

## Article

## Implementing the TPR method to assist young learners enhance their English vocabulary

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**Abstract.** The current research is aimed at boosting young learners' English vocabulary proficiency. It was created to investigate the use of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in the context of enhancing young learners' English vocabulary. The goal of this study was to see if there were any significant differences in students' vocabulary mastery success before and after using the TPR approach. To achieve the research purpose, a pre-experimental design was used. The sample included 32 first-graders from SMP N 1 Kendal. Data was collected using pre- and post-tests that included multiple-choice, matching, and translating questions. The data was then analyzed in SPSS using the t-test method to calculate the value of the t-test and t-table, which were used to assess whether there was a significant improvement in students' vocabulary before and after TPR

application. The data analysis of the learners' pre-test revealed that they lacked vocabulary. On the other hand, after using the TPR method, students' scores improved. The students' post-test results topped 100 points. It was higher than the pre-test score of around 65 points. When calculated with equations, the t-test result was 9,594. Meanwhile, the t-table at the 5% level of significance was 2.04. The results show that the t-test was greater than the t-table. It shows a significant improvement in kids' vocabulary mastery following TPR therapy. One of the most important aspects influencing the students' progress was their motivation for teaching the learning process through Total Physical Response. Based on the information, the researcher concluded that TPR helps students learn vocabulary.

**Keywords:** *Implementing; TPR; Vocabulary; Young learners*

## Introduction

Language is a fundamental component utilized by humans to communicate with others in everyday life. People are born with the intrinsic aptitude to learn any language. Since then, they have experienced both first and second language learning. First language acquisition refers to what people learn in their mother tongue, whereas second language acquisition refers to other languages that people learn alongside their home language, such as English as a foreign language in Indonesia. English is taught at almost every educational level in Indonesia. It becomes a major subject that must be learnt. According to Brown (2008), English is a foreign language that is studied for a specific purpose. Since English has become a foreign language in Indonesia, young learners should be competent in acquiring it.

People's vocabulary is the collection of words they produce. According to Arindi Cahyaning Rahayu (2021), vocabulary is the first item that a teacher teaches to students in order for them to learn how to build sentences in spoken or written form for communication purposes. Knowing the language allows people to communicate effectively with others in their daily lives. According to George D. Spache (1964), vocabulary is something that people hear,

understand, and utilize both verbally and in writing. Vocabulary is widely regarded as an essential component of language learning. Mohammadinejad, Nikdel, and Oroujlou (2012) defined vocabulary as the most important item to learn. When people cease learning vocabulary, they face difficulties in learning languages. On the other side, Kufashi stated that if learners do not grasp their vocabulary, they will struggle to understand the four abilities of language learning: hearing, speaking, reading, and writing.

As a result, as English teachers, we must provide engaging learning experiences for our students. According to Baleghizadeh and Ashoori (2011), one of the most common issues teachers have when teaching English is not using the appropriate method. As a result, in order to successfully teach English, students, particularly young learners, need be properly exposed to the appropriate approach and instructional materials. Students who are not exposed to appropriate media and methods will struggle to master language.

Some students believe that English is a tough language to understand. As a result, kids are less motivated to learn English. For this reason, teaching English should be enjoyable, relevant, repetitive, and understandable. The Total Physical Response approach, sometimes known as TPR, encourages students to be prepared to learn English at a higher educational level. TPR incorporates physical movement that is based on speech and action synchronization (Dorothy Grant Henning, 1986). By implementing TPR, students are anticipated to enjoy the teaching and learning process.

Based on the foregoing, the researchers established the following study objectives: to determine the results of students' English vocabulary mastery at SMP N 1 Kendal before and after applying the TPR method; and to determine the significant differences between students' English vocabulary mastery at SMP N 1 Kendal before and after applying the TPR method.

## **Related Theory**

Vocabulary can be characterized as an essential component of learning a new language. According to Barnhat (2008), vocabulary is a collection of words with determined meanings. A strong command of vocabulary allows students to write quickly, understand what they read and hear, and speak clearly. They can also grasp the terms, utilize them correctly, and demonstrate the ability to employ them. According to Jackson (2000), vocabulary is a collection of words that a person understands in everyday situations. People will find it easier to receive information from others. Several definitions are required when learning vocabulary. People can recall more regularly and use new words into their actions. Penny Ur (1996) claimed that vocabulary, in addition to structure and pronunciation, is the most significant feature of language. It can also be defined as the collection of vocabulary taught in a foreign language.

According to the statements and definitions provided by the experts above, vocabulary is a fundamental component that must be studied in order to understand a language and communicate effectively with others.

Learning language is particularly difficult for young learners. It is due to a large number of word variations. On the other hand, mastering vocabulary is essential in language. When the teaching-learning process occurs in the classroom, teachers encounter a number of issues, including a lack of knowledge on how to create an interesting class, which leads to students being bored with the class. Currently, teaching vocabulary may be difficult since teachers are confused where to begin (Berne & Blachowicz, 2008). The teacher should create resources that start with the technique and methodology.

As a result, teachers must remember that teaching vocabulary to young students is not the same as teaching vocabulary to adults. Young learners have the traits of wanting an interesting and enjoyable class. In this scenario, a suitable approach should be carefully implemented in order to achieve the optimum language teaching goal.

TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) AND HOW TO APPLY IT IN THE CLASSROOM

Dr. James J Asher, a psychology professor at the University of San Jose State in California, first proposed Total Physical Response in the 1960s. TPR assumes that when students participate in a learning activity, they will understand it effortlessly. We know that youngsters enjoy moving, thus learning a language should involve physical movement (Asher, 2012). Children will remember what they learn better if it is tied to a game, intriguing photographs, or other enjoyable approaches. The principle behind TPR is that humans can learn any language. It may be seen when we look at how babies internalize their first language. A youngster reacts physically to what their surroundings indicate. According to Richards and Rogers (1986:87), TPR is an approach that requires collaboration between voice and action. They work together to create a physical movement.

According to the remarks above, the objective behind the TPR method is that students hear something from the teacher and then respond physically to it. It will prepare the students to learn with open hearts. They will be excited because we know that children enjoy moving around and become bored quickly. TPR is based on how toddlers learn their first language. TPR assumed in this case that a person learns best when he or she can relate to and comprehend what is heard (Haynes, 2004; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Linse, 2005).

TPR proposes that humans can learn the world's natural languages. This process can be seen by monitoring how babies internalize their first language. A youngster reacts physically to what their surroundings indicate. In this scenario, the teacher attempts to replicate the process in the classroom using the TPR method. TPR is supposed to help students remember more of what they study. According to Muhren (2003), TPR is a method that requires a simple basic methodology to be used. TPR is an activity that follows the teacher's instructions. The teacher has rules in place to decide which students will become models. The command is easy at first, but becomes more difficult over time.

As a result, the teacher's major role is to help students become involved in classroom activities, as TPR's fundamental function in the classroom is to engage students. They will self-learn and get actively involved in the material. TPR can be utilized in the classroom to teach themes such as vocabulary, imperative words, and story-telling; when story-telling activities are involved, the process becomes more important. The crowd interacted with the presenter (Ardini, 2019). As with TPR, there is collaboration between the educator and the audience.

There are several stages that teachers might go through when teaching the learning process using TPR. First, the teacher distributes the material to the students; this is the material that they will learn, and it is appropriate for the TPR approach. The teacher then engages in direct physical actions, such as giving students instructions. Students at this stage only need to listen, watch, and try to understand what the teacher is saying (Wang Yiming, 2004). In the second level, the teacher gives the students commands. Both the teacher and the students take action in response to what the teacher says. Third, the teacher instructs the students without doing anything. In the last level, students instruct other students and complete the actions independently.

## **Methodology**

The current study employed quantitative research methods. The method's implementation was based on an experimental design. Experimental design refers to study that directly affects variables. It is intended to demonstrate the causality of numerous problems. According to Donald Ary (2002), experimental inquiry starts with a hypothesis. It is a forecast indicating that the therapy will produce a different result. As a result, this study was divided into two parts: pre-experimental and experimental research. It was to define the outcomes of a group before and after the treatment was performed. The demographic included

first-grade kids from SMP N 1 Kendal. This study's sample comprised of all 32 students in the VII G class. The researcher employed tests as a tool in this study. The data was collected using three processes: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. There was a pre-test before beginning treatment, so the results may be compared between the students' conditions before and after treatment. Each test contained 20 items divided into three categories: multiple choice, matching, and translating questions. To determine the result of a significant difference, it employed the t-test formula to collect data, which was manually calculated and analyzed statistically. The researcher utilized the following formula:

$$t = \frac{M_{po} - M_{pr}}{\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma b^2}{N(N-1)}}$$

## Results and Discussion

The primary goal of this study was to see if the Total Physical Response (TPR) method made a substantial improvement in the mastery of English vocabulary among first-grade students at SMP N 1 Kendal. The documentation, pre-test, and post-test findings provided the supporting data for this research. There will also be an explanation of how students perceive the TPR method for vocabulary development in the classroom. The documentation was used to obtain the supporting information. It included the names of the respondents and the teacher's lesson plan. Students were given a pre-test to assess their understanding of English vocabulary. After some time, they received treatment using the Total Physical Response approach. Following their treatment, the kids were given a post-test. Therefore, after receiving the results of the pre-test and post-test, the outcomes are described as follows:

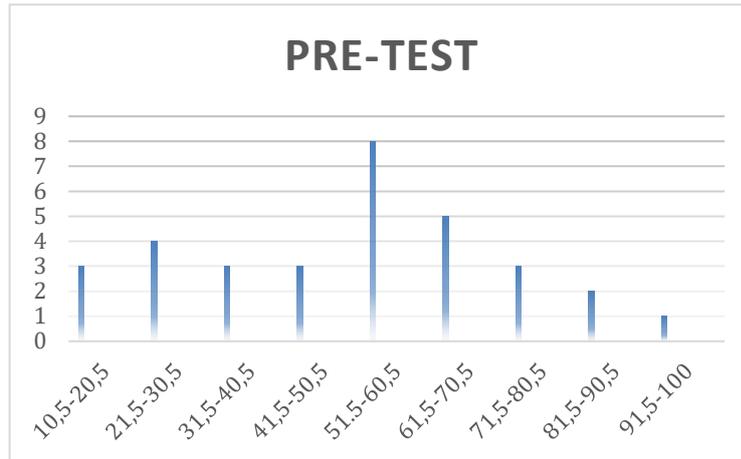
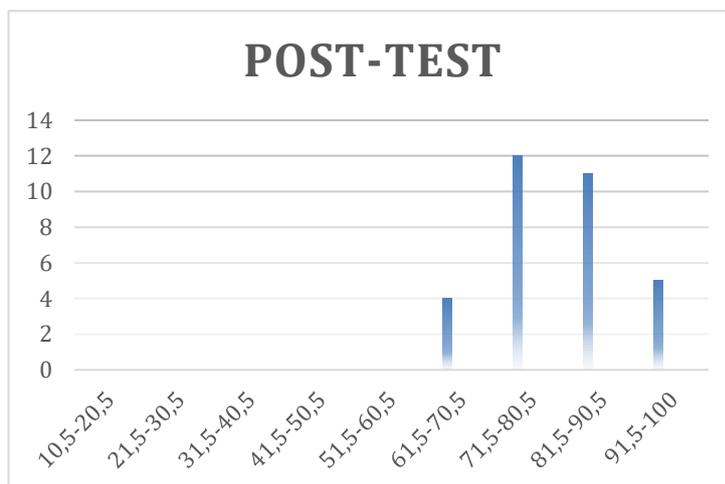


FIGURE 1. Pre-Test Score

According to the frequency diagram of the pre-test above, there are still a large number of kids who received low scores. The low score here is smaller than the normal English score for first-grade kids. More than 15 out of 32 students did not pass the test. The lowest score is 15 points, while the highest score is 95. The overall score from the pretest is 1710. The mean of the pre-test can be calculated by dividing the students' total score by the number of students, resulting in a mean of 53,437.



**FIGURE 2.** Post-test score

The diagram of the frequency of post-test above shows that students' scores have improved. The minimum score is approximately 61-70, while the maximum score is 100. Four out of 32 students had a low score. According to the diagram, students who were taught using the TPR method received higher scores. The data frequency diagram above clearly shows that students' post-test scores are greater than their pre-test scores. The total score of the post-test is 2670, hence the mean of the post-test can be calculated by dividing the entire score by the total number of students, yielding an average score of 83,437.

After the scores have been analyzed, they are calculated using statistics to see whether there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test. The findings were summarized as follows:

	PRETEST	POSTTEST
Mean	53,4375	83,4375
N	32	32
Std. Deviation	20,65217	9,54087
Variance	426,512	91,028

**FIGURE 3.** Pre-test and post-test's mean

Based on the supplied student pre-test and post-test scores, it is possible to analyze the data statistics above. The mean of the pre-test ( $M_{pre}$ ) is 53,4375, and the mean of the post-test ( $M_{post}$ ) is 83,4375. The post-test mean is 83,4375, which is greater than the pre-test mean of 53,4375. The results of the tests presented can be analyzed using the T-test formula, which is as follows:

$$t = \frac{M_{po} - M_{pr}}{\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma b^2}{N(N-1)}}$$

$$= \frac{83,4375 - 53,4375}{\sqrt{\frac{10,29^2}{32(32-1)}}}$$

$$t = 9,594$$

After manually calculating the formula and using statistics, the researcher was able to determine the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. The basic decision making is based on a comparison of t-tables and t tests. If the t-test score is greater than the t-table, it indicates that students' vocabulary mastery has improved significantly after using TPR. As a result, if the t-test value is less than the t-table, it can be concluded that there is no substantial change in students' vocabulary after using TPR. After calculating the data using the t-test procedure, it was discovered that the t-table value at 5% significance is t-table = 2.04, t-test = 9.594.

Based on these calculations, it is possible to conclude that the t-test has a greater value than the t-table ( $9,594 > 2,04$ ) at the 5% level of significance. According to the basic decision-making steps stated, it is possible to infer that the research findings revealed that using the Total Physical Response (TPR) method improved students' vocabulary proficiency in first grade at SMP N 1 Kendal.

Furthermore, based on the interview results, the majority of first-grade students at SMP N 1 Kendal, particularly at 7G, are positive about the TPR method. Students believed that TPR was an effective way for teaching English vocabulary in the classroom. TPR includes engaging, exciting, and intriguing activities that occur in class, allowing students to be more engaged and interested in classroom activities. Several students stated that TPR made it easier for them to acquire and comprehend the vocabulary being taught. Students reported that adopting TPR in the teaching learning process increased their passion and willingness to study English. Another student's perspective of TPR was that it helped them retain more of the terminology presented by the teacher. Because we know that young learners enjoy movement, the majority of

students believed that TPR was an excellent strategy to use with students, particularly young learners.

## Conclusion

The aims of this study were to determine the results and significant differences before and after utilizing the TPR approach. Based on the manual calculations, statistical statistics, and students' perceptions offered, it is possible to conclude that TPR significantly improves students' vocabulary mastery. TPR is a successful strategy for improving students' vocabulary mastery. The post-test scores were greater than the pre-test, as were the students' positive opinions. TPR increases students' enjoyment of the teaching-learning process. They can memorize more easily using proper methods, so they no longer believe that learning English vocabulary is a tough subject to understand. Furthermore, TPR has been shown to successfully enrich the vocabulary of first-grade children at SMP N 1 Kendal.

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