

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes background of problems, identification of the problems, limitation of the problems, formulation of the problems, objectives of the research, uses of the research, and the scope of the research. In order to avoid misunderstanding, definitions of terms are provided in the last part of this chapter.

### **1.1 Background of the Problems**

Since English becomes an international language, it is important for us especially for students to learn English. In Indonesia, English as a foreign language has become a compulsory subject that is taught and learnt from elementary schools up to university level. The aim of studying language itself is to communicate and to interact with others. The one way to obtain the aim is through speaking.

According to Educational Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP), students are expected to master four skills in English subject: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. While the main goal of the communication itself according to Little Wood (1990:4) is that the foreign language learners acquires communicative competence covering skills and strategies for the target language as a communicative meaning idea, and maintain social relationship by communicating with other.

Many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. That is why the main purpose of language learning is to develop proficiency in speaking and communicative efficiency. They regard speaking as the most important skill that they can acquire and assess their progress in terms of their accomplishment in spoken communication.

Brown (1994: 103) states that speaking is one of the basic skills that requires communicative competence, pronunciation (intonation, stress, and pitch), grammar, vocabulary, fluency, accuracy, comprehension and gesture improving, in order to build a good communication. These elements are needed to measure the capability of the students in speaking using appropriate technique. Brown also says that speaking is a skill in producing oral language. It is not only an utterance but also a tool of communication. It occurs when two or more people interact with each other aiming at maintaining social relationship between them. According to Widowson (1994), speaking is the active production skill and use of oral production. It is the capability of someone to communicate orally with others.

Based on PPL experience in SMP N1 Sidomulyo, the writer found that students faced difficulties in understanding and using spoken language because most of them could not produce short dialogue fluently when practicing speaking in class. The students' average score of speaking is about 60 point. Speaking seems to be the most difficult skill for those students. These facts are caused by many factors that have been discussed by some English experts.

Rivers (1981: 161) explains that students study a foreign language in high school with strong conviction that language means something spoken. The students are

often discouraged and lose interest when they find that foreign language study is just like other subjects, learning the book only without any practice. There are several tasks that the students can speak such as by using information gap, role play, discussion, completion, and so on. But, not all of the types may encourage the students to keep stimulating to speaking to speaking English. Information gap is one of the tasks that may encourage the students more actively to speak English because it provides more opportunity for students to talk in order to complete their information.

In the same respect, Cohen (1998: 18-19) reports that there are many methods that can be used to improve student's speaking skills. These methods must be interesting. One of them is by giving students information – gap activity which might make the students interact easily in speaking activity.

According to Kayi (2006), there are many activities to promote speaking. One of them is information gap activity which can be an alternative to make the students easy in using spoken English because the oral fluency activity increases the opportunity for meaningful individual students practice. Information gap activity is the activity in which the students are divided into pairs where one student has the complete information while the other partner does not have. One student is the describer and the other is the information seeker. The information seeker asks some questions to the describer in order to complete the task and the describer gives the information needed. This kind of activity can stimulate the interaction among students.

Information gap activities involve the learners in sharing the information that they have in order to solve a problem, gather information or make decisions (Rees, 2005: 156). So, English language learning students should be involved in as many situations as possible where one of them has some information and another does not, but has to get it. In other words, situations containing an information gap between the participants are very useful.

Students need more opportunity to practice English and use it communicatively inside and outside the language classroom. Florze & Burt (2001) emphasize that pair and group work activities can provide learners with opportunity to share information and build a sense of community. As Cook (1996: 90) suggests, such activities “force the students to use communication strategies whether they want to or not”.

Some studies also show that learning arrangement can cause different pattern of interaction. As Emayuta (2011) has qualitatively found that small group has higher number of interaction than pair work conducted by second year students of SMK Karya Pembangunan Gajah Mada Metro.

In addition, small group work is a process in which members working cooperatively rather than individually, formulate, and work toward common objectives under the guidance's of one or more leaders. It is also found that small group work techniques makes the students interact one another to solve the problem assigned although the individual brings his/her own personality, the students have a single purpose in group in pursuit of which they need each other's help. And the time which is in small group work is efficient because students can

help one another in overcoming their problem during teaching and learning process. So by using this way, the students can share their knowledge and they can help each other in how to apply their speaking skill.

In other hand, pair work is like interaction which is working and learning on two to solve problem. As Foster (1998:4) says that pair set-up is better in getting students to talk than group. It means that pair work can make students more speaking using English so their

Based on the background above, the researcher has done this research in SMA N 1 Seputih Raman and focuses her research on the two different types of group works in speaking class that improving students' speaking ability. The writer has chosen this school because based on the writer's pre observation SMAN 1 Seputih Raman that does not use information gap task in teaching speaking and it provides certain days to hold speaking class where the students are given some materials that require them to show their capability in English skill, especially speaking. Therefore, she has done the research entitles " A Comparative Study Between Information Gap Task in Pair and Small Group Work of Students' Speaking Ability at Second Grade of SMA N 1 Seputih Raman".

## **1.2 Identification of the Problems**

In learning speaking skill, the students often find some problems. The problems frequently found are:

1. Most teachers usually teach the students based on the book available only in their school, so that they become too dependent on those books.
2. Their native language causes them to get difficulty in using the foreign language.
3. The teachers usually do not connect the subject matter with the students' daily lives.
4. Students do not have more opportunity to practice English and use it communicatively inside and outside the language classroom.
5. They are also too shy and afraid to take part in the conversation.

### **1.3 Limitation of the Problems**

In this research, the problems are limited only into:

1. Students do not have more opportunity to practice English and use it communicatively inside and outside the language classroom.
2. They are also too shy and afraid to take part in the conversation.

### **1.4 Formulation of the Problems**

This research addresses the following research questions:

1. Is there any significant difference of students' speaking ability between students who are taught through information gap task in pair and small group work at second grade of SMA N 1 Seputih Raman?

2. Which one of the two patterns of information gap technique is better pattern in encouraging the students to talk at second grade at SMAN 1 Seputih Raman?

### **1.5 Objectives of the Research**

The objectives of the research are:

1. To find out whether there is a significant difference of students' speaking ability between students who are taught through information gap task in pair and small group work at second grade of SMA N1 Seputih Raman or not.
2. To determine which one of that pattern is better pattern in encouraging the students to talk at second grade at SMAN 1 Seputih Raman.

### **1.6 Uses of the Research**

Theoretically:

The result of the research may contribute useful information to English teachers in teaching speaking.

Practically:

Through this research, the teacher can choose the better pattern between information gap task in pair or in small group as one of the speaking activities in teaching speaking.

### **1.7 Scope of the Research**

This research is focused on the pattern of technique that is information gap task in pair and small group. The research was designed for second grade of SMA N1 Seputih Raman. The writer wrote the lesson plans for two weeks in four meetings. The topics of the material were kitchen and crossword which were suitable with the curriculum which covers certain themes to asking and giving information and opinion. The test was oral test and students' conversation during applying information gap task was recorded. She used random sampling by lottery to choose the class by assuming that all the students in science class have the same ability.

### **1.8 Definition of Term**

The researcher provides definitions of terms in the last part of this chapter in order to avoid misunderstanding of concept in this research.

- a. Speaking is the basic skill in language that enable to utter sound of word and people can share and send their ideas or feelings. Bryne (1998: 8) also says that speaking is a two way process between speaker and listener and involves the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of understanding.
- b. Speaking ability as the ability to use in essentially normal communication, grammatical structure, and vocabulary of the foreign language at normal rate delivery for native speakers of the language. (Lado, 1961: 239).
- c. Information gap task is task that students exchange information in order to complete the information. It is where two students or more work together

where each has some parts of the answers to some kind of a problem or a question. They have to explain their part of the information to their partner so that they end up with all the information. Precisely, Information gap activities are those in which students exchange information in order to complete a required task.

- d. Pair group is the pattern interaction which is working and learning on two to solve the task or problem between two people.
- e. Small group work is the work which consists of 3 until 5 students in one group in order to solve the problem.
- f. Comparison is the process of comparing information gap task in pair and small group work in order to find out whether there is a significant difference between them or not in students' speaking ability.