INCREASING STUDENTS' INTEREST IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Mulis[1]
mukhlis@alqolam.ac.id

Nur Farida[2]
nurfarida21@alqolam.ac.id

Abstract

This research was Classroom Action Research (CAR). This was conducted to solve the students' problem with English learning. The students mostly did not have a high interest in joining this subject. The subject research was 27 students 7 grade at SMP Ma'wattaibin. The research purpose was to increase the students' interest in English learning. This research was done in 3 cycles. The first and second cycles consisted of three meetings, and the third cycle consisted of two meetings. A preliminary survey and a survey of each cycle were conducted. These surveys were done to compare the students' interest before and after taking action. The findings revealed average of students' interest in the preliminary survey was 12%. This indicated the low students' interest in English learning. Then, first cycle showed that the average student interest improved, which was shown by 50% of students being interested in learning English using interactive activities. Yet, the second cycle revealed that the average of students' interest in English learning was 70%. This current research underlines that teaching English should be constructed by interactive activities in which the students are actively involved, not monotonous methods.

Key words: Interest, Language learning, Interactive Activities

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[1] Lecturer of English Department of Universitas Al-Qolam Malang
[2] Student of English department of Universitas Al-Qolam Malang

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INTRODUCTION

English is considered a crucial subject for senior high school students in Indonesia, as it plays a vital role in preparing them for higher education and future careers. Yet, English is a global language widely used in various fields, including business, education, and international relations (Rao, 2019). Today, current teaching methods should be used to obtain high effectiveness in the teaching process (Jahongirovna, 2021). Thus, interactive learning is extremely effective, not only in terms of gaining knowledge but also in terms of skills and the development of the character of students (Malikovna *et al.*, 2022). Interactive learning combines instructions and activities into interactive classes with numerous models, exercises, solutions, and reflections. But, in the learning process, the lecturing method is still dominantly used by most teachers. Whereas, in the teaching process, it is not enough to only hearing and lecturing method or verbal sentences (Dewi, Zaim and Rozimela, 2022). Hence, the teachers should involve the students in the classroom by creating interactive activities. They should utilize interactive activities to improve the learning experience in enormous classes so that students can easily reflect and apply their knowledge (Rusli *et al.*, 2019). Commonly, the term interest can mean many things, such as engaging or sharing. Related to learning activities, interest is defined as an experience characterized by attention, engagement, and a sense of excitement. This means that students who are interested in the learning activities will try to like actions related to their interests. This means that students who are interested in particular activities focus on evaluating actions based on their interests (Wahyuni, Riza and Autila, 2022). Therefore, the learning process can be constructed effectively (Tsai et al., 2021).

An interest in English learning can be enhanced as well as creating an enjoyable and supportive learning environment. In this case, a teacher should use several teaching strategies so that the students are not bored and they understand the lesson or the material learning. Further, the teachers should have teaching methods, strategies, and techniques to teach well that are in line with the characteristics of the students (Lelawati, Dhiya and Mailani, 2018). Yet, interactive activities provide opportunities for students to use English in meaningful activities rather than forms such as correctness of language and structure. Thus, interactive activities should be considered to apply in the teaching and learning process to involve students in the activities (Ayu, 2018). Through interactive activities, students can actively participate in the learning process, thereby increasing their interest in learning. In EFL classrooms, the learning environment also supports students' interest toparticipate in group or individual learning activities (Ayu, 2018). Interest in learning is a prompt or a way to express a student's interest in learning from the heart and soul of students to learn a particular subject that is useful through an activity carried out with full attention followed by a sense of satisfaction (Wahyuni, Riza and Autila, 2022). Hence, interest is a powerful aspect in encouraging students to enjoy the learning activities. In this case, the teacher should employ interactive learning in order that they do not feel bored. Further, the students' interest is influenced by some factors. Hence, Fauziah, Rosnaningsih, and Azhar, (2017) mentioned several factors affecting students' interest in learning [1] Internal factors which is coming from the students themselves. This includes motivation which takes an important part in upgrading the students' interest. If the student [2] External factors

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which is related to the teacher's method, strategy, and technique in the teaching and learning process. In this case, the teacher plays a main role in affecting students' interest in learning activities. Therefore, interactive learning activities, such as role-plays, simulations, and group discussions, promote active participation and involvement from students should be done. This active engagement can significantly increase their interest and motivation in learning English, as they become more involved in the learning process. So, interactive activities lead to meaningful English learning.

Related to students' interest in learning English, the students at the seventh grade secondary school Ma'wattaibin Banjarejo tend to think that English is very difficult they lack interest in learning English. It was indicated that most of the students are sleepy or sleeping and not paying attention. To cross-check, the researchers interviewed with two students. The interview results showed that they were less interested in English lessons because of the monotonous learning activities, such as writing what the teacher wrote on the whiteboard, completing questions provided in the textbook, and memorizing some vocabulary. The activities focus more on writing, listening to the teacher's explanation, and working on assignments. They do not enjoy interactive activities such as listening to English songs, watching movies, playing games, and ice-breaking. Further, the researchers concluded that the root cause of the students' problem was the monotony of activities during the lesson. Hence, the researchers took this undertaking to address students' problems related to their interest in English learning by using interactive activities. this research was scoped to improve students' interest in English Learning. This research revealed that interactive activities increased the students' interest in English learning. So, this research recommended that English teachers have interactive activities in their teaching activities as one of the ways in the learning process to make the students interested in learning English.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design of this study is Collaborative Classroom Action Research (CAR). According to McKay, (2006), in collaborative action research, the teachers work together to examine their classrooms. The researcher intends to use the collaborative classroom action research where the researcher acts as the classroom teacher and the original English teacher acts as the collaborator in the teaching-learning process. Arikunto, (2006) stated there are three elements in CAR, they are a research, an action, and a class of students. The design of classroom action research was divided into four phases; planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting.
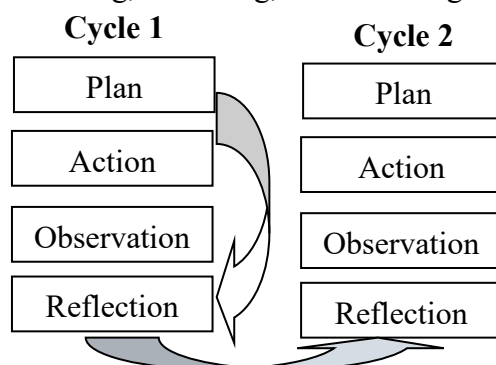
Figure 3.1: Cycles in Classroom Action Research

The subject of the research was the seventh grade consisting 25 students of Junior High School at Maa'wattaibin in the academic year 2024-2025. The researchers prefer to choose the seventh grade at this school because the students in this class do not have an interest in learning English. It was indicated that most of the students were sleepy or sleeping and not paying attention. The researchers also conducted interviews with several students and found that the students feel bored, unmotivated, and dislike joining the English lesson if the teaching and learning activities are monotonous such as fulfilling a task provided in the textbook, writing what the teacher wrote in the whiteboard or memorizing some vocabularies.

This research was designed pre-test, post-test, observation sheet, and sheet questionnaires. For the implementation, the researchers integrated ice breaking, games, and using multimedia with the lesson of the students. The researchers collect the data by observing students' activities whether students' interest in English lessons are increased or no by observation checklists and field notes. The research instruments were observation and survey. Then the data were analysed by using Semantic Differential Scales proposed by Charles E. Osgood to measure student's attitudes, emotions, or perceptions toward particular concepts, objects, or situations.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Learning should be brought by enjoyable and exciting activities. So the students will give attention much and like or motivated in the process of learning. Learning is not only transferring material but also engaging students' motivation, joy, and engagement. Yet psychologically, the students should be ready to obtain and join the classroom yo receive information, khowledge, idea, and thought. In line with this, the researchers revealed data obtained from questionnaires distributed to students and the field notes of observation.

Students' interest in learning English

These data were obtained before the researchers conducted an action, teaching English through an interactive activities method. This survey was given to 25 students in the first meeting to know students' primary interest in learning English. The each student was given a piece of paper containing six questions related student's interest in learning English. Then, the data were calculated manually using Exel Microsof Office. The data can be shown as follow.

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No	Statements of Students' Interest in Learning English	Response	
1	For me, learning English is…	Boring 85,%	Interesting 15,%
2	My overall attitude towards learning English is…	Dislike 89%	Like 11%
3	In the classroom, my feeling about joining English lessons with the conventional teaching method is	Unmotivated 85%	Motivated 15%
4	I feel English language lesson is …	Boring 92%	Exiting 8%
5	My interest in learning English in the classroom can be described as…	Weak 85%	Strong 15%
6	Practicing English conversation in the classroom makes me feel …	Anxious 92%	Confidence 8%

4.1 Preliminary Result of Students' Interest in Learning English

From the data, it can be known that most of the students have low interest in learning English. Hence, it should be undertaken through giving teaching and learning processes that raise their willingness so they learn with fun and joy and they do not tend that English lessons are difficult and boring. Further, it can affect their English achievement. This is confirmed by Utami R, Kadar and Darmuh, (2023);Nadia Riski Lestari, (2020) that the students with higher interest will have higher achievement than those who do not have. Therefore, in order that students do not have a low interest in learning English, the monotomous teaching strategy should be changed to the other teaching strategies that consist of interactive activities of the students.

Next, after the researchers analyzed the data from the first survey, the researchers gave an action by teaching with interactive activities with the topic *introducing self and introducing others (family)*. This was the first cycle consisting of three meetings which the last of which was done by giving a survey related to their interest in learning English by a sequence of interactive activities. This meeting began by introducing each other after greeting (salam). Not all students introduced themselves to the front. Then, we continue with ice-breaking "Animal's Clap". We asked the students to mention 3 names of animals. They mentioned: lion, cat, and dog. We asked them to clap once when we said cat, twice for dog, and three times for lion. During this icebreaker, the students seemed to be trying to focus. But suddenly they laughed with relief when no one made a mistake. Then, the researcher shared material for students containing questions and answers in pairs. Next, the researcher gave an example of how to pronounce each sentence. For the next step, the researchers asked the students to come forward to read the text in pairs of two students. This was turned in by all students. Next, a video about introducing self was displayed to make students focus and get an example of how to introduce themselves in English. By watching the brief video, the students were curious and excited. Next, the researcher asked the students to make an example of introducing self, then it had to be memorized and conveyed in front of the class. During the introduction self, the students were asked to get a dictionary to help them find any word in English they wanted to know. And when they do not find what they searched they asked the researcher.

At the next meeting, the researchers initiated the class with an engaging ice-breaking activity called "Follow my finger." Students were instructed to mirror the hand movements of one researcher, which included various directions such as upward, sideways, and downward. This activity elicited laughter and enjoyment, particularly when students had to maintain tilted positions without moving, effectively creating a

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lighthearted atmosphere. This was followed by another ice-breaker, "Would you rather," where students were presented with binary choices, encouraging decision-making and expression of preferences. Next, the researchers guided students through a more structured learning segment. Further, the researcher continued the action by teaching others (family). Here, the researchers showed a video animation of how to introduce others. The students watched the video and noted what they should include in introducing others. Then, the researchers asked the students about the video by asking their ideas related to referential questions. Next, the researcher gave an example of a *family tree*. After that, the students were asked to make a family tree of their own family. A dictionary was prepared by the students, and the researcher also provided a picture of a family. Each student has focused on making a family tree. Next, the students were asked to read their product in front of the class. This session was followed by all students. In the last meeting, the students made the family tree in groups by using paper *Manila*. This task is submitted for the next meeting.

For the third meeting, the researcher began the activity by saying salam, asking questions (referential questions). Next, the researcher explained that the survey would be given by the researcher. Then the researcher shared the survey about their interest using interactive activities that involve students in the classroom (not monotonous learning). The results of the students' responses were displayed as follows.

No	Statements of Students' Interest in Learning English	Response	
1	For me, learning English is using interactive activities is ...	Boring 11 (46%)	Interesting 14 (56,00%)
2	My overall attitude towards learning English through interactive activities is ...	Dislike 11 (46%)	Like 14 (56,%)
3	In the classroom, my feeling about joining English lessons with interactive activities is ...	Unmotivated 13 (52,%)	Motivated 12 (48,%)
4	After joining the English lesson through interactive activities, I feel the English language lesson is …	Boring 12 (48,%)	Exiting 13 (52,%)
5	After joining English lessons through interactive activities, my interest in learning English in the classroom can be described as…	Weak 13 (52,%)	Strong 12 (48,%)
6	Practicing English conversation in the classroom by interactive learning makes me feel …	Anxious 15 (40%)	Confidence 10 (40,%)

4.2 Post-Test of Cycle 1 of Students' Interest in Learning English

The data showed that the students' interest in learning English using interactive activities improved and developed. It can be compared from the data of preliminary results and this result. However, the researcher should continue the action to convince and make are that the students feel enjoy and have high motivation, and interest in joining English classes, and feeling confident in expressing English during the teaching and learning process.

For the second cycle, in the first meeting, the researcher gave a material discussion about greetings and responses. The researcher started the activity by salam, checking students' presence, and conveying the purpose of the teaching. Before, starting the activity, the researcher made sure they focused on joining the class by giving ice-breaking with the song "Twinkle Little Star". This was done to have high motivation and interest in joining a class. After that, the researcher displayed a video about greetings and responses. Then, the researchers asked the students about how to greet a friend when meeting in the morning, afternoon, and evening based on the video they watched. Further, the students were given a piece of paper containing of little

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conversation about greeting others. They were asked to come forward in pairs. When some of them had practiced the greeting, the researchers again gave an ice-breaking by clapping their hands. This was done to get their focus. Then the session of this activity was done for all students. Yet for the second meeting, as usual, the researchers began the activities by salam, greeting, and checking students' presence. After that, the researchers conveyed the purpose of the teaching and learning. Then, the researchers gave an ice-breaking with a song "if you really-really happy". Then the researcher conducted the action with a topic discussion "expressing like and dislike". In this activity, all students were given a piece of paper containing of the statement of expressing like and dislike for example *I like .... I dislke ......* These statements were scoped about foods and drinks. In this activity, the students should ten friends by asking each other around the class. All students were asking each other at the same time with limited time. And the student who did not complete the task, they will be punished by expressing 20 vocabularies with the meaning. This activity was done to enrich the students' vocabulary mastery about foods and drinks. In the last activity, some of students were asked to read the result of the task. This activity was done to all students. Yet, for the third meeting, the researchers shared a survey again related to the students' interest in learning English with interactive activities. The result of the survey are displayed below.

No	Statements of Students' Interest in Learning English	Response	
1	For me, learning English is using interactive activities is ...	Boring 5 (20%)	Interesting 20 (80,00%)
2	My overall attitude towards learning English through interactive activities is ...	Dislike 8 (32%)	Like 17 (68,%)
3	In the classroom, my feeling about joining English lessons with interactive activities is ...	Unmotivated 7 (28,%)	Motivated 18 (72,%)
4	After joining the English lesson through interactive activities, I feel the English language lesson is …	Boring 6 (24,%)	Exiting 19 (76,%)
5	After joining English lessons through interactive activities, my interest in learning English in the classroom can be described as…	Weak 9 (36,%)	Strong 16 (64,%)
6	Practicing English conversation in the classroom by interactive learning makes me feel …	Anxious 10 (40%)	Confidence 15 (60,%)

4.3 Post-Test of Cycle 2 of Students' Interest in Learning English

The data revealed that the student's interest progressed from the preliminary result to the last meeting survey result. This can be stated that the student's interest, motivation, excitement, and joy can be grasped by involving the students in the classroom activities. This is in line with the proverb "tell me I forget, show me I remember, and involve me I understand".

Students' interest in learning English by interactive activities
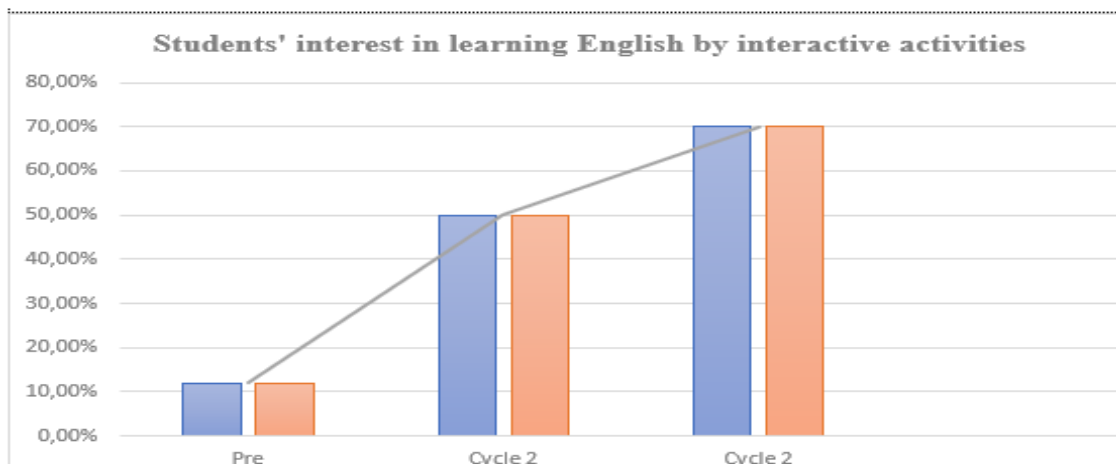
The comparison of progression from the preliminary result of the cycle can be seen as follows. In detail, the students' interest is shown below.

PRELIMINARY	CYCLE 1	CYCLE 2
15%	56,00%	80,00%
11%	56,00%	68,00%
15%	48,00%	72,00%
8%	52,00%	76,00%
15%	48,00%	64,00%
8%	40,00%	60,00%
12,00%	50,00%	70,00%

Conclusion and Suggestion

Teaching English should be done by fun learning. It can be reached if the teaching and learning activities exert interactive activities. This research declared that interactive activities can improve and develop the students' interest in English learning. So, the students enjoyed the learning process. Hence, this research underscores that the English teacher should apply various interactive teaching methods.

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