


# Improving English Vocabulary for Elementary School Students using Total Physical Response (TPR) Method

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## **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to determine the increase in English Vocabulary of Elementary School Students Using the Total Physical Response (TPR) Method. In this study, researchers using a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design for doing a way to compare groups. There are three techniques in data collection includes: observation, pre-test and posttest. After collecting data, researchers analyze, describe and finally conclude. Data will be analyzed using statistical analysis as follows with calculate the mean score of the pre-test and post-test to find out whether there is a significant difference in control and experimental groups. From this statement, it can be concluded that the TPar method will affect student learning outcomes. Therefore, it is time for teachers, schools, and related parties to use the TPR method to improve the quality of learning.*

**Keywords:** *English Vocabulary; Elementary School Students; Total Physical Response (TPR)*

## **1. Introduction**

Learning English vocabulary is very important in development students at school. By mastering English vocabulary, students can pronounce the correct pronunciation and intonation. In learning In progress students will be able to know how to write, pronounce, interpret vocabulary, and memorizing vocabulary. During the learning process some students do not pay attention to the subject matter conveyed by teacher. There are some students who are joking with their friends, and doing other activities, so that it affects concentration. Until the teacher must master learning methods or strategies.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method that was first developed in the 1970s by Asher, a professor of psychology at the University of San Jose California. in the form of conversations in which children respond physically to the instructions of their parents or others around them. For example, when a father says: "Look at dad" or "Give me the ball" the child will. This kind of conversation lasts for several months before the child gives a verbal response. Although during conversation the child does not respond verbally, he is actually trying to master the elements of the language he hears. After adequate mastery, the child will give verbal responses spontaneously. Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method designed to enable students to acquire new expressions, especially verbs and other words that accompany them, through listening and acting out these words. Learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior or potential for behavior

as a result of reinforced experience or practice. According to Hamzah (2006): Learning is a systematic process in which each component will determine the success of students. Meanwhile, the notion of learning In the opinion of Prihatiningsih, et al (2018) explains that "In learning it is not only teachers who must be active, but students are also required to be active in forming their own knowledge through direct experience". Meanwhile, according to Sagala (Suparni & Hendracipta, 2018) Learning is an activity designed by the teacher in helping students to learn according to their abilities systematically through planning, action and evaluation. there's action in it.

Vocabulary is one aspect that must be learned when we learn about a language. According to Vygotsky written in Scott Thornbury's book, "Vocabulary is a word and a word is a microcosm of human consciousness." Vocabulary is a word and a word is a small life of human life (Thornbury, 2001). According to the Nation "Vocabulary is a connection with other language activities" Vocabulary is a liaison for language activities (Nation, 1999). Meanwhile, according to Richard, "Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency and provides much of a basis for how well learners speak, listen, read and write." Vocabulary is a core component of language skills and forms the basis for students to speak, listen, read and write (Thornbury, 2001). From some of the opinions above, it can be concluded that when we know a lot of vocabulary it will make it easier for us to communicate.

Mastery of vocabulary between one person and another is not the same. The vocabulary mastered by a person is increasing in line with the development of the person. According to Yudiono (1984:47) there are several dominant factors that influence a person's level of vocabulary mastery, namely background knowledge or certain disciplines, age, education level, and references. Meanwhile, there is an opinion which states that the process of mastering one's vocabulary goes slowly. A person's vocabulary is getting bigger and expanded according to age. The more mature a person, the more things he knows (Keraf, 1986:64).

To teach English vocabulary using the TPR method, teachers can follow various procedures that have been prepared by experts which can be found in bookstores that provide learning materials for school purposes. In addition, teachers can also develop their own teaching procedures that are tailored to the needs of their students. What must be remembered is that the words to be taught must be able to be acted out so that their meaning can be understood by students, and learning is carried out by following the following eight stages (Gordon, NA). 1) Students watch demonstrations of key words and hear the instructions for using those words, 2) Students return to listening to the teacher pronounce and demonstrate (act out) the words learned. 3) The teacher again says the command to use words and does a demonstration and the students follow the model that the teacher does. 4) The teacher returns to say the command without doing a demonstration, and the students carry out the orders given. 5) The teacher again says the command without doing a demonstration, and individually the students do it. 6) The teacher performs a variety of play demonstrations and all students follow. 7) The teacher returns to say various commands without demonstration, and students carry out the commands given together. 8) If students are proficient in acting and saying commands, students take turns giving orders and acting out.

Dwiastuty, N., Anggoro, D., Anita, T., (2016) added in his research that: (1) The use of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in learning English can increase students' learning motivation according to their character at an early age. (2) In the application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, a new idea is found that learning will be maximized if this method is applied together with the use of learning media or teaching aids that support the achievement of learning objectives and is carried out continuously.

## 2. Metode

In this study, researchers using a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design for doing a way to compare groups. There are three techniques in Data collection includes: Observation, pre-test and posttest. After collecting data, researchers analyze, describe and finally conclude. Data will be analyzed using statistical analysis as follows with calculate the mean score of the pre-test and post-test to find out whether there is a significant difference in control and experimental groups.

## 3. Result and Discussion

Plato: Language is a statement of one's thoughts through onomata (names of objects) and rhemata (speech) which is a reflection of one's ideas in the flow of air through the mouth.

Language is the ability of humans to communicate with other humans using signs, such as words and gestures. As a general concept, "language" can refer to the cognitive ability to be able to learn and use complex communication systems, or to describe the set of rules that make up that system or the set of utterances that can result from those rules. All languages rely on the process of semiosis to associate signs with certain meanings.

Vocabulary is a set of words that are owned by a person or other entity, or are part of a particular language. A person's vocabulary is defined as the set of all the words that the person understands or all the words that the person is likely to use to construct new sentences. The wealth of a person's vocabulary is generally considered to be a reflection of his intelligence or level of education. Therefore, many standardized exams, such as the SAT, provide questions that test vocabulary.

The addition of one's vocabulary is generally considered an important part, both in the process of learning a language or developing one's ability in a language that has been mastered. School students are often taught new words as part of certain subjects and many adults find vocabulary building an interesting and educational activity.

Vocabulary has an important role in English language skills, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Vocabulary knowledge is very influential on English skills. Nation in Schmit and McCarthy (1993:6) says that vocabulary knowledge is one component of language skills such as reading and speaking. This means that vocabulary mastery is closely related to the ability to read and speak language skills.

Based on the discussion on English vocabulary and English skills, vocabulary is very important in English language skills, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Vocabulary makes it easier to understand spoken texts or ideas conveyed by the interlocutor or audio or audio visual. Vocabulary makes it easier to understand written texts, so that information or content in written texts is easy to understand. Vocabulary makes it easy to convey ideas or interact verbally, either individually or in a community. Vocabulary makes it easier to convey ideas in writing, both in written form, such as narratives, descriptions, expositions, and so on, but also in the form of correspondence. Therefore, English vocabulary needs to be improved to improve English skills.

This time we are going to look into strategies to give students a deeper understanding of vocabulary. You likely understand that merely repeating definitions from a dictionary is not an effective way to teach vocabulary to your students, yet this practice is often the first method that comes to mind in the context of our classrooms.

In 2003, researcher E.D. Hirsch noted the importance of teaching literacy in schools: “It is now well accepted that the chief cause of the achievement gap between socioeconomic groups is a language gap.” Consider vocabulary instruction as one way to level the playing field for all of your students.

Steps to teach vocabulary to elementary school students:

### 1. **Put yourself in your students’ shoes**

To teach your students vocabulary (or anything) effectively, you’ll need to see things from their perspective. Because while you may have known the meanings of words like fortuitous or incremental, your students might not — consider your level of education and the number of years you’ve had to gain exposure to literature. If you’re an avid reader, it’s even more likely that you’ve developed a robust vocabulary.

According to Steven Stahl’s publication on vocabulary learning, a person’s understanding of various vocabulary words likely fits into four categories:

- a. I have never seen that word before.
- b. I don’t know what it means, but I have heard of it.
- c. The context helps me know if it has something to do with X.
- d. I understand and use it.

Stahl uses an example cited from Atlantic Monthly so adult learners can remember what it feels like to be in that vocabulary acquisition process. Consider the word vicissitude in the following context:

“America’s permanent election campaign, together with other aspects of American electoral politics, has one crucial consequence, little noticed but vitally important for the functioning of American democracy. Quite simply, the American electoral system places politicians in a highly vulnerable position. Individually and collectively they are more vulnerable, more of the time, to the vicissitudes of

electoral politics than are the politicians of any other democratic country. Because they are more vulnerable, they devote more of their time to electioneering, and their conduct in office is more continuously governed by electoral considerations.”

Which category from the list above do you fit in for the word vicissitude? Why? Can you gain any meaning from the context? What measures would need to be taken for you to fully understand and include the word in your writing and speech?

Vicissitude is described in the dictionary as “a change of circumstances or fortune, typically one that is unwelcome or unpleasant.” In a traditional classroom setting, you’d be expected to write the definition repeatedly, find it in a word puzzle, and then be tested, likely matching words to definitions. But that’s ineffective - let’s look at a better way.

## 2. Make direct vocabulary instruction fun and engaging

When introducing a new term, teachers should:

- a. Supply illustrations, descriptions, examples, and anecdotes - the keyword here is and. Students need to interact with words in both an auditory and visual way. If possible, have students physically interact with the vocabulary, such as performing physical actions to represent the word. Kinesthetic learners would remember a word’s meaning easier if there was a specific action tied to it. For example, for the word jocular, meaning characterized by joking, humorous, or playful, students could pantomime laughing uncontrollably. In the earlier example, finding other texts where vicissitude is used and comparing it to synonyms and antonyms could be helpful. A myriad of websites can help with this process. Here is one particular website that has vicissitude used in quotes, poetry, text, and in the news.
- b. Consider ways to transition between grammatical forms, explicitly teaching roots and affixes of words. Think of connections to easily confused words related to the one at hand, and try to clear up any confusion your students might have. In our example, you’d review the root “vic” and find that it means change, substitute, and deputy; this would be a good start when looking for connections. Discussing the adjective form, vicissitudinary, can also help students connect affixes and possible uses of the word.
- c. Have students develop their OWN connections, illustrations, and examples. In the final step of direct instruction, students need to personalize the information and capture experiences to develop a growing understanding of the contexts in which words can be used. For example, if a student heard the word wrangle used in one of their favorite movies, have them sketch the scene and describe why wrangle was chosen by the scriptwriters. For our term, I wondered if vicissitude had anything to do with victim. The prefix vic certainly helped me make this connection, but I can also see a loose connection based on the definitions of the two words. This simple inquiry could help me to both better understand and use the term vicissitude.

One graphic organizer that can help with direct vocabulary instruction is the Frayer model. This model asks students to define the word, give characteristics of the word, list examples and non-examples of the word, and, in some cases, create an illustration to accompany the word. As helpful as the Frayer Model is, this, too, can turn into a rote, ineffective practice if a teacher overuses it or neglects the best practices for direct vocabulary instruction.

### 3. Indirect vocabulary instruction is key

Students can learn vocabulary from hearing and seeing words repeatedly in different contexts. This includes exposure to vocabulary that is encountered in an independent reading book or heard in conversation, whether that be in person, in a movie, or online. Reading aloud to students, especially those with disabilities, can indirectly instruct vocabulary as well.

### 4. Create quality vocabulary practices

What are some ways students can practice vocabulary without just copying definitions from the dictionary? Let's take a look at a few.

- a. **Sorting** - Guided word sorts consist of telling students the categories in which to sort a list of words. This could be "adjectives," "nouns," etc.. For example, students might sort words related to ancient Egypt into people, places, the process of mummification, religion, and agriculture based on the context of the word. The teacher can even give clues, such as "There should be four words in column one and three in column two." Free word sorts allow students to make categories themselves based on their own observations and methods of grouping. Some students may come up with a completely unique method of classifying the words, which helps them create their own understanding of the words. This works better with certain word lists and when students have experience with the sorting process.
- b. **On-purpose errors** - The teacher or a member of a small group uses a vocabulary word incorrectly in a sentence (either aloud or in print). Students are then tasked with determining which word fixes the mistake and should replace the erroneous word in the sentence.

For example: "The vexed businessman was shocked at how quickly the value of his stocks rose." To fix the error, students would need to replace vexed with incredulous (or one of its synonyms).

- c. **Word races** - Even older students like a good game. Have students line up in teams and set up the parameters of the game. Then, you could say the definition and have the students race to the whiteboard to write the word. You could make this more complex, too.

For example: "Write the adjective form of the word that means having a quality deserving of praise, honor or distinction." Students write: glorious (changing from the base word glory).

- d. Mind mapping - Mind maps allow visual representations of connections through the use of branches (like a tree) or colors or pictures. Students can use pencil and paper or digital tools to create a semantic map of how they connect to the vocabulary words. Some might choose images. Some might choose song lyrics, colors, or a tree. This is where with instruction, individuals can develop their own creative methods of building a vocabulary.
- e. Inquiries - Like my example above in step three of direct vocabulary instruction, sometimes allowing students to research their own questions about a word can help them build stronger connections. Find out what they're wondering about. See what they assume about or connect to the word (possibly erroneously!), and spend time researching any questions they have (if you don't already know the answers).

## 5. Vocabulary instruction can be engaging!

Vocabulary instruction is often overlooked as necessary or important in our classrooms. However, it can serve as an equalizer and an important asset for our learners. Moving away from the dictionary-copying model of instruction and toward explicit, direct instruction of vocabulary is a necessary change to empower our students for long-term academic success.

Mastery of vocabulary between one person and another is not the same. The vocabulary mastered by a person is increasing in line with the development of the person. According to Yudiono (1984:47) there are several dominant factors that influence the level of mastery of a person's vocabulary with knowledge background or disciplines, age, education level, and references. Meanwhile, there is an opinion which states that the process of mastering one's vocabulary goes slowly. A person's vocabulary is getting bigger and expanded according to age. The more mature a person, the more things he knows (Kreaf, 1986:64).

The level of education naturally affects one's vocabulary mastery. The higher a person's education, the wider the scope of his vocabulary. This is acceptable because the subjects taught at each level of education are different. Many new terms are introduced at higher levels.

The number of references that are read also affects one's vocabulary mastery. This is in accordance with the opinion of Roekhan and Martutik (1991: 51) which states that the more one reads, the more vocabulary one has mastered. The library is a very appropriate medium in supporting vocabulary through reading activities.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the factors that influence one's vocabulary mastery include background knowledge, age, education level, and references.

### The importance of learning media for elementary school students

Learning media is anything that can be used to channel messages from the sender to the recipient so as to stimulate the thoughts, feelings, interests and willingness of learners

in such a way that the learning process occurs in order to achieve the goal of learning effectively (Rusman, 2011). The use of learning media can attract interest and motivate students because it can clarify the presentation of messages and information so as to facilitate and improve the process and learning outcomes; can improve and direct the attention of the child so that it can lead to the motivation to learn more direct interaction; can overcome the limitations of the senses, space and time; and can provide students with similar experiences about their environmental events, and allow for direct interaction with teachers, communities and the environment. The development of science and technology increasingly encourage renewal efforts in the utilization of technology results in teaching and learning process. Teachers are required to be able to use the tools that can be provided by the school, and it is not possible that the tools are in accordance with the development and demands of the times. Teachers may at least be able to use cheap and humble tools but are necessary in order to achieve the intended teaching objectives. Besides being able to use the tools available, teachers are also required to be able to develop the tools available, teachers are also required to be able to develop skills to create teaching media that will be used if the media is not yet available. Thus, it can be concluded that the media is an integral part of the learning process to achieve the goal of education in general and the purpose of learning in schools in particular.

## 4. Conclusion

Why does English at elementary school need in learning English, First, a young learner learn language easily; Second, all of life system uses English in this digital period, so that it can be easier to accept technology; Third, The young learner accept English easily when they will continue to study at the junior high school. Learning English in elementary school age children can help children's minds to see from another point of view and express themselves. By having other communication channels to share their ideas and feelings, children will have many options for voicing their opinions.

With the help of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, it can help students in making it easier to learn vocabulary. However, the use of this method also has advantages and disadvantages, here are some advantages and disadvantages:

### Advantages of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method

1. Students are able to pick up and learn language better and faster if they attribute physical actions to certain words. This is very useful for children because children want to respond using physical responses first rather than using verbal responses.
2. This method is a good tool for building good vocabulary to stimulate children to learn.
3. This method can facilitate students with meaning in a real context, which is easy to remember. Actions or activities help strengthen connections in the brain.



4. Helping students achieve fluency more quickly in activities that involve students in the use of situational language.

5. Creating positive thinking that facilitates students to be involved in the learning process, so as to develop not only motivation, but also student goals in learning.

#### Disadvantages of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method

1. In using this method students are generally not given the opportunity to express their own thoughts in a creative way.

2. The teacher may find that it is limited in terms of language. Certain target languages may not be suitable for this method.

3. This can be a challenge for shy students.

4. It is limited, because everything cannot be explained by this method. This method should be combined with other approaches.

So, from some of the advantages and disadvantages of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, it can be concluded that this method is suitable to be applied to students at the beginning of their language learning, but the use of this method must be combined with other approaches, because the use of this method students generally do not given the opportunity to express their own thoughts in a creative way.

So, here it is clear that the use of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method can affect student learning outcomes in mastering vocabulary compared to before using this method students will have difficulty understanding English.

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