

# Fostering Listening Comprehension through Total Physical Response

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## Abstract

EFL Learners' distress in listening to English records in the classroom is one of the matters commonly discovered in Indonesian middle scholars. Listening activities bring students to the mastery of other skills; speaking, writing, and reading. Total Physical Response was created to enhance the students' ability in listening to a spoken foreign language discourse by giving a physical response when they hear a particular command. This study works toward finding the effect of Total Physical Response utilization on students' listening comprehension at MTs Negeri 4 Banyuwangi. The samples of this study were two groups of students; 30 students of VII A and 30 students of VII B. Class VII B was assigned as the control group, while Class VII A as the experimental group where both pre-test and post-test were conducted to each group. The experimental group was taught by using TPR, while in the control group learning is carried out in the way teachers normally teach, that is using Three-phase technique. The hypothesis was tested using independent sample t-test and analyzed by using SPSS. Total Physical Response could administer some refinement on students' listening, which is evidently manifested in the result of the post-test. Students in experiment group achieved better score than those in control group. This study suggests the use of Total Physical Response to the early middle scholars as an alternative to other teaching methods.

**Keywords:** Listening comprehension; Total Physical Response; Indonesia.

Total Physical Response is a motion-based language method. This facilitates learning English vocabulary and is suitable for middle scholars; with this method children are also involved in the form of movements that are supported by various English learning media. Learning English vocabulary using the Total Physical Response method can improve listening ability, in this case, help passive

student to involved more and have fun with their own activities to be active in learning.

English learning in Indonesia is currently given as optimally, but not evenly distributed. There are still differences between learning English in urban schools and learning English in rural schools. Learning English in urban schools is supported by very complete facilities, highly professional teachers,

supporting books, and even more often urban schools that provide special rooms as English laboratory rooms. This has a profound effect on students' learning outcomes. Whereas, English learning in a rural school still has limited facilities, they only provided textbooks and student worksheets (LKS) are given as a guide in English class. So the learning outcomes of English subjects obtained are below average.

MTs Negeri 4 Banyuwangi is a suburban school located in the western area of the Banyuwangi region. Listening comprehension that is applied in class VII MTs Negeri 4 Banyuwangi is still less effective because it is oriented towards teacher-centered method, based on observations it can be said that students show enthusiasm at the beginning of learning, but this does not last long, the learning problems experienced by students are students less accustomed to listen to English records. Students find it difficult to understand what the content of the records is and what is taught by the teacher, and this has an effect on student learning outcomes.

Based on observation done by the researcher, problems were identified, such as 1) the students of Class VII MTsN 4 Banyuwangi were lacking of interest in learning listening. These students seemed to lose interest in learning when it is related to listening. They perceive that listening is not fun. 2) The level of understanding of class VII students of MTsN 4 Banyuwangi at listening skills is still low. It was found through the students' score on regular listening tasks and the interview result with the teacher. 3) Students of class VII MTsN 4 Banyuwangi quickly get bored when they study listening. It is possibly related to their low interest. 4) Not only that the interest in listening is low, students of class VII MTsN 4 Banyuwangi also consider that English, listening in particular, is difficult to learn. Probably, the teacher has not induced effective learning strategies during his teaching. 5) Lack of material in the form of text books and supporting facilities such as recordings, CDs, learning tapes or recordings, especially

in teaching listening skills to students of class VII MTsN 4 Banyuwangi.

It is undeniable that active classroom participation, especially in listening, played an important role in the success of language learning (Tatar, 2005). In mastering second language skill, the students should be able to catch the ideas delivered by the other interlocutor. Understanding the target language can only be achieved by acquiring listening skill as it is the ability to identify and make into sense what the opponent says or speaks.

A good listening skill can help the students to become improve their second language acquisition, in this case is English. It is a consequential skill which provides learners with some of valuable linguistic inputs; it has a significant role in human communication and given the fact that listening is influential not only to understand the language but also to learn it (Rost, 2002).

According to Nadig (2013), listening comprehension involves complex processes of understanding and making sense of spoken language. These involve identifying speech sounds, comprehending the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences (Pourhose in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

Listening comprehension is now generally acknowledged as high-ranked facet of language learning; notwithstanding, much work endures to be done in both theory and practice (Morley, 2001). In a study about listening comprehension by Suryanti (2002), it was indicated that listening was not an easy subject for student to learn. Osada (2004) explains, listening is in fact essential for the language learning but at the same time a compound process. In consequence, the teacher has to appropriately develop a good strategy to initiate the process.

When teaching listening, a teacher should use a strategy or technique which is effective to release the students' stress, make the lesson more enjoyable, and enumerate long-term effect for them. It is also closely related to

the way to acquire first language. Total Physical Response (TPR) may be an alternative way to improve the student's listening comprehension, because the process is similar to acquiring first language.

The strategy of TPR is to make the students listen to instruction in a foreign language and instantly execute with a physical action (Asher 1968, p.7). TPR is a method that is unpretentious in terms of linguistic production and that requires game like movement reduces learner stress, and creates a constructive mood in the learner, which facilitates learning (Richards and Rodgers 2001, p.73). The method was adopted from the way children learn language, particularly by listening to the command given by the researcher.

Dale in Dimiyati (2010) argues that the best way to learn is through direct experience, because it is not just observing but is directly involved in actions and is responsible for the results. The principle of repetition is also still needed in learning activities. The implication of the principle of repetition for students is the awareness of students to do repetitive exercises for one kind of problem. In learning English using the TPR (Total Physical Response) learning method, the material is given through direct movements or direct experience and is given repeatedly, the material given can be in the form of examples or demonstrations of movements which are further described as a form of order given repeatedly and then responded with physical movements by students, commands or material given repeatedly will become a habit until students understand and respond with their physical movements.

Basically there are several emphases put forward by Asher to create a valuable understanding of foreign languages which is called the Comprehension Approach, namely: 1) The ability to understand the command is followed by their body movements, 2) Expertise is obtained through listening which is transferred to other skills; speaking, writing,

and reading, and 3) Teaching must minimize learner's stress levels.

Using physical movements in teaching foreign languages at the level of recognition is actually a tradition that has been done for a long time in language learning called the "Activity Based Teaching Strategy" or "English through Action" which later developed into "Total Physical Response (TPR)." To exemplify the implementation of TPR, the following lesson plan is provided. When introducing the word stand-up, the teacher says the word stand-up while standing, all students stand up while listening to the word stand-up and this is done repeatedly. Implementing this method, the researcher used a simple command like: "Touch your headset, please!" and the students did what the researcher commanded to them. After they had already understood and perform the correct response to the command, the researcher added another one, which must be more complicated compared to the previous one. The second command contains two more nouns: "Put your headset on your head, please!" After the students could make body movement perfectly by following the instruction, the researcher could increase the difficulty level of the command, such as "Take and put your book on my table, take the piece of paper from it and write down your name, please".

When the researcher first gave command to the students, they have some problems adjusting but are able to adjust well eventually due to the habit. For the next step, the researcher chose four students to come up front to be the instructor and to give commands to their classmates. They asked their friends to do what they commanded. It was easy for them to follow the instruction because their friends gave simple commands and it was also a lot of fun for the students when they mistakenly followed the commands.

The aforementioned illustration led two purposes to be shared in this article; they

are: to know significant difference in learning achievement of Class VII of MTsN Banyuwangi English listening skills between those taught using the Total Physical Response method and those taught using conventional methods, and to know the effectiveness of the use of the Total Physical Response method in learning English listening skills Class VII of MTsN 4 Banyuwangi.

**Method**

The design of the research is a quasi-experimental. As Ary (2010 p. 26) mentioned that experimental research is a study of the effect in systematic manipulation of one variable on another variable. A quasi experimental research was used in this research because it was quite impossible to conduct a true experimental research design (Ary et al., 2010, p.316). In addition, Fraenkel et al (2012, p.270) state that this design uses two already existing groups. Two classes were taken as the research samples, one class becomes the experimental group (E) and the other class the control group (C). The class which is selected to be experimental group given the treatment (X).

The collected data from the listening comprehension test (post test), as the primary data, were analyzed by using t-test formula with SPSS computing system to know whether or not there was a significant effect of using Total Physical Response as a method on listening comprehension.

**Results and Discussion**

This research was conducted at MTs Negeri 4 Banyuwangi on May 15 until June 21, 2019. The implementation process began with 1) conducting research on the initial learning process given by the teacher, 2) giving pre-tests to class VII A and B on Listening, and 3) conducting research on student learning using the TPR method. The final step, analysing the data, was done to determine the effect of the TPR method on student learning outcomes by providing a Post-Test to the students and evaluates the results.

The data obtained in this study are descriptive data using the percentage formula and pre-test and post-test results data on students using t-test. The percentage results are the results of the percentage figures for each instrument in each observation item.

Pre-test is used to know prior knowledge of the students' listening comprehension before the reseacher gave the treatment. The researcher uses multiple-choice tests for this research. The multiple-choice has 4 options for each question. The students should find the best answer based on the question. The test is given twice (pre-test and post-test) with a different question. The test is made in by the researcher and the total for all tests from pre-test and post-test is 40 items. The items of the tests consist of 11 questions about discriminate sound, 14 questions about detect constituents, and 15 questions about recognizing structure-function. The time to do the test is 60 minutes with the maximum score is 100. The result of pre-test is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows the mean score of experimental group's pre-test is 52.67. The mean score of control group's pre-test is 51.33. The result of pre-test score in experimental and control group have the same score of the test. Post-test is used to know prior knowledge of the students' on listening comprehension after the reseacher gave the treatment. The result of post-test can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 1.** The result of pre-test score in experimental and control group

Statistic	Experimental	Control
Mean	52.67	51.33
Variance	66.782	105.057
Minimum	35	30
Maximum	65	70
Range	30	40

**Table 2.** The result of post-test score in experimental and control group

Statistic	Experimental	Control
Mean	52.67	51.33
Variance	66.782	105.057
Minimum	35	30
Maximum	65	70
Range	30	40

Table 2 indicates that the mean score of post test in experimental group is 79.00 and for the mean score of post test in control group is 71.17. After this, data analysis is used to test the hypothesis of the research whether there is a significant difference in the listening of the students who were using Total Physical Response and students who were not. The statistics used in this calculation are the test of normality, the test of homogeneity of variance, and hypothesis testing.

If significance value in the (sig 2-tailed) > 0,05 level significance, the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted and alternative hypothesis (Ha) is rejected. Meanwhile, if the significance value in the (sig 2-tailed) is < 0,05 level significance, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. The result of t-test posttest is in Table 3.

From the above table on the Independent Sample T-test, the Sig. (2- tailed) is 0,002. The data had a significant less than  $\alpha$  (0,05). The null hypothesis(H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted which means that there is significant effect between students' listening comprehension who were taught by using Total Physical Response and the control group using three-phase technique. In addition, Total Physical Response can solve students' obstacles in listening comprehension as most of them can focus more in doing the command given during the learning process. They focus and follow the instructions well.

Total physical response persuades the students to experience the learning free-stress, used both language and body movement that appropriate to have long term memorable in learning (Larsen-Freeman, 200, p.117). This method was effective to develop the students' listening skill before other skills developed. Using Total Physical Response in teaching made more effective learning in the class (Asher, 1988, p.3-4). Even though the class was really crowded, but they learned to recognize new words through the instructions.

Through this study, several advantages of using the Total Physical Response method in teaching listening for middle scholars have been revealed. 1). This method can encourage students to get invoved actively in the learning process, which can create a more relaxed

**Table 3.** The result of t-test posttest

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
t-test ujien	Equal variances assumed	1.989	.164	3.234	58	.002	7.833	2.422	2.985	12.682
	Equal variances not assumed			3.234	53.690	.002	7.833	2.422	2.978	12.690

and comfortable learning environment for them. 2). This method helps the memory by associating movements with words, which is an alternative to learning new words. 3). This method focuses on listening skills and can then be followed by making commands.

### Conclusion

This research found that there is a noteworthy effect between experimental and control group based on the result on post-test. The experimental group had better achievement than the control group. Based on the hypothesis and the research result, it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of using Total Physical Response on students' listening comprehension at seventh grade of MTs Negeri 4 Banyuwangi in the academic year 2018/2019. The finding of the research shows that using Total Physical Response in learning lessen the stress of the student during the learning process and in addition makes listening more fun and interesting. It helps student to focus and concentrate in listening.

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