The Influence of Total Physical Response (TPR) Toward Listening Skill of the Third Grade Students of Sabilillah Elementary School, Sampang Madura

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to know the influence of Total Physical Response toward student’s listening skill. The writer conducted this study in Sabilillah Elementary school. The sample of this study were two classes; mathematics as the control group and science class as the experimental group. Both pre-test and post-test were conducted to both groups. The experimental group was taught by using TPR, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. The score from both tests were then tested statitcally using Mann Whitney U-Test to find out if the hypothesis is rejected or accepted. The study showed that there is a significant difference in student’s listening skill between students who were taught by using TPR and who were not taught by using TPR indicated by the significant value of Mann Whitney U-Test (the result is 0.02) and the value is lower than 0.05. Thus, the Null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the Alternate hypothesis (H1) is accepted. In this research, it is concluded that TPR has significantly influenced the listening skills of students that they were more active and relaxed during the class.

Keywords: teaching listening skill, TPR (Total Physical Response), young learner

Introduction

English has been included and decided as foreign language since 1945. Further, since the issue of the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 096/1967, English has been incorporated into secondary-school curriculum as a compulsory subject. Prior to the launching of the 1999 Curriculum, English was only introduced at the secondary schools (Rachmajanti, 2008). In recent years, the curriculum that uses in Indonesia is Curriculum 2013. By using this curriculum, the English teaching is more emphasized on enabling the students to use English for communication and to understand texts (Hendriyana, 2013).

In teaching English, students are required to master four skills, such as listening, speaking, writing and reading. Mastering four English’s skills is impossible if the teaching methods used by teacher are not effective and the learning process is not supported with sufficient facilities. The first skill that is firstly taught is listening skill. This is in line with the idea that in the first stage of learning, only one of four language skills can be selected and preferably this is supposed to be the listening skill (Asher, 1968). In reality, listening skill is rarely taught at school because firstly people think that teaching listening skill makes students less active as they just listen without doing something. The other reason is that perhaps many teachers think that learning listening should involve audio or tape recorder which may not be provided in class. Teaching listening is mostly conducted in a monotonous ways and this can result in boredom among students.

In solving all of the problems in teaching listening skill, teacher should provide various teaching methods, especially for elementary school students in this third grade considering they are beginning learners. Brown (2007) argues that Total Physical Responses is an appropriate method for beginning learner. He further states that TPR is effective in the beginning levels of language proficiency but it loses its distinctiveness as learners advanced in their competence (Brown, 2007). Total Physical Responses is a teaching technique that can help students in learning language through listening to and carrying out
instruction (Asher cited in Richard & Rodgers, 1986). Asher claims that speech directed to young children consists primarily of commands, which children respond physically before they begin to produce verbal response (Asher cited in Richard & Rodgers, 1986). In applying this method, teacher gives commands called simple body movements, such as stand up, sit down, walk, run, and turn around. Then the students will respond to the commands physically and not verbally.

In conducting this research, the writer chose Sabilillah Elementary School because this school takes English as a compulsory subject. She conducted the research for third grade students. The writer chose Total Physical Response as the topic of the study because TPR is appropriate method for young learners that the process is similar to acquiring first language. The writer will then analyze the effect of TPR by looking at the significance of this method in helping the students develop their listening skills.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Total Physical Responses**

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a set of method developed by Dr. James J. Asher, teacher of psychology of the State University of San Jose, with the purpose of developing an efficient technique for the learning-teaching of languages. According to Asher (1968), Total Physical Response was created to improve the listening ability of a foreign language by giving a physical response when students heard foreign command. He further explains that the implementation of TPR is that the teacher gives commands to students in foreign language, and then students listen to those commands and immediately respond them by doing several physical actions.

TPR was developed to increase the outcome of teaching-learning process of a second or foreign language, especially for children. Teacher who use TPR method think that by using TPR as method students will enjoy in learning foreign language. Larsen-Freeman (2000) argues that TPR was developed in order to reduce the stress the students might feel when studying foreign languages and thereby encourage students to persist in their study beyond a beginning level of proficiency. This argument is in line with Richards and Rodgers (2001) idea that this method can help the students to reduce their stress because students can enjoy their learning activity. In addition, Linse (2006) argues that Total Physical Response can improve young learners’ listening comprehension because it has a principle that language learners learn best when they are directly involved and understand the language they hear.

**Research Method**

The method used in this research was quantitative. The population of this study was the third grade students of Sabilillah Elementary School and the samples of this study were the mathematics and science classes from the third grade. The writer took the sample purposively based on certain characteristic. Then, the writer chose Science class as the experimental group and Mathematics class as the control group. The writer chose mathematics class as the control group which was taught by using conventional teaching method, while the Science class was the experimental group and this group was taught by using TPR.

The writer collected the data through Pre-test, Post-test and the observations. She collected the data from the experimental group (mathematics class) and control group (science class). Scoring the pre-test and post-test were part of data collection. In scoring both tests, writer made assessment characteristics. After collecting the data, the writer analyzed the data by using quantitative method. The writer used Mann U Whitney formula to analyze the data. The level of significance used in this research was 0.05.

**Findings**

**Test Score of Experimental and Control Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Min Score</th>
<th>Max Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test Experimental Group</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>66.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test Control</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>69.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 showed that the highest score of pre-test was 74 and was achieved by student in experimental group and control group. The lowest score was 24 which was achieved by student in experimental group too. In other side, the mean of both groups was different. The mean of control group was higher than that of the experimental group. The mean of the control group was 69.65 while the mean of the experimental group was 66.68. It revealed that listening skill ability of experimental group was higher than that of the control group. After giving the treatment, the writer gave post-test to both groups. Table 1 showed that the highest score of post-test was 92 achieved by student in experimental group. Meanwhile, the lowest score was 71 achieved by student in the control group. In experimental group, the mean score from pre-test is 66.68 while in the post-test, the mean increased to 86.84. Meanwhile, in the control group, the mean of pre-test was 69.65 and in post-test was 82. Both means in experimental and control group increased. In other words, the listening ability in experimental group and control group rose after they got the treatments, being taught by using TPR method. Although the mean of both group increased, but the increase of the control group was lower than the experimental group. The mean score which increased from pre-test to post-test as much as 20.16, while in the control group, the increase was 12.75.

### Analysis of the Data

The basic idea of the data analysis is to analyze the hypothesis purposed in this study. The Alternative Hypothesis ($H_1$) states that there is a significant difference in students’ listening skill between the students taught by using TPR and those who were not taught by using TPR. Otherwise, the Null Hypothesis ($H_0$): There is no significant difference in students’ listening skill between the students taught by using TPR and those who were not taught by using TPR.

The writer used SPSS 20.0 to calculate the data and to test the hypothesis. The data was analyzed using Mann Whitney U-Test. Before testing the hypothesis using Mann-Whitney U-test, the writer tests the normality and the homogeneity of the data. There are two methods in normality test such as Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk. In this study, the $\alpha$ value is 0.05 which means that the confidence interval of difference is 95%.

#### Table 2a The Result of Normality test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests of Normality</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov$^a$</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRETEST</td>
<td>EXPERIMENTAL GROUP</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONTROL GROUP</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTTEST</td>
<td>EXPERIMENTAL GROUP</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONTROL GROUP$^b$</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ This is a lower bound of the true significance.  
$^b$ Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the result of Normality test in table 2a, it shows that there are significant values that lower than $\alpha = 0.05$. It occurs in significant value of pre-test in control group where the significant value in Kolmogorov-Smirnov is 0.018 and in Shapiro-wilkis 0.012. Both significant values are lower than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the data from both groups are not normally distributed. It makes the writer decides to use non-parametric Independent Sample model to analyze the data and the statistics test of non-parametric independent sample that will be used is Mann-Whitney U-test.

After testing the Normality data, the writer tests homogeneity of data which is called as the test of homogeneity. The test of homogeneity is as follow:
Table 2b The Result of Homogeneity test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test of Homogeneity of Variances</th>
<th>Levene Statistic</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRETEST</td>
<td>2.065</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>.157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTEST</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>.322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 2b, it can be seen that both pre-test and post-test have significant values more than $\alpha = 0.05$. The significant value of the pre-test is 0.157 while in the post-test is 0.322. It means that the homogeneity assumption is fulfilled, thus the testing hypothesis by using Mann Whitney U-test can be continued.

After testing the normality and homogeneity of the data, the hypothesis were tested using Mann Whitney U-test to test the hypothesis, thus the writer will know whether there is significant difference in students’ listening skill between the students taught by using TPR and those who were not taught by using TPR. The result of the calculation is as follow:

Table 2c The Result of Mann Whitney U-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
<th>PRETEST</th>
<th>POSTEST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>223.000</td>
<td>141.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>548.000</td>
<td>417.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-1.338</td>
<td>-3.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asympt. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.181</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on table 2c, we know that the U value in pre-test is 223 with the significant value (2-tailed) is 0.181. This significant value is higher than 0.05, it means that $H_0$ is accepted while $H_1$ is rejected. Based on the hypothesis, if the $H_0$ is accepted, there is no significant difference in listening skill between students who were taught by using TPR and students who were not taught by using TPR. Thus, it can be concluded that the listening skill of students in both group are different, but the differences are not significant. In other words, the listening skill of students in both group before they got treatment are almost the same.

Meanwhile, in post-test, the U value is 141 with the significant value (2-tailed) is 0.02. This significant value is lower than $\alpha = 0.05$, it means that $H_0$ is rejected while $H_1$ is accepted. Based on hypothesis if the $H_1$ is accepted, it means that there is significant difference in listening skill between students who taught by using TPR and students who are not taught by using TPR. Thus, it can be concluded that the listening skill of the students in both group are significantly different. In other words, the listening skill of students taught using TPR is better that those being taught using the conventional method. Total Physical Response has influenced the listening skill of students in the experimental group.

Interpretation of The Finding

It has been stated that $H_0$ is rejected indicated by the mean score. In short, there is a significant difference of the listening skill between students who are taught using TPR and without using TPR.

The goal of this research is to find out whether TPR influences student’s listening skill or not. The research finding shows that TPR has influenced the student’s listening skill, classroom activity and TPR reduces student’s stress. The influences closely related to the goal of teaching listening by using TPR.

TPR has influenced student’s listening skill. By using TPR as teaching method, the listening skill of students can be improved. The influence of TPR in student’s listening skill can be seen from the significant increase of the pre-test and post-test scores of the students in the experimental group. Although the scores of control group increases as well, but the rate of the increase is not as high as the one of the experimental group. This finding is supported by Asher (1968), as mentioned that TPR Method was designed to improve listening comprehension a foreign language by having subjects give a physical response when
they heard a foreign utterance. This finding also is supported by the previous study conducted by Khatimah, which observed how TPR method improved listening score for VII-1 at SMP Negeri 13 Banda Aceh. Furthermore, the following study conducted by Jiandong and Ligzhu (n.d) regarding the use of TPR in university level in EFL listening class has supported the finding of the previous one. The result of both previous studies asserted that TPR could improve students listening skill of students.

TPR also encourages the students to be more active. It is because during learning-teaching activity, students do not only listen to the explanation of the teacher, but they became active by responding to the commands from the teacher. Because TPR can make students become more active, TPR can solve teaching listening problems where many people think that teaching listening skill makes students become passive students as they only listen. TPR method makes the students become the center of teaching-learning process, they do not only listen to the teacher but they are also involved in teaching-learning process. Thus, TPR can be alternatives to teach listening skill because TPR does not make the students become passive but to be active instead.

By using TPR, students becomes more active that they are involved in teaching learning activity. They follow the teacher activity in modeling the target languages and respond to the teacher’s commands by performing physical action. The way the teacher delivers the material was also different. She read story, utilized picture and modeled the target language. Thus, the teaching learning activity run interestingly and could be used to avoid the boredom of the students until the end of class. It can be concluded that teaching-learning activity by using TPR is not monotonous. TPR can keep students’ interest to learn. By looking the findings, TPR can solve teaching listening problems where many people think that teaching listening is monotonous. TPR can be applied in any ways in teaching listening, in this study, the writer used story telling in applying TPR method. Linse (2006) mentions some different ways in teaching listening by using TPR such as TPR songs and finger-plays, TPR storytelling, yes/no cards, syllable clapping, rhyming, word activities, and minimal pairs. The teacher can use them to make the teaching-learning activity not monotonous. Besides that, when teacher applied TPR as teaching listening method, the teacher does not need any audio or recorder. She/he can read story telling aloud then the students listen the story, or use other ways in applying TPR.

Total Physical Response also reduces stress of students when they learn foreign language. The stress is caused by the difficulty in understanding the meaning of foreign language. In understanding the target languages, the students interpret the meaning of language by noticing the teacher’s movement. Thus, they will not feel difficult in understanding the meaning of the languages. Besides that, they are enthusiastic during learning-teaching activity. They follow and respond any commands from the teacher directly. It means that they can understand the target languages easily. This finding is in line with the goal of the use of Total Physical Response. These are in line with Richard & Rodgers (2001: 75) statements that:

“By focusing on meaning interpreted through movement, rather than language forms studied in abstract, the learner is said to be liberated from self-conscious and stressful situation and is able to devote full energy to learning”. (According to Richard & Rodgers, 2001:75)

Larsen-Freman (2000) also explains that the goal of TPR is reducing the stress of people feeling when they learn foreign languages and thereby encourage students to persist in their study beyond a beginning level of proficiency. This finding is contrast with the result of the previous study which was conducted by Jiandong and Ligzhu (n.d) regarding the use of TPR in university level EFL listening. When the writer applied TPR, the learners did not enjoy the teaching-learning activity, they thought that this method was not challenging enough and the task given were a bit childish. It can be concluded that TPR method does not fit for adult learners because teaching method using TPR is considered less challenging for them. This method is more suitable to be implemented towards young learner.

**Conclusion**

From the explanation above, the writer concluded that there is a significant difference in student’s listening skill between students taught by using TPR and who were not taught by using TPR. It is proven by the result of the different mean scores from both groups, experimental and control group. The different mean scores of both score shows that the mean score of the experimental group in post-test (86.2) is higher than the mean of the control group (80.21). It is also proven by the result of calculation of the Mann U
Whitney U-Test. The significant value in independent sample t-test is 0.03 where the value is lower than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and the Alternate hypothesis (H₁) is accepted. It means that Total Physical Response has influenced the listening skill of students.

In this study, there are some influences of the use of TPR as the teaching method such as, the student’s listening skill can be improved by using TPR method, students can be more active students, and the last TPR can reduce student’s stress when learning foreign language.

By considering all of the benefits in using TPR as teaching method, the use of target language also has influenced in applying TPR. Concrete or action verbs like “walk”, “run”, “jump”, etc, are more appropriate to use rather than abstract verb like “beautiful”, “bad”, “handsome”, etc. The concrete or action verbs are easier to model and understandable for students than abstract verbs. The abstract verbs are difficult to model and if teacher models the abstract verbs inappropriately, the students will get confused to understand the meaning.

Considering all the benefits of implementing the TPR methods, it is suggested that the English teacher may use Total Physical Response as one of the teaching method in teaching listening skill. The Total Physical Response can be provided also by the learners, it means the TPR makes the students become more active in the classroom and also can reduce their stress. For further research, they can observe the influence of TPR in different age and also they can investigate the influence of TPR to other English language skills, such as reading, writing or speaking.

References