

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background

Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto as one of the educational institutions has a role in increasing the knowledge and skills of learners who study in this campus. One of them is knowledge and skills of English. As we know, English is very important nowadays. Besides facilitating international communication with many people around the world, English also facilitates us in terms of science and technology. Therefore, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto (UMP) conducts an English Language Education study program in the Faculty of Teaching and Education with the aim to prepare competent students to be an English teacher in the future. The campus also has a program called the English Enrichment Program (EEP) through LDC (Language Development Centre). The purpose of this program is to provide the skills and knowledge of non-English Education Department students about English and prepare each graduate to be able to compete in the global market with English communication skills both oral and written according to their field of expertise. This program is intended for all new students in addition to the English Education Department and English Literature study program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, namely the Undergraduate, Diploma III and Professional Programs.

The English Enrichment Program (EEP) program is held for 16 meetings in one semester. Where the meeting weight for 1 credit is 50 minutes and the total meeting in one week is 200 minutes. This is a very short time to master four English skills such as writing, reading, listening and speaking. To be able to master the four skills required continuous practicing especially in speaking skills. We know that speaking skill becomes more challenging because in that skill a person does not only have to face nervousness and lack of confidence, but also they have to cover some other support skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehension so that they can understand what they are going to say as well as they can understand what other people are saying. To do this spontaneously is not easy, because these skills can be obtained well by practicing continuously and also requires interesting learning to increase students' interest and ability. Therefore, the use of Information Gap Activity is expected to be an alternative for teaching speaking to improve their ability to speak in a spontaneous way.

Information gap activity is a learning activity where students will exchange information with other students in a pairs or in a group of work. From this process, we can see that when a person needs information, there is a need and reason that they have to solve a problem by doing communication. As what Hayriye Kayi (2006) stated "Information gap activities are learning activities where students are obliged to work in pairs. One student has information while one other student has no information.

They have to exchange information with each other.” From the definition, we can know that the function of Information Gap Activity is as one method of learning speaking in a fun way.

More than that, Information Gap Activity also has several advantages as one of the teaching methods in speaking class. Harmer points out “In the classroom, we will want to create the same kind of information gap if we are to encourage real communication”. By making learning like real communication, it will provide stimulation and motivation for learners to have a responsibility to provide information to their partners or groups so that they will try to speak up, express their opinions and information. The strategy that is used in Information Gap Activity in speaking class is to place learners into an activity that will stimulate them to speak. Typical types of information gap activities that might be found includes “describing and drawing”, “spotting the difference”, “jigsaw speaking and listening”, and “split dictations”.

In the classroom, they will feel nervous, not confident and anxiety when the teacher asks them to do or practice speaking, because as we know, there are a lot of conventional methods that the teacher uses only teach students for their respective imitation, drills, and memorization of dialogue in the primary focus of classroom activities. It can be said that this method makes students become passive because the class activities are only focused on teachers, so students who should be the objects to get knowledge are not free to express their opinions. Therefore, the researcher

wants to do experiment with two different classes where one class will be taught by using Information Gap Activity and another class using conventional method to prove whether the use of Information Gap Activity can improve students speaking skill.

### **B. Reason for Choosing The Topic**

In this research, there are some reasons why the researcher uses the experiment study on finding out the effectiveness of *Information Gap Activity* to enhance speaking skills of the first Semester students of Psychology Department in Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto. There are:

1. English speaking skills is an important skill that is used in daily communication with other people; it is to express feelings and ideas. So students' speaking skills must be good or at least understandable.
2. Information Gap Activity is one of cooperative learning which is fun. So that the researcher wants to investigate whether or not Information Gap Activity can enhance students' speaking skills.

### **C. Research Question**

Based on that background above, the problem that will be studied in this research is “Whether or not *Information Gap Activity* is effective to enhance students speaking skill?”

#### **D. Aims of the research**

According to research question stated above, this study is aimed to know whether or not *Information Gap Activity* is effective to enhance the 1<sup>st</sup> semester students' speaking skill of Psychology Department.

#### **E. Clarification of The Terms**

##### **1. Information Gap Activity**

Information Gap Activity is a cooperative learning activities (in pairs or groups) to complete a task or solve a problem by finding the information needed (Richards, 2004; Jones and Williams, 2002)

##### **2. Speaking**

According to Tarigan (2008: 13) he defines speaking as a skill in conveying message through oral speech. Furthermore, speaking also defined as the ability to speak fluently presupposes not only a knowledge of language features but also the ability to process information and language "on the spot".

#### **F. Contribution of The Study**

The result of this research is expected can give contribution for some parties:

##### **1. For the lecturer**

Because Information Gap Activity is one of the innovations in teaching speaking, it is expected that this technique can help

lecturers in the teaching and learning process so that it can improve teaching through appropriate and interesting activities and can be applied in class to enhance students' speaking skills.

2. For the students

This research is expected to provide an interesting description of learning speaking activities so it is able to motivate students to enhance students' speaking skills through the application of Information Gap Activity.

3. For Language Development Centre (LDC)

This research is expected to improve the quality of English language learning and provide facilities to improve the EFL learning process by applying the same techniques in other relevant subjects.