# USING SONG AS A MEDIA IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO YOUNG LEARNERS BASED ON TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) METHOD

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**Abstract:** The title of this study is Using Song as a Media in Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners Based on Total Physical Response (TPR) Method. This study was conducted to investigate students' responses related to the use of song in total physical response method during the teaching vocabulary and to find students' difficulties in this activity. This research used qualitative method by involving classroom action research. The participant of this study is one class of elementary school students in Bandung. The data were obtained through classroom observation and interviews. The data of classroom observation were acquired from video recording, teacher's field notes, and students' checklist during the learning activity. The analysis were explained in descriptive form. The data from interview were transcribed into the written data. It was analyzed and summarized then presented in descriptive explanation. The findings of this study showed students' positive response toward this method. The students showed their enthusiasm and attractiveness toward the activity, they were also motivated and engaged easily to the learning process. As a result, it can be said that the use of song in total physical response method can be applied as a way for teaching vocabulary to young learners.

Keywords: song, total physical response, vocabulary

#### Introduction

Vocabulary is one of language components that is very important to be mastered. Without mastering vocabulary, there will be difficulties when interacting with others (Ekawati, 2017). One of the main reason for chose this topic is because vocabulary is an important role in language learning. Some studies said that vocabulary has an important role in improving the ability in the teaching and learning process (Nurlaili, Nurani, & Yohana, 2015). To overcome the challenges faced in teaching vocabulary, the teacher must have strategies to teach vocabulary effectively (Jalongo & Sobolak, 2011).

The best time to learn vocabulary is from an early age (Kusuma, Adnyani, Taharyanti, 2017). However, it will require more effort to teach them, the teacher should have many creative ways to get their attention. In order to teach vocabulary to young learners, the teacher should be able to motivate students and make the classroom atmosphere more enjoyable and relaxed (Nurlaili, Nurani, & Yohana, 2015). If the students loved the atmosphere of the classroom, they will also easily love the material delivered by the teacher, so they will also easily understand it. Therefore, the teacher must have prepared to teach young learners. In addition, preparing material that is suitable for their age is also very important in teaching

young learners. There are a number of strategies that can improve vocabulary among young learners, such using drama (Demircioğlu, 2010), games (Turgut & Irgin, 2009; Huyen & Nga, 2003), and songs (Millington, 2011).

Young learners are easily bored and do not like sits for hours. Therefore, the teachers must prepare the material that has a lot of physical activities. Total Physical Response (TPR) is a very appropriate method as a way to overcome it. Total Physical Response is a method developed by James Asher, a professor emeritus of psychology at San José State University (Sariyati, 2013). It is a method that involves physical activity and gestures in the learning process (Nuraeningsih & Rusiana, 2016). Besides improving students' motivation in learning, the activity that has a physical movement can also improve their memory (Mohammadian & Dolatabadi, 2016), and make the students became faster and easier in learning vocabulary (Sariyati, 2013).

However, it was also experienced in the real situation in class, especially in the fourth grade at SD Giki Bandung. The learning process in this class was not going so well. There were some students who looked bored and did not enjoy the process of learning English. It can be caused by several factors, including; the teacher used written tasks more often than practice, the activities given are stiff and boring for young learners, and the lack of creative ways of teaching English to young learners. Some of these factors can reduce the interest of young learners and have an impact on their ability toward English learning. Therefore, an effective method is needed to teach English to young learners. One method that can be used is Total Physical Response Method (TPR). TPR is an interesting way to teach English because by using TPR young learners will use a lot of physical movements.

Most studies use storytelling as a media in using the total physical response method (Marsh, 1998; Decker, 2008; Kariuki & Bush, 2008; Holleny, 2012). There are only a number of studies that use songs as a media. Song is a combination of words sung by someone. Studies said that students like fun activities in their learning process, like playing games (Sobhani, & Bagheri, 2014) and singing (Millington, 2011). So the use of song is very suitable to be combined with Total Physical Response (TPR) method. By combining these two elements, young learners will be more active in the classroom and will not be easily bored. Song is also a very good media to encourage young learners' motivation in learning (Tirtayani, Magta, & Lestari, 2017).

This study has the purpose at investigating the students' responses related to the use of song as a media in teaching vocabulary based on Total Physical Response during the learning process in the classroom and to find out the difficulties faced by the students in the use of song as a media in teaching vocabulary to young learners based on Total Physical Response method.

#### **Literature Review**

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method invented by James Asher. This is a method when the participants can make a lot of body movement. With Total Physical Response (TPR) method, students will be more active in the classroom, they will not be easily bored because the learning activities will be fulfilled with the use of media, gestures, facial expressions, and other physical movements. Using the Total Physical Response (TPR) method is the best way in the learning process.

TPR is a method that makes the teacher's speech become the main target so the students can listen and respond to the instruction using their physical activity. It means that Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method that includes speech and action. By listening to the instructions and responding directly with physical movements, the students will easily remember each language given. This allows students to remember each new language in the long run. Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method that teaches language through physical activity (motoric) by coordinating two things, namely speech and action (Richard and Rodgers, 2001). This method is based on the premise that every human being has a biological program. This can be proven when babies internalize their first language. Before a child can speak, they continue to absorb the language given by their parents. Children respond to every language given by their parents through body movements. It means that children combine both aspects of speech and physical. Therefore, the TPR method is very suitable to be applied in the classroom to improve students' understanding. With the TPR method, students can hear and respond physically to each language given by the teacher. If students can respond correctly, it means that students already know the meaning of each word or language given. In this method, students do not have to be forced to speak, the students can talk when they feel ready to do it. Total Physical Response aims to make students feel enjoy and not feel stressed when learning a foreign language and also to make their language skills improve (Larsen and Freeman, 2000). It is in accordance with the statement of Richard and Rodgers (2001) that "The general objectives of Total Physical Response are to teach oral proficiency at a beginning level. Frira Try Islami, 2019 USING SONG AS A MEDIA IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO YOUNG LEARNERS BASED ON TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) METHOD Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

Comprehension is a means to an end, and the ultimate aim is to give basic speaking skills. TPR aims to produce learners who are capable of an uninhibited communication that is intelligible to a native speaker". TPR links between speech and action. Activities in the TPR include teachers who give command and students should respond with physical activities. By moving the body, students can more easily remember the vocabulary learned. The TPR method is very suitable for learning new vocabulary or language. The TPR method can be combined with a variety of media, such as storytelling, songs, games, role-play, or dialogue.

Vocabulary is one of the skills that should be mastered. According to McCarthy (1990) "No matter how well the students learn grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of second language are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in second language just cannot happen in any meaningful way". Learning new language means learning new vocabulary because knowing the vocabulary is the key to understand and be understood. As a conclusion, vocabulary has an important role in language learning. The communication will not run well if the communicator does not have enough vocabulary. No matter how good the grammar is, the vocabulary still the basic to the language learning. Vocabulary can be described as an important word in language. However, there are still many students who faced difficulties in memorizing vocabulary. Therefore, they have to find out the essentials of vocabulary so that they are aware of that importance. Vocabulary can also read as English language that has a thousand hundreds of words (McCarthy, 1990; Hayward and Sparkes, 1982). It is also agreed by Hornby (1995) that vocabulary is several words in languages that have their own meaning. Vocabulary has a big deal in communication because it is the key to mastering the language (Murcia, 2001). Whether vocabulary seemed systematized, but traditionally it is an individual word that could be used freely (McCarthy, 1997). So, vocabulary can be concluded as the words that have an important role in language. It is a basic component that will be used in every skill of language or communication.

Young learners can define as kindergarten and elementary school students (Wibowo, 2009). Young learners are divided into three levels, such as pre-school learners (2-4 years old), primary school learners (4-8 years old), and secondary school learners (9-12 years old) (Nuraeningsih & Rusiana, 2016). Young learners also have several traits, including having good motivation to do the things they want, always curious, moody, not having a long focus, and liking physical activities. They are the learners who have more enthusiastic (Cameron, 2001). They are also self-motivated and always picking up a new language unwittingly. Besides, they never give up on every activity that they do not understand. For young learners, Frira Try Islami, 2019 USING SONG AS A MEDIA IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO YOUNG LEARNERS BASED ON TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) METHOD Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

learning English is not a big deal for them. They are still good learners because they learn quicker and better. For the teacher, it is the responsibility of them to find out the best way to teach. The first and important thing to do is knowing young learners' characteristics. If the teachers have already know their students' characteristics, they will also find the best way and effective way for teaching. Young learners also have the characteristic of imitating their teacher, interact with others, are willing to take risks, make mistakes, and play. It is proved by the report related to characteristics of young learners that was published by Guangdong Teacher College of Foreign Languages and Arts. The report also said that young learners will pay attention and engaged in learning if the activity fun and interesting. Therefore, the teacher should find the best way and appropriate media to make young learners get involved in the learning process. The teacher also should be creative in making various activities. Teaching young learners is challenging (Jalongo & Sobolak, 2011). Young learners will not learn well if they feel their lessons are boring and unexciting (Ara, 2009). Therefore, teachers must have more ability to teach young learners. The learning activity should be fun and interesting (Talak-Kiryk, 2010). Sometimes, the teacher must be good at reading the situation and condition of the child, because their mood is easily changed. In addition, the character of each child is different, therefore, a teacher must be able to recognize and understand the character of each student in order to be able to provide appropriate treatment. Some interesting activities such as songs, rhymes, games, and the other appropriate media also needed for teaching young learners (Ara, 2009). Through the appropriate way and media, they will enjoy and will not feel pressure in learning English.

Media is a tool to increase learning motivation in young learners. Media can simplify the learning process because the use of media can influence students' attention, behavior, and thoughts. There are three types of media, including visual, sound, and movement. One of the sound media that can be used is song. Song is a combination of words sung by someone. The use of song is very suitable for young learners because most of young learners love something related to sound, visual, and movement. By using song, young learners can be more enjoyable and the learning process will not be boring. The use of song can also increase student motivation and create a comfortable classroom atmosphere (Tirtayani, Magta, & Lestari, 2017). Song can be used as media to improve students' pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. Griffe (2001) says, "Song is part of music that you sing through words. It closely related to speaking, because speaking is an action of having a communication with the others in using oral language". Griffe (2001) also states, "Teaching English using song has many advantages for students in improving their pronunciation and also gives the knowledge about the differences between pronouncing in British and American.". Song is an appropriate media to teach vocabulary. It sometimes used with repetition so it can help the students to improve their vocabulary. Song also can be said as a fun way to teach English. Through song, students can enjoy the sound and understand the words in a fun way. It can make the students less stressed and feel enjoy during the learning process. According to Read (2006), there are several reasons for using song as a media in teaching young learners, including; memorable, provide enjoyable repetition practice, provide a variety and change of pace, promote class identity, reinforce rhythm and pronunciation, integrate with other class activities, integrate with topic work, provide opportunities for movements/drama, take English out of the classroom, develop listening skills, provide integrated practice of all 4 skills, and build confidence and sense of success. So, it can be said that the song is the media that entertaining and relaxing. However, the teacher should select an appropriate song to be delivered to the students, especially young learners. Not all the songs are appropriate for the students. The song should not difficult and too fast. It is also must be related to the topic that will be delivered. The right song will engage the students, but the song selection errors will also make the students lose their interest.

## Methodology

To answer the research question, this study used qualitative method by involving Classroom Action Research (CAR). Classroom Action Research is the systematic procedure done by an educational setting to gain information related to the learning process (Cresswell, 2012). Classroom Action Research (CAR) has a purpose to enhance the quality of teaching and learning processes (Shofiya, 2014). It is also can be a way of helping the students in learning English (Latief, 2011).

This study utilized the repeated cycle's steps of classroom action research, involving; cycles, including; planning, acting/implementing, observing and reflecting (Arikunto, 2012). In the planning stage, the researcher prepared the lesson plan, learning media, learning material, and the research instrument. In the acting/implementing stage, the teacher applied all the things that have been prepared. In the observing stage, the researcher observed all the activities and the behavior of the students during the learning process. After that, as a reflecting stage, the researcher analyzed the result in order to answer the research questions.

# • Sample

In order to gain the purpose of the research questions, this study involved one class of 4th-grade elementary school students in Bandung consisting of 13 male and 14 female as the sample of the research. Then, 6 students were selected to conduct the interviews. The interviewee were selected randomly.

### Data Collection

The data were collected through classroom observations and interviews. This research was conducted for 3 weeks. The classroom observation was conducted in order to obtain the data during the implementation of using song as a media of Total Physical Response in teaching vocabulary. It is used to know students' responses and the difficulties faced by the students during the learning process. To collect the data, the classroom observation were conducted three times. In this study, the researcher become a teacher and implement Total Physical Response in the learning process directly.

To strengthen the data about the responses and difficulties faced by the students during the learning process, the researcher conducted the interview. It was conducted to 6 selected students after implemented the method in the class. This interview was conducted to strengthen the results from classroom observation. In order to avoid misunderstandings, the questions given to the students are Indonesian language since the students was Indonesian.

#### • Data Analysis

The data collected from video recording, students' checklist, and teacher's field notes were analyzed by the researcher. It was analyze by reading the data several times and explained in a descriptive form. The data collected from interview also analyze, summarize, and presented in descriptive explanation. In order to see the correlation between several data toward the students' response and their difficulties of the use of song in teaching vocabulary, the data was transcribed into the written form, then summarize and described into the descriptive explanation.

# **Finding and Discussion**

The data obtained from classroom observation was used in form of teacher field notes, students' checklist and video recording. These data showed the learning situation and students' behaviors during the learning process. The data obtained from teacher field notes, students' checklist and video recording was used as the responses related to the use of song in teaching vocabulary to young learners based on total physical response method. Then, their response were classified into two categories, such as; positive and negative responses after the data were analyzed, coded, and categorized. The summary of the students' responses can be seen below:

# Students' Responses

| Students'<br>Responses | Stages      |   |   |           |   |   |           |   |   |             |   |   |               |   |   |
|------------------------|-------------|---|---|-----------|---|---|-----------|---|---|-------------|---|---|---------------|---|---|
|                        | Questioning |   |   | Observing |   |   | Exploring |   |   | Associating |   |   | Communicating |   |   |
|                        | 1           | 2 | 3 | 1         | 2 | 3 | 1         | 2 | 3 | 1           | 2 | 3 | 1             | 2 | 3 |
| Enthusiastic           | ✓           | ✓ | ~ | ~         | ~ | ~ | ~         | ~ | X | >           | ~ | ~ | ~             | ~ | ~ |
| Attractive             | ~           | ~ | X | ~         | ~ | x | ~         | ~ | ~ | ~           | ~ | ~ | ~             | ~ | ~ |
| Distracted             | ~           | ~ | X | ~         | ~ | x | ~         | ~ | X | ~           | X | X | ~             | x | X |
| Reluctant              | ~           | X | X | X         | X | x | ~         | X | X | ~           | X | X | X             | x | X |
| Silent                 | X           | X | ~ | ~         | x | x | ~         | X | ~ | X           | x | ~ | X             | x | X |
| Confused               | X           | X | X | ~         | ~ | ~ | ~         | ~ | x | X           | x | ~ | ~             | x | X |
| (+) AS                 | X           | ~ | ~ | X         | ~ | ~ | X         | ~ | x | X           | ~ | ~ | ~             | ~ | ~ |
| (-) AS                 | ~           | ~ | X | ~         | ~ | x | X         | x | ~ | ~           | ~ | ~ | x             | ~ | ~ |

Notes:

(+) AS = Longer Attention Span

(-) AS = Shorter Attention Span

The table above shows that the students have a good response at the first and second meetings. Their responses are filled with high attraction and enthusiasm for every activity given by the teacher. The students are also engaged and enjoy every activity in the learning process. They were very enthusiastic when the teacher told that they would learn by using songs. They listen to the songs sung by the teacher carefully and respond well when the teacher asks them to stand up and demonstrate each word in the song given. However, in the first meeting, some students were still confused and did not demonstrate the words sung by the teacher because this activity was new to them. However, the teacher could solve this problem by continuing to repeat the song while giving an example by making the body movement for every word sung, so the students can follow it.

In this study, students actively participate every activity provided by the teacher. They seemed to enjoy the song given while occasionally follow to singing the song. Although the song is a new song for them, they can catch every meaning of the word on the song with the help of the movement given. The song given is also a song that is adapted with tones and lyrics that are easy to remember.

There are also negative responses indicated by several students. First, some female students complained that they were distracted by the noisy classroom atmosphere, as a result, they could not listen well to the song given by the teacher. This noisy atmosphere was made by several male students. After tracing the cause of this noise, male students said they were feeling uncomfortable because the weather in the classroom was very hot at that time. In the learning process, male students become silent but they continue to distract the other students. This causes the classroom atmosphere to be a little not conducive. Finally, the teacher gave an idea to conduct the learning activities on the front porch of the class. However, the students gave their negative responses not because of the activities or songs they do not like, but because of the lack of support from the classroom atmosphere.

For students, learning songs while moving their bodies was an exciting thing for them. By pointing out a few words based on the song given, they can help in knowing some new vocabulary without needing to explain the meaning of the word verbally. They would know by themselves about the meaning of the words because they do it with body movements. In addition, giving new words through songs made them less stressed and relaxed. Learning by using songs is an exciting way to learn. It was proved from the response they showed, they seemed happy and enthusiastic when the teacher sang the song. They also immediately make body movements spontaneously as if they do not want to lose with other students. Some students also said that they enjoyed activities more by doing a lot of body movements than just learning by writing.

However, the use of song in teaching vocabulary to young learners based on total physical response methods is not an easy thing to do. Based on the results of interviews and classroom observations, there were several difficulties faced by the students in applying this method, there are (1) the song speed, (2) the words in the song, and (3) students' limited vocabulary. The findings say that when the songs sung by the teacher are too fast, students have difficulty doing the body movements because they cannot catch the words clearly. One of the factors associated with their difficulties in catching the word clearly is their limited vocabulary. It is also a problem for them because they did not have a lot of vocabulary so they had to pay attention to the songs and movements exemplified by the teacher in order to understand the meaning. To solve this problem, the teacher slowed down the speed of the song and its movements so that students can catch it correctly. In addition, the teacher also did a lot of repetition so that the students begin to get used to the songs and movements are given. However, this is the teacher's responsibility to be able to pay attention to this problem well. Although the purpose of this study is to teach vocabulary, the teacher must also pay attention to the words given. The teacher must be careful with the words that will be included in the song because the selected words in the song are one of the problems that can make it difficult for students to learn vocabulary. Especially if our target is young learners, then we must use words that are appropriate to their level. Combining words in songs is not an easy thing because stress, rhythms, pronunciation, and intonation are things that must also be considered in delivering songs to the students so that there is no misunderstanding in delivering the words.

The findings in this study showed that the use of song in teaching vocabulary for young learners based on total physical response method is an effective method. It can be seen from the positive response given by the students. They enjoy every learning activity given by the teacher. In addition, they were very enthusiastic, motivated, and easily engaged in all learning activities. However, using songs in the total physical response method is not an easy thing. There are also several difficulties faced by students during the learning process carried out in the class.

# Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is the use of songs as a media in teaching vocabulary to young learners based on total physical response method is an effective way to do. The students' responses toward the use of song as a media in total physical response method are almost all positive. It showed students' enthusiast and attractiveness when they make a lot of body movements. It also makes the students less stressed and enjoyed every activity given by the teacher. This method also provides an interesting way for the students to achieve their learning goals. Combining songs with total physical responses also helped the students to improve their vocabulary and it has contributed a lot in making the students understand well and love to learn English.

However, there are several difficulties that the students faced in using this method, including (1) the song speed, (2) words in the song, and (3) students' limited vocabulary. Therefore, further researcher is expected to pay attention to the difficulties that the students faced in this study and make it better. In addition, further researchers can also implement this method in the other levels.

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