Research article

Developing Students' Willingness to Communicate Using Information Gap Activities

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Abstract.

The goal of this study was to increase students' willingness to communicate by incorporating information gap activities into the teaching and learning process. Three meetings were held to conduct the research. A total of 31 students took part in this study. The instrument used was students' reflections. The information was gathered in a qualitative manner and triangulation was carried out. The data analysis revealed that (1) implementing information gap activities in classrooms while teaching English increased students' willingness to communicate, particularly their behavioral intention to communicate; (2) incorporating information gap activities increased students' motivation and confidence to communicate in English; and (3) implementing information gap activities in the form of pair and group work activities increased students' motivation and confidence to communicate in English. Furthermore, information gap activities can be used as a teaching strategy in English classes to assist the teacher in effectively managing the class and retaining students' attention during the learning process.

Keywords: information gap activities, students' willingness to communicate

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1. Introduction

Information gap tasks were first introduced to the SLA research content by Long [1] to answer the questions' input and interaction. Then, a study about the information gap task also has been discussed for several decades that is the 80's such as Doughty and Pica [2] and Prabhu [3] as well as from more recent studies by authors such as Ellis [4] and Larsen-Freeman [5]. The research is aiming for oral EFL/ESL acquisition with the enrichment and practice of information gap activities and their procedures. In addition, Doughty and Pica [2], showed that there are some interesting experiments into the use of small-group information gaps, provider of a two-way task and this is called the 'plants the garden' task.

In general, information gap activities have been explored in various classrooms such as ESP for medicine personnel [6], in Science class [7], in technology and Hannover

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medical class [8], and Social class [9]. While those explored in the language class, comprise the multilingual primary [10], Korea EFL students [11], and class foreign language EFL in Libya [12], especially using in English class [13] and [14].

While the Indonesian context, many previous studies have discussed information gap activity in speaking class such as by Asrobi, Seken, and Surnawajaya [15]. They show that information gap activities are more effective than conventional techniques in teaching speaking. Furthermore, Putri [16] conducted action research for vocational students by using information gap activities and the result is that information gap activities can improve students' speaking in the classroom. Not only that, through these activities students more active in the speaking class, which can increase the students' motivation, and confidence to speak English. Finally, another study was carried ours by Astuti [17]. She applied information gap activities and other accompanying actions to increase student's speaking ability. The finding showed that the students' speaking ability was improved where the students also more confident, enthusiastic, and active in doing activities during the teaching-learning process.

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 [18], especially in teaching speaking. Information gap activities have some benefits and advantages for students, such as improved student speaking skills, enjoyment, and reduce students' nervousness [19]. It means that when the teacher asks students to complete a text by making a small or large group. Then, students try to complete their assignments by speaking so students will be happy, enjoyable, and not bored in the ongoing learning process because they can interact with each other. Besides, information gap task activities also can improve students' language acquisition, especially in mastering vocabulary and grammatical structures taught in the class. Raptou [20] remarked that through the information gap activities, the students can reinforce their vocabulary and a variety of grammatical structures taught in class.

According to the previous study, there is a relationship and influence between the users of the information gap activities toward students' learning proficiency in improving students speaking skills. In the previous study conducted by Sugiarti [21] the result was that this activity is very effective to improve the students' speaking skills. That can be seen from the students' mean score of speaking before and after the actions where the scorers from 17, 81 in pre-test into 28.54 in the post-test. So, the information gap activities to improve students' speaking skills. Furthermore, in line with another previous study by Fuqaha [22] and the results are the use of this activity has succeeded in improving students speaking ability that proved by the increase in the number of

students who achieved score 75 of their speaking score. Based on those previous studies, the researcher did this study to see the effectiveness of information gap activity in developing students' willingness to communicate.

2. Research Methods

The type of this research is qualitative methods to describe phenomena about students' willingness to communicate which focuses on the use of information gap activity as the teaching strategy in English class. The research was conducted for three weeks. The participants of this study consist of 31 students there are 14 males and 17 females. Their mean age was sixteen years old. Students' reflection became the instrument of this study.

To collect the data, the researcher used students' reflection to get further information about using the information gap activities in developing students' willingness to communicate. Reflection is given directly to students and students answer the reflection questions. Nurfaidah et al [23] remarked that the participants needed to complete their reflections in Indonesian, not in English since to make the flow of their thoughts not be blocked by the language difficulty. Provision of reflection to students three times. The first reflection in the first meeting is not related to the topic of the researcher. Then, on the second and the third reflections related to the topic. The data that has been assembled furthermore coded by the researcher through the answer from the students' reflection. In addition, the data is analyzed by data reduction. Here, the researcher selected then limited, simplified and transformed the data by summarizing or paraphrasing the observation and students' reflection. Finally, the data that had been reduced then organized and compressed. The data display may be arranged in the forms of essays, charts, flowcharts, categorization, etc [24].

3. Result

This section presents the result from the research about developing students' willingness to communicate using information gap activities. This data was obtained by doing a qualitative survey with collecting data through students' reflection. Previously, this research was intended to be conducted five times. However, the plan was changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. So, the data collection was only gathered from three meetings.

3.1. EFL students' reflection on information gap activities in developing students willingness to communicate

This study analyzed the EFL students' reflection on using information gap activities in the English classroom. There are six questions related to applied information gap activities. In the first meeting about students' responses by using information gap activities in the English classroom. The second about the student's motivation and confidence to communicate through information gap activities. Then, in the last meeting, the question about the students' opinion toward information gap activities to make students have the desire to communicate and about the application of information gap activities to makes students feel developing in terms of speaking or communication.

TABLE 1: The Result of Students' Reflection in the First Meeting

No	Reflection Questions	Students Answer		Students' Comment
1.	What do you think about the use of Information Gap activities in the classroom?	Really Like	83%	"I really like. It because it makes us understand quickly" (S1)
		Like	17%	"Yes, I like. It because in English learning can teach me more understand in English" (S17)
2.	Do you think The Information Gap is a very useful teaching strategy that makes students easy to learn English in the classroom? Why?	Really Useful	96	"Very useful to make it easier for students to learn" (S20)
				"Yes, can think actively and exchange opinions" (S5)
				"Agree, the learning is easier to understand and more fun" (S23)
		No	4	"No, because I do not know about the information gap" (S6)

Based on the table of students' reflection in the first question showed that most of the students liked the process the teacher uses an interesting method that is information gap activities. It was because this method could raise students' attention in learning English. First, there are about 83% of those who said like. Second, 17% of students opt for like. Meanwhile, the second question shows that the Information gap activities provide many benefits to students in various ways, namely, there are 96% of the students who agree that the Information Gap is a useful method to make the students easier to learn English, could exchange information, easier to understand the lesson, made the students' motivation, active, and more exciting. However, there are also the students who said that the information gap did not use to make the students easier to learn

English in the classroom because the students did not know about the information gap. The students said that there are about 4%.

Table 2: The Result of Students' Reflection in the Second Meeting

No	Reflection Questions	Yes	No	Students' comment
1.	Does information gap activity today can motivate you to communicate with your group friends/partners? Why?	100%	0%	- "Yes, I do not hesitate to be friends with others" (20) - "Yes because it's not boring" (13)
2.	Does information gap activity today can increase your confidence in communicating or speaking in English? Why?	95%		- "Yes, in this way I can speak English freely with my friends" (S3) - "Yes because the vocabulary is increasing" (S14) - "greatly improved my confidence and my mindset" (S5)
			5%	- "No, because I don't know too much vocabulary"(S8)

The first question from the second meeting showed that all the students said that information gap activity could students' motivated to communicate with their partners or groups There are about 100% of the students said that this activity gave motivation, not boring, and helped them to speak. They were also not afraid and ashamed anymore to make friends and communicate in English little by little with their friends. In addition, the result in the table above also shows that there are 95% of the students experienced an increase in their confidence in communicating or speaking in English. The students said that through this activity, they could improve their vocabulary, speak English even if only a little, and can speak English freely with their friends. Then, there are about 5% or one of the students argued that the information gap activity did not make the student confident with his friend. It was because there were many vocabularies that the student did not know yet.

The last table above showed that information gap activities did not make students have the desire to communicate and speak in English. Around, 25% of students because some of the students did not know about English. There are also said that speaking in English is very difficult. So, they haven't been able to communicate and speak in English. Then, around 4% of the student felt a slight desire to communicate because the student rarely talks or communicates with his partner or group. However, there are the most students about 71% who say yes where they have the desire to communicate with their partners or groups when did assignments. The student's reason said "Yes" because speaking English with friends is very fun and practice more often than taking notes. So, the learning process was more interesting and exciting. Not only that, but the students also have the willingness to communicate because they often exchanged

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TABLE 3: The Result of Students Reflection in the Last Meeting

No	Reflection Questions	Students Answer		Students' Comment
1.	Do you think that information gap activities can make you have the desire to communicate and speak in English? Why?	Yes	71%	"Yes, because with information gap activities, we can practice more often than taking notes" (S24)
				"Yes, because I know lots of vocabulary that I want to try to pronounce them" (S5)
				"Yes, because speaking English with a friend is very fun" (S2)
		Little	4%	"A little because I rarely communicate with my partners or my group"
		No	25%	"No, because speaking English is very difficult" (S17)
				"No, because I can not communicate and speak English yet" (S19)
2.	Does the application of information gap activities make you feel developing in terms of speaking or communication? Why?	Yes	92%	"Yes, because I feel more confident about public speaking" (S2)
				"Yes, because every interaction that occurs easier me to pronounce the English vocabulary" (S5)
		Reasonable	4%	"because I spoke with my partner using Indonesian mixed with English" (S4)

opinions in English. Thus, the students could speak English and know more about English vocabulary. So, there were 92% of the students felt developed in terms of communicating or speaking in English with their pair and groups. But, there are also 4% of the student who said not experienced development in terms of communicating or speaking in English with their pair and group because the student never spoke English (S16). Further, there is a student quite developed because the student used Indonesian mixed with English when spoke with their partners, namely, 4% (S4).

Therefore, from the data analysis, it can be identified that students' willingness to communicate has been developed by the use of the information gap tasks activities, so the use of the information gap activities can be used as a strategy to develop students' communication or speaking skills.

4. Discussion

This part presents the discussion from the research findings. This research describes students' willingness to communicate through using Information Gap activity in the EFL classroom. The data were obtained through the students' reflection. The result of the research shows that the Information Gap Activities can help the students in developing their willingness to communicate because the information gap is the key to the enhancement of communicative purpose and the desire to communicate [25]. So, Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in the L2 educational context is very important in decoding learners' communication psychology and promoting communication engagement in class [26]. It shows that the results are following the second layer of the pyramid model WTC, namely students have behavioral intention to communicate where the students are willing to initiate communication with their friends. Macintyre [27] argued that the second layer represents the last psychological step in preparation for L2 to communicate.

Based on the results of students' reflections to look at the student's willingness to communicate, first can be seen from students' motivation. The result showed that the information gap activities gave the students motivation and help them to speak and communicate (100%). The students S13 said that "the information gap activity motivated and helped the students to communicate with their partners or groups because this activity din not boring. Secondly, around 95% of the students have the confidence to communicate with their friends. It was because this activity allowed the students to speak and communicate in the English language even if only a little. For example, S12 said that "Yes I am very excited even though sometimes what I say is still a lot of mistakes". The students also said that the information gap increasing vocabulary (S14) and they could speak English very freely with their friends (S5). So, using information gap activities gave the advantages of the students, such as students can communicate, improving students' motivation, building the student's confidence, and supporting the improvement of the students' relationship [28].

Thirdly, there were 71% of students had the desire to communicate and speak with their partners or groups. It was because of the information gap activities the students practice speaking more often than taking notes (S24). Another reason comes from S2 who stated that "Yes because speaking English with friends is very fun". The students (S12) also said that" Yes because we can exchange opinions in English".So, the students were more accustomed and have the desire to communicate. Moreover, the students could get many vocabularies, reinforce their vocabulary, and a variety of grammatical

structures taught in class. As stated by Baleghizadeh [29] remarked that they allow students to use linguistic forms and functions communicatively.

Lastly, 92% of students showed that they felt developed in terms of communicating or speaking in English. For example, S12gave the response "Yes, because this method helps me to know how to speak in English and know more vocabulary". Besides, S2 remarked that " Yes, because I feel more confident about public speaking". In addition, is one of the S24 said "I feel more developed because I often communicate with my partner". Abbasi [30], argued that WTC is the intention or desire to initiate communication and this is considered to be a crucial factor to learn a second or foreign language to learners because it can allow practicing the target language.

Moreover, the students also could improve their interaction and made the students could more fluent in English speaking. This means that the student can look at some information and the partner looks at different information and then talk and exchange the information [2]. Finally from the research that has been done by the researcher, this result showed a similar result with Farouck [31], who presented that Information Gap activities are a method that can develop students willingness to communicate where willingness to communicate is one of the concepts that focuses on how language learners will utilize any opportunities to communicate in the second or foreign, language.

5. Conclusion

The Information Gap activity in English learning could help the students to develop their willingness to communicate in the classroom. It was because the information gap activities were conducted in pairs or in groups that gave the students more opportunities to practice their speaking and exchange information with other friends. As a result, the students become more enthusiastic, motivated, and confident to speak or communicate in English. in addition, the students were able to increase their vocabulary and could learn the pronunciation well. Here, the students able to get a lot of new vocabulary related to the materials they learned and they were more familiar with the English words, and they rarely mispronounced the English words. Thus, the implementation of information gap activities was believed to be able to develop the students' willingness to communicate and so useful to raise students' attention in the teaching and learning process in the English class.

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