

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Language is a socially shared symbols and combinations of those symbols. Language used to expressed thoughts and feelings to other (Daulay, 2011:12). As a tool to communicate, people use language to convey meaning, thoughts and feelings with certain symbols or language codes. Because language's primary function is communication, it has a connection to communication. That's mean social interaction by human. Language is used in the teaching and learning process with the aim of achieving the objectives of learning.

Speaking is an important skill in addition to other skills such as writing, reading and listening. Speaking as a productive skill is very important to learn. Productive skills are human abilities in producing language or expertise in expressing ideas. These skills include speaking and writing. While listening and reading are included in receptive skills which are abilities or expertise to absorb language. Students are expected to be able to master the four skills in English. So that learning objectives, especially learning English subject can be achieved. Among the aspects of language, speaking has an important role as a productive ability as well as a medium for communicating, thinking, conveying and obtaining information.

Speaking is a complicated interaction skill that is made even more complex by the fact that it causes anxiety for language learners. Comparatively speaking to the other three language skills, speaking is a complicated interactive skill. Speaking requires a variety of skills, including grammar, vocabulary, fluency, accuracy, and phonology, making it a complicated skill. Language learners must learn the fundamentals of speech production, discourse genres, and communication strategies that allow them to manage and negotiate rapid communication in order to become proficient speakers (Burns & Siegel, 2018:5).

Rao (2019:8-9) in his study stated that speaking have an important role in the process of learning English or a foreign language. Speaking is a skill used by students in real life situations. In the current era of globalization, it is very important to use English language. Additionally, students can benefit from these speaking abilities when they need to establish themselves in their careers. In the modern world, it has become extremely typical to ask candidates to demonstrate their skills during job interviews, and many hiring decisions are made primarily on how well the candidate performed in the interview. The English language can assist students in pursuing their future goals, advancing their careers and businesses, studying abroad, pursuing success, and compete in the current era of globalization.

As a productive skill from four skills in English, students need to learn how to speak effectively. However, many students in the teaching and learning process are not able to speak English. There are several problems that make students find the difficulties in speaking. According to Daulay, et al. (2019:14) “there are some problems occurred during teaching and learning process such as lack of vocabulary, less in grammar, difficult in pronouncing and low interest in English speaking”. In addition, Ur (1996:121) stated the other problems in speaking activities are: inhibition, where students are worried about making mistakes, afraid to be criticized, embarrassed if their speech is not interesting nothing to say, where students have no topic to express themselves other than the guilt that they should speak up; and nothing to say. low motivation, with students lacking enough time to participate in speaking; In class activities, students frequently speak in their native language.

The problems in speaking as described above are also found in MTs Persiapan Negeri 4 Medan. After the researcher carried out the observations, it was found that the students speaking skill is low. According to the English teacher, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic the students speaking ability is low. This was due to the online learning that had been done previously so that the teacher was less than optimal in teaching speaking so that the teacher focused more on delivering learning materials and assignments such as reading and writing. The English teacher is still

there teaching speaking by instruct the students to read a text or dialogue where this is to practice the students' reading and speaking skills. Beside that, the short allocation of learning time makes it difficult for teachers to focus on the students' speaking. In addition, the students also have limited vocabulary, grammar, low self-confidence and are afraid to start speaking in English.

Therefore, there are certain techniques or methods that can be used by teachers to be capable of inspiring the students to speaking using English as well as to improve their speaking skills. There are several techniques that can be used to improve the students' speaking skills. Among these several techniques, the researcher chose to use one of the techniques, namely Information Gap Activity to improve the students' speaking. This strategy can make the students interact with their classmates and can make the students talk as much as possible. Allows the students to talk and practice in teamwork. The students must interact more with their friends to acquire the missing information and be able to complete the given task or activity. So that through the information gap activity expected to improve their speaking skills.

According to Harmer (2007:129) information gap activities are activities where speakers have different bits of information and they must share the information they have each to be able to fill the information gap. Moreover, Rosalina and Khilda (2019:162) explained that information gap activities are a technique that can train a student communication where students and their partner or group friends have different information and they have to fill in the gaps from the information they have. Through information gap activity, students are required to share and exchange information with their classmates or other friends as part of the information gap task. The information gap technique can be used to help students become more effective communicators. The use of pictures to train the visuals and force students to speak so they can fill in the gaps and finish the work might help attract their interest in this technique. So that the technique can be used as an alternative to help students enhance their speaking abilities.

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in conducting research as one of the steps to improve the students' speaking skills by using information gap activity. Information gap can provide opportunities for the students to dare to speak and interact with their friends. Provide a more interesting learning situation. The students can interact with their partner or group to obtain information. Increase the responsibility of the students because studying together in groups can solve their task. Information gap activity also may increase the students' confidence and motivation in speaking. Therefore, the researcher decides to conduct a research entitled "The Effect of Information Gap Activity on The Students' Speaking Skill of MTsPN 4 Medan".

1.2 Identification of the Study

Based on the explanation on the background of the study above, it can be identified the following problems:

1. The students' speaking abilities are low. The students' rarely practice communicating in English language.
2. The students lack of vocabulary, make grammatical errors, making difficult for them to articulate their thoughts and determine what they want to say.
3. The students lack of confidence in their abilities and afraid to make errors, being ridiculed by their friends, and failure.
4. Learning process that had been done online before made the teacher not optimal in teaching speaking so that the students' speaking skills were low.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

Based on the background of the study above, the researchers limit the problem which will be studied is to examine the effect of information gap activity on the students' speaking skill of MTsPN 4 Medan.

1.4 Formulation of the Study

Based on the limitation of the study above, the formulation in this study: “Is there any significant effect of using Information Gap Activity on the students’ speaking skill of MTsPN 4 Medan?”

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Based on formulation of study above, the objective of study is to find out whether or not there was significant effect of Information Gap Activity on the students’ speaking skill of MTsPN 4 Medan?

1.6 Significances of the Study

The significances of this study were explained below:

1. Theoretically

This study contributes to understanding and knowledge to improve the students' speaking skills by using information gap activity.

2. Practically

a. For teacher

This study is expected to be useful for the English teachers at MTsPN 4 Medan as one of the techniques to improve the students' speaking skills.

b. For students

The researchers expected that through this study can motivate the students' courage and confidence to speak English.

c. For other researchers

This study can provide information and references to improve speaking skills by using information gap activity.