

**AN ANALYSIS OF TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR)
IN TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY TO DEAF STUDENTS
AT SLB NEGERI 1 MAKASSAR**

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Abstract: This research examined the teachers' difficulties in implementing TPR to teach English to students with impaired hearing at SLB Negeri 1 Makassar. A descriptive qualitative approach was applied, with data collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. Research evidence shows that TPR, as a gesture and revoicing strategy involving sign language, works for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and helps teach more vocabulary in terms of visual prompts. However, several challenges emerged, such as restricted words used by students, the necessity to explain repeatedly, and other barriers to learning, leading to extensive instructional challenges. All these challenges take extra time and commitment from the teachers to ensure that the student is given the required learning intervention. Thus, though parental assistance, pictures, and natural objects may be used to support the material, the paper determines that TPR alone lacks effectiveness in overcoming all difficulties.

Keywords: deaf students, total physical response, vocabulary

INTRODUCTION

Deaf students have varying degrees and types of hearing loss, affecting their communication, language, and literacy development. This population is heterogeneous, including those with additional disabilities, impacting their educational needs and learning approaches (Nelson & Bruce, 2019). World Health Organization (2020) states that there are 34 million of 466 million people in the world are deaf. It is supported by Balitbangkes

in 2020 about 7.03% of disabled people were deaf with an age of average 7-17 years. The two facts above describe the population of the deaf dominating in percentage of disabled people. It means the government should provide some solutions for the deaf people who have studied.

Inclusive education for deaf students calls for a framework of services with need analysis, specific services for the children, and evaluation of the needs that need to be accomplished for them. Against this background, the literature emphasizes the adoption of individually appropriate forms of assessment for communication and learning difficulties that may be unique to individual students (Parhoon et al., 2014).

Furthermore, delivering appropriate educational services involves creating programs incorporating various communication methods, such as sign language and visual aids, improving the learning experience (Apriani et al., 2023; Shields & Lennox, 2017). Schools also must ensure that learning environments within which their students learn for a more significant percentage of their time have the necessary tools, including assistive technologies (Brinkley, 2011). Other sources identified that support for another important aspect of a student's development is also essential in evaluative practices; this fails on academic progress and the social incorporation of learners (Shields & Lennox, 2017). There is positive practice in specific support from Inclusive Education and some

criticisms that remain as "holes" suggesting that while it could help, it is not enough for some learners, showing the significance of continuous research and flexibility in practice to reduce potential support gaps.

Deaf students face problems in pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition, which significantly impact their overall language development. Pronunciation difficulties arise primarily because deaf students cannot hear their speech, making it challenging to monitor articulation and resulting in unclear pronunciation (Suryanti et al., 2023). Additionally, their ability to interpret lip movements is limited, often leading to misinterpretations of similar lip shapes, which complicates the production of accurate sounds (Prasetya et al., 2023). While teachers

employ lip reading and repetition to aid pronunciation, these strategies only sometimes produce adequate results (Suryanti et al., 2023).

Vocabulary acquisition is another notable challenge.

Vocabulary is the lexicon available to an individual or a community, which serves as the language foundation for efficient expression and communication (Harli et al., 2024).

Deaf students often have limited mastery, particularly with abstract concepts and figurative language, due to restricted access to auditory language exposure (Widanti & Amajida, 2018). Furthermore, if a child learns sign language slowly, then the general development of language will be affected, including reading comprehension and overall literacy (Pelayo et al., 2018). Such challenges demonstrate the necessity

of appropriately focused teaching approaches to eliminate these linguistic barriers for students with hearing impairment.

The Total Physical Response (TPR) method effectively develops vocabulary in deaf students by incorporating physical activities and movement. This method strengthens memory associations through repeated, intensive exercises, making words easier to remember (Nehrulita, 2015). According to Ghani et al. (2014), TPR is effective for teaching English because it involves the comprehension of audio instructions with total physical student response, thus improving student's understanding of the instructions provided. In this arrangement, students are participative through motor response while the teacher

leads the learning process using supportive teaching instruments.

The advantage of TPR is that it best benefits deaf students by increasing interest and the ability to teach visually. TPR supports the interest of deaf students and makes language learning activities Interesting and constructive, which makes the activities more active (Jazila & Megawati, 2024). This method also focuses on gestures and actions suitable for deaf students who learn better through sign language since they can easily link the word with the intended meaning by visual sense (Yang, 2024). As such, all these features make TPR a helpful tool in the development of language comprehension and retention among Deaf students.

The preliminary investigation conducted on SLB Negeri 1 Makassar

revealed that most deaf students get easily annoyed by what the teachers say because of their restricted production of the linguistic forms they can produce, which hampers their syntactic and semantic aspects. Understanding this as a weakness, various techniques have been used to help deaf students learn languages by researchers.

Yuliani (2017) explores English vocabulary teaching for deaf students at SLBN 1 Palangkaraya, using qualitative methods such as observations and interviews to show how motivational support and structured activities improve students' engagement and retention. Similarly, Kalora (2022) studied vocabulary strategies at SLB-B Karya Ibu Palembang, focusing on visual aids, sign language, and audio-visual tools to enhance comprehension. While

Yuliani (2017) emphasizes motivational and instructional techniques, Kalora (2022) focuses on multimedia and visual tools. These studies emphasize the importance of using varied motivational and interactive methods to support vocabulary learning for deaf students.

Based on the case at SLB Negeri 1 Makassar, the researcher decided to conduct a study related to the teaching vocabulary of deaf students by using Total Physical Response (TPR). This study focused on the mastery of vocabulary at the different cognitive levels of deaf students. This study elaborated on a specific method, namely TPR for teaching English vocabulary to deaf students. Based on the statements above, the researcher conducted the research problem which is "How are the teacher's difficulties in teaching

English vocabulary by using TPR for the deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Makassar?”

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive qualitative design to examine the implementation of the TPR method, focusing on relationships, activities, and conditions in the research setting. Qualitative research investigates the quality of these elements, while descriptive research systematically and accurately details situations within a population (Arikunto (2013).

The study was conducted from September to October 2022 an odd semester of the eleventh grade of SLB Negeri 1 Makassar which was located in Jl. Dg. Tata Komp. Hartaco Indah Komp. SLB Pembina No. 2, Parang Tambung, District. Tamalate, city Makassar, South Sulawesi.

Data were collected using observation, interviews, and documentation. To increase the reliability of the study, the triangulation method of observation, interview, and documentation was used. As stated by Patton (2002), sources of triangulation are helpful because “triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods,” making the data more valid. To analyze the data, descriptive analysis was utilized.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At SLB Negeri 1 Makassar, an inclusive school with a focus on deaf students, English instruction, guided by the "Kurikulum 2013" (soon transitioning to "Kurikulum Merdeka"), involves structured strategies tailored to meet these students' needs. The following

findings were made about the teaching strategy, difficulties, and facilitating factors noted in this context.

Based on observing the English teacher in the class, the teacher applied the drilling method and Total Physical Response (TPR) as the primary forms of pedagogy. Observations in the classroom revealed that, by drilling, which involves showing an example several times, it is easier to imprint the vocabulary in their minds through impersonation. Mrs. Ema introduced and used particular words; students imitated her actions, which made recall easy. TPR also supported this strategy by associating physical movements with the use of words so that a student-built vocabulary using both visual images and body movement. For example, when

teaching "Describing Animals," Mrs. Ema drew a butterfly on the whiteboard, labeled its parts, and used gestures to explain vocabulary, such as pointing to her own eyes to indicate the butterfly's eyes. Additionally, visual aids, natural objects, and gestures strengthen comprehension using students' visual strengths.

Based on the Interview, it was found that Mrs. Ema faced significant problems in employing these strategies, and it was in pacify because the students did not know enough words. She said that, for example, she must repeat words several times—four or f, five or even more—before deaf students come to grasp them, for instance, abstract words that many of them find hard to visualize. This necessity of observation, plus the distinctive

linguistic trait of the student under consideration, increases the time it takes to complete each lesson. Further, some welfare issues emerged concerning communication because some students could not respond to the directions given. Mrs. Ema rewrites instructions in many ways until students grasp them. Thus, we can infer that there is no better way to explain instructions to the students than to ensure they comprehend fully.

Based on the documentation obtained, it was revealed that parental support is essential in reminding their children about the use of language at home. It was found that parents' support helped put and expand vocabulary learning beyond the classroom, enhancing general proficiency. Documentation highlighted employing pictures, natural objects, and other teaching

appliances, including projectors and projector screens in teaching. These tools are essential because deaf students often learn with graphics due to their lack of hearing and may need extra visual information.

Even though methods such as TPR, the use of visual top-up aids, and functional, close reiteration work for the expansion and understanding of the vocabulary by deaf students, such methods and techniques call for hefty utilization of resources as well as a lot of time consummation. Outcomes indicate that family involvement and effective use of visual aids are also helpful in the teaching and learning process.

The researcher's study at SLB Negeri 1 Makassar explored the challenges faced by teachers when using the Total Physical Response (TPR) method to teach English

vocabulary to deaf students, guided by the question: "How are the teacher's difficulties in teaching English vocabulary by using TPR for the deaf students at SLB Negeri 1 Makassar?" This inquiry is based on findings from observations, interviews, and supporting documentation and explained as follows.

First, the teacher's use of TPR and challenges observed: TPR, a method introduced by Asher and applied here, involves using physical commands and gestures to connect vocabulary to movement, which can help deaf students engage visually and physically with the material. During observations, the teacher frequently used gestures and body movements to demonstrate vocabulary and help students internalize words through action

rather than sound. However, challenges were observed. Deaf students often face vocabulary limitations, especially with abstract terms, which complicates TPR's effectiveness as they struggle with unfamiliar or non-visual concepts (Al-Dersi, 2013). This limited vocabulary base can create a communication gap, as deaf students need foundational language skills for explicit instruction, a primary goal in language teaching (Nelson & Bruce, 2019; Harli et al., 2024).

Second, repetition and time constraints. Interview data with the teacher highlighted that frequent repetition was necessary for deaf students to understand and remember new vocabulary. While students with normal hearing may engage their heads in learning and understand concepts within repetitions, the deaf

child may take four to five to retain the same. Though useful for comprehension, it takes a long time and results in time challenges that are typical in teaching inclusive classes within set time frames. Though essential, repeated actions can delay lesson progression, making it challenging to cover all planned material within the allocated time (Nehrulita, 2015).

Third, communication barriers and instructional clarity. Communication is vital in any class, but more so in an integrated teaching environment with a child who is deaf and hard of hearing due to the physical demonstration of information. Specifically, the teacher expressed concern about making sure all the students understood the instructions given in class, where, more often, the teacher reiterated

directions for fuller comprehension. Drawing from Brown, restricted communicative proficiency disrupts students' capacity to decode messages and reply; thus, consistent interrelatedness and instructional clarity are crucial though demanding (Kongsom, 2009).

Briefly, as much as TPR is a practical, movement-based approach delivery model that has all the benefits of enhancing the learning of deaf students, its weakness includes the problem of dealing with a small number of words in English at a time, the task of repeated use of the same English word many times; and the issue of communication barrier where the deaf students cannot understand any form of sign language used by the teachers in the. Consequently, these findings call for such strategies and supporting media like graphic

displays for enhancing teaching of vocabulary through TPR to the deaf students. The work also notes that while TPR may be beneficial, there is a need for other strategies to meet all the learning needs of deaf students.

CONCLUSION

The study at SLB Negeri 1 Makassar demonstrates that the Total Physical Response (TPR) method can be an effective strategy for teaching English vocabulary to deaf students, engaging them through gestures and repetition to reinforce language learning. However, the following challenges: limited vocabulary, the need to repeat instructions frequently, and communication barriers offer a hard time teaching the student, which in turn demands extra time and effort from the teacher to address the needs of the challenged student effectively.

This study's generalizability is compromised by its focus on a single school and engaging a small sample of participants; moreover, it is essential to enrich the picture of how the teacher introduced abstract terms into instruction because the study relied solely on the TPR approach.

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