

## The Use of Total Physical Response in Teaching Vocabulary Integrated with Meaningful Classroom Interaction

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### Abstract

The deep consideration in teaching vocabulary is promising a deep level of processing that can involve either long-term or short-term memory. This study was aimed at investigating the use of total physical response in the teaching of vocabulary integrated with meaningful classroom interaction. To attain the research aim, this study employed classroom action research. The steps of classroom action consisted of Planning, Acting, Evaluating and Reflecting. In the planning phase, researchers prepared lesson plans in line with students' vocabulary problems and mastery. The students' vocabulary problems were determined on how their solutions were before applying it in the class. The phase of the Acting is the session of applying total physical response as learning activities to improve students' vocabulary. The acting activities should be done in accordance with the previous plan prepared. The last but not least is evaluating and reflecting. It referred to the evaluation process since researchers applied the learning strategies in the class. The upcoming process is then reflection, and it is emphasized on whether the learning plans are on the track. This study was carried out in middle schools. The sample was chosen by using purposive sampling technique. 37 students in the eleventh-grade class were involved in this study. The successful criteria were enacted in 75, and the indicators covered expanding word knowledge, adding specific words, word-learning strategies, and word-play activities. Based on the analysis result, students were able to conduct various learning activities to improve wide and extensive independent reading activities to expand their word acquisition and knowledge; students were able to perform meaningful strategies relating to specific words to improve their comprehension of texts containing those words; students were able to perform word-play activities to improve learning atmospheres in the class. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of total physical response was able to improve students' vocabulary mastery in integration with meaningful classroom interaction. The implementation of this strategy with paying attention to classroom interaction is strongly recommended to be applied for other language elements.

**Keywords:** total physical response; teaching vocabulary; meaningful classroom interaction

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## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the language aspects which should be acquired by language learner. Learning vocabulary is important because students are able to speak, write, and using vocabulary (Chiew et al., 2019; Kinasih & Olivia, 2022; Alfatihah & Tyas, 2022). Although vocabulary learning is not being recognized as a priority in ELT context, interest

in its crucial role in EFL contexts has increased rapidly. Learning vocabulary has recently been started systematically with paying attention to a certain principled approach for teachers and learners. It is in line with Arndt and Woore (2018) who argue that in EFL context learning vocabulary is intended to acquire lexical competence, and lexical competence is an entry point of communicative competence. Students who have communicative competence should be able to address their ideas or opinions to interlocutors successfully and appropriately (Firdaus & Mayasari, 2022; Uchihara & Saito, 2019; Zhong, 2018). Therefore, learning vocabulary should be oriented to attain communicative competence in a meaningful interaction.

Van Den Bosch et al. (2019) argue that students can comprehend a word if they can recognize its meaning when they pronounce it. It means that in learning vocabulary, students have to know the meaning of it and can use it in a proper context. It is in accordance with Thornbury (2002) and Lee and Chen (2019), who states students or learners without vocabulary nothing can be delivered. It shows that vocabulary is critical in communication, even though students have good ability in structures but cannot be sure they have good enough vocabulary to express their ideas. Without vocabulary, the structures produced can be useless. In EFL learning, the use of language for meaningful communication is determined by how the vocabulary is structured functionally in particular social contexts (Ebadi & Bashiri, 2018; Clarke, 2018; Naddumba & Athiemoolam, 2022). The vocabulary usage in informal conversation in the dinner table, for example, will be different from it in formal conversation at the bank. In addition, Ihsan and Syafitri (2021) allege that the role of vocabulary in EFL contexts has shifted teachers' view and focus from sentence-level form to discourse level function.

The role of vocabulary cannot be neglected in language learning. It is central to language acquisition whether the language being learned is first, second, or foreign (Khan et al., 2018; Kho, Ramanair, & Pandian, 2021). Richards and Renandya (2002) stated that vocabulary is an important core of language proficiency. It provides a fundamental basis for how well students can arrange their speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities. Vocabulary is central to the proficiency and gives an overview of how well students have language skills determined by their vocabulary mastery. Due to this situation, students in the middle schools should be taught language skills starting from vocabulary. The problem emerging then deals with how to teach and what to teach. In another problem, learning vocabulary should be taught whether it should focus on explicit and implicit learning (Kusmayanto & Hendryanti, 2021; Nation, 2006).

There are many methods for teaching vocabularies. One of them is total psychical response (TPR) method. This method is one method of learning in teaching English as a foreign language. Furthermore, Richards and Rogers (2011) reveal the total physical response is a language teaching method built around coordination of speech and action. It attempts to teach language through physical activity. It is a language teaching method based on coordination between speech and action, the method for teaching languages using motor physical activity. Larsen and Freeman (2000) add that TPR is intended to understand a foreign language with instructions or orders because in practice students are given instructions or commands that can enhance their understanding of the learning material. Therefore, this study is aimed at investigating the effectiveness of using the TPR method to improve students' vocabulary viewed from classroom interaction.

The most usual TPR activities involve teacher's commands to which students respond physically and demonstrating comprehension. The followings are some examples of TPR activities based on commands: (1) Depending on the theme of the lesson, the teacher could prepare commands that strengthen vocabularies learning using hand movement to manipulate any set of pictures or flashcards: Point to/Touch/Pick up (your

mouth / your cheek / an orange/ a strawberry). (2) For lessons outside the classroom, more action can be introduced with commands like: Run forward, Jump, Take three steps to the left then two steps to the right, Jump up and down, Throw the ball, Raise your hands, The main focus of TPR is physical activities.

From the observation, the researcher found students' problem, most of the students said it was difficult to memorize some vocabulary and some students also did not understand what the teacher said in English. The use of this method can help student improve their vocabulary acquisition in short term and long term memory, and to motivate the student to learn and pay attention to the material presented by teachers. Researchers choose the TPR as method in teaching vocabulary because easily to get knowledge after learning process, Total Physical Response (TPR) allowed student to use and apply their physical movement in the classroom. In addition, the use of the TPR method can improve students' interest and motivations as important factors in learning. To attain this learning activities, this study also emphasized on meaningful learning interaction in the teaching of vocabulary. Therefore, this study tried to investigate the effective of using the TPR method to enhance students' vocabulary mastery viewed from meaningful learning interaction.

## METHOD

The current study applied the classroom action research. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrion (2018) CAR is the action research typically involves the use of qualitative, interpretive modes of enquiry and data collection by teachers with a view to teachers making judgments about how to improve own practice. In this research, there are learning cycles proposed by researchers where they consist of four stages are: planning, action, observation, and reflecting. In this cycle, researchers and real teachers collaborate to implement the TPR method to improve students' vocabulary viewed from meaningful classroom interaction. If the result still under the score targeted, researchers remodify the learning activities in the next cycle in order to enquire the score targeted.

The action was applied in some stages. namely planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In the first phase, researchers create a plan to conduct learning activities in the form of syllabus and lesson plan design. It was made after making sure about the problem of the research. This phase is a preparation before doing an action research. In the second phase, researchers do actions in line with the planned learning scenario. This phase focuses on the implementation of the TPR method. Researchers are assisted by observers to see the learning process and make some notes to be considered for the next improvement. In this classroom action, the phase of acting and observing is done at the same time. Observers come from the real teachers and researcher members. They are pointed to observe the whole learning situation suitable with the previous plans. Afterwards, the last phase is reflecting. In doing the reflecting, researchers and collaborate teachers discuss together the improvement of students' vocabulary and the learning situation during the implementation of the TPR method. The notes made during observation in the classroom become critical consideration to take the next cycles. The decision is taken a account of whether the improvement meet the criteria of success or not.

The subject that was used to conduct the experiment in this study is the seventh-grade of the Islamic middle school. 25 students were involved in this current study. This study is focused on the use of the TPR method in teaching vocabulary viewed from meaningful classroom interaction. To attain the data, researchers employed interview guidelines and language tests. The interview is used to get more instructional information and situation during the implementation of the TPR method in teaching vocabulary viewed from classroom interaction. Meanwhile, the language test is used to see the

improvement of students' vocabulary mastery. The tests are distributed in two sessions, namely the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test used get data about students' prior knowledge before the researcher applied the the TPR method, while post-test is given at the end of learning meetings to get the data of the use TPR method in teaching vocabulary viewed from classroom interaction.

The data of this study comprise qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data are as the primary data consisting of the solution towards students' vocabulary problems. It refers to the quantity of vocabulary mastery, learning activities, motivation, topics, learning strategies, and reading comprehension. The collected data are analyzed in qualitative ways by doing data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusion and verification (Cohen, Manion, & Morrion, 2018). Dealing with quantitative data, researchers collect the information relating to students' achievement before and after the implementation of the TPR method. To gain the data, pre-test and post-test are distributed in this study. the data are analyzed in quantitative ways by calculating students' scores using a descriptive statistic. It emphasized on mean, mode, median, and deviation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrion, 2018).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher wants to describe and discuss research findings. This study aims to find out the effectivenss of the TPR method to improve students' vocabulary mastery viewed from meaningful classroom interaction. In this study, most students have difficulties to recognize English vocabulary such as the problems on pronunciation of words, spelling of words, grammar in word formations, meaning of collocation, denotation, connotation, appropriateness, meaning relationship, word formation, idioms, and semantic association. These findings have also been found some previous studies (Uchihara & Saito, 2019; Zhong, 2018; Kalogirou et al., 2019; Joyce, 2018). In the present study, the students' problems are seen in their attitude when carrying out learning activities in ELT classes. For instance, students felt uneasy to pronoun some English words in English classes. To solve this case, researchers collaborating with the real teachers apply the TPR method. Students are asked to train any word that they feel uneasy to pronoun. This training aims to bring students to know what the words sound like and what it looks like (its spelling). It is in accordance with Tearai et al. (2021) who argue students should be presented and facilitated fairly obvious characteristics of words in order to be perceived by learners.

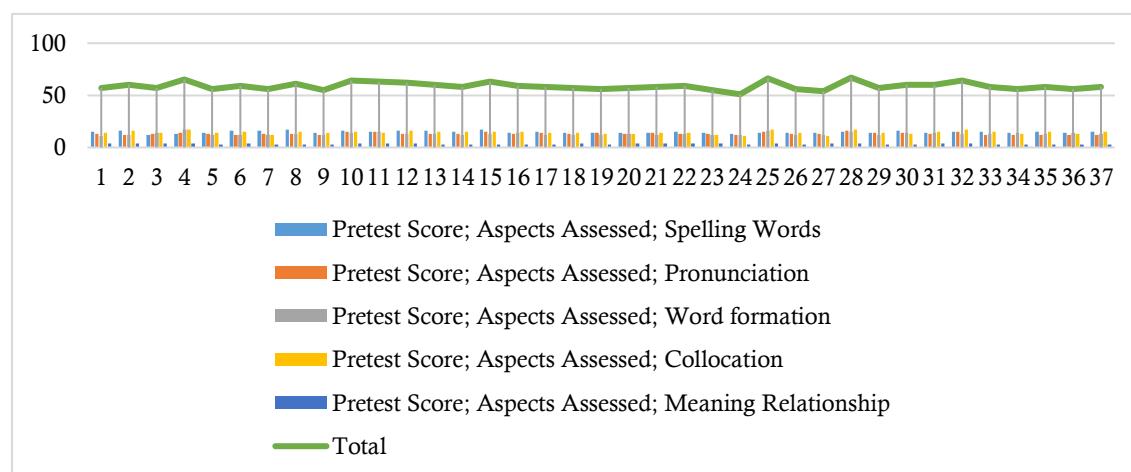
In cycle 1, the teacher provides students with implicit and explicit vocabulary. To make students pay attention, the teacher demonstrates how to pronoun some English words. Students are asked to repeat the way the words are pronounced. Students are also subjected to meaningful materials on pronunciation and spelling. In the implementation of the TPR method, students are presented with new words which are not performed in isolation and are not learned by simple rote memorization. It is in line with Mustafa et al. (2019), who state in teaching vocabulary new vocabulary items should be showed in context rich enough. It aims to provide clues on meaning and student can do multiple exposure to items they should learn (Bowers & Kirby, 2010; Augustyn, 2013; Nayan & Krishnasamy, 2015). To help students pronoun words accurately, students are aske to repeat as often as possible inside or outside the class. The emphasis of pronounciation in vocabulary learning is to create students' self-confidence in speaking skills (Wyra & Lawson, 2018; Alamri & Rogers, 2018).

At the same time, students are directed to be able to arrange phrases, simple sentences, and grammatical awareness. Vocabulary items in ELT contexts may have un unpredictable derivation of form in certain grammatical contexts (Rassaei, 2018; Castillo

& Alto, 2018). Therefore, in the TPR learning activities, students are involved in connecting words in sentences. Students are given insight that a new item of vocabulary can be more than a single word. In doing so, they are provided with examples such 'post office', 'mother in law', etc. to strengthen students, the implementation of the TPR method is emphasized on analyzing types of vocabulary such academic words, multisyllabic words, phrases, collocation, phrasal verb, and idioms. It is to assist students to remember and enable to use words that are new to them (Puimege & Peters, 2019; Indrasari, Novita, & Megawati, 2018). The learning activities of the TPR method in Cycle 1 are not really satisfied because students are not facilitated in meaningful interaction. Due to this, some difficulties of learning vocabulary are not solved yet. The learning activities are continued to Cycle 2.

In the learning activities, students are provided with information about the base form of words. When giving a new verb, for instance, students are recognized with its past form, including regular and irregular forms. At the same situation, the information of transitive and intransitive are discussed. In addition, students are presented with plural forms of vocabulary items and no plural form such as 'advice', 'information', etc. Dealing with preposition, students are asked to analyze some prepositions which have single meaning with some words such as 'responsible for', 'because of', 'remind someone of', 'look after', etc. To assist students to remember the forms of words, students are divided in groups. Each group consists of 3-4 students. Then, the teacher ask students to make several sentences taken from reading texts and are asked to use those vocabulary units. At the end of activities, students should demonstrate the result in front of the class. In the first learning activities, students felt a bit confused and needy lots of help from teachers but at the end they enjoy the learning process in their groups. The learning vocabulary in the form of group discussion create good learning atmosphere because they can devote their knowledge each other dealing with the pronunciation, spelling, meaning of words, idioms, and collocation (Setianingsih et al., 2018; Dubiner, 2017; Haerazi et al., 2019).

The implementation of the TPR method can improve students' vocabulary mastery. In terms of collocation, students are given some collocation examples. They are asked to analyze each unit word and interpret it. Giving collocation forms aims to introduce students with word types that have particular combination sound in English. It is supported by Kalogirou et al. (2019) who suggest that in learning vocabulary students should be facilitated with collocation forms which sounds 'right' or 'wrong' in a certain context. Dealing with students' vocabulary achievement, the improvement is seen in the second cycle. In the first cycle, student achieved 58 in which it is not gained the passing grade. In the initial learning activities, students don't care their lessons. The students' vocabulary achievement in pre-test is presented in Figure 1. The vocabulary assessment is



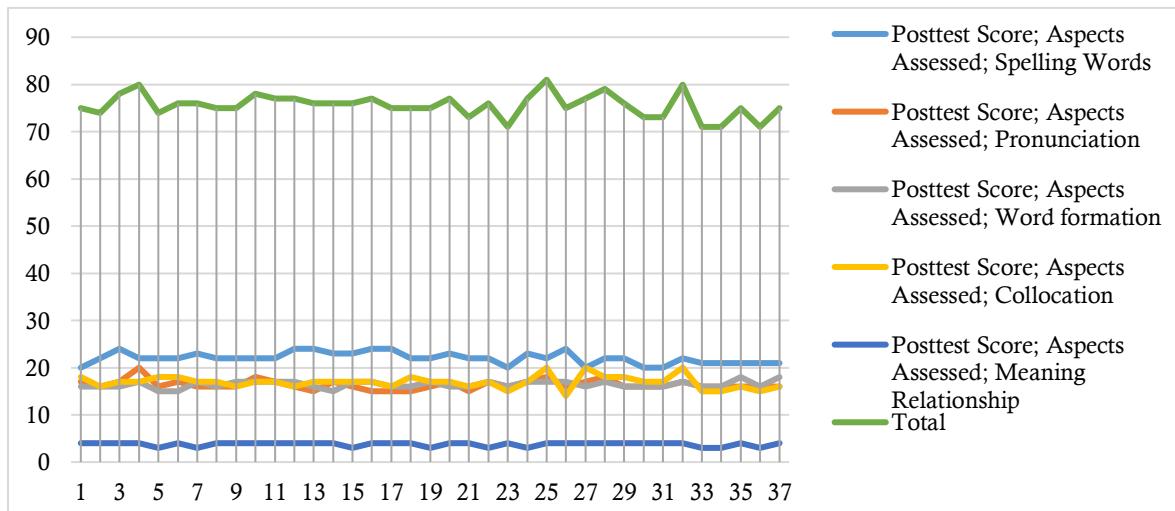
focused on spelling words, pronunciation, word formation, collocation, meaning relationship.

Figure 1. Students' Vocabulary Achievement in Pre-test

The mean score of students' vocabulary achievement in mastering vocabulary units is 58. It is not passed from the minimum passing grade criteria. The students still have problems on those vocabulary units. Researchers analyzed that some students still had difficulty memorizing and remembering vocabulary. Students not only have difficulty understanding the meaning but also feel bored because they only list vocabulary materials taken from reading texts. In solving this case, learning activities in the TPR method are designed in helping students to remember a large number of words in a short period and retain those over time. In doing so, students are asked to carry out word association activities. Word association technique is to assist students to associate words in various ways (Alamri & Rogers, 2018; Wyra & Lawson, 2018). The association reflects the underlying connection in students' mind. In this study, students do analysis on word meaning. The meaning of words rely on a part on its relationship to similar form, and words in a family word are connected each other. For instance, 'meaning' and 'hopeful' can make 'meaningful', 'meaningless', 'hopeless', etc.

During the implementation of the TPR method, teachers guide students with meaning of English words referring to in the real world. Students are involved in finding out the meaning of words should be appropriate to use in a certain contexts. It aims to guide students with denotation meaning. It is useful for students to recognize and memorize certain words which are very common for them. Only half of the students are active and enthusiastic, half of these students need more attention from teachers and researchers in the learning process. After the teacher and researcher gave the subject matter, the teacher asked several students to do what the teacher said, but the response was ineffective attitude. They just listen without meaningful interaction. When the teacher explains the vocabulary units, some students only listen. Students are not given the maximum response, especially students who sit at the back of the class.

Researchers and teachers emphasize students' attention and motivation in class. Researchers analyzed the problems in the aspect mechanism and on the props which were less large and influenced several students in understanding the contents of vocabulary and knowing the meaning function of the vocabulary. Dealing with the student interaction in class, they try to answer questions correctly and enthusiastically. When the teacher appoints a student to reveal his work in front of the class, the student appointed designate



another student or his partner. However, little students do what the teacher tell with great difficulty. The students' response and attention during the teaching and learning process increased, and those are almost those who paid attention to the teacher's explanation. Therefore, students' vocabulary mastery is improved in Cycle 2. Those can be presented in Figure 2 as follows.

Figure 2. Students' Vocabulary Masterin in Post-test

Based on Figure 2, the researcher makes an interpretation that takes the results of the analysis. In the best average score of 75 pre-cycle, cycle 1 and cycle 2 students are 58, and 75 respectively. This shows that the grades of cycle 2 are better than the results of the cycle 1. Based on the results, the researcher concludes that teaching and learning activities using the TPR method can improve students' vocabulary mastery viewed from meaningful classroom interaction. In addition, the Total Physical Response Method can motivate them to improve their knowledge of English lessons. From these results, the researcher concluded that students' achievement and participation in vocabulary using the Total Physical Response Method experienced a significant increase.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to find out the effectiveness of the TPR method to improve students' vocabulary mastery viewed from meaningful classroom interaction. The use of the TPR method is focused on two types of learning activities relating to improve students' vocabulary mastery, namely implicit and explicit learning activities. The vocabulary problems are emphasized on solving students' problems on pronunciation of words, spelling of words, grammar in word formations, meaning of collocation, denotation, connotation, appropriateness, meaning relationship, word formation, idioms, and semantic association. In cycle 1, the teacher provides students with implicit and explicit vocabulary. To make students pay attention, the teacher demonstrates how to pronoun some English words. Students are asked to repeat the way the words are pronounced. Students are also subjected to meaningful materials on pronunciation and spelling. In the implementation of the TPR method, students are presented with new words which are not performed in isolation and are not learned by simple rote memorization.

In the implementation of the TPR method, students are involved in connecting words in sentences. Students are given insight that a new item of vocabulary can be more than a single word. In doing so, they are provided with various examples to strengthen students' vocabulary units. The implementation of the TPR method is emphasized on analyzing types of vocabulary such academic words, multisyllabic words, phrases, collocation, phrasal verb, and idioms. It is to assist students to remember and enable to use words that are new to them. The learning activities of the TPR method in Cycle 1 are not really satisfied because students are not facilitated in meaningful interaction. Due to this, some difficulties of learning vocabulary are not solved yet. In the second cycle, students are acquired the passing grade and the problems are solved. The conclusion of this study is that the effectiveness of the TPR method to improve students' vocabulary mastery viewed from meaningful classroom interaction. The implication of this finding for the next studies is the use of TPR learning activities can be modified in relation to the way the teachers treat their students in meaningful learning activities.

## RECOMMENDATION

This study is focused on students' learning vocabulary in ELT contexts with caring for meaningful learning activities. For the next studies, the further studies can be focused on students' motivation, self-accuracy, and metacognition to help students in

remembering and applying the mastered vocabulary in practice. Researchers also recommend to the further studies to utilize this finding in designing learning vocabulary for the middle school level in terms implicit and explicit learning activities. In addition, the learning vocabulary materials should be designed in integrated language learning for the four language skills and vocabulary can be taught in explicit and implicit learning.

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