

*Total Physical Response for Online Learning on Young
Learners at English Learning Center Surabaya
(ELCSurabaya)*

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Abstract

Learning English, most especially for young learners, should be fun and engaging. This research is aimed to investigate the implementation of Total Physical Response (TPR) method which promotes an enjoyable ambience in online classes at English Learning Center Surabaya (ELCSurabaya). TPR is an alternative method to transfer English knowledge to young learners focusing on repetition and physical movement to teach English. The study used a qualitative design and the data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentations. The findings of this research confirmed that TPR is convenient and effective. The implementation of TPR is divided into three stages; pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching. Total Physical Response is an applicable method to create an enjoyable learning atmosphere.

A. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has significantly affected billions of peoples around the globe. Its impacts are not only wide-ranging, but also extensive. The world's student population is suffering from restrictions which includes closures of educational institutions. In Indonesia as per Wednesday, March 25th 2020, a total of 68.256.787 students were affected by COVID-19**Error! Reference source not found.** In consequence, teaching and learning activities are shifted from on-site learning to online learning. It is crucial for teachers to create a fun ambience for young learners, to minimize boredom, stress, and anxiety while learning. Given the current situation, implementing Total Physical Response (TPR) as a teaching method to transfer English knowledge to young learners is one of many recommended methods. TPR method introduced by Dr. James J. Asher is a language teaching method designed around the coordination of speech and action which attempts to teach language through motoric or physical activities. He stated that speech directed to young children consists primarily of commands, which children respond to physically before they begin to produce verbal responses**Error! Reference source not found.** This 'natural method' in a sense that second language learners understand a new language first before they have to speak it; the same way children are introduced to their first language. When a child is introduced to a new word, parents commonly point at an object or act it out and label the object. The child will immediately imitate the movement and eventually say the word. An example of TPR method in the

classroom is to teach the adjective ‘happy’, the teacher will show a smiley face and say ‘happy’. Students instantly comprehend that a smiley face means happy. They will also show their smiley face and say the word ‘happy’. TPR method encourages young learners to understand and to internalize target language through physical movements. TPR method not only promotes stress-free learning, it also creates a positive mood while learning. By focusing on message which is interpreted through movement, the learner is said to be freed from stressful situation. Second language learners will be freed from foreign language syndromes such as stress, shy, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, etc. (Asher, 1988: 5-6)

This study involved a total of eight young learners aged eight to ten at ELCSurabaya. They joined the online course twice a week since the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Here, they learned English and attempted to communicate in English freely and actively with their teacher and their classmates. Although they are familiar with the English language, they are still trying to adapt to learning English online. All eight young learners participated in the online class have never joined online courses before. Despite the fact that learning activities depended on a small-sized screen of a smartphone or of a laptop and a good internet speed, both teacher and students tried to be actively involved during the teaching learning process in a completely novel environment, virtual class. English learning process for young learners aged eight to ten is different from adolescents and adults. At the age of eight to ten, young learners are more active, more engaging, more fun, and more curious. However, they have a limited attention span and they lose interest easily. To effectively teach English to young learners, teachers must first understand the characteristics of young learners. As presented by Scott and Ytreberg (1992), young learners aged eight to ten possess several unique characteristics; they are mature enough, they have a particular point of view, they are able to describe the difference between facts and fictions, they are curious of asking questions, they believe in what is said and the real world to express and comprehend meaning or message, they have a distinct opinion about what they like and what they dislike, they are open to what happens in the classroom and begin asking a teacher’s decision, they can cooperate with each other and learn from others, they are competent mother tongue users which means they are already aware of basic linguistic rules. In addition, Harmer (2007) states a crucial characteristic of young learner aged eight to ten is that they possess the ability to become competent speakers of a new language with remarkable facility, provided they get enough exposure to it.

By implementing TPR method in online classes, young learners have the opportunities to respond both physically and verbally, to have fun while learning, to be active, to be engaging, and to be confident in speaking English. Therefore, this study is aimed to further investigate the

implementation of TPR method in online classes at ELCSurabaya.B. RESEARCH METHOD

This is a qualitative descriptive study because the result of this study will be presented descriptively. The sources of data of this research are the teacher and the eight students joining the online course at ELCSurabaya, the events, observation checklist, fieldnotes, documentations, and interview guidelines. Moreover, data collection technique was applied by the researcher to collect data based on the teaching-learning condition and environment. In collecting data, the researcher used sources of data. She conducted a non-participatory observation which included observation checklist and field notes. The researcher observed the English teaching learning process and concentrated merely on the implementation of TPR method. During the interview, the researcher asked the young learners some simple questions about how they felt about the class, how enjoyable the activities were, how much they understood the topic, and how comfortable they were in speaking English. Also, she asked the teacher about the teaching process, students' feelings towards online learning, students' understanding, and the implementation of TPR method in online class. This way, the researcher gained first-hand information. Finally, to complete the data collection, the researcher followed the online learning schedules to obtain documentations. Once the class started, the researcher observed using the observation checklists, recorded the teaching process, and made fieldnotes. When the class finished, the researcher analyzed the result of the observation, of the interview, of the recording.

C. ANALYSIS

During COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher conducted online observation starting on March 2nd, 2021 until March 25th, 2021. ELCSurabaya facilitates English learners to continue learning English in virtual classes. The focus of this study is on the implementation of TPR method used in the classroom which is adjusted to online learning activities.

1. The Implementation of TPR Method

There were two cycles of observation conducted in this research. Cycle one was conducted on March 2nd, 2021 and cycle two was conducted on March 16th, 2021. As the class commenced, the researcher focused on the implementation of TPR. TPR method in cycle one and two consisted of three stages; pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching. The first stage was pre-teaching. In pre-teaching, the teacher actively dominated the teaching process. The teacher introduced the topic of discussion about school supplies to the students using TPR-O (TPR with objects). Teacher gave commands, displayed an object, and said the target language, in the meantime students imitated any instructions given by the teacher. Fast learners usually grasped the target language

with ease, whereas slow learners needed a second or a third attempt to elicit target language. There was no treatment given in pre-teaching. Any errors made by students were not corrected in order to boost students' confidence. The second stage was whilst-teaching. Teacher used TPR-P (TPR with pictures). In this stage both the teacher and students involved actively in speaking activities. Teacher did the same steps as in pre-teaching; teacher gave commands, showed a picture of an object and asked the students what they saw on their screen. Treatments were given at this stage. Teacher allowed students to self-correct or to peer-correct. Teacher also corrected students when students were not able to self-correct or to peer-correct. Last stage was post-teaching. In post-teaching, teacher employed both TPR-O and TPR-P. Teacher showed the students a slide of PPT with 10 objects. Then, she asked students to show the objects and to say the target language. Students said the sentences as they saw the pictures and they showed the objects. Students dominated the learning process. In the last step, most students were familiar with the target language and were able to elicit the target language. In addition, the teaching learning process ran well and the students seemed to enjoy the class.

Context	: School supplies
Target language	: Pencil, book, eraser, sharpener, pencil case, school bag, cap, school uniform, shoes, a, an, it, they
Preparation	: PPT, school supplies mentioned
Type	: TPR-O (TPR with objects), TPR-P (TPR with pictures)
Procedures	:

TPR-O (Pre-Teaching)

- Teacher showed one slide of ten pictures of school supplies. They were pencil, book, eraser, sharpener, pencil case, school bag, cap, school uniform, and shoes. Teacher commanded, *“Look at all 10 pictures, memorize them.”*
- Teacher moved to next slide and continued, *“Now, find all 10 pictures in 30 seconds.”* Teacher gave limited amount of time to get the students to be more active. This activity took about 3 to 5 minutes. Students ran around their house to find 10 objects they saw on the screen. Students were very enthusiastic. When finished, students gathered all objects in front of them. Meanwhile, teacher also placed 10 objects in front of her and encouraged students to keep being active.
- Students responded with triumph, *“Finish, miss!”* while showing the objects in front of the camera. Students' facial expressions showed that they were having fun running about their house.

- Teacher praised students. Teacher showed one object in front of the camera and said, “*Pencil. It’s a pencil.*” Then teacher asked students to show a pencil and to repeat one by one.
- Next, teacher took another object, showed it in front of the camera and repeated the process until she covered all 10 objects.
 - *Book. It’s a book.*
 - *Eraser. It’s an eraser.*
 - *Sharpener. It’s a sharpener.*
 - *Pencil case. It’s a pencil case.*
 - *School bag. It’s a school bag.*
 - *Cap. It’s a cap.*
 - *Uniform. It’s a uniform.*
 - *Shoes. They’re shoes.*
- During TPR-O, when mistakes were made, corrections were made by neither teacher nor students. Treatments were not given either at this stage. This way, students would have more confident in knowing that they knew how to say the object regardless their mistakes. Some mistakes while applying TPR-O were frequently made by students were, for examples:
 - *Pencil. It’s pencil.* Young learners usually focused more on the object than the article ‘a’.
 - *Eraser. It’s a eraser.* Young learners were mostly confused to differentiate between the article ‘a’ and ‘an’.
 - *Shoes. It’s a shoes.* Young learners had the tendency to copy the previous sentences and plural nouns were often treated as singular nouns.

TPR-P (Whilst-Teaching)

- Teacher continued PPT with pictures of objects. Each slide showed one object. Teacher gave commands to individual student to say what they saw.
 - *T : What’s this?*
 - *S : Pencil. It’s a pencil.*
 - *T : What’s this?*
 - *S : Book. It’s a book.*
- Students took turn.
- During TPR-P, when mistakes were made, teacher corrected the students. Treatments were given by correcting the learners’ mistakes. This way, students recognized their mistakes and corrected their mistakes. Here are the examples:
 - *T : What’s this?*

- *S : Eraser. It's a eraser.*
- *T : A eraser or an eraser?*
- *S : A eraser.*
- *T : Eraser. It's an eraser.*
- *S : Eraser. It's an eraser.*
- *T : Great job!*
- Teacher allowed students to self-correct, before correcting students' mistakes.
- *T : What are they?*
- *S : Shoes. It's a shoes.*
- *T : It's a shoes or they are shoes?*
- *S : Shoes. They're shoes.*
- *T : Brilliant.*
- Teacher allowed students to self-correct.
- In whilst-teaching with TPR-P, students started to grasp the target language. Progress was made after treatment. Students memorized the target language through repetition

TPR-O and TPR-P (Post-Teaching)

- After the treatment process, the teacher asked the students about the material given. Teacher reviewed the lesson by requesting each student to show the objects one by one in front of the camera and to mention them using the target language correctly. Students were cooperative when doing the task. Most students were familiar with the target language and were able to elicit the target language. Consequently, the students' speaking performance improved gradually.

2. Discussion

The discussion in this section is based on how TPR method is implemented in online classes. The findings of this research confirmed that TPR method is applicable for online teaching. There are three stages in using TPR method; pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching.

a) Pre-Teaching

In pre-teaching, the teacher usually introduces the topic of the day and hints the keywords. The fundamental activities are physical response accompanied by verbal response. Students are encouraged to follow instructions modeled by the teacher, but can verbalize the commands at their will. The freewill factor allows the students to speak when they are confident. It is important to create a fun yet relaxed environment to make students comfortable during the learning process.

b) Whilst-Teaching

This step is the core activity. At this stage, teacher and students are actively involved in the speaking activities since the students are already familiar with the target language. The procedures of TPR method involves the use of simple commands and visual aids accompanied by movement. In whilst-teaching, TPR method contextualizes target language using pattern sentences and vocabulary drill.

c) Post-Teaching

In post-teaching, students are more confidence in speaking after repetitions and treatments done in whilst-teaching stage. Consequently, students manage to elicit target language with ease.

Total Physical Response method promotes confidence building and autonomous learning through modeling, drilling and contextualizing vocabulary and sentence structures. Additionally, TPR method reduces learners' anxiety and stress.

However, several challenges occurred during online classes. The difficulties which both the teacher and young learners were facing are listed as followed;

a) Internet Problem

Internet connection has been one of the major issues during online learning. Some days the internet connection was good, some others it wasn't. This caused problems in delivering knowledge. The online classes which were conducted only one hour per session were affected by the slow internet connection. Nonetheless, the teaching learning process could still go on.

b) Device Problem

Having a mobile phone or a laptop is nowadays a must for online learning. Unfortunately, three young learners out of eight did not have their own androids or laptops. Instead, they took turns with their parents or siblings. Luckily, students were allowed to join another available class of the same level in case they could not join their scheduled online class.

c) Digital Fatigue

Some students were tired after a full day of online school. Some students hesitated to move around while doing Total Physical Response because they were tired. This resulted in the delay of eliciting target language.

D. CONCLUSION

In the light of research finding and discussion, the researcher can conclude that TPR method is applicable for online class. TPR is a popular teaching method which is proven suitable not only for on-site class, but also online class. The application of TPR for online class is convenient, effective, and fun. Despite the challenges which occurred during teaching learning process such as internet problems, device problems, and digital fatigue, young learners aged eight

to ten experience an enjoyable learning atmosphere in a novel learning environment, virtual class. Furthermore, TPR method enhances young learners' self-confidence in speaking English because they have the opportunity to involve actively and to communicate freely in the teaching learning process.

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