INFORMATION GAP ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' ORAL PROFICIENCY AT PKBM CANDRA KIRANA

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Abstract:
This study is about the suggested activities which are Information Gap Activities intended to qualify the students' oral proficiency. The writer chooses this topic since there is most of the students' lack of the activities which can motivate students to develop their communicative proficiency. Almost of the classroom activities only consist of statement of grammar rules, list of vocabularies, and sentences for translation. While oral practice was limited to students. Because of that the writer tries to provide Information Gap Activities which can motivate the students of Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat (PKBM) Candra Kirana.
In this study, the writer uses the first-year student of PKBM Candra Kirana as the subject of the study. The writer designs the lesson plans, implementing the actions, making observations and reflecting on the results. This study was conducted in three cycles. To collect data, the writer used instruments of observations, lists, tests, and questionnaires. The data obtained was presented in two ways, qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings showed that IGT activities were effective in improving the students' oral proficiency. This can be seen from the improvements after each cycle. This can be seen by the rise of students' mean scores in the test results: 58.7 in the first cycle, 67 in the second cycle and 83.3 in the third cycle. Improvement was also seen based on the results from the observations that showed positivity, and good responses from the students from the questionnaire results. This means that the students responded positively to the implementation of this technique.

Keywords: *Improving Oral Proficiency, Information Gap Activities, Classroom Action Research.*

Introduction

Based on the researcher's experience in semester one of English studies in PKBM Candra Kirana faced a lot of problems in class, which are:

1. The students worried about making mistakes or fearful of criticism or losing face, or simply shy of the attention that their speech attracts.
2. They cannot think of anything to say.
3. Because of the tendency of some learners to dominate, others speak very little or not at all.
4. They prefer to use their mother language than the target language in class or at any time.

According to Willy Renandya (2020), Second Language Acquisition Principles and technology consist of Input, Noticing, Frequency, Social interaction, and motivation to improve students' oral proficiency.

In daily life we always communicate with others by using language. We use language to express our idea and thought. When we communicate, we use language to accomplish some function, such as arguing, persuading or promising. Moreover, we carry out these functions with in social context for students, they may know the rules of language usage, but will be unable to use the language (Larsen, 1986). It means that most of the students only know about the grammar, unfortunately they can't use the language orally. In other word, the students master the language in theory, but not in practice.

Here Canale (as quoted by Lubis, 1988) provides that communicative proficiency is knowledge and skill system which is required for communication. Simply, Brumfit (as quoted by Richard and Rodgers, 1986:67) stated that communicative proficiency is the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately. From two theories above, we can see that in speaking skill students are demanded to use the language actively.

As the researcher experiences, the term communication difficulties often come up when students use foreign language (English). That is why commonly the researcher wants to give a solution in teaching English, especially speaking skill. Because most of classroom action lack of the activities which can motivate them to develop their communicative proficiency. The classroom action only consisted statements of grammar rules, list of vocabularies and sentences for translation. While oral practice was limited to student. The sentences where constructed to illustrate the grammatical system of the language which had no relation to the language of real communication.

According to Spolsky (as quoted by Lubis, 1999:9) it is stated that assessing linguistic competence is not enough for practical educational purpose, we are interested not just in fact that someone knows how to use it.

Seeing the previous paragraph, it can be

said that speaking skill in language learning is very important for students in order to qualify their English not only in theory but also in practice. It's also said in Syllabus (Kurikulim 2013) that:

> Pendidikan untuk membangun kehidupan masa kini dan masa depan yang lebih baik dari masa lalu dengan berbagai kemampuan intelktual, kemampuan berkomunikasi, sikap social, kepedulian, dan partisipasi untuk membangun kehidupan masyarakat dan bangsa yang lebih baik (*experimentalism and social reconstructivism*).

In Indonesia, some English teachers still use traditional or conventional method. Conventional method usually makes students bored because the method is monotonous and the students are not active (Sy, Yuliarsih: 2019) The researcher realizes that most teacher either at SMP or SMA have strived to improve the students' oral proficiency. But they often find obstacles in their way before get their aims. So, in this research, the researcher wants to give a solution in order to develop the students' oral proficiency by conducting a suitable technique called Information Gap Technique (IGT). It was suggested by Raptou (2001:211) that "information gap is a useful activity in which one person has information that the other lacks. All of the speakers must use the target language to share the missing information". For instance, a student has the directions to a party and he must give them to a classmate. One type of speaking activity involves the so-called 'information gap' – where two speakers have different parts of information making up a whole. Because they have different information, there is a 'gap' or information gap. Getting students to have a discussion like having them to take part to give information without a gap will bring the students into a new situation. Lumengkewas (2004:4) says "such situation of learning will help the students to reduce their anxiety and feel comfortable to express their ideas in communicating in the target language". It is believed that students' oral proficiency using IGT will motivate them to speak.

Hopefully, this research can contribute to make an improvement in developing students' competence. And be used as of source in teaching English.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The writer conducts a Classroom Action Research (CAR) with both qualitative and quantitative approach. This research is intended to make a contribution to the improvement of students' oral proficiency in the classroom, and to give insight into the behavior of both teachers and students in applying the IGT.

Researcher's role in the research is as a teacher and also the observer (the researcher) to conduct this Classroom Action Research.

In this research there are three variables that are researched. Those are independent and dependent variables. The independent variable is listening skill (X) to find information and dependent variable is speaking ability also to find information (Y)

and Information Gap (Z).

In Implementing CAR, the researcher applied the model taken from Kemmis. So, this research was designed into four phases:

1. Planning the action.
2. Implementing the action.
3. Observing.
4. Reflecting the result obtains during the action.

Population

Population is a place of generalization that consist of subject the researcher with certain quality and characteristic that are standardized by the researcher, in order to learn from them and then to draw a conclusion from them. So, the population of this research is students of PKBM Candra Kirana.

The researcher used the Simple Random Sampling (Margono, 2004) which gave the same opportunity for every member of population to become research sample. This technique can comprehend the standard error of the research.

Samples

According to Iskandar (2013: 70) sample is part of population taken representatively or appoint the population or a piece of

investigated population. And researcher is using a systematic sampling technique. Under this sampling technique, the researcher takes samples from first semester students of PKBM Candra Kirana as much as 22 students.

Success Indicators

To Collect the data and to assess the students' ability in speaking through information gap, the researcher needs to state the criteria of success that can be designed according to some indicators as listed below:

1. The students' participation is an indicator of success of IGT. The mean percentage of the students' participation should reach the criteria of good or 70%.
2. The success indicators are also stated from the researcher's performance in implementing IGT in teaching and learning speaking. The researcher's performance should achieve the criteria of excellent or should reach 80%.
3. The students' average score after teaching and learning in the third cycle should be 75 or higher.
4. The success indicators are also from the students' responses toward the implementation of IGT in teaching and learning speaking. The mean score from questionnaires completed by the students should reach the criteria of strongly agree or 3.3 – 4.0.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first encounter of the speaking skills of the students indicated they are lack of confidence and too shy to speak. As they are from non-formal school that needed the equivalency of education. Some factors are they didn't get the access of education, and they came from the broken home families, lack of motivation.

Planning the Action

1. On this stage, preparing the technique in speaking.
2. Designing lesson plan.
3. Preparing teaching materials.
4. Preparing criteria of success.
5. Preparing research instrument.

In the phenomenon was emerged in the first and second cycle. To resolve the problems, the researcher had to reduce the number of new lexes in the materials for the following meetings.

Implementing the Action

1. Pre-teaching activities.

It took 5 minutes for pre-teaching activities phase. The teacher checked the students' attendance list. Then, the teacher explained the competencies and learning objectives that should be achieved and teacher asked some questions about the previous lesson.

2. While-teaching activities.

In while-teaching phase, it took 75 minutes. The teacher introduced the material and showed the real things for students as the learning concept through Information Gap Technique. Then, the teacher asked the students to guess the things. The teacher called two students, and give them different information. They could not see each information. They have to ask the information orally to find out the information. The speaking skills were developing.

In this activity, the researcher found classroom activities such as laughter, local language expression used and less focus in the first cycle. To resolve this problem, slowly but sure the research tried to correct it and direct to be more focus in the second and third cycle.

3. Post-teaching activities.

In this phase, the researcher spent 10 minutes. The teacher concluded and reflected the lesson that has been learned.

Observing

This section provided of the description result of the students' speaking ability as well as their oral proficiency.

Discussion

In the implementation of IGT, materials were provided to meet certain vocabulary and grammatical targets. The implementation allowed then learners to discuss the topics with their partner in order to compose dialogue. In every meeting, the

students were given different topics with some suitable vocabulary such as food and drink, clothes, TV programs, songs and music, work experiences, holidays, effects of the internet, my hometown, map of London, UK.

Based on hypothesis we can conclude that there is an improvement as students' speaking skills as a result of implementing IGT.

Based on the theory of Kayi (2006) mentioned that IGT are learning activities in which each student has a duty to work with his/her partner. One student has a certain information which the other student does not have. Each student has different information. In this way, the students have to exchange information in order to complete the missing one or to fill in the gap. In other words, IGT provide good activities for problem solving or collecting information. Each partner must be active in asking questions and providing answers by means of interaction and taking turns. The assigned task, completing the missing information cannot be completed by both partners unless they both communicate actively in English. It shows that the implementation of IGT can trigger the students' oral proficiency and speaking skills in learning process.

The IGT implementation in classroom interaction had contributed students to automatic

knowledge in starting and building the classroom interaction. The researcher also used the motivating technique to push students to speak each other. The lost control and the selected correction provided during the practice process were believed as the real determinants in promoting the confidence and participation spirit. These notions had contributed some interference in the classroom such as laughter, local language expression used and less focus. This happens in spontaneous communication as the students did not apply their monitor control utterance.

The implementation of IGT was carried out with very less control of the grammatical correction. These had caused the students to focus on meaning negotiation and forgot the formal language patterns. Consequently, the students' achievement dropped in the aspect. And this forced the researcher to pay more attention to the field. In the third cycle, the researcher begins the implementation by asking the students and monitoring their ability in speaking such as grammar and vocabulary. The researcher also started to provide the grammatical input and new vocabulary as the response to the students' mistakes. Fortunately, the correction didn't disturb the classroom activity that had been working well. The grammar and vocabulary correction had also increased the students' achievement in the aspects as well as made them to pass with better scores compared to the last cycle.

During the implementation of IGT, the researcher used and modified some materials to meet the level of competence of students. The suited materials, where the

students were introduced to some new vocabularies, accelerated the learning process as they could understand more about the topic. The introduction to a large number of a new words, either new in terms of pronunciation might contribute to the impairment of the drill process. In the classroom, the students would keep asking and confirming lecturer about the new words. The phenomenon was emerged in the first and second cycle. To resolve the problem, the researcher had to reduce the number of new lexes in the materials for the following meetings.

Subsequently, the speaking class at PKBM Candra Kirana, the implementation of IGT had contributed to successful improvements in the score of students. The factors that lead to this point were the teachers' performance, classroom atmosphere, instructional planning, and teaching materials. The determined factors had to work synergistically to allow learners to be comfortable when interacting in the classroom. When students felt free to make their own conversation, they would fully participate in the classroom activities. In this condition, the students would be easily stimulated and dragged to meet the instructional goals.

CONCLUSION

According to the researcher findings and discussion described previously there are some conclusion that follow. First, the teacher before implementing IGT did some preparations in dividing into two phases namely the preparation and implementation of strategy in the classroom. The preparation also covered the objective, dividing students into two groups or pairs and selecting the materials by designing the lesson plan. The implementation consists of brainstorming, dividing students into pairs, giving clear instructions on how the students should proceed to do activities. As a result, there were improvements in the students' scores following the teaching process from 58.7 in the first cycle, 67 in the second cycle and 83.3 in the third cycle.

Second, the pair work in some of IGT activities provided a chance for students to give some information or knowledge and to build their self-esteem in learning. This activity required the students to work cooperatively in their pairs where they had to speak and express information, feeling, and ideas. The improvements of the students' activities can be indicated in the improvements of the scores.

Third, in the implementation of this strategy, the student responded positively toward the use of IGT in their speaking class. Based on their opinions, this strategy can make them study better, comprehend the lesson better, become more motivated, respect each other more, and overcome shyness in doing some activities which means strongly agree with IGT.

Seeing the improvements in Oral

Proficiency by students in Information Gap Activity, it is recommended that English teachers of speaking use the technique. Because it can improve students' oral proficiency. furthermore, teacher can follow some steps: select an interesting instructional media and prepare it well. The teachers do not forget to design instructional procedure and prepare the assessment procedure. When using IGT, the teachers should manage time effectively so that activities can be done well. Finally, the teachers should explain the technique well so that the students on what they have to do.

It is also recommended that other researchers conduct further on IGT by using various interesting topics in order to find out other strength of this technique and also to investigate its weaknesses if any.

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