

The Implementation of Ice-Breaking Activities in English Classroom: A Descriptive Study of the Second-Grade Students' Perceptions at SMA Al-Irsyad Kota Ternate

Authors : Adi F. Mahmud¹, Abudar Yusup² & Amrin Hi. Saban³

Affiliations : ^{1,2,3} Universitas Muhammadiyah Maluku Utara

*Correspondence : adifadelmahmud@gmail.com

Abstract : This study attempts to identify and explore high school students' perceptions of using ice-breaking activities in the English classroom. A qualitative method with a descriptive qualitative design. The study was done at SMA Al-Irsyad Kota Ternate Jl. Perumnas South Ternate District and it involved second-grade students as subjects. They totaled 16 students, which consisted of 9 males and 7 females. Questionnaire and an unstructured interview were used to collect the data. A questionnaire was distributed to students in the classroom, and they filled it out in 60 minutes. The questions consisted of 10 statements. After the Questionnaire distribution, the students were interviewed based on the interview guidelines provided by the researchers. The interview was done with students who had already filled out the questionnaire. Data from the questionnaire were analyzed with a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree) to measure students' perceptions of ice-breaking activities in the English classroom. A 5-point Likert scale was counted with a frequency and percentage formula. During the interview, the data is analyzed through four steps: (1) data reduction, (2) coding, (3) data display, and (4) concluding. Results of the study showed that (1) 16 students have the same perception of the implementation of ice-breaking activities in English class; (2) all students' perceptions of ice-breaking activities are very positive; (3) ice-breaking activities are necessary and very needed for application in English class; and (4) students' perceptions of ice-breaking activities include helping students join the learning process, eliminating saturation, creating a positive learning atmosphere in the class, improving students' interest and motivation, and increasing students' learning achievement.

Keywords : *implementation, ice-breaking activities, perceptions*

License : This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY)

Copyrights : © 2023 by Authors

1. Introduction

Many academics, researchers, and scholars from all over the world are still fervently debating the issue of teaching English as a foreign language in the twenty-first century. Most of the issues relate to the teaching models, methods, strategies, techniques, and facilities provided at schools. Those phenomena happen in countries that teach English as a second or foreign language at schools. Such as teaching English to Iran. Students and teachers do not use teaching tools during teaching; school libraries are not well equipped to serve English learners; classrooms are poor in terms of facilities and physical conditions; the teachers do not teach in English; and the English textbooks are not suitable for the student's level of proficiency (Tabatabaei, 2012). The problems also occur in the Asir region of Saudi Arabia, where the problem of teaching English is related to education schools, the English curriculum, the educational environment, English teachers, gender, and experience (Khasawneh, 2021). Relevant problems were also found in Indonesia, which teaches English in a foreign language context. English lessons have been taught from secondary school through high school to university level. But, students' learning achievements have not increased significantly yet. Most students have low English abilities and skills (competence and performance).

Indonesian students are required to attend school and learn English for six years, but there is no evidence that they have the competency skills expected by both the curriculum and the world of work after they finish college (Harto et al., 2021). Besides school facilities, school curriculum, and school environment, the problems that appear as problems faced in the success of teaching English at high schools are teachers' problems, which are the most fundamental challenges. Teachers' roles in teaching and learning activities are the key to achievement. The variation in challenges from teachers harms teaching English at schools. Teachers' problems include short teacher training, language proficiency, limited mastery of teaching methods, unfamiliarity with IT masters, and a lack of professional development (Songbatumis, 2017). Meanwhile, the key to a teacher's success in teaching is encouraging students not to become a psychological burden but to remain enthusiastic about learning. The role of teachers in teaching activities is to help children learn through learning difficulties (Harto et al., 2021).

One of the key roles of teachers in achieving success in teaching English at school is mastery of teaching methods. Teachers should create classroom activities that are more creative and innovative to motivate students and raise their interest in learning. The teacher's role in preparing the appropriate method and creating a good atmosphere in the classroom will make a better contribution to the student's achievements. Ice-breaking is one of the activities applied by teachers who teach English at schools. Recent studies have shown that ice-breaking in English classroom activities contributes positively to students' English competence and skills. Hutasoit & Tambunan, (2018) improved students' speaking skills significantly by applying ice-breaking in teaching the tenth-grade students at SMK Dharma Bhakti Siborongborong. Ice-breaking raised EFL Students' motivation and encouraged them to be focused and fun in the classroom (Artati, 2021; Astuti et al., 2020). Ice-breaking had a positive impact on EFL classes and the English grammar teaching and learning process (Aniuranti, 2021). Furthermore, ice-breaking can reduce students' anxiety about communication and give positive effects on the process of teaching and learning, especially problematic components such as

grammar, by improving pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar (Chao & Fan, 2020; Makhmudovna, 2022; Yeganehpou & Takkac, 2016).

The preview studies above prove that ice-breaking has a significant impact on improving students' English achievement. Moreover, ice-breaking also creates a good atmosphere in classroom activities. Recent studies of ice-breaking implementation focus on improving students' achievement, motivation, focus, fun, and classroom interaction in learning English. There hasn't yet been any research on identifying and investigating students' perceptions of using ice-breaking in English class activities. Therefore, this study attempts to identify and explore high school students' perceptions of using ice-breaking activities in the English classroom. Besides, perceptions of ice breaking are a gap in this study because the context, environment, students, and situation provide different information. Based on the practical and empirical gap, the study stated that the question is, what are students' perceptions of ice-breaking activities in the English classroom?

2. Method

A qualitative method with a descriptive qualitative design was used to identify and explore students' perceptions of using ice-breaking activities in the English classroom. The study was done at SMA Al-Irsad Kota Ternate Jl. Perumnas South Ternate District and it involved second-grade students as subjects. They totaled 16 students, which consisted of 9 males and 7 females. The subjects of the study were chosen by the purposive sampling technique. Questioners and unstructured interviews were used to collect the data. The questionnaire was distributed to students in the classroom, and they filled it out in 60 minutes. After 60 minutes, the researchers submitted it. The questions consist of 10 statements. After the Questionnaire distribution, the students were interviewed based on the interview guidelines provided by the researchers. The interview was done with students who had already filled out the questionnaire. Data from the questionnaire were analyzed with a 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; and 5 = strongly agree) to measure students' perceptions of ice-breaking activities in the English classroom. A 5-point Likert scale counts with frequency and the presentation formula. During the interview, the data is analyzed through four steps: (1) data reduction, (2) coding, (3) data display, and (4) concluding.

3. Results and Discussion

The results consisted of two categories. The first category was gained through a questionnaire, which was analyzed on a 5-point Likert scale. A 5-point Likert scale was counted with a frequency and percentage formula. The second category was achieved through an interview that was analyzed descriptively by following four steps: (1) reduction, (2) coding, (3) display, and (4) drawing and taking a conclusion.

Results of questionnaire

The data conveyed from the distribution questionnaire was analyzed with a 5-point Likert scale to find out the total score for each statement of 16 students. The results found that 16 students had positive perceptions of ice-breaking activities applied in the English classroom. The students agree that ice-breaking activities help them in the learning process, create a good atmosphere in the classroom, improve their learning achievement, spark their enthusiasm, and make it easy for them to understand the

material. They also disagree that ice-breaking activities are not appropriate for use in the English classroom, making them lazy and bored in the classroom, requiring long periods, and creating a chaotic atmosphere in the class. The results are shown in the table below:

Table 1. Students' score per statement

<i>No</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>TS/ST</i>
1	Ice-breaking activities help me during learning English in the classroom	75
2	Ice-breaking activities do not appropriate to apply in learning English.	36
3	Ice-breaking activities were able to create a good atmosphere in the classroom	70
4	Ice-breaking activities made me lazy to learn in an English classroom	24
5	Ice breaking can improve my English achievement in the classroom	67
6	Ice-breaking activities made me bored to learn English in the classroom	27
7	Ice-breaking activities spent many times in English classroom	34
8	Ice-breaking activities produced a chaotic atmosphere in English class	23
9	I am not enthusiastic about learning English if the teacher does not use ice-breaking activities	57
10	I am easy to understand the material when the teacher used ice-breaking activities during teaching English in the classroom.	65

The total score for each statement above showed that 16 students agreed with ice-breaking activities to help them learn English (75), ice-breaking activities were able to create a good classroom atmosphere (70), ice-breaking activities improved English achievement (67), ice-breaking activities increased students' enthusiasm to learn English (57), and it made it easy to understand the materials (65). On the contrary, ice-breaking activities are not appropriate to apply in an English classroom (36); ice-breaking makes students lazy to learn English in the classroom (24); ice-breaking makes them bored (27); ice-breaking is used many times (34); and ice-breaking produces a chaotic atmosphere in English class (23). It means that for each statement described, students have positive perceptions of using ice-breaking activities in the English classroom.

Next, the total score for each statement is counted with a percentage formula and presented as a percentage score for each statement. The results showed that 16 students had positive perceptions of ice-breaking activities applied in teaching English. They agree that icebreakers have a great impact on the English classroom. It proved helpful,

created a good atmosphere, and entertained the classroom situation while teaching English. The data percentage for each statement is as follows:

Table 2. Students' presentation per statement

Respondents	Number of Statements	Percentage Per Statement (%)
16	ST 1	93, 75 %
16	ST 2	45%
16	ST 3	87, 50 %
16	ST 4	30%
16	ST 5	83.75%
16	ST 6	33.75%
16	ST 7	42.50%
16	ST 8	28.75%
16	ST 9	71.25%
16	ST 10	81.25%

The percentage data for each statement above indicated that (93.75%) of students agreed that ice breaking helped them learn English in the classroom, (87.50%) created a good classroom atmosphere, (83.75%) improved learning achievement, (71.25%) interested students' enthusiasms, and (81.25%) facilitated students understanding of the English material. Otherwise, the students give negative responses to statements that the ice-breaking did not provide appropriate activities to use in the classroom (36%), that the ice-breaking made students lazy to study (30%), that the ice-breaking made them bored to learn (33%), that they spent much time in class (42%%), and that the ice-breaking produced a chaotic atmosphere in English class (28%%). The percentage of positive and negative statements proves that students give positive responses to ice-breaking activities.

Results of the Interviews

Students' perspective on ice-breaking activities

The results of the interview related to the perception of students about the implementation of ice-breaking activities in English class found that ice-breaking is a great activity to do in class. Ice breaking creates an exciting class atmosphere, directs the focus of the learning process, and can be applied before and after learning starts. Next, if the learning process does not create an ice-breaking atmosphere of the class will be

boring and worrying. Ice breaking is also very effectively used in class because it has many benefits for students, such as increasing focus and increasing student study. Results proven with interview data as follow:

Ice-breaking is one of the very good activities to apply in the English classroom. It can create fun in learning, and it makes us more focused on learning.

Ice-breaking is a very good activity to use in class before and after learning activities.

The atmosphere of the classroom seems uneasy; it will make us bored and sleepy if the class does not use ice-breaking activities.

Ice-breaking activities are very effective to use in the classroom because there are many benefits for us, for example, increasing our English vocabulary and learning interest. (Data from 16 students)

Perspective students described the implementation of the ice-breaking on learning English as is very positive. 16 students have the same perception related to the application of deep ice-breaking in learning English. This has a positive impact on classroom learning effectiveness and gain results of study English. The students are also enthusiastic if they are learning English and use a good ice-breaking before and after the learning process. Next, they also view ice-breaking as needed because learning must be pleasant and create a good atmosphere that is not quiet and boring. Another benefit of ice-breaking is the increase vocabulary, deep speaking of English, and enthusiasm for learning. They also explain how important ice-breaking applied in class Findings from the proven-with-results interview below:

Because learning must be enjoyable. It can make the class atmosphere quiet and boring. Other benefits include increasing our English vocabulary, enthusiasm, and speaking English in English class.

This is very important because it has a positive effect after application. For example, increase enthusiasm and English vocabulary and not be bored. (Data from 16 Students)

The above findings describe the opinions of 16 students very closely related to the ice-breaking activities needed and important when learning English in the class. Ice-breaking activities not only create fun learning, are not boring, and overcome loneliness in learning. But also increase students' learning achievement.

Students' experiences with ice-breaking activities

Students also have experience in studying English through the implementation of ice-breaking activities. Based on the experience students obtained from the results of the interview showing that boredom causes students to be lost in learning when the teacher applies an ice-breaking, when the teacher uses ice-breaking activities for the first time, students have a similar experience. They also stating that it is pleasant and add new vocabulary during the learning process. This can be demonstrated by the results of the following interviews:

The first time I felt bored because it had never been done before, but when it was done, I was happy (Data from 14 students).

My first experience made me very happy because I'd never found it before. (Data from student 6)

It was fun, and I was able to memorize many new vocabulary words. (Data from student 7)

Students also feel there is a difference between learning through implementing ice-breaking activities. Students struggled to accept the teacher's lessons because they were bored. However, when the teacher uses an ice-breaking, there is a response from the student, and they are more focused on the follow lesson. They do not feel bored, are motivated to study, are happy to follow learning, and more enthusiastic about learning. Although two students say it is boring if many games use the full language of English and if ice breaking is applied over and over again, Following are the results of the interview with the student:

Before, I felt bored and found it difficult to accept the subject given by the teacher, but after applying ice-breaking, I felt happy, and there was a self-response and more focus on teaching materials. (Data from 16 students)

I never feel bored because it increases my motivation to learn, and I feel very happy to study. (Data from 14 students)

I feel bored because there are too many games that use full English. (Data from student 5)

I often feel bored if the icebreaker given is the same as before, but if every lesson and icebreaker given is different, I am very enthusiastic about learning. (Data from student 16)

There were no obstacles in my experience during applied ice breaking. Lack of vocabulary in English makes us not understand the game given. (Data from students 2, 8, 9, and 12)

The obstacle that I often experience is that when using ice-breaking, it doesn't use media or tools because if it did, it would look something new and different (Data from student 16).

The results of the interview above very clearly show that students need ice-breaking activities to learn English in class. It creates an atmosphere of good learning for students. However, the teacher must be creative in using every ice-breaking in the class. The teacher must selectively choose which icebreaker to implement in the class to facilitate student learning.

Ice breaking is a activity that has a very significant impact on various aspects of learning English, such as the motivation of students, eliminating saturation, creating an atmosphere of fun and not boredom, increasing the focus of students' learning, and others. This study aims to identify and explore students' perceptions of the implementation of ice-breaking activities in learning English in class. Results of research obtained through a questionnaire showing that 16 students have the same perception. Ice-breaking activities have a crucial impact on several aspects of learning English in the

class, helping students join learning English, creating an good atmosphere of learning, improving learning achievement, improving students' enthusiasm, and making it easy for students to understand learning material. Students also disagree that ice-breaking activities are not appropriate for learning, making students feel lazy and bored, wasting time, and messing up the atmosphere of learning (see Tables 1 and 2). In other words, the application of deep ice-breaking activities in English can increase motivation significantly (Pratana, Susanti, & Jannah, 2021; Rahmayanti, Saraswati, & Bhuana, 2019). Ice-breaking activities can motivate students to study English, and ice-breaking help prevent boredom in the learning process and increase excitement in students' activities in class. In addition, students also make English an favorite lesson (Rezki, Halim, & Sentosa, 2022).

Results similar to those found in the interview data show that the students argue that ice-breaking activities are good for learning English because they can create fun learning, focus, create a good atmosphere of classroom, not boring, and have a positive impact on the results of the study. Besides, students also have the experience that before the ice-breaking was applied to learn. They feel bored and have trouble TO join the class. However, when ice breaking is applied, it can remove saturation, increase interest, and encourage students' enthusiastic to attend learning. According to Burhan (2017), the use of ice-breaking can help organize and motivate students to study English. Panjaitan (2023) found that ice-breaking implementation in learning can improve students' speaking. In line with Makhmudovna, (2022) explains that ice-breaking activities can be used to overcome tension and saturation in students learning, so the class becomes exciting and more conducive before entering core learning activities. Ice breaking too has a positive impact on four internal factors of learning to speak, namely grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency (Yeganehpou & Takkac, 2016). As a result, it is possible to explain students have a positive attitude toward ice-breaking activities when learning English.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

A teacher has a vital role in creating effective learning and fun. Therefore, the teacher must be creative and innovative in designing learning to be implemented in class. Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that (1) 16 students have the same perception of the implementation of ice-breaking activities in English classroom, (2) all perceptions of students to ice-breaking activities are very positive, (3) Ice-breaking activities are necessary and very needed for application in English classroom, and (4) perceptions of students on ice-breaking activities consist of helping students join the learning process, eliminating saturation, creating a positive learning atmosphere in class, improving interest and motivation, and increasing results in a study. Thus, research recommends that (1) language teachers can use ice-breaking activities integrated activities in learning English in the classroom, and (3) the teacher can own various relevant types of ice-breaking to use as one routines activity in learning English.

References

- Aniuranti, A. (2021). The Use of Ice Breakers in Online English Grammar *Surakarta English and Literature Journal*, 4 (2), 85–97.
- Artati, NL (2021). The Effect of Kahoot As an Ice Breaker on EFL Students' Motivation *The Art of Teaching English as a Foreign Language*, 2 (2), 89–97. doi:10.36663.

- Astuti, Ayu Rindu, Asti Solihat, and Intan Satriani (2020), The Influence of Ice Breaking on Students' Motivation in Teaching English, *Professional Journal of English Education*, 3 (2), 210–216.
- Burhan, Z. 2017. The Effectiveness of the Application of Ice Breakers Toward Improving Students' Motivation in Learning English in the First Grade of MTs Madani Alauddin Pao-Pao's Unpublished Thesis Retrieved at <http://repositori.uin-alauddin.ac.id/8089/1/Zulhulaefah%20Burhan.pdf>
- Chung-yi Chao and Sa-hui Fan (2020) The Effects of Integrating Board Games into Ice-breaking Activities in a Fifth-Grade English Class to Reduce Students' Anxieties in *English Language Teaching*, 13 (9), 40–49. doi: 10.5539
- Harto Malik, MA (2021), Identification of Barriers and Challenges to *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5 (1), 217–229
- Hutasoit, R., & Tambunan, B. (2018). The Effect of Ice Breaking Technique in Teaching Speaking to Tenth Grade Students of SMK Dharma Bhakti Siborongborong in Academic Year 2028–2019, *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*, 3 (5), 700–705. doi:10.22161.
- Khasawneh, MA (2021). Problems Teaching English to Deaf Students, *Indonesian Journal of Creative Counseling*, 32–42
- Makhmudovna, KG (2022). The importance of ice-breaking activities in Teaching English *Science and Innovation International Scientific Journal*, 1 (7), 117–120. Doi:10.5281
- Malik, H., Humaira, MA, Komari, AN, Fathurrochman, I., & Jayanto, I. (2021). Identification of barriers and challenges to teaching English at an early age in Indonesia *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5 (1), 217–229. doi:10.37028
- Panjaitan, HR 2023. Increasing Students' Speaking Achievement Using Ice-Breaking at SMPN 04 Bandar Lampung *Unpublished thesis: The Language and Art Education Department of The Faculty Of Teacher and Education, University of Lampung* Retrieved at <http://digilib.unila.ac.id/71869/3/SKRIPSI%20FULL%20TANPA%20BAB%20EMBAHASAN.pdf>
- Pranata, Susanti, & Jannah (2021), the Effectiveness of Ice Breaking to Increase Students' Motivation in Learning English, *IJoELLL*, 3 (1), 31–38.
- Rahmayanti, P. Saraswati AP Bhuana, PD 2019. The Use of Ice Breakers to Improve Students' Motivation in Learning English at the Tenth Grade Students of SMK YPKKP *Professional Journal of English Education*, 2(5), 594-600.
- Rezki, A. Halim, A. Sentosa, and T. 2022, Motivating Students to Learn English Using Ice Breaking, *Al Lughawiyat*, 3(1):1–9.
- Songbatumis, AM (2017). Challenges in Teaching Faced by English Teachers at MTsN Taliwang, Indonesia *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning*, 2 (2), 54–67



Tabatabaei, O. (2012). An Investigation into the Problems of Teaching, *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 103–111

Yeganehpour & Takkac (2016): Using Icebreakers to Improve Every Factor Considered In Testing Learners' Speaking Ability *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications*, 7 (1), 58–68