

**An- Najah National University  
Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**The Effectiveness of Ice-breaker Strategy in  
Enhancing Motivation and Producing Conducive  
Classroom Atmosphere for the Tenth Graders in  
English Classes in Nablus City Schools from the  
Perspectives of Teachers and Students**

**By  
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Requirements for the Degree of Master of Methods of Teaching  
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## ***Dedication***

**I dedicate my dissertation to my lovely family who has always encouraged me to pursue my dreams and never give up.**

**To my Dear parents who enlighten my life and whom I will always appreciate everything they have done for me.**

**To my lovely sister Sarah who has waited eagerly for this dissertation more than anyone else. Sarah I'm lucky to have you as my little sister and will always be proud of you.**

**To my beloved husband Alaa Nasser who has always supported me in every step during this journey. Thank you for believing in me.**

**Above all, I would like to thank Almighty God who always gives me strength to move on, Knowledge and wisdom in everything I do.**

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## الاقرار

أنا الموقعة أدناه مقدمة الرسالة التي تحمل العنوان:

# **The Effectiveness of Ice-breaker Strategy in Enhancing Motivation and Producing Conducive Classroom Atmosphere for the Tenth Graders in English Classes in Nablus City Schools from the Perspectives of Teachers and Students**

**اثر استخدام استراتيجيات كسر الجليد في زيادة التحفيز و انتاج بيئة صفية مساعدة في اللغة الانجليزية للصف العاشر من مدارس مديرية نابلس من وجهة نظر المعلمين والطلاب**

أقر بأن ما اشتملت عليه هذه الرسالة إنما هي نتاج جهدي الخاص، باستثناء ما تمت الإشارة إليه حيث ماورد، وإن هذه الرسالة ككل، أو أي جزء منها لم يقدم من قبل لنيل أية درجة عملية أو لقب علمياً وبحثي لدى أية مؤسسة تعليمية أو بحثية أخرى.

## **Declaration**

The work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced, is the researcher's own work, and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

**Student's name:**

**اسم الطالب:**

**Signature:**

**التوقيع:**

**Date:**

**التاريخ:**

## Table of Contents

No.	Content	Page
	Dedication	iii
	Acknowledgment	iv
	Declaration	v
	Table of Contents	vi
	List of Tables	viii
	List of Appendices	ix
	Abstract	x
	<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Introduction	2
1.2	statement of the problem	7
1.3	Purpose of the study	7
1.4	Questions of the study	8
1.5	Significance of the study	8
1.6	Limitations of the study	9
1.7	Definition of terms	9
1.8	Summary	10
	<b>Chapter Two: Literature Review</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1	Introduction	12
2.2	Studies related to the definition of Icebreakers	12
2.3	Theoretical backgrounds	13
2.4	The need for using icebreakers	15
2.5	The relationship between icebreakers and motivation	21
2.6	Summary	25
	<b>Chapter Three: Methodology and Procedure</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1	Introduction	29
3.2	Instruments of the Study	29
3.3	population and Sample of the Study	30
3.4	Limitations of the Study	31
3.5	Validity of the Study Tools	31
3.6	Reliability of the Study Tools	32
3.7	Procedure of the Study	32
3.8	Statistical Analysis	34
3.9	Variability of the Study	34
3.10	Originality and Limitations of the Methodology	35
3.11	Pilot Study	36
3.12	Ethical Issues	36
3.13	Summary	37
	<b>Chapter Four: Results</b>	<b>38</b>
4.1	Introduction	39

<b>No.</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
4.2	The Study Results	39
4.2.1	The results of the main study question which is:	39
4.2.2	Results related to question two which is:	42
4.2.3	Results related to question three which is	42
4.2.4	Results related to question four which is:	43
4.3	Results of the second tool, the interview	44
4.4	Summary	51
	<b>Chapter five: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations</b>	<b>52</b>
5.1	Introduction	53
5.2	Discussion	53
5.3	Conclusion	61
5.4	Recommendations	62
	<b>References</b>	<b>64</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>76</b>
	الملخص	ب

**List of Tables**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Tables</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Table (1)</b>	Sample of the teachers' distribution according to gender	30
<b>Table (2)</b>	Sample of the teachers' distribution according to qualifications	30
<b>Table (3)</b>	Sample of the teachers' distribution according to experience	30
<b>Table (4)</b>	Sample of the Students' Distribution According to Gender	31
<b>Table (5)</b>	Alpha formula of instrument reliability	32
<b>Table (6)</b>	percentages and ranks	39
<b>Table (7)</b>	Means, percentages and degrees of the items of the study tool	40
<b>Table (8)</b>	Two independent sample T-test for variable of gender	42
<b>Table (9)</b>	One Way ANOVA Test results due to experience	43
<b>Table (10)</b>	Post hoc LSD Test results due to experience	43
<b>Table (11)</b>	One Way ANOVA Test results due to qualification	43
<b>Table (12)</b>	The interview questions	45



**List of Appendices**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Tables</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Appendix (1)</b>	Teachers' questionnaire	77
<b>Appendix (2)</b>	Students' interviews questions	80

**The Effectiveness of Ice-breaker strategy in Enhancing Motivation and Producing Conducive Classroom Atmosphere for the Tenth Graders in English Classes in Nablus City Schools from the Perspectives of Teachers and Students**

**By**

**Aseel Majde Kamel Abu Omar**

**Supervised by**

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**Abstract**

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of ice-breaker in enhancing motivation and creating conducive classroom atmosphere for the tenth graders in English classes in Nablus City Schools from the teachers' and students' perspectives. In order to achieve these aims, the researcher used two tools: a 30-item questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire was distributed among 39 teachers who teach English in Nablus city schools. A complementary interview was carried out with 20 male and female tenth graders from different schools.

After the analysis of the results of the questionnaire and the interview, it was obviously noticed that appropriate use of ice-breakers enhances motivation and creates healthy and conducive class atmosphere. Moreover, the results show that there are no statistical significant differences at  $\alpha = 0.05$  between the teachers' perspective towards using icebreakers due to qualifications. There are significant differences at  $\alpha = 0.05$  between the teachers' attitudes towards using icebreakers due to gender and experience in favor of females and the low level of experience respectively. As for the results of the interview with students, the results

show significant differences at  $\alpha = 0.05$  between the students' perspectives towards using icebreakers due to gender in favor of females.

Based on the study findings, the researcher found the following recommendations trustworthy mentioning. Recommendations are divided into categories: for instructors, the Ministry of Education and for further studies. Teachers should be motivated and encouraged to use icebreakers in their lessons and change expertise in the field. Moreover, there's a substantial need to hold sessions and workshops relevant to the usage of icebreakers by the directorates of education to qualify teachers. In addition, curriculum designers should take into consideration the inclusion of icebreakers in the curriculum. Finally, the researcher recommends other researchers to conduct studies focusing on one type of icebreakers, its implementation and effect on language acquisition.

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

### **1.4 Questions of the study**

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

### **1.6 Limitations of the study**

### **1.7 Definition of terms**

### **1.8 Summary**

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Language evolved through human civilization as a major proof of their progress and development. It is the medium of communication and the carrier of civilization among societies. English is accounted as a universal language used in communication among countries for different purposes as trade, technology and education. English language proficiency enables students to cope with the modern life needs and to be part of the rapidly changing modern world as it equips them with the major factor for employment and expands horizons and opportunities for individuals (Richards, 2001:13).

Education nowadays is based mainly on enhancing learners' motivation and overcoming obstacles that may reduce or disturb motivation towards achieving the preset educational goals. Consequently, many methods and strategies have been suggested for achieving the educational process goals taking into consideration the diversity and differences among learners' abilities, interests and individual differences.

One of these methods is using icebreakers which can be used for engaging students and facilitates an instructional environment to start up a lesson, where everyone can get to know each other, and get ready to the coming lesson in interesting atmosphere (Varvel, 2002:123). Most students' failure is due to their inability to adapt to new changes in the learning environment and not related to their mental abilities (Tento, 1997).

Icebreakers are used to make new channels in the icy situations where students feel perplexed, confused and ashamed; they tend to warm up and make the atmosphere more interesting and appealing for students to take part in conversations and classroom discussions; they aren't only used in the beginning of the class they can be used whenever the students feel that the situation or the new topic is challenging for them and they can't express themselves and they aren't confident about what they know about the topic.

Icebreakers are said to be activities that are designed to relax learners, introduce them to each other, energize them and create an educational environment based on cooperation among students and their teachers. In such a case, they are said to be a basic factor in flipping the classroom atmosphere and the whole school conditions (Dweikat and Raba', 2019). Additionally, they are nearly like openers and sometimes they are related to the subject matter, in addition, they often help to facilitate teaching and enabling students to know each other and encourage effective learning which is built on group working, and making students have fun.

The term "icebreaker" comes from "break the ice," which originally comes from special ships called "icebreakers" that are designed to break up the ice and make it easier and let other ships pass. So an icebreaker helps to facilitate and make the way clear by making the learners more comfortable, cooperative and they attract the students' attention and prepare them to

receive the new lesson. Furthermore, they can range from games, worksheet, songs, riddle, getting to know your activities, or what you did this summer sharing.

There are many different ways to start the process of getting to know your students and for them to get know each other. Ice breakers are fun activities that help people get to know each other; these activities can ameliorate the perceived distance in online learning environment. Ice breaker activities are extremely useful in breaking down barriers between students in order to facilitate class participation. (Dixon, 2008 and Raba', 2018).

Therefore, icebreakers' use has a significant effect on enhancing group work. This goes in accordance with the social constructivism theory where the development of skills requires interaction within groups and participation in authentic activities. Furthermore, students' participation in classroom activities equips teachers with a powerful assessment tool of students' proficiency level in the material to be learnt.

Icebreakers are the most remarkable way to setup efficient conductive EFL classrooms. Icebreakers as the name suggests break the walls and barriers between students and teacher, students and the material to be taught and students themselves. They refer to openers for lessons or activities used to get students into individual or group work so they become a collaborative unit and work together on achieving intended goals. Icebreakers help energize and alert students in the beginning of the class

which facilitate explaining new material when students are interested in and listening attentively (Partel,2001:86).

Modern educational methods focus on the importance of icebreakers to create a suitable atmosphere as the foundation of successful learning. Teachers should develop skills needed in designing icebreakers and activities according to students and intended aims. Teachers benefit from ice breakers to start their lessons in creative and non-traditional ways to find more about students' prior knowledge, skills, needs, and interests concerning the material to be taught to accomplish the preset educational goals. Effective Icebreakers facilitate the introduction of new topics to students by making them familiar with the subject in advance of more profound explanations and discussions. It also encourages all students to participate in a relaxed informal situation.

### **Benefit of icebreakers activities**

Icebreakers are great for getting rid of monotonous class routines, boredom and to motivate the students to be a part of teaching and learning. But the benefits of icebreakers are still arguable to some researchers. According to Almeth-Hib (2009) Ice Breakers can get rid of rigidity, authority, organized attitudes and behavior usually employed in daily activities. In addition, the Icebreakers can relax learners before starting the teaching and learning and allow them to enjoy classes and communicate with each other. Overall he concludes that icebreakers can improve processes of learning.



Fanani (2010) also emphasized the benefit of the icebreakers in decreasing anxiety and weariness, moreover, icebreakers develop and enhance students' genuineness and creativity. They also facilitate students' interaction in groups and work as a team. Icebreakers are a chance to increase learners' concentration and practice a systematic thinking and creativity to problem solving. All of this can be achieved if icebreakers are practiced appropriately in time and manner.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

Teaching is defined by Ball and Forzani(2009) as the setting of the surrounding environment to facilitate learning and participating in frequent activities with others to learn something.

Recent methodological teaching approaches revolve around the effective role of using the target language and the learners taking part in classroom activities to language acquisition. The application of ice-breaker activities fulfills these requirements. Icebreakers motivate learners' participation and they become more open to risk taking. Communication during icebreaker activities increases feelings of comfort and relaxation. Moreover feelings of stress and embarrassment are eliminated.

The traditional system of teaching has accepted that using fun activities may decrease the level of language proficiency. Teachers' thorough trials to motivate learners and alleviate their anxiety take a lot of time at the expense of teaching. Learners' language efficiency is elaborated by spending the time on actual learning of the topic.

The issue of facilitating English speaking in the classroom methodologically is very important, and it should have lots of implications for practicing language teachers. It is therefore necessary for us to exactly understand the effectiveness of different kinds of ice-breakers, and till that time prevent making quick and censorious judgments on its classroom indications. The finding of this study may help EFL teachers to let their students make use of these activities at home for more practice.

### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

A lot of teachers and parents complain all the time that students are weak in English and students complain that English is very difficult. Students' achievements are lower than expected due to multiple complexities. They are reluctant to participate in classroom discussions out of embarrassment and fear of making mistakes. In this context, teaching of English is made interesting and effective through the use of icebreakers. Icebreakers strategy can help reduce fear and anxiety level by flipping classroom atmosphere. There is an urgent need to save the situation and do something to revive the process of teaching and learning of English language. Unfortunately, some related studies don't believe in the effectiveness of using the icebreakers, and this survey may help a lot to change this idea.

### **1.3 Purposes of the Study**

This study aims to achieve the following purposes:

- 1- Investigate the effect of ice-breaker in enhancing motivation and producing conducive classroom atmosphere for the tenth graders in English classes in Nablus city schools from the perspectives of teachers and students.
- 2- Investigate the effect of teachers' and students' gender, qualification and year of experience on their perspectives.

#### **1.4 Questions of the Study**

This study will answer these questions:

1. What is the effect of ice-breakers strategy in enhancing motivation and producing conducive classroom atmosphere for the tenth graders from the teachers' and students' perspectives?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences in teachers' and students' perspectives towards using icebreakers strategy at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) due to gender?
3. Are there any significant differences in teachers' perspectives towards using icebreakers strategy at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) due to years of experience?
4. Are there any significant differences in teachers' perspectives towards using icebreakers strategy at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) due to qualifications?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The ultimate goal of every teacher and curriculum designer is to create effective and productive learning sessions for students where they

can learn collaboratively in a relaxing and comforting environment. This study strives to shed the light on the importance of icebreakers to spur participation and cooperation in the process from all students without judging or grading them. This study aims to point out the previously mentioned purposes of using icebreakers and motivate teachers and curriculum designers to include them in the starter of each lesson.

### **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

The study is limited to teachers' and students' perspectives towards the effectiveness of icebreakers in English classes in the scholastic year (2018/2019) in Nablus City Schools. The sample consists of 39 male and female teachers of and 20 male and female students from the tenth graders.

### **1.7 Definition of terms**

**Icebreakers:** icebreakers are exercises or games meant to introduce people to each other in a relaxed environment. They are speaking activities to offer the learners the opportunity to know each other. In order to complete an ice-breaker task learners must talk to each other.

**Conducive classroom:** is a classrooms atmosphere free from physical threat or emotional discouragement and frustration. The educational process is built on three basic components: the teacher; the students; their ability to communicate and interact without breaking respect boundaries. In conducive classrooms, the arrangement and management are very important because they affect students' learning evidently ( Fraser,1994,1998a).

## **1.8 Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher provided a thorough introduction to the important role of integrating icebreakers strategy in enhancing motivation and creating conducive classroom atmosphere for the tenth graders in Nablus city from the perspectives of teachers and students. Then, the researcher concluded the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, questions of the study, significance of the study and a list of items definition.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

### **2.2 Studies related to the definition of Icebreakers**

### **2.3 Theoretical backgrounds**

### **2.4 The need for using icebreakers**

### **2.5 The relationship between icebreakers and motivation**

### **2.6 Summary**

## **Chapter two**

### **Literature review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the literature review related to the significant importance of employing icebreakers as a basic ingredient in each lesson plan. This chapter of study is organized topically to facilitate handling several areas. It shows the theoretical framework, it covers the interrelatedness between the appropriate interpretation of icebreakers strategy and social constructivism learning theory. It also provides the reader with different relative studies, essays and articles from general to specific with some extracted recommendations that manifested the role of icebreakers on enhancing students' performances, motivation and achievements.

#### **2.2 Studies Related to the Definition of Icebreakers**

According to Doover (2004) Icebreakers are questions that allow discussions to take place among students or activities that allow interaction within the group to relax which is the primary goal for any teacher who decides to use icebreakers. They seek to create an environment that is anxiety free, where learners are allowed to "break the ice" or learn in a fun atmosphere. The purpose of icebreakers is to help shy students start a conversation, enhancing interaction and communication skills, removing cultural barriers within the group, developing the feeling of friendship and trust among learners (Pillai,2007).

Icebreakers are defined as tools facilitating creative thinking through interaction by making conversations and discussions about new topics, assumptions and specific information (forbes- greene, 1982). pathak and verma(2011) added that icebreakers are activities where learners as part of a group get closer to one another and break barriers between them gradually to develop trust and support to learn efficiently. To Alarifin and Suzanah( 2014) icebreakers break the boring dull activities or lessons and turn it into fun relaxing exercises that motivate learners to be part of the learning process. Soraya (2014) points out that in order to be able to eliminate rigidity and to create not only serious but also fun and relaxing classrooms, teachers should integrate icebreakers in lesson plans.

### **2.3 Theoretical backgrounds**

Social constructivism theory has connection with the use of icebreakers in teaching. It seeks to provide learners with the most appropriate classroom atmosphere or learning. It also ascertains the value of enthusiasm, motivation, interest, collaboration and interaction in the process of acquiring knowledge and building certain skills. This interrelated relation will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

#### **Social Constructivism and icebreakers**

According to social constructivism theory learning succeeds when learners work collaboratively in groups in a dynamic and interactive environment. Moreover, constructivist ascertains the value of



communication skills, social interactions, and sharing of ideas in the process of learning (Mayer, 2004). This differs from the traditional way of teaching where learners are passive and work individually. They depend on repetition of subjects guided and adhered by the textbooks.

The use of techniques and strategies as icebreakers achieve the purpose of communication by engaging learners in new social experiences and keeping them in contact with other members of the group (Barnlund, 2008) who is also one of the significant advocates of SLT by the integration of behavioral and cognitive aspects in learning. Social learning theory assumes that learning occurs when students are in a social setting and each one is learning from the other through observation. The theory is summed by the idea that reward and punishment from society impact learners to shape their behavior according to them.

Vygotsky (1978) formed his theories on the basis of how important the social interaction and communication in the cognitive development and authentic learning. The social interactions play a major role in higher mental development process which can't be figured in separation cultural context. Icebreakers technique goes in accordance with social constructivism theory and achieves its objectives.

Lin (2012) referred to active learning as being different from one to another. And the redundancy in understanding the term can't lead us to its application in classrooms. Active learning differs from traditional way of teaching where teachers talk and learners are passive. In active learning,

learners need to integrate with written, read, spoken, listened topics and reflect on them. Learners have chance to question, apply, clarify and integrate new information which helps them understand new materials. Group discussions, problem solving, role play, case studies and structured learning groups they increase information retention, critical thinking, motivation, new information transfer which are the center of intended learning outcomes ILOS (scarpell,2009) full of social interaction.

#### **2.4 The need for using icebreakers**

Students' lack of oral proficiency is referred to students' lack of self-confidence. They don't have the courage to speak because of the fear of making mistakes (Patil, 2008). Zhang (2009) pointed out that EFL learners face trouble with gaining oral proficiency in English because teachers depend heavily on instruction. They don't give students enough space to participate using the language. In addition, students don't have conversation with native speakers of the English language which results in their disabilities to learn how to produce the correct stress, intonation, pitch, accent and consequently deficiencies in oral proficiency.

Icebreakers are able to develop communication skills necessary to conduct and respond to a conversation. Speaking and communication is the ultimate goal in any foreign language class teacher seeks to achieve. These skills can only be developed through interaction among students and teachers. Shumin(1997) also added that classroom atmosphere is a fundamental component in the process of second language acquisition

which is not restricted to memorization of vocabulary items lists or grammar rules.

According to Kelly (2004) successful learning happens when students are interacting and cooperating in a relaxing and comfortable atmosphere and that teachers should employ icebreakers in their lessons as experts considered them necessary for a successful classroom. In addition, icebreakers connect learners with school emotionally which increases motivation. Icebreakers aims provide students with help to learn and practice easily and collaboratively as a group, so they find out more about their classmates. Sumardini (2014) says that icebreakers teach students to cooperate with each other and as a result activate the learning atmosphere. According to Pits (2010) it's a collaborative activity at the beginning of the class to make learners feel relaxed and happy in a formal environment.

The anticipation from icebreakers is to create a classroom with happy relaxed refreshed learners. According to Irachmat (2015) icebreakers develop enthusiasm for learning and working effectively with others to achieve success in the process. it can be defined as activities that permits opening new ways of thinking and abandoning the stiff old way of learning that depends strongly on passive memorization of information in a fun relaxing atmosphere (Sunarto, 2012; Novasari, 2014). As cited by Novasari (2014) who also added that icebreakers create dynamic teaching-learning environment from passiveness to activeness and from dull to awareness. He also adds that there are certain activities teachers tend to use frequently as

icebreakers shouting, Hand claps, Singing, Body Motions, Humor, Games, Fairy Tales, Magic, and Audio Visual.

Integrating active and collaborative learning activities in class can enhance student success. In order to expect students to work effectively, we need to plan purposeful activities that will enable students to build community and rapport with each other. Thus ice-breaker activities can be critical to developing a positive classroom climate that is conducive to learning, especially through interactions among students (Magnam, 2005). This tip describes one effective ice-breaker activity that you can use in your class to help build student rapport (Raba'2017).

Some teachers and instructors are happy to create a new environment in the classroom based on cooperation and interaction, but for them there are lots of types of icebreakers which can be used in certain situations and not suitable for all lessons, sessions and workshops. There are some icebreakers which can suit courses, also there are lots of icebreakers which are used a lot, and students consider them boring. (McKeachie ,1999:45).

Icebreakers work better and give positive results if they are relevant to the content of the lesson, and they have specific goals to be achieved, and to be distributed to appropriate groups. The best icebreakers simply are those which let students get involved in the activity and give opportunities to each student to work and learn. In addition, icebreakers are not viewed as obligations and duties to be carried out at the beginning of the first lesson of a course, but rather they are viewed as ways to continue building

community and introducing new topics (McKeachie ,1999). In this respect they can flip classroom interaction which results in conducive classroom atmosphere (Raba'2018).

Ice breakers are beneficial in varied types of classes, at a variety of levels and for most class sizes. Instructions summarize the activity, provide directions, estimate the time needed for the activity, and suggest the most effective class size, variations, and any materials needed(Eggleston & Smith, 2002). Icebreakers can define the way teachers plan their classes. Dover (2004) ascertains that icebreakers can be used to meet the needs of students and goals of the curriculum. Moreover, Icebreakers also allow teachers to show students how enthusiastic are they toward the subject to be taught.

According to Leblanc (2011) icebreakers would help learners to focus on the task and neglect everything outside the classroom. When the activity is done, students will be ready to start learning and concentrating on the lesson. Moreover, teachers will be ready to grab all students' attention and enthusiasm.

The researcher strongly believes that using icebreakers improves teaching, makes students confident and cooperative and they interact with each other and with the teacher. The key component for successful classroom is students' enthusiasm which can be guaranteed by choosing the appropriate time for activities that triggers all students' participation in a comfortable setting. Icebreakers are the tools that enable the group to

interaction between members to be easier and smoother. According to Siegenthaler (2007) they are warm ups; they act as openers to stimulate motivation and interest toward the lesson to be taken. Kanu(2011) added that icebreakers cant only be used in the beginning of the lesson but also in the middle and in the end to restore lost concentration.

Some researchers as Jenkins(2001) mentioned that the time limit for icebreakers shouldn't be too short or too long. He also believes that icebreakers should be easy to ensure that students aren't intimidated from the new material. Moreover, teachers should be creative and choose different icebreakers with specific objectives in the mind, and they shouldn't keep on using the same icebreaker, because after a while it becomes so boring. In addition, icebreakers must be dynamic and diverse to ensure students participation. Icebreakers should be relevant, friendly, light, short and interesting. They can set the tone for the lesson content and format, and build credibility (Dover, 2004).

Icebreaker activities lead to energized language learning that encourages participation and stating learners' perspectives. As stated by Richards and Rogers (2001), using implementations of humanistic approaches such as "silent way, total physical response, suggestopedia, and community language teaching may have positive effects in improving students' speaking ability" (p.16). Tsou (2005) listed in his article a number of the researchers (Hanania and Gradman, 1977; Krashen, 1982; Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982; Rodriquez, 1982) who believe in the help that the

natural silent period can offer in the language acquisition process. However, others strongly disagree with the benefits of the silent period and emphasized the role of speaking and employing learners' linguistic knowledge in language learning as (Elis, 1988, 1993, 1999; Ely, 1986; Gomez, 1995; King, 1993; Seliger, 1977; Spada, 1986; Long, 1981; Swain, 1985, Tsui, 1992; Wagner- Gough and Hatch, 1975).

Studies show a direct relationship between students' participation in classroom discussions and their educational achievement (Lim, 1992; Wudong, 1994; Zhou, 1991). Icebreaker activities are significant for learners' oral participation in classroom discussions. Teachers should plan and conduct icebreaker activities to minimize students' anxiety while speaking in the target language (Hilleson, 1996; Riasiti, 2011; Subasi, 2010). These icebreaker activities must be chosen and arranged to meet students' interests and level of proficiency. Not all learning situations are the same, each one face different problems (Abdullah & Abdulrahman, 2010).

Using games as icebreakers in the teaching process would ease the acquisition of new information is crucial in learning speaking and reading skill (Deesri, 2002). Icebreakers in EFL classrooms could also be in the mother tongue which would facilitate and enhance learning efficiency. Icebreakers could be songs, repeating of sentences or utterances games or role play would encourage and motivate students to pay attention, participate and interact with other members of the group (Yeganehpour, 2012).

Researchers like Bailey (2005) and Songsiri (2007) found that Teachers' responsibility exceeds instructing students and scoring their exams to the conducting of good complete syllabus with enough number of diverse icebreakers activities similar to what happens in students' daily lives like making a phone call, poking a ticket, reserving a place in a restaurant and how to ask for permission. These are the types of activities that interest students and attract their attention. They supplied teachers with some tips to enhance positive attitudes toward successful communication in the classrooms that would last forever: students concentrate more in relaxed and fun atmosphere. So, teachers should avoid using tangible rewards or construct competitive tasks. Students should be encouraged to keep trace of their own work and feel the value of communication. In addition, teachers must help students to develop their self-esteem and concentrate on their strengths.

## **2.5 The relationship between icebreakers and motivation**

Icebreakers and motivation are interrelated. Icebreakers mirror teachers' enthusiasm and excitement toward the subject matter they are about to explain which can reflex on the students' reactions. The best way is to link the new material to learners' previous knowledge. When learners find out that they are familiar with the new subject their motivation increases toward building new knowledge regarding it. Overall, icebreakers can increase learners' motivation toward leaning.

Most English teachers adopt teaching methods that are not attractive for learners. These strategies cause boredom and dullness. Consequently,



students become less motivated to learn. Using icebreakers require more planning and preparation on behalf of teachers. Time limit consideration used for icebreakers is a basic element when planning a lesson. Teachers should pay attention not to take time more than needed to grab learners' attention.

An essential consideration must be taken in order to achieve success in learners' academic life. Learners mustn't feel distanced and not belonging to the learning environment. Icebreakers can help students adapt to new learning experience. Learners come with various expectations about the learning situation and the outcomes they can achieve.

Putting emphasis on the activities used to create fun, active and inclusive language classrooms. Icebreakers works as facilitators for interaction where learners can introduce themselves and know more about their classmates to work as teams and collaboratively on the basis of semi structured communication as classrooms are social places and not only for learning. Icebreakers ease the transition process into new educational atmosphere. The beginning of the class period can define and affect strongly the rest of it and students' feelings toward the subject being taught.

Icebreakers help the teacher to show students how enthusiastic are they toward the subject matter, learning, and the learners themselves. Icebreakers establish a link with learners' prerequisite knowledge and relating it to what they are familiar with in the beginning of the class. Icebreakers can be an effective tool to review what students have learnt in

previous classes. They can facilitate learning when teachers illustrate the links between the content and the goals students are working to achieve. Students learn better if they are aware of the returns of their learning (Reid et al, 2005; Wood & Solomonides, 2008). Icebreakers can lead to discussions with students about the content they are going to learn about and the best method that could be used to learn better.

The relationships between the students and teachers and between students themselves constitute an important part of learning. Icebreakers in the beginning of a unit can define the relationship between the teacher and students, and between student and student. How icebreakers activities develop form the later interactions (McKay, 2002). Interactions between learners in groups are a necessity. Icebreakers are a felicitous approach to facilitate these interactions and can lead to creating a positive learning environment where learners feel free and safe to participate. Employing icebreakers breaks down barriers and cultural differences among students which contribute in overcoming problems of embarrassment and isolation.

Motivation to learn is the core requirement for successful learning. Learners are often over intimidated by failure and so they are overcome by feelings of anxiety, fear, and reluctance to be a part of the class discussions. Thoughts of learners' being incapable to keep up with subject complexity lead to draining their mental abilities to memorize, focus and concentrate.

Their fear of failure focuses their attention on passing exams with no consideration to the actual learning they would really benefit from cause

them to be passive learners. The point is turning these negative feelings into positive motivation to do more efforts in the learning than just passing the course. Teachers need to create a teaching and learning environment that will help students relate the success back to their original motivation for being in school and re-energise them to learn the material.

Icebreakers allow learners to communicate and interact in groups. Students share their own opinions about the lessons in group discussions. The fundamental reward of using icebreakers is proving to learners that school and learning aren't detached from feeling of happiness and pleasure. Rodrigues (1982) breaking the ice and making sure students are motivated and energized can create fun atmosphere and facilitate learning. She adds that icebreaker and warm-up activities have the same goal which is keeping brain working. Icebreakers success is connected to them being suitable to learners' needs and levels.

Nguyen (2008) motivation is an essential force that drives students to complete the learning tasks and acquire knowledge. According to Wlodkowski (2010) motivated learners would achieve more success than less motivated learners even if they share the same capabilities. If learners are not motivated to do the required tasks the learning process would be accompanied with boredom, rigidity, distraction and frustration. It's noticeable that students learn better when they are concentrating, feeling fresh and amused than when they are feeling bored and tired. They seem to receive and build knowledge faster in the morning classes and the

knowledge acquisition efficacy reduces through the day to its minimum capacity in the evening classes. Icebreakers innovates students experience with new or difficult subjects. Icebreakers also acquaint learners with each other and create a friendly atmosphere that encourages cooperation (Draves, 1997).

## **2.6 Summary**

What this section shows is the great interest of many researchers to highlight the importance of using icebreakers to increase motivation in classrooms. The study results go in accordance with the results of Shumin (1997), Pillai(2007) and Dover(2004) who all agreed that icebreakers create a fun enjoyable atmosphere to allow interaction among learners in a fun, relaxing situation which helps to break the barriers between them. Moreover, classroom atmosphere is a fundamental component in success as they break dull exercises and lessons. The researcher also agrees with Soraya who added that icebreakers are necessary to break rigidity. The results of the study emphasized the value of icebreakers in motivating cooperation among students as Kelly and Sumardini wrote. Others like irachmat , sunarto and novasari concluded the power of icebreakers in enhancing enthusiasm and facilitating creative thinking. The researcher also agrees with McKeachie that There are some icebreakers which can suit courses, also there are lots of icebreakers which are used a lot, and students consider them boring. In addition, the researcher reemphasizes. The ideas of Sonsiri have about teachers responsibility to conduct complete syllabus

with enough number of diverse icebreakers activities similar to what happens in students' daily lives like making a phone call, poking a ticket, reserving a place in a restaurant and how to ask for permission. In the end the researcher ascertains the findings of Wlodkowski that motivated learners would achieve more success than less motivated learners even if they share the same capabilities.

On the other hand, the researcher and the study results came in disagreement with (Hanania and Gradman, 1977; Krashen, 1982; Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982; Rodriquez, 1982) who believe in the silent period significant role in language acquisition. The researcher believes in the communicative and cooperative methods that stimulate real life events in developing proper speaking skills in the target language.

What this study adds is the benefits of using icebreakers in teaching English as a second language and how appropriate the tenth graders' age for the use of icebreakers strategy as a stationary stage where they can stop being under evaluation pressure and just discuss topics whether this strategy is applied in the beginning, middle or end of the class. This would allow teachers not only to find out learners' previous knowledge of the subject but also to take advantage of this strategy as a way for integrating tenth graders with the actual use of ESL.

Certain activities can reduce anxiety. For example, role plays activities where students generally take on a new personality with a new name. This helps them to keep their self-image safe by disguising their true

self with a new identity and this can in a certain way reduce their fear of negative evaluation. Moreover, group discussions (teachers should form groups from students with mixed abilities) this creates bigger chance for all learners to participate, since what they are not evaluated as right or wrong. Games like describing pictures and guess by using wh-questions while students are in group or pairs can be integrated into speaking activities. This counts much less threatening for shy students.

Teachers play exclusive role; they should stimulate learners to use English while interacting with their classmates and their teachers. Teachers also should convince students that they practice English speaking, the more battle against speaking anxiety (Ansari,2015).

# **Chapter Three**

## **Methodology and Procedure**

### **3.1 Introduction**

### **3.2 Instruments of the Study**

### **3.3 population and Sample of the Study**

### **3.4 Limitations of the Study**

### **3.5 Validity of the Study Tools**

### **3.6 Reliability of the Study Tools**

### **3.7 Procedure of the Study**

### **3.8 Statistical Analysis**

### **3.9 Variability of the Study**

### **3.10 Originality and Limitations of the Methodology**

### **3.11 Pilot Study**

### **3.12 Ethical Issues**

### **3.13 Summary**

## **Chapter three**

### **Methodology and Procedure of the study**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This part presents the methodology that is used in this study; the aim is to determine the teachers' and students' perspectives towards the use of ice-breakers; it also presents the population of the study, the sample, the instruments of the study, and the statistical analysis.

The study is descriptive one and is conducted to determine whether the perspectives of the teachers and students towards using icebreakers strategy are positive or negative. These perspectives were measured by a questionnaire and an interview designed purposively by the researcher after reviewing some relevant questionnaires.

#### **3.2 instrument of the study**

The researcher developed a 30-item questionnaire to be distributed among the sample of the teachers who teach English -39 English teachers- for the tenth graders. The second tool is a 12- question semi-structured interview with 20 male and female students to be selected from different schools.

In order to analyze the data, the researcher uses (SPSS) statistical program, independent T-test, and One -Way ANOVA. Descriptive statistics, means, standard deviations and percentages, are also be used to answer the questions of the study. Finally, the results of the study are discussed and recommendations are suggested.



This study includes three independent variables: gender for both teachers and students (male or female), educational level only for teachers (diploma, bachelor, master or more) and years of experience for teachers only (1-5 years 6-10 years or more than 10).

### 3.3 Population and sample of the study

The population of the study are all male and female teachers of English in Nablus city schools. (39 male and female English teachers). In addition, the interview population is tenth graders males and females from Nablus city schools. The sample of the study was chosen randomly and is distributed according to the independent variables. Tables 1,2,3 and 4 show the distribution of the study samples.

**Table (1): Sample of the teachers' distribution according to gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage(%)</b>
Male	18	46.2
Female	21	53.8
Total	39	100.0

**Table (2): Sample of the teachers' distribution according to qualifications**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage(%)</b>
Diploma	5	12.8
Bachelor	28	71.8
Master	6	15.4
Total	39	100.0

**Table (3): Sample of the teachers' distribution according to experience**

<b>Experience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
(1-5)years	5	12.8
(6-10)years	8	20.5
(11 and more)	26	66.7
Total	39	100.0

**Table (4): Sample of the Students' Distribution According to Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	5	50
Female	15	50
Total	20	100.0

### **3.4 Limitations of the study**

This study considered the following limitations:

- Human limitation: All tenth grade English teachers and tenth grade students in Nablus directorate
- Locative limitation: Nablus city schools- Palestine.
- Time limitation: the study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2018/2019.
- Topical limitation: the study deals with the effect of using icebreakers strategy in enhancing motivation and creating conducive classrooms for tenth grade learners.

### **3.5 validity and reliability of the tools of the study**

#### **Validity of the questionnaire**

To check the validity of the first study tool (the questionnaire), it was given to a number of TEFL specialists from an Najah National University; two supervisors and two experienced Teachers of English from directorate of Education in Nablus district; they were asked to give their evaluation of the questionnaire content and how appropriate it is to the aim of the study. Their justification and suggestions were taken into consideration. For

example, four of the questionnaire items were modified until they appeared in the researchers' final modification. (see appendix A)

### **3.6 reliability of questionnaire**

In order to check the degree of reliability for the questionnaire, Cronbach alpha was calculated and table (2) below show that the degree of reliability was (0.88) which is considered suitable for the purpose of the study.

**Table (5): Alpha formula of instrument reliability**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Reliability coefficient</b>
Teachers' questionnaire	30	0.88

Table (3.2) shows that the reliability coefficient is high, and appropriate for the purpose of the study.

### **Validity of the interview**

To ensure the validity of the second item of the second tool (interview), the interview items were shown to the same jury mentioned earlier in this chapter. They recommended changes in items 2,4&5 until they became as the final result. (see appendix B)

### **3.7 Procedure of the Study and its Analysis**

The respondents of the study were selected randomly from among all tenth grade students and English teachers at Nablus directorate during the second semester of the scholastic year 2018/2019.

This study aimed at enhancing learners' motivation and creating conducive classrooms for learning ESL by the integration of icebreakers that facilitate the creation of enjoyable atmosphere and as a result improving learners' speaking and communication skills. to do so, the researcher used two tools: a questionnaire which was distributed among 39 English teachers and an interview with **20** tenth grade students.

**The following procedures were taken to conduct the study**

1. The researcher gathered and reviewed a large amount of related literature, which provided her with sufficient beneficial information to form the research problem.
2. The researcher attended few classes for the tenth grade in different schools in Nablus directorate to form a clear image of the current general atmosphere.
3. The researcher checked the validity and reliability of the two tools used in the study by asking experts in EFL to revise them. The study tools were considered suitable for the purpose of the study and made the needed adjustments.
4. The researcher took permission from the faculty of graduate studies who sent the permission to the needed to facilitate the researcher's information gathering by distributing the questionnaire and conducting interviews.

5. The researcher distributed the questionnaire among teachers of English for the tenth grade and they were asked to add anything to the questionnaire freely for the sake of achieving validity and reliability. The same thing was done with the interview.
6. The researcher worked on collecting all the questionnaire copies from participants. Then the collected data from the questionnaire and the interviews were statistically treated.

### **3.8 Statistical analyses**

The following statistical procedures were employed to analyze the data collected.

- Frequencies, means, standard deviations and percentages.
- Cronbach alpha formula to check the internal reliability of the tools of the study.
- T- test
- One way anova test
- Post hoc test

### **3.9 Variables of the study**

The variables of the study were as the following:

The independent variables:

For the English teachers questionnaire

- Gender variable: Male & Female
- Experience: 1-5 years

6-10 years

11 and more

- Qualification: Diploma

Bachelor

Master

### **Dependent variable**

The Role of Ice-breaker Strategy in Enhancing Motivation and Producing Conducive Classroom Atmosphere for the Tenth Graders in English Classes in Nablus City Schools from the Perspectives of Teachers and Students.

### **3.10 Originality and limitation of methodology**

This study is one of the studies conducted to deal with learners' deficiency to speak and communicate using the English language due to several reasons. The purpose of the study was to emphasize the important and significant role that icebreakers strategy plays in enhancing learners' motivation and the creation of conducive classes for learners of English in general and school level in particular.

The researcher worked to find out more about teachers and students' opinion about the significant role icebreakers play in improving classes and learning atmosphere. The researcher used the qualitative approach represented by conducting interviews with students of tenth grade and quantitative approach by using the questionnaire for teachers.

The limitation of the study was the use of only a questionnaire and interviews to collect data.

### **3.11 Pilot Study**

The researcher used a pilot study to check the suitability of instruments for the purpose of the study and to see if any adjustments are demanded before the actual application. The researcher implemented the pilot study on 30 students from the tenth grade in kofor kalil secondary school in the first semester of the scholastic year 2018/2019. These students were asked about their attitude towards using strategies like icebreakers after being introduced to it and what the role of it in enhancing motivation and improving language acquisition. During the pilot study the researcher observed that using icebreakers strategy and improving classes atmosphere are interrelated.

### **3.12 Ethical issues**

Before conducting the study, a written consent was obtained from the Faculty of Graduates Studies at an Najah National University. This permission is to inform all participants that their answers are confidential and anonymity is guaranteed. Moreover, the participation is voluntary.

### **3.13 Summary**

This chapter is about the study method, instruments, questions, target population, the validity and reliability of the two instruments used ( the questionnaire and the interviews), study procedures, study design, statistical data analysis, independent and dependent variables of the study, pilot study implementation, and ethical issues.



# **Chapter Four**

## **Results**

### **4.1 Introduction**

### **4.2 Results of the study**

### **4.3 Results of the second tool, the interview**

### **4.4 Summary**

## Chapter Four

### Statistical analysis and Results

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the result of the study tools used to answer the question “what is the degree of using icebreakers in English classroom practices?” the results of the teachers of English questionnaire and the results of tenth grade students interviews.

#### 4.2 Results of the study

For achieving the purpose of the study, the researcher used means, standard deviations and estimation level for each item.

The following percentages and ranks are used to explain and interpret the results of the main question of the study

**Table 6: percentages and ranks**

	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1	80% and more	very good
2	70%-79%	Good
3	60%-69%	Medium
4	50%-59%	Poor
5	less than 50%	very poor

##### 4.2.1 The results of the main study question which is:

What is the role of Ice-breaker strategy in enhancing motivation and producing conducive classroom atmosphere for the tenth graders in English classes in Nablus city schools from the perspectives of teachers and students?

The following table illustrates the items that used in the questionnaire, and it shows the means, percent and degree for each item.

**Table (7): Means, percentages and degrees of the items of the study tool**

No.	Item	Means	Percent	degree
1	Require teachers' knowledge of the suitable kind according to the age and level of students.	4.07	81.53	Very good
2	Need step-by-step instructions and then need to be demonstrated.	4.02	80.51	Very good
3	Succeed when they are planned, and have clear instructions with enough time for students to think.	3.94	78.8	good
4	Are attractive for all students to participate in.	4.1	82	Very good
5	Are frustrating mostly.	3.82	76.4	good
6	Increase students' speaking and listening.	4.1	82	Very good
7	Don't suit all students' levels.	4	80	Very good
8	Enhance participation.	4.1	82	Very good
9	Don't create a positive group atmosphere.	3.74	74.8	good
10	Help people to relax.	4.20	84.1	Very good
11	Help us to get to know one another.	4.02	80.5	Very good
12	Are necessary for all topics.	4.10	82.05	Very good
13	Are a waste of time.	4	80	Very good
14	Need a lot of instructions and students can't carry out them perfectly.	3.74	74.8	Good
15	Create conducive classroom atmosphere.	3.74	74.8	Good
16	Help people remember names.	3.71	74.34	Good
17	Are energizers for students	3.84	76.8	Good
18	Are good openers to start any lesson.	3.69	73.8	Good

19	Allow participants to express their expectation.	3.76	75.2	Good
20	Build a sense of community.	3.76	75.2	Good
21	Are physically uncomfortable for some students.	3.61	72.2	Good
22	Engage participants in the learning process and set the tone for participation.	3.82	76.4	Good
23	Break down barriers between the students and the teacher.	3.92	78.4	Good
24	Encourage students to think differently.	3.87	77.4	Good
25	Are good methods to introduce new material.	3.87	77.4	Good
26	Stimulate students' ability to think about the next topic.	4.1	82	Good
27	Activate students and class room atmosphere.	3.87	77.4	Good
28	Are effective tools to review tests in a joyful setting.	3.87	77.4	Good
29	Help teachers discover where students are relative to the topic	3.76	75.2	good
30	Establish positive rapport with students and foster a productive learning environment.	3.92	78.4	Good
	Total	3.98	79.8	Good

Table 5 shows that the total degree of using icebreakers in English classroom practices is (79.8) which is good degree. The highest percentage was given to item 10 (They help people to relax), on the other hand, the lowest percentage was given to item 21(Are physically uncomfortable for some students).

Furthermore, this table shows that ten items received a very good degree, and the rest received good degrees, these findings indicate that there is a high level of satisfaction from the teachers towards using icebreakers.

#### 4.2.2 Results related to question two which is:

“Are there significant differences in teachers’ perspectives towards using icebreakers at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) due to gender?”

In order to answer this question, two independent sample T-test was used and table 6 explains the results

**Table (8): two independent sample T-test for variable of gender**

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T- value	Sig.*
Male	18	3.86	0.30	2.133	0.035*
Female	21	3.93	0.28		

- **Significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ )**

Table number six shows that there are significant differences in teachers’ perspectives towards using icebreakers at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) due to gender in favor of females.

#### 4.2.3 Results related to question three which is

“Are there significant differences in teachers’ perspectives towards using icebreakers at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) due to years of experience?”

The researcher used One Way ANOVA Test to analyze the data from the questionnaire, and the following table illustrates the results of this analysis

**Table (9): One Way ANOVA Test results due to experience**

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between Groups	0.213	2	0.106	1.260	0.046*
Within Groups	3.039	36	0.084		
Total	3.252	38			

The results of table(9) show that there are significant differences at  $\alpha = 0.05$  between the teachers attitudes towards using icebreakers due to experience. The significant was (0.046) which is less than (0.05). In order to know the differences, post hoc LSD Test was used and table 7 shows the results.

**Table(10): Post hoc LSD Test results due to experience**

<b>Experience/level</b>	<b>(6-10)years</b>	<b>(11and more)</b>
(1-5)years	0.13356*	0.25612*

Table 8 shows that there are significant differences between experience level ((1-5) years) and levels of ((6-10) years and (11and more)) if favor of (1-5) years).

#### **4.2.4 Results related to question four which is:**

Are there significant differences in teachers perspectives towards using icebreakers at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) due to qualification?" The researcher used One Way ANOVA Test to analyze the data from the questionnaire, and the following table illustrates the results of this analysis

**Table (11): One Way ANOVA Test results due to qualification**

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.*</b>
Between Groups	0.225	2	0.162	2.135	0.235
Within Groups	3.015	36	0.143		
Total	3.240	38			

The results of table (9) show that there are no significant differences at  $\alpha = 0.05$  between the teachers' attitudes towards using icebreakers due to qualification.

The significance was (0.235) which is more than (0.05).

#### **4.3 Results of the second tool, the interview**

The semi-structured interviews were conducted as complementary tool for gathering data about the role of icebreakers strategy in enhancing motivation and creating conducive classes. Participants were given ten questions to answer. The order of questions varied according to participants' answers. The researcher depended on creating relaxing atmosphere without giving participants the feeling of being interrogated. Simple and straight forward language was used in questions to be suitable for tenth graders and to allow them to express their attitudes toward icebreakers with comfort.

In the beginning, the researcher explained the goal of conducting these interviews with participants and that the data are used for scientific purposes only. After taking the interviewees permission to take detailed notes, the researcher started conducting the interviews. Interviewees were told that they are free to change answers given during the interview. In the end, the researcher collected, organized and analyzed the data collected.

Participants in the interview were all in the tenth grade from Nablus city school, mostly they were students at al Fatimiya secondary school with

the contribution of participant from Asssalahiya secondary school, Saa'd ibn Amer, Rafidia school and kofor kalil school.

**Table (12): The interview questions**

No	
1	Does your English teacher use icebreakers in the beginning of every new lesson?
2	Do you enjoy icebreakers and find them interesting?
3	Do icebreakers create cooperative and comfortable classrooms atmosphere?
4	Do icebreakers help you to build relations with your classmates and how?
5	Do you think icebreakers are a waste of time and why?
6	Do icebreakers encourage you to think differently?
7	How can icebreakers make a difference in your feelings about new materials?
8	Do icebreakers decrease your anxiety toward new lessons?
9	What is your favorite icebreaker activity?
10	Do you find some icebreakers physically uncomfortable?
11	Do you think icebreakers are necessary in each lesson plan or just lessons you aren't familiar with them?
12	Do icebreakers give more chance for students to express themselves and what they know?

### **The answers of the questions of the interview**

#### **Does your English teacher use icebreakers in the beginning of every new lesson? why?**

Due to most students' unfamiliarity with the meaning of the concept "icebreakers", the researcher had to start with explaining to them what this strategy is. Most students affirmed that this kind of strategy was never used by their English teachers. others said that the implementation of such strategy wasn't taken seriously and that their teacher only asked two or three students at most about things connected with the lesson they are about



to take to evaluate their previous knowledge or to see if they remember the topic from earlier classes. Few students answered positively that their teacher gives them the appropriate time necessary to discuss topics in groups.

The ability to stand up in front of all the class members and to speak English is a serious problem that the majority of learners face. Being embarrassed and shy of making mistakes is a serious obstacle. The appropriate use of icebreakers and setting them **to** groups can develop feelings of security and being relaxed. This allows learners to be more open and to express themselves by engaging in discussions.

All the interviewee agreed that integrating icebreakers increases motivation and interest in the subject matter being discussed. In other words, it would decrease distractions students face because of feeling detached from the topic and the process itself.

Engaging learners in discussions by the use of icebreakers in a fun atmosphere doesn't just interest them but also develop feelings of achievement that they really took part in the class discussion. This increases their self-esteem and as a result improves their English-speaking skills in specific and language learning in general. Students also develop trust in their teacher; they appreciate their teachers' effort to take every possible chance to engage them in the learning process.

Some teachers believe that using icebreakers is a waste of time and would distract them and their students from the actual pre planned lesson.

They prefer to focus on the textbook and to depend on the traditional way of teaching. A lot of teachers in our schools still believe that languages are acquired by memorizing set of rule and vocabulary lists without paying attention to learners' true interaction and proper language employment.

**Do you enjoy icebreakers and find them interesting?**

All interviewees agreed on their urgent need of icebreakers in each English class. They believe that periods devoted for unevaluated use of language in a relaxing environment is fun and productive at the same time. They all emphasized the role of icebreakers in triggering the mind potentials to think out of the box. The general atmosphere where they are gathered in group and feel secured to speak without being judged interest them to participate. Also, the varied types of icebreakers are interesting and overcome feelings of boredom and monotonous. The repeated use of the same icebreaker would by time develop negative feelings.

**Do icebreakers create cooperative and comfortable classrooms atmosphere?**

**Do icebreakers help you to build relations with your classmates and how?**

The third and fourth question answers came very close. Interviewees approved that icebreakers and working together in groups facilitate their cooperation where all of them work together for the same purpose. This kind of activities help learners build on each other's knowledge. Even if learners don't have adequate knowledge about the subject matter being

discussed, listening to their classmates triggers their minds potentials to dig deep and think creatively.

The interviewees also agreed that being in groups makes them feel more secured and comfortable. They develop a bond easier with the group members and feel more able to speak and share their thoughts without being criticized and picked on compared to speaking directly in front of all the class members. When students are set in groups, they can relate to other members of the group easier and know more about them.

Few students answered that they prefer individualistic way of learning. They prefer to depend on teachers' explanation of the subject without any intrusion in the process from themselves or their classmates. They regard activities as icebreakers as source of distraction and wasting time.

### **Do you think icebreakers are a waste of time and why?**

Most interviewees' answers came negative. They don't believe icebreakers are a waste of time at all. They affirmed their contentedness of the importance of icebreakers integration in foreign language learning to offer them chances of using language sparingly without having to wait for a small chance of saying a sentence and wait for their classmates to participate. Our schools face the problem of having a huge number of students in each class. For example, there are at least 38 students in every classroom which give learners a small or even no chance to have a part in discussions or use of language they are learning. Icebreakers use and

dividing learners in groups offer all students the proper chance to be a part of a discussion and to employ language items they learn in conversations.

However, a lot of teachers and students who defend the traditional way of teaching believe in only approaching text books material and that the use of icebreakers is nothing but distraction and deviation from the main idea. In spite of the development of learning methods and teaching strategies that emphasizes the great role of communicative learning, many teachers still prefer to be the center of classrooms and the only source of information.

### **Do icebreakers encourage you to think differently?**

The use of icebreakers according to interviewees help them to think of the subject from various aspects through listening to their classmates ideas and building on them till they come to a conclusion. Icebreakers stimulate creativity in thoughts through offering learners opportunity to think in a comfortable, stress free situation where they don't feel as being tested by teachers. This stress free situation allows them to see different aspects of everything and to brace difference in opinions and ways of thinking other students have respectfully.

### **How can icebreakers make a difference in your feelings about new materials? Do icebreakers decrease your anxiety toward new lessons?**

Interviewees assured that most of times they are intimidated by the idea of a new subject. They get anxious about whether they will succeed in

mastering the new skills they are about to take or not. Starting with icebreakers makes students familiar with the new topic in a relaxing way with no strengths attached. Also, when learners gain more knowledge about the material from employing their previous knowledge in the process or from hearing to what their group members have to say about the topic. This gives students a good amount of self esteem to trust themselves and their potentials to learn.

Self esteem plays a great role in learning in general and language acquisition in particular. As the researcher previously mentioned, most of learners' deficiencies to speak in English is due to their lack of self esteem and their fear of making mistakes.

**What is your favorite icebreaker activity?**

**Do you find some icebreakers physically uncomfortable?**

A lot of interviewees answered that they like all kind of icebreakers. Yet, they prefer games as puzzles, guessing answers with the use of wh-questions and problem solving by working together in pairs or groups. Students like simulation and role play icebreakers where they have the chance to speak with saving their self-image as they pretend to be other characters. They feel safer when they make mistakes because they are taking other names and so they are given bigger chances to speak without being intimidated by being judged and evaluated.

Regarding the second question, learners answered with negation. They believe that icebreakers that offer them the chance to move would reenergize them and break the monotony of English classes.

**Do you think icebreakers are necessary in each lesson plan or just lessons you aren't familiar with them?**

The majority of interviewees answered that having icebreakers in the beginning of new lesson helped enormously with enhancing their self-esteem and making sure they have prior knowledge about the subject matter and triggering their minds to think in different ways by listening to what their classmates know and think about the topic. Icebreakers whether used in the beginning of a new lesson or in any time are an opportunity to express their opinions and show their attitude towards topics.

#### **4.4 Summary**

In this chapter, after the results of the study tools are collected, the results of the study are presented by the researcher; the results are computerized and statistically analyzed by the use of the statistical package of social science (SPSS).

# **Chapter five**

## **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

### **5.2 Discussion**

### **5.3 Conclusion**

### **5.4 Recommendations**

## **Chapter five**

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher included the results, discussion, conclusion, and some recommendations.

#### **5.2 Results Discussion**

**Discussion of the results of the main study question which is:**

**What is the role of Ice-breaker strategy in enhancing motivation and producing conducive classroom atmosphere for the tenth graders in English classes in Nablus city schools from the perspectives of teachers and students?**

Results showed that the roles of using icebreakers in enhancing motivation and creating conducive classrooms were high from both the teachers' perspectives and students' perspectives. The researcher divided the results in two sections: the questionnaire for teachers of English and interviews for tenth graders in Nablus city.

**As for the results of the first tool (the questionnaire) the total degree of the responses on the role of using icebreakers in enhancing motivation and creating conducive classrooms was (79.8) which suggest a high level of attitude.**

The highest percentage was given to the item (They help people to relax) which scored (84.1), on the other hand, the lowest percentage was



given to the item (Are physically uncomfortable for some students) which scored (72.2).

The findings indicate that there is a high level of satisfaction and agreement from the teachers towards using icebreakers in enhancing motivation and creating conducive classrooms for the tenth graders in Nablus city. The use of icebreakers strategy not only increased learners' enthusiasm and motivation, it also lowered learners' anxiety levels. They can increase learners' interest in the subjects to be studied and break classes' monotony. These findings go in accordance with (alarifin and suzanah 2014). This also agree with ( Soraya,2014) in icebreakers ability to break rigid classrooms and creating relaxing environments. The implementation of these strategies makes learning more fun and sustainable.

The use of icebreakers proved to create good rapport between teachers and students; students develop trust easily in their teacher when they see the efforts being embraced by their teachers for the sake of facilitating their learning. These results go in accordance with Rabaa'(2017). In addition, the researcher believes Icebreakers help in building a sense of community and collaboration among students which has a positive influence on language acquisition and increasing learners' speaking time and participation in classes. In most of language courses, the higher the level of language proficiency the lower the frequency of icebreaker instances. While, on the basis of this study, there is a remarkable

difference in the speaking ability of EFL students who use icebreakers in speaking classes and those who do not use this strategy. Teachers may help students to use language as a means of communication. By this way, students are encouraged to speak more comfortably, especially in high levels that most of their attempt is to find the best structure, to have the best choice of words, and to speak fluently. This agrees with Kelly (2004), Magnam (2005), Also, the researcher found that good icebreakers demand previous preparation from teachers to consider varying them and to consider factors as students' level, time appointed for icebreakers, the desired results that teachers seek to achieve. These results agree with Jenkins 2001, Dover 2004. Classroom management is necessary to avoid learners' boredom while teaching speaking lessons in a foreign language. And so, teacher should creatively choose proper activities that create an interesting learning atmosphere. Harmer (2004) stresses the importance of teachers varying strategies, techniques and roles when teaching speaking in a foreign language. He mentions roles teachers can adopt while teaching speaking. They can be prompters, where they provide help for students who lose their tracks and have speaking fluency problems. The second is the role of participants. In this part they participate in classroom activities and engage students to be creative and encourage them without over participating. The third is feedback providers. As feedback providers, teachers make sure students don't experience hesitation and misunderstanding in activities.

## **Discussion**

Most students face problems with Learning English as a foreign language and the acquisition of all language skills needed to succeed in communication. Thousands of words are produced every day by each person. When learning a target language, learners tend to formulate sentences in the first language and then translate them into the target language. The arrangement of vocabulary items and grammatical rules isn't spontaneous and automatic (Thornbury ,1997). Moreover, fluency in speaking is influenced negatively by learners' fear of making mistakes. Continual practice and use of the target language can decrease and control self- monitoring students apply when speaking in English.

### **Discussion of the results of the questions related to the effect of the study independent variables:**

**Are there any statistically significant differences in teachers' and students' perspectives towards using icebreakers at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) due to gender, experience and qualification?**

Results of the teachers of English perspectives referred to the different variables don't show any effect regarding them and this leads to the fact that Icebreakers strategy is important and fundamental in the learning process regardless of teachers' gender, experience and qualification; all participant ascertained and emphasized the importance of icebreakers' integration in lesson plans.

## **Discussion of the results of second tool, the interview**

### **Regarding the first question which is “Does your English teacher use icebreakers in the beginning of every new lesson? Why?”**

All of them described how icebreakers allow discussions in classrooms which make learning more active and alive. Icebreakers can make new turns in new language learning and apprehension. They can make the acquisition of difficult topics much easier. In language teaching, the use of the appropriate icebreakers can facilitate language learning and use. One of the most critical challenges in teaching English for Arabs is their ability to speak English in front of an audience, especially weak or shy students. The suitable implementation of icebreakers can compensate the lack of good speaking exercises in the textbooks. This goes in accordance with the results of patil (2008) and Zhang (2009). The researcher agrees with interviewees and believes that the use of these methods make learning more motivating and fun than traditional ways of teaching that depend on teachers' lecturing.

### **As for the second question which is “Do you enjoy icebreakers and find them interesting?”**

They all think that icebreaker can flip the classrooms atmosphere in a fun and relaxing way that facilitate language acquisition. The researcher believes that learners stress levels while speaking and communicating via English decrease enormously; this agrees with Dover (2004). Icebreakers play a great role in allowing learners to gain critical thinking skills which

allow them to think differently. They can attract learners' attention and motivate them to learn more about the topics in an interesting way. Icebreakers can activate students and detach them from passiveness. The use of ice breaker breaks the rigidity of classrooms and work as a boost for students to break the barriers they have whether among students, with the teacher or with the material itself. This agrees with Sunatro 2012, Irachmat 2015.

**With regard to the third and fourth questions “Do icebreakers create cooperative and comfortable classrooms atmosphere? And Do icebreakers help you to build relations with your classmates and how?”**

The researcher found that the use of icebreakers build a sense of community among students as they all work together to achieve the same goal that is learning all language skills especially speaking. They can help develop good and positive relations between them. Learners seem to acquire language better when they have active learning and communication via the target language is enabled. Groups and discussions give teachers the chance to employ learners' acquired knowledge and building on it. Learning in groups and collaboratively make learning fun and exciting in a formal setting. This go in accordance with Kelly 2004 and Pits 2010. The researcher agrees that proper implementation of icebreakers can give learners' the chance to communicate with other students, teachers and knowledge itself. In addition, it can create good rapport between students and their teachers. This goes in accordance with Magmam 2005 and Rabaa' 2017.

**With respect to the questions “Do you think icebreakers are a waste of time?” And “Do icebreakers encourage you to think differently?”**

The results assure that icebreakers are a fundamental part that can't be neglected to guarantee successful language acquisition. They disagree that icebreakers aren't beneficial and regard them as important as any other teaching method including the traditional way of teaching. This refers to students' varied learning styles. Icebreakers definitely increased motivation. They give learners equal opportunities to express their opinions. The use of icebreakers doesn't only get students to speak in the target language; they also motivate critical thinking through engaging in problem solving in the learning process. Most students feel reluctant to speak and participate due to their weak language performance or embarrassment, these activities offer them the chance to speak, discuss, communicate and think. The researcher ascertains that all of these results can't be considered a waste of time. Icebreakers give learners clear idea about the goals of the lessons and help them to focus on the topic without being distracted. This goes in accordance with Leblanc 2011.

Referring to the other question, the researcher found that results indicate icebreakers ability in triggering thinking and reasoning. Learners through icebreakers activities can retain a lot of information they pick from their classmates or teachers. Acquiring this information is enhanced because they are learnt in indirect way and fun relaxed environment.

**With respect to the questions “How can icebreakers make a difference in your feelings about new materials? Do icebreakers decrease your anxiety toward new lessons?”**

Icebreakers can clear negative feeling learners have towards the language classes and their fear of the language acquisition difficulties. Students are anxious to learn new languages not only out of embarrassment to make mistakes in front of others, Some learners especially teenagers face problem with learning a new language and choose to stick to their mother tongue as it's a great component and reflection to their identities. The use of icebreakers can change the way they feel towards the learning English by breaking the barriers with the language itself. Icebreakers can be activities to find out and speak about different cultures and background. They also can search for reasons to learn English. This could encourage them and change their attitudes toward language learning if they have a goal to achieve. This agrees with Wood & Solomonides, 2008 and Reid et al., 2005.

As for learners' favorite icebreakers, their preferences play significant role. In general, the results indicate that whether icebreakers are games, exercises or simulation; learners enjoy them and think of them as relaxing ways to break the class strictness. Sitting in a particular way all the class time can cause feelings of routine and monotony which would affect learning negatively. The researcher assumptions go in accordance with these results and ascertains that learners need icebreakers to fresh up and regain energy to attend the class and participate with interest.

Regarding if learners think icebreakers are necessary in each lesson plan or just lessons they aren't familiar with them, they can be used in any time during the lesson the teacher assumes to be appropriate based on the learners' needs and sequence of the lesson plan they prepare. The researcher believes in the incredible positive change that can result in English classrooms due the merge of icebreakers in learning. This agrees with Kanu 2011. Icebreakers give more chance for students to express themselves and what they know. The results indicate that icebreakers can be beneficial for all parties of the educational process.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

This study is designed to shed lights on the effectiveness of using icebreakers at schools for tenth graders in Nablus directorate. To sum up this study, there is a serious demand for teachers to use icebreakers effectively to support their interpretation of the lesson. The use of icebreakers activities in the textbooks and lesson plans mustn't be optional for teachers to use or not.

Ice breakers and openers are usually used at the start of a lesson to assist to set pleasant environment for students and help teachers in introducing activities creatively allowing them to be active participants who are encouraged to be part of the class activities. Icebreakers offer learners feelings of trust and cooperation while working together in groups. They work on involving learners as all of them are given chances to interact.



Icebreakers form the foundations for effective conducive lessons. They can be used to achieve multiple purposes among which is providing learners with a feeling of joy reflects on the success of learning the activity that follows. Before applying an icebreaker, teacher should keep in mind learners' needs and relating the icebreaker into the lesson content. Icebreakers should be chosen differently according to the specific objectives in mind. In addition, variation in icebreakers won't lead learners to feelings of boredom and depression.

Icebreakers should be relevant, friendly, light, short and interesting. They can set the tone for the lesson content and format, and build credibility (Dover, K. H.,2004). Choosing an appropriate icebreaker means meeting students' needs, personal interest, comfort and pleasure. Attention should be paid not to choose icebreakers that don't suits learners' stage of development as icebreakers for adults don't fit younger learners.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The researcher recommended the following:

##### **Recommendation for instructors:**

1. The necessity of integrating icebreakers strategy in the educational process in an attempt to keep up with the modern teaching methods and strategies.
2. Exchange expertise with other teachers familiar with icebreaker strategies locally or globally to infer which type of icebreaker strategies suit students' preferences.

3. The need to verify in the types of icebreakers used in classroom to maintain excitement, interest and motivation in English language classrooms that are core ingredients in successful learning.

**Recommendations for the Ministry of Education:**

1. The administrators should pay more attention to qualifying teachers to be more open to new strategies as icebreakers and equip them with all the necessary requirements.
2. Facilitating teachers' mission by giving them more space and freedom to adopt the appropriate icebreakers strategy for their students.
3. Holding workshops and conferences that are concentrating on the use of icebreakers activities and how to benefit from this integration in education.
4. Curriculum designers should take into consideration the inclusion of icebreakers in the curriculum.

**Recommendations for further studies:**

1. Conducting other studies to investigate the importance of icebreakers strategy in education for other classes' levels and ages that include the variables.
2. Specifying one of the icebreakers, its implementation and studying its effect in language acquisition.

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## **Appendices**

## Appendix I

### Teachers' questionnaire

**Dear respondents,**

**The following questionnaire is one of the tools used to collect information for the research entitled “ The Effectiveness of Ice-breaker Strategy in Enhancing Motivation and Producing Conducive Classroom Atmosphere for the Tenth Graders in English Classes in Nablus City Schools from the Perspectives of Teachers and Students”.**

**The questionnaire is adapted from different related literature review. The questionnaire is composed of two parts: the first part is about personal information, while the second is about the items of the questionnaire.**

#### **Part 1: Personal Information**

**Please tick the correct answer which will be used for the research purpose only.**

**1- Gender: male** ☐ **female** ☐

**2- Qualification: BA** ☐ **Master** ☐ **PhD** ☐

**3- Years of experience: 1-5** ☐ **6-10** ☐

**11 and more** ☐



**Dear teachers,**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
	Do you think that ice-breakers					
1	Require teachers' knowledge of the suitable kind according to the age and level of students.					
2	Need step-by-step instructions and then need to be demonstrated.					
3	Succeed when they are planned, and have clear instructions with enough time for students to think.					
4	Are attractive for all students participate in.					
5	Are frustrating mostly.					
6	Increase students' speaking and listening.					
7	Don't suit all students' levels.					
8	Enhance participation.					
9	don't create a positive group atmosphere.					
10	help people to relax					
	Help us to get to know one another.					
12	Are necessary for all topics.					
13	Are a waste of time.					
14	Need a lot of instructions and students can't carry out them perfectly.					
15	Create conducive classroom atmosphere.					
16	Are physically uncomfortable for some students.					
17	Are an energizer for students					
18	Are good openers to start any lesson.					
19	Allow participants to express their expectation.					
20	Build a sense of community.					

21	Help people remember names.					
22	Engage participants in the learning process and set the tone for participation.					
23	Break down barriers between the students and the teacher.					
24	Encourage students to think differently.					
25	Are a good method to introduce new material.					
26	Stimulate students' ability to think about the next topic.					
27	Activate students and class room atmosphere.					
28	Are effective tools to review tests in a joyful setting.					
29	Help teachers discover where students are relative to the topic					
30	Establish positive rapport with students and foster a productive learning environment.					

## **Appendix 2**

### **Interview questions for tenth graders in Nablus schools:**

Dear students, listen carefully to these questions and answer them according to your situations.

Does your English teacher use icebreakers before every new lesson?

Do you enjoy icebreakers and find them interesting?

Do icebreakers create cooperative and comfortable classrooms atmosphere?

Do icebreakers help you to build relations with your classmates and how?

Do you think icebreakers are a waste of time and why?

Do icebreakers encourage you to think differently?

How can icebreakers make a difference in your feelings about new materials?

Do icebreakers decrease your anxiety toward new lessons?

What is your favorite icebreaker activity?

Do you find some icebreakers physically uncomfortable?

Do you think icebreakers are necessary in each lesson plan or just lessons you aren't familiar with them?

Do icebreakers give more chance for students to express themselves and what they know?

جامعة النجاح الوطنية  
كلية الدراسات العليا

اثر استخدام استراتيجيات كسر الجليد في زيادة التحفيز  
وانتاج بيئة صفية مساعدة في اللغة الانجليزية للصف  
العاشر من مدارس مديرية نابلس من وجهة نظر  
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إشراف

د. أحمد عوض

قدمت هذه الأطروحة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في أساليب تدريس  
اللغة الانجليزية بكلية الدراسات العليا في جامعة النجاح الوطنية في نابلس، فلسطين.

2019م

ب

اثر استخدام كسر الجليد في زيادة التحفيز وانتاج بيئة صفية مساعدة في اللغة الانجليزية للصف  
العاشر من مدارس مديرية نابلس من وجهة نظر المعلمين والطلاب

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الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة الى مناقشة اثر استخدام استراتيجية كسر الجليد في زيادة التحفيز وانتاج بيئة صفية مساعدة في اللغة الانجليزية للصف العاشر في مديرية نابلس من وجهة نظر المعلمين والطلاب، من اجل تحقيق اهداف الدراسة قامت الباحثة باستخدام اداتين : استبانة مكونة من ثلاثين فقرة مقابلة تم توزيعها علي تسع وثلاثين معلما للغة الانجليزية اما الاداة الثانية فهي مقابلة تكميلية مع عشرين طالب وطالبة في الصف العاشر من مدارس مختلفة.

بعد تحليل نتائج الاستبانة والمقابلة توصلت الباحثة الى ان الاستخدام الملائم لاستراتيجية كسر الجليد يؤدي الى زيادة التحفيز وانشاء بيئة صفية مساعدة و كما اثبتت النتائج الى انه لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة احصائية عند  $\alpha = 0.05$  من وجهة نظر المعلمين اتجاه استخدام استراتيجية كسر الجليد بالنسبة للمؤهلات لكن توجد فروق ذات دلالة احصائية عند  $\alpha = 0.05$  بالنسبة الى الفروقات في الجنس ومستوى الخبرة في مصلحة الاناث ومستوى الخبرة المنخفض.

بناء على النتائج التي توصلت اليها الدراسة ترى الباحثة بان بعض التوصيات تستحق الذكر، تم تقسيم التوصيات الى فئات: توصيات للمدرسين، وتوصيات لوزارة التربية والتعليم، وتوصيات لدراسات وابحث لاحقة، يجب على المدرسين ان يكونو متحفزين ومتشجعين لاستخدام النظرية في دروس اللغة الانجليزية وتبادل الخبرات بينهم في هذا المجال، بالنسبة لوزارة التربية والتعليم توجد حاجة ملحة لعمل ورشات تدريبية في مجال استخدام استراتيجية كسر الجليد لتأهيل المعلمين، اما فيما يخص مصممين المناهج الدراسية يجب الاخذ بعين الاعتبار اهمية دمج الاستراتيجية في المنهاج الدراسي، واخيرا توصي الباحثة الباحثون الآخرون بعمل دراسات تركز على نوع واحد من انواع استراتيجية كسر الجليد وتطبيقه، و دراسة اثره على اكتساب اللغة.