



## ICE-BREAKERS AND WARMERS: EFFECTIVE TOOLS IN DEVELOPING SPOKEN ENGLISH

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### ABSTRACT

*A foreign language teacher necessarily has to invent innovative, practicable and the most feasible techniques to achieve a desired goal. The techniques can be adopted or invented at the individual level of the teacher who deals with the target group of students. In the present time, developing oral communication is a vital component in the teaching of English as a foreign language. The general goal of the teacher is to motivate the learners to speak in the language they are learning. The inclusion of innovative methodologies like direct method, virtual classroom conditions, tools and models and the individual potential related theories may best suit the common conditions for the second language learners. The paper focuses on the utility and necessity of the inclusion of ice-breakers and warmers in the language curriculum prepared for the second language learners. The activities like - draw a picture, guess the feelings, language games, group and pair works etc. are to be practiced by taking much caution of the physical, mental and social conditions of the ESL learners.*

**Key words :** *Innovative, target group, interactive, fun-oriented, psychological, participatory approach, curriculum, ESL, experimentation etc.*

### INTRODUCTION

During the recent times, teaching of speaking English in India as a foreign language has produced several theories and modules. The second language learners come across various such theories which enable them learn English with the help of the tools and techniques. However, despite numerous such additions in the theoretical framework and the practical



lessons, learning of speaking English still remains unspeakable and unattainable. The models suggested by modern linguists and theoreticians provide learners a definite scope to practice English with the given lessons and modules. While teaching English in a second language learners' class, it provides teacher or trainer an opportunity to exercise various tools and techniques to make the classroom environment learner friendly. The trainer is no longer a teacher now but has turned these days as the facilitator. The process of facilitation definitely opens a wide scope to the teacher who turns as facilitator to manage the mastery in the class by employing his expertise and skills. In this process, the facilitator retains the role of a key role player who with his own experience and planning perform miraculous experiments in English or foreign language learning class.

### Background Study:

Learning of English or a foreign language is often recommended with theory and the feasible practices. English as a foreign language has several theories propounded by linguists and experts for spoken English programme. To design a strategic framework on a spoken English workshop, it is suggested that a facilitator needs to identify the state of learners in the form of their age groups, educational qualifications, formal background, etc. While designing on effective foreign language learning programme, it is normally advised that the facilitator or the expert in the language must work out a suitable plan by keeping in view the target learners' ability in dealing with the sessions plan. Therefore, a facilitator may prepare a meticulous manual incorporating all the essential inputs including methodology of teaching, contents or study topics, sessions with the formal and informal interactions etc. According to Sunney Tharuppan, a veteran researcher and facilitator in language enhancement programme, an effective manual has to be prepared by taking into account several aspects of carrying out ninety hours spoken English programme. The trainer or expert is expected to keep attention at some aspects such as,-target trainees, talking assistance (talking companions), class room facilities, course material, course administration, and autonomy in the classroom to both the trainers and the trainees. Effective teaching and learning strategies, conducting and introducing various exercises, planned curriculum, session timings, learner relieving session arrangements, carrying out drills, classroom and home assignments, etc. However, conducting sessions with inclusion of all the components require an effective facilitation. Such facilitation, apart from the course content, strategic planning, and teaching methodology also needs the fillers in the form of informal dialogues and dealing with the group of the trainers

### Why Need Icebreakers and Warmers :

Teaching and learning of foreign language like English has still been a big task to both the teachers and learners. Research studies have shown that out of several hurdles in this process,

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the most commonly agreed upon hurdle in the methodology has proved somewhat insufficient or inappropriate and hence, due to the lack of potentiality and effectiveness in the practicing methodology, teaching of English or foreign language has become difficult. Hence, despite the knowledge and expertise in the language domain, the process remains incomplete and unaccomplished. Therefore, a facilitator, while organising training sessions for a target oriented group or class, has to have a careful look at the learners' group, its strengths and limitations, likes and dislikes, preferences and denial, acceptance and rejections etc. It is the very psychoanalytical basis of the study of target group and their ideal and idle behavioral patterns. Hence, a facilitator must prioritize the psychological demands of the learners and thereby plan and strategically design learning policies.

To assist the design spoken English programme, a trained facilitator normally prefer language games, fillers, fun-oriented talks, warmers and icebreakers by carefully purposefully avoiding the critical pedagogical concepts. Initially, every training session may begin with the icebreakers and warmers. Eventually it has been found through the common consensus that, the second language learners do not naturally or spontaneously show readiness to pick up a spoken task due to the non-exposure of foreign or English language speaking conditions or situations. It is the very fear of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation that most of the learners keep indifference to the given task. Such an indifference is quite common everywhere and this state needs to be lifted up by enabling learners come forward and participate the activity. The activity to bring each individual participant initially provides a little relaxed mental conditioning and a ready platform to the learners. The activities motivate participants to participate individually in the form of icebreakers provide an informal platform. There are several ways and advantages of ice breakers in a language learning process. They are intended to

1. Make learners get to know each other in the target learning group
2. Bring among each learner of effective learning due to the value he/she gets in group
3. The group activities help learners enjoy themselves
4. Provides learners a relaxed feeling of having companions to support and appreciate
5. To get motivation through group assistance and collaboration in learning foreign language
6. It avails learner an opportunity in group learning and overcoming individual fear
7. It enables learner practice language there is no fear of failure.

Ice breakers, being a collective or group activity mostly performed in a play way method with essential language learning outcome influence target learners. It effects positively to all the learners equally due to its collaborative learning strategy. Icebreakers though appear funny, informal, easy, and as a group activity; but it has remarkable credentials in language learning process. A facilitator may design icebreaking sessions considering the learners group as

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beginners, elementary, intermediate, or advanced learners. A careful and cautionary activity may well serve the purpose of the openers to the following up advanced sessions. The facilitator, while exercising and executing the activities must carry out the intended language learning tasks. Therefore, the facilitator can spend some extra time in meticulous workout and design of the icebreaker session. There are two important points such as the name and nature of activity and the essential learning outcome. This activity may cause another issue if not carefully planned and conducted with the intended language learning task

A facilitator must also think of the do's and don'ts, as the purpose should not suffer from for which it is intended normally. A language learning, 'Breaking the Ice' consists of saluting, returning the solute, respecting, eliciting, introducing, thanking etc. The facilitator needs to observe the language delivery process along with the interest of the learners. It is expected that, a facilitator may direct the activity being an external observer than being a participant in the role of the learners like the participants do.

There are several examples of icebreakers as follows.

- a. Show me your picture  
(Asking learners draw any picture and to show it to others and describe it)
- b. Find Five Things in Common (Interaction with participants)
- c. Wordplay (Finding words in different forms and classes)
- d. What Annoys You (Asking every person about his or her mood)
- e. My Last Film (Tell about the recent movies watched)
- f. Who Are You (Open-ended individual speech or reaction)
- g. What I Don't Like (Individual opinion by participants)

Alike the above few icebreaking exercises, there are various fun-oriented and gaming exercises as well.

### Warmers:

As icebreakers are to initiate speech or dialogues among the learners, warmers are equally beneficial in language learning class. Alike icebreakers, warmers may have following intention in English as second language class.

- a. Warmers are intended to fill in the gap between the two exercises or activities, usually in a relaxed informal and funny way.



- b. To help learners get warmed up from the previous exercises and to prepare for next activities.
- c. Intended to relieve mental stress if any by light physical activities or funny gap fillers.
- d. It helps learners focus on their activities through a refreshed mind
  - e. Warmers assist learners to change mood and divert one from any stressful activity
  - f. It is intended to shift learners approach from any negative experience to the positive one.
  - g. Warmers regenerate mental energy and get prepared to perform next tasks enthusiastically.
  - h. It determines the break in activities or sessions.

Warmers, in a language learning class, provides learner several benefits redoubles their mental faculty adopt and grasp new and challenging tasks positively and enthusiastically.

Following are a few exercises or activities for an English language class.

1. Picture Mingle (drawing picture-pasting it on front arm-- shuffling of students--music- repetition)
2. Hot Seat (Students in a team-one sitting back to the board--write the word guess without utterance)
3. Line up (Question- How long to school? short time-- long time-learners stand In line.
4. Name Game : Repetition I am.... You are... She/he is...)

In this way, warmers are the most motivating and essential gap fillers in the language learning process.

### CONCLUSION:

Icebreakers and Warmers in the language classrooms heighten the creative interests, interactive responses, fun-oriented events by reducing the efforts of teachers. Several types of Warmers and Ice-breakers possibly make the involvement of each of the learners in the class. The practice of the exercises surely builds up confidence and motivate learners follow each other in performing the exercises. It not only invites learners' psychological interest but also the linguistic interest as well. The Ice-breakers and Warmers are fear free activities concentrating more on the participatory approach of the English as second language (ESL) learner in the language learning related activities.



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