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The Effect of Using Ice-Breaking Activities Integrated with the Audio-Lingual Method on the Speaking Skills of Seventh Grade Students at Junior High School in Semarang in Academic Year 2025/2026

Iin Isria Nurul Hidayah
English Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia, isriaiin7@gmail.com

Ngasbun Egar
English Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia, ngasbunegar@upgris.ac.id

Siti Musarokah
English Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia, sitimusarokah@upgris.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Many junior high school students still lack speaking skill and motivation in learning English. Because motivation significantly impacts student engagement and performance, teachers must create an engaging learning environment. Therefore, the researcher conducted a quantitative study to assess the impact of audio-lingual method with ice-breaking as the technique on students' motivation and speaking skills in English among first-grade students at junior high shcool in Semarang (2024/2025). A pre-experimental design was used, involving pre-test, treatment, and post-test phases, to measure improvements in speaking skills after utilizing audio-lingual methods alongside ice-breaking techniques. Statistical analysis of the test data aimed to provide empirical evidence of the effectiveness of these methods in enhancing students' learning experiences. The researcher found that the students' scores was poor before the treatment. Whereas after the treatment, students' scores improved although not all of them. The results of the T-test was significant since the p-value or sig (2-tailed) was 0.000, which was less than 0.05 (5%). The null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. It can be concluded that employing ALM repetition drills and ice breaking improved student's speaking skill.

Keywords: Audio Lingual Method (ALM), Ice Breaking, Speaking skill

Introduction

English is spoken in almost all countries because English is an international language used in various parts of the world. According to (Yusmalinda & Astuti, 2020) English's widespread use in almost every nation has led to its selection as an international language. In English, there are four skills that need to be learned: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are grouped into two types, productive and receptive skills. Writing and speaking are seen as productive or active skills, whereas reading and listening are regarded as passive or receptive skills (Putera et al., 2022). By using the mouth organs that produce sounds, speaking can be easier to convey ideas and information clearly. Compared to other skills, speaking skills are active skills that are quite difficult to do because they require several elements to be mastered. The components of spoken language include grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension (Suriyawan et al., 2025). English speaking skills of young learners are still very lacking because they are new to English as a second language, lack of confidence and lack of motivation.

Motivation is an internal or external drive that makes someone want to do something to achieve a specific goal, whether consciously or unconsciously. With motivation, students will do things with pleasure and with greater focus, with a clear goal in mind. According to (Nurkholis et al., 2022), Motivation is a compulsion that resides within an individual to attempt to alter their behavior in a manner that most effectively fulfills their requirements. (Adi et al., 2021), learning motivation can be seen from student behavior and characteristics related to willingness, attention, concentration, and perseverance. Motivation is crucial for English as a foreign language learning, significantly influencing student achievement and performance (Yulfi & Aalayina, 2021). Students with low motivation will feel lazy and reluctant to engage in productive activities, which can prevent them from achieving their goals. To create a fun learning environment, teachers must continually think creatively to develop a variety of media, methods and strategies. Monotonous methods and simple media can decrease student motivation. One of learning method that can increase speaking skill is using audio-lingual method (ALM). According to (*Freeman, 2000*), There are several audio-lingual method techniques, namely dialog memorization, expansion drill, repetition drill, chain drill, single-slot substitution drill, multiple substitution drill, transformation drill, question-and-answer drill, use of minimal pairs, complete the dialog, and grammar game. Because this study chose the repetition drill, this method focuses on imitating the pronunciation. Speaking and listening comprehension are the main emphases of the ALM method of teaching foreign languages (Putra et al., 2022). The audio-lingual method (ALM) was supported by strategies to create enjoyable learning beyond media, namely the use of icebreaker techniques. According to (I Wayan Kasni & Komang Elisa Ayumi Dewi, 2022), The word "icebreaking" is derived from two foreign words: "breaking" means to break, and "ice" implies to have hard, cold, and stiff qualities. According to (Fitria, 2023), Ice breaking might be in the form of yells, applause, singing, gestures and songs, limb exercises, or games. Icebreakers can make the learning atmosphere more active and enjoyable, especially for young learners. According to (Adi et al., 2021) Using icebreakers to treat pupils could help them become more motivated to learn English in the seventh grade. A happy and comfortable feeling will increase students' interest and motivation to learn. Then, if motivation has been formed within the student, learning will be easier to accept

and learning objectives will be achieved. Icebreaking involves unifying perceptions, harmonizing movements and sounds, and maintaining unity. The objectives of this study is to found out whether the use of ice breaking activities assisted with the audio-lingual method (ALM) can improve the student's ability in speaking introduction self or not.

Methods

The study utilized a quantitative research methodology. By using statistical tools, this approach helps measure the impact of using effective icebreakers to increase students' motivation in learning English in first grade (Adi et al., 2021)**.** The researcher utilized a pre-experimental design for this study, consisting of pre-test, treatment, and post-test phases. This method is intended to identify and evaluate the primary differences in students' speaking skill after being taught using audio-lingual method and ice breaking.

According to Creswell (2012), a population is a collection of people who share a certain trait. While definition of sample according to Creswell (2012), a sample is a subgroup of the target population that a researcher studies to generalize about the target population. So, the population of this study was all seventh grade students at SMP PGRI 01 Semarang which consisted 8 classes from A-H class, while the sample was taken from class 7D which consisted of 35 students. The sample was taken using a cluster sampling. According (Harahap, 2018), cluster sampling is a sampling procedure where the groups (with similar features) are randomly picked. The sample should be selected at random in order to determine the effectiveness of the study. According to (Harahap, 2018) The instrument is a device designed to inspect or quantify both constant and variable qualities. To assess the influence of audio-lingual method and ice breaking on students' speaking skill, the primary instrument used is a speaking assessments. The students were asked to introduce themselves one by one in front of their friends. The researcher then gave them scores based on the speaking components: pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and comprehension. Each component has a score of 20, which when added together totals 100. The following is the table of scoring categories of achievement.

Table 1. The Scoring Categories of Achievement

No.	Category	Score
1.	Great	90 – 100
2.	Good	80 – 89
3.	Enough	70 – 79
4.	Inadequate	60 – 69
5.	Failed	<60

The technique of data analysis was used t-test and descriptive text. Descriptive statistics were performed using statistical tools like SPSS to guarantee precision and facilitate analysis:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

Notes:

$\bar{x}$ = Mean

$\sum x$ = Sum of all observation values

n = Total of the sample

To ascertain whether any detected variations in students' motivation improvement are statistically significant, the t-test examined pre-test and post-test results. A significance level of 5% ($p < 0.05$) was applied, following Sudjana's (2008) recommendation. The means of the samples before and after treatment are compared using a dependent sample t-test. Ary *et al* (2010:176) the mean difference between paired scores is the metric investigated by the dependent t-test, and pre-test and post-test scores from the same individual are an example of paired scores. According to (WIDA & RENDA, 2023) The formula of T-test analysis was used:

$$t = \frac{\overline{D}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D^2 - (\sum D)^2}{N(N-1)}}}$$

Notes:

t = t ratio

$\overline{D}$ = Average difference

$\sum D^2$ = Different scores squared, then summed

$(\sum D^2)$ = correlation between two sample

N = The number of elements in a sample

Findings and Discussion

1. **Students' speaking ability before being taught using ice breaking activities assisted with the audio lingual method (ALM)**

As the only experimental class, 35 students from class 7D of SMP PGRI 01 have carried out the pre-test process and produced a varying scores. The score was achieved from the process learning without using audio lingual method (ALM) as a learning method and ice breaking as the strategic of learning. And the result, the average score of pre-test was 61. Then, the minimum score of pre-test was 54 and the maximum score was 70.

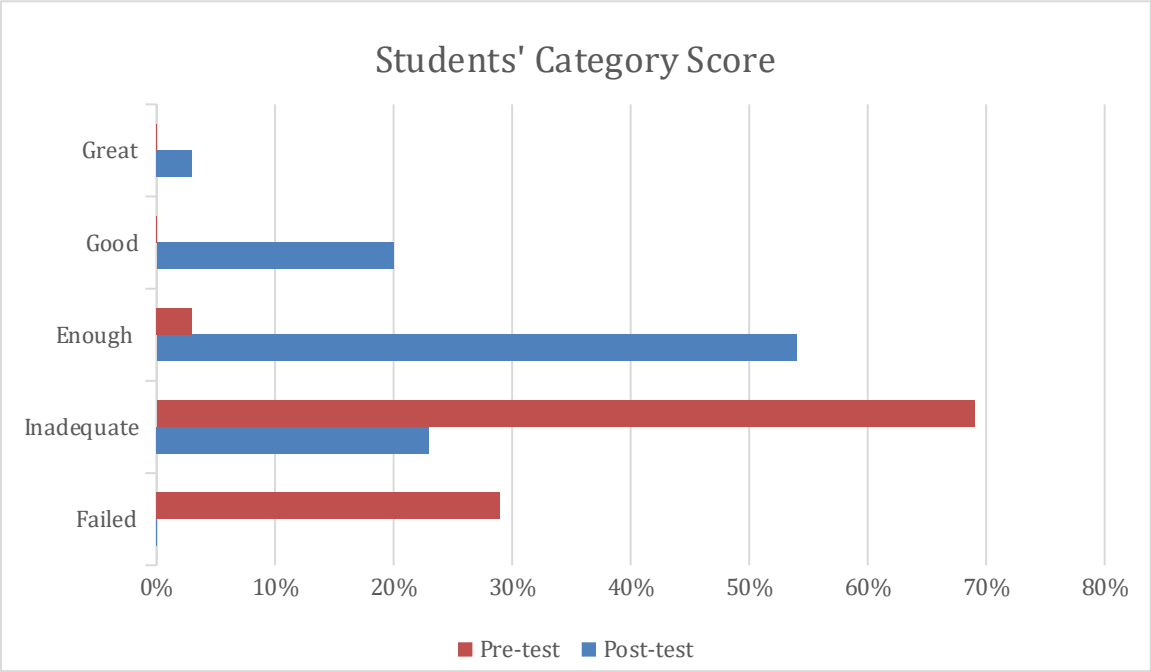
2. **Students' speaking ability after being taught using ice breaking activities assisted with the audio lingual method (ALM)**

The score was achieved from the process learning using audio lingual method (ALM) as a learning method and ice breaking as the strategic of learning. The result, the average score of post-test was 76. Then, the minimum score of post-test was 66 and the maximum score was 94.

3. **Students' speaking ability before and after being taught using ice breaking activities assisted with the audio lingual method (ALM)**

there was significant progress observed between the pre-test and post-test. The average score increased from 61 to 76. The increase was 15 and 15% in percentage form. Then, the minimum score increased from 54 to 66. The increase was 12 and 12% in precentage form. The last, the maximum score increased from 70 to 94. The increase was 24 and 24% in precentage form.

4. Categorizing the Students' Score



The percentage of the pre-test and post-test scores was determined by the researcher. Starting at the pre-test chart and moving on to the post-test chart. Most students are in a position of inadequate. The total percentage is 69% containing 24 students. Then the second highest position is in the failed.The total percentage is 29% containin 10 students. Next from the enough category. The total percentage is 3% containing only 1 student. The last from pre-test is in the good and great category. The total percentage is 0%, nothing students in this category. Next from post-test column. The post-test has some good diverse categories, namely is 0% in failed. Total percentage in inadequate category is 23% containing 8 students. Total percentage in enough category is 54% containing 19 students. Next total percentage in good category is 20% containing 7 students. And the last total percentage in great category is 3% containing only 1 students.

The failed category decreased from 10 to 0. Some students in this category move to a higher level category. 10 students consist of 3 students from failed to inadequate. There were 6 students from failed to enough category. The last, there was only 1 student from failed to good. Next, the Inadequate category decreased from 24 to 8. 24 students consist of 5 students still in inadequate category but their scores still increase even though not much. And then, there were 12 students from inadequate to enough. 6 students from inadequate to good. The last, there was only 1 student increased to great category. The enough category increased from 1 to 19. 1 student still in enough category but his scores still increase even though not much. The other 18 students consist of 6 from failed and 12 from inadequate categories. Next, the good category increased from 0 to 7. The 7 students consist of 1 from failed and 6 from inadequate categories. The last, the great category increased from 0 to 1. The only 1 student came from inadequate category.

The analysis of the experimental class data results showed that there were substantial differences between the pre-test and the post-test. Even though there was only one student in the top category, the number of students failing decreased significantly. the number of students in the failed category had significantly decreased after the researcher used an audio lingual as the lerning method and ice breaking as the strategy to explain the material in a fun way, and the students had responded favorably to the learning process. The researcher discovered that students' language mastery in the experimental class had significantly improved.

Discussion

Before and after the treatment, the pre-test and post-test outcomes have been examined. The mean of pre-test is 61. It indicates that prior to receiving treatment, students' speaking abilities were still poor. this can be seen from the lowest and highest scores in the class. The lowest score is 54 and the highest score is 70. It indicates that not a single student received a score higher than the 75. After the lesson was given, the class received audio lingual method to learn introduction material and some icebreakers for the refreshing, the post-test was analyzed and produced different results. The mean of post-test is 76, the lowest score is 66, and the highest score is 94. This indicates that the class increases the different score results. After receiving treatment, the post-test revealed a greater value than the pretest, which had a lower average, minimum score, and maximum score

All tests have been examined for normalcy using IMB SPSS version 25. The results show that the Shapiro-Wilk significance of learning outcomes is 0.013. The significance indicates that the number exceeded the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (5%). The data pre-test and post-test can be conclude that it was regularly distributed. After knowing that the data was normally distributed, a paired sample t-test was conducted. The total number of students who participated during the treatment was the same, namely 35 students. the mean of pre-test is 61,4857 and the mean of post-test is 75,5429. From the average pre-test and post-test, a fairly high increase can be seen, namely 23%. Next, The value from pre-test and post-test is Sig. 0.174> 0.05. So, there is no correlation between pretest and posttest scores, which means there is no stable increase in scores across all students because each student has their own ability to grasp learning.

The last from the value of pre-test and post-test is Sig.(2-tailed) 0.000. Thus, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. Since (Ha) is accepted and (Ho) is rejected, the research problem has been solved that audio lingual as a learning method and icebreaker are beneficial in increasing students' speaking skill.

The findings of this study are similar to several theories. The research finding is sismilar with a study done by Arini et al (2018) and Suriyawan et al (2025). In their study, it stated that the use of icebreaking method can increase stundets' speaking ability. While according to Putra et al (2022), Rahman et al (2021), and Marice Saragih (2025). They said that audio-lingual method can improve stundets' speaking ability.

Significant changes between the pre-test and post-test results before and after the treatment demonstrate that audio-lingual method (ALM) especially repetition drill,

are effective in enhancing students' speaking ability, this is the research problem that the experiment has dealt with. Students learn how to pronounce various vocabulary through Audio Lingual method repetition drills. This can help students pronounce the same vocabulary later without making mistakes. In this way, students can speak fluently with appropriate intonation and use appropriate facial expressions and body language to make it easier for the other person to understand them.

Conclusion

From all the data presented in the previous section, it can be concluded that before the introduction of audio-lingual approach (repetition drill), the pretest score was unsatisfactory. The maximum score was below the average of 61. Additionally, the total average score was low—54. And then, The posttest findings showed improved scores after the audio-lingual strategy (repetition drill) was presented. The highest score was 94, although not all of them passed the KKM above 75. The average score was also 76. Finally, there were notable differences in the students' speaking abilities before and after they were instructed using the audio-lingual method through icebreaker exercises and repetition drills. The paired sample t-test data indicates that the significant value was 0.000, which was less than $\alpha = 0.05$ (5%). Due to the fact that the p-value, or sig (2-tailed), 0.000, is less than $\alpha = 0.05$ (5%), the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that employing icebreakers and repetition drills improved children's language skills.

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