

The Effect of Prophet Yusuf Storytelling on Students' Grammar Mastery

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Abstract

The study of grammar has been shifting in the language teaching classroom. However, the fact that the difficulty to understand grammar, especially past tense among junior high school students has been an issue that needs to be solved. This study investigated the effect of using the storytelling of Prophet Yusuf based on Quran verses towards students' grammar mastery at the 8th grade in MTsS Diniyyah Pasia, Agam, West Sumatera. This quasi-experimental research involved 32 sample students who were treated as experimental class and taught by using the storytelling of Prophet Yusuf. It is found that there is a significant effect of using storytelling of prophet Yusuf based on Quran verses towards students' grammar mastery. It is also concluded that there is a significant difference between students who are taught by using the storytelling of the prophet Yusuf based on Quran verses and the students who are not taught by using storytelling. It indicates that the use of Prophet Yusuf Storytelling which is based on Quran verses in learning Grammar can help the students to master the grammatical pattern effectively.

Keywords: Grammar Mastery, Quran Verses, Storytelling, Surah Yusuf

Introduction

Grammar plays a vital role as the foundation for both, oral and written communication. Grammar is a set of rules that help someone to combine words into meaningful sentences. Grammar is defined as the way words are constructed to create precise sentences (Ur, 2012). This statement formalizes grammar as one of the major aspects of learning a language because without having good grammar mastery, it would be difficult for someone to deliver his or her ideas properly (Taufiq & Putri, 2019).



Grammar helps learners to understand the relations existing among sentences in reading, which enables them to transform their ideas into coherent sentences in a written form (Hyland, 2019; Myhill & Newman, 2016). Besides, grammar plays a significant role in grasping and using spoken language because it is believed that learning the grammar of a language is necessary for developing the ability to produce grammatical well-formed utterances in a language. Thus, grammar cannot be ignored due to its important role in every skill of language.

In Indonesia, grammar has been learned as an integrated subject in the English classroom, along with other skills; writing, reading, listening, and vocabulary. The ability to understand grammar will help the learners to compose clauses in academic writing (Gustira & Artika, 2020). However, grammar is still considered one of the hardest language components for students. Grammar is precise since the students have to know the right form of the verb, the right use of auxiliary verb or the tenses, and the proper adverb of time to put them all together in a correct sentence. Some learners are sometimes reluctant to be corrected by other people, especially in oral communication. Moreover, some exceptions need to be put into attention by the language users, such as in spelling and pronunciation, especially as it is not spelled the way it sounds. Therefore, the need for good strategies to teach grammar is necessary to make grammar easier to be understood by Indonesian language learners.

Storytelling is one of the strategies that can make foreign language learners, especially young learners, learn grammar without getting bored. "Good stories can capture one's imagination and hold one's attention", as stated by Hidayah, 2015, p.2). In other words, if the teacher could have the student's attention, the researcher assumes that it would make grammar easier to be understood by the learners. Furthermore, Miller & Pennycuff (2008, p.1) emphasized, "Storytelling is an effective pedagogical strategy that can be woven into instruction to increase students' competencies in all areas" (Miller & Pennycuff, 2008)(p.1). It is one of the most effective strategies to increase language skills and language components, especially grammar. Moreover, a short story also affects the students' character education, particularly when they read the famous figure's short story (Artika, 2015). Besides, students' comprehension will also develop with the use of storytelling (Al-Mansour, 2011; Hung et al., 2012; Marzuki et al., 2016; and Spencer et al., 2013)

However, the ability and creativity to create stories that can convey the point are not possessed by everyone. To invent and create a story that explains a basic concept of grammatical structures is undeniably a point that can assist the teacher to have not only a fun classroom interaction but more importantly a channel to demonstrate and simplify the grammatical rules in a more receptive and innovative practice. The use of storytelling to teach grammar could conceivably help learners counter their anxiety of learning grammatical forms (Hidayah, 2015). Teaching grammar by using storytelling has also increased the students' motivation; they do not feel that studying grammar is a boring and difficult subject anymore (Amiot et al., 2018; García, n.d.; Pillai et al., 2017).

As the authentic strategy of teaching, storytelling also has potential of encouraging young learners' emotional intelligence and helping them to gain insight into individual behavior (Dujmović & Skola, 2006). Language learning has also been promoted by storytelling with learners' vocabulary enrichment and new



language forms acquisition. Their statement is in line with (Mallan, 1991) that in grammar learning, storytelling could be a stepping stone to learning syntax as it reveals the grammatical and syntactic features inconsequential context. Storytelling manifests various uses of tense and linking instruments in constructing ideas. By designing a contemplating learning activity, it is easier for the teacher to draw the learners' attention to understand the linguistic features in the story. In other words, storytelling can be used as a strategy in teaching grammar because it can deliver the grammar material in a more meaningful context. In addition, this strategy can deliver abstract material like grammar which used to be a boring subject in a fun way of teaching.

Storytelling does not always use a story in the process, but sometimes an experience of someone in his or her past can be used. (O. Serrat, 2008, p.1) noted, "Storytelling is the vivid description of ideas, beliefs, personal experiences, and life lessons through stories or narratives that evoke powerful emotions and insights". It means that storytelling can be applied through narratives and stories. In the narrative, storytelling would be probably conducted by telling a story in front of the classroom or writing a story.

A story presents a realistic context of presenting a grammatical aspect then carries and focuses the learners' concentration and curiosity distinctively that no other method might do as a good story can hold students' attention. Furthermore, eliciting and illustrating grammar points can also use stories; the former utilizes inductive reasoning, while the latter requires deductive concepts. Therefore, it is useful and necessary to bring up both approaches in the grammatical structure of lesson planning. Attaching grammar stories in lessons would help the learners' better understanding of grammar as well as a fun activity for them (Baker & Greene, 1996). To make a lively atmosphere, it seems that storytelling is a good strategy in teaching grammar which avoids making the students bored and sleepy. The teacher can use this strategy to hide or to disguise the grammar material into a more fun subject.

That the stories can provide opportunities to learn a language in context for the students could be the reason why the researchers want to tell stories in their classroom activity. New vocabularies and language structures are also introduced in stories. However, the students should also pay attention to their vocabulary learning strategies to maintain their vocabulary mastery as it will strengthen their ability in the use of grammar (Fitriani & Artika, 2020). Moreover, stories can have a strong impact on the establishment of personal knowledge and self-awareness (Soleimani & Khandan, 2013). If the students can remember the stories it is more likely they can remember the structures that are used in those stories. For example, a student likes the story of Musa AS, and then he writes it down on a piece of paper; since he fond of it, he remembers almost all the sentences in the stories which makes that student writing almost perfect.

Morgan & Dennehy (1997) asserted the five components of an effective story as follows: 1) Setting: a description of characters, time, place, and context; 2) Building up: a series of events; 3) Crisis: a climax or peak of the story; 4) Learning: a moral value of the story; 5) Having alteration in the character(s) attitudes, consciousness, and capabilities: the tale-teller needs to focus on the retaining lessons taken by the listener.



Moreover, Erickson et al., (1976) recommended the five following models to support the storytelling learning theory and the conversational induction of a hypnotic trance: 1) Fixation of attention. At this stage, the students are encouraged to pay attention to their current situation and feeling and then move to other concerns or stresses; 2) Depotentiation habitual frameworks and belief systems. This stage is referred to as the 'hypnotic trance' where the learners are more responsive and receptive to new knowledge, concepts, and ideas in general.; 3) Unconscious search. At this stage, the students unconsciously activate their background knowledge to comprehend a new fact. However, the students are more probably creative to reshuffle their prior knowledge to demonstrate their new insights and proficiency when they are immersed in a storytelling activity; 4) Unconscious process. The storyteller encourages various unconscious processes by indirect schemes of suggestion in storytelling. These unconscious activities authorize the learners to open and form new notions and form new knowledge; 5) Hypnotic response. The result of the storytelling activities' inducement process will be noticed in this stage. This unconsciousness will appear to appear autonomously and automatically as a result of the previous stage, the unconscious process.

To summarize, there are 5 stages of storytelling according to Erickson and Rossi. First encouraging students to focus, then let the student be immersed in the story, after that let the students guess what will happen next, then give the students some clues, and finally ask their responses. Furthermore, Soleimani and Khandan (2013) have conducted a research on the effect of telling short stories in learning grammar among EFL high school students in Iran. The participants of this study were monolingual speakers of Persian who were given an appropriate short story for the intermediate level. The focus of attention in this study was teaching grammar. They found that the use of storytelling had a positive impact on grammatical rules acquisition. Then they figured out the procedures of storytelling as follows: First, choose a story that contains grammatical aspects regarding language features. Second, the teacher taught new vocabulary from the story. Then the teacher told the story to the students. At last, the students respond to the questions listed at the end of the passage. The answers will be related to the language feature they have just learned.

The researchers decided to choose Soleimani and Khandan's teaching procedure in this study as their procedure used certain language features that were similar to this research. The researchers then modified the instructions as follow: 1) Choose Surah Yusuf as a story that contains grammatical point related to simple past tense; 2) Then the researchers teach new vocabulary from Surah Yusuf; 3) Telling the story; 4) During the story, the teacher teaches students the simple past tense; 5) Ask the students some questions after students finish reading the story which the answer to all questions related to simple past tense.

There is a lot of stories that could be found in the Quran. To avoid the broad scope of the research, the researchers chose the story of Prophet Yusuf AS in Surah Yusuf, the 12th surah in the Quran, as it is one of the best stories in the Quran. This surah has a detailed, compelling, and fascinating story that involves both human evil characteristics, such as pride, jealousy, passion, hatred, intrigue, deception, terror, and terror as well as their noble qualities such as loyalty, patience, nobility, bravery, and compassion (Kathir, 2019). Surah Yusuf is the 12th Surah in Quran that contains 111 verses. Surah Yusuf tells the dream of Yusuf, the jealousy of his brother, Aziz, and his wife adopted him, the verdict of Aziz's wife, Yusuf going to



prison, interpretation of the dreams. All the events presented in the story of Yusuf become the material of this research. To make it fit this study, the researchers put simple past tense and surah Yusuf to the story and applied Hasan's procedure without changing the basic concept of the theory.

Al- Qur'an contains many good stories from the past. The stories introduced the readers to the ancient civilization, the story of past nations, the life of prophets, their families, the adherents, the believers, the agnostics, the tyrants, and their fates. The holy book of the Quran portrays numerous kinds of people with different attributes, characteristics and provides the choice of the path the people should follow for their salvation in life and hereafter salvation (Torki, 2017). This fact makes using storytelling with Quran Verses in teaching grammar would be a good method in teaching grammar especially in an Islamic school, MTsS Diniyyah Pasia.

Method

The design of this quantitative research was experimental research which was aimed to know the effect of using storytelling in teaching grammar. In this study, the researchers chose the Pre-test-Post test nonequivalent Control Design, with two groups design: an experimental group that was treated by using storytelling and the control group that was treated without storytelling. The researchers taught grammar by using conventional strategy in the control class, they started from explaining the definition, the form, the adverb of time, showing the examples, and ended by giving the assignments. The control group is useful to know whether the new treatment, storytelling, is more effective than the use of the unusual one. In the experimental class, the students were treated by using storytelling by choosing surah Yusuf as the storytelling material, then the researchers taught new vocabulary from Surah Yusuf. Then the researchers told the story of Yusuf while explaining simple past tense to the students. In the end, after the students finish reading the story, the researchers would ask the students some questions related to simple past tense. These two groups have been given the same length of time and the same materials in teaching. This research used the pre-test to determine a students' background knowledge or preparation for an educational experience and post-test to know whether there would be differences in the students' grammar mastery.

The population of this research was all students in the eighth grade of MTsS Diniyyah Pasia, Agam, West Sumatera which were consisted of 6 classes. The sample of this research was determined by using purposive sampling. They are selected based on certain characters that are allowed to have a close relationship with the attributes of the population that has been previously known. The samples of this research were two classes of the eighth grade of MTsS Diniyyah Pasia, Agam, West Sumatera. The researchers chose classes VIII.5 and VIII.4 because they had some problems with grammar mastery especially in past tenses, which have a close relation with the characteristic of the population, and because it was also suggested by the teacher in the school. Then, one of the two classes was chosen to be a control class and another class as the experimental class by testing the normality and homogeneity of the data.

The instrument used in this research was multiple-choice tests that will be given as pretest and posttest of the experimental and control class. The test consists of 30 items, which were formulated in four alternatives answers. To make that test



valid and reliable; the researchers have done the expert validity and reliability of the test. To analyze the data, the researchers did the t-test. Four formulas were used to analyze the data in this research. The first was used to find the average score of each group, the second summed the square of variance, then the third was to calculate standard deviation, meanwhile, the last formula was used to calculate the t-test.

Findings and Discussions

After finding the mean score, the standard deviation, and the value of the t obtained by using the t-test of both classes, the hypothesis was tested. The hypotheses of this research were tested as follow:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant effect of using storytelling of prophet Yusuf based on Quran verses towards students' grammar mastery.

To measure whether the hypothesis was accepted or rejected, the researchers used the formula to find whether H_a/H_0 was accepted or rejected, the value of the $t_{obtained}$ was compared with the value of the t table. If $t_{obtained}$ is located between $-t_{table}$ and $+t_{table}$, the null hypothesis (H_0) will be accepted or if $t_{obtained}$ is not located between $-t_{table}$ and $+t_{table}$, the alternate hypothesis (H_a) will be accepted.

The calculation of pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental class, the mean score of the post-test (\bar{X}_2) was 69.19. It is greater than the mean score of the pre-test (\bar{X}_1), 77.44. Then it was analyzed by using a T-test in SPSS 22. The output can be viewed in table 1:

Table 1: T-test For Pre-test and Post-test Experimental Class

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
	F	Sig.	t	df
Equal variances assumed	1.761	.189	-3.298	62
Data Equal variances not assumed			-3.298	59.505

Table 1 indicates that $t_{obtained}$ was -3.298 and the t table for degrees of freedom was 62 with a level of significance of 0.05 was 1.667. Through comparing the $t_{obtained}$ (-3.298) and t_{table} (1.667), it is found that the $-t_{obtained}$ (negative) was smaller than the t_{table} .

From the data, it means that there is a significant effect of using the storytelling of prophet Yusuf Story based on Quran Verses towards students' grammar mastery which is an alternate hypothesis (H_a) is accepted because the $t_{obtained}$ is smaller than the t table.



Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference between students who are taught by using the storytelling of the prophet Yusuf based on Quran verses and the students who are not taught by using storytelling

From the calculation of post-test scores of both classes, experiment, and control class, the mean score of the post-test (\bar{X}_2) of the experimental class was 78.31. It is higher than the mean score of the post-test of the control class (\bar{X}_1), which was 68.5. Then it was analyzed by using a T-test in SPSS 22. The output can be viewed on the table:

Table 2: T-test For Post-test of Control and Experimental Class

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
	F	Sig.	t	Df
dataEqual variances assumed	1.959	.166	-4.523	62
Equal variances not assumed			-4.523	63.851

Table 1 indicates that $t_{obtained}$ was -3.298 and the t_{table} for degrees of freedom was 62 with a level of significance of 0.05 was 1.667. Through comparing the $t_{obtained}$ (-3.298) and t_{table} (1.667), it is found that the - $t_{obtained}$ (negative) was smaller than the t_{table}

From the data, it means that there is a significant effect of using the storytelling of prophet Yusuf Story based on Quran Verses towards students' grammar mastery which is an alternate hypothesis (H_a) is accepted because the $t_{obtained}$ is smaller than the t_{table} .

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference between students who are taught by using the storytelling of the prophet Yusuf based on Quran verses and the students who are not taught by using storytelling

From the calculation of post-test scores of both classes, experiment, and control class, the mean score of the post-test (\bar{X}_2) of the experimental class was 78.31. It is higher than the mean score of the post-test of the control class (\bar{X}_1), which was 68.5. Then it was analyzed by using a T-test in SPSS 22. The output can be viewed on the table:



Table 3: T-test For Post-test of Control and Experimental Class

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
	F	Sig.	t	Df
data				
Equal variances assumed	1.959	.166	-4.523	62
Equal variances not assumed			-4.523	63.851

As shown in Table 2 that t_{obtained} was -4.523 and the t_{table} for degrees of freedom 62 with $\alpha=0.05$ was 1.667. Through comparing the t_{obtained} (-4.523) and t_{table} (1.667), it was found that the t_{obtained} was smaller than the t_{table} .

The data above indicates that the alternate hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected because the $-t_{\text{obtained}}$ was smaller than the t_{table} . So, it can be said that there was a significant difference in the students' test result in grammar especially in past tense between the students who are taught by using storytelling and those who are not taught by using storytelling.

Hypothesis 4: Students' grammar mastery taught by using the storytelling of prophet Yusuf based on Quran verses is better than students who are not taught by it

The last hypothesis, whether students' grammar mastery taught by using the storytelling of prophet Yusuf based on Quran verses is better than students who are not taught by this method revealed the difference mean score of post-tests of the two classes. The mean score of the experimental class which was taught by the storytelling of prophet Yusuf bigger than the post-test mean score of the control class (77.44 > 68.5). It means that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and it can be concluded that the grammar test result of the students who were treated with storytelling was better than the grammar test result of the students who were not taught by using storytelling.

Based on the hypothesis result, the researchers found that using storytelling to improve students' grammar mastery gave a significant effect on students' grammar mastery, especially in the past tense. It can be seen from the mean of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental class: the mean of the pre-test of the experimental class is 71.11 and the mean of the post-test is 78.31. It means that the mean of the post-test of the experimental class is higher than the mean of the pre-test of the experimental class. The t-test result is shown that the t_{obtained} is (3,298) higher than the t_{table} (1.667). The differences between both tests are caused by the treatment given. The fact shows that storytelling has a significant effect on improving the students' grammar mastery.

The research has proven that using storytelling gave a significant difference in students' grammar test results. It can be identified from the mean of the post-test in the experimental class and control class in which the mean of the post-test of the



experimental class was 77.44 and the control class was 68.5, that is mean score of the experimental class' post-test is higher than the mean of post-test of the control class. The t-test result showed that the t_{obtained} was higher than the t_{table} ($4.523 > 1.667$). The difference between both classes was caused by the treatment given. The fact shows that storytelling has a significant difference in influencing the students' test result in grammar especially in the past tense.

Finally, the data of the experimental and control classes were obtained to indicate the students who were taught by storytelling were better than the students who were not taught by using storytelling from the data that were obtained. It was found that the mean score of the post-test of the experimental class ($\bar{x} 1$) was higher than the mean score of the control class ($\bar{x} 2$) $78.31 > 68.5$. Thus, it can be concluded that storytelling can help students to improve their grammar test results, especially past tense.

This finding was supported by the study conducted by Nguyen et al., (2014); Hassan Soleimani & Khandan (2013); Hidayah (2015); and Kamaludin et al. (2015) that teaching grammar using storytelling has helped the teacher easily introduce grammar to students, has increased students' interest and enthusiasm in learning grammar and has eventually improved their learning outcomes. In the meantime, the control class that was taught conventionally did not have the same environment as the experimental class.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and the discussion, the researchers conclude that the use of storytelling of Prophet Yusuf which is based on Quran verses in teaching grammar to the eighth-grade students of MTsS Diniyyah Pasia has a significant effect in improving students' grammar mastery. It is supported by the data that storytelling has improved the students' grades and understanding in the simple past tense. Furthermore, it is also proven that the use of storytelling of Prophet Yusuf which is based on Quran verses in teaching grammar is better than the conventional strategy of teaching. The data of the post-test of both classes have shown that the mean score of the experimental class is higher than the mean score of the control class, meanwhile, both classes have the same level of ability in the pre-test. Further research on this subject could be developed, particularly in this digital era in the form of digital storytelling in any skill of language.

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