

IMPROVING STUDENTS' GRAMMAR ABILITY (SIMPLE PAST TENSE) USING JOHNNY GRAMMAR WORD CHALLENGE APPLICATION IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the effectiveness of *Johnny Grammar Word Challenge* in improving students' grammar ability especially *simple past tense* in Junior High School level. It needs an appropriate technique outside the class activity called MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning). Classroom action research is used to design the research. The result shows that the use of *Johnny Grammar Word Challenge* could improve the student's grammar ability. From affective aspect, the students can use their mobile phone effectively. Psychomotor aspect, they enjoy giving positive response toward the implementation of the application. Then, from cognitive aspect, they have been able to determine the appropriate verb which is used in a past tense sentence. *Johnny Grammar Word Challenge* is suitable to be implemented to improve student's grammar ability especially simple past tense. Thus, the researchers suggest teachers to use it as a variation in teaching English.

Key Words: Grammar Ability, Johnny Grammar Word Challenge, MALL

I. INTRODUCTION

The world is constantly changing from time to time. As the result of the current globalization era, English becomes the world's major means of communication. It is widely adopted for communication among two speakers whose native languages are different from each other where one or both speakers are using it as a 'second language'. As English is a foreign language in Indonesia, of course the sentence pattern among Indonesian and English sentences are different. That's why it is rather difficult to master English grammar. Moreover, most of students think that English grammar is the most difficult one to be learnt, since the way to teach grammar is delivered traditionally.

This paper discusses mainly the English grammar in junior high school level. The researchers take grammar as their research focus because the researchers realize that grammar plays an important role to make the students be able to master English well.

Based on the interview, the researchers know that the respondents are still hard to understand about Simple Past Tense especially Irregular verb. This is one of the reasons why the researchers wants to conduct an action research focusing on grammar of Irregular verb.

To have a mastery of English grammar, it requires a lot of practices, both in or out of school. It needs an interesting teaching method as well. According to Heidi Dulay, et al. (1982, p. 3) to be successful a learner needs not have a special inborn talent for learning languages. Learners simple need to "do it right". The researchers thinks that application of *Johnny Grammar Word Challenge* is a good and right method to anticipate this situation.

Nowadays, most of students use their mobile phone just to play games, get interaction in social media, and communicate with each other. They also spend most of their time with useless activity instead of study. So we can minimize such kind of activities with the benefit one such as mobile learning.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This article is part of a more extensive research that addresses mobile devices in education. Nowadays, all investigations demonstrate the unstoppable advent of mobile devices in learning. Multiple research confirm that contextualizing Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) practice can improve idiomatic skills and support a foreign language class, and there is a positive sense in the learners' perceptions towards mobile based learning, for developing their English abilities for instance.

According to Pilar et al. (2013, p. 2) Mobile learning (m-learning) refers to the use of mobile technologies for educational purposes. These devices can offer learning opportunities that are: spontaneous, informal, contextual, portable, ubiquitous, pervasive, and personal. Thus, as explained, learners take primary responsibility and control of their learning process, including setting goals and evaluating outcomes. They are no longer the passive recipients of education, but consumers making choices in the learning market.

The universal and common features of this phenomenon are accessible to approach it from an exploratory introductory descriptive character of the complex and novel phenomenon of m-learning. Currently also include the presence of multiple affordable to experience educational methodologies in teaching English with mobile devices options. These devices and their programs are available for teachers to use them. But, truly, what specific applications are available for the teacher? About these aspects firstly it is analyzed the present situation and its technological development, described the rapid evolution of these devices, the teaching of a foreign language in the Indonesian case, and the combination of these variables with specific applications for primary education. So, the objective is to analyze the effectiveness of *Johnny Grammar Word Challenge* in improving students' grammar ability especially *simple past tense* that is focused in irregular verb in Junior High School level.

III. MALL (MOBILE ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING)

According to Yedla (2013, p. 2) Mobile Assisted Language Learning means learning with the aid of handheld technology like mobile phones, portable laptops and any other similar portable devices which are handy. In addition, mobile learning reduces inadequacy of learning location with the mobility of general portable devices.

MALL is a teaching and learning methodology that uses mobile phones or other handheld devices with some form of wireless connectivity, such as phones, PDAs and tablets, among others. O'Malley et al. (2003, p. 6) defined it as "any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not in a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies". It is considered a booming future trend, thanks to its ubiquity, which facilitates education anywhere and anytime, and the ever-increasing interest among the growing number of users of smart-phones and portable devices.

MALL is without any doubt the next step in the evolution of educational technology, reflecting the digital convergence of mobile technology and e-learning in response to a more dynamic society that seeks a personalized, lifelong and universal

education (Romero et al., 2010). It is, therefore, the educational technology of the new century, as it can provide frequent and comprehensive access to systems and applications that support formal and informal learning. It gives the learner the opportunity to control and to take advantage of the free time that most people have during a typical day: while travelling to and from work, having a lunch break, or waiting to see somebody. Learning spaces have departed from the traditional classroom and have expanded their horizons: it is now possible to learn at home connected to a virtual space, or even walking down the street with a virtual application that provides information added to the place that you are visiting, or to an object that you are looking at in real time. MALL also presents a number of very attractive features that prove very useful for universities and educational institutions and rewarding for the students, such as: ubiquity of access to information, resources, materials and educational content; flexibility which promotes independent and collaborative learning; interactivity, usability and efficiency which enhance the learning environment, develop professional skills and encourage learning.

IV. JOHNNY GRAMMAR WORD CHALLENGE

The description of the application in *itunes.apple.com* about *Johnny Grammar Word Challenge* is an application of questions about vocabulary, grammar and daily English spelling with different levels of participation. Johnny Grammar's Word Challenge is a quiz for English learners to test common vocabulary, spelling and grammar that appears in everyday English. The users must beat the clock and answer as many spelling, vocabulary and grammar questions as they can in this 60-second quiz! Main features:

- 3 levels - Easy, Medium, Hard
- 3 quiz categories – Words, Grammar, Spelling
- 10 common topics – Food & Restaurants, Travel, Small Talk, Hobbies etc.
- Earn badges as you play and share with others
- Compete with others on a global leaderboard
- Share your badges with others on a leaderboard
- Feedback provided on wrong answers to enhance your learning.

This top English learning app is created by The British Council. This app is appropriate for learners of all ages. It is a fun way to improve grammar because this application is such kind of a game app. It can be downloaded to our mobile to practice grammar everywhere and every time. This app strengthen my fundamental skills in English. It can not only correct the common mistake in grammar and spelling. Overall, it is a useful app and worthy spreading.

V. Action Research

The researcher discussed the research methodology used to collect the data which presented in several subdivisions; Research Design, Setting and Subject of Research, and Research Procedure.

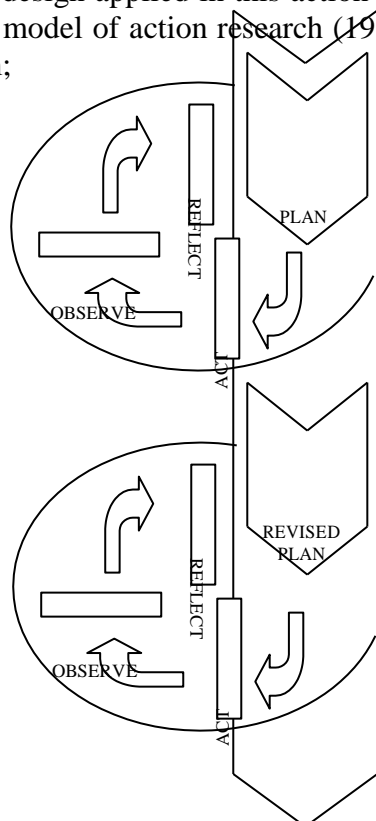
The research design employed in this study was the collaborative Action Research. This design was preferred and applied since it was very favorable in increasing the quality of

the process and outcome of teaching and learning. Kemmis and McTaggart in Kunandar (2008, p. 42) defined action research as follows:

Action research was a form of self –reflection inquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a)their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practice and (c) the situation in which the practices are carried out.

Through conducting steps in classroom action research, researchers could discover the solution for problems took place in their class by applied relevant theories and teaching techniques creatively.

The design applied in this action research was the design proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart's model of action research (1988) which could be seen at the following diagram, in spiral form;



Picture 3.1 Kemmis and Mc Taggart's model CAR

In Kemmis and Mc Taggart's model consist of;

- Planning
It developed action plan, the researcher explained about grammar simple past tense, and introduced Johnny Grammar Word Challenge for teaching and learning grammar.
- Acting
It applied the teaching of grammar and using Johnny Grammar Word Challenge application for learning process during the study.
- Observing

It had function to record the effect of learning grammar using Johnny Grammar Word Challenge. It uses observation checklist, interview sheet, test item, and field notes to record the activity of the respondent.

- Reflecting
It reflected about the result of teaching grammar using the application.

VI. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULT

The used of *Johnny Grammar Word Challenge* can improve the student's grammar ability especially simple past tense. It could be seen from the criteria of success from affective aspect had been reached. Psychomotor aspect, the students enjoyed giving positive response toward the use of application. Then, from cognitive aspect, the students had been able to determine the appropriate verb which was used in a past tense sentence, and improve their grammar ability in writing a good sentence

The result of interview sheet show the respondents have opinion that the use application of *Johnny Grammar Word Challenge* in learning grammar, especially simple past tense is very helpful in their understanding grammar. Therefore, they want to continue using this application in learning not only grammar but also vocabulary.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

English as foreign language in Indonesia gives its own difficulties to the learner since the sentence structure is different. Mobile Assisted Language Learning is one of learning method that can be used by anyone in case to overcome their problem in language learning. This paper has reviewed the use of *Johnny Grammar Word Challenge* to study English grammar in Junior High School grade. An action research was also carried out in this study, moreover the researchers used the design proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart's model consists of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

As a result, the following concluding remarks and recommendations can be recorded:

1. MALL has been proved to be an effective method in learning English.
2. Theory and practice in second language learning can be matched together by the use of modern technology.
3. Modern technical ways should be followed for effective learning and teaching of the second language.
4. English language teachers should encourage their students to use technology in developing the language skills.
5. *Johny Grammar Word Challenge* is a useful and helpful application to learn English grammar in an interesting way.

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