

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses several points, i.e., background of the problem, research problem, objective of the research, uses of the research and scope of the research as follows:

### **1.1 Backgrounds of Problem**

English becomes more and more important these days. We need to understand English in facing globalization era because English is the access of international communication. Language skills such as reading, speaking, listening and writing as well as language elements such as vocabulary and grammar should be taught to students. Now, speaking ability in English is crucial because it is likely to be in any aspects of modern life. That is why, policy makers in many countries in the world put English as the important subject in school curriculum.

In Indonesia, English is the first foreign language that should be taught from elementary level until university level. After learning English the students are expected to be able to use the language for communication both in spoken and written form. Because English is the means of international communication, the students must be able to speak in English.

The demand in English curriculum of SMA states that SMA/MA students should be able to use language in informational level. Arriving at informational level means that the students are expected to be able to access knowledge and information from the target language (English) by their language skills. There are four skills of language to be taught by English teachers of SMA/MA, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Depdiknas, 2006:307). After the students mastering listening, they will try to read and after that they will start to speak.

The fact that English has been taught for years, we can say the capability of speaking English in Indonesia is still unsatisfactory. The students in class are often embarrassed when they make mistakes or laughed at in class. They still hesitate to try to interact with their friends or with their English teacher in target language or English. These situations tend to happen because the teacher never involve in making the students to have the courage in speaking English, they seldom to make the various interesting communicative activities in class.

In this quantitative descriptive research, the writer concentrated on the speaking skill of the students. There are so many factors influencing the students' achievement in speaking. One of them is, of course, the technique used by the teacher in teaching speaking. Alexander (1998) in Subaikan (1995) states that the teaching qualities, particularly approach, method and techniques used in teaching process are important. It is the English teacher's responsibility to create and to determine techniques that may provoke the students to keep speaking.

Small group work may meet the criteria to keep the students stimulated to speak as Roger and Walters (1987: 17) In Utomo (1997) notices that small group work gives the students more time to practice the language. The effectiveness of small group work has been suggested by Mclean and Castonos (1976) in Utomo (1997:27) that the amount and variety of talk were significantly greater in small group work than in the teacher led discussion. In other words, students not only talked more, but also use a wider range of speech acts in the small group context. Like in Nation (1989:27) states that one of the factors that influences the small group work is the task. It suggests that task play an important role in the success of small group work.

Information gap is one of the tasks that may encourage the students more actively to speak English. To improve students' speaking skill, the researcher proposed to use Information gap as the technique. This research focused on teachers as the only learning sources and speech is as the main learning strategies. Therefore, the researcher proposed Information gap as an alternative technique.

Information gap is a kind of task that will encourage the students to speak in English more so that they can improve their speaking ability. Because it gives the students opportunity to speak in the target language and students produce more speech in the target language more than they would otherwise. As Pica (1985) states that information gap task offered the largest percentage of opportunities for non native speaker to modify their output in response to native speaker signals of request for clarification and confirmation. Furthermore, Information gap forces the students to open their background knowledge related with the topic given and then practice it.

Background Knowledge will help the students able to response. Thelen (1960, p.61) in *Models' of Teaching* (Bruce Joyce) stated that learners will not raise up to study unless they know how to response.

This will not make the students bored because they can corporate with their friends. This research will focus on the students so that they will practice it by their own self. Therefore, the researcher proposes Information gap as the technique. The researcher hopes that Information gap can be helpful in improving students' ability in Speaking English.

## **1.2 Identification of Problem**

Based on the reseracher's pre observation in Senior High School, she faced some problems like; some students get difficulties to express their idea in front of the class. It might be caused they afraid to make mistakes. Most of the students cannot tell their ideas when their teacher asked them, because they feel shy, nervous, and most of all afraid of making mistake and not knowing how to pronounce certain words. The students do not want to communicate to each other in English class. It might be caused the students only have little vocabulary and the teacher only give the students little chance to practice their speaking abilty. Most of the students do not know how to pronounce the word. It might be cause the teacher is not teach them how to pronounce the word right.

### **1.3 Limitation of Problems**

In this research, the researcher focused on the students who cannot express their idea, cannot communicate and interact to the other students. So, the reseracher intended to improve the students' speaking ability. The researcher used Information Gap as technique to make the students feel enjoy in learning English.

### **1.4 Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the background above, the researcher will formulate the problems as follows:

1. Is there any significant difference of students' speaking ability before and after pretest and posttest through information gap task?
2. What are the students responses toward information gap task?

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

In relation to the problem formulated above, the objectives of the action research are to:

1. To find out whether there is significant difference of students' speaking ability before and after being taught using Information Gap.
2. To know the students responses toward information gap task.

## **1.6 Significances of study**

The writer expected that the research can be used as:

Theoretical uses:

1. To verify the previous theory dealing with the theories of Information gap.
2. To be used as a reference for the next researcher who will concentrate on students' speaking ability, students' participation in teaching learning process of Information gap and teacher's teaching performance.

Practical uses:

1. As a help to English teacher in finding appropriate technique in improving students speaking skill and teacher's performance.
2. As a help to students in improving their speaking skill.
3. As a consideration in making policy related to the development of teaching learning English subject especially speaking skill.

## **1.7 Scope of the Research**

The researcher will find out whether there is any significant improvement of students' speaking ability that is taught through information gap. This study only focused on improving students' speaking ability in group discussion. The study then employed Information gap learning technique for the improvement of students' speaking ability to improved students' speaking ability.

## 1.8 Definition of Terms

- *Speaking*

*Speaking* is a process of communication between at least two or more speakers.

- *Small Group Work*

*Small Group Work* is a technique in Teaching and Learning process where the students can work with their friends in group.

- *Information Gap*

*Information Gap* is a task of learning a second language that has five kinds of activity to transfer some information. This task will force the students to speak to each other in order to get the information they needed.