Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Master's Degree in field of English Language and Literature

Specialty: Linguistics

Enhancing Pupils' Engagement through Warm-Up Activities in EFL Classrooms .An Exploratory Action Research Study in Mustapha Hafiane Secondary School

Presented and publicly defended by
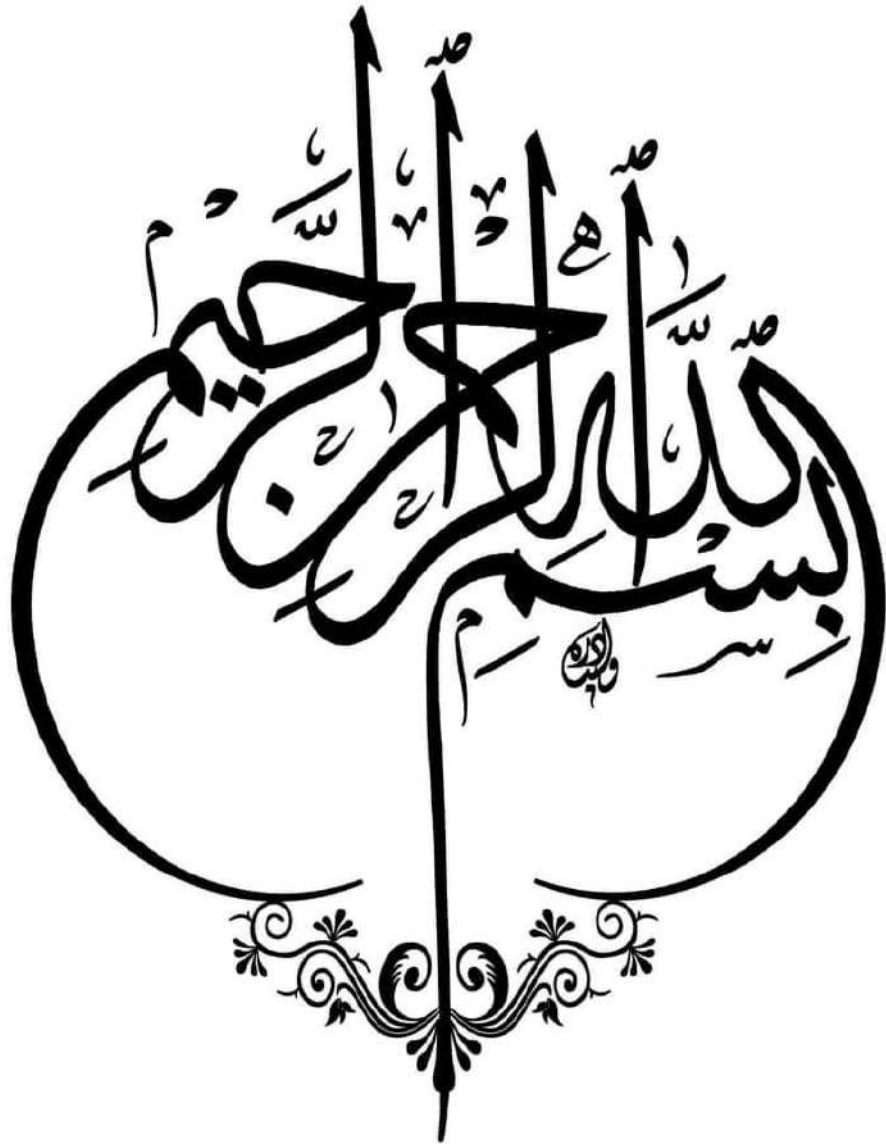
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Academic Year:2023/ 2024

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of Letters and English Language

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Dedication

To my dear father MILOUDI EL KHEIR who has taught me and whom I consider as my idol, may God bless him. To my lovely mother TEMMAR MESSAOUDA who has helped and supported me in this life, and whom I consider as a source of tenderness and safety. To my sisters and My brothers and. To my husband and my children and all the rest of my family, To my friend who encourages me all the time KARIMA. To all the teachers and pupils who participated in these research and all my friends and colleagues. From the bottom of my heart, I present to you the fruit of my research

Acknowledgement

First of all, I would like to give thanks to my supervisor Dr, Belarbi Ahmed Noured-dine for encouraging, guiding and supporting me to finish this dissertation and also giving me mental support from the beginning to the end. For his co-operation, I have succeeded to complete my researcher paper.

A lot of Thanks to my Mother and my friend Karima for helping ,and inspiring me always to continue my writing.

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Abstract

The current study is an Exploratory Action Research and was carried out for the purpose of enhancing the efficacy of warm-up activities used in EFL classrooms. The participants of the study were third year secondary school pupils at Mustapha Hafiane Secondary School in Ouargla , Algeria , and their ages ranged from 17 to 19. The data were gathered through two different questionnaires in the form of pupils' reports in order to provide answers to two research questions. First, an Exploratory Practice (EP) was carried out with the participation of 32 students from two skill-based listening and speaking classes by using the first questionnaire as the data collection tool. The aim was to understand what warm-up activities/practices meant to pupils and to investigate their perceptions on the use of warm-up activities as tools to increase participation in classes.

 Following the findings of EP, an Action Research (AR) was carried out in one of the classes with the participation of 21 pupils for a four-weeks period. The AR study was the implementation of the emerged themes from the EP in the form of redesigned warm-up activities. Following the classroom implementations, the second data collection tool, which was the second questionnaire, was distributed to the pupils. The findings of the second questionnaire provided the reflections of the pupils on the AR study. The collected data were content analysed and the teacher researcher provided reflections on the overall process.

Keywords: Exploratory practice, action research, EFL classrooms, teacher's self development

List of Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ICT: Information Communication and Technology

ESL: English as a Second Language

EP; Explora tory Practice

AR; Action Research

PR; Practitioner Research

RP; Reflective Practice

Introduction

Introduction

For almost all skill-based practices for EFL classes, warm-up activities are suggested (Almarza, 1996; Royka, 2002; Rinvolucri, 2003; Deng & Carless, 2009). Gathering the attention of pupils and getting them participate in such practices may turn into a challenge for English instructors. In my own context, I mostly attempt to use warm-up activities to engage my pupils into the topic and build schemas within my classroom. Although I implement a variety of warm-up activities to motivate my pupils to feel more ready for the activity, as Maznevski (1996) suggests teachers can have a clear opinion of the pupils' level of absorbing the concept that is taught, I have rarely seen so far that such practices work well. Whether I implement the warm-up practices in course books and/or use the ones I prepare by myself, my pupils are most of the time unwilling to participate in such classroom practices.

The unwillingness of my pupils to participate in warm-up activities puzzled me for a period of time, and I decided to investigate the reasons behind with the active participation of my pupils. With such a puzzle in my mind, my intention was first to discover the possible ways to enhance active student participation in warm-up activities and next to investigate what pupils' perceptions would be on the use of redesigned warm-up activities based on the discoveries. On this, Mustapha, Rahman and Yunus(2010) state, "by striving to provide a more supportive, non-threatening and open learning environment ,educators would make pupils feel comfortable in letting their voices be heard" (p. 1083). For Belchamber (2007), pupils may need to be noticed; their interests and ambitions are key points (p.60). By keeping those in mind, my research questions are

Statement Of the Problematic

The most frequent barrier that students in Algerian schools' encounter when studying English as a foreign language is a lack of integration and attention. Other typical barriers include a lack of enthusiasm and low involvement. Regretfully, many educators overlook the fact that pupils may or may not be motivated to work with the activities they practice in class if they don't feel interested in them. Ignoring the importance of the warming up stage and neglecting it due to the lack of good class room management that unable teachers to well manage the warming up step, as a result many of them pass it. However, students may become disinterested and frustrated if they don't feel like they are making much progress in their English language studies.

The teacher addresses the class's objectives in the introductory lesson, which is the first step toward ensuring that the lecture is effective. Numerous short-term actions are conceivable to accomplish these aims .encourage the kids and get their attention if we want the best for them and for our classes to be more effective. Warming up exercises are becoming increasingly common among teachers and are necessary to get students thinking about the upcoming lesson and to get them interacting with one another. employing various popular activities—song, games, images, films, ICT, etc.—to pique students' interest in learning English and enhance the lecture .

Objectives

1. Identify the Role of Warm-Up Activities:

   - To explore the importance and role of warm-up activities in EFL classrooms in Algerian secondary schools.

2. Examine Student Perceptions:

   - To understand students' perceptions and attitudes towards traditional warm-up activities.

3. Assess the Impact of Redesigned Warm-Up Activities:

   - To evaluate the effectiveness of redesigned warm-up activities on student engagement and participation.

4. Explore Classroom Management Techniques:

   - To investigate the relationship between effective classroom management strategies and the success of warm-up activities.

5. Develop Practical Recommendations:

   - To provide practical recommendations for teachers on how to design and implement engaging warm-up activities in EFL classrooms.

6. Contribute to TEFL Pedagogy:

   - To contribute to the existing body of knowledge in TEFL pedagogy by offering insights and best practices for enhancing student engagement through warm-up activities.

7. Enhance Teacher Practices:

   - To empower teachers with effective strategies and tools for incorporating warm-up activities that align with lesson objectives and student needs.

8. Foster a Positive Learning Environment:

   - To promote the creation of a positive and inclusive classroom environment that supports active learning and student participation.

9. Evaluate Long-Term Benefits:

   - To explore the potential long-term benefits of effective warm-up activities on students' language acquisition and overall academic performance.

Research Questions

1. What are Mustapha Hafiane Secondary School 's EFL pupils' perceptions on the use of warm-up activities to increase participation?

2. How does implementation of redesigned warm-up activities make a change in Mustapha Hafiane Secondary School's EFL pupils' attitudes?

Research methodology

Since we are basing our research on the quality not on the quantity and numbers as findings, we have adapted a qualitative approach as a method of data analysis which is the most effective for achieving these goals. Since we believe that this will be the most beneficial way to analyze the results of the hypothesis, data were gathered using one method: a questionnaire with secondary school pupils of both streams : Language and Scientific to get their opinions and insights about the extent to which warm ups are effectively beneficial.

One instruments is used in this study: an interview with five English teachers. Our study takes place in Mustapha Hafiane Secondary School in Ouargla,

Structure of dissertation

There are two chapters in the current study. The session will begin with a theoretical section in which we will first discuss warm-up. It includes further information regarding the definition of a warm-up , functions, background information on it, its guiding principles, types, forms, and some instances, this is in part one. Furthermore, we will demonstrate the connection between class management and warm-up efficiency throughout the class in part two. The focus is on class room management, approaches and new trends.

The practical study, which provides us with the link between the two variables, is the concluding chapter of our research. To verify our hypothesis, we have created one instruments: an interview with five English teachers, and a questionnaire with third year students in Mustapha Hafiane Secondary School.

Review of Literature

In this particular study my aim is first to start with an exploratory practice together with my pupils and turn the whole understandings into an action research.

For this, it could be reasonable to mention teacher practitioner types and provide some background to the study. Accordingly, the importance of warm-up activities in EFL classrooms needs to be considered. In an experimental study conducted by Estalkhbijari and Khodareza (2012) at a university in Iran, 60EFL pupils were grouped as an experimental and a control group in order to investigate the effects of warm up tasks as classroom activities on foreign language written production. The experimental group received treatments on warm-up tasks, and the control group received placebo. Two paragraphs of 150words writing tasks were used as pre- and post-test. Three experienced teachers graded the student papers. The results of the study provided that the experimental group showed better performances in writing.

The authors drew attention to the role of warm up tasks as facilitators for student involvement in the class work in the forms of sharing answers, trying to participate, paying attention, giving the answers, encouraging to take part in the lesson, participating as volunteers, working on the exercises, drawing, and writing the exercises (p. 197).Hansen and Liu (2005) point to the significance of warm-up activities in another study, which aims to present guiding principles that teachers can utilize in their own planning and student training for effective peer response.

The authors state that in order to create an environment wherein pupils feel more comfortable to engage in negotiation of meaning and provide each other with linguistic content, warm-up activities play supportive roles (p. 33).

On the other hand, in recent years, research area on and significance of professional development in language teaching platforms have dramatically increased. Small-scaled classroom practices and research related to teacher education/development have been considered as valuable educational progresses. Such studies play significant and additional developmental roles for teachers' professional development. Savaşkan (2013) puts emphasis on professional development of teachers and the benefits of research development conducted by teachers as part of their professional development in their own settings (p. 52).

In this perspective, the need for local understandings of education and the need for closing the gap between academic research and classroom practice gain importance. Whitehead (1990) points to the failure of educational research by university academics to provide a base for professional practice (p. 27). Practitioner research (PR) is among the alternatives to provide teachers a platform on which they can move forward, integrate classroom practices into scientific concepts, or improve themselves both individually and collaboratively. Nakamura (2014) draws attention to the three concepts of Practitioner Research (PR) as Action Research (AR), Reflective Practice (RP), and Exploratory Practice (EP). The author mentions these are all natural and logical components of continuous professional development and are methods that teachers observe, analyze, and improve their teaching in local contextual features (p. 105).

Teachers as practitioners enhance improvement and context-specific environments in classroom with the help of research. Not just teachers, but also pupils get benefit of such a mutual development. The focus on quality of life in classroom, involving everybody as practitioners, and working cooperatively for mutual development are emphasized (Wu, 2006; Hanks, 2015).

Collaboration between pupils and teachers is similarly voiced as unavoidable and inseparable from each other (Raimann & Mongomery,2007; Dar & Gieve, 2013).Smith (2015) takes practitioner research to another point and provides a well-directed description "Exploratory Action Research", which is directly related to this particular study. He sees exploratory action research as an eclectic combination of Exploratory Practice (EP) and Action research (AR), and describes it simply as a logical description (for teachers and mentors) of a form of practice (p. 42). He states: Exploratory AR can be characterized as a gradualist approach, developed to be useful for induction into teacher-research in difficult circumstances, whereby teachers are encouraged first of all to engage in research-based exploration of issues arising in their classrooms via means which do not interfere with their everyday teaching, rather than immediately plunging into action and attempted measurement of change.

Only after a first exploratory research phase has been completed are teachers guided to consider trying to resolve emerging issues by implementing and evaluating new actions, which themselves are grounded in and justified by findings from the first, exploratory phase (p.39).Exploratory Practice (EP) emerged from two concerns "(a) the damaging split between researchers and teachers, and (b) the high risk of burnout associated with current proposals for teacher-based classroom research" (Allwright, 2005, p. 27).

From these two concerns came what we see as an ethically motivated approach to create learning opportunities in the classroom for developing local understandings. Wu (2006) points to the basic understandings of EP as "quality of life, incommunicable understandings, and puzzlement" (p. 1). EP is the understanding of life in classroom, it is questioning 'what is inherently so?' (Wu, 2006; Hanks, 2015).

EP gives learners opportunity to rethink their goals, share their reflections with others in groups, use their own strengths, and explore their own ways of learning (Chu, 2013, p. 5). All wright (2005) addresses EP as teachers and learners work together at the level of managing learning opportunities, and try to use them productively by working to deepen their understandings of life in the language classroom (p. 24). For Chuk (2003), EP brings together the research and pedagogy, relies on existing pedagogical practice as a research tool, and uses teacher and learner puzzles about classroom events. It seeks an understanding about what happens in classrooms (p. 57). An EP study conducted by a group of English instructors at University of Wisconsin-Madison explores the ESL writing pupils' views on feedback (Best, Jones-Katz, Smolarek, Stolzenburg, & Williamson,2015).

In this study teacher researchers had semi-structured focus group interviews with 20 pupils in five focus groups. Participants were not enrolled in any classes, and they volunteered to participate. Each interview was conducted by one of the researcher. The reason they used focus groups was to create a collective dynamic and to open doors to pupils to provide their opinions, insights and perceptions in terms of the meaning of feedback and the course they received. The session of each group was audio-recorded which was 30-40 minutes long, and the facilitator of each group transcribed the recordings.

The transcripts were interpreted in three phases of coding. The first phase revealed initial reactions, in the second phase initial codes were categorized into 30 categories and in the third phase three major themes emerged. In addition to their findings, the teacher researchers suggested other teachers and administrators to create more space for pupils to voice their views and insights. They conclude by stating "We believe in

the need for us as individual teachers as well as whole programs to simply listen more to pupils and then pedagogically respond to what we hear" (p. 18).

Another EP study conducted by Pillai (2013) explores why pupils have low interest in learning vocabulary and have lack of lexical control when it comes to use in academic and personal growth. The participants of the study were a group of 20 pupils of a postgraduate management program. With the aim of understanding pupils' perceptions and needs on vocabulary learning, a questionnaire was first delivered to the participants. Following that a test was administered to pupils, which included finding the word and matching it with the correct meaning.

Having analyzed the findings, the teacher implemented over a 20 hours of action research-based instruction with aiming to integrate a selected set of vocabulary items which would be useful for the pupils' present and future needs. After the application of the study, the researcher also conducted informal interviews and used questionnaires to understand pupils' perceptions/opinions on the practice of using games for the teaching of vocabulary. A posttest was administered to see how the stu

dy was effective on pupils' vocabulary use and recognition.

The results of the study provided improvement for pupils in terms of words taught, interest in going to class, and interest and involvement in class. The study also revealed improvement in involvement of tutor and using different methods/games (p. 92). It is clear that EP provides invaluable opportunities for both teachers and pupils to work collaboratively, to develop better understandings of classroom practices/materials, to construct knowledge together, and helps both sides improve quality of life in classroom.

On Action Research (AR), Rainey (2000) discusses two types, first of which is for "teacher's professional self-development" and the other is for "collaborative action research" resulting in critical reflection and, in turn, to change not just in the immediate environment, the classroom in the case of education, but in the wider community (p. 67).

AR helps mutual development in collaboration, teachers improve their teaching, make important changes in practice, places emphasis on 'insider' experiences, creates dialogic mediation among each other under a social constructivist perspective, and construct knowledge as both personally and collectively (Burns, 2015). Teachers as they take active roles in research construct new knowledge together with their pupils and colleagues mutually (Dikilitaş, 2015, p. 48). Atay (2006) similarly states in her article, in which pre-service and in-service teachers collaboratively conducted action researches, both pre-service and in-service teachers benefited from collaboration: "All participants indicated that this program was different from others, because they felt they were "doing" something" (p. 9).

Teachers apparently need to be in search for research and improvement. Getting help and providing help mutually undoubtedly improve teachers. However, as the aim of this study fits more in the first scope of AR, focus will be put on teacher's professional self-development while further reviewing literature in this particular study. Ellis (2012) sees AR as 'a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by practitioners in their own contexts of action' (p. 27). It is "inquiring into one's own practice through a process of self- monitoring that generally includes entering a cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting on an issue or problem in order to improve practice" (Farrell, 2007, p. 94). Curry (2006) adds AR can include colleagues

sharing a similar question for research, and making the findings public to others help teachers be aware of new knowledge (p. 1).

AR practice topics may vary based on teachers' different needs, questions, and/or problems. According to Farrell (2007), areas for teachers to reflect on their own context may include but not be limited to the following topics; teaching the four skills, classroom dynamics, learning language, grouping arrangements, use of materials, grammar and vocabulary, assessment policies and techniques (p. 96).

In order to conduct an AR, researchers mostly mention similar shared steps and procedures; Burns (1999), for example, points to exploring an issue in teaching or learning, identifying areas of concern, observing how those areas play out in the setting of the study, discussing how the issue might be addressed, collecting data to determine the action to be taken (e.g., student questionnaires, observation reports

CHAPTER ONE:

Theoretical review of warming up and class management

1. Warming up

1.1   **Definition of warming up**

In the context of education, especially English language teaching, the phrase "ice breaking". " Warm up" or "lead in" describes the first stage of a class when teachers engage students and get them ready for the main lesson. It's an important stage of the lesson since it establishes the mood and background for what comes next.

Typically, the lesson begins with a warm-up. The first thing teachers do is warm up. They prepare ahead of time. Warm-ups are described by   Rushidi (2013) as "an initial step to help the students fel at ease and create a good mood for learning" (p. 10). According to the statement made by Robertson & Acklam (2000) on page 30, "warm up is a short activity starts in the beginning of lesson.". furthermore, a college of Education in Barcelona: has provided much better definitions:

The fact that they are simple to use, low-demanding, and communicative is crucial (Robertson,Acklam, 2000, p. 30).

teachers construct an emotional and cognitive framework as well as perform institutional tasks during the first fifteen minutes of class through a variety of activities such greetings, casual conversation, announcements, attendance checks, lesson evaluations, and previews. These exercises seek to foster a laid-back environment, engage students, boost self-esteem, get them mentally ready for the lesson, help them remember what they've already learned, and previews. The objectives of these activities are to manage administrative duties, provide a calm environment, engage pupils, boost confidence, and mentally prepare them for the lecture.

Warm-ups orient students to the lesson topic, allowing them to identify what they already know, what they don't know, and what they'd like to learn. They arouse curiosity and provide motivation for the upcoming lesson.

A good "lead in" is essential for effective teaching and learning. It helps to engage students, set the context for the lesson, and transition smoothly into the main activities of the lesson. It's a time to establish both an affective and cognitive framework for the lesson, as well as fulfill any required institutional roles. It's important to note that the specific activities used in the "lead in" may vary depending on the teacher's style, the nature of the lesson, and the needs of the students. However, the underlying principles of creating a positive, engaging atmosphere and preparing students for the lesson remain constant

It is crucial to use the opening period to engage students, set the tone for the class, and provide a seamless transition into the major activities of the lesson rather than jumping right into the main lecture

The summaries highlight how crucial affective and cognitive elements are to getting pupils interested in language learning.

Instructors are urged to start lessons with introductory exercises including welcomes, small conversation, and review in order to establish a good mood and engage the class. These techniques assist in establishing the lesson's tone and getting the class ready for participation. At the beginning of the course, it is also thought that performing administrative duties and carrying out institutional functions are essential.

To sum up, successful teaching and learning require a strong "lead in." It facilitates student engagement, establishes the lesson's background, and makes a seamless transition to the lesson's primary tasks. Now is the moment to set up the lesson's affective and cognitive framework and carry out any necessary institutional responsibilities. It's crucial to remember that the precise exercises included in the "lead in" might change based on the requirements of the students, the type of lesson being taught, and the teaching style of the instructor. But the fundamental ideas of setting up a welcoming and stimulating environment and getting pupils ready for the lesson never change.

Engaging students and getting them ready for the main lesson are frequently the goals of an effective lead-in in language instruction. As an illustration, consider this:

1. Welcome (one to one minute): The instructor extends a warm welcome to the class, fostering a welcoming atmosphere calm environment.

2. Informal Conversation (1-3 minutes): The instructor converses or has casual conversations with the pupils. This might be a broad conversation to engage everyone and boost confidence, or it could be about a pertinent subject.

3. Verifying Attendance (3-5 minutes): In order to meet an institutional mandate, the instructor verifies attendance.

4. Lesson Review (5–10 minutes): The instructor goes over the prior lesson by doing practice problems and answering questions. This aids in remembering the terms and ideas that will be important for the current lesson.

5. Previewing the Lesson (10-15 minutes): The teacher previews the current lesson by explaining the objectives or rationales, stating the content of the lesson, and stating the stages or activities explicitly. This prepares the students cognitively for the lesson, raising their expectations of what they are going to learn.

A good "lead in" is essential for effective teaching and learning. It helps to engage students, set the context for the lesson, and transition smoothly into the main activities of the lesson. It's a time to establish both an affective and cognitive framework for the lesson, as well as fulfill any required institutional roles. It's important to note that the specific activities used in the "lead in" may vary depending on the teacher's style, the nature of the lesson, and the needs of the students. However, the underlying principles of creating a positive, engaging atmosphere and preparing students for the lesson remain constant.

1.2   Functions of warming up

Particularly in the setting of a classroom, warm-up exercises fulfill several purposes:

1. Creating a Positive Learning Environment: Comfortable and upbeat learning environments can be established with the use of warm-up exercises. Students are inspired to engage more fully in class as a result.

2. **Relationship Building**:

Both among students and between students and instructors, these activities can promote positive relationships. This reciprocal trust has the potential to improve education.

3. **Encouraging Students:**

Engaging in warm-up exercises helps pique students' curiosity and drive. A stimulating assignment at the beginning of class can increase students' motivation to study.

A warm-up in an English class serves as an essential activity to prepare students for learning.

 Purpose of Warm-Ups:

Orientation: Warm-ups help students understand the lesson topic and identify what they already know, what they don't know, and what they'd like to learn. Curiosity: They arouse curiosity and provide motivation for the upcoming lesson. Social Function: Warm-ups help students get ready for learning, speaking English, and interacting with classmates.

Diagnostic Function: Warm-ups serve as diagnostic activities, revealing students' knowledge of the topic and their language skills. Use observations from warm-ups to guide your lesson plans and address specific language points.

Using the English language comes more naturally during warm-ups, as many activities require improvisation or creative thinking. Students are engaged and motivated as they play with the language. Every student, regardless of their personality type, can participate. The following are some essential functions of warm-up exercises:

1. **Attention Grabber:** For pupils, warm-up exercises work as a "attention injector." They boost student participation and assist in getting them ready for the upcoming class. They are intended to grab students' attention, assist them in putting away distracting ideas, and prepare them to concentrate both individually and in groups on the upcoming tasks.

2. **Motivation Booster**: Students' motivation and interest might be piqued by these exercises. Offering engaging homework at the beginning of a lesson might encourage pupils to want to learn.

3. **Knowledge Reinforcement**: Warm-up exercises can also help students remember past information that relates to the current lec

4. **Promotes Interaction:** Warm up activities promote interaction among students. They encourage students to participate more actively in class, fostering a good relationship between students and teachers, as well as among students themselves.

5. **Values Reinforcement:** Warm up activities can reinforce human values like honesty, self-confidence, and responsibility. During the development of the classes, students encourage each other, respect their turns, and seem to be engaged in the activities proposed.

Recall that the connection of warm-up exercises to the lesson and the students' proficiency level determine their usefulness. Incorporating diverse and captivating warm-up exercises is crucial for enhancing classroom engagement and maintaining students' focus.

Christopher Cotter (2011) states that:

> Warming up activities in lesson plans receive less attention that it should. Some teachers tend to prepare these activities few minutes before starting the class. A well prepared warm up offers more than just "have fun" in a session, it allows teachers to create a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom (p 12).

1-3 Types and forms of warming up

Warming up exercises are more than simply a   means of getting the class going; they are an effective tool that may boost engagement, reinforce language skills, and foster a happy, stimulating learning atmosphere.

They are a crucial part of methods for teaching and learning that work. They are of many types and roles.

1. **Attention Grabber**: Warming up activities are designed to capture students' attention at the beginning of the class. They are usually short and enjoyable, which helps to engage students in the subsequent steps of the class.

2. Strengthening Knowledge: These activities can help reinforce language knowledge. They provide an opportunity for students to practice and apply language structures and functions in a fun and interactive way.

3. Encouraging Student Involvement: Warm-up exercises motivate students to participate fully. ***They encourage both solitary work and group projects, which can result in a more vibrant and cooperative learning atmosphere.***

4. Reinforcing Values: ***Exercises that warm you up can also serve to reinforce moral principles like accountability, honesty, and self-assurance. They encourage a cooperative and respectful learning atmosphere where students may learn from one another.***

5. Increasing Motivation: ***Students' enthusiasm and motivation in the classroom can be raised by engaging in warm-up exercises. They provide a pleasing image for the class, grabbing the interest and curiosity of the children.***

In addition , icebreakers are a great method to break the ice and provide a clear beginning point for the class. They may also be used to promote creativity,

encourage involvement, introduce new ideas, and have students reflect on what they learned thus far. Thus, adding icebreakers to your lesson plan can improve student learning overall. Icebreakers may be useful for stimulating creativity, motivating participation, presenting new ideas, and reflecting on topics in addition to breaking the ice and providing a clear beginning point for the class.

Engaging in icebreaker activities can facilitate socialization, relationship building, and increased comfort level in unfamiliar surroundings for college students. Here are a few entertaining icebreakers to try:

1. Bingo for People: Draw a grid on paper or an Excel file with nine blank squares. Put a sentence (such as "Has traveled to another country," "Plays a musical instrument," or "Is a vegetarian") in each square.

After then, the students search for others who also match the statements, checking off the squares as they go.

2-Scavenger Hunt: Create a list of objects or hints that are connected to the classroom. Students locate these objects or figure out the clues in pairs or small groups. It's a great opportunity to meet new people and explore the area.

3. **Three of a Kind:** Assign students to groups of three according to things they have in common, such as a favorite color, cuisine, or birth month. They introduce themselves to the class and discuss their commonalities.

4. **Charades:** Assign students to groups and engage in a charades game. Every team takes a turn enacting a word or phrase without saying anything, and the other teams have to guess what it is. It is a fun and exciting way to break the ice.

5. **Two Truths and a Lie**: Every student presents two accurate and one inaccurate self-reporting statement. The other participants attempt to determine which of the statements is false. It's a fantastic method to discover fascinating information about one another.

6. **How's Your Mood?:** Provide pupils with a collection of emojis that stand for various emotions, such as joy, sorrow, surprise, etc. They select an emoji that best expresses how they are feeling at the moment and give an explanation. This exercise promotes empathy and self-expression.

 7. **Tale Stitching:** Begin a tale with one or two sentences, and then ask each kid to add a new phrase to carry on the plot. Continue until you have crafted a distinct and cooperative narrative.

 8. **Shed Your Problems Away**: Students jot down their concerns or pressures on little pieces of paper in this imaginative icebreaker. After that, they rumple the documents and place them in a special "worry bin.

2. Class room management

2.1 Class room management

It refers to the vast range of abilities and methods instructors employ to make sure their classroom is orderly and free from disruptive student conduct. It entails setting up a disciplined classroom with explicit guidelines that support learning and sanctions that lessen or completely eradicate actions that obstruct it. Good classroom management is crucial for teachers and students alike. Regardless of the teacher's enthusiasm for the material or commitment to the students, an unruly classroom can have a detrimental effect on learning. Effective classroom management involves getting to know your students, learning about their strengths and weaknesses, and investing in them as unique persons.

Ensuring seamless interactions between teachers and students and fostering a healthy learning environment are contingent upon effective classroom management. The following are some typical tactics that teachers might employ:

1. Set an example of ideal conduct: Act out the behavior that you desire to observe. You may successfully educate pupils how to respond in various situations by demonstrating good behavior. For example, role-play a conversation in front of the class with an administration, another instructor, or a student assistant. Talk on a pertinent subject while keeping eye contact, speaking courteously, and giving the other person enough of space to talk. After that, start a class discussion to go over and debate the desired behaviors that were shown.

2-Let Students Help Establish Guidelines: Let students participate in developing the standards and guidelines for the classroom.

Ask students what they think should and shouldn't be acceptable conduct before enforcing regulations unilaterally. Talk about things like cell phone use and loudness levels in the classroom. This cooperative approach results in standards for your classroom culture that are respected and understood by everybody.

3. Clearly Document Rules: After you've set guidelines, make sure they are properly documented. Written rules promote uniformity and aid in pupils' retention of expectations. Post the rules in a visible location so that everyone may see them when required.

4. **Establish Relationships:** Have a personal relationship with your pupils. Find out about their problems, hobbies, and skills. Students are more likely to interact well in the classroom when they feel appreciated and understood.

5. Positive Reinforcement: To promote desired behavior, use positive reinforcement. Give students praise when they behave well, follow the rules, or engage in active participation. To reinforce excellent behavior, a modest incentive or a simple "Great job!" may make a big difference.

6. **Consistent Consequences:** Make sure to express the negative effects of misconduct. When implementing these sanctions, be consistent. When they disobey the rules, children should be aware that they may receive a warning, lose some privileges, or have to spend time in time-outs.

7. Classroom Procedures: Establish dependable schedules for your everyday tasks. Regular schedules ease pupils' anxieties and make them feel safe. Establish a standard routine, for instance, for entering the classroom, kicking off the session, and switching between activities.

8. Check in with pupils: Frequently find out how pupils are doing and what kind of assistance they might require.

Developing a good relationship with students enables you to keep a supportive atmosphere and respond quickly to any problems.

2.2 Approaches

To engage students, create a good learning environment, and get them ready for learning, an English class must warm up. Here are a few efficient ways to begin teaching English:

1.Wordle: A lot of pupils like to play the online game "Wordle" in which they have to predict a daily-changing five-letter word. You may use a wordle generator to make your own "Wordle" or you can play the daily game with your kids. This exercise adds a challenging aspect while also aiding in the review of previously taught vocabulary.

2. Show and Tell: Encourage kids to give brief, stress-free presentations. They may share an object associated with a subject, an intriguing item, or a personal narrative. All students may participate, regardless of personality type, and it's a terrific icebreaker.

3. Music with Movement: Play an upbeat tune to get the class going. Ask pupils to get up and move in time with the beat. Singing enhances the exercise's enjoyment and gives the language rhythm.

4. Quick-Track Schoolyard Games: Incorporate movement and language skills. Use English commands to play games like "Simon says," "Red light, green light," or "Duck, duck, goose." It's an engaging method to get pupils moving and conversing.

5. Question and Response: Start the session with some thought-provoking questions about the subject matter. Students should be encouraged to talk about their solutions in pairs or small groups. It gets them thinking and establishes the lesson's context.

Warm-up exercises are often a five- to ten-minute preparatory phase that connects to the lesson topic and supports both the learning process and the effective teaching of English, particularly for students with intellectual disabilities. The key ideas of the warm-up exercise are illustrated in the graphic below, which is adapted from Velandia (2008).

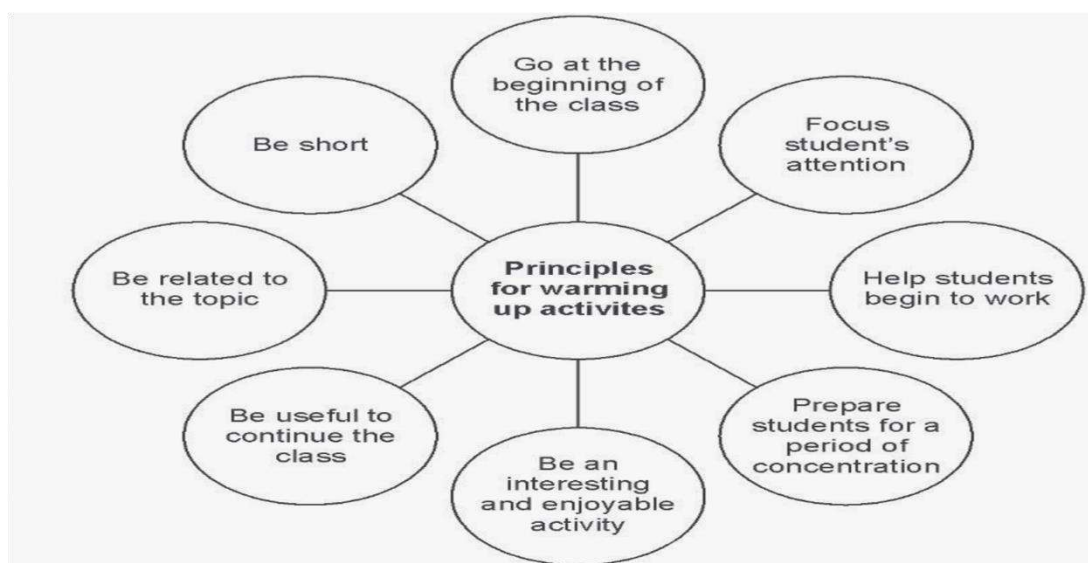

Diagram: features of warm-up activity (Velandia, 2008).

Robertson and Acklam (2000) assert that the primary goal of a warm-up exercise is to deliver the lesson quickly and in an engaging way for students to practice their English. Furthermore, Robertson and Acklam (2000) have refuted Valendia (2008) by pointing out that a warm-up activity's objective is to prepare students for working in

English; it is not required for it to be relevant to the lesson's topic. Recognizing each of these concepts is essential to the effectiveness of warm-up exercises.

2.3 New trends

Engaging in a warm-up exercise before an English lesson may set the tone for the entire session.

You can use the following enjoyable and useful warm-up exercises in your English classroom:

1. Wordle This online game may already be well-known to many kids. In Wordle, users must predict a daily-changing five-letter word.

Every participant receives the same word, and they have six guesses at it. The tiles' color varies with each guess:

Green: The letter is in its proper location.

Yellow: The word has the letter, but it is not in the correct place.

Grey: The term does not include the letter. You may use a "Wordle generator" to make your own Wordle game or play the daily game online with your pupils. It's an excellent method to have your pupils think harder and review previously taught material.

2. Show and Tell: This task gives students the opportunity to present in a relaxed setting. It can be used at the start of the term, at the conclusion of the class, or both. Pupils can discuss a subject linked to the lesson, bring something from home, or chat about their interests. It promotes communication and increases fluency in spoken English.

3. Book Talks and Book Passes: Inspire students to pass a book around the classroom or to discuss a book they've read. It encourages conversation and reading.

4. Read Alouds from Picture Books: Select an engrossing picture book and read it to the class. Talk about the plot, the characters, and the pictures. It's an excellent approach to get pupils interested and introduce new words.

5. First Chapter Fridays/First Chapter Readings: Read the first chapter of a book or a short story to begin each Friday's session. It builds suspense and motivates pupils to read more independently.

6. Book Trailers: To spark interest in a particular book, play book trailers, which are brief video teasers. After then, students can talk about what they expect from the book and whether or not they want to read it.

7. Mentor Text Routines: As mentor texts, choose passages from well-written books. Examine writing styles, vocabulary, and sentence construction. It's a useful strategy for raising kids' writing proficiency.

8. Selective Reading and Conferences on Reading: Permit pupils to select the books they want to read.

Have one-on-one reading conferences with them to talk about their understanding, interests, and development.

warm-ups should be short, relevant, and dynamic. They set the stage for the main part of the lesson, just like starters at a dinner party – you don't want to spend too much time on them!. Feel free to adapt these activities to suit your students' level and interests. Happy teaching!

Adding interactivity to warm-up activities can improve student participation and provide a supportive learning environment. Here are a few tactics that you may employ:

1. Group or Pair Activities:

Assign pupils to small groups or couples. Assign them an assignment that relates to the lesson's subject. They might work together to solve a task, have a discussion, or come up with ideas. Urge them to present their results to the class as a whole thereafter.

2. Quick Quizzes or Polls:

Ask brief questions on the day's topic or the prior class using digital technologies or straightforward paper quizzes. Pupils have the option to write down their responses or vote. It promotes involvement and introduces a competitive aspect.

3. Word Association:

Choose a random word that is associated with the lesson to begin. Students should be asked to immediately link it to other words or phrases. Students could respond with terms like "pollution," "recycling," "climate change," etc. if the topic is "environment." It works really well to activate past knowledge.

4. Sentence Completion:

Give partial sentences that pertain to the subject matter of the lecture. Students can finish them by working alone or in couples. For instance: "The protagonist of the narrative is..."

"What's not happy is..."

5. Guess the Word or Phrase: Inscribe a word or phrase on the board that is jumbled. It is up to the students to decode it and choose the right word. You can make use of linked terms or language from the course.

6. Role-playing: Give students roles based on a lesson-related situation. Students can alternate between being the interviewer and the interviewee, for instance, if you're teaching about job interviews. It promotes communication and creativity.

7. Visual Prompts: Display an eye-catching picture, comic, or brief video clip that is associated with the subject. Get students to explain what they observe, make predictions about what could happen next, or talk about the relevance of what they see.

8. Music and Lyrics: Play a little song that has a message associated with the lesson. Ask pupils to pay close attention and talk about the feelings or lyrics that are expressed. You can also investigate colloquial language or cultural allusions in the song.

9. Brain Teasers and Riddles: Present your pupils with an entertaining riddle or brain teaser. It may have to do with words, reasoning, or general knowledge. For instance: "I hear without ears, and I speak without a mouth." Who am I?

"What can't open locks even with keys?"

10. Prompts for Creative Writing:

Give an image stimulus or a phrase beginning. Based on it, students might compose a few phrases or a brief paragraph. It stimulates linguistic creativity and inventiveness.

Make sure the warm-up exercises are brief, diverse, and in line with the goals of the class. You are welcome to modify these concepts to fit the interests, age, and skill level of your pupils. Enjoy adding some interactivity to your warm-ups!

Chapter Two:

Methodology

Participants

As the first step in order to explore the puzzle, which is to discover the possible ways to enhance active student participation in warm-up activities, 32 secondary school pupils from two streams participated in the Exploratory Practice study. Their ages ranged from 17 to 19 years.

For the second step, which was the application of the outcomes of the Exploratory Practice (EP) as an Action Research (AR), 21 pupils from one of the previously mentioned classes were the participants.

Data Collection Instruments

During the study, two different questionnaires in the type of pupils' reports were used as data collection instruments. The first questionnaire was used for the EP study and aimed to provide possible answers to the first research question. The purpose was to investigate pupils' perceptions on the use of warm-up activities as tools to increase participation in class.

The second questionnaire was used for the AR study and aimed to find answers to the second research question. The questionnaire investigated how pupils perceived the process and what changes occurred in their attitudes towards the use of redesigned warm-up activities in classes during AR study.

Data Collection Procedure

During the first step (EP), the pupils were handed in three formerly prepared questions in the first questionnaire, and they worked individually to react to the questions as a sample of pupils' reports. In pairs the pupils went through all three questions one by one in two-class-time period and tried to explore the puzzle together. Pairs discussed

about their shared opinions. Each pair compared their notes with each other and prepared a short speech for the main themes emerged from their notes. Pairs gathered two by two and presented their themes on each question to each other. This continued as a circle of pair-exchange until the whole class examined all the conclusions. The following seven steps were followed during the EP study process:

Step 1 (26th of November, 2023): I introduced my puzzle to the class that I would like investigate possible ways to enhance participation in warm-up activities. I told my reasons/opinions why I would like to study on this specific issue together with them.

Step 2 (27th of November, 2023): The following day after the introduction, the EP study took place. In pairs my pupils first took individual notes on a paper answering the following questions in the first questionnaire:

What does warming-up mean to you?

What specific warm-up activities/practices can work well in class?

What specific warm-up activities/practices do not work in class?

Step 3: Each pair compared their notes with each other and prepared a short speech for the main themes emerged from their notes.

Step 4: Pairs gathered two by two, and presented their themes on each question to each other. They went through the questions one by one.

Step 5: In a circle, a whole class discussion was made to come to possible conclusions. The ideas/opinions shared for each question were written on the board.

Step 6: The teacher collected and kept record of all written data for further use.

Step 7 (27th and 28th of November, 2023): The teacher content analyzed the data and specified the themes emerged from the EP study.

The following five steps illustrate the Action Research (AR) process. For four weeks from 02nd of December 2023 to 04th of January 2024, the AR study prepared by the teacher researcher was carried out in classes. Having eight hours of a skill-based listening and speaking class in a week, the themes emerged from the EP were integrated into classroom practices and used as redesigned warm-up activities with the participation of the pupils. Following the implementation of the AR, the teacher researcher collected pupils' reports through the second questionnaire with the aim of finding answers to the second research question.

Step 8 (29th and 30th of November, 2023): The teacher prepared an action plan based on the themes emerged.

Step 9 (02nd of December, 2023 - 04th of January, 2024): The themes were integrated into classroom practices and used as warm-up activities. This process was the implementation of the AR study for four weeks.

Step 10 (05th of January, 2024): In order to understand the pupils' attitudes towards the use of redesigned warm-up activities, the pupils individually provided their opinions over the implementation of the AR. The second questionnaire was delivered to pupils in the form of pupils' reports. The questionnaire included the following four questions:

What do you think changed in your mind about the warm-up activities that we used during classes?

What were the beneficial sides and the advantages of the activities? Please provide details and examples.

What were the useless points and the disadvantages of the activities? Please provide details and examples.

Can you provide any other suggestions? If yes, what are they?

Step 11 (08th of January, 2024 – 10th of January, 2024): The teacher content analyzed the pupils' reports in order to come up with the results of the study.

Step 12 (18th of January, 2024): The findings and the results of the study were shared with the pupils.

Data Analysis

Following the EP study, the teacher researcher monitored the process and collected all the pupils' reports in order to analyze the content, create the coding system, and specify themes emerged from the first questionnaire. Following the AR study, the teacher researcher collected all the pupils' reports

from the second questionnaire and analyzed the data by implementing the same analysis methods as in the EP study.

Findings

Findings of the EP study

Findings for Question 1 in the Questionnaire

Two themes emerged for the first question in the questionnaire; **"What does warming-up mean to you?"**

The themes were "Definitions as motivation" and "Lack of necessity". Some quotes and the frequencies of the themes mentioned by the pupils are provided as the percentages. 19 out of 32 pupils answered this question.

Table 1:. Findings for Question 1 in the Questionnaire.

What does warming-up mean to you?	Percentages	Number of Responding Pupils
Definitions as motivation	25 %	8
Lack of necessity	34 %	11

Eight pupils provided "definitions as motivation" and the percentage was 25 %. For these pupils, warm-up activities meant practices to serve a preparation for the unit beforehand. Warm-up activities meant to help teachers increase motivation of pupils:

I think warm-up is something that you do to prepare yourself for an activity. It is a kind of motivation for pupils. (Student Comment)

The second theme was related to "Lack of necessity" of the warm-up activities. 11 pupils, which accounted for 34%, reported warm-up activities in the course book were not necessary and we did not need to implement such practices. They were easy and mostly time wasting:

They are not good because they show us the photo, and then show us the vocabulary. It is wasting our time and so easy. (Student Comment)

It is simple and not necessary. For example, it is like "Look at the picture and which of the people are famous in your country?" (Student Comment)

Findings for Questions 2 and 3 in the Questionnaire

This section provides findings for the second and the third questions, "What specific warm-up

activities/practices can work well in class?" and "What specific warm-up activities/practices do not work in class?" These two questions were illustrated in the same themes as because they were related to each other and almost most of the pupils provided similar answers to these questions. The

emerged themes and some quotes from the pupils' reports are provided with the percentages as the followings.

Table 2: Findings for Questions 2 and 3 in the Questionnaire.

What specific warm-up activities/practices can or do not work well in class?	Percentages	Number of Responding Pupils
Relevance to real life	31.25 %	10
Using pictures/visuals	25 %	8
Using videos	25 %	8
Recent social events	16 %	5
Vocabulary	13 %	4
Storytelling and sharing memories	13 %	4

First theme was related to "Relevance to real life". 10 pupils out of 32 (31.25%) reported that the practices needed to be relevant to their lives. It was mentioned that they felt more comfortable and ready when the topics were more in relation with real life experiences:

Everyday parts are very important. We watch the video and catch useful samples from the conversations. (Student Comment)

Pictures are not realistic. It looks like a book for children. (Student Comment)

Using "Pictures/visuals" and "Videos" were two other themes emerged from the pupils' answers with 25% for each. Eight pupils suggested using more pictures that were related to the topics before we started the unit. The reason was, visuals might help them create ideas beforehand. Meaningful visual aids could give them chance to produce more vocabulary during discussions and learn new words from each other.

Pupils suggested watching videos to generate interest for the topics. As because the videos of the course-book did not seem realistic and were most of the time similar to each other, my pupils pointed to the need for variety in videos. For them, classes could be more enjoyable and help them focus more on the topics in this way:

I think we should use visual activities because they are beneficial. I learn vocabulary from pictures. (Student Comment)

Just pictures can work well because we see it for the first time and talk about it. We hear different ideas and learn different vocabulary from our friends. (Student Comment)

We should watch more videos about the topic. We understand better in this way, and lesson becomes fun. It is practical. (Student comment)

Another theme was integrating "recent social events" into our classes. Five pupils (16%) reported that we needed to make connections between the topic of the unit and social cases. In that way, according to my pupils, classes could become more active and interesting for them:

Using recent social news or events are more interesting. (Student Comment)

We should use current articles about the topic. (Student Comment)

The next theme was "Vocabulary" with 13%. Four pupils mentioned adding some extra vocabulary practices to warm-up activities. Rather than learning only the target vocabulary that were presented in the unit, these four pupils suggested adding more vocabulary practices to the topic while we were practicing warm-up activities. During the EP study, they mentioned learning more vocabulary in general perspective could help them speak more comfortably:

There should be useful and unknown vocabulary parts, puzzles, or cartoons. We can talk about a famous person's quote. (Student Comment)

Highlighted words are very attractive, so maybe before activities, we can talk about these words. We can have dialogues about them. (Student Comment)

"Storytelling and Sharing Memories" was the last theme emerged from the EP study. For four pupils (13%), creating fiction and/or nonfiction stories from the topics could work well. Sharing their memories and experiences from past could create curiosity for the topic beforehand:

I think asking pupils about memories is a good idea because they have to think about it. Also, they can find funny things; everyone can have an interesting story. (Student Comment)

For example, the topic is life experiences. We can talk about our lives; it can be an event or a memory. (Student Comment)

Implementation of the Emerged Themes as Redesigned Warm-up Activities

The application of the AR mostly took place by adhering to the themes emerged from the EP findings.

Before listening and speaking activities in the course-book, the themes such as "Pictures/visuals" and "Videos" in the form of YouTube videos or Google images were used as redesigned warm-up activities. Similarly, story-telling practices, sharing memories from past, and/or associating topics with real life experiences, which were also the other emerged themes, were integrated into the redesigned warm-up activities. On the other hand, eleven pupils mentioned during the EP study that warm-up activities in the course book were easy and mostly time wasting. Therefore, I decided not to prepare extra warm-up activities for some unit topics. I just used the ones that

the course-book provided basically as a short warming-up because such practices either fitted in our AR implementation purposes already or were clear enough for pupils to discuss on. My choices and planning were most of the time effective to decide whether to use or not to use redesigned warm-up activities for classes; the reason was that lesson planning needed to be prepared before the classes, and additionally I was already and previously informed of the pupils' expectations from the EP study findings.

The following sample practices are from the AR study that I implemented through the process:

On the 9th of December 2023, the topic was "Ethics in Business" in the book unit. The unit aimed to get pupils to watch and understand a video about the manners and morals people need to stick to. Before we started the unit, I used Google images that were related to animal conservation and helped my pupils to be familiar with the term. In pairs, my pupils discussed the pictures about different types of manners and behaviors. They gave samples from their own lives to each other and shared their experiences. In this way, they had the chance to relate the topic to the real life. That activity was a sample of "Story Telling and Sharing Memories", "Relevance to Real life" and "Pictures/Visuals" themes emerged from the EP findings.

On the 15th of December 2023, the topic was "Ancient Civilization". The course-book unit aimed to provide listening, speaking and vocabulary practices to pupils. As a pre-listening warm-up activity, we first talked about our own country's and hometowns' customs and traditions in a whole class discussion. In pairs, my pupils shared customs, traditions, daily lives in their hometowns with their partners. They used the dictionary applications in their smart phones to learn related vocabulary with their own customs and traditions. Some pairs shared their opinions with the rest of the class after they had discussed with their partners. Different experiences from a variety

of pupils were revealed. The whole class mentioned customs and traditions from several locations/ such as ancient Egypt "and Vocabulary" themes.

On the 28th of December 2023, the topic was "Safety". It was supposed to be a speaking practice after having listened to a specific kind of safety type in the class. The listening included comprehension questions and was a while-listening activity. It helped my pupils to get ready for the speaking activity. Before they began to speak in pairs, we used Google images and Wikipedia explanations to be familiar with some of the phobia types in the unit and commented on them as a whole class. Next step was using their own smart phones to find related vocabulary and images on the phobia type they chose and discuss it with their partners. Google images and Wikipedia helped them get prepared for the speaking task more effectively. It was a sample implementation of "Pictures/Visuals" and "Vocabulary" themes into warm-up activities.

On the 25th of December 2023, for example, we did not use any warm-up activity for the listening and speaking practices. The topic was "Advertising". As because the topic was so related to real life and all pupils were mostly familiar with the topic, we preferred not to focus on warming-up. Rather than that we listened to audio recordings in the book and held group and whole class discussions related to the topic. During those post-listening speaking practices, my pupils and I shared our experiences over the use of social-networking websites in our own lives. Another sample was on the 4th of January 2024. The topic was "The solar system", and the unit aimed to teach related vocabulary and to help pupils discuss on the topic. Similarly, I did not implement any redesigned warm-up activity for this topic for the reason that the course book provided realistic pictures and a related video on the topic. After one to two minutes long warming-up practice for the topic, we began to watch the video in the unit. Following that, my pupils held discussions in pairs as a post-listening

activity. Such two cases were sample practices of "Lack of Necessity" theme emerged from the EP study.

Findings of the AR study

Having implemented the AR study for a four-weeks period in classes; the second questionnaire was distributed to the pupils in order to understand how they perceived the process. The following sections illustrate the themes emerged from the questionnaire and the quotes from the pupils. The questionnaire consisted of three questions. The aim was to find out overall reflections of the pupils over the classroom implementations and to see whether pupils' attitudes changed towards warm-up activities. The following three sections provide the findings for each question in the questionnaire. The frequencies of the themes, including the percentages of how many pupils mentioned them, are included.

Findings for Question 1 in the Questionnaire

Three themes emerged for the first question in the questionnaire "What do you think changed in your mind about the warm-up activities that we used during classes?" The themes were "Increase in creativity and interest", "Change in awareness", and "Attention".

Table 3: Findings for Question 1 in the Questionnaire

What do you think changed in your mind about the warm-up activities that we used during classes?	Percentages	Number of Responding Pupils
Increase in creativity and interest	33 %	7
Change in awareness	24 %	5
Attention	19 %	4

First theme emerged from the question was "Increase in creativity and interest". Seven pupils (33%) stated the practices made them feel more comfortable during classes, created interesting classroom atmosphere, and helped them be more creative in classes. They had positive attitudes towards the AR implementations:

They made us more creative and force us to think in English. (Student Comment)

In the past, I used to get nervous when I had to talk in front of the class. However, after we started to do warm-up activities I got used to talk and now I feel more comfortable when I'm answering teachers' questions. (Student Comment)

The next theme was on the "Change in awareness" of the practices on the pupils. Five pupils (24%) found the practices practical and stated such practices would provide further positive benefits to their learning. Because the practices brought variety to the classes and were mostly designed based on the pupils' own needs, not just for this class but for future learning they thought they could also benefit from the practices:

First, I was thinking that they were not beneficial, but as we went on I realized that I was developing. (Student Comment)

For a while ago I thought that warming up activities were unnecessary, but now I consider that they help to understand the lesson more. (Student Comment)

Another theme was related to "Attention" of the pupils. Four pupils (19%) reported that the practices were beneficial and helped them gather more attention before we started the class. The reason might be that during the study I planned my warm-up activities based on the EP findings and practiced them with the pupils accordingly. They were most of the time participative in the practices:

They helped me to pay my attention to the class more. (Student Comment)

It is beneficial to get attention of the class. (Student Comment)

Findings for Question 2 in the Questionnaire

The second question was "What were the beneficial sides and the advantages of the activities? Please provide details and examples". After content analysis of the questionnaire, four themes emerged for this question; "Relevance to real life", "Improvement in vocabulary", "Effectiveness of visuals", and "Bringing variety to classes". Almost most of the pupils reported the practices prepared them to the topic of the units. They felt more comfortable and were ready to listen and speak about the unit topics. The following comments are from two pupils:

In your class with the help of this kind of activities not only I really enjoyed but also I am able to understand most of things during the lecture. (Student Comment)

It helped us to be prepared for class. For example, we had some ideas about the unit that we were going to start. (Student Comment)

Table 4: Findings for Question 2 in the Questionnaire.

What were the beneficial sides and the advantages of the activities? Please provide details and examples	Percentages	Number of Responding Pupils
Improvement in vocabulary	48 %	10
Relevance to real life	38 %	8
Effectiveness of visuals	29 %	6
Bringing variety to classes	14 %	3

10 pupils (48%) mentioned the positive effects of the warm-up activities on their "Improvement in vocabulary". The pupils mostly thought they became familiar with the related vocabulary of the units and also learned additional words that were not

among the target vocabulary. The warm-up activities provided extra vocabulary practice to my pupils and they also had opportunity to turn passive vocabulary into active:

We can learn more words except the Unlock's (the course-book) vocabulary part and when we use these words while speaking with our partner the new words will be permanent. (Student Comment)

It helps us to be familiar to the new topic's vocabulary. Also, you have an opinion before you read the text. It helps us to predict unknown verbs. (Student Comment)

"Relevance to real life" was the second theme that was mentioned most by the pupils. Eight pupils (38%) reported that the practices had positive effects on their language skills because those were the topics related to their own lives. They enjoyed connecting the topics with real life situations.

Mentioning memories from their past and/or finding relations with their own settings facilitated the participation:

I noticed that while I was telling about a topic that I had lived sometime, I was a faster speaker. For example, we mentioned our flight experiences, it was good for me, because I had a lot of experiences and I told them quickly. (Student Comment)

Sometimes I don't have ideas about some topics but when it's related to our lives I have ideas to share and these activities help me to express myself easily. (Student Comment)

The theme "Effectiveness of visuals" such as Google images and YouTube videos seemed to have helped some pupils. Six pupils (29%) reported that they found them effective and they were good alternatives to the warm-up questions in the book's unit. Commenting on Google images that were related to the topic of the units seemed to

guide them to get prepared. Visualization of the unit topics mostly generated interest in the classes. In addition, the pupils found watching YouTube videos practical. Such videos, according to the pupils, brought variety to classes and were practical in use:

Instead of trying to answer the questions like 'what do you think about the Egyptian Civilization?' It is quite better to look at the photos that are about Egyptian Civilization and to comment about the photos. (Student Comment)

We learned parts of a car... You showed us parts of a car one by one on the pictures. It was more understandable. (Student Comment)

Showing photograph and watching video prevented boredom. It is good way to learn. If you came to the class and said, "Come on, do this, read this, listen!" It would be the worst thing that you could. (Student Comment)

The last theme emerged from this question was related to "Bringing variety to classes". Three pupils (14%) reported accordingly. As it is mentioned before, the AR study consisted of several pedagogical practices. For this reason, the pupils thought implementation of such a variety of activities in class brought variety to the classes. They had mostly positive attitudes towards the practices:

They are both about our lives and not just one type. We did not change the topic by doing the same things. It made us more willing and curious. (Student Comment)

It made lessons different from the others. (Student Comment)

Findings for Question 3 in the Questionnaire

This section provides the findings for the third question, "What were the useless points and the disadvantages of the activities? Please provide details and examples" Nine pupils stated two

different disadvantages for the AR implementations. Two themes emerged as "Topics of the units" and "Time problem".

Table 5: Findings for Question 3 in the Questionnaire

What were the useless points and the disadvantages of the activities? Please provide details and examples	Percentages	Number of Responding Pupils
Topics of the units	24 %	5
Time problem	19 %	4

The first disadvantage was related to "Topics of the units". Five pupils (24%) mentioned this theme and thought some topics were not interesting or not easy to discuss even in their native language. It was not because of the activity type, but some topics of the units themselves were not attractive for them. They would not like to listen to or speak about those topics.

Maybe for some people the title could be dull or something. (Student Comment)

Some subjects are difficult to speak even in Arabic. I think this is the only one disadvantage. (Student Comment)

The next theme as a disadvantage was "Time problem". According to four pupils (19%), the practices took more time than they needed to. They thought we had spent too much time on warming- up, and that prevented us from following the syllabus as scheduled.

The useless points and disadvantages of them are that they take some time and cause to be late and slow for schedule. (Student Comment)

Sometimes we spend a lot of time in one unit. (Student Comment)

On the other hand, almost all pupils reported they were satisfied with the practices. Many of them mentioned there were not particular disadvantages. They stated they did not meet any impractical points in the study.

I have not noticed any disadvantage with the practices. (Student Comment)

 I think there is nothing useless with the activities we did. (Student Comment)

 As I said before I don't think it has any disadvantages. (Student Comment)

Findings for Question 4 in the Questionnaire

Most of the pupils avoided suggesting further ideas for the last question in the questionnaire; "Can you provide any other suggestions? If yes, what are they?" 13 pupils (62%) reported they did not have any further suggestions. On the other hand, eight of the pupils (38%) added the practices were beneficial; however, they did not provide any reasons why.

Table 6: Findings for Question 4 in the Questionnaire

Can you provide any other suggestions? If yes, what are they?	Percentages	Number of Responding Pupils
No Suggestions	62 %	13
Practices were beneficial	38 %	8

No suggestions come to my mind. I think the methods we are practicing in class are sufficient for now. (Student Comment)

I think it is very beneficial. I haven't got any suggestions. (Student Comment)

Reflection

With the help of such a study, my pupils and I experienced a change in learning and teaching. For my pupils' side, they were mostly positive with the whole process. They eagerly volunteered to help me conduct the research and actively participated in every step. After the EP study was completed, I changed my lesson planning and began to integrate the themes emerged from EP findings into my warm-up activities. I never encountered unwillingness from my pupils as we continued to have our regular classes and conduct the AR at the same time. That might be because the AR implementations all came from my pupils' opinions and suggestions. I planned the warm-up activities for the classes by keeping in mind the outcomes of the EP findings and tried to use them accordingly as much as possible. I designed the materials and the activity types by adhering to my pupils' responses in the first questionnaire.

These all gave me an insightful understanding that my classes could turn into

atmospheres where student-teacher collaboration ends up with more efficacies. On this point, Congmin (2013) suggests that communicative interactions between teachers and pupils need to be taken into consideration (p. 26) and they are essential for teachers to work towards pedagogical achievements while contributing to pupils' language learning (Consolo, 2006, p. 51).

In classroom applications my pupils mostly tended to participate in practices during which visual materials were used and topics were related to real-life experiences. The study helped me understand that my pupils were pleasured to have taken a part in decision-making process, and following that their enthusiasm towards active participation in warm-up activities increased. It was a significant change for me to see my pupils participating in warm-up activities. The whole process facilitated mutual understanding, and my pupils positively welcomed the outcomes.

As can be inferred from the second questionnaire, the study helped my pupils feel more comfortable and creative with the help of redesigned warm-up activities. They showed more enthusiasm for warm- up activities and changed their attitudes towards such practices. One of the themes "Change in awareness" might also be a good sample for the positive effects of this study on my pupils, as they tended to believe warm-up activities could turn into educative pedagogical tools. In addition, as the warm-up activities were varied and different for almost each unit topic, my pupils benefited the diversity in the practices while improving their vocabulary in several different topics. These changes and developments were all consistent with the findings of the study.

In this study, on the other hand, creating a knowledge-shared classroom helped me as the teacher researcher become more socially constructed and attribute to a collaborative platform with my pupils. The process, in my opinion, drew special attention upon teacher identity as because it may be constructed and maintained through teacher-student relations. Such an experience provided me a supportive advantage while shaping my own perceptions towards teaching as an individual teacher.

Wallace (1998) discusses the relation between AR and teacher development, and points to the effectiveness of AR as a professional development strategy for teachers in addition to practices such as membership of a professional association, informal discussions with colleagues, or attendance to conferences (pp. 4-6).

Such a study may be counted as one of the inquiry-based approaches to professional development. It aimed to create an environment in which dialogic mediation took place. Together with the active participation of my pupils, I formulated the everyday concepts by redesigning the lesson plans and the classroom materials with the help of classroom discussions. When given opportunities to discuss on and investigate their own learning, pupils welcome power and responsibility of being decision- makers of

their own learning (Po-Ying, 2007, p. 240). In my opinion, these were all quality outcomes that meant opening doors to my pupils for declaring their thoughts in decision-making process. I as the teacher researcher provided guidance to my pupils during information-sharing process, opened them up opportunities to work collaboratively and share knowledge on the way they actually desired.

Implications of the study may reveal another advantage that I achieved a goal-directed action. Besides improving the quality of life in my classroom, which is an indication of EP, the study helped me and my pupils come up with mutually predefined classroom activities and materials. Rather than using only regular warm-up activities in the book, which are mostly similar to each other, a variety of warm- up activities were used in the classes. Hearing the pupils' voices and responding them back are both undoubtedly the quality outcomes for teachers' self-development. Applications of the findings of the EP study in my classes and besides considering them as innovative classroom activities/practices were reasonable. Exploratory AR gave my pupils and me opportunities to experience mutual understanding and to take specific aspects of collaboration into consideration in classroom.

Initial/pre-service education may not be enough to become effective teachers in dynamic educational developments. It is so clear that conducting Practitioner Research (PR) studies such as Action Research (AR), Teacher Research (TR), or Exploratory Practice (EP) and so forth are among the options to enhance teacher development because the nature of these mentioned practices are all contextual and specific to teachers' own teaching environments. Conducting such context-based studies, as it is in this particular study, help us as teachers improve our teaching, expand our theoretical knowledge, and see what really happens in our own classrooms.

In a study conducted by Atay (2008) with eighteen English teachers as the researchers, EFL teachers' attitudes towards classroom research and its effects on teachers' instructional practices were investigated. Five themes were emphasized that emerged from the teacher researchers' journals. In the study, the author drew attention to the themes after analyzing and constructing categories. Themes such as "development of research skills", "increased awareness of the teaching/learning process", "renewed enthusiasm about teaching", "collaboration with colleagues", and "general problems with research" were all based on the teacher researchers' perceptions after attending the courses given by the author and conducting studies (p. 144). The first three themes of Atay's study in my opinion may fit in my case through this particular study, as I believe I became more aware of my own teaching, and I understood the importance of classroom-based research one more time.

Consequently, Anwaruddin and Pervin (2015) argue the ineffectiveness of research done in academic world. They discuss that teachers do not always have chance to get access to studies, find academic articles related to their own classroom environments, and they see academic articles too theoretical to comprehend (p. 22). Teachers sometimes tend to continue teaching with the knowledge that they were inherited from their educational background. Burns (2010) points to this by stating "many teachers have been put off research and the theories about teaching they were taught in teacher training courses, because they find out that when they get into the classroom the theory does not match the reality" (p. 6). The more teachers are engaged in research the more qualified they are in teaching. These may be the results of knowledge and consciousness they have gained through research engagement in field.

Teachers undoubtedly become aware of the necessity and the benefits of professional development by conducting practitioner research types.

Limitations and Implications

This particular study used only student reports as the data collection tool during both EP and AR implementations. In order to provide more insight to the findings, semi-structured interviews with the pupils and/or focus group interviews could have been held with the participation of the pupils. In order to investigate this particular study topic with a different perspective, gathering data from EFL teachers could also contribute to gaining more comprehensible and in-depth knowledge.

The study, together with the EP and the AR implementations, took approximately one month in total. For this reason, it would be not wrong if we saw the study as a plot study because of the time constraint, limitation of data collection tools, and the number of participants, which were the members of relevant population. Application time period can be kept longer. Such a research can be turned into an experimental study. By constructing an experimental group and a control group, for instance, the causal effect of the study on different learning and teaching outcomes can be measured.

General Conclusion

In conclusion, this study aimed to investigate the role of warm-up activities in enhancing student engagement in EFL classrooms, with a specific focus on secondary school students in Algeria. Through a combination of Exploratory Practice (EP) and Action Research (AR), the study examined students' perceptions of warm-up activities and assessed the impact of redesigned warm-up activities on their participation and attitudes.

The findings indicated that warm-up activities are crucial for creating a positive learning environment, fostering student-teacher relationships, and increasing student motivation and engagement. The initial EP phase revealed that students often feel disconnected from traditional warm-up activities, highlighting the need for more innovative and tailored approaches. The subsequent AR phase demonstrated that redesigned warm-up activities, based on student feedback and needs, significantly improved student participation and overall classroom dynamics.

Moreover, the study underscored the importance of good classroom management in the successful implementation of warm-up activities. Effective classroom management strategies were found to enhance the efficacy of these activities, making students more receptive and active in their learning process.

Overall, this research contributes to the field of TEFL by providing practical insights into the design and implementation of warm-up activities. It emphasizes the need for continuous teacher development and adaptive teaching practices to meet the evolving needs of students. Future research could further explore the long-term effects of these activities on language acquisition and academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers to enhance the effectiveness of warm-up activities in EFL classrooms:

1. **Incorporate Varied Warm-Up Activities:** Teachers should integrate a variety of warm-up activities that cater to different learning styles and interests. This can include games, discussions, multimedia content, and interactive exercises to maintain student engagement and motivation.

2. **Align Warm-Up Activities with Lesson Objectives:** Ensure that warm-up activities are directly related to the lesson's objectives and content. This alignment helps students see the relevance of these activities to their overall learning goals, thereby increasing their interest and participation.

3. **Foster a Positive Classroom Environment:** Create a supportive and inclusive classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable and encouraged to participate. This includes establishing clear rules, showing respect for all students, and providing positive feedback.

4. **Continuous Professional Development:** Teachers should engage in ongoing professional development to learn new strategies for effective classroom management and innovative warm-up activities. Workshops, seminars, and collaborative learning with peers can be valuable.

5. **Student-Centered Approaches:** Involve students in the selection and design of warm-up activities. By considering their preferences and feedback, teachers can create more engaging and effective activities that resonate with students' interests and needs.

6. Utilize Technology: Incorporate ICT tools and digital resources in warm-up activities. This can include educational apps, online quizzes, and interactive games that make learning more dynamic and interactive.

7. Monitor and Adapt: Regularly assess the effectiveness of warm-up activities through student feedback and participation levels. Be willing to adapt and modify activities based on this feedback to ensure they remain effective and engaging.

Research Implications

The findings from this study have several implications for future research in the field of TEFL and educational practice:

1. Longitudinal Studies: Future research should consider longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of redesigned warm-up activities on student engagement and language acquisition. This will provide deeper insights into their effectiveness over time.

2. Comparative Studies: Conduct comparative studies across different educational contexts and age groups to understand how warm-up activities can be tailored to diverse student populations. This can help in identifying best practices that are universally applicable.

3. Exploration of Digital Tools: Investigate the role of digital tools and resources in enhancing warm-up activities. Research can focus on the efficacy of specific technologies and how they can be integrated into the classroom to support EFL learning.

4. Teacher Training Programs: Examine the impact of specialized teacher training programs on the implementation of effective warm-up activities. Research can explore how training influences teachers' ability to design and execute these activities.

5. Student Perceptions: Further studies should delve into students' perceptions of different types of warm-up activities. Understanding students' views can provide valuable insights for creating more engaging and effective classroom practices.

6. Cultural Factors: Explore the influence of cultural factors on the effectiveness of warm-up activities. This can help in developing culturally responsive teaching strategies that are sensitive to the backgrounds and experiences of students.

7. Integration with Other Teaching Practices:

  - Research how warm-up activities can be integrated with other teaching practices and methodologies to create a cohesive and comprehensive approach to EFL instruction.

By addressing these recommendations and research implications, educators and researchers can continue to improve the use of warm-up activities in EFL classrooms, ultimately enhancing student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

Questionnaire for Exploratory Practice

What does warming-up mean to you?

What specific warm-up activities/practices can work well in class?

What specific warm-up activities/practices do not work in class?

Appendix B: Questionnaire for Action Research

What do you think changed in your mind about the warm-up activities that we used during classes?

What were the beneficial sides and the advantages of the activities? Please provide details and examples.

What were the useless points and the disadvantages of the activities? Please provide details and examples.

Can you provide any other suggestions? If yes, what are they?