

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study is intended to investigate the use of information gap activities to motivate students. This chapter lays out the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research question, the purpose of the study, significance of the study, and the last is definition of key term.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Information gap has increasingly achieved popularity in recent years and have been recommended as a way forward in English language teaching (Jondeya, 2011; Prabhu, 1987; Richards, 2006 and Thornbury, 2005). Information gap task activities are very important for teacher and also can help the students to explore their skills. Larsen-Freeman (2000) said that there are three features which can make truly communicative activities they are information gap, choice, and feedback. Information gap activities can also be used as speaking practices that reflect the daily conversation. Richards and Renandya (2002) stated that the give and-take exchanges of messages will enable to create discourse that conveys intentions in real-life communication. Besides, using information gap activities are effective to create students participation in speaking because sometimes learners speak more willingly in class when they have a reason for communicating (Spratt, Pulverness, & Williams, 2005). Thus, information gap activities also can enrich the types of activity that can be done in learning process. It also makes the class more fun and interesting.

In general, information gap have been explored in classroom like science class (Khatimah, 2014), in mathematic class (Caniglia, Borgerding & Meadows, 2017) in ESP for medicine personnel (Villanea-Morales, 2017), in social class (Li & Li, 2020), in English class (Afrizal, 2015; Shi, Zhang & Wang, 2019). Moreover, many researchers have discussed information gap focusing on learning vocabulary (Eskildsen, 2018), reading (Marashi & Mehdizadeh, 2018), and writing (Pratiwi, Susilawati, & Husin, 2017). In English class, information gap activities have also been discussed in speaking class (Namaziandost, Hashemifardnia & Shafiee, 2019).

In Indonesian context, many previous studies have discussed information gap task activities in speaking skill. Sugiarti and Margana (2019) conducted an action research study for vocational students by using information gap activities to improve the students' speaking skills. The result showed that information gap activities were effective to improve the students' speaking skills. This can be seen from the students' mean score of speaking before and after the actions. The score rose from 17.81 in pre-test into 28.54 in post- test. Astuti (2011) implemented information gap activities and other accompanying actions to improve the students' speaking ability. Another research conducted by Ismaili and Bajrami (2016) found that the information gaps activities help improve students reading and speaking.

In line with the discussion above, information gap task activities are very important to be applied in the learning process because this activity is effective in an English classroom (Neu & Reeser, 1997), especially in teaching speaking. Information gap activities have some benefits and advantages for students, such as improving student speaking skills, enjoyable and reducing students' nervousness

(Brown, 2001). It means that when the teacher asks the students to complete a text by making a small or large group, the students who try to complete their assignments by speaking so students will be happy, enjoy and not bored in the ongoing learning process because they can interact with each other.

Besides, information gap tasks activities also can improve students' language acquisition, especially in mastering vocabulary and grammatical structures taught in the class. Raptou (2002) remarked that through the information gap activities, the students can reinforce their vocabulary and a variety of grammatical structures taught in class. Furthermore, information gap activities may boost students' confidence, students' interaction and also motivation in speaking. For instance, when a teacher often asks students to talk through assignments given by the teacher, indirectly the students will be motivated and accustomed to talking because they have to complete the task by talking and interacting. This is in line with the statement of Liao (1997) who pointed out that the information gap can give opportunities to the student to modify their interaction.

Harmer (2007) states that an information gap activity is an activity where learners are missing the information they need to complete a task and need to talk to each other to find it. Information gap activities are useful for various reasons. They provide an opportunity for extended speaking practice, they represent real communication in which motivation can be high, and they require sub-skills such as clarifying meaning and re-phrasing. Moreover, in line with another previous study by Larsen-Freeman (2013) information-gap task is a technique in which

learners are missing the needed information to complete a task or solve a problem, and they have to communicate with their classmates to fill in the gaps.

Relevant to this present study, a preliminary observation has been conducted at a senior high school at Kota Kendari. Based on the observation, the researcher saw a lack of self-confidence and motivation of students so that student communication did not develop. Besides, the researcher also saw the lack of enthusiasm of students in expressing their opinions in front of the class. In the learning process, the researcher also saw that students were less active in teaching and learning activities during the English learning process. To solve this problem, information gap activity is expected to help students understand the English spoken by the teacher and help them to be motivated to speak in front of the class. This information gap activity is also expected to help students to build communication with peers by actively asking and answering questions.

## **1.2 Scope of the Study**

This study investigates how information gap task activities could help students motivated to speak in English class. The participants are high school students at one school at Kota Kendari.

### **1.3 Research Question**

In an effort to contribute to the body of knowledge, this study focused on the following question: "How information gap task activities could help senior high school students motivated to speak in English class?"

### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

Based on the research question, this present study aims to know how information gap task activities could help senior high school students motivated to speak in English class.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study offers some important insights into a number of aspects of pedagogical benefits. The finding of this study can be used as a reference for those who want to conduct a research in analyzing students' motivation to speak through information gap in speaking skill. Moreover, it can give positive impacts for all level of academic society, such as giving in sights on gap as a learning technique which help the learners to develop their skills especially their speaking skill.

Furthermore, for the teacher or lecturer, with this research is expected to be helpful in knowing the students' motivation to speak through information gap task activities. Then, this study will give contribution to teachers and lectures in solving their problems in teaching speaking. This research also could be helpful for the institution, IAIN Kendari, to improve the quality of teaching and training to students in learning. Moreover, with this research, hopefully, not only from English

Education Department that used information gap activities but also the other course can apply this learning strategies in learning.

## 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

This part is aimed to define some important terms in this study as in the following.

*Information gap* 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.

*Student motivation* is essential in facilitating a desire to begin to engage in and pursue educational goals. Student motivation is also defined as a process where the learners' attention becomes focused on meeting their scholastic objectives and their energies are directed towards realizing their academic potential.