



Ice Breaker Effectiveness for Increasing Students' Interest in Learning English

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Received: 25-02-2024 Reviewed: 28-02-2024 Accepted: 27-03-2024

Abstract

English teachers are required to have the ability to plan, organize, and evaluate English learning effectively. English should also be fun for students because it can be a factor in making them enthusiastic. Ice-breaking is one of the methods used to increase students' interest in learning English. This research aimed to analyze the impact that occur to students after the application of the icebreaker method. This research was conducted using mixed-methods research at SMA Muhammadiyah 5 Makassar in the academic year 2023-2024. This research used 31 samples from class X MIA. The research instruments were questionnaires, note-taking, recording, and interview questions. The results showed that the impacts after the application of the icebreaker method were: increasing students' knowledge; making students more diligent; stimulating creativity; increasing vocabulary; and motivating students. The score of the questionnaire before treatment was 12,89%, and the score of the questionnaire after treatment was 19,01. Thus, it could be argued that students' interest could be increased through the use of ice breaker. This research can be useful for English teachers to improve their understanding of students' problems, increase students' interest in learning, identify their problems, and solve their problems in learning English.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Ice Breaker, Students' Interest

Introduction

In the process of teaching English at various levels of education, usually many difficulties are encountered both by the teacher and the students (Sakkir et al., 2021). One example of these difficulties is the lack of students' interest in learning. This is caused by a lack of motivation to learn English, lots of assignments, a lack of enjoyment, and boredom. In order to run the learning process as effectively as possible, teachers are needed to act as motivators. In the teaching and learning process, teachers should pay more attention to student interest because

Ice Breaker Effectiveness for Increasing Students' Interest in Learning English

interest can influence teachers' and students' performance (Paramitha et al., 2022). Interest in studying provides the motivation that contributes to the objectives of the process of learning. Interest for studying can be perceived in students' behaviors and traits that include accessibility, concentration, focus, and curiosity. Interest is very necessary in the learning process because high interest will affect students' abilities.

Students that are highly motivated to learn will be eager to participate in class activities and will pay close attention. In the meantime, uninterested students will be reluctant to learn, become bored quickly, and attempt to avoid learning activities (Hayuni, 2021). Teachers must therefore prepare a number of strategies that can pique students' attention in order to inspire enthusiasm for learning in their students. There are a number of strategies that may be employed to boost student engagement, including rewarding students for their hard work and offering incentives.

Based on researcher' observation made during PPL (Field Experience Practice), many first grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah 5 were not very interested in learning English. It was clearly seen when students were sleepy and tired in the class and did not show interest in continuing the learning process. Researcher believed that strategies needed to be used to inspire students to learn English.

Icebreaker is one strategy to increase students' interest. Therefore, ice breaker was chosen as a solution to the problem of students' low interest in learning English. Icebreaking is a transitional situation from a boring, sleepy, bored, and tense situation to a relaxed, energized, less sleepy, more attentive situation, and more likely to enjoy listening to or watching other people speak in front of the class. Icebreaking is a game or activity that functions to change the frozen atmosphere in the group (I Wayan Kasni & Komang Elisa Ayumi Dewi, 2022). Ice-breaking in learning can be interpreted as solving problems in the mental and physical minds of students. Ice breaking is used to create a learning atmosphere from passive to active, from rigid to moving (familiar), and from bored to cheerful (Kadek Bagus Rusman, 2022). Implementing the icebreaking strategy in class keeps students in a good mood during the learning process. Icebreaking in learning can be done when opening the lesson, providing a break when delivering the material, and closing the lesson (Adi et al., 2021).

Icebreaking is very necessary. Icebreaker method can be applied in the process of teaching and learning smoothly. Therefore, researcher is eager to carry out descriptive experimental research with the title "Ice Breaker Effectiveness in Increasing Students' Interest in Learning English." In detail, this research aimed to analyse the impact of the changes that occur to students after the application of the icebreaker method.

Literature Review

Several researchers have previously explained the definition of ice breaker, its objectives, types, and implementation process in the classroom. According to (Astuti R et al., 2020) ice breaker is an attempt to soften or dissolve an uncomfortable, hard environment that resembles ice. Ice breaker is a useful exercise to relieve student anxiety and learning fatigue and make the

classroom more enjoyable and accommodating before moving into core tasks. In contrast to a stressful circumstance, a conducive environment will help students accomplish their learning objectives more successfully. There are many other ways to break the ice, including games, short stories, and guesswork. This task was completed in five to fifteen minutes.

According to (Maisah, 2019), teachers must have guidelines or instructions on how to conduct ice breaking in order to function and benefit for both teachers and students. Thus, the function of the instructor is crucial because in the learning process, the teacher serves as a facilitator, making learning interactions enjoyable and enhancing the learning outcomes so that they can be met.

As (Virgil E. Varvel Jr, 2002) stated that there are multiple applications for ice cracking techniques. Initially, icebreakers inspire classmates to participate in activities that support teaching and learning. Second, icebreakers present joyful activities and unstructured movement during courses, and it might help to break the cycle of boredom and fatigue. Finally, icebreakers can be developed to present the subject. This implies that icebreakers can be applied when the instructor introduces a fresh subject. Additionally, ice-breaking exercises let students get to know one another while they are learning.

(Rahmayanti et al., 2019) based on earlier findings explained that the usage of ice breaking strategies, particularly in using the games have the potential to increase students' engagement and interest in studying English, as well as their performance in the classroom.

Another study by (Idris P & Rampeng, 2021) discovered that the usage of kahoot (media games) as ice breaker can foster a supportive learning atmosphere, spark students' curiosity, and make learning more laid-back and pleasurable.

Furthermore, (Al Ghifarah & Pusparini, 2023) conducted research on the use of ice breaking strategies. Her findings indicated that while ice breaking is an essential tool for reducing student boredom in the classroom, its application varies depending on the level and skill of the students. This is because students may have varying English proficiency levels. Teachers can utilize ice breaking activities in the classroom to help students feel less bored and to foster a community of learners.

An ice-breaking technique can be used at the start of the lesson to help the students feel at ease. Ice breaking techniques can also be used halfway through or at the conclusion of the learning process. According to (Pitts, 2010) ice breaking is a cooperative exercise that can be carried out at the start of the lesson to help adult learners unwind and create a fun mood in a formal setting. Two things need to be the main emphasis of ice breaking: the things that are crucial to think about and the method by which ice breaking is used.

Research Method

This research was conducted by using Mixed Methods research. According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), as a method, mixed method focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. The first-grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah 5 Makassar in academic year 2023/2024 made up the population of this study. There were 2 classes of the first grade, the class were X MIA and X

Ice Breaker Effectiveness for Increasing Students' Interest in Learning English

IIS. Class X MIA consists of 31 students, and Class X IIS consists of 21 students. So, the total of populations was 52 students. This research used 31 samples from class X MIA as the experimental class. There are several instruments that researchers have used, namely: questionnaires, note-taking, recording, and interview questions. There were twenty items in the questionnaire, and for each, there were four possible response result categories: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. To ascertain the students' interests, the questionnaire was administered both before and after the course of treatment. During the research, the procedures of treatment were chronologically performed as follows: 1) consulting with the tutoring teacher regarding the material given to the students; 2) the researcher gave the first questionnaire. 3) The treatment was administered by the researcher in an experimental class.

Table 1:
Questionnaire

| No | Questions | Statement | | | |
|----|---|-----------|---|---|----|
| | | SA | A | D | SD |
| 1 | I like learning English by using conventional methods | | | | |
| 2 | The use of conventional methods is very enjoyable in learning process | | | | |
| 3 | The use of conventional methods is useful in increasing students' interest | | | | |
| 4 | I became more diligent in studying by using conventional methods | | | | |
| 5 | My vocabulary has improved by using conventional methods in learning process. | | | | |
| 6 | I understand lessons more quickly by using conventional methods | | | | |
| 7 | Conventional methods are less effective in the learning process | | | | |
| 8 | I felt difficult and bored because the teacher only gave assignments in the LKS book | | | | |
| 9 | My vocabulary did not improve because the teacher only gave assignments in LKS books | | | | |
| 10 | The conventional method taught by the teacher did not motivate me in learning English | | | | |
| 11 | I like learning English by using the Ice Breaker | | | | |
| 12 | Ice-Breaker is able to liven up the learning atmosphere in the classroom | | | | |
| 13 | The Ice-Breaker must be applied in learning | | | | |
| 14 | My interest increased with the Ice-Breaker | | | | |
| 15 | I feel happy and enjoy when the teacher uses the Ice Breaker Activity method in learning | | | | |
| 16 | The teacher motivated me to increase my interest for learning because I had used the Ice Breaker | | | | |
| 17 | The Ice Breaker is very effective for use in the classroom | | | | |
| 18 | The Ice-Breaker Activity method is effective in training students' focus and creativity in learning. | | | | |
| 19 | Students are more motivated to increase their knowledge in learning English after using the Ice Breaker | | | | |
| 20 | The Ice-Breaker Activity method is able to overcome student problems in the classroom | | | | |

Statement

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree.

Result/Findings

1. The Students' Interest in Learning English by Using Ice Breaker Game

In this class, the researcher took the score of questionnaires before and after treatment from the students. Based on the results of the questionnaire above, many students disagree about the conventional methods that teachers have applied in the classroom before, but many students also did not know about the Ice Breaker method that the teacher used. The result of students' responses from experiment class before the application of Ice Breaking Method showed in the table below:

Table 2:

**The Result of Students' Responses from Experiment Class
(Before the application of Ice Breaking Method)**

| NO ITEM | Freq of the student's choice | | | | TOTAL | Score of Frequency | | | | Students Score |
|------------|---------------------------------|---|----|----|-------|-----------------------|---|----|----|-------------------|
| | SA | A | D | SD | | SA | A | D | SD | |
| 1 | - | 1 | 25 | 5 | 31 | - | 3 | 50 | 5 | 58 |
| 2 | - | - | 20 | 11 | 31 | - | - | 40 | 11 | 51 |
| 3 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 |
| 4 | - | - | 27 | 3 | 31 | - | - | 54 | 3 | 57 |
| 5 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 |
| 6 | 1 | 2 | 27 | 1 | 31 | 4 | 6 | 54 | 1 | 65 |
| 7 | 25 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 31 | 100 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 114 |
| 8 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 124 | - | - | - | 124 |
| 9 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 124 | - | - | - | 124 |
| 10 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 124 | - | - | - | 124 |
| 11 | - | 1 | 25 | 5 | 31 | - | 3 | 50 | 5 | 58 |
| 12 | - | - | 20 | 11 | 31 | - | - | 40 | 11 | 51 |
| 13 | - | - | 30 | 1 | 31 | - | - | 60 | 1 | 61 |
| 14 | - | - | 27 | 4 | 31 | - | - | 54 | 4 | 58 |
| 15 | 1 | 1 | 28 | 1 | 31 | 4 | 3 | 56 | 1 | 64 |
| 16 | - | - | 15 | 16 | 31 | - | - | 30 | 16 | 46 |
| 17 | - | - | 17 | 14 | 31 | - | - | 34 | 14 | 48 |
| 18 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 |
| 19 | - | - | 20 | 11 | 31 | - | - | 40 | 11 | 51 |
| 20 | - | - | 11 | 20 | 31 | - | - | 22 | 20 | 42 |

Ice Breaker Effectiveness for Increasing Students' Interest in Learning English

Table 3

**The Result of Students' Responses from Experiment Class
(After the application of Ice Breaking Method)**

| NO ITEM | Freq of the student's choice | | | | TOTAL | Score of Frequency | | | | Students Score |
|------------|---------------------------------|----|----|----|-------|--------------------------|----|----|----|-------------------|
| | SA | A | D | SD | | SA | A | D | SD | |
| 1 | - | 1 | 25 | 5 | 31 | - | 3 | 50 | 5 | 58 |
| 2 | - | - | 20 | 11 | 31 | - | - | 40 | 11 | 51 |
| 3 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 |
| 4 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 |
| 5 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 31 |
| 6 | - | - | 28 | 3 | 31 | - | - | 36 | 1 | 37 |
| 7 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 124 | - | - | - | 124 |
| 8 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 124 | - | - | - | 124 |
| 9 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 124 | - | - | - | 124 |
| 10 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 124 | - | - | - | 124 |
| 11 | 25 | 6 | - | - | 31 | 100 | 18 | - | - | 118 |
| 12 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 124 | - | - | - | 124 |
| 13 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 124 | - | - | - | 124 |
| 14 | 28 | 3 | - | - | 31 | 112 | 9 | - | - | 121 |
| 15 | 16 | 11 | 5 | - | 31 | 64 | 45 | - | - | 109 |
| 16 | 20 | 11 | - | - | 31 | 80 | 33 | - | - | 113 |
| 17 | 31 | - | - | - | 31 | 124 | - | - | - | 124 |
| 18 | 20 | 11 | - | - | 31 | 80 | 33 | - | - | 113 |
| 19 | 17 | 14 | - | - | 31 | 68 | 42 | - | - | 110 |
| 20 | 20 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 31 | 80 | 27 | 2 | 1 | 110 |

The next step was to calculate the percentage index for each item. The following is the result of the percentage of students' statement:

Table 4

The percentage index

| The percentage index (without ice breaking method) | | | The percentage index (using ice breaking method) | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------|---|-------------------|----------------------------|
| NO | Students score | Index Percentage (%) | NO | Students score | Index Percentage (%) |
| 1 | 58 | 58 | 1 | 58 | 58 |
| 2 | 51 | 51 | 2 | 51 | 51 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 3 | 31 | 31 | 3 | 31 | 31 |
| 4 | 57 | 57 | 4 | 31 | 31 |
| 5 | 31 | 31 | 5 | 31 | 31 |
| 6 | 65 | 65 | 6 | 37 | 37 |
| 7 | 114 | 114 | 7 | 124 | 124 |
| 8 | 124 | 124 | 8 | 124 | 124 |
| 9 | 124 | 124 | 9 | 124 | 124 |
| 10 | 124 | 124 | 10 | 124 | 124 |
| 11 | 58 | 58 | 11 | 118 | 118 |
| 12 | 51 | 51 | 12 | 124 | 124 |
| 13 | 61 | 61 | 13 | 124 | 124 |
| 14 | 58 | 58 | 14 | 121 | 121 |
| 15 | 64 | 64 | 15 | 109 | 109 |
| 16 | 46 | 46 | 16 | 113 | 113 |
| 17 | 48 | 48 | 17 | 124 | 124 |
| 18 | 31 | 31 | 18 | 113 | 113 |
| 19 | 51 | 51 | 19 | 110 | 110 |
| 20 | 42 | 42 | 20 | 110 | 110 |
| Total | 1289 | 1289 | Total | 1901 | 1901 |

From the table above, it could be seen that the percentage index before treatment in experimental class was 12.89% while the percentage index after treatment was 19.01%.

2. The Improvement of Student's score in Experimental Class

After calculating the result of the students score from both classes, the researcher presented the improvement from both classes as follows,

Table 5

The Improvement of Students Score in Experimental Class

| Type of Test | Experimental Class |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Questionnaire (before treatment) | 12,89 |
| Questionnaire (after treatment) | 19,01 |
| The Improvement | 6,12 |

Ice Breaker Effectiveness for Increasing Students' Interest in Learning English

Beside using questionnaire, researcher also selected students who would help to answer the interview questions that the researcher had prepared. Researcher took interview results from students who had been selected by researcher to become respondent.

Table 6

The Students Answers in Interview

| No | Questions | Answer |
|----|--|---|
| 1 | Have you ever heard of the ice breaker game? | Ever, from our English teacher. The teacher explained to us about what ice breaker is, and then the teacher teaches us by using ice breaker. It is such kind of warming up I think, or maybe it is games, more games every meeting. |
| 2 | What do you know about the ice breaker game? | Ice breaker games are games when we have English subject. It is funny. It makes us happy in the class. We make yel yel, we listen to famous song, and we have to guess the missing lyrics, we continue the lyrics, etc |
| 3 | Do you think ice breakers are useful for students? | Very useful because we enjoy the class. We do not realize the time, we still want to study but the bell is ringing and we have to finish the class. Ice breaker is good for our listening because we learn listening to the songs. Ice breaker is good for our speaking as well. We learn to speak when we have to continue to make the sentence when we play "if then" game. I think the most important is all of my friends in the class become more creative to think many answers that should be in English. It force us to be confident in speaking English. |
| 4 | Will students' interest in learning English increase by using the ice breaker game method? | Yes, students' interest has increased, because students like the game more than the old method used by the teacher, just answer all the lessons in LKS book, or just listen to teacher explained in front of the class. We do not like it. We like games. |
| 5 | What causes students' interest decrease in learning English? | "Student interest decrease because students think that learning English is very difficult, such as pronouncing, writing, and how to arrange sentences. |
| 6 | What are the difficulties students have in learning English? | Because English is considered as a foreign language, it is very difficult for students to learn it. We feel shy to speak in English. When we try to speak English, our friends laugh at us. They said that we use planet language. This condition makes us shy and lazy in learning English. The way to read and the way to pronounce are different. We get confused in reading. It seems like we make mistake every single time. |
| 7 | How effective is the use of ice breakers in the classroom?" | Very effective because students feel very enthusiastic when the teacher use ice breakers in class. |
| 8 | "Will using an ice breaker disrupt learning in class?" | Not disturbing, instead making us excited, spirit, brave, and creative . |
| 9 | What is the effect of implementing the ice breaker method in the classroom?" | Increase knowledge, be creative, and make us focus and brave. We feel enjoyable even when we make mistake in speaking, reading, listening and pronouncing. |
| 10 | Will the results of using ice breakers in increasing student interest be permanent? | Students think it will be permanent because ice breakers have many types, so using them in the class will not make us feel bored". |

Discussion

Based on the results of the application of the ice breaker in learning English, it shows that after 8 meetings, students can be more enthusiastic and motivated in learning English, and they felt happy while using the ice breaker method in class. Therefore, the researcher concludes that the use of ice breakers is very effective, and it can be seen from the results of data analysis obtained before treatment and after treatment, and also from the questionnaires, where the results of the questionnaire before treatment were 12.89% and the results of the questionnaire after treatment were 19.01%. This shows that the use of the icebreaker method is effective in increasing students' interest in learning English. Students feel more relaxed while learning because the icebreaker method can relieve stress in learning foreign language. However, almost all students in the first class of SMA Muhammadiyah 5 Makassar do not know this method. Researchers found out about this after asking the students. They say they are too lazy to learn English and are only given a lot of assignments because the teacher rarely explains the material. This makes students know nothing about English and makes them unhappy in learning English.

This condition has also been reinforced by several previous researchers. According to (Adi et al., 2021), the use of ice breakers is very effective because it makes students more relaxed, more active, excited, happy, active in class, stay in class during the learning process, and focus on the material. And also, teachers are better off using the icebreaker method than conventional methods in the classroom to avoid the appearance of student laziness and feeling bored in the classroom.

According to (Lestari, 2022), Ice breaking is effective for teaching since the teacher should use an innovative and creative technique for teaching English. Teachers can provide ice breaking technique to teach their students. So, the students feel more relaxed and get them prepared for materials. When learning English, researchers also get problems when students are noisy and make noise in the classroom. The icebreaker method can be one of the methods used to reduce their noise and make students calmer.

According to (Rahmayanti et al., 2019), the use of ice breakers is recommended to teachers who have students with lack of motivation to learn English. This research shows that ice breaking can make students more enthusiastic about learning because it provides fun activities. It can also regain students' attention when they make noise in the classroom.

All of the previous findings above are in line with the result of this research that the application of icebreaker method in learning English process can increase students' interest. It is evident that this method can be used to activate learning in the classroom, especially in increasing student interest, so that during the learning process students can feel relaxed, have fun, and not get bored, so that the learning process can take place effectively. This is because teachers who use ice breakers must become facilitators by paying attention to the feelings and characters of students in learning process. Ice breaking method is not only for beginner level but this method can also be applied at advanced level.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, the researcher concluded that using ice breaker increases students' enthusiasm in learning English in the first grade at SMA Muhammadiyah 5 Makassar. This is demonstrated by the results of students' interest levels, which reveal a considerable difference between the answers of their questionnaires before and after treatment. The score of questionnaires before treatment is 12,89%, and the score of questionnaires after treatment is 19,01%. Therefore, we can conclude that implementing ice breakers during treatment can enhance students' interest levels.

This research is limited in the number of samples and also limited to the usage of icebreaker games. This research also did not give other approaches for students of SMA Muhammadiyah 5 Makassar to improve their interest in learning English, which is one of the most difficult subjects in the school. Therefore, other researches are needed to explore other innovative and creative methods to improve students' interest in learning English as a foreign or second language. Further research is needed to investigate the impact of icebreakers on other English skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing ability, for senior high school and university students.

Declaration of conflicting interest

As the researcher, I declare that I have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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