

## The Implementation of TPR (Total Physical Response) Method in English Vocabulary Learning of Young Learner

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to use the TPR method's efficacy in the process of teaching basic English vocabulary, especially for young learners. Total Physical Response encourages children's curiosity, creativity, and all of their senses, supporting their cognitive development. This research was conducted on 6 students at an elementary school in Kalijati, Subang. The students are grades 2 to 4 (7-10 years). The material taught to students is material about the Part of Body. Students will be taught to recognize vocabulary for body parts in English. This research used qualitative research where the research was conducted based on the actual conditions. This study found that students showed increased motivation and found it easier to remember vocabulary after involving the TPR method in the learning process. In addition, students enjoy more in following the teacher's orders and the whole learning process.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition is defined as the time when a person develops new linguistic or lexical associations in his or her brain (Iskandarwassid & Sunendar, 2009). Language acquisition happens at a young age or when a person learns their first language, often known as their mother tongue (Hashim & Yunus, 2018). Meanwhile, Language learning describes the procedures that take place when a new language is presented. It will be more successful to teach children a language spontaneously or through direct communication in the target language. All children have the mental capacity to communicate in a foreign language under normal circumstances, but grammatical structures, phonetic rules, an alphabet, and vocabulary must be developed first. The statement that "Children are naturally programmed for language and language develops in the same way that other biological functions develop" was made by (Lightbown & Spada, 1999), who quoted Chomsky (1959, p. 15). Children build social communication systems when playing games and socializing with peers. They do this by employing techniques including chuckling, laughing, body language, and facial expressions that facilitate communication between the learners. Long (1998) confirmed in her study that her

daughter acquired a second language while playing games with her peers in an engaged social milieu.

Learning vocabulary is an important stage of learning a language. The more words students know, the better they will be able to express themselves while speaking or writing as well as better understand what they hear and read. However, it does occasionally happen that children struggle to quickly and easily internalize the vocabulary. Therefore, the main goal of this study is to use the TPR method's efficacy in the process of teaching basic English vocabulary, especially for young learners.

The design of lessons that include physical activity is appropriate for teaching vocabulary to beginners, and techniques like James Asher's (1977) Total Physical Response (TPR), in which the learner responds physically to verbal commands, can be useful for teaching children English vocabulary, because they build social systems of communication by using their imagination, experimenting with ideas, developing kinesthesia, and feeling in control of their bodies. Total Physical Response encourages children's curiosity, creativity, and all of their senses, supporting their cognitive development. In addition to promoting the development of language and social skills including cooperation, negotiating, competing, and obeying rules, TPR helps kids use their physical and mental energy in a positive way. Students actually require vocabulary to support themselves in order to construct sentences that other people can understand. Because of this, learning vocabulary is crucial. *"If language structures are the framework of language, then vocabulary is the nit that provides the vital organs and the flesh,"* claims (Harmer, 2001, p. 246). The students should therefore increase their vocabulary in order to improve their ability to communicate with others. Furthermore, Aminudin (2009) cited Edge (1993, p. 27) when he said that *"the more vocabulary students learn, the more ideas they should have, so that they can communicate by using their ideas more effectively."* However, students occasionally struggle to put the vocabulary they have learned in earlier sessions to use. In order to achieve their goals, teachers should choose a proper technique. Aminudin (2009) thought that Total Physical Response (TPR) was a good way for kids to learn vocabulary. Similar to this, Asher (2009) described how some students learned Spanish while TPR watched them and carried out their orders.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a collection of methods developed by Dr. James J. Asher, a psychology professor at the State University of San Jose, with the aim of creating an effective way for language acquisition and teaching. The approach was developed under the assumption that when a second language is learned, it is internalized through a decoding process akin to how the first language develops. Before producing language, this process requires a lengthy period of comprehension and development. The hypothesis of TPR, according to Asher (1977), is that the human brain is innately predisposed to acquire any natural language through contact. Children internalize language, parents and children communicate using both verbal and kinesthetic skills, the child responds physically to the father's verbal commands, and the father's voice reinforces the child's responses in a positive way. The child learns the language without being able to speak it for several months. According to Vygotsky as cited in Brown (2000, p. 287), we have thus far determined the significance of the social context in the formation of language. Brown postulated the zone of proximal development, where learners construct the new language through socially mediated interaction. Social connection is crucial to the learning process. The internalization and decoding of messages take place during this time. After reaching this stage, the infant is able to spontaneously reproduce language, allowing them to mix words with gestures and body language to develop language proficiency. Kinesthesia can assist in this process of message internalization and assimilation by connecting words and actions. The researcher concurs

with Asher (1979, p. 10), who claims that *"the assimilation of information and skills can be significantly accelerated through the use of the kinesthetic sensory system"*.

In light of this, we believe that the relationship between the development of the motor system and the development of language serves as the fundamental foundation for learning a foreign language. The link between language and actions is a defining feature of TPR, according to (Asher, 1977, p. 11). The researcher observes that this approach incorporates the action stimulus response as support for learning, which is closely related to behaviorist psychology, according to which any physical activity is a behavior. *"The two very important concepts in TPR are the notion of Total Physical Response involvement and the role played by the right hemisphere of the brain in learning a second language by action,"* Octaviany (2007) quoted Garcia (2001, pp. 15) as saying. According to Asher (1977, p. 12), learning a foreign language by action occurs in the right acts, as opposed to audiolingual techniques, which concentrate on using the left hemisphere. The left and right hemispheres of the brain are separate structures. This was demonstrated in the neurological studies that Asher mentions, in which cat brains and the corpus callosum of a child with epilepsy whose brain was surgically divided were analyzed. The findings of these studies show that the brain is divided into two hemispheres, each of which has distinct functions. TPR was designed with right-brain learning in mind by Asher. The majority of second language instruction techniques focus on left-brain learning.

Many authors have contributed to the TPR goals. There is general agreement among researchers that TPR teachers value their students' enjoyment of the process of learning a foreign language. The general goals of Total Response, according to Richard and Rodgers (1986:91), "are to teach speech proficiency at a beginning level. Understanding is a means to an end, and the final goal is to impart fundamental speaking abilities. TPR strives to generate students who can communicate freely in a way that a native speaker could understand. It is necessary to establish an appropriate approach or technique for the students to achieve academic development. TPR was created to enhance the outcomes of the teaching-learning process of a second language, particularly when teaching young learners.

The basic goals of TPR, as stated and summed up by many academics, are as follows: TPR improves speaking and listening abilities at the beginner level. Oral production is not prioritized over hearing and bodily reaction abilities. Expressing oneself verbally through comprehension. When they are ready or confident enough to communicate spontaneously, they are not compelled to do so. Over other language components, grammar and vocabulary are prioritized. There is a preference for spoken language over written language. Students "act" in reaction to the teacher's directions as well. The teacher is the play's director, and the students are its actors (Asher, 1977, p. 21).

The vocabulary serves as a language's foundation. As a result, when students are just starting out, teaching English vocabulary takes precedence. Words that people need to know in order to communicate successfully include those used in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and listening (receptive vocabulary). According to Hornby (1995), vocabulary is *"a list of words with their meanings; vocabulary is the total number of words in a language."* The terms we teach in the foreign language are a crude definition of vocabulary, according to Ur (1998). The post office and mother-in-law are two examples of new vocabulary items that are made up of two or three words yet only communicate one idea, respectively. A helpful approach is to refer to vocabulary *"items"* rather than *"words"* in order to encompass all such situations. There are various approaches to teaching the students the terminology. According to research, our *"mental lexicon"* is extremely efficient and well-organized, and elements that

are semantically linked are kept together. Consequently, classifying vocabulary words into semantic categories (lexical set). One of the best methods to introduce it is through topics (like body parts, for instance). Synonymy (using words with similar meanings) and antonymy (using words with opposite meanings) are two other ways to relate vocabulary. The use of images in vocabulary instruction is one of the most fascinating techniques. Pictures are important because they enable students to connect words and images, and they are beneficial for those with strong visual memories. Thinking map instruction is the other alternate method for teaching vocabulary. When using graphics to illustrate the words is challenging, this tactic is helpful. It is yet another approach to classify and arrange language according to a certain subject.

## **2. METHOD**

This research used qualitative research where the research was conducted based on the actual conditions. Qualitative research is a research process that is conducted naturally based on the objective conditions without any manipulation (Arifin, 2011). This research was conducted on 6 students at an elementary school in Kalijati, Subang. The students are grades 2 to 4 (7-10 years). The data presented in this article is the result of trial data on the application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method to see the acquisition of children's English vocabulary. The English vocabulary which taught in this article is a vocabulary that is commonly heard and used by children in daily life. This is based on the previous research which conducted by (Spencer, Goldstein, & Kaminski, 2012) where teachers can choose a theme in teaching vocabulary, for example the names of objects contained in the classroom or school environment which used by children in communication. The implementation of the method was conducted in one meeting, for 15 minutes. The implementation of the method is conducted by using games. All children participate in activities by following physical activities related to the commands.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

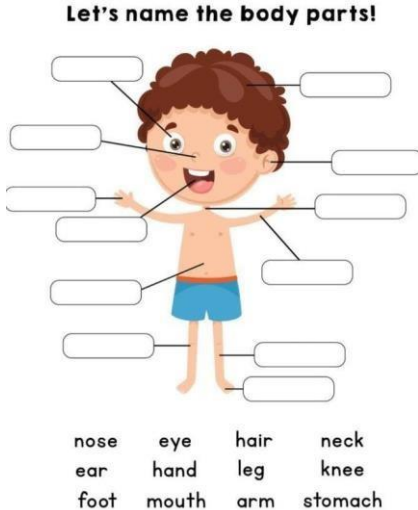
The material taught to students is material about the Part of Body. Students will be taught to recognize vocabulary for body parts in English. The class begins with the first activity, namely singing the song "good morning" with the teacher's command "I will sing a song, then follow me!" Then the students obey the teacher's orders by joining in singing the song with body movements. Singing this song aims to build student enthusiasm before learning takes place. As revealed by Paquette & Rieg, 2008, singing in class creates a positive and motivating learning atmosphere.

In the second activity the teacher began to introduce Part of Body to students by combining it with the TPR method. The teacher says "Hold your hair!" Then the students carry out the teacher's orders by holding their hair. Then the teacher asked "What is hair in English, does anyone know?" no students answered, then the teacher told, "The English word for hair is hair". Furthermore, the teacher asked the students to hold their heads, then asked "what is the English head" then the students answered "head". The teacher does the same thing when introducing other Part of Body vocabulary in the same way, by asking students to hold their body parts and say it in English. In this activity students still seem embarrassed to follow the teacher's orders, but this activity is carried out repeatedly until students can remember and mention vocabulary about the Part of Body by themselves. This means that students do listening activities first, before they develop speaking skills. This is one of the methods of TPR, namely the Natural Method. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) explain Asher's thoughts on Total Physical Response in their book. TPR is the Natural Method because Asher sees first and second language learning as a parallel process. Asher sees three processes as central, namely (1)

children develop listening competence before they develop the ability to speak. In the early stages of mastering the first language, they can understand complex utterances that they cannot produce or imitate spontaneously, (2) children's ability to listen is acquired because children are required to physically respond to spoken language in the form of parental orders, and (3) once the foundation in listening has been formed, speech will develop naturally.

Next is the third activity. The teacher invites students to sing the song "Head, Shoulder, Knees and Toes". Then the students sing it with the movements of holding Head, Shoulder, Knees and Toes following the song. Involving songs and physical activity in learning using the TPR method is the right choice. The physical aspect of the TPR learning process makes it possible to integrate physical exercise and play into song teaching in a natural way and to enhance children's physical activity and engagement outside the classroom, contributing not only to their linguistics, but also to their physical and movement development. In the process of teaching and learning English, the use of TPR involves movements that students can actively do in class. In teaching, the teacher can use songs, stories, or games in which there are instructions so that students can carry out these instructions and perform an action. The teacher acts as a parent who conveys messages to their children. In this activity students show increased motivation and begin to enjoy the learning process. A method that involves physical activity and gestures in the learning process (Nuraeningsih & Russiana, 2016). Besides improving students' motivation in learning, the activity that has a physical movement can also improve their memory (Mohammadian & Dolatabadi, 2016), and make the students become faster and easier in learning vocabulary (Sariyati, 2013).

In the next activity, it will be easier for students to remember the Part of Body. The teacher gives the game with instructions, students must fill in the correct part of the body in the white box that is connected to the Part of Body image. (Picture 1)



Picture 1.

The first student gives the correct answer "mouth" to the arrow connected to the mouth picture. Then other students followed the first student wanting to try to fill in the white box enthusiastically and enjoy the learning process even more. This is because the game is one of the fun methods of TPR which can make the learning atmosphere more fun and lighten the mood.

**4. CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study was to find out how students responded after the teacher implemented the TPR method in learning vocabulary. Learning vocabulary is an important stage in learning a language. The more words students know, the better they can express themselves when speaking or writing and better understand what they hear and read. However, it is often difficult for children to remember and pronounce vocabulary quickly and easily. TPR is the right method for teaching vocabulary to young learners. TPR is a fun method that involves physical activity and instruction. Implementation of TPR can be in the form of songs, games or role plays. This study found that students showed increased motivation and found it easier to remember vocabulary after involving the TPR method in the learning process. In addition, students enjoy more in following the teacher's orders and the whole learning process.

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