

TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE USE OF ICE BREAKING IN ENHANCING A DYNAMIC CLASSROOM AT SMK NEGERI 2 KUPANG

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Dynamic Classroom Ice Breaking Interactive Learning Teachers' Perspective	This research explores Teachers' Perspectives on the use of Ice Breaking in Enhancing a Dynamic Classroom at SMK Negeri 2 Kupang . It aims to examine how teachers perceive and implement ice breaking strategies, their positive impacts on classroom dynamics, and the challenges encountered in the process. The study employs a qualitative approach using observations and interviews with three English teachers. The findings reveal that teachers view a dynamic classroom as an interactive and flexible learning environment that promotes active student participation. To foster this environment, teachers apply various ice breaking activities, such as simple games, light physical exercises, and quick quizzes, to increase engagement and reduce boredom. Ice breaking positively impacts student participation, strengthens social interaction among students and teachers, and enhances teachers' creativity. Nonetheless, challenges such as time limitations, diverse student interests, limited facilities, and students' difficulty in understanding instructions were noted. The research concludes that ice breaking is an effective strategy for creating a dynamic classroom and improving learning quality. It recommends that teachers design enjoyable and relevant ice breaking activities tailored to classroom conditions and lesson content.
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INTRODUCTION

The classroom is a social space where learning occurs through continuous interaction between teachers and students. Teachers are responsible for planning, teaching, guiding, evaluating, and creating an engaging atmosphere. However, despite their efforts, classroom dynamics may not always support effective learning. In many cases, students appear bored, unmotivated, or disengaged, especially in vocational schools where long lessons and repetitive activities may cause fatigue or distraction. These issues reduce learning effectiveness and highlight the need for strategies that can create a more active and enjoyable environment.

To address these challenges, teachers are encouraged to adopt innovative strategies that enhance classroom engagement. One such strategy is the use of ice breaking activities. Ice breaking refers to short, simple, and fun activities designed to break the monotony, reduce tension, and encourage participation. These activities help initiate social interaction, refresh students' focus, and create a more dynamic atmosphere conducive to learning.

Previous research suggests that ice breaking supports students' social and emotional development, increases participation, and improves classroom relationships (Johnson, 2012; Hammond, 2015; Fitriyanti, 2023). However, most studies tend to focus on student outcomes or general classroom management. Few studies specifically investigate teachers' perspectives on the

use of ice breaking, particularly in vocational high school contexts. This presents a research gap worth exploring.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate teachers' perspectives on the use of ice breaking in enhancing a dynamic classroom at SMK Negeri 2 Kupang. It focuses on the types of ice breaking used, the perceived impacts on classroom dynamics, and the challenges faced by teachers in implementation.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach to explore teachers' perspectives on the use of ice breaking in enhancing a dynamic classroom at SMK Negeri 2 Kupang. The qualitative method is chosen to enable an in-depth understanding of the teachers' views, practices, and experiences through descriptive analysis of their responses.

The subjects of this research consist of three English teachers from SMK Negeri 2 Kupang who teach tenth-grade students. These participants are selected based on their active use of ice breaking strategies in their classrooms. Their participation provides relevant insight into the practical implementation and perceived effectiveness of these activities.

The data collection techniques used in this study include observation, semi-structured interviews, and field note-taking. The researcher attends the school and observes the natural classroom setting to document how teachers implement ice breaking in real time. A structured observation checklist is used to guide this process. In addition, interviews are conducted using open-ended questions to allow participants to express their experiences freely. The interviews are recorded—with consent—and transcribed for further analysis. The researcher also uses a notebook to record additional observations, including non-verbal cues and spontaneous remarks during interactions.

This study is conducted at SMK Negeri 2 Kupang, located in East Nusa Tenggara, during October 2024. The research tools include a checklist sheet, an interview guide, a recording device (smartphone), and a notebook. These instruments are designed and developed based on the research objectives and literature review.

To ensure the validity of the research findings, data triangulation is used by comparing information obtained from different sources and methods (interview, observation, and notes). The credibility of the data is strengthened through persistent observation and member checking, where the researcher confirms the findings with the participants.

The data analysis follows the model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1985), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The researcher organizes the data, identifies key patterns and themes, and interprets the results in relation to the research questions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

This study explores English teachers' perspectives at SMK Negeri 2 Kupang on the use of ice breaking activities to enhance a dynamic classroom environment. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with three English teachers who teach tenth-grade students.

The findings reveal that all participating teachers regularly implement ice breaking activities to increase student engagement and reduce classroom tension. To answer the first research question, the study identified several types of ice breaking activities commonly used by the teachers. Based on observations and interview results, teachers tend to use various activities such as songs, physical movements, and games to foster student participation and reduce rigid, tense, or monotonous

classroom atmospheres. These types of ice breaking activities align with the classification proposed by Sunarto (2012), which categorizes them into songs, body movements, and games.

In the games category, teachers often use charades, whispering games, and “Two Truths and a Lie.” Charades is effective for teaching the topic “Describing People and Things” as it supports students in understanding descriptive language through body movement, while fostering creativity, teamwork, and nonverbal communication. The whispering game is commonly used to train listening and speaking skills by passing a sentence in a whisper, typically focusing on verb tenses. This activity improves students’ concentration, enhances grammar comprehension, and creates a joyful learning atmosphere. For the topic “Asking and Giving Opinions,” teachers use Two Truths and a Lie, in which student’s share two true statements and one false statement about themselves. This game effectively encourages speaking practice in a fun and interactive way.

In addition to games, teachers incorporate light physical activities such as stretching or simple calisthenics, often paired with cheerful songs like “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes” or games like “Simon Says,” to refresh students’ minds. In some cases, teachers simply give direct instructions for light movement without using music. Another common ice breaking activity is quick quizzes, in which teachers ask short grammar-related questions (e.g., identifying verb 1, 2, or 3), and students respond in groups. This fosters grammar reinforcement in a competitive yet enjoyable atmosphere.

These ice breaking activities are essential for increasing student involvement, stimulating peer interaction, and promoting cooperation. Students gain confidence in using appropriate grammar and vocabulary by actively engaging in discussions and responding to questions. Such activities also help clarify misunderstandings and strengthen conceptual understanding.

Teachers reported that students showed greater motivation and enthusiasm following ice breaking sessions. These activities contributed to a more interactive classroom environment and helped build positive student-teacher relationships. Ice breaking was also used by teachers as a diagnostic tool to gauge students’ prior knowledge and to facilitate smooth transitions into the main lesson.

The teachers emphasized that a dynamic classroom is a key factor in the learning process. They observed that when students are curious and engaged, it increases their own teaching enthusiasm. A dynamic classroom also allows for the integration of enjoyable and interactive learning strategies. In terms of positive impacts, teachers identified several benefits of ice breaking activities:

1. Increased student engagement – students become more active, enthusiastic, and motivated to participate.
2. Enhanced social interaction – students build stronger relationships with peers and teachers, fostering a sense of mutual trust.
3. Reduced boredom – students feel more relaxed and attentive during lessons.
4. Support for teacher creativity – teachers can experiment with various strategies that align with the lesson objectives, promoting instructional innovation.

Despite these benefits, teachers also reported several challenges in implementing ice breaking activities. The most prominent obstacle was time limitation; with fixed schedules, it is difficult to include such activities without reducing time for delivering lesson content. Another issue was limited student vocabulary, which often led to misunderstandings of instructions, requiring teachers to translate or explain in Indonesian. Teachers also faced variability in student interest, as some students were reluctant or shy to participate. Lastly, limited classroom facilities constrained the use of certain materials or tools, forcing teachers to modify their planned activities.

Overall, the implementation of ice breaking activities is adjusted based on classroom conditions. Teachers prefer simple, brief, and meaningful activities that align with the day's lesson and student needs.

Discussion

The use of ice breaking activities plays a significant role in supporting classroom dynamics, especially in vocational high school contexts like SMK Negeri 2 Kupang. Based on the findings, teachers view a dynamic classroom as an environment where both teachers and students are actively engaged, learning is flexible, and interaction is encouraged. These perspectives align with the definition of dynamic classroom proposed by Ciaburri (2023), who states that student engagement, participation, and excitement contribute to an effective learning atmosphere.

Ice breaking serves as a bridge between students and learning materials. Teachers at SMK Negeri 2 Kupang use games and physical activities not only to entertain but to initiate learning readiness and emotional comfort. This supports the view of Johnson (2012), who emphasizes that well-chosen ice breaking activities reduce anxiety and promote classroom participation.

The positive impacts—such as enhanced student motivation, improved peer interaction, and increased teacher creativity—are consistent with previous studies by Nasution et al. (2023) and Agusriana (2021), who found that ice breaking positively affects classroom atmosphere and learning outcomes. The teachers' use of ice breaking to adapt instruction to student needs also reflects the flexible pedagogy required in a dynamic classroom.

However, the challenges reported indicate a need for strategic planning. Time constraints and varying student responses reflect the complexity of classroom management, as also noted by Langley and Knight (2016). These findings suggest that teachers must carefully select and modify ice breaking strategies to suit available resources and classroom conditions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the use of ice breaking activities significantly contributes to enhancing a dynamic classroom atmosphere at SMK Negeri 2 Kupang. Teachers perceive a dynamic classroom as one that is interactive, flexible, and engaging—where students actively participate and enjoy the learning process. Ice breaking strategies, such as light games, short physical movements, and quick quizzes, are implemented to foster this dynamic atmosphere. These activities increase student engagement, reduce boredom, promote social interaction, and support teacher creativity.

However, the implementation of ice breaking also presents challenges, including time constraints, variation in student interest, lack of facilities, and students' difficulty in understanding instructions. Despite these obstacles, teachers demonstrate adaptability by modifying ice breaking activities according to classroom conditions and lesson objectives.

The key finding of this research is that ice breaking is not only a supplementary activity, but a meaningful pedagogical tool that enhances both the cognitive and emotional dimensions of the learning environment. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how practical strategies like ice breaking support effective teaching and dynamic classroom development from the perspective of teachers.

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