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Teaching Vocabulary by Using Total Physical Response

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Abstract

This study aimed at finding out whether there is any improvement of students' vocabulary mastery after being taught by vocabulary using Total Physical Response (TPR) in SD Swasta Pertiwi Sabang. This experimental research was conducted by giving the students a pretest before the treatments and a posttest after the treatments. The population of this research was the whole students at SD Swasta Pertiwi Sabang there are 75 students. The samples of this study were the students from fourth grade students which were chosen by using random sampling consist of 23 students. Total Physical Response can be used to teach vocabulary in Elementary School. The result revealed that there was a significant improvement of students' vocabulary mastery after being taught by using Total Physical Response. The mean score from the pretest increase 53.81 points and in the posttest are 81.74. The t-test value was also found higher than the t-table ($t_s = 13.777 > t_t = 2.080$). It means the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted whereas the null hypothesis (H_o) is rejected.

Key Words : *Vocabulary, Action Verb, Total Physical Response*

1. INTRODUCTION

People who learn English as a foreign language (EFL) needs to know and learn about four basic skills. The key to improve those skills is vocabulary. [Richard & Renandya \(2002\)](#) stated that "vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis on how well learners speak, listen, read and write". From that statement, we can conclude that by having an extensive vocabulary, the other skills in learning a language can be more easily obtained because the basic skill is already covered.

Vocabulary needs to be taught for children since early age especially from the age of 6-12 years old. [Cameron \(2005\)](#) explained that words are important to develop children skill and knowledge and building up useful words to young learners is fundamental to the foreign language learning at primary level. It is reasonable because people's receptive auditory sensor had to be triggered since early age so that they can receive information well.

The writer conducted a preliminary study at fourth grade students of SD Swasta Pertiwi Sabang. She observed the students while they were learning English in the classroom. She found that the fourth grade students at SD Swasta Pertiwi Sabang lacked of vocabulary mastery. This problem leads them to be unable to listen in English properly and have hard time to understand what the teacher says. The limited amount of vocabulary also decreases students' willingness to use English in their daily communication, and students are also reluctant to speak in English since they do not know what to say and write as a result of vocabulary problems. Therefore, they felt bored in the English classroom.

Vocabulary is still difficult to be mastered by students in the learning process. However, teachers can try many different techniques to help students master vocabularies. One of techniques that the writer proposes is Total Physical Response (TPR). [Asher \(2012\)](#) stated that by using TPR (Total Physical Response) in teaching and learning process, understanding or listening skill could be developed through movements of the students' body. TPR is suitable to teach English for students in Elementary School who are still in a lower level category because the Total Physical Response is a fun method and can make students feel enjoy while learning English. [Larsen-Freeman \(2011\)](#) believes it is important to have students enjoy their experience in learning to communicate in a foreign language. In fact, the TPR method was developed in order to reduce the stress of learners when studying foreign language and thereby encourage students to persist in their study beyond a beginning level of proficiency.

Total Physical Response is easy to use in learning a language because it involves bodily actions so students can have visual aid to help them understand what they are trying to learn, which is vocabulary. [Asher \(2012\)](#) tried to construct a stress-free approach to help teacher reducing students' stress while learning English because a student who began learning a second language were prone to giving up before they could master it.

Grounding from the previous researches and the theory of Total Physical Response method, the writer was interested in applying the Total Physical Response method as a way to solve the problem of the fourth grade students of SD Swasta Pertiwi Sabang.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the most essential part that should have been owned by every language learner because it is impossible to construct phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or essay without having enough vocabulary. [Crystal \(2008\)](#) stated that vocabulary is a fix set of words used as part of the definition of other words. The notion is found in such contexts as foreign-language teaching, the teaching of reading, and lexicography. [Richard \(2002\)](#) explained that vocabulary is the core component of language proficiency and provides much of the basis for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. From the definition above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is the total number in language which builds the language proficiency.

[Cameron \(2005\)](#) stated that building up a useful vocabulary is central to learning foreign language at the primary level. Moreover, she also added that vocabulary development is not just learning more words but is also importantly about expanding and deepening word knowledge.

2.2 Definition of Total Physical Response

Total Physical Response was firstly introduced by Asher in 1988. It is believed by Asher that listening is the basic principle which needs to be learned before going to the next stage; speaking. [Larsen and Freeman \(2011\)](#) concluded that teaching should emphasize meaning rather than form, and learner stress should be minimized. In Total Physical Response, students are demanded to be active both in listening and responding to the commands of their teacher.

According to [Asher \(2012\)](#), TPR is based on premise that human brain has a biological program for acquiring any natural language in the world by observing how children acquire their mother tongue. Communications is the aspect which can help parents verbal and physical aspect positively to help children to absorb language and produce it spontaneously. Asher claimed that children follow three natural processes of language learning as follow:

- a. Children develop their listening skill before going to the next stage; speaking skill. It means that in order to advance to the speaking skill, children had to have a good listening skill because in order to learn to speak a new language, we have to understand how the words sounded. That is why babies learn to speak by listening.
- b. Children's ability in listening comprehension is acquired because children need to respond physically the command in form of parental commands.
- c. When their basic foundation of listening comprehension has been established, speech evolves naturally and effortlessly out of it. It means that when a learner understood how to listen well, over time they will know how to produce those words. So, teachers need to strengthen the bases of listening students' skill so they would be accustomed to the words they hear and then they can utter them naturally.

In a classroom that uses TPR method, hearing vocabulary and commands in the target language will stimulate students to naturally acquire the language. It is believed that students who learn language through TPR method will remember the vocabulary longer than those who do not learn through TPR. From the natural process above, it can be concluded that the students will try to comprehend the expression of language before trying to produce verbal language. By using physical movement in TPR, it is believed that learning vocabulary with movement can be easier than giving abstract word first.

3. METHODS

This study was conducted by applying experimental design. [Ary \(2010\)](#) explained experimental research involves a study of the effect of the systematic manipulation of one variable(s) on another variable. He also mentioned the manipulated variable is called the experimental treatment or the independent variable. The observed and measured variable is called the dependent variable.

In this study, the writer applied pre-experimental design with one group pretest-posttest design because the writer wanted to examine the hypothesis to set up cause and effect between dependent and independent variables without control group. [Ary et.al. \(2010\)](#) mentioned that one-group pretest-posttest design usually involves three steps, a pre-test, a treatments and a post-test.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

The research was conducted within a week which started from September 30th 2019 and finished on October 4th. In the first meeting on September 30th 2019, a pretest was done to measure the students' initial ability. In the next three meetings on October 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, the treatments were carried out to teach the students about action verbs. In the last meeting on October 4th 2019, the writer gave a posttest to the students. Then the writer analyzed the data by using statistical formulas.

4.1.1 The Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Score

After the students' pretest and posttest score were obtained, the writer analyzed the scores and then compared the mean score of both tests. The difference between the pretest and the posttest can be seen in the figure below.

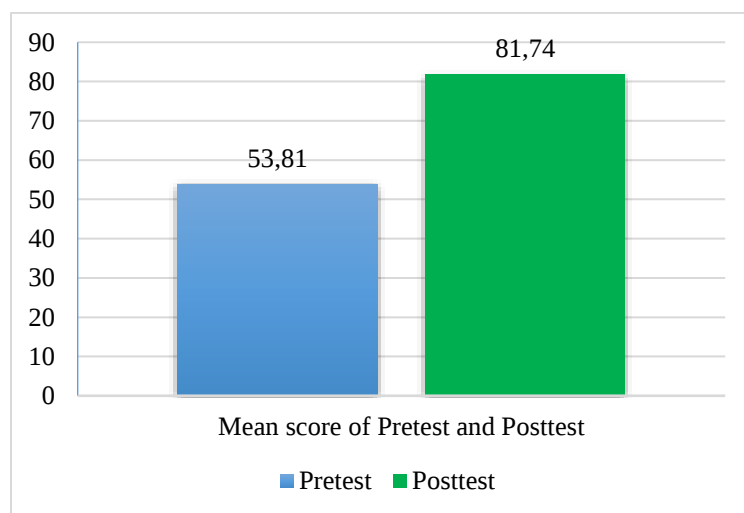


Figure 4.1 Comparison of pretest and posttest score

In the figure above, it can be seen that the pretest' mean score was 53.81. On the other hand, the mean score of the posttest was 81.74. From this result, it can be implied that the mean score of the posttest is higher than the mean score of the pretest. The score differences between pre test and post test was 27.83.

4.1.2 Hypothesis Testing

In this research, the writer stated two hypothesis for this research that are Null Hypothesis (Total Physical Response cannot improve students' vocabulary class IV at SD Swasta Pertiwi Sabang) and Alternative Hypothesis (Total Physical Response can improve students' vocabulary class IV at SD Swasta Pertiwi Sabang) In order to test the hypothesis above accurately, the writer used significant value of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$). Because the degree of freedom of the data in this research is 16, the critical value of t-score that is used for this research from the t-table is 2.080.

From the data analysis, it is found that the t-score from this study is 13.777 in which it is higher than the t-table ($t_s = 13.777 > t_t = 2.080$). So, because of the t-score from the t-test above is higher than the t-table critical value, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted whereas the null hypothesis (H_o) is rejected. The difference between the pretest and the posttest score and also the difference of the result of t-test and t-table value can be seen in the following table.

Table 4.1 The pretest and posttest score and t-test result

Tests	Total score	χ (mean)	d (gain)	t-table	t-test
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Pretest	1240	53.91	640	2.080	13.777
Posttest	1880	81.74			

4.2 Discussion

In this study, it is found that the alternate hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. It means that there is a significant improvement of vocabulary mastery after the students were taught by using Total Physical Response. It was shown that there is a significant increase in the total score of the students. The mean score of the pretest is 53.91, meanwhile the mean score of the posttest is 81.74. This study concluded that the TPR (Total Physical Response) method is effective in teaching vocabulary to elementary students.

The findings of this study were resonable for several factors. First, The Total Physical Response method can bring a fun learning atmosphere to the classroom. The use of TPR method in classrooms can also reduce stress during learning process. As [Larsen and Freeman \(2011\)](#) said that TPR method was developed in order to reduce the stress of learners when studying foreign language and thereby encourage students to persist in their study beyond a beginning level of proficiency. It makes this method enjoyable especially for young learners. Therefore, it is very effective for young language learners. As the result, it increases learning effectiveness especially in teaching vocabulary for children.

Second, in a TPR classroom, hearing vocabulary and commands in the target language will naturally stimulate students to acquire the language. It is believed that students who learn language through TPR method will easily remember the vocabulary. Lincoln Center of Albania (2014) reported that TPR method leaves memorable movement that help learners in recognizing vocabulary. Hence, by using physical movement in TPR, it is believed that learning vocabulary can be easier than only giving abstract word.

Third, Asher as quoted in [Blair \(1992, p. 20\)](#) stated that beginning language learners can benefit greatly from a "silent period". They learn to understand and response to parts of the language without attempting to speak or well-known in term "delayed production"; In the TPR method, the students are only asked to express their understanding by using the movements without need to speak. To sum up with, the use of TPR is effective in teaching and learning vocabulary since it provides fun way for the students. Therefore, teaching English especially vocabulary by using TPR can be a good alternative for English teacher in teaching elementary students because this method can give some benefits to the students in increasing their vocabulary mastery.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The students' problem in Class IV SD Swasta Pertiwi was concerning with the lack of students' vocabulary mastery. The aim of this study was to improve students' vocabulary mastery using the Total Physical Response method was successful. The method is effective in improving students' vocabulary mastery which was indicated by the improvement of mean score from pre test to post test.

Regarding to this research, the writer would like to propose some suggestions. For the teachers, it is hoped that they have to be more creative in teaching English, because most of students are easily get bored especially

elementary school students. So, one of the ways to make students become more active in the class is by using Total Physical Response method.

For the researchers in the future who want to conduct the similar study, it is expected that they have to be well-prepared before getting into the elementary school to conduct the experiment. As experienced by the writer herself, most of the elementary students in where this study took place were more passive and seemed did not want to participate in the pretest at the first time. But this problem was solved by doing more fun approach to the students. So, it can be said that the writer also has to be more creative in approaching elementary school students.

6. REFERENCES

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