

Student's Perception on Implementation of Telephone Game as Icebreaker in English Learning at MTs Muslimat NU Palangka Raya

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Abstract: Low levels of students' engagement in English class are one of the challenges for teachers in English learning. The objective in this study is Exploring students' perception of the telephone game as an icebreaker activity for English language learning at MTs Muslimat NU Palangka Raya. A quantitative descriptive method was used with data collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to 32 seventh-grade students who had already played the game in the English classroom. The questionnaire focused on four areas of the game, such as enjoyment, speaking confidence, pronunciation learning, and classroom atmosphere, as well as three items related to the game limitations. Data were analyzed and given as percentages to classify student perception. Despite this limitation, the findings suggest that the Telephone Game is useful in English learning. As a result, the telephone game in English learning class as alternate teaching approach to increase student engagement and reduce boredom in the English classroom. Therefore, the telephone game is recommended for English teachers to use in English learning classes.

Keywords: Telephone game, Students' perception, Icebreaker.

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Introduction

Low levels of student engagement in English classes are still frequently In 2022, Indonesia's PISA scores decreased across all domains, particularly in mathematics, reading, and scientific literacy, positioning the country 66th out of 81 nations. (PISA 2022 Results (Volume I), 2023). This indicates that the education quality in Indonesia remains inferior to the international average. observed. Many students tend to be passive, less motivated, and easily get bored during the learning process. According to Xuan Mai et al. (2024), student engagement is still a big problem that many researchers in the field of English language teaching are looking into. This lack of engagement directly affects their learning outcomes and limits their opportunities to practice the language effectively (Ye, 2024). Several factors contribute to the issue of low student engagement in the English learning process. These factors are often independent and influence students' participation in the classroom. One of the primary factors is the use of monotonous teaching methods. When teachers rely on repetitive and less interactive instructional approaches, students tend to feel bored and disengaged. As stated by Shimray & Wangdi (2023) monotonous teaching techniques are a primary precursor of boredom in the English classroom, which can significantly reduce students' interest in learning. In addition, low student motivation further worsens this condition. Nam (2010) suggests that such limited interaction restricts students' ability to engage in authentic communication. Therefore, these factors highlight the need for more interactive and student-centred teaching strategies to enhance engagement in English learning.

There are several ways to make the learning process enjoyable and engaging. An ice breaker is one effective way to create such an environment. An ice breaker is able to make a positive and stimulating classroom atmosphere that supports student interest that support student improvement of their language skill. According to Lamrani & Abdelwahed (2020) the use of engaging activities can foster a supportive learning environment that encourages student participation. According to Yulistiyani et al. (2025) game-based learning positively influences student motivation and teamwork, reducing anxiety, rendering learning more enjoyable and efficient. Game-Based learning is based on experiential learning and constructivism, where students participate and learn through direct experience from the game. Gee (2003) in his book states that games-based environment are create an 'active learning' atmosphere where students are not just becoming 'a good listener'; instead, they have to actively participate in the learning process. This process requires real engagement and encourages students to use the language to learn meaningfully instead of simply memorizing.

Furthermore, Kleinschmit et al. (2025) state that the use of icebreakers could make the classroom atmosphere more enjoyable and interactive. Icebreakers are not only a game, but also function as a tool to stimulate fun and enjoyable learning and engagement for students. Through the ice breaker, students have opportunities to collaborate, communicate, and build connections with their peers or the teachers. In addition, icebreakers could help student more confident and willing to participate in learning activities. Sasan et al. (2023) state that ice breaker able to encourage students to engage in discussion and exchange ideas with their classmates. This increases confidence and participation that assist the success of the learning process.

The telephone game icebreaker is a method to trigger students' engagement. The ice-breaking method is effective in increasing the academic engagement of the academic students, especially in the English subject (Nugraha et al., 2025). Ice-breaker, making the class atmosphere less boring, enjoyable, and fun. Employing ice-breakers or games during the English learning process makes students more active. The Word of Chain Game is an effective tool for improving student vocabulary acquisition, engagement, and confidence in using new words (Lestari, 2025). The previous study states that Word of Chain is an effective tool or game that is employed in English learning. Word of Chain is similar to the Telephone Game, Chinese Whisper. The name of the game is different and varies. The student is more active in talking in English during the game. According to Daulay et al. (2021), the telephone game is able to increase student motivation and make the learning process more interactive to improve student ability and self-confidence to learn English. This game is able to attract students to use English more because the rules of the game force them to comply.

Previous study shown that the Telephone game, or Chinese Whisper, increases speaking ability. Utami & Rahmawati (2018) study found that the Chinese Whisper game in the classroom increases students' speaking ability. Suryadi (2022) study indicate Chinese Whisper game significantly increases the students' vocabulary mastery. Ewis Febriani et al. (2024) study employing a pre-experimental research design showed that the implementation of Chinese Whisper was able to increase the students' listening skills.

Based on the previous study above, several research gaps can be identified that no study has specifically analysed the students' perception of the Telephone Game or Chinese Whisper in English Learning. Previous studies have focused more on English skills such as speaking, listening, and vocabulary. A study by Utami & Rahmawati (2018) measures the effectiveness of the Telephone Game, and Suryadi (2022) focuses more on students' vocabulary mastery, and Ewis Febriani et al. (2024) study more focused on students' listening skills. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap of the previous study examining the students' perception of using the Telephone Game at MTs Mulimat NU Palangka Raya, English class in seven grade students.

Method

This study was conducted in MTs Muslimat NU Palangka Raya. MTs Muslimat NU Palangka Raya employs Kurikulum Merdeka, which has 3 hours of lesson period for the English course. In 3 hours of lesson period, the student is learning 2 skills in one meeting. Teachers require the grades of students in every meeting. Therefore, using a game or an icebreaker in the middle of English learning can reduce boredom, and the teacher can measure the students' comprehension by using a game such as the Telephone game. The students have played the Telephone game with their English teacher before, and they are familiar with and understand the game rules.

In this research, a quantitative descriptive approach was used due to the data resulting in the need to analyze in percentages. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), quantitative research involves systematically collecting, analyzing, and interpreting numerical data, followed by reporting the findings in an objective and structured manner. A quantitative descriptive approach was considered appropriate because the data were gathered through a questionnaire and using a Likert scale to obtain measurable results (Tamrin et al., 2021). The descriptive quantitative design was used to allow the researcher to present student perception clearly without manipulating the variable and knowing the perception of the students (Valverde-Zavaleta et al., 2021). The percentage of the data shows how the students view the Telephone game. A questionnaire with seven question that explore the aspects of Enjoyment, Self-confidence, pronunciation, classroom engagement, classroom noise, difficulty receiving message, message distortion to ask about their perspective on the telephone game. A Likert scale is employed to gather data regarding an individual's opinion, perception, or attitude toward a phenomenon. Currently, the Likert scale has been widely developed and used as a tool to conduct certain surveys, including in the field of education or social sciences, where the data analysis is more inclined to the form of quantitative data measurement.(Kusmaryono et al., 2022). There are seven perceptions that are asked in the questionnaire, which are aspects of fun learning, speaking confidence, pronunciation learning, class atmosphere, and the limitations of the game, such as class noise, message clarity, and message distortion. The questionnaire employed a Likert scale, which has 5 answer options: Strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree

The population of this research was seventh-grade students in MTs Mulimat NU Palangka Raya consist of 32 students. The participants were chosen by purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants based on the specific characteristics of qualities that are relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2015). Purposive sampling employed to selecting the criteria of the class were: (1) the class is taught by teacher who employ the Telephone Game as an ice-breaker activity in English learning, (2) the class has used this activity consistently within the observer learning period, allowing student to acquire relevant perception through consistent exposure. Based on criteria, 7-C group class is selected due to the English teacher in the class uses the Telephone Game in English learning for an ice-breaker in learning period.

First steps of this research are preparing the questions in questionnaire for gathering data in classroom. Researcher print out questionnaire and distribute to students in the classroom after they played the Telephone Game. The researchers ensured to inform the student that there is no correct or wrong answer and will not affect their grade. Responds gathered from student via questionnaire and sort the responses and calculated to percentage.

After the students fill out the questionnaire, the researcher uses a Google Form to collect and tabulate the questionnaire responses, as automatically generate percentage data based on students' responses, thus minimizing the time required for manual data entry. However, to ensure the accuracy of the automatically generated results, the researcher cross-checked the percentages of produced by Google Forms through manual calculation. This steps to avoid potential miscalculation that may occur due to system errors or misinterpretation responses categories in automated data output The researcher

employed a percentage scale presented by Arikunto (2013). The score interpretation criteria for the question can be categorized as follows: 81-100% (very good), 61-80% (good), 41-60% (fair), 21-40% (poor), and 0-20% (very poor). Researchers employ the formula to calculate the percentages. P is the percentage, f is the frequency of the answer, n is the population, which 32 students. Form of manual calculation shows below.

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100$$

Results and Discussion

The result of the research was obtained from 32 students in grade 7-C in MTs Muslimat NU Palangka Raya that have played the Telephone Game in the English classroom assisted by their English teacher. Before conducting further analysis, a reliability test and validity test.

		Correlations							
		VAR00001	VAR00002	VAR00003	VAR00004	VAR00005	VAR00006	VAR00007	VAR00008
VAR00001	Pearson Correlation	1	.341	.594**	-.027	.337	-.172	.044	.481**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.056	.000	.882	.059	.346	.809	.005
	N	32	32	31	32	32	32	32	32
VAR00002	Pearson Correlation	.341	1	.343	-.246	.275	.079	-.190	.363*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.056		.059	.175	.128	.666	.297	.041
	N	32	32	31	32	32	32	32	32
VAR00003	Pearson Correlation	.594**	.343	1	.243	.553**	-.015	-.084	.615**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.059		.188	.001	.935	.652	.000
	N	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31
VAR00004	Pearson Correlation	-.027	-.246	.243	1	.291	.251	.104	.444*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.882	.175	.188		.106	.166	.569	.011
	N	32	32	31	32	32	32	32	32
VAR00005	Pearson Correlation	.337	.275	.553**	.291	1	.199	.224	.747**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.059	.128	.001	.106		.275	.217	.000
	N	32	32	31	32	32	32	32	32
VAR00006	Pearson Correlation	-.172	.079	-.015	.251	.199	1	.618**	.576**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.346	.666	.935	.166	.275		.000	.001
	N	32	32	31	32	32	32	32	32
VAR00007	Pearson Correlation	.044	-.190	-.084	.104	.224	.618**	1	.524**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.809	.297	.652	.569	.217	.000		.002
	N	32	32	31	32	32	32	32	32
VAR00008	Pearson Correlation	.481**	.363*	.615**	.444*	.747**	.576**	.524**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.041	.000	.011	.000	.001	.002	
	N	32	32	31	32	32	32	32	32

Figure 1. Validity test of the question.

Table 1. Reliability test of the question

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.611	7

Based on the percentage. The procedure of the formula for calculating the percentage from Likert scale scores. Data validity and reliability were tested with SPSS. All of the research questions in the questionnaire is valid and reliable.

Table 2. Students Questionnaire Result

No	Question	Positive	Category
1	I feel happy and laugh when playing Telephone game because often the messages change.	62,5%	Good
2	This game makes me more confident to whisper words/sentences in English to friends	75%	Good
3	Through this game, I learned how to pronounce new words from teachers or friends	81,3%	Very Good
4	Telephone games make the learning atmosphere in class less boring	71.9%	Good
5	The classroom is too noisy, making it difficult to hear the message	43.8%	Fair
6	The message is not very clear, so make me say the last word I hear	59.4%	Fair
7	The message I receive is unclear because it changes, so it's difficult to say	59.4%	Fair

Source: Primary data, processed by Researcher, 2026

Positive Perception

This research was conducted in the seventh-grade class group C at MTs Muslimat NU Palangka Raya. The students involved are 32 students, and they were familiar with the Telephone Game, as they played with their teacher during the English learning process. The previous experience allows the researcher to focus on deeply understanding the students' perception rather than introducing a new activity. Examining students' responses to determine that the Telephone game is good to use in English learning for improving their confidence in using English in the English classroom. The result of the study was that 32 students from the 7-C class. The students have played the Telephone Game, assisted by their English teacher. Some students state Telephone game is a fun game in the English learning process.

In the first question in the questionnaire, most of the students (SA = 25%, A = 37,5%) agreed that the telephone game makes English learning more enjoyable. From these responds indicates that the majority of the student number have a positive perception of the use of the telephone game as a learning activity in the classroom. They feel that the game is a more relaxed and engaging atmosphere, which is able to reduce boredom during the learning process. However, several students (28,1%) chose a 'neutral'; these students feel that the presence or absence of the game did not affect their learning experience in the classroom. In addition, (3,1%) of the students find that the Telephone Game is not enjoyable. This different perception may be influenced by individual preference, learning style, or level in this game. Findings in the analysis of the first question in the questionnaire, this statement falls into the 'Good' category according to the score of the indicator table; therefore, the telephone game has a positive and beneficial impact, particularly in increasing enjoyment and classroom engagement. This is also supported by Maharani et al. (2025) who found that traditional games such as the Telephone game effectively improve students' auditory comprehension focus and motivation

In the second question in the questionnaire explore that student confidence in using English during the Telephone Game in English classroom revealing range of perception among 32 students Most student (SA = 31,3% A = 43,7%) agree that the Telephone game enhance their speaking confidence in English while playing the Telephone Game. This is in line with Sinaga, Pambudi et al. (2024) found that using educational games in the classroom increases students' talkativeness in groups and increases speaking skill. While several students (15,6%) chose a neutral option because they did not feel any change in their speaking confidence during the telephone game. In addition, (9,4%) students disagree that the Telephone game makes them more confidence with speaking in English. They feel their confidence does not improve during play the Telephone Game. From these findings in the second question, the Telephone Game is categorized as ' Good ' according to the indicator table, about 75% of student responds agree that the Telephone Game increases their confidence in their speaking. This finding is also in line with Gunawan (2025) According to his findings, game-based learning improves students' vocabulary and confidence, indicating that frequent engagement in communicative, low-anxiety activities promotes student involvement and risk-taking.

Findings in the third question show that most of the students (SA=31,25% A=50%) agree that learning pronunciation for unfamiliar words either from their group or teacher during the Telephone Game. This indicates that the activity not only makes learning fun but also creates opportunities for student enhancing the student pronunciation skills in such an interactive method. However, not all students feel the same about the experience, while a small number of students (6,25%) chose neutral because they were unsure how the game was helping them significantly in pronunciation. In addition, there are some students (12,5%) who disagree with the statement. Despite these responses, the percentage of these findings classified into 'very good', which means most of the population of students have a positive perception through the Telephone game. These findings are supported by a statement from Dai & Wu (2022) They state that peer feedback on the activities has an important role

in improving students' pronunciation. According to their study, students benefit from listening to their peers and input whether it is correct or incorrect, which helps them to be more aware of how words should be pronounced. While in the Telephone Game, this process occurs naturally. Therefore, the students are listening carefully to the message that is delivered by their peers and then repeating the message as accurately as possible. Therefore, the Telephone game is able to develop students' ability in pronouncing unfamiliar words.

Findings in the fourth question of the survey show that most of the students (SA= 46,9%, A= 25%) agree that the Telephone game makes English learning more fun and less boring. However, other students (15,6%) are unsure about whether the Telephone game affects the atmosphere of the class, which is influenced by individual learning preference or level of participation during the activity. While a small number of students (12,5%) have a different answer from their experience, the Telephone game does not improve the class atmosphere. These different responses could be influenced by factors such as limited involvement in the game, lack of understanding, or personal preferences in traditional learning. Despite all the responses from the students, these findings reveal that the majority of the students have a positive perception of the Telephone game, about 71.9% of students have positive responses, and agree that the Telephone Game provides a less boring atmosphere in the class and the percentage is 'Good' category. These findings are also supported by Hamuddin et al. (2024) who found that the use of games in English learning could significantly enhance student motivation and reduce boredom in the classroom.

Challenge and limitation

Based on the responses from the fifth question of the questionnaire, the limitations of the telephone game. These findings show that most of the students (SA=21.9%, A=21.9%) agree with the statement that the classroom is noisy and they find it difficult to hear the message. While other students have different answers, other students (25%) are unsure about this statement. In addition, the other students (D= 12.5%, SD= 18.7%) respond that they disagree with the statement. According Arcite et al. (2024) the Telephone Game relies on listening accuracy. If the class is noisy, the message is difficult to hear, which causes a distortion in the message. This indicates that noisy classroom conditions are one of the main struggles in implementing the Telephone Game as an ice-breaking technique. Noise also could decrease the success rate of this game as an educational tool, as the basis of the game depends on the precise message from one student to another.

According from result of the sixth question of the questionnaire show the perception of the students is that the message they receive is not very clear, which makes them say the last word or randomly say a word that sounds the same as the word. Most of the students (SA=37.5% A=21.9%) agree with the statement. While some students (N=21.9%) answered neutral, this indicates that their experiences vary depending on factors such as their listening ability. In addition, some students (D=12.5% SD=6.2%) had different answers; they disagreed with the statement. Because some students are still able to follow the message accurately. These findings are related to the findings from Fröhholz et al. (2016), who found that whispered speech contains reduced acoustic information if compared to normal speech, which is difficult for listeners to accurately perceive the message. This means the students have a distorted message, and other students receive the distorted message. They cannot process what the message is; therefore, the student that receive the distorted message is saying the last word that they heard or guessing what the word could be. The acoustic limitation of whispered message students develop an adaptive methods in guessing the word based on the last sound they heard. Although this strategy allow the game continue to play, it actually reduce the accuracy of the message on to the next recipient, so that the final message frequently changes from the original one. This can be seen as an opportunity and limitation; students are trained to guess and process the

incomplete information, which is their listening strategy; on the other hand, excessive distortion could reduce the educational value of the game if students merely guess without actually listening carefully.

The last question in investigating the limitation of the telephone game found that most of the students (SA= 43.8%, A=15.6%) found that the message was unclear, so it was hard for them to convey the message. While a few students (N=9.4%) answered neutral. On the other hand, some students (D=25%, SD=6.2%) are able to follow the message and receive the message clearly. This condition is more than just hearing the last word. One of the difficult skills since it affects their ability to receive and convey the message. According to Asrida et al. (2024) found that there is a correlation between listening skills and vocabulary. Therefore, listening skill also influenced by the student's vocabulary mastery. These findings indicate that the ability to convey a message accurately depends not only on listening skills but also on student vocabulary mastery. Students with limited vocabulary often have difficulty recognizing or reproducing the words they hear, resulting in an inaccurate message being conveyed to the next student.

Based on the research findings above, it was found that the majority of students perceived the Telephone Game as an Ice-breaker positively contributed to their engagement in student MTs Muslimat NU Palangka Raya. Most students have a positive perspective toward the Telephone Game in making learning enjoyable, increasing their confidence, and improving their pronunciation. Despite the limitations of the Telephone Game, students show enthusiasm and interest in participating in the activity, also increasing students' engagement in the English learning process.

Overall Students' Perception

This section presents the overall percentage result of students' perception toward the use of the Telephone Game as an ice-breaker, based on the perspective toward the use of Telephone Game as an ice-breaker, based on the positive and negative items in the questionnaire. The average percentage of the four positive perceptions was 72,67% which determined the "Good" category. This indicates that most students perceived the Telephone Game positively. In terms of building confidence, improving pronunciation, and reducing boredom in the classroom. Otherwise, the average percentage of the three negative results was 54,2% which was determined to be "Fair," suggesting that although some students experienced struggles such as noise and unclear messages during the game, these issues were not perceived as a major obstacle by the majority of students.

Among all items, the highest percentage was found in the third result, "Through this game I learned how to pronounce new words from teachers or friends with 81,3% categorized as "Very Good." This indicates that the game was most helpful in helping students improve their pronunciation skills. Compared to this, the lowest percentage was found in the fifth result, "The classroom is too noisy, making it difficult to hear the message," with 43,8% categorized as "Fair", indicating that classroom noise was one of the main struggles students faced during the activity. Overall, these findings suggest that students generally held a positive perception toward the Telephone Game as an ice-breaker. Although classroom noise remains an area that may require attention from teachers when implementing this activity

Conclusion

Students' perception of the Telephone Game shows a positive perception. The Telephone Game is also able to increase the engagement of students in English learning classes. This could also be used as a learning strategy that is used by teachers to reduce boredom in English learning, particularly to improve enjoyment, speaking confidence, and pronunciation awareness. Most of student that played the Telephone game gave a positive perception. Students consider this game to be fun and make English learning more enjoyable. This game also helps them use their speaking skills more often and

be more confident in speaking and listening. While teachers should consider classroom conditions and students' listening skills when implementing this game to minimize its limitations and maximize the learning outcomes. Therefore, this game is recommended for teachers to use the Telephone game as an alternative teaching strategy to support students' speaking confidence. It also reduces boredom in the English classroom during the English learning process.

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