

FOSTERING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS DESCRIPTIVE TEXT THROUGH INFORMATION GAP: A CLASSROOM ACTION RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This classroom action research examined the use of information-gap activities to improve seventh-grade students' speaking skills in descriptive-text tasks. The study involved 38 students of Class VII B at SMP Negeri 1 Lembang and was conducted in two cycles comprising planning, action, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through speaking tests, teacher and student observation sheets, and questionnaires, and were analyzed descriptively using quantitative and qualitative procedures. The findings showed a steady increase in students' mean speaking scores, from 62.34 in the pre-cycle to 69.90 in Cycle I and 79.93 in Cycle II. The overall improvement from the pre-cycle to Cycle II was 17.59 points, and the Cycle II mean exceeded the minimum mastery criterion of 75. Classroom implementation also improved, as reflected in the Cycle II teacher-observation score of 91.25%, categorized as very good. Student engagement reached 88.75% in Cycle II, also categorized as very good. Questionnaire responses further indicated more positive student perceptions of the information-gap activities. These findings suggest that information-gap activities can support students' speaking development by increasing opportunities for interaction, participation, and confidence in using English. The study recommends careful classroom management and varied information-gap tasks to sustain student engagement.

Keywords: classroom action research, descriptive text, information gap

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an important skill to learn because it is a tool to communicate. As human beings, we need to talk with others to interact in daily life. Through speaking, students can also deliver their ideas and share what is on their minds (Putri et al., 2025). As a matter of fact, the teacher focuses on written skills (reading and writing), which are tested in the school examinations or TKA, so speaking skills are not an important part of the curriculum. The teacher does not give students a chance to practice speaking English, so they have difficulty producing and developing their English.

On the other hand, the teaching-learning process shows that learning is teacher-oriented, with students simply listening to the teacher's explanation. Besides, the implementation in the teaching-learning process cannot engage students' interest because communication is one-way: the teacher explains, and the students listen, which makes them feel bored, especially the actively involved students. Meanwhile, the

students are shy and afraid to speak in English (Anggraini, 2021). When the teacher tries to ask the students something, they smile and shake their heads. They are afraid to speak and make a mistake.

The students also lack vocabulary and have poor pronunciation. They feel not confident when they want to speak up and share their ideas. Some students also have a problem with their mother tongue and their dialect. It makes it difficult to pronounce English words and sentences. Therefore, they keep silent.

The implementation of teaching strategy also influences the achievement of the teaching-learning process. The teacher uses an inappropriate learning strategy in various ways. So the students are not interested in learning English. They are passive or sleepy, and some students even play or chat with others.

Based on preliminary research, the researcher concludes that students' speaking skills need improvement. Choosing appropriate techniques, media, or games is

expected to involve students in the teaching-learning process and make them more active. The researcher is confident that using the information gap is very useful and engages students. This kind of activity is fun, and all of the students are active. Each student is assigned a task to find the information, and they must find a way to ask for it. The activity involves students in groups so they can share and cooperate with each other. They also have opportunities to practice speaking during the speaking lesson, thereby improving their speaking skills.

In the previous study, Triana et al. (2022) showed that the information gap technique fostered the speaking skills, and the other study focused on the students' results in general in a different context. In other words, there is no discussion about improving the active student and self-confidence. The study focused on students' processes by using the Information Gap technique to improve speaking skills. The study investigated whether there was a significant improvement in students' speaking skills after implementing the Information Gap Technique.

METHOD

This type of study is classroom action research (CAR). Carr and Kemmis (1986), in Burns (1999), argue that action research is a self-reflective study conducted by participants in social situations to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which they are carried out. In other words, action research is a process in which participants systematically and carefully examine their own educational practice using research techniques (Ferrance, 2000).

The study also collaborates between the teacher and the researcher about the weaknesses of the teaching and learning process at every meeting. After the parties share and find a solution, the parties plan an action. The researcher creates a lesson plan that uses the information gap strategy. There will be two cycles in this action. If at the end of Cycle II the objectives have been reached,

this action will be ended, and if at the end of Cycle II the objectives have not been reached yet, this action will be continued to Cycle III.

After planning, the researcher arrives in class and implements the lesson plan. The researcher also collaborates with the teacher and friends to observe during the teaching-learning process. Then, after the class ends, the researcher has a discussion to evaluate and reflect on during the lesson. By conducting the evaluation and reflection, the researcher will know whether there will be any improvement. The spiral model, Kemmis and Taggart, taken from Sukarno, 2009, the cycles can be seen as follows.

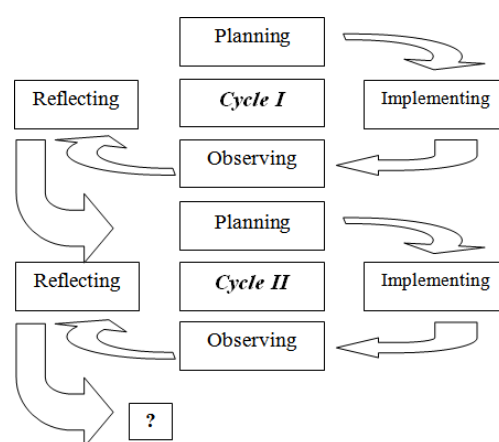


Figure 1. The Process of the Cycles

This study will be carried out in October 2016 using VII B students of SMP Negeri 1 Lembang as the subject of this research. The school is located on Jl. Raya Lembang No. 357, Lembang, West Bandung Regency. There are 38 students, consisting of 13 males and 25 females. The study will focus on speaking skills. The researcher chooses this class because they have a low speaking ability.

The researcher uses tests and non-tests to collect the data. The researcher gives a post-test in the form of a descriptive monologue at the end of every cycle. The researcher analyses and assesses by using assessment instruments. The test focuses on speaking skills. The purpose of the test is to measure the students' progress and the result of the teaching-learning process. The rubric's

assessment of speaking skills was adopted from Brown (2004).

The research used non-test methods, i.e., observation and a questionnaire. The researcher will focus on students' engagement in hearing the teacher's explanation, discussing the material, and doing the exercises. An observation sheet is completed during the implementation of an information gap activity in the classroom. The researcher will collaborate with the English teacher and a friend. When the researcher implements the information gap, the parties will observe the situation during the teaching and learning process. This observation sheet will help the researcher observe the class situation.

The questionnaires are given to students to gather information about their level of activity, responses, and opinions in the teaching-learning process through the information gap. The question type is yes/no.

The techniques used for analysing data are quantitative and qualitative. After collecting the data, quantitative analyses are performed by summarizing students' scores, calculating overall scores, and calculating aspect mean scores. After collecting qualitative data through observation, the results of the data analysis are used to determine changes in students' behaviour, such as their motivation and confidence in the learning process, in Cycle I and II. It is also used to assess the improvement in students' speaking skills through information-gap activities. The writer used Miles and Huberman's (1994: 10-12) model, which comprises data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The objective of this research is to improve the descriptive speaking skills of seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Lembang through information-gap activities. To conduct this research, the researcher engaged in planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The researcher prepared an observation sheet, a questionnaire, and a lesson plan before conducting the research. The researcher also identified the problems and tried to solve them. Then, the researcher carried out the actions by implementing information-gap activities to improve descriptive text-writing skills. While conducting the actions, the researcher collaborated with an English teacher to observe the teaching-learning process by using an observation sheet. Besides, the researcher also used a questionnaire to assess students' activity, responses, and opinions regarding the implementation of the information gap activity.

The actions were conducted in two cycles that started on October 4th, 2016, and ended on October 14th, 2016. Each cycle consisted of two meetings. The result of Cycle II had reached the KKM, so the researcher ended the actions. The implementation of information-gap activities was successful, and the research objective was achieved.

Pre Cycle

This stage was done before giving the treatment. The pre-test was conducted to know the students' speaking skills.

Table 1. The Result of Pre-Cycle

No	Category	Span of Score	Freq	Sum of Score	Percentage (%)	Average Score
1	Very good	85-100	0	0	0.00	Fair Category
2	Good	70-84	3	225	7.89	
3	Fair	60-69	23	1512.5	60.53	
4	Poor	50-59	10	543.75	26.32	
5	Very Poor	<50	2	87.5	5.26	
Sum			38	2368.75	100.00	

The above table shows that the average pre-cycle score is 62.34. None of the students

belongs to the very good category. About 7.89% of the 38 students are in good standing.

In fact, the fair category has the highest score in the score span. It is about 60.53 % or 23 of 32 students. The rest belong to the poor and very poor categories: 10 of 38 students, or 26.32%, belong to the poor category, and 5.26%, or 2 of 38, belong to the very poor category.

The average score of the pre-cycle test is 62.34. This score does not reach the average English lesson score at SMPN 1 Lembang, which is 75. Then, the researcher used the information-gap activity to improve descriptive text-speaking skills in cycles I and II. The diagram below will make it easier to read the result of the pre-cycle test.

Cycle I

In cycle I, the researcher delivered the treatment through the Information Gap activity in the classroom to improve speaking skills. It was done because the result in the pre-cycle was still low. It showed that the students' speaking skills needed improvement in some areas, including pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, and vocabulary. There were planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

Table 2. The Result of Cycle I

No	Category	Span of Score	Freq	Sum of Score	Percentage (%)	Average Score
1	Very good	85-100	0	0	0.00	2656.2538=69.9 Fair Category
2	Good	70-84	17	1293.75	44.74	
3	Fair	60-69	18	1193.75	47.37	
4	Poor	50-59	3	168.75	7.89	
5	Very poor	<50	0	0	0.00	
Sum			38	2656.25	100.00	

The above results from the cycle I test show that there is improvement in students' descriptive speaking. The average score almost meets the minimum criteria of 75. It is 69.9 and falls into the fair category. 44.74% (17 of 38 students) are in the good category. The fair category is 47.37% (18 of 38

students), and the poor category is 7.89% (3 of 38 students).

Observation sheet

Table 3 The Result of Teachers' Observation Sheet

No	Aspect	Observer		Score Rate	Percentage (%)	Category
		1	2			
1	The teacher tells the topic of the lesson.	3	3	3	75	Good
2	The teacher constructs the vocabularies about things in the school.	3	3	3	75	Good
3	The teacher uses survey task to deliver the material.	3	3	3	75	Good
4	The teacher explains the instruction and gives the example.	3	2	2.5	62.5	Fair
5	The teacher organizes the students into group of four.	2	2	2	50	Poor
6	The teacher observes and helps the students.	2	3	2.5	62.5	Fair
7	The teacher gives an example of conversation about describing our school.	2	3	2.5	62.5	Fair
8	The teacher checks the students' understanding by speaking test.	3	3	3	75	Good

9	The teacher asks to the students about the lesson.	3	3	3	75	Good
10	The teacher gives appreciate during the teaching learning process.	3	3	3	75	Good
SUM		27	28	27.5	689	
Mean Score		$\frac{27.5}{40} \times 100 = 68.9$ (Fair)				

From Table 1.3 of the results of observation in cycle I above, points one, two, and three are good, that reaches 75%. But, point number four, which is that the teacher explains the instruction and gives the example, is a fair category. It reaches 63 %, so it should be revised. The teacher also organizes the students' groups. It's 50%, so it should be revised. Points 6 and 7 are still fair

categories. It reaches 63 %, so it should be improved. Moreover, the teacher's giving examples of conversation, the teacher's checking students' understanding, and the teacher's giving appreciation during the teaching-learning process are 75% and are in a good category. The diagram below clearly shows the results of the Cycle I observation.

Table 4. The Result of Students' Observation Sheet

No	Aspect	Observer		Score Rate	Percentage (%)	Category
		1	2			
1	The students answer the questions relate the material before.	3	3	3	75	Good
2	The students are ready to learn the material.	3	2	2.5	62.5	Fair
3	The students respond the teacher's explanation	3	3	3	75	Good
4	The students pay attention the teachers' explanation.	3	3	3	75	Good
5	The students engage in the teaching learning process	3	3	3	75	Good
6	The students ask questions.	2	2	2	50	Poor
7	The students sit based on their group orderly.	2	2	2	50	Poor
8	The students do the activity.	3	2	2.5	62.5	Fair
9	The students cooperate well with their group in the activity.	2	3	2.5	62.5	Fair
10	The students present the activity.	3	3	3	75	Good
SUM		27	26	26.5	662.5	
Mean Score		$\frac{26.5}{40} \times 100 = 66.25$ (Fair)				

The result of the students' observation sheet indicates that the students' answers to the questions relate to the material before, which is a good category, with a score of 75%. But when the teacher starts opening the material, the students are not ready yet, as the observation sheet shows a fair category (62.5%). Then, the students' responses to the teacher's explanation, their paying attention, and their engagement in the teaching-learning process are good categories. They show 75 %.

However, the students' asking questions and grouping are still poor, at 50%. The students doing the activity and cooperating with the group are 62.5% and belong to the fair category. The students' present activity is in the good category, or 75%. The diagram below will make it easier to read the students' observation sheet results.

Questionnaire

The researcher used questionnaire sheet in cycle I to acquire the students' opinion about

teacher's teaching. The result of the questionnaire is showed in this table below:

Table 5. The Result of Students' Questionnaire

No	Questions	Students	Percentage (%)
1.	Do you like English?	35	92.11
2.	Do you like "speaking skill"?	30	78.95
3.	Do you understand the material presented?	17	44.74
4.	Is the learning process interesting?	20	52.63
5.	Do you feel bored during the learning process?	9	23.68
6.	Are you better able to apply "speaking skills" by using information gap activities?	26	68.42
7.	Do you feel more enthusiastic during the learning process by using information gap activities?	24	63.16
8.	Do you feel more confident speaking English by using information gap activities?	20	52.62
9.	Is the use of information gap activities in the classroom very effective and helpful in learning English?	23	60.53

The above data shows that 92.11 % or 35 of 38 students like studying English, 78.95 % or 30 of 38 students think that they like speaking, 44.74 % or 17 of 38 students know the teacher's explanation, 52.63 % or 20 of 38 students think that the teaching learning process is interested, 23.68 % or 9 of 38 students are bored during teaching learning process, 68.42 % or 26 of 38 students can speak in English easily when they use information gap activity, 63.16 % or 24 of 38 students feel more enthusiast during teaching learning process by using information gap activity, 52.63 % or 20 of 38 students feel more confident in speaking English by using information gap activity, 60.53 % or 23 of 38 students have opinion that the use of information gap activity is effective in teaching learning process. It helps them in learning English. Based on the above data, the researcher concludes that most students are interested in the learning process, but some cannot understand the material.

Reflection

The results of the test, observation, and questionnaire in cycle I indicate no significant improvement. The average test score increases by 7.56, or 0.07%, from 62.34 to 69.90. Although the average score has not yet reached the standard, the students are enthusiastic and excited. Therefore, it is necessary to resume the teaching-learning process for cycle II.

Cycle II

Based on the reflection in cycle I, the researcher found no significant improvement. The students also engaged actively in the activity to communicate with others. However, there were no weaknesses in the accuracy and fluency. Therefore, Cycle II was conducted to follow up on activities aimed at improving students' speaking skills.

Table 6. The Result of Cycle II

No	Category	Span of Score	Freq	Sum of Score	Percentage (%)	Average Score
1	Very good	85-100	8	700	21.05	3037.538=79.93 Good Category
2	Good	70-84	29	2268.75	76.32	
3	Fair	60-69	1	68.75	2.63	
4	Poor	50-59	0	0	0.00	
5	Very Poor	<50	0	0	0.00	
Sum			38	3037.5	100.00	

The table above shows an improvement in students' speaking skills in this cycle. The average score of cycle II is 79.93. It means that the test result has reached the minimum average score of 75. Most of the students got a good category. They are 76.32 % or 29 of 38 students. The rest belong to a very good and fair category. 21.05% (8 of 38 students) got very good, and 2.63% (1 of 38 students) belong to the fair category. The diagram below will show the result of the cycle II test:

The Result of Teachers' Observation Sheet

The researcher conducted the teaching-learning process through an information-gap activity and simultaneously observed students' and teachers' behaviour. The researcher asked their friends. The result of the teacher's observation sheet will be presented in the table below as follows:

Table 7. The Result of Teachers' Observation Sheet

No	Aspect	Observer		Score Rate	Percentage (%)	Category
		1	2			
1	The teacher tells the topic of the lesson.	4	3	3.5	87.5	Very Good
2	The teacher construct the vocabularies about describing myself.	3	4	3.5	87.5	Very Good
3	The teacher uses flash card to deliver the material.	4	4	4	100	Very \Good
4	The teacher explains the instruction and gives the example.	3	4	3.5	87.5	Very Good
5	The teacher organizes the students into group of four.	4	4	4	100	Very Good
6	The teacher observes and helps the students.	3	3	3	75	Good
7		4	4	4	100	Very Good
8	The teacher gives an example of conversation about describing myself.	3	4	3.5	87.5	Very Good
9	The teacher checks the students' understanding by speaking test.	4	3	3.5	87.5	Very Good
10	The teacher asks to the students about the lesson.	4	4	4	100	Very Good
	The teacher gives appreciate during the teaching learning process.					
SUM		36	37	36.5	91.25	
Mean Score		$\frac{36.5}{2} \times 100 = 91$		y Good)		

Based on the table above, the teaching-learning process runs well. The teacher covered the lesson topic and constructed vocabulary about describing myself, achieving 87.5% and belonging to the very good category. The teacher used flashcards to deliver the material, which is 100 % and belongs to the very good category. Then, the teacher explained the instruction and gave the example of reaching 87.5%, which is a very good category. The teacher organized the students into groups of four that belong to very good. It reaches 100 %. The observation focus number (6): the teacher

observed and helped the students reach 75%, which belongs to the good category. Then, the teacher gave an example of a conversation about describing myself that reached 100%. It is a very good category. Moreover, the teacher checked the students' understanding through a speaking test and asked them about the lesson, which was in a very good category. It is 87.5%. Furthermore, the teacher gave appreciation during the teaching-learning process, which is 100%, and is a very good category.

From the result of observation in Cycle II, it stated that the instruments of

observation reached 91.25% and the categorize was very good. It meant that the students activities during teaching learning process in cycle II was increased and engaged.

Based on the result, the teacher managed the class well. So, the students could

engage during the teaching and learning process. They were also interested in learning English. The students also participated actively in the activity. The diagram below clearly shows the results of the teacher's observation in cycle II.

Table 8. The Result of Students' Observation Sheet

No	Aspect	Observer		Score Rate	Percentage (%)	Category
		1	2			
1.	The students answer the questions relate the material before.	3	3	3	75	Good
2.	The students are ready to learn the material.	3	4	3.5	87.5	Very Good
3.		4	3	3.5	87.5	Very Good
4.	The students respond the teacher's explanation.	3	4	3.5	87.5	Very Good
5.	The students pay attention the teachers' explanation.	3	4	3.5	87.5	Very Good
6.	The students engage in the teaching learning process	3	3	3	75	Good
7.	The students ask questions.	4	4	4	100	Very Good
8.	The students sit based on their group orderly.	4	4	4	100	Very Good
9.		3	4	3.5	87.5	Very Good
10.	The students do the activity.					
	The students cooperate well with their group in the activity.	4	4	4	100	Very Good
	The students present the activity.					
SUM		34	37	35.5	887.5	
Mean Score		$\frac{35.5}{10} \times 100 = 88.75$ (Very Good)				

The table above shows that the students answered the questions related to the material before in the good category (75%). The data show that the students were ready to learn the material, responded to the teacher's explanation, paid attention, and engaged in the teaching-learning process, which falls into the very good category. They are 87.5 %. Moreover, the students' questions reached 75%, which is in the good category. The students sat in their groups in an orderly manner and did the activity. They were in the very good category. It reaches 100%. The

students cooperated well with their group during the activity, which was in the very good category, achieving 87.5%. But the students presented the activity in a very good category. It is 100 %.

Based on the results, the students show no improvement in engagement during the teaching and learning process. The results show that the students participate actively in the activity. The diagram below shows the results of students' observations in cycle II.

Table 9. The Result of Questionnaire Ccycle II

No	Questions	Students	Percentage (%)
1.	Do you like English?	37	97.37
2.	Do you like "speaking skill"?	35	92.11
3.	Do you understand the material presented?	34	89.47

4.	Is the learning process interesting?	30	78.95
5.	Do you feel bored during the learning process?	5	13.16
6.	Are you better able to apply “speaking skills” by using information gap activities?	30	78.95
7.	Do you feel more enthusiastic during the learning process by using information gap activities?	32	84.21
8.	Do you feel more confident speaking English by using information gap activities?	30	78.95
9.	Is the use of information gap activities in the classroom very effective and helpful in learning English?	29	76.32

The data show that there is no improvement in the results of the questionnaire in cycle II. 97.37% or 37 of 38 students like studying English, 92.11 % or 35 of 38 students think that they like speaking, 89.47 % or 34 of 38 students know the teacher’s explanation, 78.95 % or 30 of 38 students think that the teaching learning process is interested, 13.16 % or 5 of 38 students are bored during teaching learning process, 78.95 % or 30 of 38 students can speak in English easily when they use information gap activity, 84.21 % or 32 of 38 students feel more enthusiast during teaching learning process by using information gap activity, 78.95 or 30 of 38 students feel more confident in speaking English by using information gap activity, 76.32 % or 29 of 38 students have opinion that the use of information gap activity is effective in teaching learning process. It helps them in learning English.

Reflection

The improvement in the test result in cycle II is greater than in cycle I. It is 10.03 and has reached a standard score of 75. The average score in this cycle is 79.93. The students’ activeness in learning speaking skills also increases. Then the writer stopped teaching the speaking descriptive text using an information-gap activity.

Discussion

The Improvement of Descriptive Speaking Skills

The researcher compared the test result of cycle I and cycle II to know the improvement of descriptive text speaking skill. The clear improvement can be seen in the table 1.10 as follows:

Table 1.10 The Result of Descriptive Text Speaking Test All Cycles

Assessment Aspect	Mean of Score		Improvement			
	PC	C I	C II	PC-C I	C I- C II	PC-C II
Speaking Skill	62.34	69.90	79.93	7.56	10.03	17.59

Based on the table above, the researcher notes that the average test result in the pre-cycle is low. It is 62.34. It does not reach the average of the standard score. In Cycle I, there is an improvement of about 7.56 from the Pre-Cycle test. The average score in Cycle I is 69.90. In cycle II, the average score shows 79.93. The improvement is 10.03. The total improvement from Pre-Cycle to Cycle II is 17.59. The average score in Cycle II proves the standard score. Thus, the researcher does not continue in Cycle III.

The study of classroom action research in improving speaking skills come from (Tini, 2022). It stated that by using technique, there was any improvement on the students’ speaking skills by practicing in real-life conversation in supporting the environment. In line with (Putri et al., 2025), the study explored the effectiveness of Role-Play on the students’ speaking skills and the results enhanced the students’ speaking abilities. On the other hand, (Safitri et al., 2020) revealed that the use of Task-Based Learning fostered

the students' speaking skills by using instrument assessment accuracy, vocabulary and comprehension. Information Gap was more extremely effective than reasoning-gap activities (Namaziandost et al., 2019). Not only for students' who was extrovert, information gap also took apart to introvert students to speak (Marashi et al., 2019). The students also used pictures and maps to help them build their critical thinking to speak.

Similarity, the study of Mahmudah et al., 2025 revealed that there was any significantly improvement on the students' results speaking skills. furthermore, it also offered a communication and good interactive technique rather than traditional ones. The students felt a positive response on the implementation information gap in the classroom (Masluha, 2025).

In contrast, there is a limit in implementing the information gap to increase the students' speaking skills. It might excessively focus on the task rather than conversation itself. When the activities just repeat on the same topic, it might reduce their motivation. The limited attention also happened when the teacher could not monitor the other students in large class (Sartika, 2016).

CONCLUSION

The study is about Information Gap activity can improve the students' speaking skill. The result of speaking test shows that there is significantly improvement. It can be proved

by the result of the students in Pre-Cycle to Cycle II. The improvement of the descriptive text by using Information Gap activity in teaching speaking skill is 17.59. In Pre-Cycle test, the mean score is 62.34, Cycle I test is 69.9 and Cycle II is 79.93. There are more than 75 % of the students' final mark get >75.

The teacher should use various strategy or technique in teaching-learning process to overcome the bored situation and to motivate them in learning English. Information Gap activity is one of the interesting activities in teaching speaking skill for junior high school students. However, the teacher has to conquer the weaknesses of information gap activity by managing the class well and having good time in teaching speaking because some students sometimes do not engage during teaching learning process.

There are also have limitation about the activities and the results of speaking skills. since the participants in the classroom only one class, it might not be generalized to all the students or different educational context. Therefore, it needed future studies to conduct it wider. The short duration also effects or limited the opportunities to the long-term effect. In addition, the study was done only in two cycles within a limit of time. It cannot be as reference to conduct the research, so that it should be prepared well enough in the future research.

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