

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses several aspects. The first is the background of the research. The second is research questions. The third is research purposes. The fourth is research significance. The fifth is research scope. The sixth is a conceptual framework. Furthermore, the last in previous studies.

A. Background of the Research

The use of ice-breaking activities is essential for encouraging young learners to be enthusiastic about learning, especially in learning English. This research aims to determine the utilization of icebreakers in EYL lessons and their impact on young learners' motivation. Teachers who teach young learners must be both creative and prepared. The statement aligns with Prayatni (2019), who states that teaching English to young learners requires good teaching abilities, creativity, comprehensive preparation, and patience. Teachers for young learners must address these factors to remain enthusiastic and motivated. Therefore, learning with creative and fun activities is often used for young learners.

Young learners, typically defined as children between the ages of 5 to 12, possess distinctive characteristics that set them apart from older learners. According to Cameron (2001), they are naturally curious and tend to learn best through play and hands-on activities. Their attention span is relatively short, so they need a variety of activities to stay focused and motivated. In addition, emotional factors greatly influence their learning, so a positive and supportive learning atmosphere is essential for their development. Therefore, one way to facilitate their learning is to use icebreakers in the learning process.

Ice-breaking activities have been developed as highly effective learning tools. This technique is widely used and shows that students are more actively involved in learning because it is an interesting form of learning. A variety of enjoyable activities are used in the classroom as icebreakers to get students interested (Farwati, Rahmah and Sutisna, 2018). This icebreaker is often used to create an active and cheerful learning atmosphere. According to Sunarto (2012),

through the use of icebreakers, a learning environment can be created that transitions from passive to active, stiff to flexible (familiar), and bored to happy.

In the learning process, ice-breaking activities frequently include active and exciting activities that place learners at the centre of learning. Young learners should find English language instruction engaging and realistic, as should parents, educators, and administrators (Brewster and Ellis, 2002). Icebreaker activities often include active activities such as singing, moving and other fun activities. With this series of activities, students will not feel bored so they can be more active and enjoy learning. Breaking the ice can help students become less bored, and difficulties can motivate them to be engaged and interesting (Wahyudi and Madya, 2020). Therefore, ice-breaking activities are one of the important activities in learning, especially in learning English for young learners.

Apart from that, the use of ice-breaking activities can be used to increase motivation for students to participate actively in the learning process. Motivation in learning is a motive that leads to the aim of the learning process (Pranata, Susanti and Jannah, 2021). Motivation in learning is required to determine learners' enthusiasm to learn. To foster student motivation, teachers must be active and creative in providing a positive learning environment, leading to increased student enthusiasm for learning.

Motivation for students is a crucial aspect that encourages them to be actively involved in the learning process. According to Deci and Ryan (2013) in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), there are two types of motivation, namely intrinsic motivation (from within the individual and influencing more natural behaviour) and extrinsic motivation (from outside and influencing more controlled behaviour). Ice breaking can contribute to increasing both types of motivation, depending on the way and purpose of its use. In educational settings, well-designed icebreakers can help students feel more connected to the material and each other, thereby increasing their intrinsic motivation to learn. On the other hand, the effective use of icebreakers can help create better group dynamics, thereby increasing extrinsic motivation because participants feel more connected and motivated by a supportive environment.

To build on this, students' motivation serves as a driving force for success in learning. One way for student motivation to emerge and grow is through ice-breaking activities in the classroom. In line with Febriandari, Khakiim, and Pratama (2018), icebreakers foster focus and enthusiasm in students, with enthusiasm representing learning motivation. When students are motivated, it becomes easier for them to follow the learning flow. Furthermore, icebreaking activities can help foster positive relationships between students and teachers as well as between students themselves. According to Suryoharjuno (2019), these activities can increase student motivation and facilitate more active interaction between teachers and students. Ultimately, growing and maintaining student motivation is crucial to cultivating a positive and productive learning environment where students develop both academically and personally.

Ice-breaking and motivation have links in relationships. Motivation and ice-breaking are linked because ice-breaking allows teachers to express interest in the topic and learning and their learners (Pranata et al, 2021). Ice-breaking will enable teachers to explore their creativity and prepare additional lessons. Teachers are challenged to correlate the icebreaker topic to what learners know or have already learned. Ice-breaking also helps attract learners' attention so that they remain happy, enjoy, and motivated, especially when learning English.

This research was conducted in a Public Elementary School in Bandung. The researcher conducted initial observations to build and strengthen this research. The researcher had a casual conversation with the English teacher. The conversation about how ice breaking is implemented in his class and then how the teacher thinks of the effect of ice breaking on student's motivation in the class. This attracted interest, so the researcher decided to compile this research.

Teaching young learners has its challenges. Based on the researcher's experience, teaching young learners requires a set of abilities to think creatively, and innovatively and also requires full patience. In learning, especially English learning. Young learners often experience learning disorders, some of the factors include a lack of interest in learning because learning is not fun or boring, learning methods that are less suitable for the situation and condition of students, difficulty

in managing focus and concentration, and an environment that is less supportive of learning. Therefore, with these problems, it is a challenge for teachers to adjust what learning techniques or strategies can overcome students so that learning is no longer boring and they are enthusiastic about learning. This problem is the reason why researchers compiled this study.

Several previous studies have explored this topic. Mepieza (2024) did the initial investigation. This research focuses on the effectiveness of icebreaker activities and investigates their effects on student participation and engagement in the classroom. Syahhila (2023) carried out the following research. This research examines how icebreakers affect junior high school and the motivation of learners to learn. Arifani and Safitri (2023) conducted other research investigating the influence of icebreaking on the motivation of vocational high school learners to learn English. However, it differs from others before. The current research analyzes ice-breaking activities that foster young learners' motivation in English learning.

B. Research Questions

From the background above, this research conducted some research questions obtaining the following objectives:

1. What ice-breaking activities does the teacher use in English lessons?
2. How effective are the ice-breaking activities in fostering young learners' motivation based on the teacher's perceptions and students' responses?

C. Research Purposes

From the research questions above, this research is aimed at obtaining the following objectives:

1. To investigate ice-breaking activities does teacher uses in the English lessons.
2. To identify the effectiveness of the ice-breaking activities to foster young learners' motivation based on teacher perceptions and students' responses.

D. Research Significances

This research holds significant implications for both theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, this research is helpful to the next researcher in providing a theory for ice-breaking activities to foster young learners' motivation in English learning.
2. Practically, this research is useful for schools to implement ice-breaking activities for their teachers. Furthermore, this research is helpful as a source and reference for English teachers in creating a fun, active, and creative learning atmosphere by using ice-breaking activities.

E. Research Scope

This research focuses on how teachers use icebreaker strategies to motivate young learners. To be more specific, this research aims to identify ice-breaking strategies used by teachers in class, and then find out teacher perceptions and student responses to the use of ice-breaking activities in class as an effort to foster students' motivation to learn English. Participants in this research were a teacher and students from an elementary school in Bandung who often used ice-breaking strategies in their classes. This research was conducted using qualitative methods with a case study design.

F. Conceptual Framework

Young learners are children in the early stages of education. Young learners as children who attend preschool until primary school. Adults and young learners have different characteristics (Wahyudi and Madya, 2020). As a result, the teaching methods used will also differ. Teaching English to young learners should appeal to parents, instructors, and administrators while still being accessible to children (Breswter and Ellis, 2002). Young learners require varied, active, engaging, and enjoyable learning experiences. Youngsters are quickly bored. Thus, variation in teaching should be used to keep young learners engaged and motivated (Wahyudi and Madya, 2020).

The ice-breaking technique is one approach to making learning more exciting and exciting for young learners. The ice-breaking performance is one of the techniques that teachers use to capture learners' attention and make research more enjoyable. According to Yeganehpour (2017), icebreaker activities are any act teachers use in the classroom to attract interest in the learners in their lesson.

Icebreakers include various activities to encourage a more comfortable atmosphere for learning. Ice-breaking can be done in various forms of activity, for example, in the form of funny and meaningful stories from teachers, prize guesses, or games (Jarusrichoonthai, Malapaschas and Olsson, 2016). Other various activities of ice breaking categorized by Zhang (2000), the ice-breaker activities used by teachers into question and answer and pictures. Hapsari, Mahmud, Agustianti, Sastraatmadja, Aprianti, Indrawati and Nurhusain (2023) also give the example of variety ice breaking possible to do in learning activities such as songs, and types of applause. By having variations in learning activities, learners can minimize boredom so that they continue to enjoy and be motivated to learn.

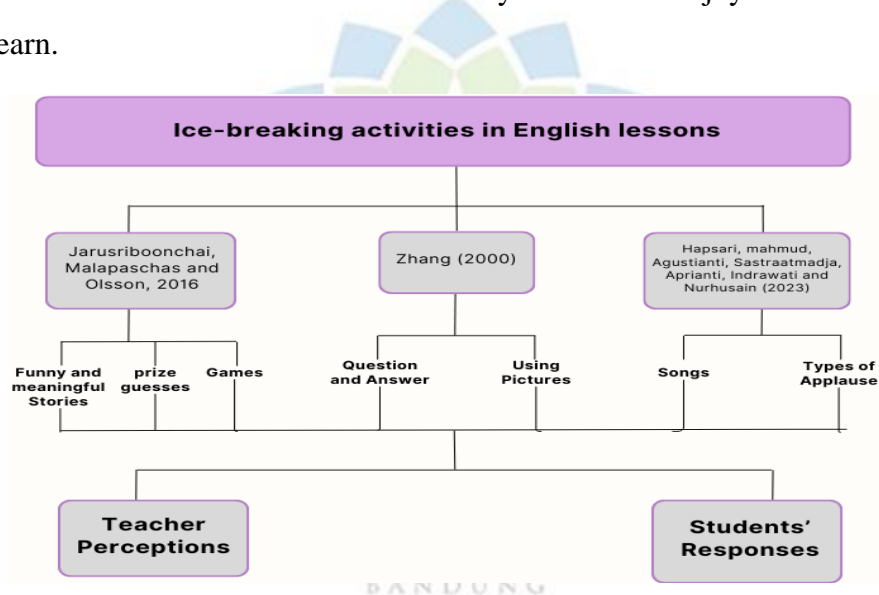


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

The illustration above shows seven points that can be classified as icebreaker activities. One of the points is to tell funny and meaningful stories. Telling stories is an excellent pastime because it is enjoyable and straightforward for anyone to participate in (Roney, 1989). Numerous materials or instruments can be utilized to make delightful stories for learners researching English, such as photos, paper, or realia. The next point addresses prize guesses. With these prize predictions, learners will be more willing to share their thoughts and interact. Guessing is a valuable game to enhance learners' engagement in oral

communication since it creates an enjoyable learning environment (Porong, 2022).

Games are the next points mentioned. Games are one of the most used icebreaker exercises in learning, particularly in English. A "game" is a structured and organized play usually launched for entertainment and frequently used as an instructional tool (Bendo, 2019). The next point is Q&A. Q&A activity can be the first step to making students feel interested and involved in learning. Q&A makes students feel interested and involves them in learning (Zhang, 2000). With this Q&A activity, teachers and students can explore each other from experience, knowledge, habits, and much more.

The next one is using pictures. Using pictures can bring students to see all forms of something that they have never felt. Pictures can bring images of reality into the unnatural world of the language classroom (Zhang, 2000). There is also an icebreaker that uses songs. Usually, teachers use songs that have been modified to make them easier to follow and remember. The teacher is a little creative, changing (not destroying) the lyrics of songs that are "in" or familiar without changing the tone, and of course, packaged educationally (Fitria, 2023). And the last one is the types of applause or clapping. Clapping hands is an activity that is quite easy and can be implemented immediately without the need for complicated and lengthy preparations (Fitria, 2023). Therefore, it is not surprising that applause or clapping is often used as an icebreaker in learning.

Ice-breakers are a valuable activity for learning English. The use of icebreakers is one factor in increasing student motivation in learning. Motivation can also be defined as one's direction to behaviour or what causes a person to want to repeat a behaviour and vice versa (Alizadeh, 2016). Motivation is an important component of learning. Pranata et al (2021) define motivation in learning as a motive that leads to the aim of the learning process. Motivation in learning is required to determine learners' enthusiasm to learn.

Motivation and ice-breaking are two topics that are closely related. Motivation is an inspiration to do better. In this scenario, the motivation is educational and learning-based. As Agustina (2016) stated, motivation is an

activity that can inspire kids to do better. When researching feels lonely, too tense, and dull, ice-breaking arises as an activity to overcome this sense of loneliness, tension, and boringness, and becomes a very effective means of learning, including learning English. According to Kader (2022), ice-breaking strategies are among the most prevalent educational activities since they inspire learners to become more involved in learning. Motivation and ice-breaking are closely associated since an entertaining and engaging strategy, such as ice-breaking, is required to encourage or motivate learners.

In short, ice-breaking plays an important role in creating a more positive and dynamic learning environment. Ice-breaking activities, such as interactive games or light discussions, can stimulate enthusiasm and reduce emotional or social barriers that often arise in the learning process. Thus, this strategy not only breaks down a stiff classroom atmosphere but also functions as a trigger to increase student involvement and raise enthusiasm for learning.

G. Previous Studies

Researchers have conducted many studies on ice-breaking activities to foster young learners' motivation in English learning. Some of them are discussed below:

Mepieza (2024) conducted research investigating the impact of icebreakers on student participation and engagement in the classroom. It used a qualitative research methodology to examine the effect of icebreakers on student participation and engagement in class. It was carried out at PAU Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc. in the Philippines. The participants included one teacher, the teacher-in-charge, and seven learners currently enrolled in grade 11 senior high school at PEGAFI. The data for this research was acquired using semi-structured interviews. The research's findings show that icebreaker activities are critical in creating a happy and productive learning environment; learners believe that icebreakers help them enhance their speaking and listening abilities and mood and brain activation. Even though the current research is about the same topic, ice-breaking impact, it has a different focus. The current

research focuses on the effect of icebreakers on young learners' motivation to learn English.

Syahnila (2023) did a research. The purpose of this research is to identify the influence of ice cracking on learning motivation. The author employed a pre-experimental procedure with a one-group "pretest and posttest design" for this research. It was carried out in Mts Al-Mustaqim Arang Limbung. His research's demographic included grade VII learners from Mts Al-Mustaqim Arang Limbung. It used a sample of 30 learners from class VII A. Questionnaires were used to collect the data for this research. This research suggests that Ice-breaking affects learners' learning motivation, as evidenced by the average student scores before and after being taught ice-breaking. However, this current research differs from the previous research. The current research used a qualitative descriptive method and was conducted on young learners in second-grade elementary schools, with one English teacher participating. Interviews and observations were employed to gather data for the current research.

Another research was undertaken by Arifani and Safitri (2023). This research focuses on the impact of ice-breaking on learners' motivation to learn English. It employed a single-group pretest and posttest pre-experimental research design. It was undertaken at SMK Cendana Padang Panjang because many learners still believe that learning English is challenging and dull, and many are not focused on their current learning. This research's population consisted of class XI learners from SMK Cendana Padang Panjang, selected using the total sample technique. Data for this research were gathered using a closed Linkert scale questionnaire. The findings of this research indicate that ice-breaking substantially enhances student learning motivation, and there is a significant difference between learners taught with the Ice-breaking approach and those acquainted without it, contrary to this current research. It used a qualitative descriptive method and was conducted on young learners at the second elementary school level. In contrast, the previous research was conducted at the second vocational school level. Using one English teacher as a participant.

Furthermore, the current research employs a case study design instead of the previous research's pre-experiment, one-group pretest, and post-test.

Abu Omar (2019) did the previous research. This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of ice-breakers in enhancing motivation and creating a conducive classroom atmosphere. The author employed a descriptive one and was conducted to determine whether the perspectives of the teachers and students towards using the icebreaker strategy were positive or negative. It was carried out in Nablus City Schools Palestine. To achieve her research aims, Abu Omar's research used two tools: a 30-item questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire was distributed among 39 teachers who teach English in Nablus city schools. This research suggests that there is a serious demand for teachers to use icebreakers effectively to support their interpretation of the lesson. The use of icebreakers in the textbooks and lesson plans mustn't be optional for teachers to use or not. However, this current research differs from the previous research. The current research focuses on how impact of ice-breaking activities based teachers' perceptions and how students respond to the use of ice-breaking strategies in English lessons. Meanwhile, Abu Omar's research focuses on the effectiveness of ice-breaking in increasing motivation and creating a conducive classroom atmosphere.

Astuti, Solihat and Satriani (2020) conducted another research. This research aims to explore icebreaker techniques in teaching English to students at Junior High School. This research was conducted on VII grade high school students in Cimahi city, VII D class consisting of 32 female students. It used two types of data collected, there are qualitative and quantitative. The result of this research is students to be focused and have fun learning English in the class. Different from previous research, this current research focuses on researching young learners and using qualitative methods with case study design. Astuti's research focuses on students at Junior High School and uses two types of data collection, using qualitative and quantitative.