

## IMPORTANCE OF ICE BREAKING ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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**Abstract.** This article is mainly aimed to explain the concept of ice breakers. In the English language teaching process, every teaching phase is paramount for the achievement of its goals. At the beginning of the classes, the teachers might bring an ice breaker. In this article, ice breaker is considered a crucial component in EFL classes. Considering the prominence of ice breakers, the researcher regards the importance of a literature study about ice breakers, especially in English language class. The ice breakers are jumbled sentences, correcting mistakes, English songs, storytelling activities, and English humor.

**Keywords:** Ice breakers, English language class, EFL context, motivation.

## ВАЖНОСТЬ ЛЕДОКОЛЬНЫХ МЕРОПРИЯТИЙ В ОБУЧЕНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

**Аннотация.** Данная статья в основном направлена на объяснение концепции ледоколов. В процессе обучения английскому языку каждый этап обучения имеет первостепенное значение для достижения поставленных целей. В начале занятий учителя могут принести ледокол. В этой статье ледокол считается ключевым компонентом в классах EFL. Учитывая известность ледоколов, исследователь считает важным изучение литературы о ледоколах, особенно на уроках английского языка. Ледоколы — это перемешанные предложения, исправление ошибок, английские песни, рассказывание историй и английский юмор.

**Ключевые слова:** ледоколы, урок английского языка, контекст английского языка, мотивация.

## INTRODUCTION

Learning activity is an activity that must be followed by all students and teachers, with the aim of achieve the success of educational goals. The success of learning depends on an effective learning process in the classroom. Effectiveness of learning behavior is influenced by four things, namely

- the existence of motivation;
- attention and knowing the goals;
- efforts;
- evaluation of the use of results.

Based on Bornstein (1987), Budiawan (2008), motivation is a form of encourage from the inside (inner drive), and also encouragement that can move a person to do certain activities. Therefore, motivation to learn English is influenced by many things, one of which is a learning process that is not conducive and does not vary. So that the learning process becomes bored and decreases the motivation of students to improve their English skills.

Every English teacher is always encouraged to prepare every learning activity carefully since a well-prepared activity helps the students to achieve the learning objectives. One of the proposed teaching activity to implement is ice breakers. Ice-breaking activities are generally used at the beginning of the class. According to Astuti et al., (2020), an ice breaker is an effort to break or melt the rigid atmosphere that is like ice to become more relaxing and comfortable.

Panggua (2016) points out that ice breaker can be interpreted as breaking the ice, and the ice here might refer to many situations. Simply put, an ice breaker is a kind of activity done by the teachers to create comfortable teaching and learning process, and it can be carried out through many activities.

## **METHOD AND METHODOLOGY**

We consider that ice breaking activities are the main way of improving motivation and making the learning process effective.

The term “*ice breaker*” comes from two foreign words, namely ice which means ice has a rigid, cold, and hard nature, while the breaker means solving. Meaning literally an ice-breaker is an “ice breaker”. So, an ice breaker can be interpreted as attempts to break or melt the atmosphere that is rigid as ice to become more comfortable flowing and relaxing.

An ice breaker commonly only lasts a few minutes at the beginning of the class, but it might bring plenty of advantages to the students. Astuti et al., (2020) state that ice breaker derives from two foreign vocabularies called ice (a rigid, cold, and hard nature), and the breaker (overcoming). Indeed, an ice breaker is an effort to break or melt the rigid atmosphere that is like ice to become more relaxing and comfortable. Ice-breaking can be carried out in assorted activities like a short story, a game, and guessing, and an ice-breaking activity is normally managed in 5 until 15 minutes. Panggua, (2016) points out that ice breaker can be interpreted as breaking the ice, and the ice here might refer to many situations. Hutasoit & Tambunan (2018) mention that an ice-breaking activity might help the teachers to create the successful exchange of thoughts by creating more comfortable situation for the students, so they are going to participate more in conversation. An ice breaker, in short, is a learning activity used to create comfortable teaching and learning process. In this study, ice-breaking is a type of activity used at the beginning of the class, and it is used to make the students ready to join the class and lead to the topic that is going to be learned.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Ice breaking is an activity that can be used to solve the tension and saturation of students in learning, so that the class becomes fun and more conducive before entering into core activities. The conducive situation will be more effective to help students achieve learning goals compared to a tense situation. Ice breaking can do in various activity, such as game, short story, and guessing. This activity is usually done in time 5 until 15 minutes.

There are several benefits of doing ice breaking activities, including the ones eliminate boredom, stress, anxiety, and fatigue because they can get out while from the routine of the lesson by doing free and cheerful activities, also other benefits such as:

- Train creative thinking and broad students,
- Develop and optimize the brain and creativity of students,
- Train students to interact in groups and work together in a team,
- Train systematic and creative thinking to solve problems,
- Increase self-confidence,
- Practice determining strategies carefully,
- Train creativity with limited material,
- Practice concentration,
- Dare to act and not be afraid of being wrong,
- Gluing tenuous interpersonal relationships,

- Train to respect others,
- Strengthen self-concept,
- Train the soul of leadership,
- Practice being scientific,
- Practice making decisions and actions.

There are several considerations for teachers using icebreakers during a lesson so as to keep time management:

- What do you want to achieve with an icebreaker? Do you want to set the tone for the learning community or lead into course content in engaging ways?
- Think of your population in choosing or designing an activity. This includes group size, demographics, levels of knowledge, extent to which they know each other, reasons for being in your class, and more. For example, larger classes might need a simple activity and new classes may require a low-risk activity.
- Think through the activity ahead of time and adapt it accordingly. Will the space you have suffice? Do you have all needed supplies? Would the activity lead to issues of confidentiality? Does the activity accommodate varying abilities?
- Icebreakers do not always go exactly as planned. Flexibility and willingness to learn are part of building a positive and open learning community.

In implementing ice breakers, every teacher has to consider several aspects such as student level, student interest, learning objective, time, and others. According to Witkowski in Farwati et al., (2018), there are several principles in applying ice breakers. They are as follows:

1. Goals: An ice breaker must be matched with teaching goals.
2. Participants: Participants' age and skills must be considered as the significant aspects.
3. Time Allocation: 20 minutes is the normal time of an ice breaker.
4. Control: The teachers must control the implementation of ice breakers since ice-breaking activities are fun and short activities employed to liven up and to relax the situation.

One of the suggested ways of doing ice-breaking activity is *jumbled sentences*. According to Ur & Wright (1993), the teachers may write jumbled sentences on the board or dictate them. In online learning, the teachers may use PowerPoint as the replacement of the board. After the teachers provide the jumbled sentences, the students need to arrange the words into good sentences. Another ice breaker suggested by Ur & Wright (1993) is correcting mistakes. In this way, the teachers provide some incorrect sentences and ask their students to correct the sentences. The next ice breaker likely used in teaching grammar is fun teaching media like English songs. Ur & Wright (1993) recommended some versions of employing English songs in EFL classes, and across those versions, there are two feasible ways of teaching grammar. The first is asking the students to listen to an English song while filling in the blanks. The second version is giving the students complete lyrics of an English song. Then, the teachers ask the students to listen to it while finding out the inadequate parts in the lyrics.

## CONCLUSION

An ice breaker is a significant element in EFL classes. Employing ice breakers may affect the process of teaching and learning positively especially the learning process of a problematic component like grammar. That is why the teachers as learning facilitators might take ice-breaking activities as a possible attempt to overcome the problems. This article suggests several theories related to the usage of icebreaking activities in English language classes and

recommends some ice breakers that are feasible to implement. They are jumbled sentences, correcting mistakes, English songs, storytelling activities, and English humor.

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