



**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD THEIR SPEAKING ENGLISH ABILITY
AFTER BEING TAUGHT THROUGH GOSSIPING GROUP TECHNIQUE
AT SMAN 3 BATUSANGKAR**

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Abstract

This research aimed to know X grade students' of SMA N 3 Batusangkar perception toward their English speaking ability after being taught by using gossiping group technique. This research discussed five aspects of students' speaking ability toward their comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar used in speaking. Based on calculation, students' perception toward their speaking ability after studying English by using gossiping group technique was positive. Students' perception toward those five aspects is clarified well. So it can be concluded that the students think their English speaking ability is better after being taught by using gossiping group technique. Moreover, it is hoped that there is a good corporation between teacher and students to maximize the use of gossiping group technique to improve students' speaking English ability.

Key word: gossiping group technique, speaking English

I. Introduction

Speaking is the ability to communicate about feelings, ideas, or thought orally with other people. Speaking as one of the important skills in English is really needed for the students to be studied in the classroom. In Indonesia, teaching speaking as one of the skills in English is regarded compulsory. It is because through mastering

English, the students are hoped to be able to use English for communication actively.

However most of the students still have problems in speaking English. They are still not really able to speak English well even though they have learnt it since they were at Elementary school. Based on preliminary interview with some English teachers, it is assumed that there were a

number of students who rarely speak and take part in classroom activity. Consequently the students become passive to talk that may due to their lack of speaking ability. This situation can be caused by the assumption that occurred among the students that think speaking English is difficult. Furthermore, the materials that are used by the teacher also influence the students' ability in speaking English. In addition, the classroom atmosphere should be positive to make students feel confident to speak in the classroom.

To develop students' ability in speaking, the teacher provides them with a variety of topics and activities which will engage the students' interest and encourage the students to share their feelings and ideas with others. There are several ways that can be applied; namely through singing a song, playing games, telling stories, drawing maps and pictures, etc. Nowadays, as Baw (2000) states, one of new innovation in teaching speaking English is by doing gossiping group techniques as one of speaking techniques to improve students' speaking ability. This technique has been done by the teacher in SMA N 3 Batusangkar.

Gossiping group technique can create classroom activities becomes more effective. As Baw (2000) says that by having

gossiping group technique, it can make learning becomes easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to a new situation. It is because the techniques and materials used are more real-life and sensational because the students will do gossiping about familiar people around them. The object can be artists, politicians, family or people at school. Therefore it may stimulate the students to talk more.

II. Review of Related Literature

A. Nature of Perception

Perception has an important contribution in someone's judgment about things. Someone can give perception based on what he or she sees, hears and touches. This is the same with what Tallent (1978) views that perception refers to manner in which someone take in information from the environment with the eyes, the ears and the skin (sense organs) based on the understanding he/she hold. It is a brief reference to how someone sees things or in animate forms.

A variety of factors may influence someone's perception. Walgito in Putri (2010) proposes two factors; internal and external factors. Internal factor involves physiology as sensing factor and psychology

which relates to feeling, the way and ability to think, experience and motivation. Moreover, the external factor relates to the environment and culture where people live. It may involve in work setting and social setting where someone usually spend his or her time.

B. Nature of Speaking

Speaking is a way that we use to express the ideas or to say what we feel to other people. It can be defined as a way that enables people to communicate each other. By speaking, people can share their thought to other as a tool to require understanding between people. Since speaking is seen as an active process, there are some important elements involved within its process. According to Harris (1974) there are 5 components that may influence someone's speaking, generally in analysis of the speech process:

1. Pronunciation

Pronunciation can be defined as the manner in which someone utters a word. It also includes the segmental features vocals and consonants and stress or intonation. Therefore, pronunciation or the way a word is usually spoken is a key to gain full communicative competence.

2. Grammar

Grammar is one of the most important components in mastering English. In linguistics, grammar is the set of logical and structural rules that govern the composition of sentences, phrases, and words in any given natural language. By having knowledge about grammar rules, someone can produce the correct sentences in speaking. It is in line with Isyam (2007) who states that grammar is a set of rules to arrange words and other components to form correct sentences of a certain language which give meanings to whoever uses the language.

3. Vocabulary

Vocabulary, according to Koizumi (2006), is conveyed as a good indicator of second language proficiency, as well as one of the essential and fundamental components of communication. One cannot use a language without having knowledge about vocabulary of that language. Therefore, without knowing words, someone would not able to speak smoothly.

4. Fluency

As one of the goals of speaking activities in the language classroom, the development of fluency is really needed. Fluency can be said as the smoothness or flow with which sounds, syllables, words

and phrases are joined together when speaking. This is also a kind of ability to speak in the language and be understood by its speakers and listeners.

5. Understanding or content

It is a factor which needs understanding between speaker and listener. If the listener understand about what are the speakers is talking about, the communication between them can run well.

C. Gossiping Group Technique

Gossiping in group may be one of effective group activities to encourage the students to study more. As Baw (2000) says that gossiping as group activities in language learning can exploit our human weakness about speaking to provide language fluency practice. The activities will express the social aspect of learning and provide learners with chances to talk and listen with a communicative purpose to help them improve their ability. It will exploit the natural desire to talk about the people around. Therefore the students will tend to speak critically and disparagingly about people to be gossiped about.

In addition, Kahler (1993) also explain that gossiping group is a natural way to develop communicative skills because gossiping group is a mirror of authentic

communication, which is essentially personal, expression of personal needs, feelings, experiences, and knowledge that are never the same. Therefore, the view or opinion of the students toward something being gossiped is various because they have different experience and knowledge about the object.

Moreover the communication in the gossiping group is performed face-to-face in a group. As Beebe and Masterson in Dunn (1989) define that gossiping group is face to face communication among a small group of people who share a common purpose or goal, feel a sense of belonging to the group, and exert influence upon one another. Besides that, Gandhi (2010) supports that speaking effectively in gossiping group is achieved by means of body language as well as public speaking skills. Therefore, the students can practice their speaking well.

Before conducting the activity, the teachers should prepare the material to be gossiped about. The material should be an interesting and challenging topic. Beside the material should be communicative and appropriate with the students' age, ability and background knowledge. Therefore the students' can understand the material more and make them easier to talk.

For the material itself the teacher can get the source from raw material, such as: newspaper, magazine, television, or radio to provide news about some of the well-known people on the society today. The person chosen can be a movie star, athlete, and politician, terrorist or even fictional character in comic or novel. It just depends on the teachers' tastes which is expected can make the students interested and inspired. So they can be motivated to talk in the classroom discussion.

If the learners are mature and understand enough, the person to be gossiped about can be taken from the class member. As long the main purpose of this activity is just to help the students develop their speaking in a meaningful context and setting. Here, gossip is an example of how a number of interpersonal exchanges can be made by making use of our tendency to talk about the people around us.

According to Baw (2000) there are some stages to implement Gossiping group as group activities in speaking class.

1) Stage 1, the teacher explains to the class the nature of the activity and gets the students to sit in groups of four or five. Then the teacher distributes a small piece of paper containing three different gossip

items to each group member and have the students talk and listen to their gossip.

2) Stage 2, the students are formed into new groups. Then have the students gossiping again using all the information they gained in the previous round. However, they are not allowed to look at written information. They must rely on their memory for whatever they want to gossip about.

3) Stage 3, the teacher give new information about the topic and have three minutes to reflect the new information. Then let the students discuss the topic in front of the class.

In addition, today there are some teachers have given some improvements on teaching speaking by using gossiping group technique. The teachers add pictures to increase the students' motivation in taking part in the activity. The picture is made by the students in a group based on the views that is given by the teacher about the object gossiped to create an interesting classroom activity. Then, the students may just talk and share their ideas based on the picture that is made before. They do not need to see the cards to talk about the object gossiped. Therefore, the students can be more attracted to practice their speaking.

From the explanation above, we can conclude that gossip as group activities in language teaching gives opportunities to the students to practice their speaking. Also it helps the students to develop their speaking ability in English, because gossiping depends on the students' taste and relate to something around their lives such as movie star, singer, country leader, politician, criminal, someone black listed by history or even fictional character.

III. Methods of the Research

This research was conducted by using descriptive research. It aims to collect data in order to know the students' perception after taught by gossiping group technique toward their speaking ability. This research was done at SMA N 3 Batusangkar. The population of this research was the first grade (grade X) of SMA N 3 Batusangkar students. The first grade was chosen since the first grade students should have competence in giving and asking opinion that was involved in activities in gossiping group technique. Furthermore, the instrumentation of this research was questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed directly to the students. The questionnaire was made based on the indicators that suggested by Brown (1994).

The indicators were taken from five components of speaking. Questionnaire is enclosed in the appendix.

In analyzing the data, the writer used Likert Scale as suggested by Gay (2009). He states that a Likert Scale asks an individual to respond to a series of statement by indicating whether she or he Strongly Agree (SA), Agree(A), Disagree(D), Strongly Disagree(SD). Each response is associated with a point value and individual's score in determined by summing the point value for each statement.

NO	Option	Point Value
1	Strongly Agree	4
2	Agree	3
3	Disagree	2
4	Strongly Disagree	1

To find out the percentage of each item, the researcher used the formula proposed by Sudjana (2005) as follow:

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100\%$$

Where:

- P = the percentage of the result
- f = the total point of the answer or each question
- n = the total amount of the sample

Then, the data will be converted as follow:

Percentage	Description
100%-81%	Very good
61%-80%	Good
41%-60%	Poor
0%-40%	Very poor

After those stages above, the data was transformed into descriptions.

IV. Findings

This research is aimed to see the students' perception on using gossiping group technique toward their speaking English. There are five components that are analyzed in this research. They are comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. The students' perception toward those five components is shown by the result of the analysis of data collected through questionnaire.

The result of this research shows that gossiping group technique gives positive perceptions to the students' in improving their speaking ability. The positive students' perceptions can be seen through analyzing each indicators of speaking components data gained through questionnaires.

4.1 Students' Perception toward their Comprehension

The data of percentage of students' perception toward their comprehension after being taught through gossiping group could be drawn as below:

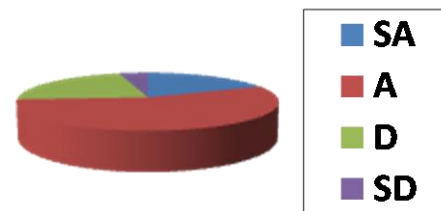


Figure 1. The Average Percentage of Students' Perception toward their Comprehension

From the figure, it can be seen the average of students' perception after being taught through gossiping group toward their comprehension. There are 18,47% of students answered strongly agree (SA), 55,40% of students answered agree (A), 22,03% of students answered disagree (D), and 4,10% of students answered strongly disagree (SD). It means that the students feel they have better comprehension in speaking after being taught through gossiping group technique. It is proved by more than 73,87% (18,47% + 55,40%) of students give perception that gossiping group can make the students have better comprehension in speaking English.

This first indicator reveals that, relevant with the theories, gossiping group

technique give good perception toward students' comprehension in speaking English. This might be supported by the materials that is used in gossiping group technique is easy to understand and also the language used is familiar with the students that may encourage them to practice their speaking. As Baw (2000) stated that gossiping activity may encourage the students to be more active in class that means they can follow the activity during the class. Therefore the students can comprehend the activity and conversation occurs during the lesson.

4.2 Students' Perception toward their Fluency

The data of percentage of students' perception using group gossiping toward their fluency could be drawn as below:

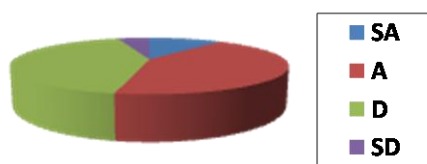


Figure 2. The Average Percentage of Students' Perception toward their Fluency

From the figure, it can be seen the average of students' perception after using gossiping group toward their fluency. There are 10,64% of students strongly agreed (SA), 42,54% of students agreed (A),

42,17% of students disagreed (D), and 4,66% of students strongly disagreed (SD). It means from the graph, the students have good fluency in speaking after using gossiping group. It is proved by more than 53,18% (10,64% + 42,54%) of students give perception that gossiping group can make the students have good fluency in speaking English.

The second indicator also reveals that gossiping group give positive perception toward students' fluency. The students feel that their fluency is improved after being taught by gossiping group activity in the classroom. It can be influenced by the improvement of students' motivation to talk that make them eager to speak English in the classroom. It is in line with Bateson's word in Baw (2000) who said that people may talk more in something which they experience. They share communicative conventions and inhabit same world of discourse.

4.3 Students' Perception toward their Vocabulary

The data of percentage of students' perception using group gossiping toward their vocabulary could be drawn as below:



Figure3. The Average Percentage of Students' Perception toward their Vocabulary

From the figure, it can be seen the average of students' perception after using gossiping group toward their vocabulary. There are 9,33% of students strongly agreed (SA), 41,42% of students agreed (A), 43,28% of students disagreed (D), and 5,97% of students strongly disagreed (SD). It means from the graph, the students have standard with vocabulary knowledge after using gossiping group. It is proved by more than 50,75% ($9,33\% + 41,42\%$) of students give perception that gossiping group can make the students have standard knowledge vocabulary in speaking English.

The third factor indicates that gossiping group give positive perception toward students' vocabulary. The students think that their amount of vocabulary is increased after being taught by gossiping group technique. It may be caused by the material which is familiar with the students. The familiar material may make the students speak more because they know and

understand the vocabularies to be used in the conversation.

4.4. Students' Perception toward their Pronunciation

The data of percentage of students' perception using group gossiping toward their pronunciation could be drawn as below:

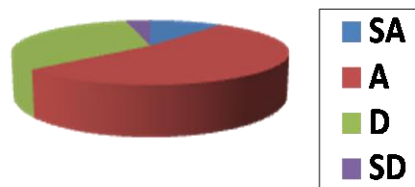


Figure4. The Average Percentage of Students' Perception toward their Pronunciation

From the figure, it can be seen the average of students' perception after using gossiping group toward their pronunciation. There are 10,45% of students strongly agreed (SA), 52,99% of students agreed (A), 33,02% of students disagreed (D), and 3,55% of students strongly disagreed (SD). It means from the graph, the students have good pronunciation after using gossiping group. It is proved by more than 63,44% ($10,45\% + 52,99\%$) of students give perception that gossiping group can make the students have good pronunciation in speaking English.

The fourth indicator also reveals that the students feel that their pronunciation is improved after being taught through gossiping group technique. It is consistent with Baw's finding (2000) that the students' think that they have better pronunciation after being taught through gossiping group technique. It increase students' awareness in producing words because they always use the words in conversation. This condition make them know the correct pronoun of the words that due to their improvement in the ability of pronunciation.

4.5. Students' Perception toward their Grammar

The data of percentage of students' perception using group gossiping toward their grammar could be drawn as below:

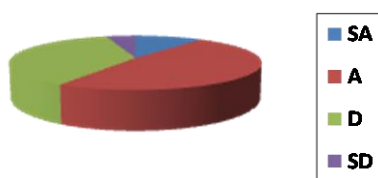


Figure5. The Average Percentage of Students' Perception toward their Grammar

From the figure, it can be seen the average of students' perception after using gossiping group toward their grammar.

There are 10,26% of students strongly agreed (SA), 48,32% of students agreed (A), 36,94% of students disagreed (D), and 4,48% of students strongly disagreed (SD). It means from the graph, the students have good grammar ability after using gossiping group. It is proved by more than 58,58% (10,26% + 48,32%) of students give perception that gossiping group can make the students have good grammar ability in speaking English.

The last indicator, which is grammar, also show positive perception to the students. According to the students, their grammar ability is improved after being taught through gossiping group. This finding may indicate, as Baw (2000) has found that through gossiping, the students are able to tap into their largely passive grammatical knowledge and extend their conversational range.

The analysis of the questionnaires as stated in the finding concluded that students were getting more involved in the speaking class. As Baw (2000) says that gossiping as group activities in language learning can exploit our human weakness about speaking to provide language fluency practice. The students' who are not able to speak English before using gossiping group are able to

speak English better after using gossiping group technique.

The finding of the research proved that theory mentioned in chapter II that gossiping in group may be one of effective group activities to encourage the students to speak more. It is similar to the theory proposed by Baw (2000) that gossiping group as the activities will express the social aspect of learning and provide learners with chances to talk and listen with a communicative purpose to help them improve their ability in speaking.

The data from the result of questionnaires show that positive students' perception using gossiping group toward their speaking ability. Based on the data, it could be concluded that students' give positive perception after being taught through gossiping group technique toward their speaking ability at SMAN 3 Batusangkar.

V. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research, it can be concluded that using gossiping group technique give better effect toward students' speaking English ability at SMA N 3 Batusangkar. Gossiping group as the activities express the social aspect of learning provide learners with chances to

talk and listen with a communicative purpose to help them improve their ability in speaking. The students' who are not able to speak English before using gossiping group can be able to speak English better after using gossiping group technique. So, gossiping group is one of effective group activities to encourage the students to speak more.

From the data of this research, gossiping group technique gives positive perceptions to the students' in improving their speaking ability that are in comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and also to their grammar in speaking English.

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VII. APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD THEIR SPEAKING ENGLISH ABILITY AFTER BEING TAUGHT THROUGH GOSSIPING GROUP TECHNIQUE AT SMAN 3 BATUSANGKAR

After being taught through Gossiping Group technique:

NO	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
1	I can understand simple conversation				
2	I can understand daily conversation spoken slowly				
3	I can understand daily conversation without frequent repetition				
4	I understand the conversation more in slow speed than in normal speed with some repetition				
5	I understand the conversation more in slow speed than in normal speed with some repetition				
6	I understand daily conversation				
7	I understand discussion in the classroom				
8	I can fix mistakes that occurred during the conversation and repeat the correct conversation to clear the meaning of the conversation				
9	I rarely speak in halting and fragmentary				
10	I rarely speak hesitate as to make a conversation				
11	I often speak English therefore I am fluent in speaking English				
12	I rarely have pauses in searching appropriate term				
13	I feel fluent in having daily conversation even though sometime I hardly find appropriate words in searching correct term				
14	I feel fluent in having discussion without many mistakes while speaking				
15	I feel fluent in having daily conversation without many mistakes while speaking				
16	I can use some fillers while having a conversation				
17	I have very limited vocabulary but still able to make conversation				
18	I rarely use inappropriate words in having conversation				
19	I have enough vocabulary to make a conversation				
20	I rarely use inappropriate words because I have enough vocabulary				
21	I rarely use inappropriate term				
22	I rarely repeat the conversation because of limited vocabulary				
23	I am able to use appropriate vocabulary in having conversation				
24	I can use appropriate idioms in having conversation				

25	I am able to pronounce words as to make a conversation				
26	I am able to understand conversation with clear pronunciation				
27	I am able to pronounce correct words so it does not disturb the listener concentration and cause miscommunication				
28	I am able to pronounce words even though with inappropriate accent				
29	I am able to pronounce words even though with inappropriate intonation				
30	I am able to pronounce words correctly				
31	I am able to pronounce words with appropriate intonation				
32	I can comprehend conversation because of correct pronunciation and do not have to repeat the words				
33	I do not feel difficult to have conversation because I understand grammar				
34	I comprehend conversation and do not have to repeat the conversation because I understand grammar				
35	I rarely have mistake in grammar that can change the meaning of the words				
36	I sometimes have mistake in grammar but do not disturb the meaning of the words				
37	I master the use of proper grammar				
38	I can produce differences English allophonic variants (such as: -s ending)				
39	I can express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms in daily conversation				
40	I am able to use proper pronoun in daily conversation				