

## **The Use of Chinese Whispers to Enhance Students' Mastery of Simple Present: A Classroom Action Research**

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Submitted: 24-12-2022

Reviewed: 28-12-2022

Accepted: 29-01-2023

Published: 25-01-2023

### **Abstrak**

This research entitled The Use of Chinese Whispers to Enhance Students' Mastery of Simple Present: A Classroom Action Research. The focus of the research was to find out whether the use of Chinese whispers could enhance the students' simple present mastery, how to use Chinese whispers, and also to investigate students' difficulty in mastering simple present. Classroom action research was carried out from July to August 2022. There were forty students in seventh grade at SMP Negeri 1 Parung who were involved in this research. The research was conducted in two cycles and there were two meetings for each cycle. The procedures of the research were planning the action, implementing the action, observing the action, and reflecting on the action. In collecting the data, the researcher used field notes, interviews, observations, and tests. The final result of the study revealed that there was a significant improvement in their achievement since they learned the lessons through Chinese whisper. Students' percentage who passed the minimum criteria in the pre-test was 47,5%, in test 1 was 60%, in test 2 was 85% and 87,5% in the post-test. Referring to the overall results of the study, the use of Chinese whispers could be considered as one of the alternatives and effective teaching methods to improve students' mastery of the simple present tense.

**Keywords:** Chinese Whispers, Simple Present Tense, Classroom Action Research



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### **Introduction**

English is considered as an international language. As international language, English is crucial to use in communication. Therefore, the need of mastering English is more significant and bring more benefits in some aspects such as education, business, politics, and so on.

English is one of foreign languages that is taught in Indonesia. English is included in subject matter and had been taught starting from junior high school level until university level. In learning English, there are four skills that should be mastered by the students: listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill and writing skill. Moreover, there are some English language components that is important in developing those skills such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling.

Grammar is an important component to comprehend since it influences the development of some English skills such as speaking and writing. Fotos and Hinkel (2002, p. 84) state that "grammatical knowledge helps a speaker to organize and express the idea in his or her mind and thus improves the development of fluency." Moreover,

based on Tarigan (1994, pp. 3-4), since writing is productive and expressive activities, the writers must skillfully take advantage of using graphology, grammar or vocabulary mastery. Thus, in comprehending grammar, students should also mastering tenses as the basic tool to create sentences or utterances.

One of the tenses that is crucial is simple present tense. Since the simple present tense is a basic tense which is often used for daily conversation and for making simple sentences in writing, the simple present tense mastery is needed. The simple present tense along its use was taught in seventh grade of junior high school.

According to school curriculum and learning syllabus, the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Parung were expected to be able to compile oral or written descriptive text about people or objects in accordance with the context of their usage by paying attention to the language elements of the declarative, negative, and interrogative form of simple present tense sentences. Moreover, students must be able to identify the simple present forms (declarative, negative, and interrogative) as the language elements.

Based on the pre-observation that has been done in seventh grade of SMP Negeri 1 Parung, it was found that most of the students were not able to produce simple present tense correctly and were not able to use the simple present tense well both in oral and written form. For example, when the teacher asked them to write a simple present tense, they did not use appropriate verb form based on the kinds of sentences' subject, such as they did not add "-s" or "-es" to a verb in a sentence which the subject is singular. Besides, some of them were able to remember the structure but they were still confused about the structure itself. When the teacher asked them to change the positive form of simple present tense into negative and interrogative, most of them were wrong in using "do not" and "does not". Moreover, they also often forgot where they should put be "does" and "do" in negative form. In addition, they were lack of confidence of writing the simple present tense and using the simple present tense orally. When the teacher asked students to write their simple present tense in white board, the students tended to be reluctant to write it because they were worried if they made mistake. Furthermore, when the teacher asked them to make a simple present tense orally, they just kept silent by did not say anything about simple present tense, and they did not have any initiative to say a sentence in simple present tense form without waiting their turn.

On the other hand, students felt bored in learning simple present tense, mainly if it dealt with the formula. The teacher used a conventional way, so the students only focused on the form not the function of simple present tense. Besides, based on the seventh grade teacher of SMP Negeri 01 Parung, the students often forgot the structure and the function of simple present tense. Furthermore, not all the students were active in learning process. They tended to be reluctant to share their ability in learning simple present tense. Therefore, the teacher needed to find out the suitable methods, approaches or strategies to make them interest in learning simple present. As the result, the students will comprehend the simple present tense well and also use it in their daily conversation.

There are a lot of attractive methods or techniques that can be used to teach simple present tense. One of them is using game. Game is considered to be used because it will make the learning process more attractive and more motivating. Besides, it is suitable for young learners. Khuat and Ngnyen (2003, p. 14), as cited in Sinaga (2017), argued that Game is usefeul for students in learning and retaining words since it carries pleasure for them.

One of the games that is suitable for learning simple present is Chinese whispers game. An interesting view about it was expressed by Rosenfeld et al. (2015, p. 2) that

Chinese whispers which also called as broken telephone is a game that played among people in a line in order to convey a message. The message must be announced by the last person in a line. Moreover, the message that announced by the last person should be compared to the first person's message to check whether it is a correct message or not. Chinese whispers game requires students to be involved in learning process within their group. Thus, this game can be implemented in teaching learning simple present tense activity. By using Chinese whispers game, the students is expected to be able to write simple present tense, comprehend the structure, comprehend the forms of simple present tense, use the simple present tense orally and comprehend the function of it.

Deriving from the problem above, the objective of this research were; 1) to investigate students' difficulty in mastering simple present tense, 2) To find out whether students' mastery of simple present tense enhance by using Chinese whispers game, and 3) to find out how to use Chinese whispers to enhance students' mastery of simple present tense.

This research is expected to have some benefits both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the result of this research is expected to provides literature of review about students' mastery of simple present tense by using Chinese whispers game. Practically, the research have some benefits not only for teachers, but also for students and researchers; a) For teachers and instructors, this research is expected to be able to give them information about the use of Chinese whispers game in enhancing students' mastery of learning tenses and enrich their games in teaching and learning English process, b) for the students, this research will help them to improve their grammar mastery, especially simple present tense which will be useful for their English skill, and c) for other researchers, this research is expected to enrich their references or literature review for their research if they write about related topic.

There were some related studies about student's improvement in mastering the simple present tense through games and about the use of Chinese whispers game in language learning. First of all, First of all, Aryaningtyas, Sundari, and Tasnim (2016) conducted a research to improve students' simple present mastery by using stick figure. The objective of this research was not only to improve the student's mastery of simple present but also to improve the active participation of eighth grade students. The classroom action research was designed as the method in their research and was done in 2 cycles to achieve the criteria of success. The data collection methods were obtained from administering a tense test, observation, giving interview, and documentation. The students' active participation was increased through 2 cycles. In cycle 1, the percentage of the students' active participation was 42% (16 students). Then in meeting 1 of cycle 2, it increased to 79% (30 students). Moreover, it increased again in meeting 2 of cycle 2 to 87% (33 students). As the result, Aryaningtyas, Sundari, and Tasnim (2016) found out that the students' active participation and their tenses mastery was improved by using stick figure.

There was also a research which had been conducted by Mardiana (2012). The purpose of this research was to improve students' mastery in simple present tense by using dice game through Classroom Action Research. The research was conducted at the seventh grade students of MTs. Ma'ahid Kudus in academic year 2011/2012. The classroom action research was used to design the research and it consisted of three cycles. Each cycle was conducted through four steps. They were planning, action, observation and reflection. The research showed that the students' mastery in simple present tense improved from cycle I until cycle III. The improvement could be seen from the average

score. The average score of cycle I is 65.76, the average score of cycle II is 69.79, and the average score of cycle III is 73.34. Moreover, the students felt more enjoy and fun in learning simple present tense by using dice game.

On the other hand, Utami (2018) conducted a research about the use of Chinese whispers game. The research was done in order to find out whether there is significant influence of using chinese whispers game regarding to students' speaking ability or no. The first semester of eighth grade students in SMP Negeri 1 Tajungsari South Lampung in academic year 2017/2018 became the population in this research. Quasi experimental pre-test-post-test group design as well as experimental method was used in the research. There are 229 students' involved as the population. After analyze the data, it was found that the result of the test showed there was significant influence of using Chinese Whispers Game. To sum up, it is proved that Chinese Whispers Game is useful in improving the students' speaking ability.

The next research conducted by Sinaga (2017) which aimed to identify whether whispering game was effective to students' listening skill or not. This research was carried out in second semester of English Department UNRIKA in academic year 2016/2017. The kind of this research was an experimental research. It was the type of research which focused on establish the cause-effect relationships. The experimental class was taught by using whispering game, meanwhile the control class was taught by using lecturing method. The research used total sampling. Based on the data analysis about students' listening skill, the researcher found out that the mean of students in control class was lower than the mean of students in experimental class. The outcome of the data analysis proved that the use of whispering game at second semester UNRIKA in academic Year 2016/2017 brought significant effect in the students' listening skill.

However, there were still few research which studied the use of Chinese whispers game in teaching specific grammar such as the simple present tense. Although this research had similarity with the previous studies, but this research would be a bit different since the research used Chinese whispers game in improving the students' mastery of simple present tense. So, this research would help student to improve their simple present tense mastery

Moreover, there are some explanation about simple present tense. Azar (2003, p. 4) pointed out that simple present tense expresses general statements or fact, and expresses situations or activities that always, usually, and habitually exist in the past, present, and future. In line with Azar, Lester (2012, p. 13) stated that the present tense had seven varied range of meanings. Those seven different meaning grouped into three, they are dealing with present time, past time, and future time. Moreover, Azar (2003, p. 4) explained the three forms of simple present are statement, negative and question. Hariyono (2004, pp. 72-74) stated that the simple present tense mainly divided into two parts, verbal sentence and nominal sentence.

Furthermore, there are some definitions by expert related to Chinese whispers game and how it is used in language teaching. Chinese whispers game is one of the learning strategy that is covered in a game that play by whispering materials wihtin group. Thomas (2013, p.33) explained:

Whispering Game also called Chinese Whisperss game is a party game that a message is passed around a line through whispering, and the expectation that in the telling, it will become comically disorted or exaggerated by the time it completes the circuit.

Moreover, Tooley (2016, p. 39) defined that Chinese Whispersing game is also called the telephone game. It is a game which demonstrates how easily a message, passed a line of communication. In addition, Masland (2012, p. 59), as cited from Utami (2017), stated "Chinese whispers is also know as 'the broken telephone', it is an old party game that suited to lines, rows or circle of students working as a team." It means that this game should be played in a group than the group make a line or circle. To sum up, Chinese Whispers is a game that has various name such as the broken telephone or the telephone game. The game usually played within a group of people which they should deliver a message from the teacher from one person to another by whispering.

Furthermore, in using Chinese Whispers Game in teaching and learning process, there are some steps that must be done, as Vernon (2009, p.49) explained:

One player starts off whispering something to the person next to them who whispers it in turn to the person next to them and so on round in a circle or down the line to the end. The last person then says the phrase or sentence out loud - and usually it is not the same as the initial message, which children find funny, although for ESL purposes it is not useful.

Whispers Game is a very funny game that will give motivation to the students to be active and will attract them to involve in teaching and learning process.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher was interested in solving the problems faced by the students relate to their simple present mastery. Therefore, it was necessary to conduct a research entitled "The Use of Chinese Whispers to Enhance Students' Mastery of Simple Present: A Classroom Action Research" at the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Parung. By doing this research, the researcher expected to give contribution in improving students' simple present tense mastery.

## **Method**

Classroom Action Research was used in this research as the research design. There are some definitions about the classroom action research. Burns (2010, p. 2) said that "action research is related to the ideas of 'reflective practice' and 'teacher as researcher'." In addition, he added "it involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring a teaching context." Furthermore, Nunan (1992, p. 229) stated that action research is a model of self-reflective study that was done by practitioner which focus to solve problems, improve practice, or enhance understanding.

Regarding to experts' explanation about action research, it can be said that action research was a research that conducted based on the problem which was found in the classroom during the teaching learning process. Action research was mainly done by teachers, lecturers, or teaching tutors in their teaching environment in order to improve teaching learning process, to improve students' comprehension, and also to solve the problem that have been found. In action research, the teachers as researcher have to do some steps, such as making plan of the action, implementing the action, monitoring the process, and assessing the action.

The model of action research that used in this research was the model which was developed by Kennis and Mc Taggart (1988) in Burns (2010, p. 9). According Kennis and Mc Taggart (1988) in Burns (2010, p. 8) in their model of action research, there are four steps in doing action research, such as planning, action, observation, and reflection.

In planning step, the problem was identified by doing classroom observation. The interview which aimed to gain information related to the problem was also conducted both to the students and the teacher. Then, the researcher and teacher discussed the



problem in mastering simple present tense along its best way to solve the problem. The researcher and teacher agreed to use Chinese whispers game to improve students' simple present tense mastery. In addition, the researcher also prepared the teaching kits and lesson plan. After that, the researcher also decided the activities to implement Chinese whispers game in teaching simple present tense for the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Parung.

In the action step as well as the second step, the researcher took action by implementing Chinese whispers game in teaching learning process. The action was implementing Chinese whispers game until there was improvement on students' simple present tense mastery. The action was done in two cycles that consist of three meetings of each cycle. During the action, the researcher observed the teaching learning process.

The observation step was done during the process of teaching learning. The researcher observed the students and the teaching learning process to reflect the implementation of Chinese whispers game to improve students' simple present mastery. Besides, in this step, the researcher also collected the information as much as possible to know the effect of the action and to find out the problem that might be occurred in the learning process. To gain the information, the researcher made field notes. In addition, the researcher also interviewed the students and the teacher to gain their opinion about the teaching learning process.

The last step, after conducting action and observation, the researcher had to do reflection and evaluation to determine whether the action was done well or not. If the result showed the improvement of students' simple present tense mastery, the research was ended.

To collect the data, the researcher used field notes, test, documentation, observation and also interview as the instruments of the research. The use of field notes was to find out the problems, difficulties, and also weaknesses of the actions. Moreover, field notes also enable researcher to see the students' progress in teaching learning process. In order to measure the students' simple present tense mastery before and after treatment by using Chinese whispers game, test was given. The kind of the test were pre-test and post-test, and formative test. Meanwhile, documentation was used in form of picture that take during the research process and also school's document such as curriculum, syllabus, and text book to prove the result of the research. Besides, Observation was used to gather real data during the teaching learning process. The data which were gained such as the students' behaviours and characteristics. Besides, the observation reflected their interactions and their reactions while they were taught through a selected method. Meanwhile, the interview was done by researcher through face-to-face with the participants and the interview questions were designed based on the interview protocol developed by Creswell (2009). Furthermore, this research used structured interview since the result of the interview was used in coding process.

Furthermore, to analyze the data, This research used both qualitative and quantitative data. To analyze the qualitative data, steps of data analysis proposed by Creswell (2009, pp. 185-189) that consists of organize and prepare the data, read the data, coding, generate description, and represent the analysis, and make interpretation were used.

The first step was organize and prepare the data. The data were collected through interview and field notes. Next, the data in form of interview and field notes were read in order to find out general sense of the information and to reflect its overall meaning. After reading process, coding process was done. In coding process, the data were categorized

and labelled with a term. Then, the data were described and generated into a small number themes and categories which appear as the major findings of this research and used to create headings in the findings section of the research. After it, the descriptions and themes were represented in narrative. The last step was making interpretation to find out the outcome of the data.

Moreover, there were criteria which determine the success of this research. The first criteria was the students have to pass the minimum criteria. The minimum criteria of English subject was 70. After calculating the students who passed the minimum criteria, the researcher calculated all students' minimum mastery standard percentage by using the formula of percentage classical minimum mastery standard that proposed by Sudijono (2008: 43) such as:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

P = the class percentage

F = the number of students who pass the criteria

N = the total number of students

Besides, there were some categories of percentage that show students' achievement of English subject such as very low, low, medium, high and very high. So, if there was improvement in the percentage of their achievement within the cycles, they were succeed in mastering simple present tense. The categories of classical percentage of minimum mastery criteria used the percentage interval as follows:

Interval	Catagories
85 – 100 %	Very high
75 – 84 %	High
60 – 74 %	Medium
40 – 59 %	Low
0 – 39 %	Very low

*Percentage interval.*

## Result

In this research, there were two steps that have been done, pre-research and action research. The implementation was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four steps, they are planning, implementing, observing and reflecting. Each cycle consisted of three meetings and each meeting took about 80 minutes.

After implementing Chinese whispers game in teaching learning simple present tense, the researcher got the data from each cycle.

No	Students' Code	Pre-Test	Quiz 1	Quiz 2	Post-Test
1	S-01	58	66	74	72
2	S-02	74	76	80	82
3	S-03	54	64	72	76
4	S-04	56	68	76	74
5	S-05	78	78	76	80
6	S-06	66	72	78	84
7	S-07	70	76	80	86
8	S-08	54	58	62	68
9	S-09	74	78	82	88

10	S-10	64	70	76	82
11	S-11	74	76	84	90
12	S-12	76	74	82	86
13	S-13	76	78	76	82
14	S-14	62	66	70	70
15	S-15	70	74	78	82
16	S-16	76	78	74	78
17	S-17	52	60	62	68
18	S-18	68	66	70	74
19	S-19	76	74	76	82
20	S-20	58	60	70	68
21	S-21	78	74	78	86
22	S-22	70	76	78	84
23	S-23	56	54	64	72
24	S-24	72	76	80	88
25	S-25	74	78	84	82
26	S-26	76	78	80	86
27	S-27	50	56	62	66
28	S-28	52	62	70	76
29	S-29	70	72	76	84
30	S-30	60	74	76	74
31	S-31	54	62	72	76
32	S-32	50	56	64	72
33	S-33	76	76	82	92
34	S-34	74	72	80	86
35	S-35	58	64	74	72
36	S-36	52	58	60	68
37	S-37	74	76	86	84
38	S-38	54	58	70	72
39	S-39	68	74	82	88
40	S-40	60	74	74	76
Total		2614	2782	2990	3158
Average		65,3	69	75	79
P*		47,5%	60%	85%	87,5%

#### *The recapitulation of Students' test*

#### **Data Analysis**

The Pre-test score showed that the total score of the students was 2614. As explained in the previous part, the minimum criteria of English lesson for seventh grade students in SMP Negeri 1 Parung was 70. There was 19 students out of 40 students who passed the minimum criteria. It meant there were only 19 students who passed the minimum criteria. It also showed that the class percentage of mastering simple present was 47,5%. It meant the result was lower than the pass percentage criteria that had to be 85%. Moreover, based on the interval percentage, the class was in 40-59% which meant the class was categorized into low.

According to the data for cycle 1 that showed in the table Quiz 1, the total score of the students was 2782. The result of the test showed that there was 24 students out of 40 students who passed the minimum criteria. It meant there were 24 students who passed



the minimum criteria. Besides, the researcher got the data about the percentage of the students who passed the target score. The result was 60% of the students passed the target score. Moreover, based on the interval percentage, if the class percentage was in 60-74%, the class percentage of simple present mastery was in medium category. The result of the date in cycle 1 meant that there was improvement from the pre-cycle until cycle 1. However, there were not significant improvement since the class percentage of target score was still under 85%.

Meanwhile, in cycle 2, there are 34 students who passed the target score. the calculation of the pass rate percentage of students who passed the exam in cycle 2 is 85%. It was same as the target which was 85% of the students had to passed the target score. It meant that it had met the target of the research. Moreover, the criteria for 85% is very high. As the result, the researcher ended the cycle until cycle 2.

Moreover, the total score of the students in post-cycle was 3158. The result of the test showed that there was 36 students out of 40 students who passed the minimum criteria. The percentage of the students who passed the target score was 87,5%. The percentage showed that there was improvement of students simple present mastery from cycle 1 until cycle 2.

To sum up, there was improvement from the pre-test until the post-test. The total of the students' score which passed the minimum criteria of English lesson and the percentage of students' who passed the target score improved significantly and finally met the target percentage of the research. Therefore, it can be concluded that the using of Chinese whispers game were able to improve the students' mastery of simple present tense. Moreover, the data also showed that this classroom action research was successful because it had fulfilled the criteria of success.

## Discussion

Based on the interview and field notes, interview there are some obstacles faced by students in learning simple present tense through Chinese whispers, as follows: 1) the students were difficult to memorize the use of verb agreement such as the use of -s or -es after the verb if the subject is singular, 2) the students were eager to utter the sentence since they are passive in English and only use English in teaching learning process in the class. To solve this problem, students need more practice to master verb agreement and they need more exposure in using English on their daily life since it will give them more confidence in uttering English sentence.

Besides, from the result of the tests form pre-test until the post-test, the total of the students who passed the target score was improved. In the pre-test, there were only 19 students who passed the minimum criteria compared to the post-test that there were 36 students who passed the minimum criteria which was 70. Meanwhile, related to the students' pass, there were 87,5% who pass the criteria in the post test and it was higher than the pre-test which was only 65,3%. It is line with the criteria of success in this research if it was 85% of students who pass the minimum criteria. Moreover, the categories of percentage interval also improved through the cycles, from low categories into very high categories. Thus, based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the use of Chinese whispers game was able to improve students' mastery of simple present tense. It was proved by the total of students who pass the minimum criteria and the percentage of students' pass percentage improved from pre-test until the post-test.

The last, the result of the test from pre-test until post-test, observation sheet, field notes, and interview were also used by the researcher to analyze the use of Chinese

whispers game during the teaching learning process. The students' simple mastery improved from pre-test and post-test. According to researcher and collaborator observation, it was significant improvement after the researcher used Chinese whispers game to gain their confidence since it required the students who were lack of confidence to actively participate in the game. Besides, the students' simple present mastery more improved when the researcher decreased the total of the students in each group, from ten members into five members. The total of five members made the students more effective in getting the sentence since it minimized more error in delivering the sentence. It can be said that reducing the number of participants from ten students into five students in the Chinese Whisper game made students understanding of the simple present tense more effective. It was because by reducing the number of participant, the possibility of making mistakes in delivering the sentence was reduced and the class situation was more conducive. So, by reducing the number of students, Chinese whisper game can be used effectively to enhance students' simple present tense mastery.

### Conclusion

The result of the data and the discussion in the previous chapter lead to the conclusion regarding the use of Chinese whispers to enhance students' mastery of simple present as follows:

1. Some obstacles faced by students in mastering simple present tense are verb agreement and being passive in using English. Researcher may give more practice to master verb agreement and give more exposure to use English.
2. Chinese whispers game could be used to enhance students' mastery of simple present tense since it showed significant improvement during the research. The total of the students who passed the target score and the categories of percentage interval also improved.
3. To get the expected result from implementing Chinese whispers to enhance students' mastery of simple present tense, the researcher had to find out the good strategies in using it. The good strategies was found by the researcher when the researcher found difficulties in implementing Chinese whispers game. The first difficulties was the fourth and fifth person of a group was commonly conveyed incorrect sentences which cause the last person got the incorrect sentence. So, the researcher limited the group only for five person which is more effective in sentence delivery. On the other hand, the researcher's encouragement of the students who were lack of confidence to become the leader or the last person who write the simple present made them more confident. Besides, through Chinese whispers the researcher could solve the students' fear in making mistakes since the mistakes of the simple present would be discuss after all the group had written the sentences.

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