

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON THE USE OF ICE BREAKING TECHNIQUES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan penggunaan teknik pemecah kebekuan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, dengan fokus khusus pada dua jenis teknik: teknik spontan dan teknik yang direncanakan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa teknik yang direncanakan lebih sering digunakan oleh guru karena kesesuaiannya dengan tujuan pembelajaran dan materi ajar. Sementara itu, teknik spontan diterapkan secara situasional sebagai respons terhadap dinamika kelas yang tidak terduga atau reaksi siswa. Kedua teknik terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa, menciptakan suasana belajar yang positif, dan membuat siswa merasa lebih nyaman dalam berkomunikasi. Deskripsi ini menyimpulkan bahwa fleksibilitas guru dalam memilih dan menerapkan teknik pemecah kebekuan berdasarkan konteks kelas sangat penting. Implikasinya adalah program pelatihan guru harus menekankan pengembangan strategi pemecah kebekuan yang direncanakan dan spontan untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang lebih interaktif dan dinamis.

Kata kunci: Ice Breaking, Pengajaran, Teknik, Pembelajaran

ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe the use of ice breaking techniques in English language learning, specifically focusing on two types: spontaneous and planned techniques. The findings show that planned techniques are more frequently used by teachers due to their suitability with learning objectives and teaching materials. Meanwhile, spontaneous techniques are applied situationally in response to unexpected classroom dynamics or student reactions. Both techniques proved effective in increasing student engagement, creating a positive learning atmosphere, and making students feel more comfortable in communicating. This description concludes that teachers' flexibility in choosing and applying ice breaking techniques based on the classroom context is crucial. The implication is that teacher training programs should emphasize the development of planned and spontaneous ice breaking strategies to foster a more interactive and dynamic learning environment.

Keywords: Ice Breaking, Teaching, Techniques, Learning

INTRODUCTION

English language learning often faces challenges in creating a conducive and interactive classroom atmosphere. Ice-breaking activities are a good way to start an English language classroom because they can help break the ice between teachers and students, and even between students themselves (Chowdhury, 2022). The term "ice breaking" is derived from "break the ice," which is derived from "ice breaking", which are designed to break up ice. Ice breaking aids in the successful flow of ideas by making participants more comfortable and engaging them in conversation (Solihat et al., 2020). One strategy that can be used to overcome this challenge is ice breaking. Previous studies

have shown that the use of ice-breaking techniques can increase student motivation and create a more positive learning environment (Santoso et al., 2024).

These activities not only serve to alleviate apprehension but also promote camaraderie and rapport among classmates, laying a solid foundation for effective communication throughout the learning journey. The benefits of incorporating ice-breaking activities extend beyond mere comfort levels. The benefit of introducing ice breaking in the classroom is that it eliminates monotony, ennui, and tiredness with easy activities that anybody can participate without the need for specialized expertise (Kadek Bagus

Rusman, 2022). In light of these advantages, the practice of initiating ice-breaking activities holds immense potential for transforming the learning experience and empowering students to become confident and articulate communicators. When applying icebreakers on children (Melati Almas Saniy et al., 2021) unearthed that the activities could encourage young learners to develop their interpersonal skills. As educators continue to explore creative approaches to enhance speaking skills, the integration of ice-breaking strategies stands out as a promising avenue for nurturing effective communication in the classroom and beyond.

In terms of activities, an ice breaking can take numerous forms. For example, reading stories, question and answer, utilizing pictures, playing games, and so on. It can assist the teacher in creating a pleasurable and suitable learning environment. Students will feel relaxed and at ease while learning here. They will also be in a pleasant learning mood. Furthermore, it helps boost students' motivation, comprehension, and full participation in the learning activity. Creating a happy, safe, and exciting classroom environment is crucial for foreign language learning. This can boost student engagement, motivation, and academic accomplishment (City & Nam, 2022 and Jaelani & Utami, 2020).

In the context of English language teaching, the most commonly used ice-breaking technique is the planned technique, which has proven effective in speaking learning. This technique not only helps students feel more comfortable but also encourages them to actively participate in discussions and speaking activities. However, despite numerous studies discussing the benefits of ice-breaking techniques, there are still limitations in understanding the most effective types of ice-breaking activities and how to apply them in the context of English language learning at various educational levels. Therefore, this study aims to describe the use of ice-breaking techniques in English language teaching and is expected to provide new insights for educators in effectively applying these techniques.

METHOD

Data collection is an important part of research, so it must be done correctly, from the right sources and in an appropriate manner. In general, data collection is the process of gathering the

information needed to answer research questions and solve problems. If this process is not done correctly, then the results of the research can be wrong and not useful (Mwita, 2024)

This research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Data was collected through direct observation in several English classes at various educational institutions and interview. Observation is the act of performing a procedure to estimate or calculate a value (Janowicz et al., 2019). The instruments used included observation (observing learning that used ice breaking) and interviews with English teachers who had applied ice breaking techniques in their teaching. Data analysis was conducted by grouping information based on themes emerging from observations and interviews, and comparing findings with existing literature.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The most frequently used ice breaking technique is planned ice breaking. All teachers emphasize that ice breaking is not only intended for entertainment, but must also be relevant to the speaking material that will be taught. Planned techniques make it easier for teachers to adjust activities to the topic or theme of the lesson, such as expressing feelings, describing people, and so on. With planning, teachers can ensure that the activities carried out are appropriate to the students' ability level, so they are not too easy or too difficult. This is important to build students' confidence when speaking. Because the activities have been prepared in advance, their implementation becomes more efficient and does not take too long. This allows teachers to control learning time better. Planned ice breaking allows teachers to give clear instructions, including using mixed languages (Indonesian and English), and can provide examples to build students' confidence.

Meanwhile, spontaneous ice breaking tends not to always be relevant to the learning topic, so it has less educational value than specially designed techniques. Not all teachers feel comfortable or ready to improvise spontaneously. It takes high class management skills and on-the-fly creativity for spontaneous techniques to be effective. Spontaneous activities can risk disrupting the allocation of learning time if not controlled properly, especially if students are too involved in activities that do not directly support the material. Without preparation, spontaneous ice

breaking can be too difficult or uninteresting for students with varying abilities, so that not all students feel involved.

Overall, the discussion highlighted that icebreaker activities are not only a fun addition to English lessons, but also a strategic component that can increase student engagement, reduce speaking anxiety, and encourage active verbal participation. When well-planned and implemented contextually, this is in line with Sari et al., (2023) who said that there are two types of icebreaker techniques that can be used in the teaching and learning process and planned techniques are used more often than spontaneous, this technique has been proven effective in creating a dynamic and communicative classroom atmosphere that is conducive to language learning. It can be concluded that the planned ice-breaking technique is used more often because it is considered more effective, relevant, and easy to integrate with speaking learning. Teachers feel that this technique provides space to design activities that are appropriate to the material and conditions of students, as well as maintaining the efficiency of learning time. Although spontaneous techniques have flexibility value, they are rarely used because they are considered less structured in the context of planned learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that ice breaking is very important to be implemented in the classroom because it has a significant influence on the effectiveness of the learning process. Ice breaking not only functions as an opening activity or to refresh the atmosphere, but also plays a role in creating a positive, pleasant, and conducive learning environment. Ice breaking can help reduce tension, increase comfort, and build involvement and communication between students. Ice breaking can also increase motivation, concentration, and active participation of students, especially in learning speaking skills that require courage and self-confidence. The teacher uses various ice breaking techniques that are adjusted to the objectives of speaking learning and the needs of class conditions. The most frequently used technique is planned ice breaking, because it is considered more relevant to the material being studied and easier to control in terms of time and content relevance. Teachers organize ice breaking activities that are not only entertaining, but also educational, such as: guessing games about people

or objects through verbal descriptions, throwing paper containing questions that must be answered verbally, and singing simple songs containing lesson materials such as pronouns. These types of ice breaking aim to encourage students to speak actively, creatively, and spontaneously in a fun and non-stressful atmosphere. In addition, teachers also sometimes use spontaneous ice breaking techniques when the classroom atmosphere starts to decline, with light activities that are improvisational. Teachers consider this activity very useful and does not interfere with the allocation of learning time because it has been designed to be integrated with core activities. Thus, the ice breaking technique used by teachers has been proven to be able to encourage students to be more active, confident, and motivated in learning to speak English.

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