

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

a) Total Physical Response (TPR)

Definition of TPR

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method developed in the 1970s by Asher, a psychology professor at the University of San Jose California based on observations of the way babies acquire their mother tongue. Children respond physically to instructions from their parents or others around them. For example, when a father says: "Listen to me" or "sit down" then the child will respond physically. This kind of interaction lasts for several months until the child is able to give a verbal response. (Ikhwati & Megawati, 2018) Total Physical response or TPR is a language teaching method based on the idea that language is learned better when accompanied by physical movements.(KASAP, 2024)

Total Physical Response (TPR) is one of the language teaching methods developed by James J. Asher in the 1960s. This method is based on the idea that language learning can occur effectively when learners connect language input with physical movement. According to Asher, language acquisition is closely related to the way children acquire their first language, where they initially listen to language from their environment and respond through physical actions before they are able to produce spoken words. Therefore, TPR emphasizes comprehension before production, meaning that learners are encouraged to understand language through listening and responding physically before being expected to speak.

The main principle of Total Physical Response is the coordination between speech and action. In TPR activities, teachers provide verbal instructions or commands in the target language, and students respond by performing appropriate movements. For example, when learning vocabulary related to daily activities, a teacher may say "wake up," "brush your teeth," or

“open the door,” and students demonstrate the meaning through physical actions. Through this process, students do not only memorize vocabulary meanings but also experience the words through meaningful actions. This connection between language and movement can help learners develop stronger associations between vocabulary items and their meanings.

TPR is considered an appropriate method for young learners because children generally learn better through active involvement and direct experiences. Elementary school students are still developing their cognitive abilities, and they often find abstract explanations difficult to understand. Therefore, learning activities that involve movement, interaction, and concrete experiences can make language learning more understandable and enjoyable. By involving students physically, TPR provides opportunities for learners to participate actively rather than only listening to teacher explanations or completing written exercises.

Another important characteristic of TPR is its learner-centered nature. In traditional language teaching approaches, students often become passive recipients of information because the teacher dominates classroom activities. In contrast, TPR encourages students to actively respond to language input through physical actions. The teacher acts as a facilitator who provides instructions, models activities, and guides students during the learning process. Meanwhile, students participate by listening, interpreting meaning, and responding through movements. This interaction creates a more dynamic classroom atmosphere and increases students' involvement in learning.

In vocabulary learning, TPR provides an effective way to introduce and practice new words because vocabulary is closely related to meaning and context. Instead of learning vocabulary only through translation or memorization, students learn words by connecting them with actions, situations, and experiences. This approach allows students to understand vocabulary in a more meaningful way. For example, when students learn verbs such as “run,” “jump,” “sit,” or “stand,” they can directly perform these actions, making the meaning of the words easier to understand and remember.

The use of physical movement in TPR is also related to the concept of embodied learning, which suggests that the body and cognitive processes are connected during learning. When students physically engage with learning materials, they may create stronger mental connections between new information and personal experiences. In the context of vocabulary learning, performing movements related to words may help students recall vocabulary because the learning process involves multiple forms of engagement, including listening, seeing, and doing. Therefore, TPR can support vocabulary learning by providing multisensory experiences for young learners.

Furthermore, TPR creates a low-anxiety learning environment because students are not immediately required to speak in the target language. According to Asher's theory, forcing learners to produce language too early may create stress and reduce their confidence. Instead, TPR allows students to first develop comprehension through listening and physical responses. As students become familiar with vocabulary and classroom instructions, they gradually gain confidence to use English verbally. This process may encourage students to participate more comfortably in language learning activities.

In classroom implementation, TPR usually involves several stages. First, the teacher introduces new vocabulary or commands by demonstrating the meaning through actions. Second, students listen to the teacher's instructions and respond through movements. Third, students practice responding independently without direct teacher modeling. Finally, students may be encouraged to produce language by giving commands or using vocabulary in simple communication activities. These stages allow students to gradually develop understanding and confidence in using English.

Although TPR is often associated with physical activities, the method does not only focus on movement. The physical response functions as a tool to strengthen comprehension, memory, and meaningful learning. Therefore, successful implementation of TPR requires careful planning, appropriate vocabulary selection, and classroom management. Teachers need to design activities that match students' abilities and learning objectives so that physical activities remain connected to language learning goals.

Based on the explanations above, Total Physical Response can be defined as a language teaching method that combines verbal language input with physical actions to facilitate learning. In the context of this study, TPR is viewed as an approach that supports English vocabulary learning among fourth-grade students by providing active, meaningful, and enjoyable learning experiences. Through the use of commands, movements, and interaction, TPR helps students connect English words with their meanings and experiences, making vocabulary learning more accessible for young learners.

TPR Teaching Steps

TPR is a language teaching method design by James Asher based on his observation. Combination of bodily movements and oral language attract the attention on the first stage. The instructor gives the instructions accompanied by his/her bodily movements and the learner responds with the help of their bodily kinesthetic movements (KASAP, 2024)

“when I say something in the target language, listen carefully and do what I do. For example, if I say “Tate”! and I stand up, you stand up. Just listen and act rapidly without trying to pronounce the words yourself” (Asher, 2000)

Advantages and Disadvantages of TPR

TPR is interactive and fun, especially for children. They can learn while playing because elementary school children are still at the stage of active motor development. TPR is suitable because it combines physical activity with language, which makes children not get bored quickly. However, for language teaching at the level of structure and meaning, this method may be difficult to use. (Ikhwati & Megawati, 2018)

Total Physical Response (TPR) is considered one of the effective teaching methods for young learners because it combines language learning with physical movement and active participation. The method provides several advantages that support students' language development, especially in learning

English vocabulary. However, like other teaching methods, TPR also has several limitations that teachers need to consider when implementing it in the classroom. Understanding both the advantages and disadvantages of TPR is important to ensure that the method can be applied effectively according to students' needs and learning objectives.

Advantages of Total Physical Response (TPR)

One of the main advantages of Total Physical Response is that it creates an active and enjoyable learning environment. In TPR activities, students are not only required to listen to explanations but also participate physically by responding to teachers' instructions through movements. This active involvement can reduce boredom and increase students' motivation to learn English. For young learners, who generally have a short attention span and need meaningful learning experiences, activities involving movement can make lessons more interesting and engaging.

Another advantage of TPR is that it is suitable for elementary school students because it considers children's natural learning characteristics. Young learners tend to understand concepts better when they experience learning directly through concrete activities. TPR provides opportunities for students to connect English words with physical actions, making abstract vocabulary easier to understand. For example, when students learn action verbs such as "walk," "jump," or "clap," they can directly perform the actions while hearing the words. This connection between words and movements may help students understand vocabulary more easily.

TPR also supports vocabulary retention because it involves multiple learning processes, including listening, observing, and performing actions. When students learn vocabulary through physical responses, they create stronger associations between words and meanings. The involvement of body movement can make learning experiences more memorable compared to learning vocabulary only through translation or memorization. Therefore, TPR can support students in remembering and recalling new vocabulary during and after learning activities.

Another benefit of TPR is that it reduces students' anxiety during the language learning process. In many foreign language classrooms, students may feel afraid of making mistakes, especially when they are required to speak English immediately. TPR allows students to begin learning through comprehension and physical responses before producing spoken language. This approach gives students time to become familiar with English sounds, instructions, and vocabulary without experiencing excessive pressure. As a result, students may develop greater confidence and willingness to participate in English activities.

Furthermore, TPR encourages meaningful interaction between teachers and students. The teacher provides instructions, demonstrates actions, and guides students during activities, while students respond actively through movements. This interaction creates a communicative classroom atmosphere where students receive language input in a meaningful context. Through repeated exposure and practice, students gradually become familiar with English vocabulary and classroom expressions.

Another advantage of TPR is its flexibility in classroom implementation. Teachers can adapt TPR activities to various vocabulary topics, such as daily activities, classroom objects, body parts, animals, and commands. The method can also be combined with other teaching techniques, such as games, songs, storytelling, and role-play. Therefore, TPR can become a useful strategy for teachers who want to create varied and creative English lessons.

Disadvantages of Total Physical Response (TPR)

Although TPR has many advantages, the method also has several limitations that should be considered. One of the main disadvantages of TPR is that it may not be suitable for all types of language materials. TPR works effectively for vocabulary related to actions, commands, and concrete objects. However, it may be more difficult to apply when teaching abstract concepts, complex grammar structures, or vocabulary that cannot easily be represented through physical movement. Therefore, teachers need to select appropriate materials when using TPR.

Another limitation of TPR is that it may become less effective if it is used excessively. Since the method focuses heavily on listening and physical responses, students may become dependent on movements and have limited opportunities to practice productive language skills, such as speaking and writing. If teachers only rely on TPR without incorporating other activities, students may have difficulties developing complete language abilities. Therefore, TPR should be combined with other approaches to provide balanced language learning experiences.

Classroom management can also become a challenge when implementing TPR, especially in large classrooms. Because students are required to move and participate physically, activities may become noisy or difficult to control if classroom rules and instructions are not clearly established. Teachers need to prepare appropriate procedures and manage students' movements to ensure that activities remain focused on learning objectives. Effective classroom management is necessary to prevent physical activities from becoming only games without meaningful language practice.

In addition, the implementation of TPR requires teachers to have sufficient creativity and preparation. Teachers need to design suitable commands, select appropriate vocabulary, and create activities that match students' abilities. Without proper planning, TPR activities may become repetitive or fail to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Teachers also need to understand how to balance physical activities with opportunities for students to use English communicatively.

Another disadvantage of TPR is that some students may have different preferences or learning styles. While many young learners enjoy physical activities, some students may feel uncomfortable performing movements in front of others or may prefer quieter learning activities. Therefore, teachers need to consider individual differences among students and provide various learning opportunities to accommodate different needs.

In conclusion, Total Physical Response provides significant advantages for young learners, particularly in English vocabulary learning. The method can increase students' engagement, motivation, confidence, and vocabulary understanding through meaningful physical experiences. However, TPR also has limitations related to material selection, classroom management, teacher preparation, and the development of other language skills. Therefore, effective implementation of TPR requires careful planning and appropriate combination with other teaching strategies. By considering both its strengths and weaknesses, teachers can maximize the benefits of TPR as an approach for supporting vocabulary learning in elementary English classrooms.

b) Vocabulary Knowledge

Definition

“Vocabulary refers to the words that we must know to communicate effectively” (Adler, 2001, p.34). Vocabulary can be learned indirectly through daily communication, listening to adults read to them, and reading on their own. Students from a lower socioeconomic class have a significantly smaller vocabulary to draw from when reading due to a lack of indirect vocabulary instruction, which negatively impacts reading comprehension (Block & Israel, 2005). Vocabulary can also be learned through direct instruction. Directly teaching vocabulary words in context and word-learning strategies improves both vocabulary and reading comprehension (Block & Israel, 2005). (McKown & Barnett, n.d.)

Kinds of Vocabulary

Perhaps the most basic form of materials for vocabulary learning are coursebooks. Coursebooks are considered to have a major influence on classroom practice, forming the core of most teaching programmes (Tomlinson and Masuhara 2018). (Norton & Buchanan, 2022). And in the grade IV curriculum textbook, the independence curriculum contains vocabulary for content words such as verbs, nouns, and adjectives.

The words can be categorized into various lexical divisions, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns. Words can be classified according to their meaning, with concrete words (e.g., "cat") and abstract words (e.g., "hope") being two categories.(Dwi azizah, 2024)

c) Vocabulary Teaching Strategies

Reading extensively is one of the most important ways in which children can learn vocabulary implicitly and further develop their vocabulary knowledge (Stahl and Nagy 2012, p. 49)(Garton, 2019). Oral storytelling is another example of how to teach vocabulary implicitly, through listening, in the YLL classroom, particularly for the very young learners. Oral stories ‘have traditionally been told by word of mouth, with, these days, many retellings in written form and remediations in digital form or film.’ (Bland 2015, p. 185)(Garton, 2019). ICT, too, can be used to support both explicit and implicit vocabulary learning(Garton, 2019)

2.2 Previous Research

After conducting a literature review, the author found several studies on English language learning using the TPR method that had been conducted previously and could support this study. The studies are as follows:

The first research was conducted by Azhari Ikhwati and Erna Megawati in their research entitled "EFEKTIVITAS MODEL PEMBELAJARAN TPR (TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE)DALAM PENGAJARAN BAHASA INGGRIS". This study was conducted to determine how effective the use of the TPR (Total Physical Response) learning model is in teaching English vocabulary. The subjects here are students in the study group in Sukamulya village, Sukamakmur sub-district, Bogor. There is a significant difference between the study group that received the TPR learning model and the study group that did not receive the TPR learning model. This shows that the TPR learning model is effective in teaching English vocabulary..(Ikhwati & Megawati, 2018)

The second research was conducted by Catur Sugiarti Putri and Taslim with the title “THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TPR (TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE) METHOD IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY MASTERY”. This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of the total physical response method in improving students' vocabulary. Using a pre-experimental design with a onegroup pretest-posttest model with the population of the 4th grade student of SD Inpres 7/83 Pasempe, the data analysis employing a paired sample t-test revealed a significant increase in the average score from the pre-test to the post-test, with an average improvement of 31% and a substantial significance value (Sig 2-tailed) of 0.001. As a result, H1 is accepted, while H2 is rejected.(Putri, 2024)

The third research was conducted in 25 fifth-grade students in one of Muhammadiyah's elementary schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. dengan judul penelitian “Total Physical Response for English Vocabulary Size: A Pre-Experimental Study to Fifth Graders in Yogyakarta”. The researcher employed an alternative assessment method different from the conventional vocabulary size test—a vocabulary test using shape-related vocabulary conducted in this study. Data was obtained in this study using pre-tests and post-tests. This study revealed that the student's vocabulary size before the pre-test was classified as "good" based on the mean score of 92.96. After the post-test, the average score ascended to 95.68. However, it remained within the "good" category as it did not surpass the threshold for the "very good" category (>96). Furthermore, the Wilcoxon-signed rank analysis revealed no significant difference between students' pre-test and posttest—the Asym. The Sig (2-tailed) value is 0.050, which exceeds 0.05, indicating the lack of statistical significance.

Based on several previous studies that have been conducted by (Ikhwati & Megawati, 2018) (Putri, 2024) (Dwi azizah, 2024). Two of the three studies above have proven to have a positive impact on learning English vocabulary in using the Total Physical Response (TPR) method. Therefore, in this study, the author intends to prove whether the TPR method is effective in the context of vocabulary learning for fourth grade students at SDN Pasirlayung 03.

