

USING GAP INFORMATION ACTIVITY IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT HOTEL AND TOURISM VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Suci Ayu Andari¹, An Fauzia Syafei²

English Department
Faculty of Languages and Arts
State University of Padang
email: Suciayu331@gmail.com

Abstract

In this paper the writer discusses some of the activities of information sharing (gap information) in learning English at hotel and tourism vocational high school. This paper describes the activity of sharing information in study speaking in the class. This activity is best used as a technique to learn speaking so that, when students learn speaking they feel comfortable, easy to understand and not boring. So that this information sharing activity (gap information) can help students to improve their speaking skills.

Key words: activities to share information, techniques to learn speaking, improve speaking ability

A. INTRODUCTION

Language is used as a means of communication in society. People use language to convey the message each other, also they believe that language is the way to introduce their social identity to the other. Language is the system of sounds and words used by humans to express their thoughts and feelings. (*Oxford dictionary.p.247*). There are many kinds of language in our life. Nowadays, English has become a very powerful language in the world. If we master English, we can communicate with other people who speak English in our environment in order it acquires and broaden our knowledge not only as someone's language even as international language. As one of international language, most communities in the world use English in communication. As the most important foreign language in Indonesia, English is one of the compulsory subjects taught in Junior High School, Senior High School and University.

In learning English, a learner is expected to master the four basic language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. When listening and speaking, it means that interpret them for meaning, and when reading and writing, it is expected to understand the texts and create the texts. Speaking becomes essential for everyone to increase his or her knowledge and to communicate with their society. This idea is supported by the fact that speaking has become a part of our daily activities. As we know that there are many reasons for speaking, one of the reason is speaking for getting information even for sharing information. In teaching speaking at Senior High School, speaking activity is unenjoyable and it

¹ English ELTSP of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang graduated on September 2016

² Lecturer of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang



is very boring. In speaking activity, the teacher gives a conversation, then asks students to memorize it after that the students are asked to perform it in front of the class one by one. Actually the most important thing of teaching speaking is not only knowing the sentence and mastering the pronunciation but the most important goal of teaching speaking is in comprehension about a dialogue and also getting information on it.

Beside of problem above, there are still many problems in teaching speaking. First, the students make of mistake in grammar and pronunciation. They only speak English without pay attention to the sentence structure and correct pronunciation. Second, the students are afraid of making mistake in speaking English because lack of vocabularies. And the last, the teacher dominantly teaches the students using Indonesian language so it can not increase the students' speaking ability.

Beside of these problem, in Senior High school and included for Vocational High School students, most of students do activity such as role play. Some studies related to the vocational high school had been conducted by some researchers. One of them is the use of tourism brochures in teaching English at vocational high school of tourism conducted by Sari and Syafe'i (2013). At the role play activity students is given a conversation about something and each of the students have their role for doing the conversation. In addition, the role play activity actually students do not understand the role to play, the important thing for them only for getting score. So students do not master their lesson and even they could not practice it in their daily life.

So, it is better if speaking activity is done by using gap information activity. The gap information activity can be used to teach English at vocational high school. So, teaching English will become interesting and also can increase motivation of students in speaking. And activities of gap information can build the student's vocabulary which it will help them more confident to practice speaking, the students will be more active in speaking then it will improve their achievements on classroom interaction.

B. DISCUSSION

Harmer (1983:85) described information gap activity as “a key to the enhancement of the communicative purpose and the desire to communicate”. Information gap activity is defines as; “A situation where information is known by only one or some of those present, students use the language they have at their command to bridge the information gap, by asking question, giving information.

Gap information activity can be done in Vocational High School to teach English because most of materials and many activities in the school is done orally. Because of this, gap information activity is appropriate to be used in Vocational High School. Model of gap information activity is aimed to promote speaking activity for students at Vocational High School. Through this activity students can be more interesting in learning speaking and activity of speaking will be more enjoyable.

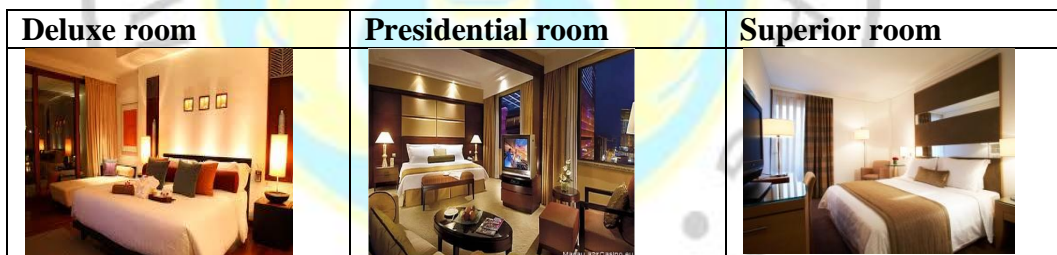
1. Gap Information Activity

a. Information exchange

In this activity, students share information each other by asking and answering about a topic. In this situation, one student will be a guest at a hotel which wants to stay in the hotel. And the other student will be a receptionist. Both of them share information which is in this case the receptionist tells to the guest some information that the guest needs. To do information exchange can be done in front office, between the receptionist and the guest for making reservation, check in or check out. On the other side, this activity can be done between the house keeping and the guest for laundry service or for telling to a guest about facilities can be used in the room. For example, how to use bathroom, how to ordering food inside room etc. And also it can be done between the guest and the waiters for ordering food in the food and beverage department. In additional, this activity is appropriate if it be done via telephone or face to face,

b. Same difference

For this activity students can work in pairs and each couple is given some pictures, for example, picture of deluxe room, presidential room and picture of superior room. Students in pairs discuss the similarities and/or differences in the pictures. On the other side this activity can be done to look for room that can be used for seminar international. In this case one student can be as a guest to look for room for doing seminar and the guest want to know differences between those rooms.



c. Guess the cards

Guess the card activity is done with partners, teacher already prepares some cards then one student chooses the object and the other student will guess the object on the cards. The objects are hotel facilities (room, kitchen, food & beverage, person etc).

d. Fill in the chart

To do this activity can be done for filling housekeeping form and laundry form/list and also can be used for ordering food and drink in food and beverage department. In this case, students work in partners. The students are both given tables of menu of a restaurant. Students must ask each questions to fill items and costs in each of their tables.

2. Implementing of gap information activity

a. Information exchange

Procedure:

Teacher divides students two of a group. Then students are given each conversation. One student will be a receptionist and the other student will be a guest in the hotel. Students practice with their partner and then perform it in front of the class. In this conversation, students is asked to play creatively, they can use some customs, dresses or it can be used some items that appropriate based on the conversation.

Situation: Student A is a receptionist of a hotel. Student A as a receptionist needs some information from student B as a guest in the hotel about his identity for filling up hotel reservation form. Student B as a guest gives some information about his identity to student A as the receptionist at the hotel.

b. Same difference

Procedure:

The teacher divides each group is 2 students. Each student has a different picture that should not be shown to their partner. The students take turn asking questions to find out same and differences between those pictures. Students can use clues to describe the things. For example: In deluxe room, is there refrigerator? Etc. in this activity, both of those students, student A and student B start dialogue / asking question from sameness between two room; deluxe room and presidential room then will be continued to differentness of those rooms.

DELUXE ROOM



PRESIDENTIAL ROOM



Similarity

No	Student A	Student B
1.	Two table lamps	Two table lamps
2		
3		

Differencess

No	Student A (Deluxe Room)	Student B (presidential Room)
1	-	Television
2	-	Sofa
3	Three windows	Two windows
4	Two beds(small and big)	one bed (big)

c. Guess the card

Procedure:

Students work in partners. The students already have the object chosen for them. One student holds a card so that their partner can't see. The partner must ask yes or no questions to determine what is on the card.

Student A will choose a card of many cards then student A has a card. Student B does not know what is on the card. Student A gives clue about the card to student B. If the answer of student B is wrong, so student A has to tell other clue. Student A has to creatively to give some clues until student B can answer what is on the card.

A : I have a card, please tell me what is on this card. The clues are : her /his job are to clean the room, change bed cover etc.



B : house keeping!

A : yes, all right. Next...

For teacher, the teacher can choose theme about facilities/person/things used in the hotel because these theme is appropriate if it is done for Vocational High School students.

d. Fill in the chart

Procedure:

Students work in partners which is students are divided 2 in groups. The students are both given tables of menu of a restaurant. Students have to do three short conversations below. And while they do conversation, one student writes down items and prices on the tables. And other student also writes down it on the tables until they finish three those conversations. The student listens to the dialogues from their partner to find out how much each customer needs to pay for his or her order. Students use the menu provided (menu not shown here) to their partner .

Customer 1

A: Are you ready to order? (A gives list of menu to B)

B: Yes. I'd like to have a hamburger, 3 cookies, milk, please. (A writes down the order on the table)

A: Oke, I repeat again your order. A hamburger, 3 cookies, a glass of milk. Is that all for you?

B: Yes.

A: Thank you.

No	item	cost
1		
2		
3		

Customer 2

A:How can I help you? (A gives list of menu to B)

B: I'd like to have a tossed salad (A writes down the order)

A: Is that all for you?

B: I need a cheese pizza slice too. (A writes down the order)

A:So, I repeat again your order. A tossed salad and a cheese pizza slice.

Thank you.

No	item	cost
1		
2		
3		

Customer 3

A:May I take your order? (A gives list of menu to B)

B: I'd like to have two cheese pizza slicesplease. (A writes down the order)

A: Would you like to have something to drink?

B: Yes, two juices please. (A writes down the order)

A:Oke, I repeat your order; two cheese pizza slices and two juices. Thank you.

No	item	cost
1		
2		
3		

Information Gap activities are useful because they are very meaningful; all students are involved in the process equally and they are all moving towards a specific purpose. Each student has the task of finding out certain information, and therefore must find a way in which to ask for this information. Motivation is usually quite high in these activities. These activities help move the students from working in a more structured environment into a more communicative environment.

Information gap activities offer several advantages; they can:

- Increase student talking time: students actively collaborate with classmates to achieve the activity's goal while the teacher facilitates the activity (preparation, set up and scaffolding, and during-activity support, as needed).
- Increase student motivation: Students communicate for a purpose as they exchange and collect information needed to complete the task. Information gaps can involve group, pair, or whole-class interaction dynamics, which add variety to a lesson. Also, students get to feel like important "experts" because everyone has task-essential information.
- Incorporate authentic communication situations and materials: teachers can tailor information gap activities to meet students' real spoken English needs, such as asking for and following directions, asking for opinions, and problem solving with others. While teachers should provide level-appropriate scaffolding and language frameworks, communication during

information gaps is often unscripted, reflecting the communication format students will encounter in everyday situations. Also, information gap activities can be designed to incorporate authentic materials such as maps, brochures, and other real-world content.

- Can be creatively designed to focus on meaning, form, and/or curriculum content: once teachers become familiar with the formats information gap activities can take, they can build activities that meet many types of learning objectives. Teachers can create activities that require or encourage students to orally use recently taught vocabulary or grammatical forms. Teachers can also build information gaps around themes from non-language curriculum content areas, such as science or history.
- Encourage critical thinking skills and teamwork: during information gaps, students must often exercise problem-solving skills, determine what data is missing, categorize and analyze data that is collected, seek clarification from others, and collaborate with classmates to successfully achieve the activity's objectives.

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