



Motivating Students in Learning English Using Icebreaking

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Article info

Submitted : 23 January 2022
Revised : 18 March 2022
Accepted : 14 May 2022

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored to what extent ice breaking motivates students to learn English at one of the Islamic states junior high schools in Southeast Sulawesi. This study employs two methods: a questionnaire and reflective writing. This study used two instruments: questionnaire and reflection. Students were handed questionnaires twice, at the beginning of the meeting before implementing Icebreaking and at the end of the meeting after implementing Icebreaking, in order to observe improvements and significantly increase student motivation. At the end of the meeting, in addition to providing in-depth information, the researcher provided reflection so that students may describe more precisely what they felt and gained during the Icebreaking application. This study revealed two aspects: motivation and Attraction. Aspects pertaining to motivation indicate that Icebreaking motivates students to study English. While the intriguing feature exposed by Icebreaking helps students avoid boredom during the teaching and learning process and increases their enjoyment of class activities. In addition, a number of students reported that English became their favorite subject.

Keyword: *Icebreaking, learning English, Students' Motivation*

INTRODUCTION

According to Bhuna (2017), motivation is the desire to achieve a goal. Consequently, motivation is a favorable attitude toward reaching a specific objective. Motivation plays a crucial role in the learning process. Therefore, motivation determines learning success. It can also alter or affect human behavior. Motivation equips students with a purpose and direction to pursue. It plays a crucial function in the field of English language instruction in the classroom. Students may encounter challenges due to a lack of sufficient motivation. Without a desire to study, it is extremely challenging for students to achieve effective learning.

In the teaching field, there are several ways to boost the students' learning motivation. One of which is implementing the proper learning strategy. The classroom learning strategy is crucial for optimal learning, particularly while learning English. This aspect of class management is still widely questioned by the teacher. Traditionally, classroom instruction is so repetitive that students only pay attention to the instructor. One of the notable variances in modern education is the use of ice-breaking tactics. It has been demonstrated that breaking the ice increases students enthusiasm (Kavanagh et al., 2011). Students' lack of interest to learn English is a common issue in schools, and teachers must provide additional assignments to boost student motivation. People are aware that students feel bored, sleepy, unmotivated, have given up, and are not engaged in the learning process. The icebreaker is therefore chosen as the

solution to this problem due to the students' enthusiasm in this strategy, which helps to increase their motivation to study English.

According to Yeganehpour (2016), ice breaking is the activity or the statement that initially loosens up a stiff and formal environment or situation. In this study, breaking the ice is a way for creating a learning environment where students can play while studying in order to avoid the boredom. Moreover, Haryono (2017) reported that icebreaking have an effect on the cognitive development and creativity of students, which in turn has an effect on their learning achievement. An activity that breaks the ice can assist students overcome an unsupportive learning environment, which can have an effect on their physical and mental health. Hutasoit and Tambunan (2019) stated that icebreakers offer numerous benefits to the learning process. It can assist the teacher in fostering a pleasurable and favorable learning environment. Here, students will feel relaxed and at ease while learning. They will also be in a positive learning disposition. Additionally, it can boost students' motivation, comprehension, and participation in the learning process. When employed at the beginning of a lesson, for instance, ice breaking can capture the students' attention. Students were more engaged in their studies (Hutasoit & Tambunan, 2019).

Rahmayanti et al. (2019) also advised that teachers employ icebreakers in the learning and teaching process with students that have poor motivation for studying English. This study demonstrates that ice breaking can increase student interest in learning by providing enjoyable activities. It can also recover the students' focus if they are making noise in the classroom. Pranata et al (2021) also agreed that Ice breaking was effective to increase students' motivation in learning English at the first grade of SMP Nurul Jadid. The result of the students' motivation level indicated that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test, and the t-test value was more than the t-table value. Therefore, it might be claimed that employing ice breakers to treat students could boost their motivation. By breaking the ice, the relationship between teacher and students is established so that the teaching and learning process can flow smoothly.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach which has the objective to establish a study plan that allows for proper assessment of cause and effect linkages between independent and dependent variables. This study was conducted in the academic year 2020/2021 at one of the Islamic states junior high schools in Southeast Sulawesi. According to the prior observation, the English level of the class was quite low, and the majority of the students were unmotivated to learn. To overcome this problem, the teacher used icebreaking in the teaching and learning process to deal with this circumstance. In this study, icebreaking was used based on the class condition. It was utilized at the beginning of the lesson to get everyone excited about the topic and get them ready for the class. It was also utilized in the midst of class when students were getting bored. Most of the teachers were playing vocabulary games at this point, such as a guessing game. It was also utilized at the conclusion of class. This was supposed to be the last class. The majority of students were excited because it also signaled the conclusion of the class. To explain, the icebreaker in this study was not the main material; it was only used to help the students enjoy the teaching and learning process. It was played for about 5 to 7 minutes.

Data for the study were gathered utilizing two instruments to gather the necessary information for research: classroom observation, questionnaire, and students' reflection. The purpose of observation in this study was to capture all teaching and learning activities. This was not used as the primary data for this study, but rather to better describe the setting and background of this study. The second technique was a questionnaire which aimed collect information to serve as the preparation's foundational material and to get representative samples of respondents' thoughts or opinions. The evaluation of their motivation throughout the teaching and learning process was the focus of questionnaires. The questionnaire was delivered to twenty-four students. The questionnaire was administered twice, before and after the application for icebreaking. Each questionnaire sheet regarding the impact of Icebreaking on student learning motivation comprises 16 item statements, with eight positive statements (statement numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14) and eight negative statements (2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 15, 16) for each area. The questionnaire was modified from Elaish, et al (2019).

The last instrument utilized by the researcher was student reflection. The reflection took the shape of pertinent research-related questions. Students were given a reflection assignment to be completed on paper. Reflection relates to the learning conducted by students through the application of the Icebreaking approach in the classroom. During reflection, students responded to questions on their experiences, their responses to the application of the ice-breaking method, and their motivation towards the use of the ice-breaking method used during the teaching and learning process.

The following steps were used to acquire information from questionnaires: the questionnaire adapted from Elaish, et al (2019) was administered twice, with 16 questions in each part, before and after icebreaking application. The purpose of administering the questionnaire twice is to observe the change in student motivation following the implementation of Icebreaking. While reflection was provided at the last meeting, Individually icebreaking reflections are given to students after the researcher has taught a class in order to determine how students understand their motivation in the subject. Reflection consists of three questions pertaining to student motivation throughout English study. This reflection was inspired by Cavilla (2017), who provided a method for compiling a reflection as a performance and motivation reference. In addition to providing reflections in Indonesian, students also respond in Indonesian. The Likert Scale-analyzed questionnaire results were recapitulated in Excel using multiplication. On the questionnaire, there are five possible replies for each statement: highly agreed, agree, doubt, disagree, and strongly disagree. For each vote result, the statement is multiplied into positive and negative statement scores (Artino, La Rochelle, Dezee, & Gehlbach, 2014). The score ranges for positive statements starting from SS (strongly agree) = 5, S (agree) = 4, R (doubtful) = 3, TS (disagree) = 2 and STS (strongly disagree) = 1. Vice versa, on the negative statement STS (strongly disagree) = 5, S (agree) = 4, R (doubtful) = 3, S (agree) = 2 and SS (strongly agree) = 1.

Students' reflections were analyzed by data coding. After thoroughly evaluating the data from the questionnaire and the reflection journal, a logical conclusion is offered. Coding was not the entirety of data analysis, but it was used to organize and evaluate data to clarify underlying signals for comprehensive study. The coded data described how icebreaking motivated students to study English. Researchers utilized Thematic Coding (thematic analysis). Thematic coding analyzes research data to detect patterns or themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Motivating and appealing were the research themes. The researcher read and color-coded the students' reflections. Yellow code M indicates a motivational category, whereas light blue code A indicates an attractive category.

The example of the data is as follow:

Table 2.1: Example of data coding

Theme and Code	Students' Reflection	Code
Motivational (M)	Today's lesson makes me very happy because I rarely learn English such this way. (ST.19 of Q1) (M)	(M)
	Having a game in the middle of a lesson makes me excited and not bored. (ST.23 of Q2) (M)	(M)
Attractive (A)	Yes, because we can learn while playing. (ST.10 of Q3) (A)	(A)
	Because playing can also hone my English. (ST.24 if Q3) (A)	(A)

(Adapted from Braun and Clarke 2013)

Notes:

ST : Student M : Motivation
Q : Question A : Attraction

RESULTS

Finding of Questionnaires

Positive & Negative Statement of the Students before Implementing Icebreaking

Positive and negative remarks were the most acknowledged in students' questionnaire responses prior to the implementation of icebreaking. The end outcome is seen in the image below.

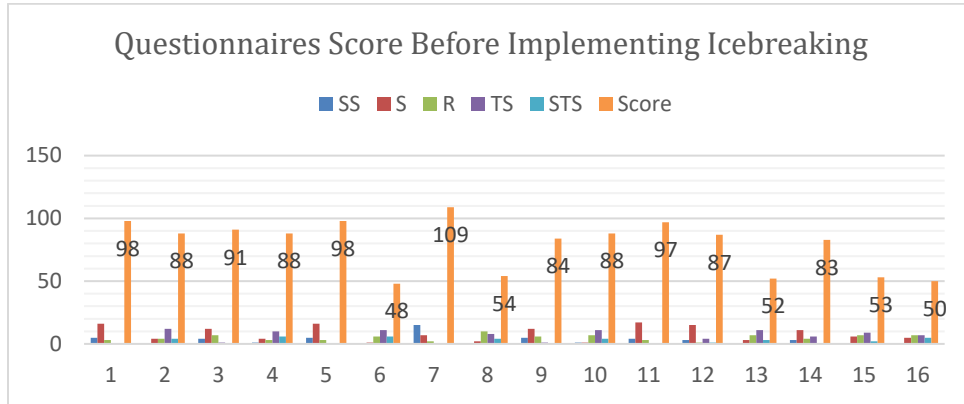


Figure 3.1 Histogram of Questionnaires Score before Implementing Icebreaking

Overall, when positive statements (Q1, Q3, Q5, Q7, Q9, Q11, and Q12) and negative statements (Q2, Q4, 6, Q8, Q13, Q15, and Q16) were combined, the questionnaire score for student motivation prior to implementation was the highest. Q7 "I am extremely motivated to study English if the teaching method is interesting" with a value range of more than 90 indicates that students are driven to learn English classes if the teaching approach they get is engaging. While the lowest score with a value range greater than 40 is found in Q6 "I am not very motivated to learn English if the teaching method is less attractive," which is a negative statement indicating that students are dissatisfied with the number of hours of English instruction provided by the school.

Positive & Negative Statement of the Students after Implementing Icebreaking

Positive and negative statements were the most acknowledged in students' questionnaire responses following the implementation of icebreaking. The conclusion is illustrated in the image below:

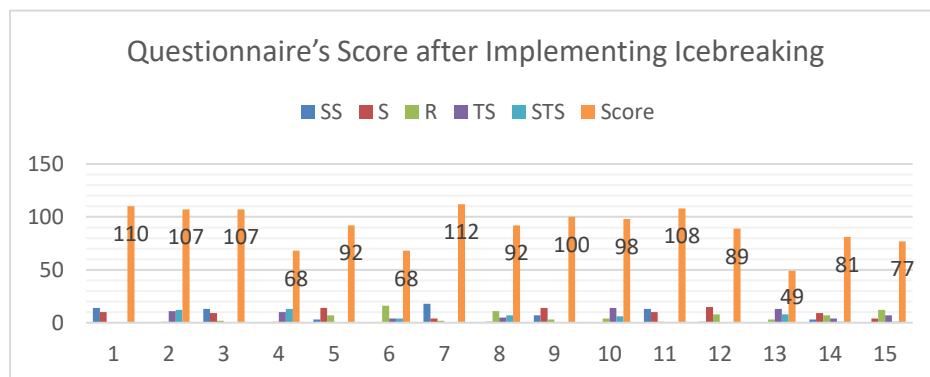


Figure 3.2 Histogram of Questionnaire's Score after Implementing Icebreaking

In conclusion, the overall score of 1268 before the application has increased to 1444. Based on positive statements (Q1, Q3, Q5, Q7, Q9, Q11, and Q12) and negative statements (Q2, Q4, Q6, Q8, Q13, Q15, and Q16), the highest score on the questionnaire about student motivation after the implementation of Icebreaking was still Q7, which stated that students are motivated to learn English lessons if they receive an interesting teaching method in class. This statement number is identical to the statement number before to adopting Icebreaking, hence the difference in value may be observed from 109 (Q7 prior to implementing Icebreaking) to 112 (Q7 after implementing Icebreaking) (after Implementing Icebreaking). The question with the lowest score following the use of Icebreaking was Q13, which indicated that students were not diligent and were bored when completing English homework.

Finding of Reflection

Students Reflection on Motivation Aspect

The success of research is reflected in the improvement of students following the implementation of the research technique (Braun & Clarke, 2013). After assessing students' reflections using coding, the researcher discovered that the icebreaker successfully boosted students' motivation. Based on the results of the coding, through the first question of reflection, "How do you feel about today's lesson? ", practically all students agreed that ice breaking was the most effective technique for increasing students' enthusiasm to study English. This was demonstrated by the statements of students who indicated that ice breaking was the new method they discovered to enhance their learning.

"Today's lesson makes me very happy because I rarely learn English like this way." (S.19)

"I think today's lesson made me feel great in learning English than the previous days." (S.23)

According to the following students, icebreaking motivated them to study since it is an enjoyable activity. It also provided a novel approach to study while enjoying the topic through playing and learning.

"Today's lesson is very different from usual lessons because we can learn and play." (S.5)
(Similar statement to S.14)

"I become happy in learning because it is fun" (S.7) (Similar statement to S.3)

On the other hand, a number of students reported that English is their favorite subject and that they like studying it.

"I'm happy because English is my favorite subject" (S.18)

"It makes me happy because I can learn English again and again" (S.21)

In the second question, "What do you think about the application of icebreakers in the classroom?" Students also said that the implementation of icebreakers is highly appropriate in the classroom.

"I think ice breaking is very suitable to be implemented in our class because finally the class becomes active." (S.8)

"In my opinion, the Icebreaking method is very suitable to be applied in our class because we can learn while playing" (S.16)

Several other students agreed that icebreaking was beneficial to the class.

"it is good and proper for us" (S.17)

"I think it's good because it can increase students' enthusiasm for learning." (S.24)

When asked, "Are you motivated to learn English with the application of Ice Breaking?" practically all students stated that ice breaking motivated them in the study. These arguments were presented for a variety of purposes. Several students stated that ice-breaking was the preferred technique for them. There were other students who stated that, because they may play while studying, ice-breaking might help stimulate the mind. Therefore, English studies become the most popular among students. This was demonstrated by the following student response.

"Yes, I am very motivated to learn English because English is one of my favorite subjects." (S.13)

"Yes, because of ice breaking, I started to like learning English, even at first I didn't." (S.15)

"Yes, I am motivated for English students because ice breaking is very good to apply in the classroom." (S.22).

Students Reflections on Interesting Aspect

The primary aspect of this strategy was also the aspect to which students responded most enthusiastically. When questioned, "How do you feel about today's lesson?" Almost all students reported that Icebreaking increased their enjoyment of learning and desire to study English. This was demonstrated by the students' assertions that icebreaking was successful in attracting them to study.

"I feel happy and joyful so it can make me interested in learning English" (S.1) (Similar statement as S.10)

"I find it very good and quite interesting." (S.4)

In response to the second question, "How do you envision ice-breaking applications in the classroom?" Students felt it was really nice, extremely fascinating, better, and made them very pleased since they were no longer sleepy or bored in class and could play while studying, as the following students stated:

"Very good because we can learn while playing" (S.9)

"Very good at making learning very interesting" (S.10)

This statement also supported as the following students said.

"It's great because I have become even more excited to learn." (S.3) (Similar statement to S.21)

"Ice breaking games make the classroom atmosphere entertained and excited." (S.6)

When questioned in the third question, "Are you inspired to learn English with the use of Ice Breaking? ", students are thus highly interested in learning English in class because of the engaging Icebreaking approach, which motivates them to study in class. They are eager to learn in class because it is enjoyable. This was demonstrated by the following student response.

"Icebreaking makes me very happy to learn English" (Similar statement to S.12 and S.20)

Besides, there was student said if using the ice breaking method is very good.

"Yes because if breaking is so good" (S.3) (Similar statement to S.12)

Regarding the implementation of Icebreaking, all students said that they were motivated and interested in learning English for various reasons.

DISCUSSION

This research highlighted how the usage of icebreakers may motivate students to study English. In order to collect the results of this study, researchers employed three methods: classroom observation, questionnaires, and student reflection. To begin with, the game can stimulate students to learn; individuals appeared enthusiastic about studying, which enhances their motivation to study English. Based on the seventh statement of the questionnaire, "I am motivated to learn English if the method is interesting," this was the highest score possible. While through contemplation, as seen by student 7's statement, "it's amazing, I become more eager to study," this is demonstrated. According to Saniy and Sarwi (2020), anything enjoyable in the learning environment motivates pupils. This may be observed in the students' competitiveness in answering questions during class.

On the other side, icebreakers can increase student attentiveness, strengthen memory and capture ability, and foster group cohesion. According to Wikstrom et al (2019), ice-breaking can boost student motivation in physical education. Observation demonstrates that students grasp the topic more readily and acquire a great deal of new vocabulary through games, which they may incorporate into the lesson, as in the game "Simon Says," which can be used to the present tense subject. For example, Simon instructs the students to sit down, come forward, leap, etc., and they all comply. Increasing student motivation will also have an effect on students' English-speaking abilities. According to Lasagabaster (2011), the job of motivation is to make the learner position-aware at the beginning of the learning process. The process and end outcomes then tell the learner of the intensity of their learning effort. Many of the children are already able to articulate, describe, and provide directions while speaking using simply the terminology they acquire from playing the game. Occasionally, students provided their friend instructions while playing the game consecutively. This also occurred in the game Draw me. Unconsciously, students spouted several languages to describe their friend's drawing, such as "the dog was barking." To encourage students, it is necessary to provide engaging communication activities. Images give discussion topics for learners. This is due to the fact that images may excite and supply information that can be referenced in conversation, discussion, and narrative. Thus, the students were able to construct sentences with greater ease and assurance. Students could communicate more fluently since they have topics to discuss (Janu et al 2020). Then, they had less nervousness when speaking.

The primary, practically all students stated that English had become their favorite subject, with student 13 saying, "Yes, I am very motivated to learn English since English is one of my favorite subjects." Yes, due of ice breaking, I began to like learning English, even if at first I did not. This answers the third question of reflection: "Are you motivated to study English because of the Icebreaking implementation?" Previous research by Yeganehpour (2016) has demonstrated that Icebreaking is one of the best strategies for enlivening the learning environment. Nonetheless, it is certain that students of the same age as Junior High School still require engaging learning methodologies, and that playing while learning is what they still desire (Gomes & Mendes, 2007). In accordance with Ahmad, et al (2020), Game is a familiar approach that may promote students' attention. Playing games favorably affects several elements of development, including intellectual, social, emotional, motor, and linguistic factors. Playing games helps children develop their character via involvement in engaging and amusing activities. Playing games also fosters and promotes intercommunication.

Overall, what students perceive about Icebreaking is interesting and motivates them to keep learning. When student motivation is developed, they will autonomously keep studying new material (Daif-Allah & Aljumah, 2020). However, the technique is more crucial than the content, therefore teachers must prepare the content and complete the approach (Allen & Iano 2019). It indicates that the instructor must prepare the teaching approach for the subject before distributing it.

CONCLUSION

Based on the integrated icebreaking results that have been implemented through several actions from all meetings, questionnaire analysis, and reflection, it is possible to conclude that the usage of icebreaking can boost students' motivation to study English.

This implementation revealed the amount to which students were motivated to study English. The usage of icebreakers may engage students in active learning, alleviate their tension, and motivate them to believe that learning English is simple. Student reflection demonstrates that all students responded that they were motivated to study English. This research was conducted effectively and completed the previous research by Amroti (2016) in Purworejo in that the researcher has now combined the game with the lesson and curriculum, making it easier for students to comprehend the lesson. While the Icebreaking implementation questionnaire score for student statements increased from 1268 to 1440.

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