TEACHING ENGLISH USING ICE BREAKING TO TAIWANESE STUDENTS: EFL TEACHER'S EXPERIENCES

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Abstract: This research examined the challenge, strategy, advantages, and disadvantage of using ice-breaking when learning English among Taiwanese students. This research used narrative inquiry as its research design. Data was collected through interviews with an EFL teacher completing a doctoral program in Taiwan. Data analysis included identifying key themes from interview data. The research results stated that ice-breaking has challenges, strategies, advantages, and disadvantages when learning in class. The challenge was that students felt bored when the teacher used the same type of ice-breaking over and over again. The strategy was to use technology-based ice-breaking. The advantage was that it could improve a conducive learning environment. The disadvantage was that teachers had to have various types of ice-breaking. This research underlines the complexities of employing ice-breaking in English language instruction, as well as the significance of continued efforts, teacher flexibility, and creative variation to accommodate students' particular needs. In conclusion, a balanced and thoughtful approach to using ice-breaking is critical to fostering a successful enjoyable classroom for Taiwanese students. The implications of this research are useful for English teachers and students because ice-breaking can improve the relationship between teachers and students in learning.

Keywords: *EFL teacher's experiences; ice breaking; teaching English; students' motivation.*

INTRODUCTION
Students faced challenges in learning English because they were lack of motivation. Students need motivation in order they can easy to acquire their learning, especially in the classroom. In today's linked and globalized world, the necessity of studying English for students cannot be emphasized. The English language is spoken worldwide, and it has earned the title of global language (Srinivas, 2019). English has gone beyond being just a language; it has become a portal to many possibilities and a critical instrument for personal and academic development. Proficiency in English allows students to communicate effectively with people worldwide, fostering international understanding and collaboration. Hence, students' motivation to learn English is influenced by how the EFL teachers teach their students. Their teaching is shown by the teachers' communication styles.

Teaching English is of fundamental importance. English has grown as a lingua franca, bringing individuals from different linguistic backgrounds together, allowing worldwide communication, and acting as a common language in industries such as commerce, science, and technology. Individuals who are fluent in English have a multitude of options, including the ability to engage in cross-cultural conversations, seek further education at prominent institutions, and access a vast range of material in the language. Teaching English plays a crucial role in enhancing cognitive and linguistic abilities. Learning a foreign language, such as English, has been linked to improved problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and multitasking abilities. It also contributes to the development of cultural awareness and sensitivity, fostering a global

perspective among learners. Moreover, English is often considered the language of innovation and research, teaching it equips students with the skills necessary to stay abreast of advancements in various fields and participate in the global knowledge exchange.

Individually, English competence offers access to a wide range of academic and professional opportunities. Communicating in English has become a fundamental skill that should be cultivated in all academic settings (Escobar Fandiño et al., 2019). In an era where cross-border collaboration is frequent, English literacy improves students' capacity to engage in worldwide academic discourse, access a wealth of global knowledge, and participate in a globalized workforce. English proficiency is more than simply a language ability; it is a strategic advantage that enables students to negotiate the challenges of an increasingly linked and competitive world. EFL teachers face the challenge of ensuring their students can utilize the language effectively in real-world situations (Namaziandost & Nasri, 2019). English as a Foreign Language teachers approach professional development in five ways: educational programs, academic pursuits outside the classroom, government schemes, and self-directed schooling (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019).

Teachers should tailor instructional plans to each student's unique learning circumstance, taking into account their specific issues and traits (Wang, 2023). Students will succeed in studying English if they have a strong desire to learn. So, the capacity to communicate successfully in English is an important component of cultural competency. As students begin their academic adventures, acquiring English language skills not only enhances their personal and academic experiences but also provides them with the necessary tools for success in an interconnected and multicultural world. In the following conversation, we will go deeper into the many benefits of learning English, looking at how it enables students to prosper academically, professionally, and emotionally in our fast-changing global society.

Motivation to learn is one of the determining variables in the achievement of educational goals (Puspitarini & Hanif, 2019). Motivation is a crucial aspect that determines success or failure in language acquisition (Yusuf et al., 2020). Improving student motivation is a crucial aspect of the teaching profession, which requires significant work from teachers (Sabry Daif-Allah & Aljumah, 2020). Motivation is a fundamental part of the human experience (Morris et al., 2022). Motivation for Learning English proficiency is characterized by a strong desire to study the language (Adila et al., 2018). Motivation, defined as intrinsic or extrinsic, is a key aspect in learning English (Sari & Ningsih, 2022). Intrinsic motivation is a kind of motivation that arises internally within the students (Husna & Murtini, 2019). Extrinsic motivation occurs when learners get inspired by external benefits, such as grades or praise, rather than the learning itself. English language learning requires a friendly setting that fosters students' active engagement. Students' engagement in learning English can be achieved through ice-breaking. Ice breaking in learning English might be done when starting a class, halting during material delivery, and finishing learning (Adi et al., 2021). This type of ice-breaking can be used to kick off a session or conversation or to introduce a new topic (Rahmayanti et al., 2019). Students might become bored when teachers use the same strategy without engaging them in new activities, such as ice-breaking (Farwati et al., 2019). Ice-breaking activities play an important role in teaching and learning. The purpose of this study is to investigate the EFL teacher's challenges, strategies, advantages, and disadvantages when giving ice-breaking activities in English teaching and learning.

Ice-breaking exercises are critical in building a good and inclusive learning atmosphere, especially while teaching. Ice breaking is a common technique used to welcome and warm up talks among attendees at meetings, training classes, team-building sessions, and other events (Agusriana, 2021). Ice-breaking is an excellent approach to increasing the enthusiasm of students (Al Ghifarah & Pusparini, 2023). These exercises are engaging tools for reducing stress, encouraging engagement, and instilling a feeling of community in students. Ice-breaking is used at the start of a course or workshop to break down social barriers and assist students in becoming more comfortable with one another. This social cohesiveness is critical for effective learning because it encourages open communication, cooperation, and a supportive environment in which students are more likely to engage and express their ideas.

Furthermore, icebreaking exercises are effective instruments for revitalizing the learning environment. These exercises are intended to be enjoyable, participatory, and occasionally demanding, instilling a sense of passion in the classroom. Teachers may attract students' attention

by integrating amusing features, making the learning process more pleasurable and memorable. This good energy frequently continues over into the rest of the session, fostering an environment in which students are more open to new ideas and eager to actively participate in the learning process. Teaching using ice-breaking has a long-term influence on the entire learning experience. Teachers should be inspired and encouraged to incorporate ice-breaking into their courses, as well as modify their field of expertise (Kamel et al., 2019). The connections made during these activities can last beyond the first introduction, resulting in a more collaborative and supportive learning environment. The icebreaking strategy helps pupils improve their speaking skills and overcome nervousness (Hamrin, 2022). Students are more likely to have a feeling of belonging and connection to their peers, which can boost their drive to study and contribute to a cooperative classroom environment. Insummary, using ice-breaking activities in the classroom not only breaks down initial barriers between students, but it also creates a dynamic and interactive learning atmosphere that improves the entire educational experience.

Many researchers have been conducted some research on how ice-breaking effective in learning English. Based on the research conducted by Adi et al., (2021), ice-breaking was beneficial in motivating first-grade students at SMP Nurul Jadid to enjoy, be active, energized, interact, remain in class, and focus on the subject. After that, Astuti et al., (2020), ice-breaking or warming up can increase students' motivation and interest in the learning process. In general, the previous studies agree that ice-breaking can improve students' motivation to learn English. However, there is still no research that discusses about challenges, strategies, advantages, and disadvantages of ice breaking when it is implemented in classroom activities and this research wants to investigate it. Thus, that is the reason why the researcher is interested in conducting this research to know the EFL teacher's experiences about ice-breaking especially in Taiwanese students. The research questions about this study are: (1) What challenges do EFL teachers face in implementing ice-breaking activities? (2) What strategies do EFL teachers face in implementing ice-breaking activities? (3) What are the advantages of ice breaking when used in class? (4) What are the disadvantages of ice breaking when used in class?

METHOD

This point will describe the research design for this study in depth. First, some background information on this study is presented. Second, the chapter goes on the setting and participants. Third, the data collection will be described in this study. Fourth, the data sources in this chapter provide a summary of the pilot study, including the results of the research instrument improvement. Fifth, the explanations of the data collecting and analytic procedures for the current investigation.

This research used narrative inquiry as a research design. In this study, the reason why the researcher utilized narrative inquiry to explore the participants' experiences in-depth on a particular topic or phenomenon in ice breaking. By collecting and analyzing their narratives, the researcher could gain a deeper understanding of the topic and capture the complexity and richness of the participants' experiences. The researcher employed narrative inquiry to elicit the participants' experiences and viewpoints on a certain subject or event. The researcher might obtain a greater grasp of the issue by collecting and analyzing their tales, as well as capturing the depth and variety of the participants' experiences. Narrative inquiry's approach has led to the development of keywords and distinctions that define what constitutes narrative inquiry and research (Clandinin, 2016). Narrative inquiry's relational features enable researchers and participants to interact and connect, leading to a more comprehensive knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation (Haydon et al., 2018). Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research method that seeks to comprehend people's experiences by gathering and analyzing their tales or narratives. It entails listening to personal tales, examining the themes and patterns in the narratives, and understanding the meaning behind them.

The participant in this research used a pseudonym, namely, Zizi. Zizi comes from Lombok, Indonesia. He was my classmate when I was in the undergraduate program at Universitas Islam Malang (UNISMA). He was 32 years old. During his studies at the university, he was a very active student and joined many programs of students. He is a very kind person. He got a scholarship to study for his bachelor's in UNISMA. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in 2014. After that, he became a teaching assistant and helped the lecturers a lot. After that, he got a scholarship again and he continued his master's degree at UNISMA in 2017 and graduated in 2019. Later, he became an English lecturer and helped

teach religion at the Faculty of Islamic Religion, because he was previously an ustadz from the Ainul Yaqin Islamic boarding school. Finally, he received another scholarship to complete his doctoral program at the National Pingtung University (NPTU) in Pingtung, Taiwan. Currently, he is at the end of the semester of his studies. Besides completing his studies, he is an English teacher in an English course called the English Language Teaching Assistant Program (ELTA). ELTA students come from elementary and middle school.

In this study, the researcher used interviews to obtain the data of this study. The researcher encouraged the selected participant to contribute his experiences and stories. This technique involves conducting semi-structured interviews to gather the participant's experiences and stories.

To collect the participant's tales of how he taught his students utilizing ice breaking, the researcher would obtain data using his pre-career and professional teaching history interview using an online interview with Google Meet application. The interviews lasted for about fifty minutes.

The data was analyzed using a narrative approach. This method entails systematically reviewing the collected data to find repeating themes, patterns, and insights inherent in the narratives offered by EFL teachers. Using a narrative method, the researchers sought to explore teachers' unique tales and personal experiences using novel ice-breaking strategies in their English language classroom. The qualitative complexity of the data enables a more in-depth knowledge of the contextual problems that influence the execution of these techniques. Through this narrative story, the study aims to contribute to the realistic depiction of EFL teacher's daily experiences as they overcome the difficulties of English language teaching.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Ice-Breaking in Teaching English to Taiwanese Students: EFL Teacher's Experiences, the focus narrows to an in-depth exploration of the experiences of a specific EFL teacher in Taiwan. Through an extensive interview with this participant, the narrative inquiry unveils a rich tapestry of the teacher's journey in integrating ice-breaking techniques into his English teaching methods. Themes emerging from the narrative shed light on the teacher's challenges, strategies, advantages, and disadvantages of ice breaking that impact student engagement, and the role of adaptability in navigating the complexities of language education in the Taiwanese context. This

single-participant narrative inquiry provides a nuanced understanding of the individual teacher's experiences, contributing unique experiences to the broader discourse on innovative language teaching practices in Taiwan. The following are the themes found from interviews given to a participant:

EFL teachers' challenges of using ice-breaking
Teaching English to Taiwanese students using ice-breaking poses certain challenges for Zizi. One significant obstacle is the repetition of the same type of ice-breaking, leading to student boredom. Varying ice-breaking is crucial to maintaining engagement. Additionally, mastering a diverse range of ice-breaking suitable for different student levels presents a second challenge. Teachers are expected to possess the versatility to adapt ice-breaking to cater to the varied needs and proficiency levels of students, requiring a continuous effort to keep the learning experience dynamic and captivating.

> "I have obstacles in teaching English to Taiwanese students using ice-breaking. The obstacle I face when I give ice-breaking is when I give the same type of ice-breaking over and over again. This makes the students bored. Apart from that, the second challenge is that teachers are expected to be able to master various types of ice-breaking that are suitable for use at various levels of students."

EFL teachers' strategies to incorporate ice-breaking
Employing various strategies enhances his effectiveness in utilizing ice-breaking while teaching English to Taiwanese students. Firstly, Zizi incorporates technology-based ice-breaking, utilizing tools such as Mentimeter and Board Games to make the learning experience more engaging and interactive. Secondly, he integrates ice-breaking not only before but also during and after the learning process, creating a continuous and dynamic classroom environment. Thirdly, he ensures clarity by explaining the rules of the ice-breaking games before introducing them to his students, fostering a smooth and enjoyable experience. Lastly, Zizi diversifies my approach by incorporating ice-breaking not only common in my home country but also those from different cultures worldwide. Recognizing the significance of such versatility, he advocates for teachers to undergo ice-breaking training, enabling them to develop and implement their creative ice-

breaking, ultimately enriching the language learning experience for their students.

> "I have several strategies for using ice-breaking when teaching English to Taiwanese students. The first strategy is to use technology-based ice-breaking such as Mentimeter and Board Games. The second strategy is that I often use ice-breaking not only before learning but also during learning and after learning. The third strategy is that I explain the rules of the game before I give the ice-breaking to my students. My final strategy is that I don't only use ice-breaking which are mostly used in my own country but also in other countries. Therefore, teachers need to take part in ice-breaking training so that they can create their ice-breaking."

The advantages of using ice-breaking
Utilizing ice-breaking in English language learning with Taiwanese students yields multiple advantages. Firstly, it enhances student concentration on the material, creating a focused and conducive learning atmosphere. Secondly, the use of ice-breaking fosters a sense of comfort among students, indirectly boosting their participation and concentration levels. This, in turn, contributes to a more dynamic and engaged classroom environment. Thirdly, teachers incorporating ice-breaking often become students' favorite teachers, as the approach adds an element of enjoyment to the learning process. Finally, the use of ice-breaking facilitates the strengthening of relationships between students and teachers, fostering a positive and interactive dynamic throughout the learning journey.

> "There are several benefits that I feel when I use ice-breaking for learning English with Taiwanese students. The first advantage is that it makes students more concentrated on the material. The second advantage is that it can make students more comfortable when learning. Indirectly, student participation and concentration will increase. The third advantage is that teachers who use ice-breaking will become students' favorite teachers. The fourth advantage is that there is an increase in the relationship between students and teachers during learning."

The disadvantages of using ice-breaking
While incorporating ice-breaking during learning, students often become so engrossed in the activities that they lose track of time, forgetting about the conventional study time. The enthusiasm generated by ice-breaking can inadvertently pose a challenge when it comes to managing time effectively. If teachers fail to adeptly regulate the duration of these activities, the enthusiasm that makes ice-breaking enjoyable might become a drawback. Therefore, careful time management is essential to strike a balance between the energy and engagement fostered by ice-breaking and the need to cover the intended curriculum within the allocated timeframe.

> "When using ice-breaking during learning, students forget about their study time because they are too enthusiastic about carrying out ice-breaking. Therefore, time becomes a drawback of the ice-breaking itself if the teacher cannot manage the time in providing the ice-breaking."

The challenges faced by Zizi in teaching English to Taiwanese students using ice-breaking prompt a discussion on the complexities of implementing such techniques in the classroom. The identified obstacle of repetitive ice-breaking leading to student boredom underscores the importance of variety in instructional methods. This study is in line with Mahmud et al. (2023) that ice-breaking might reduce students' motivation to study English in class, causing boredom. To sustain engagement, Zizi must diversify the types of ice-breaking employed, ensuring a dynamic and stimulating learning environment. Furthermore, the necessity of mastering a diverse range of ice-breaking suitable for different student levels introduces another layer of complexity. Adapting ice-breaking to accommodate varying proficiency levels becomes imperative, demanding a high level of teacher versatility. This challenge emphasizes the need for ongoing efforts to tailor icebreaking activities to meet the specific needs of students across different language proficiency levels. In essence, the discussion sheds light on the intricate nature of using ice-breaking in English language teaching, emphasizing the vital role of variety and adaptability in fostering an effective and engaging learning experience for Taiwanese students.

The research underscores the effectiveness of Zizi's diverse strategies in incorporating ice-breaking while teaching English to Taiwanese students. By integrating technology-based ice-breaking, such as Mentimeter, Zizi enhances the interactive nature of the learning experience, aligning with modern educational trends. Mentimeter program is an existing online tool/web browser, for ice breaking (Pratama et al., 2021). The decision to integrate ice-breaking throughout

the learning process, not just before, ensures a continuous and dynamic classroom environment, promoting sustained engagement. Zizi's commitment to clarity, as evidenced by explaining the rules before introducing ice-breaking games, contributes to a seamless and enjoyable learning experience. Moreover, the incorporation of ice-breaking from various cultural backgrounds showcases a global perspective, enriching the students' exposure to different linguistic and cultural nuances. Zizi's advocacy for ice-breaking training emphasizes the importance of empowering teachers to develop their creative ice-breaking, fostering an adaptable and innovative teaching environment that ultimately enhances the overall language-learning experience for Taiwanese students.

The discussion on utilizing ice-breaking in English language learning with Taiwanese students highlights the myriad benefits associated with this instructional approach. Firstly, the enhancement of student concentration on the material is a notable advantage, creating a focused and conducive learning atmosphere. Ice breaking can improve the learning environment by reducing noise and preparing students for the topic content (Fitria, 2023). Ice-breaking catalyzes heightened engagement, capturing students' attention and encouraging active participation. This result is in line with the research conducted by Sasan et al., (2023) said that using ice-breaking may increase students' reported enthusiasm and participation. However, this research is in contrast to research conducted by Sari et al., (2021) who said that learning through ice-breaking cannot enhance students' focus. Due to their lack of familiarity with the learning process and ice-breaking activity, students may grow frustrated and confused with the teacher's instructions. Secondly, the cultivation of a sense of comfort among students through the use of ice-breaking indirectly contributes to increased concentration levels. This not only creates a more dynamic and engaged classroom environment but also establishes a positive emotional connection with the learning process. This research is in line with research by Giani et al., (2022) said that the existence of the ice-breaking approach in the middle of learning could assist students to concentrate more so that they can focus on their studies and feel comfortable learning.

Thirdly, teachers who incorporate ice-breaking often become students' favorite, as the enjoyable nature of these activities adds a layer of excitement to the learning journey. The result is based on the

research by Adi et al., (2021) that ice-breaking is greatly important to make the teaching-learning process run easily and enjoyable to learn English. However, boredom among students, if not solved, will certainly have a negative effect on the learning process, and their stress can be produced by numerous sources, including physical issues, psychological ones, or a combination of these two. So, teachers who use ice-breaking must pay attention to students' physical and psychological factors (Triyono et al., 2023). Lastly, the use of ice-breaking facilitates the strengthening of relationships between students and teachers, fostering a positive and interactive dynamic throughout the entirety of the learning experience. This research is based on the study by Darmayanti et al., (2023) that ice-breaking activities can improve student-teacher interactions and help new students adapt to the classroom environment more easily. Overall, the discussion underscores the multifaceted advantages of integrating ice-breaking into English language instruction for Taiwanese students, emphasizing the positive impact on concentration, participation, enjoyment, and teacher-student relationships.

The research brings attention to a noteworthy aspect of incorporating ice-breaking during learning, emphasizing the potential impact on time management. As students become deeply engrossed in these activities, the enthusiasm generated may lead them to lose track of conventional study time. The disadvantage of this approach is that the teacher must be skilled and creative (Pratama et al., 2021). However, this research contradicts research conducted by Rusman (2022) who said that some teachers are uncomfortable with incorporating ice-breaking into the learning process because they are content with the boring teaching technique that is similar to lectures. While the heightened engagement is a positive outcome, it simultaneously poses a challenge for effective time management. The risk lies in the possibility that the enjoyment derived from ice-breaking might inadvertently extend beyond the allotted timeframe, potentially affecting the coverage of the intended curriculum. It is imperative for teachers to skillfully regulate the duration of ice-breaking activities to strike a delicate balance between the energy and engagement they foster and the necessity to fulfill the academic requirements within the designated time constraints. This finding underscores the importance of incorporating ice-breaking judiciously, requiring educators to navigate the fine line between capturing student enthusiasm and

ensuring a disciplined adherence to the overall learning schedule.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Zizi's experiences in teaching English to Taiwanese students using ice-breaking highlight both challenges and effective strategies. The identified challenge of repetitive ice-breaking leading to student boredom emphasizes the critical role of variety in instructional methods on the potential negative impact of icebreaking on students' motivation. Zizi has employed diverse strategies to overcome these challenges, incorporating technology-based ice-breaking, ensuring clarity in instructions, and advocating for cultural diversity in icebreaking activities. The multifaceted benefits of ice-breaking, such as enhanced concentration, increased student comfort, and strengthened teacher-student relationships, underscore their positive impact on the learning experience. However, the potential time management challenges associated with students becoming engrossed in ice-breaking necessitate careful regulation. This study emphasizes the intricate nature of using ice-breaking in English language teaching and emphasizes the importance of ongoing efforts, teacher versatility, and creative adaptation to meet the specific needs of students. In essence, a balanced and mindful approach to incorporating ice-breaking is essential to fostering an effective and engaging learning environment for Taiwanese students. There are several recommendations for future research. First, future research can use case study research design. Second, future research can conduct the similar research in the private or public schools, because this research was investigated in the English course. The limitations of this research are the limited sample size and environmental context.

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