



USING ICE BREAKING ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN EFL CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

Classroom management plays a crucial role in determining the success of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. However, EFL classrooms often face challenges such as students' low confidence, limited participation, and learning boredom, which may reduce engagement and learning effectiveness. This study aims to analyze the role of ice breaking activities in supporting classroom management, identify effective types of ice breaking activities, and examine their benefits in improving students' attention, participation, and classroom atmosphere. This study employed a qualitative approach using a literature review design. Data were collected from relevant academic journals, books, and scholarly articles, and analyzed using descriptive qualitative techniques. The findings reveal that various types of ice breaking activities, including word games, guessing games, short conversational activities, and movement-based activities, can effectively enhance student engagement. The implementation of ice breaking activities at different stages of the lesson helps maintain students' focus, reduce boredom, and create a positive learning environment. Furthermore, ice breaking activities contribute to improving students' confidence, participation, and social interaction. Ice breaking activities are not merely supplementary tools but essential strategies that support effective classroom management in EFL settings. Their proper use can significantly improve the overall quality of the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Ice Breaking, EFL, Classroom, Management

INTRODUCTION

Classroom management is a crucial aspect in determining the success of the teaching and learning process, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Effective classroom management is not merely concerned with controlling students' behavior, but also with creating a conducive, interactive learning environment that fosters students' engagement in the learning process.

In EFL classrooms, teachers often face various challenges, such as students' low confidence in using English, limited active participation, and a tendency to experience boredom during the learning process. Previous studies have shown that boredom is one of the most common negative emotions in foreign language learning, which can lead to disengagement,

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reduced attention, and decreased motivation (Xu et al., 2026). In addition, students' participation in EFL classrooms is often limited due to differences in learning styles and classroom dynamics, which further affects the effectiveness of the learning process (Crosthwaite et al., 2015). Emotional factors such as anxiety and lack of confidence also play a significant role in influencing students' willingness to communicate and participate actively in classroom activities (Hakiim et al., 2023).

One of the strategies that can be implemented is the use of *ice breaking activities*. Ice breaking activities are short, structured tasks designed to reduce tension, create a relaxed atmosphere, and enhance students' focus and motivation. Wana et al. (2024) assert that the implementation of ice breaking activities in classroom settings significantly improves students' learning readiness, promotes a more dynamic classroom environment, and assists teachers in managing classroom dynamics more effectively.

More specifically, Patty et al. (2026) found that the use of ice breaking activities in English language learning contributes to the improvement of students' self-confidence in communicating in English, as well as encouraging more active participation during classroom interactions. This indicates that ice breaking activities not only influence students' psychological readiness but also support the development of their language skills.

In the context of EFL learning, ice breaking activities should not be viewed merely as supplementary or entertaining elements; rather, they can function as an integral part of classroom management strategies to enhance interaction and student engagement (Gea & Tafonao, 2024). The appropriate use of ice breaking activities enables teachers to manage classrooms more effectively, particularly in addressing passive learners, students with low confidence, and those who are easily distracted. Furthermore, various types of ice breaking activities, such as word games, guessing games, and movement-based tasks, can be aligned with instructional materials to maintain their educational value.

Based on the above considerations, it is essential to further examine the role of ice breaking activities in supporting classroom management, identify effective types of ice breaking suitable for EFL classrooms, and explore their benefits in improving students' attention, participation, and the overall conduciveness of the learning environment. Therefore, it is expected that teachers can optimally utilize ice breaking activities as part of effective instructional strategies.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a literature review design. The purpose of this method was to analyze and synthesize relevant theories and previous research findings related to the use of ice breaking activities in supporting classroom management in EFL classrooms.

The data used in this study were obtained from secondary sources, including academic journals, books, and scholarly articles published in reputable national and international journals. The selection of sources was based on their relevance to the research topic, particularly those discussing classroom management, EFL learning, student engagement, and the implementation of ice breaking activities.

The data collection technique was conducted through documentation, by identifying, reviewing, and organizing relevant literature. The researcher focused on studies that examine



the role, types, and benefits of ice breaking activities in classroom settings, especially in English language learning contexts.

The data analysis was carried out using descriptive qualitative analysis. The researcher analyzed the collected data by categorizing key themes, comparing findings from different studies, and interpreting how ice breaking activities contribute to improving classroom management, students' attention, participation, and learning atmosphere.

Through this method, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how ice breaking activities can be effectively utilized as a strategy to support classroom management in EFL classrooms.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Types of Ice Breaking Activities in EFL Classrooms

Ice breaking activities play an important role in supporting classroom management, particularly in EFL classrooms where students often face difficulties in maintaining focus and active participation. Based on the analysis of relevant literature, several types of ice breaking activities can be effectively implemented to create a more engaging and interactive learning environment.

One commonly used type is word games, such as vocabulary matching, word association, and spelling challenges. These activities not only help students to expand their vocabulary but also encourage them to actively participate in the learning process. In addition, word games can be easily integrated into the lesson content, making them both enjoyable and educational. This is supported by Syajida et.al (2025), who found that the use of interactive learning methods, such as songs and word-based activities, significantly improved students' vocabulary retention. Students were able to remember new words more easily when learning was combined with enjoyable and engaging elements, such as melodies and visual aids, which facilitated stronger associations between words and their meanings.

Another type is guessing games, such as "guess the word" or "guess the picture." These activities stimulate students' curiosity and critical thinking while promoting interaction among students. Guessing games are particularly effective in encouraging shy or less confident students to participate, as they create a relaxed and less intimidating atmosphere. Hasanah et.al (2025) further reported that interactive guessing activities, including movement-based guessing games and visual-based tasks such as word search activities, had a positive impact on students' engagement and comprehension. These activities not only increased students' participation but also helped them better understand vocabulary, particularly verbs and concrete nouns, through physical movement and visual representation. Overall, such interactive strategies were found to create a more dynamic learning environment, enhance student motivation, and improve their ability to recall and use English vocabulary effectively.

Furthermore, short conversational activities can also function as ice breaking. For instance, simple question-and-answer sessions, pair discussions, or sharing personal experiences can help students practice speaking skills in a low-pressure setting. These activities are beneficial in improving students' confidence and willingness to communicate in English.

In addition, movement-based activities, such as role-playing, simple physical games, or "find someone who" tasks, can be used to energize students and reduce boredom. These activities are especially useful when students begin to lose concentration, as they involve physical movement that can refresh students' minds and restore their focus. This finding is



supported by Dewi et al. (2025), who reported that the implementation of a kinesthetic approach through ice breaking activities had a positive impact on the classroom atmosphere and the effectiveness of English language learning. Their study revealed that students became more enthusiastic and active during the learning process, as ice breaking activities not only helped to create a relaxed environment but also enhanced students' focus and readiness to engage with the lesson. Furthermore, several positive behavioral changes were observed, including increased student participation in answering questions and engaging in discussions, improved vocabulary acquisition through movement-based games, and the development of collaboration through group activities. Students also demonstrated greater confidence in expressing themselves and participating in front of the class. In addition, ice breaking activities were found to be an effective tool for teachers to build initial rapport with students, particularly in early classroom meetings. This approach was considered highly contextual, especially in rural settings where students tend to be physically active. Therefore, well-designed ice breaking activities not only contribute to a more enjoyable learning environment but also enable teachers to better understand students' characteristics and group dynamics, which are essential for developing more effective instructional strategies.

The implementation of these various types of ice breaking activities should be adjusted to the classroom context, including students' proficiency levels, class size, and learning objectives. When used appropriately, ice breaking activities not only serve as a tool to create a positive classroom atmosphere but also contribute significantly to effective classroom management.

Implementation of Ice Breaking Activities in EFL Classrooms

The implementation of ice breaking activities in EFL classrooms should be carefully planned to ensure their effectiveness in supporting both classroom management and instructional objectives. Ice breaking activities can be integrated at different stages of the lesson at the beginning, during the lesson, and at the end depending on the classroom situation and students' needs.

At the beginning of the lesson, ice breaking activities can be used to create a positive learning atmosphere and prepare students mentally for the learning process. Short and engaging activities, such as simple games or warm-up questions, help students transition from a passive state into a more active and receptive mindset (Putri & Tamrin, 2024). This initial engagement plays a crucial role in establishing students' readiness and motivation to participate in the lesson.

During the lesson, ice breaking activities function as an effective tool to restore students' focus and reduce boredom, especially when signs of fatigue or disengagement begin to appear. Activities such as short games, pair discussions, or movement-based tasks can re-energize students and maintain their attention. Mau'izah et al. (2025) found that the integration of short and engaging ice breaking activities significantly improves students' concentration, particularly when they begin to lose focus during the learning process. Therefore, the use of ice breaking in the middle of the lesson is essential to sustain students' engagement and learning continuity.

At the end of the lesson, ice breaking activities can serve as reflective or closing activities. Teachers may use short quizzes, games, or interactive reviews to reinforce the material that has been taught. This not only helps students recall the lesson but also creates a positive and memorable closing atmosphere (Utami et al., 2025).



In terms of duration, ice breaking activities should be brief, typically ranging from 5 to 10 minutes, in order to maintain instructional efficiency. Teachers must also consider students' proficiency levels, class size, and learning objectives when selecting appropriate activities. An activity that is too complex may discourage students, while one that is too simple may fail to engage them effectively.

The effectiveness of implementing ice breaking activities is supported by several previous studies. Mahmud et al. (2023) reported that the use of ice breaking activities in English classrooms generated positive responses from students, as it increased their interest, reduced boredom, and created a more engaging classroom atmosphere. Furthermore, Kadariyah and Sa'diah (2026) found that well-structured ice breaking activities not only improved students' motivation and participation but also contributed to the development of their language skills and the creation of a more conducive learning environment.

Moreover, the success of ice breaking activities largely depends on the teacher's ability to manage time, provide clear instructions, and create a supportive classroom environment. When implemented appropriately, ice breaking activities can serve as an effective strategy not only to enhance students' engagement but also to support overall classroom management in EFL settings.

Benefits of Ice Breaking Activities for Classroom Management

Ice breaking activities provide various benefits in supporting effective classroom management, particularly in EFL classrooms where student engagement and participation are often challenging (Bupu et al., 2025). Based on the analysis of previous studies and relevant theories, the use of ice breaking activities contributes significantly to improving students' attention, participation, and the overall classroom atmosphere.

One of the primary benefits of ice breaking activities is their ability to increase students' attention and focus. In EFL classrooms, students often experience fatigue and boredom, which can reduce their concentration during the learning process. The use of short, engaging activities helps refresh students' minds and restore their focus. As noted by Sunarni et al. (2024), ice breaking activities can effectively improve students' concentration, especially when they begin to lose attention during classroom instruction. This finding is further supported by Safitriana et al. (2025), who reported that ice breaking activities create a more dynamic and enjoyable learning environment, which significantly enhances students' focus and engagement.

Another important benefit is the enhancement of students' participation. Ice breaking activities encourage students to become more actively involved in classroom interactions. Through interactive tasks such as games, discussions, and group activities, students are given opportunities to express their ideas and engage with their peers. Audria et al. (2024) found that students showed increased interest and willingness to participate when ice breaking activities were incorporated into the learning process. Similarly, Patimah et al. (2024) demonstrated that students became more enthusiastic and actively involved in learning activities after the implementation of ice breaking strategies.

In addition, ice breaking activities help to create a more conducive and positive classroom atmosphere. A relaxed and enjoyable learning environment can reduce students' anxiety and make them feel more comfortable in using English. This is particularly important in EFL contexts, where students often feel insecure about their language abilities. Kadariyah and Sa'diah (2026) highlighted that the use of ice breaking activities contributes to a more



supportive and interactive classroom environment, which in turn enhances students' motivation and engagement. Supporting this, Sumindar and Setiawan (2024) emphasized that creative ice breaking techniques foster a positive classroom climate and improve interaction among students, which are essential components of effective classroom management.

Furthermore, ice breaking activities play a role in building students' confidence. When students are involved in low-pressure and enjoyable activities, they are more likely to take risks in using the target language. This gradual exposure helps students become more confident in expressing themselves, both individually and in group settings. In line with this, Audria et al. (2025) found that ice breaking activities not only reduce students' anxiety but also improve their motivation and vocabulary mastery, which ultimately supports their confidence in participating in English learning activities.

Another significant benefit is the improvement of social interaction and collaboration among students. Many ice breaking activities involve pair or group work, which encourages students to communicate and cooperate with one another. This not only strengthens peer relationships but also promotes a sense of belonging within the classroom, which is crucial for maintaining a positive and well-managed learning environment.

Overall, the integration of ice breaking activities in EFL classrooms offers multiple advantages that support effective classroom management. By increasing attention, participation, and confidence, as well as creating a positive learning environment, ice breaking activities can significantly enhance the quality of the teaching and learning process.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that ice breaking activities play a significant role in supporting effective classroom management in EFL classrooms. Various types of ice breaking activities, including word games, guessing games, short conversational activities, and movement-based activities, can be implemented to create a more engaging and interactive learning environment. Each type contributes differently, ranging from improving vocabulary mastery to enhancing students' confidence and participation.

Furthermore, the implementation of ice breaking activities needs to be carefully planned and adjusted to the classroom context, including the timing of use (beginning, during, or end of the lesson), duration, and students' characteristics. When appropriately integrated into the learning process, ice breaking activities can effectively maintain students' attention, reduce boredom, and sustain engagement throughout the lesson.

In addition, ice breaking activities provide various benefits for classroom management, such as increasing students' focus, encouraging active participation, creating a positive classroom atmosphere, building students' confidence, and fostering collaboration among learners. These benefits are particularly important in EFL contexts, where students often face challenges related to low confidence and limited interaction.

Therefore, it can be concluded that ice breaking activities are not merely supplementary activities, but rather an essential strategy that can be utilized by teachers to enhance classroom management and improve the overall quality of English language learning. By designing meaningful and contextually relevant ice breaking activities, teachers can create a more conducive, interactive, and effective learning environment.

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