positive effect on the students' achievement.

CONCLUSION

Information Gap technique is a technique which uses table in providing missing information that must be completed thus students are recommended to question each other by sharing ideas to fill the blanked-table. It increases students' critical thinking by constructing question through the table. In this activity every peer is recommended to ask the partner more than one time in order to make sure the appropriate answers. By communicating in English, students try to create the informative questions that can be understood by interlocutor. Moreover, students become more active and creative because the performance is contextualized that makes students explore their ideas freely.

Furthermore, the postive constribution of Information Gap Technique was also proven by the different scores which were obtained from both experimental group and control group. The mean score for the post-test of the control group was 55.8 and the standar deviation was 8.76 while the mean score for the post-test of the experimental group was 67.4 and the standar deviation was 10.64. After obtaining the mean score and the standar deviation, the reseracher further found that Z-score of pre-test of experimental group and control group was 1.7 that can be found in given limit ($-2.04 \leq 1.7 \leq 2.04$), thus null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis rejected (Z count is lower that Z table) which indicated that there is no significant difference between two scores. Conversely, Z-score of post-test of the experimental group and control group was 4.3 ($-2.04 \leq 4.3 \geq 2.04$). It showed that there was a significant difference between post-test of the experimental group and control group since the alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected (Z count is higher than Z table). For this reason, it can be concluded that Information Gap Technique is the appropriate strategy in increasing students' speaking ability.

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