

# **THE APPLICATION OF ICE BREAKING ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

By:

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## **ABSTRACT**

The paper entitled “Ice Breaking Activities in Teaching English to Junior High School Students” was purposed to describe the process of ice breaking activities and the suitability of the ice breaking activities with the principles applied in teaching English. This research was conducted at SMPN 18 Kota Bogor by using descriptive qualitative research. The participant of this research was one of English teachers of that school. The finding of this research described the process of ice breaking activities in teaching English and the suitability of the ice breaking activities with the principles. The ice breaking activities used were “Tongue-twister, English Game, and English Song”. The ice breaking activity was started by dividing the students into several groups, telling the name of the activity, giving some explanations about what they had to do, and finally starting the ice breaking by choosing one member from several groups to repeat the sentence. The result showed that the ice breaking activities were usually started by telling the name of the activities, giving some explanations about what they are going to do, doing simulation and finally starting the ice breaking activities about five to twenty minutes. Furthermore, the process of ice breaking activities are mostly appropriate with the principles. The role of the teacher as the facilitator, the instruction given which is easy to understand, the suitability of the students’ level with the ice breaking activities, the time limit used, the atmosphere of the class, and the students’ interest toward lesson.

Keywords: Ice Breaking activities, English Teaching

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## ABSTRAK

*Skripsi dengan judul “Ice Breaking Activities in Teaching English to Junior High School Students” bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan proses dari kegiatan ice breaking dan kesesuaian dari kegiatan tersebut dengan prinsip-prinsip dari kegiatan ice breaking. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan di SMPN 18 Kota Bogor dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah salah satu guru bahasa Inggris di SMP tersebut. Hasil penelitian menggambarkan proses dari kegiatan ice breaking dan kesesuaian dari kegiatan tersebut dengan prinsip-prinsip dari kegiatan ice breaking. Ice breaking yang digunakan adalah “Tongue-twister, English Game, and English Song”. Kegiatan ice breaking dimulai dengan membagi siswa kedalam beberapa kelompok, mengatakan nama ice breaking yang akan diaplikasikan, menjelaskan langkah-langkah yang harus dilakukan dalam kegiatan ice breaking, dan memulai kegiatan ice breaking dengan memilih satu siswa dari beberapa kelompok untuk mengulang kata-kata yang telah disampaikan oleh guru. Peneliti juga menemukan bahwa, kegiatan ice breaking biasanya dimulai dengan menyebutkan nama dari ice breaking tersebut, memberikan instruksi tentang bagaimana ice breaking tersebut dilakukan, melakukan simulasi, dan memulai kegiatan ice breaking dalam kurun waktu lima sampai 20 menit. Untuk lebih lanjut, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa proses ice breaking sesuai dengan prinsip-prinsip dari ice breaking tersebut. Peran guru sebagai fasilitator, instruksi yang diberikan jelas dan mudah dipahami, kegiatan ice breaking yang sesuai dengan siswa, waktu yang digunakan sudah sesuai, suasana kelas menjadi lebih hidup, dan minat belajar siswa menjadi lebih tinggi.*

*Kata Kunci : Kegiatan ice breaking, Mengajar bahasa Inggris*

## BACKGROUND

Teaching English to students of Junior High School has become a challenging one. Nowadays, it is hard to find students who have motivation in learning English. Most of them are easily getting bored, especially if the teacher teaches them using the same technique all the time without giving them any refreshing activity such as ice breaking activity. The writer chooses this topic in order to describe the process of ice breaking activities and the appropriateness of the activities with the principles applied in teaching English to Junior High School students. The writer has two reasons in choosing this topic. First, ice breaking activities are interesting. It is believed that by applying ice breaking activities, students will be more enthusiastic and interested in learning English. Because in this kind of activities, students will be given some fun activities that will engage their interest to learn English. Ice breaking also will refresh the situation, reduce the boredom, and reload the energy of the students. Second, applying appropriate ice breaking activities in teaching English to Junior High School gives so many advantages. They can relax and liven up the atmosphere of the class, encourage and

motivate students to learn, engage students' interest, attract students' attention, and also provide the students opportunity to communicate with each other. It is hoped that this research will give information about the process of ice breaking activities and the suitability of the activities with the principles applied in teaching English to Junior High School students. The questions of this research are “How does the teacher apply ice breaking activities in teaching English to Junior High School students?”, and “How appropriate are the ice breaking activities with the principles?”

Ice breaking activities are variety of fun activities applied in the classroom in order to engage students' interest. Harmer (2007:52) stated that Games, music, discussions, stimulating pictures, dramatic stories, and amusing anecdotes are some of activities which frequently engage students' interest. In the line with Harmer, Flanigan's 2011 study (as cited in the article of Hutasoni and Tambunan) found that applying ice breaking activities in the classroom will liven up students' mood of learning. Also appropriate kind of ice breaking activities will make students enjoy

the learning process in order to motivate them to get the best result from the lesson. Kanu (2011) said that Ice breaking activities can be used as openers to motivate learners toward lesson. They can be used in the middle of a session to refresh the situation, reduce the boredom, reload the energy and enthusiasm of the students and get the concentration back. They can also be used at the end of the lesson to confirm or review the material. Leblanc (2011) confirmed that by doing ice breaking activities students will lose their interest for the outside world and will focus on the lesson. He believes that after doing an ice breaking activity students are going to be able to concentrate on their lesson and they will get the maximum of their learning process as the result.

The following are principles of a successful ice breaking activity according to Witkowski (2000):

- a. Objectives: Ice breaking activity must be in line with the material given.
- b. Audience: Ages and abilities of participants must be considered as the important factors.
- c. Time Management: Ice breaking activity may take around 20 minutes.
- d. Control: Control the ice breaking activity. Ice breaking activities are short, fun activities to liven up and to relax the atmosphere.

Jenkins (2001) argued that an appropriate ice breaking activity should be dynamic and simple, not too long nor too short. In relation with Jenkins, Sapp (2007) states the principles of ice breaking activities as:

- a. Simple: The simpler, the better.
- b. Non- threatening: Ice breaking activities should not make people feeling uncomfortable.
- c. Open ended: The uniqueness of students must be allowed to be expressed.
- d. Relevant: The needs of the group and purpose of the lesson must be taken into account in choosing the types of ice breaking activities.

- e. Energizing: Ice breaking activities should excite students according to their level of activity.

English Teaching is a process of presenting and explaining new material, providing practise, and testing. These three processes of teaching should be conducted by using appropriate method in order to make it clear and understandable Penny (1996:10). Applying various activities in the classroom can become one of the appropriate strategies in order to engage students' interests. Create a good atmosphere in the classrom can also encourage students to practice the language, to venture a response, and to make them feel more confident Brown (2001:74).

According to Harmer (2007:40) one of the ways to engage students' interest at the beginning of the lesson is by giving them some interesting activities. After they are engaged, teacher tells the students what they are going to learn, and discusses with them what goals need to be achieved as the result of their lesson. Exploring new knowledge by giving explanation and examples, practicing, and solving problems becomes the next step of the learning process. As the final, teacher reviews the material and gives students some ideas of what they will be doing next. In the line with Harmer, Slattery and Willis (2001:12) stated that there are three steps in English teaching, such as greeting and checking attendance as the opening, organizing the classroom by everyday interaction, and closing.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study applied qualitative approach and descriptive method in order to gain the data. Moleong (2002:163,168) stated that by using descriptive method can give opportunity to analyze the data deeply since it systematically accurate and factually describes the characteristics of the gained data. The participant of this study was an English teacher of *SMPN 18 Kota Bogor*. The participant was chosen by using purposive sampling.

In collecting the data, the writer employed three instruments include documentation, classroom observation, and

interview. Here are the following explanations:

1. Documentation

Documentation included lesson plan or *Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran (RPP)* that English teacher used during the observation. This document was important to analyze whether the ice breaking activities related to the objective of the learning process or not. Another purpose was to find out the appropriateness of the ice breaking activities with the audience. It was also important to find the exact time of ice breaking used in one session of instruction.

2. Observation

This research particularly employed non-participant observation in which the researcher did not involve in the setting of the research. The observation closely observed what the teacher and the students did in the classroom during pre-activity. Further, the writer observed whether the ice breaking activities appropriate with the principles or not. The researcher focused on observing the pre-activity. However, the whole activities hold in the classroom was recorded. Observation note was also made to note what was happening during the class, especially during the pre-activity and also to back up the result of the observation.

3. Interview

Structured interview was conducted in order to avoid misconception about what had been found in the observation. Accordingly, interview should be planned in terms of time of interview, the duration of the interview, the interviewee, and the type of question. This interview was clearly an appropriate data collection technique in order to gain information concerning the process of ice breaking activities and the suitability of the activities with the principles used during pre-activity.

After collecting the data through documentation, classroom observation, and interview, the data was analyzed and

interpreted in order to get the result of the research question. The analysis and interpretation of data was conducted in three steps.

1. Data Analysis of Documentation

The writer used teacher's *Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran (RPP)* as documentation. The document was analyzed in order to know whether the ice breaking activities related to the objective of the learning process or not. Another purpose was to find out the appropriateness of the ice breaking activities with the audience. It was also important to find the exact time of ice breaking used in one session of instruction.

2. Data Analysis of Classroom Observation

In this step, the researcher did the observation during teaching learning process. The observation was conducted in order to gain depth data about the process of ice breaking activities and the suitability of the activities with the principles applied in the classroom. This activity was supported with video recorder and also observation note as back up. The data from the video, then transcribed into textual data.

3. Data Analysis of Interview

For the last step of gaining the data, the writer interviewed the participant. This interview was conducted to avoid misconception about what had been found in the observation. This activity was recorded with voice recorder and the result is transcribed. The transcription of the record, was carefully analyzed in order to get the important information according to the research question.

To process the data from the three instruments, the coding method was used in this research. As mentioned by Alwasilah (2002:229) coding is efficient data-labeling and data-retrieval device. To implement the code, the researcher employed three steps of coding. The first step was open coding. The data was analyzed and classified based on the similarities. Then, the data was particularly compared based on the

differences. The second was axial coding,. After identifying the similarities and comparing the data, in this step, the data was collected. In this process, the data collected was related from categories to sub-categories. The third is selective coding. In this step, the writer gathered all categories and sub categories and systematically link it with the core category and validated the relationship.

## RESEARCH FINDING AND CONCLUSION

### 1. Data from Documentation

#### a. RPP 1

The *RPP* is about Present Continuous Tense. At the pre-activity of the *RPP*, it is mentioned that the teacher uses ice breaking during that activity. However, it does not mention the detail information about kind of ice breaking used during the process, the time limit, and also the objective of using the ice breaking activity.

#### b. RPP 2

The *RPP* is still about Present Continuous Tense. The same with the previous *RPP*, this *RPP* does not mention the detail information about kind of ice breaking used during the process, the time limit, and also the objective of using the ice breaking activity. What is written is just the words “ice breaking” at the pre-activity of the *RPP*.

#### c. RPP 3

The topic of the *RPP* is about Present Tense. Not different with the other two *RPP*, this *RPP* also just mentions the words “ice breaking” at the pre-activity of the *RPP*. It does not mention the detail information about kind of ice breaking applied during the activity, the time limit, and also the objective of applying the ice breaking activity.

### 2. Data from Observation

#### a. Observation 1

The first observation was conducted on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 from 1.00 to 2.20 pm. The activity was started by dividing the students into 7 groups, each group consisted of 4 to 5 students. After the group had been decided, the teacher explained what they were going to do which was doing one of ice breaking activities called *Tongue Twister*. After that, she gave the instruction on how doing the activity by using two languages in order to make the students completely understand what they were going to do. The instruction given was simple, the students just had to repeat what the teacher said. After the students understood, then the teacher started the ice breaking by saying one sentence that needed to be repeated by the students. The sentence was “*She sells seashells on the seashore*” and she only said the sentence once. The students were given time to memorize the sentence. After that, she chose one member from several groups to repeat the sentence, and if the member of the groups could not say the sentence correctly, the whole members of the group had to come forward to take the punishment. The punishment given was still the same, they had to repeat the same sentence until correct. There were three groups came forward to take the punishment, the third, the fourth, and the sixth groups. This activity took around thirteen minutes to finish.

During this activity, the students looked very happy and excited. They were totally having fun and enjoying the ice breaking process. Moreover, the students seemed to be motivated and encouraged to learn English in the classroom.

### b. Observation 2

The second observation was conducted on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 started from 1.00 to 2.20 pm. At the beginning of the class, the students were given ice breaking activity in order to make them forget about the outside world and start focus on the lesson. The activity was started by telling them the name of the ice breaking activity which was “*Simon Says*”. However, the teacher changed the *Simon Says* into *Idoy Says* to make it more Indonesian. After the teacher told the name of the ice breaking, she then explained how to do the *Simon Says or Idoy Says* step by step. First, when the teacher said “Idoy says sit down”, then all of the students had to sit down. But when the teacher said “sit down”, without saying ‘Idoy says’ then students had to stay still. After the whole students understood about what they had to do, the ice breaking was started, and if one of them made mistake during the ice breaking process, the students had to come forward in order to take the punishment. But, because all of the students did not make any mistake, so nobody got the punishment.

During the activity, the students seemed to be excited and happy. Although, the activity was short, they still could enjoy the process. Moreover, the students paid more attention to what the teacher said during the learning process. They looked more ready and motivated to start the class.

### c. Observation 3

The third observation was done on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 started from 1.00 to 2.20 pm. The activity was started by telling the name of the ice breaking activity which was called “*Touch the parts of your face*”. After that, the teacher gave the instruction on how doing the activity by using

two languages in order to make the students completely understand what they were going to do. Then, she gave the example on how doing that activity. For example, when the teacher said “touch your nose” then the students had to touch their nose. If they touched the wrong part of their face, then they had to take the punishment which was singing and dancing to the “*Baby Shark*” song. After all the students understood what they had to do, the teacher then started the ice breaking activity.

During this process, the students seemed to enjoy the activity. They were smiling, laughing, singing, and dancing together. Moreover, after they were given this activity, the students looked more focused and ready to start the class. It could be seen from their enthusiasm to participate on the learning process.

## 3. Interview

Interview was conducted to avoid misconception about what had been found in the observation. Structured interview was used in order to get deeper information about the process of ice breaking activities and the appropriateness of the activities with the principles applied in the classroom. The participant of the interview was one of English teachers of SMPN 18 Kota Bogor. The interview was taken on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 in the classroom.

Eleven questions were developed according to the principles of ice breaking activities. The interview section was started by asking the first question, which tried to find out the participant’s role in the process of ice breaking activities. The participant said that her role in the ice breaking activities was as a facilitator. When asked about how she gave the instruction on doing the ice breaking activities, she mentioned that the instruction should be clear and understandable. Continuing to the third

question which was about kind of ice breaking activities used during the class, the participant mentioned that it depended on the goal of the learning process. When asked about the reason why she chose “Tongue Twister” as the ice breaking, the participant said that it was because she wanted to teach pronunciation to the students and to make them familiar with English words and sentences. Continuing to the next question which was about the reason why the participant applied “English Games” called “Simon Says” as the ice breaking, she mentioned that she chose “Simon Says” as the ice breaking because she intended to make the students more focus but still active at the same time, moreover they can enjoy the learning process. The next issue tried to find out the reason why the teacher chose “English Games” and “English Song” as the ice breaking on the last observation, she told that she wanted to make the students concentrate and she also thought that it was easier for the students to memorize vocabularies through song. When being asked about how she decided which ice breaking suited the most with the students level. She said that intermediet level suited the most with the students. Continuing to the next question which was about how long the ice breaking activities usually took time, she mentioned as short as possible. The next question tried to find out about on which part the ice breaking activities was usually done. She mentioned in the Pre-Activity. When asked about how to make the students enjoy the ice breaking activities within the limit time, the teacher said by choosing fun and interesting ice breaking activities could make them feel happy and motivated to learn English. Continuing to the next issue which was about the classroom situation after given ice breaking activities, she mentioned that the situation of the class become more alive. The next question was about the effect of using ice breaking activities toward lesson, the participant said that the students become more focused and

ready to learn English. The last question regarding to the students’ response toward lesson after they were given ice breaking activities, the teacher mentioned that students had positive response toward learning after they were given ice breaking activities.

According to the research result, this study has achieved the conclusion from two research questions. First, the process of breaking activities in teaching English to Junior High School students is done in several ways. The result shows that the teacher usually starts the ice breaking by telling the name of the activities, giving some explanations about what they are going to do, doing simulation on how to do the ice breaking activities and finally starting the ice breaking activities about five to twenty minutes.

As for the second question, which is about the appropriateness of the ice breaking activities with the principles applied in the classroom, the result shows that most of the principles of ice breaking are appropriate with the activities done by the teacher. The role of the teacher as the facilitator, the instruction given which is easy to understand, the suitability of the students’ level with the ice breaking activities, the time limit used, the atmosphere of the class, and the students’ interest toward lesson.

In relation to the result of the study, Witkowski (2000), Jenkins (2001) and Sapp (2007) say that an appropriate ice breaking has to be as short as possible, it also should excite students according to their level of activity, beside of that the activity should be fun in order to liven up and to relax the atmosphere, and it should motivate students’ interest toward lesson. The role of the teacher as the facilitator, the instruction given which is easy to understand, the suitability of the students’ level with the ice breaking activities, the time limit used, the atmosphere of the class, and the students’ interest toward lesson.

This study examines the process of ice breaking activities and the

appropriateness of the activities with the principles applied in teaching English to Junior High School students. In particular, this study tries to describe the steps of ice breaking activities and the suitability of the activities with the principles. The ice breaking activities which were used during this research study included “Tongue-twister, English game, and English song”. It is found that the process of ice breaking is fun and enjoyable. Moreover, these activities are quite effective to trigger students’ interest toward lesson. It can be seen from their enthusiasm in the classroom. The students become more active to participate in the learning process. They are also motivated and engaged to the lesson, and they seem to be more focused and paid more attention to what the teacher said.

The research also reveals that the steps of the ice breaking activity is started by deviding the students into groups, telling the name of the activities, giving some explanations on how doing the ice breaking, starting the ice breaking activities by saying one sentence that needs to be repeated, giving the students time to memorize the sentence, and choosing one member from several groups to repeat the sentence, and if the member of the groups cannot not say or memorize the sentence correctly, the whole members of the group have to come forward to take the punishment.

It is also found that the process of ice breaking activities is started by telling the name of the activities, giving instruction on how doing the ice breaking, doing simulation together before the ice breaking started, and finally starting the ice breaking activities about five to fifteen minutes. Moreover, it is discovered from the observation that teacher takes a big role in the process of ice breaking. She does not just watch the students do the activities, but she involves herself in the process. furthermore, giving clear and understandable instruction, choosing the appropriate ice breaking activities, considering the time limit used, creating the good atmosphere of the class which makes the students are motivated and interested toward lesson.

According to the result of the research, it can be concluded that the process of ice breaking activities are mostly appropriate with the principles. In this case, doing an appropriate ice breaking activity triggers the students to learn English actively. They participate more in the learning process. These activities do not just make the students enjoy the learning process, but also motivate them to learn English. It is clear that ice breaking activities should be applied following the principles of the activities.

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