A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF ICE BREAKING TECHNIQUE IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT SMP NEGERI 2 JAYAPURA

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Abstract: Icebreakers are commonly used by trainers or instructors to maintain group dynamic. In fact, there is a growing interest for language teachers to use icebreakers in the classes. The current study focuses on the role of the ice breaking technique in increasing students' interest in learning English. 70 students from SMP Negeri 2 Abepura were involved in this study. This study was conducted within a qualitative descriptive design using observation, interview, and questionnaire to collect the data. The results of the observation and interview showed that the use of icebreakers in the classes showed potentials in motivating the students to learn English in accordance with Sapp's principles of icebreakers: simplicity, relevance, non-threat, open-endedness, and energizing. Besides, the result of the questionnaire showed that the students had a positive perception on the ice breaking technique applied by the teacher during the English classes. The majority of the students ($> 60\%$) agreed that the ice breaking activities were motivating in terms of the principles. Overall, the ice breaking techniques was likely to increase the students' interest in learning English in terms of the principles.

Keywords: icebreaking technique, students' interest, learning English

Abstrak: *Icebreakers* biasanya digunakan para pelatih atau instruktur untuk mempertahankan dinamika kelompok. Pada kenyataannya, ada paningkatan minat terhadap penggunaan *icebreakers* dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Penelitian ini berfokus pada peran teknik *ice breaking* dalam meningkatkan minat siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini melibatkan 70 siswa kelas dari SMP Negeri 2 Abepura. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan observasi, wawancara, dan kuesioner untuk mengumpulkan data. Hasil observasi dan wawancara menunjukkan bahwa teknik ice breaking memiliki potensi dalam memotivasi siswa untuk belajar bahasa Inggris berdasarkan prinsip *icebreakers* menurut Sapp yaitu sederhana, relevant, tidak membahayakan, terbuka, dan memberi semangat. Selain itu, hasil dari kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa para siswa memiliki persepsi positif tentang teknik *ice breaking* yang diterapkan oleh guru selama kelas bahasa Inggris. Mayoritas siswa (>60%) setuju bahwa setuju bahwa kegiatan icebreakers memotivasi mereka berdasarkan kelima prinsip yang ada. Secara keseluruhan, teknik *icebreaker* yang digunakan berpotensi meningkatkan minat siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris dalam kaitannya dengan prinsip-prinsip yang ada.

Kata kunci: Teknik *ice breaking*, minat siswa, belajar bahasa Inggris

INTRODUCTION

English has become central in almost every aspect of human life since it is the most recognizable foreign language in many countries. In Indonesia, it is recognized as a foreign language that is used in many contexts, including Indonesia. Since the enactment of the 1994 Basic Education Curriculum, English has been a compulsory subject in schools in Indonesia. Consequently, students have to pass an English exam in order to graduate from an educational level. Thus, the teachers play key role in bringing the students to meet the demand. Students' interest in learning English is an important part of the teachers' effort. One way to get there is creating fun and enjoyable English lessons. The question that follows is how to make an English lesson motivating.

Motivation has a very important role in learning a language. Dornyei (1998) states that motivational influence is considered a key to learning a second language and one of the biggest factors to influence the success of a language learner. Motivation is the urge or will that exist within a person that drives him or her to do something. Motivation causes the energy in a person to experience a change which results in a reaction to do something to achieve a certain goal (Hamalik, 2003). Motivated students tend to learn more and faster than students who are less motivated (Wimolmas, 2013; Spolsky, 1990). It can be said that motivation can affect feelings, emotions, and actions that will be taken by someone. In turn, motivation plays an important role for students in increasing their desire to take English lessons.

For these reasons, many English teachers have tried different ways to raise students' interest in learning English. One of the ways is including ice breakers in the classroom activities. According to Forbess-Greene (1983, p.1) in the book *The Encyclopedia of Icebreakers*, an ice breaker is normally used by a trainer to promote collaboration, encourage creative thought, refute common beliefs, clarify new ideas, and introduce particular material. Dover (2004) defines icebreakers as questions in discussion or interaction in activities used by teachers and students in interacting easily and happily. Chlup & Collins (2010, p.34) said that ice breaking activities are designed to help regenerate a condition in various ways. They help participants or students to make establish relations and begin conversations. By doing so, tension in a classroom can be reduced which gets students ready for a lesson.

Icebreakers serve several functions in classroom contexts. It is normally introduced in a language classroom to break the silence of the first meetings (Dornyei & Murphey, 2003) or as an introduction or an intriguing tool relating to the topic of a discussion (Clark, 1998). An icebreaker changes a gloomy, tense, and uncomfortable environment into a relaxed, exciting environment, and causes people to pay attention and enjoy seeing what is going on in front of the class (Soenarno, 2005). Some studies also have found that icebreakers are effective in boosting classroom activities as well as improving language learning (e.g., Mepieza, 2023; Ghreibi, 2020; Yeganehpour, 2017; Flanigan 2011, among others). The same holds for Indonesian EFL contexts (e.g., Hutasoit, 2018; Astuti, et.al. 2020; Pranata, 2021; Agusriana, 2021; Dhuhria, 2020; Hutasoit & Tambunan, 2018; and Farwati, 2019). It can be said that icebreakers can be a teaching strategy that increases students' motivation to learn English.

English teachers of SMP Negeri 2 Jayapura have tried to introduce icebreakers as a teaching strategy for the past two years. The writer's previous observation to the school showed that the 8th graders English teacher has continuously applied icebreakers in the classroom. The teacher was seen using ice breaking as a technique to

overcome students' problems such as boredom, playing with classmates, or lack of concentration. In fact, the feasibility or effectiveness of the use of icebreakers in this case to generate students' interest in learning has not been measured empirically. Note that icebreakers are fundamentally directed to break participants' silence or uncomfort to establish group dynamics (Chlup & Collins 2010; Dornyei & Murphey 2003).

The current study was conducted to explore the state of affairs of the icebreakers used by the 8 graders English teacher at SMP Negeri 2 Jayapura based on Sapp's (2007) 5 principles of icebreakers. In order to gain an adequate look into the teacher's use of icebreakers, this study was also interested in gathering the students' perceptions on the use of icebreakers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term icebreaker is derived from the phrase "break the ice," which is associated with an icebreaker ship in the Arctic (Clark, 1998). The ship was regarded as a facilitator or instructor of a meeting. The meeting or learning scenario, as well as the conditions of the participants, were the frozen ice. Clark stated that ice breakers are planned activities that are intended to energize students in a situation or environment that is typically formal that puts the participants in tense. Ice breaking is an interesting activity to start learning that can be used by teachers to engage students in English classes (Robertson & Acklam, 2000). According to Forbess-Greene (1983), ice breaking activities are suitable for usage in professional, business, educational, medical, and other human services environments. According to Forbess-Greene most of the icebreakers are about 30 minutes and they need little or no advance planning. They are easy to apply in various ways. If planned, the group leader or teacher in the classroom can help ensure that the participants are open to the knowledge and skills offered during the learning program. Thus, icebreaker has widely been used in various settings, including team building, conferences, social events, and classrooms.

Sapp's principles of icebreakers

According to Sapp (2007) there are five aspects that need to be taken into consideration in applying an icebreaker. In Sapp's terms, an icebreaker should be simple, non-threatening, open-ended, relevant, and energizing.

1. *Simple*. The term simple indicates simplicity. Simplicity means it is necessary to have a simple icebreaker that everyone can participate in. The simpler, the better an icebreaker is.
2. *Non-threatening*. Under this term, an ice breaking activity should let students free from feeling uncomfortable. Singing a song may be more comfortable than guessing games for certain participants.
3. *Open-ended*. Open-endedness necessitates students' uniqueness that should be allowed to be expressed. So, icebreakers should be flexible in accommodating different types or styles of students.
4. *Relevant*. Relevance deals with group needs and the purpose of a lesson that need be taken into account in choosing the types of icebreakers. Although icebreakers are fundamentally designed to break the silence or stiffness, it is necessary to make any efforts to connect them with a lesson or the course of a discussion.
5. *Energizing*. Within the term energizing, ice breaking activities should excite students according to their level of activity. Icebreakers should be potential to prepare students to start or resume and activity.

Sapp (2007) pointed out that that there are numerous crucial factors to take into account while using icebreakers in classroom conditions:

1. An instructor needs to develop icebreakers that are potential for any age groups and number of students
2. Detailed instructions followed by a demonstration could lead to a successful icebreaker.
3. Not all students may fit into any icebreakers, but icebreakers normally take the majority of students to take part. So, it is a promising activity. .
4. It is necessary for a teacher to be flexible in modifying icebreakers when it is necessary since some students may find an icebreaker is not easy to follow.
5. It should be noted that an icebreaker can be introduced when the students start to be attentive and cool down, for example, after a while of a noisy class.

Sapp (2007) further mentions several aspects that can give potential an icebreaker including the teacher's position as a facilitator, the clarity of the instructions given, the level of the students for ice breaking activities, the time allotted for the activity, the tone of the classroom, and the students' enthusiasm in the teachings. Barrett (2008) states that one of the roles of the teacher is as a facilitator in learning for students who are expected to be able to provide motivation in achieving goals and being able to solve problems in learning. Thus, Jenkins (2002) said that an icebreaker should be dynamic and simple especially in the first meetings as students are not comfortable yet with others.

Significance of Icebreakers

Some authors have found that icebreakers are helpful in some ways. Boatman (1991) mentioned that icebreakers bring a class to life and energize the participants. Furthermore, Pillai (2007) stated that icebreakers help motivate silent students to be able to communicate and work in a team. Pillai also mentioned that ice breaking activities are able to increase students' self-confidence and friendship among students. They encourage and get students to be ready to learn new things by stimulating their minds and bodies.

Chlup & Collins (2010) discussed the benefits of using icebreakers which can be summarized as follows. First, they help students to be easily acquainted and begin conversation with others. Second, they encourage students to participate in an activity and establish connections. Third, icebreakers are engaging and allow students to cheer up. Lastly, it creates a learning condition which helps students to learn contents in a safe atmosphere. It can be said that icebreakers have more advantages in establishing group dynamics. The participants are not only engaged physically but also psychologically. Besides, if well organized, they enhance learning conditions.

The significance of icebreakers has also been confirmed by several studies. Some studies measure the effectiveness of icebreakers in enhancing learning conditions from students' and teachers' perspectives (Agusriana, 2021; Dhuhria, 2020, Farwati, et.al., 2019; Dewi 2015). These studies found that students have positive perception on the use of icebreakers in motivating them to get involved in learning activities. To provide a complete description on the use of icebreakers in an English classroom, Farwati, et al (2019) conducted a qualitative study at SMPN 18 Kota Bogor observing an English teacher. The results showed that the use of tongue-twisters, English games and song as icebreakers was feasible if organized within certain principles of icebreakers. For

example, the teacher should act as a facilitator. Agusriana (2021) specifically explored teachers' perception on the use of icebreakers in an English class. The study was conducted at MAS Ruhul Islam Anak Bangsa with 5 English teachers as the participants. To get the teachers' perception, the study employed a semi-structured interview. The results of this study indicate that the use of icebreakers in the classrooms show positive impact in the learning process because it maintains students' attention. On the students' side, Dhuhria (2020) found that the majority of the students responded positively to the use of icebreakers based on the questionnaire that was distributed to 90 students of MA Darul Ulum Banda Aceh.

Different from the previous studies which collected students and teachers' perceptions, these studies looked further on the effect of icebreakers on improving students' motivation or learning abilities. For example, Pranata (2021) investigated the effect of ice breaking in increasing students' motivation in learning English in the first grade of SMP Nurul Jadid. This was a pre-test and post-test research design. The results of this study indicate that there was a significant difference in motivation between the control and experimental group where the experimental group's motivation increased after they were taught using icebreakers. The author concluded that the application of icebreakers generated students to be happy, active, enthusiastic, more involved in classroom activities.

It can be concluded that all of the studies above investigated the effect of using ice breaking techniques in learning English, some studies used a qualitative design while some others used a quantitative design. The current study is similar with the previous studies in terms of qualitative design of the study. It used similar techniques in collecting data: observation, questionnaire, and interview. So far, no studies have focused on exploring the use of icebreakers in increasing students' interest in learning English in Papuan context. In this case, this study targeted the 8th graders at SMP Negeri 2 Jayapura and their English teachers.

METHOD

This study aims to explore the teacher's use of icebreakers in teaching English in 8 Grade students of Class 8-C and 8-E and to gather the students' perceptions on it. This study was carried out under qualitative descriptive design which is normally used to examine a natural object condition (Sugiyono, 2016). This study was conducted in SMP Negeri 2 Jayapura, which is located in Abepura, Jayapura Municipality. This school was chosen because it is convenient in terms of distance and communication with the school and the English teachers. The subjects of this study were an English teacher and 8 graders of the school. The teacher is a permanent English teacher at the school who was teaching 8 graders. She has a good amount of experience teaching English at the school. The teacher was chosen based on the previous observation that indicated that she has used icebreakers frequently in teaching classes 8C and 8E for over 5 years. The students were 8th graders from two classes: 8-C and 8-E with a total of 70 students altogether. The students were purposely chosen because the two classrooms shared comparable characteristics of demonstrating off-task behavior, according to the teacher who frequently uses ice-breaking activities in these classes.

The current study employed observation, interview and questionnaire to gather the data. The observation was a non-participatory observation. An observation sheet was used to record the application of icebreakers. All the items in the sheet were written based on Sapp's (2007) principles of implementing icebreakers: simple,

relevant, non-threatening, open-ended, and energizing. The observations were made when students took part in learning English when icebreakers were taking place. The observation was carried out four times where the researcher sat in the classroom consisting of two meetings in class of 8-C and the other two meetings in class of 8-E. The first observation took place on Thursday, May 18 to Class 8-C and the second one was on May 22, 2023 to Class 8-E. The third observation was on May 19, 2023 to Class 8-C and the fourth one was on May 23, 2023 to Class 8-E.

Beside observing the classes, some in-depth interviews were also conducted with the teacher. The purpose of the interviews was to explore more on the teacher's experience and opinions on the use of icebreakers. In conducting the interviews, the writer used a notebook to record the teacher's responses. There were 9 main questions for the interview which covered topics such as the teachers' background, knowledge of ice breaking, application of icebreakers, teachers' opinions on the use, impacts, and problems in applying icebreakers in the classroom. All interviews were conducted in the teacher's office during school hours and mostly before a class began.

In addition to the observations and interviews, a questionnaire was used in this study to gather students' perceptions on the teacher's use of icebreakers from the four classes they have taken. There were 15 items in the questionnaire with four points Likert-scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. Like the observation sheet, the items in the questionnaire were constructed based on Sapp's (2007) principles of implementing icebreakers in a classroom: simple, relevant, non-threatening, open-ended, and energizing. The administration of the questionnaire to the students was done right after the students completed the four classes where they were observed. The purpose of doing this is to get a complete picture of the whole icebreakers that they had experienced.

After all the data gathered from the observations, interviews, and questionnaire were collected, they were analyzed as follows. Observational data were recorded in the form of discrete answers of Yes or No to a single item. Thus, the analysis straightforwardly reviews how many items receive Yes or No. If an item was responded with a Yes, an observed aspect has met the principles. The data on the students' perceptions were analyzed by counting the percentage of students' answers to each statement in the questionnaire. But before that, the writer tabulated the data, which collected all the data results, then grouped them in tabular form according to the required analysis. The results of the analysis are classified into very high, high, medium, low, and very low which is measured in the following categories (Iskandar, 2008). Thus, the results of the analysis are presented in percentages of the number of students who responded in terms of the Likert-scale.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to explore the use of icebreakers by the English teacher of Grade 8 of SMP N 2 Jayapura. It also gathered the students' perceptions on the use of icebreakers. To investigate these problems, the study conducted classroom observations and interviews to the teacher and administered a questionnaire to the students. The results of the analysis of the data gathered from these techniques are discussed as follows.

Based on the four observations, the writers found that the teacher applied the ice breaking techniques in accordance with the components of the principle of using ice

breaking (Sapp 2007): simple, relevant, non-threatening, open-ended, and energizing. In its application, the teacher provides clear instructions and is easily understood by students. The teacher very often gave instructions more than once to ensure that all students understood the teacher's instructions or directions. In addition, even though icebreakers are generally recognized as ways to increase participants' enthusiasm, the teacher appeared to make efforts to make connections between an icebreaker and the lesson or learning topic being studied. In other words, the teacher tried to modify lessons with fun activities to attract students' attention. For example, in a lesson about short messages, some students were not paying attention to the teacher's explanation because it took a while. So, the teacher applied 'the whisper game' where one student whispered a message to another student until all students in a group had taken their turns.

The ice breaking activities created good relationships between teachers and students, or between fellow students. The observations showed that Grade 8C and 8E were excited and took part in every icebreaker the teacher used. This was clearly seen when the teacher announced in the middle of a lesson that students should listen and "do what I say." With great enthusiasm, the students listened and paid more attention to the teacher's explanation before the game. Once the game started, everyone followed the teacher's instructions but laughed when one failed. It was clear that the teacher also made sure that all students were involved and comfortable in participating in any ice breaking activities. As a result, the students appeared to expect more icebreakers. Once the lessons continued, the students were ready to be back on their assignments that the teacher gave previously. The observations found that the ice breaking activities created good interaction between students and teachers or fellow students. They have fun and enjoy the process of English learning activities, after completing a game.

The purpose of the interviews is to find out the teacher's opinion on using icebreakers in the classroom to increase the students' interest in learning English. The writer interviewed the English teacher who taught in classes 8C and 8E at SMP Negeri 2 Jayapura. Based on the interviews, it was found that the teacher (BS) is a permanent English teacher and has taught English for a number of years at the school. BS has applied icebreakers in her English lessons for five years.

When she was asked about the nature of using icebreakers in the classroom, BS mentioned that icebreakers were introduced to boost students' motivation. The interviews also showed that the teacher consistently applied icebreakers in every change she had and many are geared toward a lesson topic. This is what she said "*Saya biasanya gunakan icebreakers seperti game, body movement, clap hands di setiap kesempatan dan menghubungkannya dengan suatu materi atau materi yang sudah diajarkan*" (I usually apply several types of icebreakers, for example, games, body movements, clap hands, or activities that related to the lesson or as a reminder of the material that has been learned).

BS also said that she didn't plan an icebreaker for any part of the lesson period. It can be in the beginning, middle, or at the end of a lesson. However she said that certain times she made it on purpose: "........*di kelas dimana siswa tidak ribut, saya biasanya terapkan icebreaker di akhir pelajaran*" (in a class where the students are not noisy or quiet enough, I usually give an ice breaker at the end of the lesson). Another question that was asked to the teacher was her opinion on the effect of icebreakers on the students' learning. BS said that an ice breaker affects students in the way that it reverses a state of being sleepy, noisy, or bored into an exciting condition that helps them continue the lesson. BS says that icebreakers brings positive impact on the students' English learning, "*Icebreakers dapat memberi efek yang positif dalam*

belajar bahasa Inggris, karena icbreakers menarik" (icebreakers can have a positive impact on students' English learning because they are interesting activities). Finally, BS was asked about any challenges that she might have when applying icebreakers. BS said that as long as the rules of icebreakers are spelled out clearly and they are suitable with the students' level, everything should go well.

Overall, it can be concluded that the teacher has good knowledge about icebreakers. According to the teacher, ice breaking activities are activities that are needed and important to implement in a classroom. Based on the teacher's experience, ice breaking activities in class can influence students's learning, and provide several benefits. For example, icebreakers can make the class conducive and contribute to a lesson being taught. Therefore, students' attention is only focused on the teacher, and students can follow the learning process. For this type of ice breaking activity, teachers usually use different or varied types.

Questionnaire is another technique used to gather data in this study. The questionnaire was carried out to find out the students' perceptions on the use of icebreakers. The following table shows the students' perceptions in terms of Sapp's (2007) principles of icebreakers.

No	Items	Components	Options			
			SA	A	D	SD
1	The ice breaking activities instructions are clear and easy to understand.	*Simplicity*	63%	36%	1%	0%
2	The teacher use ice breaking in learning English.	*Relevance*	26%	68%	6%	0%
3	The ice breaking activities are related to the lesson.		35,50%	58,50%	6%	0%
4	The teacher use various types of ice breaking activities in the classroom.		44,30%	51,40%	4,30%	0%
5	The teacher use ice breaker when the class is noisy.		30%	56%	13%	1%
	Average		34%	58%	7%	0%
6	Ice breaking activities increase self-confidence.	*Non-threatening*	33%	56%	11%	0%
7	Ice breaking activities create fun classes.		50%	47%	3%	0%
8	The ice breaking activities help in learning English		43%	53%	4%	0%
9	Extra time in ice breaking activities.		38,50%	53%	8,50%	0%
	Average		41%	52%	7%	0%
10	Ice breaking activities are motivating.	*Open-endedness*	34%	57%	9%	0%
11	Ice breaking activities tend to get more attention.		40%	57%	3%	0%
	Average		37%	57%	6%	0%
12	Ice breaking activities add up/empower vocabulary learning.	*Energizing*	48,50%	48,50%	3%	0%
13	Involvement in ice breaking activities.		23%	60%	16%	1%

14	Activeness in class.		30%	61%	9%	0%
15	Enthusiastic in starting or continuing the lesson after ice breaking activities.		46%	47%	7%	0%
		Average	37%	54%	9%	0%

In terms of simplicity, around 99% of the students agreed that icebreakers are clear and easy to understand. Next, 94% of the students confirmed that the teacher applies icebreakers most of the time. While 96.7% of students agreed that the teacher applied a variety of icebreakers, 94% of them considered the ice breaking activities to be related to the lessons they learned. Interestingly, most students (86%) stated that the teacher usually used ice breaking activities when the class was noisy.

The third component is non-threatening. Around 96% of the students agreed that the icebreakers were fun and helped them learn English. Similar numbers are seen for students who desired more ice breaking activities (92%). Also, it is seen from the table that around 89% of the students agreed that icebreakers increased their self-confidence (89%).

The fourth component is open-ended in which 97% of the students tended to be more attentive during ice breaking activities, and 91% of them confirmed that ice breaking activities are motivating. Meanwhile, on the fifth component, energizing, most students (97%) believed that icebreakers strengthened their vocabulary learning. Besides, 93% of the students were enthusiastic in starting or continuing the lesson after an ice breaking activity. While 91% of the students felt more active in class, 78% of the students were involved in the ice breaking activities.

Overall, the findings showed that the majority of the students favorably confirmed the use of the ice breaking activities in the classroom. This is obvious from the average responses they gave in which they agreed strongly in all five components. In other words, their perspectives on the usage of ice breaking activities during the process of learning English in the classroom are strongly positive in relation to the principles of icebreakers in the classroom.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study have shown that the teacher's use of icebreakers was in accordance with the principles of icebreakers proposed by Sapp (2007). The principles include four aspects (simple, relevant, non-threatening, open-ended, and energizing) that if taken together they promote fun activities. The observations found that the teacher implemented two types of ice breaking activities from the two observed classes. At the first meeting in grades 8C and 8E, the teacher implemented the "whisper game" as an icebreaker before the classes began. In this activity, the researcher found that the activity was a more interactive part of teaching, both among fellow students and with the teacher. Any games we play are fun and attractive. Everyone would love to take part. So too, when games are used in a language classroom, students may find it fun that they want to get involved. Besides, games of certain kinds involve teamwork and competition and students may feel challenged to get involved. This is in accordance with one of the benefits of ice breaking in training students to interact in groups and work together in teams. According to Forbess & Greene (1983) ice breaking activities such as games and brainteasers are useful. Games contribute positively to group dynamics since they involve problem-solving, competitiveness, collaborative work, and consensus-seeking.

Similar effect of applying icebreakers in language classes can be seen from the results of the second observation to the classes. The teacher applied the "Do what I say" which involves body movement. The teacher implements these activities in the middle of learning because the classroom situation was not conducive, where many students talk and play with their friends when the teacher is explaining the lesson. The students appeared to enjoy the activities and were ready to resume the lesson. Flanigan (2011) said that the use of icebreakers in English classes can create a fun learning atmosphere for students. Classroom activities such as games that involve body movement allows students to get away from tiredness, stiffness, or boredom especially after a long period of a lesson.

Such icebreakers create a conducive class where the students feel more relaxed and ready to get into the lesson. Sapp (2007) mentions that an effective icebreaker should be completed as quickly as feasible and should motivate students to engage in any ice breaking activities. While such exercises should be enjoyable, they should also enliven, unwind and motivate the students' interest in learning a subject in a classroom.

The positive contribution of icebreakers in boosting the students interest in learning was also seen from the interviews with the teacher (BS). It was found from the interviews had good knowledge about icebreakers and its application in the classroom. If Sapp's principles are taken into consideration, it can be said that the teacher had applied icebreakers in view of the principles. BS made it possible for students to get involved by modifying the instructions and varying the activities. According to Williams and Southers (2010), the use of various types of icebreakers can encourage students to interact with each other and the teacher as the main role player in the learning environment. In an interview, BS said that icebreaker technique is a teaching technique that can influence students, especially in learning English. This is what some previous researchers found (e.g., Pranata 2021; Dhuhria 2020; Farwati 2019). They all found that the use of icebreakers gave a positive effect to the students' classroom learning. To many students in countries like Indonesia, English lesson may be both difficult and boring subjects. Thus, when the teachers apply icebreakers like games, students find something interesting from learning English that motivates them to participate in the lesson. Ice breaking activities can make participants more participative and show a strong attitude that they want to be involved in learning (Preziosi 1989). The result of the observations and the interviews with the teacher confirm this by the fact that the students were enthusiastic and looking forward to the coming English lessons.

Similar contribution of the teacher's use of icebreakers is also supported by the result of the questionnaire. Based on the results of the study, it was found that the majority of students answered agree and strongly agree (> 60%) on all items in the questionnaire. It can be said that they were interested in the use of icebreakers and the use of icebreakers had something to do with their learning. It can also be concluded that the students' perceptions on the use of icebreakers were positive in terms of simplicity, relevance, non-threatening, open-endedness, and energizing (Sapp, 2007). The results confirm what Chlup and Collins (2010) said that ice breaking activities help participants or students from each group to get to know each other or start conversations, remove barriers or tension in class, which then allows them to be involved to build trust and feel more open to one another. Ice breaking activities also help students who lack self-confidence to start conversations by developing teamwork skills and communication skills, both among fellow students or between students and teachers. In line with Boatman (1991), the implementation of ice breaking activities

encourages students to participate, build connections, and develop a sense of student focus. In addition, the research found that students agreed that learning English by using ice breaking activities could attract students' attention, increase concentration, confidence, motivation, and students become more active in participating in class. Some previous studies confirmed this. Dewi (2015), for example, found that the use of icebreakers was effective as the students' scores increased from cycle 1 (66.69%) to cycle 2 (77.21%).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings this study concludes that the teacher applied two types of ice breaking activity; "Whisper game" and "Do what I say". From the application of these two types of activities, it can be concluded that ice breaking activities facilitate students to interact in groups and work together in teams. They promote systematic and creative thinking to solve problems, and train students to concentrate, dare to act, and not be afraid of making mistakes. In addition, the ice breaking technique is feasible as a teaching technique to motivate students to learn English. This is evident from the findings of observation and interview. Besides, it is concluded that the students (of Grades 8C and 8E) have positive perceptions on the use of icebreakers in the English lessons. All these indicate that the teacher's use of icebreakers in the classes was in accordance with the five components of Sapp's (2007) principle: simplicity, relevance, non-threatening, open-endedness, and energizing. Therefore, this study concludes that, when icebreakers are used in view of the principles, they likely increase students' interest in learning English.

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