

# The Use of Total Physical Response Method in Developing Vocabulary Mastery of Junior High School Students at SMPN 7 Makassar

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## Abstract

This study sought to evaluate the efficacy of employing the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach to enhance vocabulary mastery among seventh-grade students attending SMPN 7 Makassar. Employing a quantitative pretest-posttest design, participants were randomly selected using random sampling. A pretest yielded a mean score of 50.71, while a posttest after the intervention showed a mean score of 79.00. The research employed a significance level of 0.05. The results indicated that utilizing the TPR method significantly enhanced the students' vocabulary mastery, demonstrated by a notable improvement between pretest and posttest mean scores ( $p < 0.05$ ). This study has some contribution to understanding the efficacy of TPR in vocabulary learning. Future research suggestions include larger sample sizes and investigating the long-term impact of TPR on students' ability about their vocabulary.

Keywords: *Total Physical Response Method, Vocabulary Mastery.*

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## 1. Introduction

English as a universal language in daily life and academics, whether as a first, second, or foreign language, is crucial for communication worldwide. Mastering English is essential as it facilitates global interaction. In Indonesia, English is mandatory from junior high school to university, teaching listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. However, vocabulary remains a challenge, especially for junior high students new to English or without prior elementary instruction. This lack of vocabulary hinders their language comprehension and expression. Students at SMPN 7 Makassar face difficulties in English, primarily due to limited vocabulary. Traditional methods like memorization have shown little impact on their learning achievement. Moreover, uninspiring teaching

methods have left students disinterested, particularly in mastering vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension.

Recognizing this challenge, utilizing this method, involving physical actions in learning, emerges as a promising solution. Previous studies show TPR's potential for engaging students and enhancing their vocabulary skills. Although effective, implementing TPR faces hurdles like traditional teaching dominance, insufficient teacher training, and students' low English proficiency.

Studies conducted elsewhere have illustrated the effectiveness of TPR, but challenges persist in its widespread adoption. To address these issues, ongoing research aims to test TPR's effectiveness in diverse settings to further

validate its impact on students' vocabulary mastery.

Hence, to improve English learning at SMPN 7 Makassar, this research proposes implementing the TPR method for seventh-grade students. TPR can make vocabulary learning more engaging, boosting motivation by allowing students to practice using English words in real contexts. Through bodily movements, TPR not only facilitates quick vocabulary retention but also broadens students' language exposure during the learning process.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Total Physical Response Method**

Larsen-Freeman (2000) stated that TPR was designed to alleviate students' stress when learning foreign languages, encouraging them to persist in their language studies beyond the initial proficiency level. In accordance to Richards and Rodgers (2001), emphasize TPR's potential to reduce students' stress levels and enhance their enjoyment of the learning process.

Furthermore, Linse (2006) argues that TPR can enhance young learners' vocabulary mastery by directly engaging them in understanding the language they hear. Asher (1968) specifically developed TPR to improve foreign language command. This method involves the teacher giving commands, which students respond to immediately by performing physical actions. TPR aims to improve English language teaching, especially in its process where English is a foreign language, especially among children. Teachers using TPR believe it creates an enjoyable learning experience for students acquiring a foreign language.

It leads the researcher to conclude that the total physical response (TPR) method is the learning method used in the process of learning activities through coordination of body movement and orders from educators to

students who responded through body movements (physical issues).

The Total Physical Response has two main goals. Firstly, it aims to teach early oral fluency, focusing on understanding. This understanding is crucial to reach the ultimate goal of mastering vocabulary.

Specifically, TPR adapts language teaching to match students' needs through action-oriented activities centered on vocabulary and following commands.

In teaching vocabulary using TPR, the focus is on improving students' listening skills and their ability to understand and respond appropriately in English within different communication situations.

Advantages of TPR for Vocabulary Mastery:

- a. TPR allows learning the target language in a meaningful way, helping students understand communication contexts.
- b. Learning through TPR is enjoyable for both educators and learners.
- c. Students feel less stressed while studying.
- d. TPR aids in long-term memory retention due to engaging both sides of the brain.

Disadvantages of TPR for Vocabulary Mastery:

- a. Some students, especially adults, might feel uncomfortable demonstrating movements, especially when learning challenging vocabulary.
- b. Difficulty in translating individual English words heard in conversations or dialogues.
- c. Not all language rules can be effectively taught using commands, as language complexity varies.
- d. TPR might be more suitable for introductory-level language teaching and might have limitations at higher proficiency levels.

### **2.2. Vocabulary Mastery**

Vocabulary, as stated by White (1986) and Hornby (1974), refers to the words that form language and are crucial elements for constructing sentences or discourse. Having a

good vocabulary selection allows for accurate expression of thoughts and ideas.

Julian Edge (1993) emphasizes that knowing numerous words in a foreign language is essential for better understanding. "Mastery" means possessing skill, ability, and technique in a specific activity. Mastering vocabulary involves the cyclical process of encountering new words, learning them, and continually expanding one's knowledge of their meanings and usage in a foreign language (Cameron, 2001).

In summary, vocabulary forms the foundation of language learning and serves as a vital tool for communication. Mastering vocabulary involves understanding word forms, meanings, and using them effectively in both spoken and written communication. Key indicators of vocabulary mastery encompass understanding word meanings, accurate pronunciation, spelling, and the ability to use words in sentences. These indicators highlight a student's comprehensive grasp of vocabulary.

Teaching vocabulary is central in language theory and practice, encompassing four language skills: writing, speaking, listening, and reading. All of these skills are generalized into two types which are receptive and productive skills.

Harmer (2007) outlines two types of vocabulary:

- a. Active vocabulary: Words that students have learned and can use effectively.
- b. Passive vocabulary: Words recognized but not necessarily used by students.

L.S.P. Nation (1990) made these into two categorizations they are: motivated and unmotivated vocabulary:

- a. Motivated (active) vocabulary consists of words readily used in daily life.
- b. Unmotivated (passive) vocabulary is divided into two categories: words partially understood but not actively used, and words unnecessary for daily communication.

In this context, passive vocabulary is understood during listening and reading, while

active vocabulary is used for speaking and writing. The study's focus is on improving active vocabulary, specifically spelling, usage, meaning, and pronunciation.

Vocabulary forms the fundamental basis of oral communication, essential for expressing thoughts, emotions, and desires. Without a robust vocabulary, effective communication becomes challenging as it's necessary for understanding names, actions, and concepts. Rivers and Temperly (1978) emphasize the impossibility of learning a language without vocabulary.

Roger (1992) underscores that a strong command of vocabulary allows for effective expression and precise thinking, enabling better communication and problem-solving.

Moreover, Godman and Mohr (1991) highlight that vocabulary is integral to reading comprehension and is a crucial component of standardized tests, reflecting a person's learning capability. Strong vocabulary skills have been linked to greater success in academic settings. Words not only aid in reading but also in writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking. Increasing one's vocabulary enhances communication effectiveness and influence on others.

Wallace's (2001) principles for teaching and learning vocabulary:

- a. Clear Aims: Set clear goals for vocabulary teaching to assess learning success. Clarity about the number of words students are expected to learn is essential.
- b. Quantity: Determine the number of new words to teach based on course content. Consider activating a few new words first, typically five to seven, to prevent overwhelming students.
- c. Relevance: Choose vocabulary related to the course's purpose or syllabus. Teachers often select words based on the course materials, but students should also communicate their vocabulary needs.
- d. Repetition: Ensure repeated exposure to new words until students can recognize and use them confidently. Encourage students to

use words frequently to remember them better, focusing on correct stress and pronunciation.

- e. Clear Meaning Presentation: Present new words in a way that ensures students fully understand their meanings. Clarity and precision in explaining word meanings are crucial.
- f. Contextual Presentation: Adapt word choices to different situations and audiences, varying from formal to informal settings. Teaching vocabulary within relevant contexts helps students learn words appropriately.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3. 1. Research Design

In this study, the researcher employed a research design, namely a pre-experimental design which is specifically the only group that would be given a pretest and a posttest. The process involved conducting both a pretest and a posttest within a single group. Initially, students took a pretest to assess their vocabulary mastery. Following this, the treatment, utilizing the Total Physical Response Method for vocabulary learning, was implemented. To gauge the effectiveness of this method, a posttest was administered at the end of the session. The comparison between pretest and post-test scores aimed to determine if there was an increase in students' scores after employing the Total Physical Response Method for vocabulary learning.

#### 3. 2. Population and sample

As outlined by Sukardi (2010), the population denotes the entirety of individuals within human, animal, event, or object groups coexisting in a specific setting, designed to form the basis for drawing conclusions in a study. This research defines its population as the collective body of seventh-grade students enrolled at SMP NEGERI 7 MAKASSAR during the academic year 2023, totaling 352 students.

In line with Sudjana and Ibrahim (2004), a sample constitutes a subset of the population that is accessible and shares similar characteristics to the broader population from which it is extracted. Employing a random sampling technique, this study intends to select a single grade encompassing 352 students from the seventh-grade cohort at SMP 7 Makassar to represent the sample.

#### 3. 3. Research Instrument

Research involves measuring natural and social contexts, necessitating effective measurement tools known as research instruments. These instruments help measure observed phenomena, which are called research variables (Sugiyono, 2012).

An instrument serves as a tool to gather data from a variable and should ideally be valid and reliable (Matondang, 2009). The data collected using such instruments are used to explain and test hypotheses in a study (Muljono, 2002).

In this particular research, the writer will employ a Vocabulary Mastery test as the research instrument. This test includes multiple-choice questions, matching items, and sentence translations, providing clear instructions for completion. The improvement in students' Vocabulary Mastery through the use of audio-visual media (learning videos) will be measured by administering a Vocabulary Mastery test as both a pretest and a posttest to the students.

#### 3. 4. Technique of Data Collection

##### a. Pre-test

The researcher evaluates students' vocabulary mastery before treatment. A vocabulary test, including multiple-choice questions, matching items, and sentence translations related to the Total Physical Response Method, will be administered. The pretest takes approximately 80 minutes.

**b. Treatment**

The researcher conducts three sessions to teach instruction text using the Total Physical Response Method. Classroom activities include:

- 1) Individual students perform English instructions.
- 2) Students ask their peers to perform instructions.
- 3) Group division for activities.
- 4) Students identify and translate daily life instructions into English.
- 5) The teacher evaluates student instructions.

**c. Post-test**

Following the completion of three treatment sessions, students will undergo a post-test. The

post-test is designed to evaluate and measure the progress and development of students' mastery of vocabulary subsequent to the implemented treatment sessions.

**d. Technique of Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using SPSS

**4. Findings**

The tests carried out were pre-test and post-test which received treatment in the form of learning the use of total physical response method in developing vocabulary mastery in learning English. The results were analyzed with a quantitative approach using the SPSS application.

Table 1. Students' scores of vocabularies in the Pre-test

No.	Respondent	Pre-test Score	Category
1	AH	80	Average
2	AJ	15	Poor
3	PN	35	Poor
4	MAB	25	Poor
5	SR	40	Poor
6	MKA	65	Poor
7	MRS	30	Poor
8	TM	45	Poor
9	SA	50	Poor
10	MAN	75	Average
11	NF	40	Poor
12	SR	60	Poor
13	GS	75	Average
14	AH	30	Poor
15	SF	45	Poor
16	AM	40	Poor
17	JS	70	Poor
18	NA	45	Poor
19	KNI	85	Good
20	MAM	70	Poor
21	MAL	70	Poor
22	NA	65	Poor
23	MFM	35	Poor
24	S	15	Poor
25	MNI	45	Poor
26	MFAP	25	Poor
27	NAR	50	Poor

28	MYG	45	Poor
29	NH	80	Average
30	NAZ	85	Good
31	AFN	55	Poor
32	MH	25	Poor
33	MAZ	85	Good
34	DPNH	40	Poor
35	SR	35	Poor

Table 1 shows student scores in the pre-test. The lowest score is 15, while the highest is 85. The part shows the result of the post-test after doing several treatments using the total physical response method to enhance students' vocabulary.

Table 2. Students' vocabulary scores in Post-test

No.	Respondent	Post-test Score	Category
1.	AH	90	Good
2.	AJ	65	Poor
3	PN	75	Average
4	MAB	70	Poor
5	SR	65	Poor
6	MKA	85	Good
7	MRS	70	Poor
8	TM	80	Average
9	SA	75	Average
10	MAN	85	Poor
11	NF	75	Average
12	SR	80	Average
13	GS	80	Average
14	AH	65	Poor
15	SF	80	Average
16	AM	75	Average
17	JS	90	Good
18	NA	75	Average
19	KNI	90	Good
20	MAM	90	Good
21	MAL	90	Good
22	NA	85	Good
23	MFM	70	Average
24	S	70	Average
25	MNI	80	Average
26	MFAP	55	Poor
27	NAR	80	Average
28	MYG	75	Poor
29	NH	85	Good
30	NAZ	100	Very good
31	AFN	80	Average

32	MH	75	Average
33	MAZ	95	Very good
34	DPNH	85	Good
35	SR	80	Average

Students' pre-test and post-test results were measured using a student rating system of very good, good, fair, average, and poor the student score Classification is as follows:

Table 3. Pre-test Score Classification

Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	93-100	-	0%
Good	84-92	3	9%
Average	75-83	4	11%
Poor	<75	28	80%
<b>Total</b>		35	100 %

The information displayed in Table 3 indicates that no students achieved very good scores (0%), while 3 students attained good scores (9%), 4 students received average scores (11%), and a significant majority of 28 students obtained poor scores (80%).

Table 4. Post-test Score Classification

Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	93-100	2	6%
Good	84-92	10	28%
Average	75-83	15	43%
Poor	<75	8	23%
<b>Total</b>		35	100%

According to the data provided in Table 4, there emerged a notable discrepancy in students' vocabulary proficiency subsequent to receiving the treatment. Specifically, 2 individuals excelled, achieving very commendable scores, making up 6% of the total; 10 students performed well, constituting 28% of the participants; 15 students achieved moderate scores, encompassing 43% of the cohort; and 8 individuals struggled, obtaining poor scores, accounting for 23% of the overall group.

Table 5. Paired Samples Statistics

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair	Pre-Test	50.71	35	20.869	3.527
	Post-Test	79.00	35	9.533	1.611

Upon reviewing Table 5, it's apparent that the pre-test recorded a mean score of 50.71, displaying a standard deviation of 20.869. Conversely, the post-test exhibited a mean score of 79.00, coupled with a standard deviation of 9.533. These findings strongly imply a substantial enhancement in students' vocabulary abilities subsequent to employing the Total Physical Response Method.

Table 6. T-test comparing scores before and after the test

Paired Samples Test									
Paired Differences									
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	-28.286	13.663	2.309	-32.979	-23.592	-12.248	34	.000

A t-test was utilized to evaluate whether a significant difference existed in student scores before and after the test. According to the t-test criteria, a probability value above 0.05 is considered acceptable. In Table 4.6, the probability value of 0.000 is notably lower than the significance level (0.05). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is firmly rejected, favoring the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>). These results substantiate that the Total Physical Response Method effectively improves the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) vocabulary proficiency of first-grade students at SMPN 7 Makassar.

## 5. Discussion

The researcher undertook this study with the primary aim of discovering ways to make the Total Physical Response Method more engaging and effective for students, ultimately improving their vocabulary proficiency. The decision to opt for the Total Physical Response Method stemmed from a desire to develop educational materials that could pique students' interest and captivate their attention. Initially, some students were unfamiliar with this method, prompting the researcher to take the initiative to introduce this innovative approach. By introducing this new method, the researcher sought to provide students with a valuable tool for bolstering their vocabulary mastery, fostering a more engaging and interactive learning experience in the process.

Based on the provided description of the data calculations, it can be inferred that the data collected from first graders of SMPN 7 Makassar is both homogeneous and normally

distributed. The improvement in vocabulary skills, particularly when using this method, is evident. The data, collected from pre and post-tests of 35 students in the experimental Grade, indicates a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery. The average pretest score before implementing the Total Physical Response Method was 50.71, and after the treatment, the post-test mean score increased significantly to 79.00. The considerable rise observed in the post-test scores in comparison to the pretest scores strongly indicates that the implementation of the Total Physical Response Method significantly and positively impacted the students' proficiency in vocabulary skills.

Furthermore, the difference between the pretest and post-test mean scores is statistically significant, as indicated by the statement that "0.00 is smaller than 0.005 (0.005) and is a significant value." This suggests that this method played a significant role in enhancing the students' vocabulary mastery, making it a highly effective approach for language instruction in this context.

The findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by Fahrurrozi (2017) with the title "*Improving Students' Vocabulary Mastery by Using Total Physical Response*". This study shows that implementing TPR in classrooms to improve learning outcomes can improve students' vocabulary skills by activating students through modeling that physicalizes students' vocabulary and can translate it to students as meanings of English words.

In addition to its classroom application, integrating TPR into English language learning



can transform what was once a challenging experience for students into a more enjoyable and engaging process. This approach aims to enhance the learning environment, enabling students to actively participate and thus achieve the best possible outcomes in their learning journey. Moreover, Wati (2021) with the title *“Improving Students’ English Vocabulary Mastery Through Total Physical Response method at Grade VII a of Mts Negeri 2 Kuantan Singingi Sentajo Raya District - Kuantan Singingi Regency”*.

Students have the opportunity to acquire vocabulary from their surroundings, including objects, animals, and the environment. If students are driven to excel in English, they should engage in regular repetition, consistent practice, and consider joining an English course. The amount of vocabulary a student retains in their memory determines their language proficiency. Next, Shihab (2011) conducted a study titled "Effectiveness of Total Physical Response (TPR) Method in Teaching English Vocabulary to Young Learners (Quasi-Experimental Study with 2nd Grade Elementary School Students in Bandung)" indicates that the data obtained from: Interviews found that students had an overwhelmingly positive response to her method.

The students stated that the activity was fun and interesting and this method helped them to remember the material because they memorized the vocabulary by looking at the action. In reference to the result of the study, the conclusion is this method is significantly effective in enhancing students’ mastery of vocabulary.

Hafidah's (2020) exploration revealed the adeptness of early childhood educators in the Bendsari district, showcasing their proficiency in theme and material development, media utilization, vocabulary selection, and the application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method for English language education. The training illuminated the transformative impact of TPR, empowering educators to foster an interactive and enjoyable English

learning environment for young learners. Consequently, it is envisaged that English language education in preschool and early childhood settings in the Bendsari district has undergone a significant shift, promising more effective and captivating learning experiences.

Moreover, Xie's (2021) study underscored the effectiveness of the Total Physical Response (TPR) technique in instructing English to young learners. The research highlighted TPR's incorporation of games, role-playing, storytelling, and collaborative activities, all grounded in physical movement, as foundational elements of its pedagogical approach. These findings echoed previous research, further validating TPR's prowess in facilitating English language acquisition for the young learner demographic. However, there are challenges in implementing TPR in practice, such as the continued dominance of traditional teaching methods, limited teacher training, low English language proficiency among students, lack of authentic language environments, and an assessment system that focuses more on exams. These findings highlight the need for changes in the approach to teaching English to young learners. The study also provides insights into the attitudes of parents and students towards English education, as well as the impact of parental supervision on the use of TPR. Overall, the interpretation of the article suggests that TPR is an effective method for teaching English to young learners, but there are still challenges that need to be addressed. The latest research that will support the current researcher's study is a study conducted by Nuraeni (2019), which revealed that the method was very enjoyable for the students and made them highly engaged in learning English at school.

Drawing upon the earlier research findings, employing this method has demonstrated a substantial impact on enhancing students' mastery of vocabulary. This assertion is reinforced by the research outcomes, revealing a remarkable surge in post-test scores compared to the pre-test scores. Consequently, it is evident that the Total Physical Response

Method effectively contributes to enhancing students' capacity to master vocabulary.

## 6. Conclusion

The study uncovered that the average scores in the post-test notably surpassed those in the pre-test, with the post-test average at 79.00 compared to the pre-test's 50.71. A T-test value of 0.000 for both the pre-test and post-test suggests a discernible enhancement in vocabulary mastery facilitated by the Total Physical Response method. This demonstrates an improvement in students' performance from the pre-test to the post-test phase.

The success of Total Physical Response in augmenting students' vocabulary proficiency is attributed to its interactive approach and the enjoyable classroom ambiance it fosters. By engaging in physical responses to commands in the target language, students found it easier to retain vocabulary, as evidenced by empirical research data indicating a significant surge in students' comprehension levels. Consequently, Total Physical Response emerges as an effective technique for bolstering students' mastery of vocabulary. In summary, the Total Physical Response method proves highly effective in enhancing vocabulary skills, particularly for seventh-grade students at SMPN 7 Makassar.

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