



# Investigating the Influence of the TPR Method on the Development of English Vocabulary in Small Classroom

Zul Astri<sup>1</sup>(✉), Nurmadina Hs<sup>2</sup>, Nurul Fachrunnisa<sup>1</sup>, and Misnawati Misnawati<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia  
zulastri17@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Handayani Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

**Abstract.** English language skills are one of the most important things that should be mastered early in life to have a qualified generation in the future. In this case, employing the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach to teach basic English vocabulary is an effective strategy for students at the beginner level of proficiency in the language. The study's objectives are to examine each student's learning style and determine how well the TPR method develops the vocabulary of students with various learning styles in small classrooms. The participants in this study totaled 19 students. The research design consisted of one experiment group with a pre-and post-testing procedure. The information was gathered through a questionnaire from the Barsch Learning Style Inventory (1980), a vocabulary test, interviews, and classroom observation. A study conducted by the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) revealed that the majority of students were visual (68.4 percent) and auditory (15.8 percent), with only 15.8 percent being kinesthetic. It was discovered through data analysis that the average of students' results in the pre-test was 43.4 percent, whereas the average of students' results in the post-test was 85.8 percent. According to this, students' achievement in acquiring English Vocabulary has improved significantly due to the application of TPR.

**Keywords:** learning style · TPR method · English vocabulary development · small classroom

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Students are unique individuals with unique requirements, interests, and ways of processing knowledge to succeed in education. It is in line with [3] who stated that Students possess various qualities and characteristics. A skilled and sensitive teacher seeks multiple ways to impart information or knowledge to ensure that each student receives the information or knowledge most effectively. If a teacher spends the extra time and energy necessary to elevate and encourage individualism in his or her students, in addition to personalizing the content of his or her course materials, this will result in a more hopeful educational experience for the students.

© The Author(s) 2023

U. Widiati et al. (Eds.): ASIATEFL 2022, ASSEHR 749, pp. 771–781, 2023.

[https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-054-1\\_66](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-054-1_66)

Teachers cannot avoid differences and similarities between students as individuals because they are inherent features of the learning environment. These differences and similarities can be attributed to a variety of factors, such as ancestry and behavior. Examples of measurable characteristics include age, motivation, interest, attitude, aptitude, learning styles, and learning strategies. Teachers may decide to use these considerations as a point of reference when presenting materials to students to ensure that information, skills, and attitudes are well received by students.

When instructing students in the classroom, teachers, and lecturers don't always consider each student's learning style as one of the many student variables [4]. The majority of teachers use their teaching style rather than considering their students' learning styles. In this issue, teaching methodology can be incorporated as a factor affecting student performance. Students will learn effectively if teachers present an appropriate teaching method to stimulate the learning process, and this will ultimately increase student performance and achievement.

In this study, the researcher examines the vocabulary development effectiveness of the TPR method for students with different learning styles (visual learners, auditory learners, and kinesthetic learners). Since the vast majority of meaning is conveyed lexically, vocabulary is a crucial aspect of second and foreign language instruction, even though it is not the only factor that communicates meaning. There are undoubtedly additional elements, such as grammar, emphasis, rhythm, etc. Learning a language cannot be reduced to simply learning vocabulary, but it is also true that without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in a second language cannot take place in any meaningful way. Therefore, learning and teaching vocabulary is crucial as the foundational element for mastering a language. Vocabulary is the first and most fundamental aspect of learning English [5]. Consequently, the researcher attempts to concentrate on vocabulary elements.

Furthermore, in this study, the researcher attempts to use the TPR method because numerous studies have shown that this method is widely used to improve students' vocabulary skills. However, no research investigates which learning styles this method is compatible with, even though classrooms contain a variety of students with varying learning styles, and previous researchers did not account for these differences in their findings. In addition, the researcher discovered in several sources that the characteristics of the three learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) differ when processing new information or knowledge imparted by the teacher.

Following all of the information presented above regarding the significance of vocabulary elements, different types of learning styles, and the effect of the Total Physical Response Method, the researcher decided to carry out research to investigate the effect of the Total Physical Response Method on various learning styles (V-A-K) in vocabulary development in the small classroom.

## **1.2 Scope of Problem**

From all problems above, the researcher has chosen to concentrate her study on the impact that the TPR Method has on the three distinct types of learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) and their respective contributions to vocabulary acquisition in the classroom.

### 1.3 Research Questions

- a. What types of learning styles do students have?
- b. How well does the Total Physical Response Method accommodate the needs of students with different learning styles?

### 1.4 Objectives of Research

The objectives of this research are:

- a. To obtain a profile of the preferred method of instruction for each student
- b. To elaborate on the degree to which Total Physical Response is able to meet the needs of students who have varying styles of learning.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Total Physical Response Method

Total Physical Response, also known as TPR, is an approach to learning English that was developed by [2]. Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method of teaching a language that is based on the coordination of speech and action. Its goal is to teach language through the use of physical activity. TPR was developed in the 1960s ([13]; [14]). The goal of this method of instruction is to teach language through the use of physical movement. It is a structured learning style that is based on the coordination of commands, speech, and movement. TPR is a well-liked approach for teaching children in their early year's words associated with actions and movements ([15]; [16]; [17]; [22]). According to [20], one of the benefits of using the TPR method is that it helps students improve both their understanding and their memory through the use of their body movements when responding to commands. The imperative form of language is a very powerful instrument that can be used to manipulate the behavior of students and direct their understanding through the use of movement or action.

The use of the right brain is associated with the TPR method, while the use of the left brain is utilized by some of the participants in the method [13]. This is because activities that require creativity are performed on the right side of the brain, whereas tasks that require cognitive ability are performed on the left side of the brain. When the TPR method is used, the right hemisphere of the brain is responsible for processing the activity of the body, and the left hemisphere is responsible for the production of language. The theory that children demonstrate their comprehension through actions and associate their vocabulary with these actions is supported by research carried out by [9]. Children will develop an unconscious understanding of language once they are able to make connections between the target language and the actions. As a consequence of this, they are going to effortlessly learn the vocabulary.

## 2.2 Vocabulary Mastery

The mastery of a language is based on its vocabulary [8]. Vocabulary mastery is linked to language mastery. It can be obtained by reading the target language ([10]; [19]) or listening to it ([19]). Other researchers discovered that children's vocabulary development can be observed when they are speaking, writing, or translating, though not as much as when they are reading [10]. Children who learn a second language pick up new words unconsciously or without conscious effort. This can be obtained by listening, speaking, and reading in order to gain understanding or learn new information [21].

The input given to children has the potential to affect the development of their language acquisition abilities. According to [12], students' vocabulary levels can be predicted in any language based on the length of the language received. As a result, the longer they listen to utterances in the target language, the better they will master that language.

In this study, the term "foreign language" is used to refer to English. Children are exposed to English as a foreign language when there are no native English speakers in their immediate environment [18]. However, it is not accurate to say that English is a foreign language for children, as it is possible that some children view English as a second or intensive language. The efficacy of teaching children a second language can be measured by how well they comprehend the material.

## 2.3 Learning Styles

Rita Dunn and Kenneth Dunn conceptualized the VAK (Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic) learning style. People with visual learning styles tend to learn through external visual relations, those with auditory learning styles will find it easier to learn through listening, and those with kinesthetic learning styles learn through physical movement [11].

Individuals are best able to absorb, organize, and process information according to their learning style [6]. A suitable learning style is a key to a person's learning success [1]. For students to effectively achieve their learning objectives, they must be assisted and directed to recognize their optimal learning style during learning activities. Rita Dunn states in Ria Putri that there are three types of learners: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic (VAK). The visual learner acquires knowledge through sight, the auditory learner through hearing, and the kinesthetic learner through movement, work, and touch. Each individual possesses all three learning styles, but one dominates the others. Also, influencing learning outcomes are learning styles [7]. Learning outcomes are the final state, it is also a competency and change that a person has through repetitive process and recognition, it will be stored for a long time because learning outcomes contribute to forming a person who always wants to achieve better results, which then leads to a shift in mindset and improved work behavior.

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

In this research, the researcher applies experimental design. It is used to explain how the Total Physical Response Method can be used to help students learn vocabulary in a variety of ways.

#### 3.2 Population and Sample

##### 1) *Population*

The population of this study is the first-grade students of Junior High School Pesantren Darul Istiqamah. The numbers of students were 82 students for grade 1. This school is a boarding school under the foundation of Darul Istiqamah Maros. This school combines two types of curriculums namely curriculum from the Ministry of Education and curriculum from boarding school. The difference with other formal schools is the additional subject or subjects of religion, namely Arabic and BBQ (Guidance to Read Quran), while the general lessons are not different from a formal school. For the two additional subjects are carried out at night so as not to interfere with the formal subject.

There are unique characteristics of this school namely the process of identifying learning styles performed by the school when the student first enrolled in the school. When the learning style they have known by the teacher, they sit according to their learning styles, respectively. The purpose of this identification is that teachers can know the student's learning style and more forgiving some students' characteristics and also make them more easily in the process of transfer of the knowledge and information although in practice there is no specific method applied by the teacher.

In determining the population, I deliberately choose the junior high school because this school has grouped the students based on their learning styles. It would be very appropriate for my research. I require a heterogeneous population in which in the classroom existing 3 different learning styles of students, so instead of only 2 learning styles or even only 1 learning style in the classroom. In contrast to other formal schools since students' learning styles are not previously detected early there is no way to see how students learn in the classroom as a whole.

##### 2) *Sample*

The sample of this research is grade 1 SMP-IT Putri Pesantren Darul Istiqamah Maros. The researcher took one class consisting of 21 students of Junior High School students in the second semester of 1st-grade Pesantren Darul Istiqamah Maros. 4 classes have the same characteristics. The researcher applied random sampling by taking only one class as a research sample because as the researcher said before that the 4 classes have the same characteristics, there are 3 different types of learning styles based on teacher assessment results are (VISUAL, AUDITORY, KINESTHETIC STYLES).

There are 4 classes for grade 7 namely 7A, 7B, 7C, and 7D. No class is superior to the other, so all of the classes are the same in selecting the sample of research, the researcher randomly chose one class namely class 7B.

### 3) *Teacher*

Teachers at this school get training about Quantum Teaching when they were recruited to be a teacher at the school. They are given the knowledge and understanding of the learning styles of students in the school. By using this knowledge, they will better understand the type or character of students in the classroom. They will be very tolerant of students because they already understand how students process the information or the knowledge. For instance, when there are students who walk around in the classroom or cannot sit when the learning processes, then the teacher does not necessarily angry with the students but before they would look at the profile of the students and they will be understood that these students like to do such thing to be able to acquire the knowledge. Teachers are given training about quantum teaching, but they do not apply the particular method to students. They are still in the stage of understanding the student's learning style which is a step further than other formal schools in the district of Maros.

The school is now in the third year of the application of Quantum teaching and the identification of learning styles. As I have stated before those teachers have not yet implemented certain methods when teaching in the classroom, but now they are in the stage of doing such kind of thing. When another formal school was going to learn about quantum teaching, now SMP-IT Putri Pesantren Darussalam is about to start looking for the best method to be applied to the student. Therefore, the researcher deliberately took this school to be the sample for my research.

When students come and register themselves as students at this school, the students are given a form to identify their learning styles. It is intended that teachers can know the profile of the students they teach. In the classroom, the teacher set up their seats. There are 3 rows of benches and they are sitting according to their learning styles. Visual students are seated in the same row, as well as auditory and kinesthetic students. The school makes U-safe in arranging the chair.

### 3.3 Method of Collecting Data

In chronological order, here are the steps involved in collecting data:

#### 1) *Questionnaire*

In identifying students learning styles, the researcher translates the language into the Indonesian Language since the students are Junior high school students. Furthermore, she writes the sentences in the easiest way to understand. There is piloting to see whether it works or not. There are 24 questions based on the learning style inventory by Barsch, which are measured by using three criteria, as follows:

Often= 5 points/scales

Sometimes= 3 points/ scales

Seldom= 1 Point/ Scale

This instrument was chosen for a variety of reasons: it is simple to administer, easy to administer, self-scoring and not scored by an external agent, quick to administer and complete, easily reportable scales, and reliability and validity supported by research.

## 2) *Interview*

Interview employed to convince the learning styles of students. The questions in the interview section do not differ from the questions in the questionnaire.

## 3) *Pre-test*

The objective of the pre-test is to assess students' prior vocabulary knowledge. In this research, the researcher does a pre-test by giving vocabulary tests to students to see their basic vocabulary knowledge before they are given material using the TPR method by the teacher. The number of questions in the pre-test is made based on the textbook used by the teacher in teaching English in the classroom.

## 4) *Post-test*

The purpose of the post-test is to assess students' vocabulary knowledge after they have been taught using the TPR method. In this study, the post-test consists of a vocabulary test with the same questions as the pre-test.

### **3.4 Method of Analyzing Data**

In analyzing the data researcher uses mixed methods, descriptive qualitative, and quantitative methods. This is used to solve the problems that exist from data.

The researcher firstly investigated the various learning styles of the students and then compare the results of the students' pre-test and post-test to determine whether or not there was an improvement in their vocabulary knowledge. In addition, the researcher profiled each student individually, considering their distinct learning styles to determine whether or not the students improved their vocabulary elements as a result of using the TPR Method.

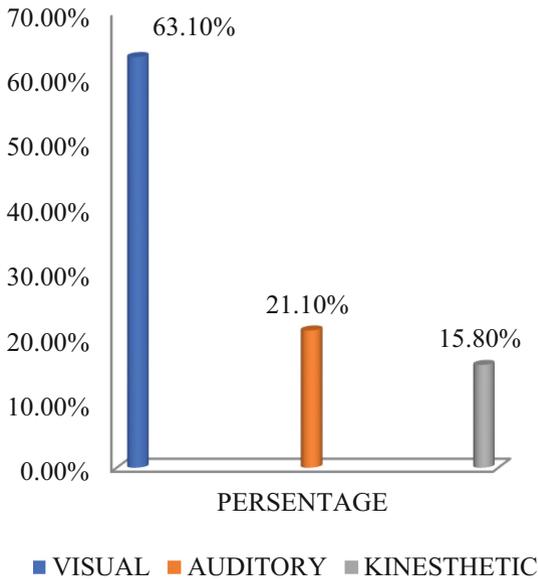
## **4 Finding and Discussion**

### **4.1 Learning Style Identification**

SMP-IT Putri Pesantren Darussalam has identified the students' learning styles using forms created by the school. But in convincing the result of students' learning styles, researchers gave questionnaires to the students from Barsch Learning Style Inventory. After getting the results of the questionnaire, to further convince the student's learning styles the researcher conducted an interview section on the subject of this study. This is done to crosscheck the above questionnaire answers given. So, there are three instruments used to identify the student's learning styles. They are a form from school, a questionnaire from the Barsch learning style inventory and the last is the interview which also uses Barsch Learning Style Inventory.

**Table 1.** The Frequency and Percentage Students' Learning Style

No	Learning Styles	Frequency of Students	Percentage
1	Visual Learning Style	13	68.4%
2.	Auditory Learning Style	3	15.8%
3.	Tactual Learning Style	3	15.8%
<b>Total</b>		19	100%

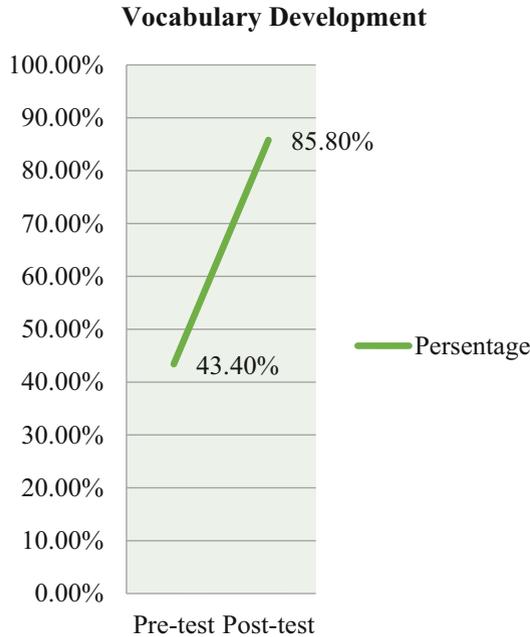
**Fig. 1.** Chart of Students' Learning Styles

#### 4.2 Percentage of Students' Learning Style Data

This table above shows the percentage of learning styles which is got by the researcher from the previous data (Table 1).

#### 4.3 Data Put in Chart

The chart shows that the 1st-grade students in class B of **SMP-IT Putri** Pesantren Darussalam Grade 1 have various learning styles in general. It is signed by significant different percentages by using Learning Styles Identification by Barsch. The result can be concluded that from 19 students, (a) 63,1% of students have a visual learning style, (b) 21.1% of students have an auditory learning style (c) 15,8% have kinesthetic/tactual learning styles (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 2.** Students' Vocabulary Development

#### 4.4 Vocabulary Element Measurement

From the pre-test through the post-test, each student's score was tallied individually using the formula below to determine their performance in each activity.

$$\text{The percentage} = \frac{\text{the number of right answer} \times 100\%}{\text{the number of item}}$$

Students' test scores were averaged according to the following formula:

$$\text{Mean score} = \frac{\text{the total of the percentage}}{\text{the number of students}}$$

Students' pre-test results averaged 43.4%, while their post-test results averaged 85.8%, according to the data above. TPR has had a significant impact on the students' ability to learn English vocabulary (Fig. 2).

Based on the data above, we can see the improvement of every student with their feature learning style. All visual learners can improve their vocabulary 40% and more improvement from the pre-test and kinesthetic as well. In contrast, auditory learners only can improve themselves only 10% to 25% improvement after the pre-test.

We can conclude that after applying TPR method in the classroom, only visual and kinesthetic learners can retain vocabulary more effectively after using the TPR method in the classroom. It is related to the theory that visual learners generally can understand the material given better when they see the teacher's body language and facial expression

and in TPR the teacher always acts and show the meaning of vocabulary by using gestures and body language. Furthermore, kinesthetic learners can receive the information better by learning through moving, doing, and touching. The concept of the TPR method fit the characteristic feature of the kinesthetic learning style and it is proved by the improvement done by kinesthetic students. In contrast, auditory learners learn better through listening but they are easily distracted by noise. After the three meetings, TPR method given by the researcher showed that auditory learner only can improve their vocabulary 20% after the pre-test.

## 5 Conclusion

Only 15.8 percent of students were found to have a kinesthetic learning style, according to the results of a study that was carried out using the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI). The majority of students were found to have either a visual or auditory learning style. The analysis of the data revealed that in this small classroom, the students' overall performance on the pre-test averaged 43.4 percent, while their overall performance on the post-test averaged 85.8 percent. These findings were discovered in comparison to one another. According to this, the level of success attained by students in the process of acquiring English Vocabulary as a result of the implementation of TPR has significantly increased.

**Acknowledgments.** The researchers would like to thank the teachers and all of the participants, students of SMP-IT Putri Pesantren Darussalam Maros for their generosity in giving their time to participate in this study. We hope that this brief study will serve as additional knowledge or a reference for future research.

## References

1. Adlia Afriani, et al, Analisis Kebutuhan Belajar Mahasiswa pada Mata Kuliah Strategi pembelajaran TI, Prosiding Seminar pendidikan IPA Pascasarjana UM. Vol. 2.2017, ISBN:978–602–9286–22–9.
2. Asher, J, Total Physical Response Method for Second Language Learning, San Jose: San Jose State College, 1968.
3. Astri, Z, The Use of Total Physical Response Method for Different Learning Styles in English Vocabulary Development. *SELTICS*, 1(1), 2018, 25–38. Retrieved from <http://ejournals.umma.ac.id/index.php/seltics/article/view/57>
4. Astri, Z., and I. Wahab, "The effect of reading teaching material for different learning styles in improving students' reading comprehension", *Jurnal Bahasa Lingua Scientia*, Vol. 10, no. 2, 2018, pp. 215-30, doi:<https://doi.org/10.21274/lis.2018.10.2.215-230>.
5. Astri, Z., & Wahab, I, The use of TPR method for disable students with different learning styles in English vocabulary development. *SELTICS*, 2(2), 2019, 66–75. Retrieved from <http://ejournals.umma.ac.id/index.php/seltics/article/view/336>
6. Chatib, Munif, Orangnya Manusia: Melestarikan Potensi dan Kecerdasan dengan Menghargai Fitrah Setiap Anak, Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka, 2014.

7. Endang, Nugraheni, et al, *Gaya belajar dan Strategi Belajar Mahasiswa Jarak Jauh: Kasus di Universitas Terbuka*. Jakarta, 2003.
8. Ilham, D, Teaching speaking using direct method at fifth grade of SDN 1 Cimerah Tasikmalaya, 2009, Retrieved from <http://psrcentre.org/images/extraimages/ICECEBE%252-113900.pdf>
9. Li, C, *Applicaton of Total Physical Response in Children's ESL Education*, 2010
10. Liu, C. L, A Review of Effect of Different Tasks on Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition. *Higher Education Studies*, 5(5), 2015, 56–63
11. Ria Putri Palupijati, Model Pembelajaran Visual Audio Kinestetik dalam meningkatkan hasil belajar siswa di SDN Sleman Yogyakarta, *Jurnal PGSD UNY*, 2012.
12. Paradis, J., Nicoladis, E., Crago, M., & Genesee, F, *Bilingual children's acquisition of the past tense: A usage-based approach*, 2011.
13. Richard, J., & Rodgers, T, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (1st ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
14. Rokhayati, A, Promoting Total Physical Response (TPR) For Young Learners in English Class, In *The 2nd TEYLIN International Conference Proceedings*, 2017, pp. 75–80.
15. Rachmawati, R. Pengaruh Penggunaan Metode Total Physical Response (TPR) Terhadap Penguasaan Kosakata Bahasa Inggris Anak Taman Kanak-Kanak (Penelitian Kuasi Eksperimen Di TK-PG Darul Hikam Bandung), 2013.
16. Safitri, A, Implementation of Total Physical Response Principles in Teaching Vocabulary at Elementary School, *U-Jet*, 6(6), 2016, 1–9.
17. Sari, D, The Implementation of Teaching English Vocabulary Using Total Physical Response At The Fifth Grade of SDN 2 Bonagung In 2014/2015 Academic Year. Universitas Muhamadiyah Surakarta, 2005.
18. Steinberg, Denny, D., Nagata, & P, H. D, *Psycholinguistics: Language, Mind, and World*. (Second Edi). Longman, 2013.
19. Takach, V, P, *Vocabulary learning strategies and foreign language acquisition*, Cromwell Press Ltd, 2008.
20. Tarigan. *Pengajaran Kedwibahasaan*, Bandung. Angkasa, 2009.
21. Zhao, A., & Olszewski, A, Exploring learner factors in second language (L2) incidental vocabulary acquisition through reading, *28(2)*, 2016, 224–245.
22. Zhen, Y, Using TPR Method in Teaching English Adjectives, Kristiantad University, 2011 Retrieved from <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:458462/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

