

## ENHANCING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY THROUGH TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Hanifah Ayu Retnoningsih, Suparno, Ellisa Indriyani Putri Handayani

English Education Department  
Teacher Training and Education Faculty  
Sebelas Maret University of Surakarta

Email:hanifah.ayu14@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** This article is aimed to describe whether Total Physical Response can enhance the students' vocabulary mastery and the students' attention during the implementation of Total Physical Response. The Classroom Action Research is adopted as the research design. The data were collected by conducting observation, interview, test and making field notes. The qualitative data were analyzed by Miles and Huberman's method namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were analyzed by using non-independent t-test and simple statistical method. Based on the data collected from 32 students of one elementary schools in Surakarta in the academic year of 2017/2018, the findings show that the implementation of Total Physical Response can enhance the students' vocabulary mastery and there are active students in the classroom during the implementation of Total Physical Response.

**Keywords:** *action research, students' attention, vocabulary mastery, total physical response*

### INTRODUCTION

This research is conducted based on the importance of mastering English vocabulary for students. It is considered to the first thing to learn and the first step to do because it is regarded the important element that will be the basic competence in order to get other competencies like listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Richards and Schmidt in Canale and Swain (1996: 5), stated that vocabulary is a knowledge that must be learned by students to enable them to speak English communicatively. As the basic component of any languages, vocabulary must be learned by the students as early as possible. Having adequate vocabulary helps the students to express their ideas fluently and effectively in speaking.

Unfortunately, the result of pre-research observation showed that the

students had lack of vocabulary mastery. It was affected by some aspects from the students and the teacher. From the students' aspect, the students have difficulties to write and also pronounce words correctly. besides, they found it difficult to memorize the words meaning since English was new for them. Moreover, the students easily got bored and seemed unhappy to learn a number of vocabularies. They preferred to talk to their friends or asked the teacher to play a film or did some games when they felt the lesson did not attract them. Meanwhile, from the teacher aspect, she taught the students with drilling method in teaching vocabulary. The teacher asked the students to memorize a long list of words written on the whiteboard. Thus, the researcher proposed a solution by implementing Total Physical Response in order to overcome the problem. TPR is

extremely useful and adaptable as a teaching technique, especially for beginner classes (Phillips, 1996: 19). Therefore, it is expected that the students' vocabulary mastery will enhance after implementing Total Physical Response.

This research considered the following research questions:

1. Can Total Physical Response enhance the vocabulary mastery of the second-grade students?
2. Can Total Physical Response improve the students' attention in vocabulary learning process?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Some literature reviews related to this research are presented as follows:

### Vocabulary Mastery

Hatch and Brown (1995: 1) stated that vocabulary is a list or set of words for a particular language or a list of words that individual speakers of language might use. According to Ur (1998: 60) vocabulary can be defined as the words that are taught in a foreign language.

Burns and Betty (1975: 295) proposed vocabulary from the general point of view. They say that vocabulary may define as the stock of words used by a person, class, or profession. The most basic of this vocabulary is often designated as listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Meanwhile, Schmitt et al (1997: 40) argued that vocabulary is a basis of a language that is very important to be mastered first. People cannot speak and understand the language well if people do not master it. He added that no matter how successfully the sound of the foreign language is mastered, without words to express the wider range of meanings, communication in a foreign language just cannot happen in any meaningful way.

Vocabulary Mastery is concluded as a series of words with their mean which is taught in foreign language classes and used by individual speakers, class, or professions in the form of written or spoken unit.

There are some components of the vocabulary mastery. Based on Brown, D. (2004: 83), Nation (2001: 27), Harmer (1990), and Penny, Ur (1998: 60), the components of speaking skills are (1) Form; (2) Meaning; and (3) Use.

### Total Physical Response

Various experts such as Asher in Richards and Rogers (2001), Vale and Feunteun (1998), Brumfit (1995), and Brown (1994) have their own definition in total physical response. They are presented as follows:

Asher in Richards and Rogers (2001: 73) stated that Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action; it attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity.

Another expert Vale and Feunteun (1998: 39) described Total Physical Response as a method that is based on a short sequence of instruction or descriptions which are acted out, involving lots of physical response.

Brumfit (1997: 6) stated that they believed that TPR is one means of providing an input rich in directives. Supporting Brumfit's statement Asher in Lasher-Freeman (2000: 108) also stated that the fastest, least stressful way to achieve an understanding of any target language is to follow directions uttered by the instructor.

In line with those arguments above, Brown (1994: 30) also argues that the TPR classroom was one in which students did a great deal of listening and acting.

Asher in Richard and Rogers (2001: 77-78), there are three steps inside the

activities of Total Physical Response. They are :

**Review**

The teacher reviewed the previous learning material or asked the students to mention what they have already known about the material.

**New Commands**

The students are introduced by the new vocabularies related to the learning material and did question answer with the teacher.

**Role Reversal**

In this stage, the students are prepared to volunteer in giving commands orally to other students.

**Reading and Writing**

In this stage, the teacher listed the new vocabularies on the whiteboard and giving the sentences as the examples. Then, the teacher pronounces the words and asks the students to listen and copy the words.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

**The Subject of The Research**

The subject of this research included 32 students of the second grade of one of the elementary school in Surakarta, consisting of 19 male and 13 female students in the academic year of 2017/2018. The research was conducted from January 10<sup>th</sup> up to February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

**The Procedures of The Research**

In this research, A classroom action research of Lewin's model (Tomal, 2003: 11) was used as the research design. The procedures were; (1) The Problem-Solving Segment; (2) Action Planning; (3) Taking Action; and (4) Evaluation and Follow Up. On the step of taking action, the researcher implemented the procedure of Total Physical Response based on. The procedures namely; (1) Review; (2) New Commands; (3) Role Reversal; and (4) Reading and Writing.

**The Technique of Collecting Data**

In collecting the data, the researcher collected two types of data, namely qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data were collected from the score of the students' score while the qualitative data were collected from the description of the students' attention, and the interview. The quantitative data was obtained by conducting two tests; pre-test and post-test. While qualitative data was obtained by conducting observation and surveys.

**The Technique of Analyzing Data**

To analyze the quantitative data, the researcher used a simple statistical formula. Meanwhile, the qualitative data were analyzed by using Miles and Huberman's method (Miles and Huberman 1984: 21-22) namely: (1) Data Reduction; (2) Data Display; (3) Conclusion Drawing.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Before conducting the research, the researcher conducted pre-research first by conducting pre-observation and pre-test in the classroom. Based on the pre-observation, there were some problems found as the researcher stated before in the introduction. In addition, the students had the problem in vocabulary mastery which could be seen from their pre-test score. Their mean score of pre-test was 68. Based on the problem found on pre-research, the researcher decided to implement Total Physical Response. In conducting the research, there were two cycles. Each cycle consisted of three meetings. Post-test was conducted in the third meeting of each cycle.

**Cycle 1**

The learning material of the first cycle was about mentioning things inside bedroom and bathroom. The learning

material was taken from the internet and the English textbook.

On the very first meeting, the researcher gave the students to play a game called head and shoulder. The students enjoyed the game, it can be seen by some students kept laughing and clapping during the game.

In the review stage, the researcher introduced the material by talking about things in bedroom and bathroom.

Then, in the new command stage, the researcher conducted the students by giving new commands to point or show the picture of things inside bedroom and bathroom on the whiteboard. It was followed by the translation in Bahasa.

Meanwhile, for the role reversal stage, one of the students was asked by the researcher to come in front of the class to give a command to the other students orally. The researcher helped her by giving a model first before she gave a command to the other students.

In the last stage, reading and writing, the researcher wrote the vocabulary beside the picture which stacked on the whiteboard. Then, the researcher did the pronunciation drill by speaking the correct pronunciation of the vocabulary and asking the students to repeat after her. Next, the students were asked to copy the vocabulary into their own book.

The learning material of the second meeting of the first cycle was about kind of professions. The learning material was taken from the internet and the English textbook.

In the second meeting of cycle 1, the researcher gave the students a game. The game was called as the opposite. The researcher gave one vocabulary and they said the opposite of that word.

In the review stage, the researcher asked the students to mention kind of professions that they have known before.

Then, in the new command stage, the researcher conducted the students by giving new commands to point or show the picture of professions on the whiteboard.

Meanwhile, for the role reversal stage, one of the students was asked by the researcher to come in front of the class to give a command to the other students orally. The researcher helped her by giving a model first before she gave a command to the other students.

In the last stage, reading and writing, the researcher wrote the command sentences on the whiteboard while the students copied only the words that were underline in their book.

The result in cycle 1 showed that there was an improvement in the students' vocabulary mastery compared to the mean score in pre-test and post-test. The mean score of pre-test as 68 became 86 in post-test. After being calculated using a non-independent t-test, the result was  $t_o = 4.809$ . The computation showed a difference level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$  with N-1 (31) has  $t_t = 1.698$ , that  $t_o > t_t$ . Therefore, the students' vocabulary mastery increased.

The improvement also can be seen by each indicator of vocabulary. The first indicator is the form; it increased from 2.0 in the pre-test became 2.5 in the post-test 1. The next indicator is meaning. Based on the result of pre-test, the average score was 3.7. In the first post-test, the average score improved became 4.5. Meanwhile, the indicator of use, the average score on the pre-test was 1.1. In the first post-test, the average score improved became 1.6.

Although all of the indicators of vocabulary mastery improved, but there were some weaknesses namely: (1) Some students still got low score in their test; the lowest score in the post-test 1 was 60; (2) Some students still had difficulty to make the commands; (3) Most of the students still

did not have confidence to give the commands to the other students; (4) Most of the students had short attention and memory in learning vocabulary. (5) Students were not willing to speak English during the lesson; and (6) The classroom situation was not conducive because some students were still screaming, running, fighting, and crying during the lesson.

Meanwhile, there are positive results in cycle 1 namely: (1) Students' vocabulary mastery achievement improved, their mean score of post-test 1 increased to 86; (2) The mean score of each aspect of vocabulary also improved; (3) Students began to know how to pronounce and spell the words correctly; (4) Most students could use the words easier; (5) Most students could understand the meaning of the words; (6) Most students were starting to engaged with the lesson

According to the result in the first cycle, the English teacher gave the researcher some revisions in conducting the second cycle to eliminate the weaknesses happened in the first cycle. The revisions were as follows: (1) Giving more chances to students to create commands for the other students; (2) Managing the noisy students; (3) Making maximum use of the allocated time; (4) Adding some activities such as demonstrating the words.

## **Cycle 2**

The learning material of the first meeting of the second cycle was about mentioning kind of vehicles. The learning material was taken from the internet and the English textbook.

In review stage, the researcher started the lesson by giving the students review the previous material. After that, the researcher explained the topic about vehicles.

In new command stage, the researcher conducted the students to do

some commands. She gave commands to point each picture of kind of vehicles. It followed by the students as well. Then, the researcher loudly mentioned and acted each new vocabulary with movements and asked the students to imitate her.

Meanwhile, for the role reversal stage, the researcher pointed the picture and asked the students to stated and demonstrated the vocabulary by themselves. The researcher continued the stage by asking one of the students as a volunteer to come to the front of the class to point the picture while the other students stated and demonstrated the vocabulary.

In the last stage, reading and writing, the researcher wrote the vocabulary beside the picture which stacked on the whiteboard. After that, the students copied those kinds of vocabulary on their own book.

The learning material of the second meeting of the second cycle was about kind of activities. The learning material was taken from the internet and the English textbook.

In the second meeting of cycle 2, the researcher gave the students a game. the researcher started the lesson, she gave an ice-breaking to boost the students' mood for learning. She gave the students a game called nose and ears.

In review stage, the researcher asked the students to mention kind of activities that they have known before.

In new command stage, the researcher conducted the students to do some commands. She gave commands to point each picture of kind of activities. It followed by the students as well. Then, the researcher loudly mentioned and acted each new vocabulary with movements and asked the students to imitate her.

Meanwhile, for the role reversal stage, the researcher point the picture and asked the students to stated and

demonstrated the vocabulary by themselves. The researcher continued the stage by asking one of the students as a volunteer to come to the front of the class to point the picture while the other students stated and demonstrated the vocabulary.

In the last stage, reading and writing, the researcher wrote the vocabulary beside the picture which stacked on the whiteboard. After that, the students copied those kinds of vocabulary on their own book.

Based on the result in the second cycle, the students' vocabulary mastery showed improvement comparing to the first post-test. The mean score of post-test 1 as 86 became 90 in post-test 2. After being calculated using a non-independent t-test, the result is  $t_o = 5,188$ . The computations shows a difference level of significance  $\alpha = 0.05$  with N-1 (31) has  $t_t = 1.698$ . It could be said that  $t_o > t_t$ . Therefore, the students' vocabulary mastery increased significantly.

The improvement also can be seen by each indicator of vocabulary. The first indicator is the form; it increased from 2.5 in the post-test 1 became 2.5 in the post-test 2. The next indicator is meaning. Based on the result of post-test 1, the average score was 4.5. In the second post-test, the average score improved became 4.7. Meanwhile, the indicator of use, the average score on the pre-test was 1.6. In the first post-test, the average score improved became 1.7.

Meanwhile, for the students' attention, the findings showed improvement as well. After conducting this research, the students became less noisy and gave a full attention to the researcher's explanation during teaching-learning process. The students were also willing to speak English in the lesson. Those indicated that they became active learners.

The discussion was focused on the implementation of Total Physical Response and its' impact on the vocabulary mastery

and the students' attention. Based on the research findings, there were some points that could be taken. First, Total Physical Response can improve vocabulary mastery. Before the method was conducted, the students found it difficult to remember the meaning of English word. It can be seen from the number of mistakes from pre-test. As reported on reflection, the result of the test showed their ability improves from cycle to cycle. After implementing Total Physical Response, the students easily remembered the vocabulary.

It is proven by the theory from Larsen and Freeman (2000: 111) about understanding the new vocabulary became easier if they use the body while they are learning is true. The use of body gesture can be done all the time such as pointing at or showing pictures with their hands. They were also demonstrating the vocabulary repeatedly. Those kinds of activities could make the students understand the meaning more easily.

In line with the statements above, Ytreberg (2000: 1) said that the students' understanding comes through hands and eyes, and ears. The physical world is dominant all times.

Larsen and Freeman (2000: 111) stated that by using response learners' memory is activated. As found in this research, the students respond to the teacher's commands by pointing at the picture. The students also can make new simple commands by themselves.

Furthermore, the concept or repetition at TPR as stated by Asher in Scott and Lisbeth (2000: 1) is in line with common knowledge that children learn better and faster than adults but children have short-term attention and memory. It means that they are able to store the items of information for short period time. That is the

reason why repetition is crucial at TPR. In this research, materials are given repeatedly.

On the second stage, the researcher gave the commands to point, show, or take the picture. This stage was repeatedly done until all the words were given. Afterward, the students did the third and last stage by demonstrating the vocabulary or by making new commands by themselves. Sum up, it is easier for the students to recall the words they have learned if it were done repetitively and use their body to learn.

Asher in Richard and Rogers (2001: 73) states that Total Physical Response is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action. This statement supports the result of the research that TPR improve students' spelling and pronunciation skills. The students are better at pronouncing and spelling the words than before the research. In this research, the students practice to pronounce and spell the word during the TPR by doing the commands repetitively, pronouncing and demonstrating the words clearly and loudly, and reading and writing the words at the end of the TPR stage.

The next point is that Total Physical Response also made the students paid full attention during the teaching and learning process and also made the teaching and learning process more effective which is in line with Larsen and Freeman (2000) that language learning is more effective when it is fun.

The statement before is in line with the implementation of TPR. In this action research, the students were happy and paid full attention because the class was fun. The students moved their body, they were also pointing and showing the picture based on the commands given. The class was conducive when the students were demonstrating the vocabularies and loudly pronounce them. The students were being

excited and laughing much during the learning activity.

Sariyati (2013) said on her research entitled "The Effectiveness of TPR Method in English Vocabulary mastery of Elementary School Children" that TPR method can motivate the children to be interested in learning English vocabulary, as it is entertaining them.

It is proven in this research by their being happy, enthusiastic, and laughing much during the learning activity. As found in this research, the students always laugh when they were demonstrating new words. The students could pay attention during the teaching and learning process because they were interested. The students were also more active by commanding their friends in front of the class without being shy or bored during the teaching and learning process.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the research findings, it can be obtained some implications. First, Total Physical Response can be used to enhance the students' vocabulary mastery. The various activities done in the classroom can train not only the students' vocabulary mastery but also the other English skills. Second, the various activities done by the students such as speaking activity, commanding activity, acting activity, and doing games make the students have the different learning experience and also make the students have many opportunities in using the target language communicatively. The other important point is that to implement Total Physical Response, the teacher can use as many as learning media and sources to support learning which is suitable for the students' needs. It gives additional learning sources to the students besides textbooks.

Regarding the problems happened during the research, Total Physical Response

can be a solution to those problems. But, to make it has the more effective impact, the teacher should consider his ability in managing the classroom and using the variety of learning sources for the students.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the result of the research, the researcher concluded that Total Physical Response (TPR) can be used as the technique to improve the students' vocabulary mastery and the quality of the teaching-learning process. The result of the final test shows that there was a significant progress on the students' achievement in doing vocabulary test after the research was conducted.

In addition, the teaching and learning activity was livelier than that before the research. The students were more active in joining the lesson, as could be seen in the result of the observation conducted by the researcher. Moreover, Total Physical Response also brings the positive environment to the classroom. It is proven in this research by their behavior of being happy, enthusiastic, and laughing much during the learning activity.

The suggestions based on the research findings are as follows: (1) For English teachers. It is important to identify the best way to improve the students' motivation in learning English because this is as the key of success in the teaching-learning process. The English teacher should make the situation of the instructional process interesting, in order that the students are eager to improve their English vocabulary mastery. In using Total Physical Response to each student, the teacher must follow the suggested steps in TPR to get optimal results. (2) To the students. Learning English as a foreign language is not something difficult if the students have the motivation to learn it. The students can

learn English not only the class but also everywhere, such as English course. Therefore, the students should always be active in learning English. (3) For other researchers. This study is just one of the efforts in increasing the students' motivation and achievement, so the researcher hopes that the finding of this study will be used as a starting point of the future researchers on similar problems. There are many other techniques of teaching English of elementary school that can be taken as an object of research to find out the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary especially to young learner can be reached.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brown, Douglas H. (1994). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Regent.
- Brown, Douglas. 2004. *Language Assessment Principles and Classroom Practice*. Longman: United State of America.
- Brumfit, Christopher Moor. and Jayne, Tongue Ray. (1995). *Teaching English to Children*. New York: Longman Group.
- Burns, Paul C and Betty, L. Broman. (1975). *The Language Arts in Childhood Education*. Chicago: Rand Mc. Nally College Publishing Company.
- Harmer, Jeremy. (1998). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. United Kindom: Pearson Education Limited.
- Hatch, Evelyn and Brown, Cheryl. (1995). *Vocabulary, Semantics, and Language Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Larsen, Diane and Freeman. (2000). *Technique and Principles in Language*



- Teaching Second Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nation, I. S. P. (1990). *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary (Teaching Methods)*. United States of America: Heinle ELT.
- Penny, Ur. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. Cambridge University Press
- Richards, Jack C and Rodgers, Theodore S. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching: Second Edition*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Sariyati, Ice. (2013). *The Effectiveness of TPR (Total Physical Response) Method in English Vocabulary*
- Mastery of Elementary School Children. Parole*, 3 (1): 50-64.
- Schmit, Norbet and McCharthy, Michael. 1997. *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition, and Pedagogy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scott, Wendy A. and Lisbeth H, Ytreberg. (2000). *Teaching English to Children*. New York:Longman Inc.
- Tomal, Daniel. R. (2003). *Action Research for Educators*. United States of America: Scarecrow Press.Inc.
- Vale, David and Feunteun, Anne. (1998). *Teaching Children English: Training Course for Teachers of English to Children*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.