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The Implementation of Total Physical Response (TPR) Method in Improving Arabic Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

Students in Islamic boarding schools have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally using Arabic. Meanwhile, in terms of understanding written texts and reading written language, they have pretty good skills. This study aimed to describe the implementation of the TPR method to improve the speaking skills. This study used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The subjects of this study were Arabic teachers and selected students using the snowball technique. Based on the results, the TPR method can break the ice of communicating in Arabic among students, their difficulties in expressing their thoughts can be minimized by getting used to responding to those around them.

TPR, Speaking skill, method

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مستخلص البحث

يواجه الطلاب في المدارس الداخلية الإسلامية صعوبة في التعبير عن أفكارهم شفهيًا باستخدام اللغة العربية. وفي الوقت نفسه، من حيث فهم النصوص المكتوبة وقراءة اللغة المكتوبة، فإنهم يتمتعون بمهارات جيدة جدًا. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى وصف تنفيذ طريقة TPR لتحسين مهارات التحدث. استخدمت هذه الدراسة المنهج النوعي مع المنهج الوصفي. تم الحصول على البيانات من خلال الملاحظة والمقابلات ودراسات التوثيق. كانت موضوعات هذه الدراسة عبارة عن مدرسين للغة العربية وطلاب تم اختيارهم باستخدام تقنية كرة الثلج. بناءً على النتائج، يمكن لطريقة TPR أن تكسر جليد التواصل باللغة العربية بين الطلاب، ويمكن التقليل من الصعوبات التي يواجهونها في التعبير عن أفكارهم من خلال التعود على الاستجابة لمن حولهم.

كلمات أساسية الاستجابة الفيزيائية الكاملة، مهارة الكلام، الطريقة

INTRODUCTION

Students in Islamic boarding schools have the ability to read (*maharah al-qiro'ah*) as well as translate and understand written Arabic quite well, but low speaking skills (*maharah*)

al-kalam). Based on previous studies, this is due to the *al-Qawa'id wa al-Tarjamah* method in Islamic boarding schools (Mulu, 2013); (Salman & Aedi, 2019).

The implementation of the *al-Qawa'id wa al-Tarjamah* method has a positive impact on improving the ability to read and understand written Arabic texts, but on the other hand, students find it difficult to speak Arabic (Jamil & Sardiyannah, 2020). Another study found that in Islamic boarding schools, the implementation of grammatical and translation methods is still considered in accordance with the expected learning objectives (Ritonga, Pahari, et al., 2021); (Ritonga, Purnamasari, et al., 2021).

However, Arabic skills in other aspects such as maharah al-istima' and maharah al-kalam are often neglected (Budiarti & Wahyudi, 2021). With this condition, steps to minimize speaking difficulties among students must be taken and should be in accordance with the current existence of various learning methods so that the transition from certain methods to the latest learning methods is the right thing to do. Therefore, this study aimed to describe the implementation of TPR method to improve Arabic speaking skills.

Total physical response (TPR) as a learning method has various advantages, especially it can improve vocabulary skills (Astri, 2018); (Miskiyah & Amalia, 2017); (Nuraeni, 2019). Total Physical Response (TPR) or (الطريقة الاستجابية الجسمانية الكلية) is a language learning concept that was first developed by a psychologist from California, United States around the 60s, named James J. Asher. This method is operationally carried out in the form of harmony between words and actions (Asher, 1969). This study aimed to describe the implementation of the TPR method to improve Arabic speaking skills. Thus, there will be no awkwardness of students in Islamic boarding schools in using Arabic in their daily activities.

METHOD

This study was carried out in Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic boarding school due to the excellence of graduates who are proven to be able to read and understand various Arabic books but have difficulty conveying their thoughts in Arabic. This study was conducted for 6 (six) months from April to September 2019. This study used a qualitative descriptive method.

The subjects of this study were Arabic teachers in Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic boarding school, while students were selected using snowball technology. The snowball technique was used because it allows researchers to choose according to the needs at the study location (Naderifar et al., 2017). The data were kept on observation, interview, and documentation study. The observation was carried out on the implementation of Arabic learning with the TPR method in a non-participant manner due to the limited time for researchers to be actively involved in every learning activity. In addition, researchers conducted unstructured interviews to avoid misunderstandings from informants to researchers.

Data were analyzed interactively and simultaneously from data collection to drawing conclusions. The accuracy of the data was measured by triangulation techniques, where researchers verified the data through the source or the collection time even through collection technique.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Arabic Learning Plan using TPR method

Learning a language should start with a lot of listening, then talk (Yıldırım & Yıldırım, 2016). In listening, it will usually be followed by a physical response, such as moving, looking, reaching, and so on, due to the stimulation arising from what is heard.

In planning TPR as a learning method in Islamic boarding schools, teachers first set the goals to be achieved in teaching the material. Arabic material taught using the TPR method can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1.
Arabic learning materials taught using the TPR method according to the Learning Plan

No	Title	Sub Title
1	التعارف	Vocabulary and conversation
2	المهنة المدرسية	Vocabulary and conversation
3	في البيت	Vocabulary and conversation
4	في العمل	Vocabulary and conversation
5	الرحلة	Vocabulary and conversation

Table 1 shows Arabic learning materials taught using the TPR method according to the learning plan. Arabic teachers also explained that material related to *al-ta'aruf* (vocabulary introduction and conversation) is carried out using the TPR method (Informant 1, Interview; 2019). In addition to the information given by the teachers, the learning plan also shows that one of the goals of *al-ta'aruf* is to make students be able to introduce themselves using Arabic orally. Therefore, there is a match between the objectives to be achieved and the method used.

Table 1 shows that in the learning plan prepared by Arabic teachers, there are also materials on *al-mibnah al-madrusa, fi al-bayt, fi al-'amal, al-rihlah* (Document Study; 2019). Informants also strengthened the data in the document that these materials are planned to be implemented using the TPR method.

The learning plan prepared by Arabic teachers for implementing the TPR method is in line with the results of studies conducted by previous researchers that the TPR method can be used for vocabulary learning (Sariyati, 2013). In addition, the learning plan made by Arabic teachers is also in accordance with the study results that the TPR method can be used to improve speaking skills (Idris et al., 2020). The steps set by Arabic teachers in planning content related to vocabulary and communication skills as described above prove that the TPR method is considered appropriate to improve speaking skills.

Arabic Learning Implementation using TPR method

Another important result to be revealed in this study is related to the implementation of Arabic learning with the TPR method. Based on the results of observations and interviews, in the implementation of the TPR method, the steps and techniques taken can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. TPR method technique

Based on the observation, Arabic teachers give instructions while demonstrating or doing activities according to what they say. For example, when the teachers say “iftah al-bab”, the teachers also open the door (Observation; 2019). In addition, teachers also do together with students what the teachers are instructed. For example, when teachers say “najlisu” or “qumu”, simultaneously, teachers and students carry out the instructions to “sit” or “stand” (Observation; 2019).

In implementing TPR, Arabic teachers also give instructions to students personally, and then students respond to commands instructed by the teachers. For example, when teachers say "irfa' yadak", then students immediately raise their hands (Observation; 2019). In addition, students also instruct the teachers in reverse to do a movement.

Arabic learning with the TPR method as described is a technique commonly used to improve understanding of the conversation (Informant; Interview; 2019). Through this technique, the implementation of the TPR method at Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic boarding school provides students with new experiences in the learning process.

The implementation of the TPR method as described above according to some education is not always suitable for certain levels of education (Anderson, 2008). The implementation of the TPR method at the higher education level often makes students feel uncomfortable with the instructions given, due to different emotional conditions from the basic education level. However, the reality that is obtained at Darussalam Parmeraan Islamic boarding school indicates that students enjoy the implementation of TPR through the techniques carried out by the teachers.

The Benefits of Total Physical Response to Improve Arabic Speaking Skills

Total Physical Response is a language teaching method with verbal instructions or orders and invitations aimed at making students able to translate through attitudes or actions (Kuo et al., 2014); (Lu, 2018).

The implementation of TPR as described above provides great benefits in improving Arabic speaking skills. Conceptually, TPR has several benefits as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Benefits of TPR method

No	Learning Aspect	Benefit
1	Class situation	Creating an active class atmosphere due to direct student involvement
2	Cognitive Learners	Helping students to more easily memorize words, sentences and learning material
3	Psychomotor	Psychomotor development of students is more dynamic
4	Multi-Level Cognitive	Students with various levels of intelligence will more easily understand the material
5	Communication	The TPR method makes the learning atmosphere more communicative

Total Physical Response puts more emphasis on listening and understanding skills in the initial phase. This method requires students to be able to understand foreign languages through physical activity. Thus, the ability of the students must be explored before learning to speak, read, and write.

Asher stated that because there is an emphasis on listening and understanding in the early stages, this TPR method is also called “the comprehension approach”. In the implementation of the comprehension approach, the strengths of the comprehension approach are as follows:

1. The comprehension approach allows meaningfulness in learning a foreign language
2. By delaying speaking until students are able to recognize and understand the foreign language, it can increase self-confidence
3. The comprehension approach gives a reasonable place to listening skills
4. The comprehension approach can facilitate and speed up the achievement of reading skills, where reading proficiency or maharatul qira'ah is one of the achievement goals that must be achieved in Arabic teaching in Indonesia in general.
5. Emphasis on comprehension can collaborate with other methods using the communicative approach.

Asher also stated that the main principles of the TPR method in his writing entitled "Children learning another language: a developmental hypothesis", as follows:

1. It is better to postpone the speaking skills of students before they are able to understand the spoken language well
2. Understanding spoken language through expressions in the form of instructions or imperatives created by teachers
3. Make sure that students are ready and able to speak directly.

Oensyar and Hifni explained two basic techniques of the TPR method, namely: First, the introductory technique, a certain method used by teachers when introducing new vocabulary through commands for the first time. Second, working technique (Oensyar & Hifni, 2015), the method used to combine and explain instructions accompanied by supporting interpretations of what has been introduced to improve language skills.

Fakhrurrozi and Mahyudin also added several techniques in introducing new mufradat using Total Physical Response, namely (Fakhrurrozi & Mahyudin, 2012):

1. Teachers recite and make movements on the instructions pronounced to be understood by students. Students listen to what is said and follow what the teachers demonstrate
2. Teachers create conditions so that students can choose one of the two *mufradat*. Students choose one *mufradat* and know it well. With this selection, it is easier to find out other *mufradat*
3. By introducing a new vocabulary, students make choices on one of three vocabularies. If the student guesses the word wrong, then the student must try one more time. If true, then the teachers give compliments that please the students to motivate them
4. Teachers introduce a new word to students clearly and realistically, either through activity or movement or with other comprehensible signs and signs.
5. Teachers introduce new *mufradat* through movements in the form of instructions from cassette or audio media. Teachers record it and carry out every instruction heard. Sometimes, teachers intentionally give wrong responses so that the sound from the cassette, tape recorder, or audio can be corrected.

To improve language skills, several forms of techniques introducing the *mufradat* followed by techniques for combining or explaining instructions and memorizing the *mufradat*.

Tarigan explained *rancang bangun* berkaitan dengan TPR:

1. In general, TPR aims to teach foreign language proficiency verbally for novice students
2. Teaching materials are grammatical and lexical
3. The main activity in the classroom is a continuous practice
4. In the TPR method, students play an important role as listeners and performers. Learners listen and pay attention to what is heard from the teacher, and respond to it with physical activity, either individually or in groups
5. Teachers play an active and direct role in TPR. Because the teachers who determine the teaching material, who will provide new material and demonstrate it are also chosen by the teachers, and the teachers also determine the choice of supporting materials in the class.
6. For the TPR method, there is usually no textbook in the form of basic text

Advantages and Disadvantages of Total Physical Response

There are several advantages and disadvantages of the TPR method, namely: 1) Teachers or students feel that learning a language is fun, 2) During the study, students will not feel burdened or stressed, 3) By balancing the implementation of the left and right brain make the material studied will be remembered well by students in the long term (Chasanah, 2014).

In addition, 4) the learning will be meaningful for students, 5) This method can foster self-confidence for students, because they are not required to speak before knowing and understanding the target language well, 6) This method is easy to collaborate with other methods based on the communicative approach because this method requires comprehension first. 7) With this method, learning types can be well facilitated, whether they are sight dominant, listen dominant, or active working directly or acting. Each student has the opportunity to express their respective types of learning through the implementation of TPR method (Purwa et al., 2021).

On the other hand, 8) This method can make it easier for students to learn how to listen and follow the instructions carefully. Listening and following skills are the main skills

to realize language success, 9) By allowing students to just listen first, they will be able to mentally prepare before speaking, because the time to start speaking is determined by students when they feel ready, 10) This method effectively used for various ways of learning students.

In addition to the many advantages of this TPR method, there are also some disadvantages, such as 1) The complexity of the language rules makes this method not applicable to all language teaching. 2) This method requires students to carry out activities or movements based on what they hear (Shi, 2018), (Chasanah, 2014). Purwa et al., (2021). (Shi, 2018), while not all students feel comfortable when asked to demonstrate a movement, especially for adult students, they will feel reluctant and less interested, 3) Teaching language using this method is more appropriate and suitable for beginner level students, 4) This method requires teachers not only to be proficient in word or sentence structure but also requires teachers who are proficient in communicating using the target language well and easy to understand. 5) This method requires teachers who are proficient in various learning variations and are able to design learning well so that all students can participate, including those with disabilities, such as the speech impaired.

The TPR method can be used in teaching Arabic. However, this method is limited to verbs in the form of a command sentence which can only be performed physically or in other words, not all words can be used for Total Physical Response. This method demands comprehension through physical activity. This is where the abilities of students must be explored before they learn to speak, read, and write.

In general, this TPR method aims to improve the ability to speak a spoken language and be able to communicate in a foreign language. This method also aims to realize the relationship between physical responses and language acquisition, provide learning materials in the form of commands, provide word meanings in the form of physical demonstrations and avoid feeling forced and boredom in learning. In principle, this method is held on the basis of coordinating speech with physical actions. This method can make the classroom atmosphere more lively, so that it has good potential and opportunities to activate students in the language learning process, and students have the opportunity to express their respective skills more creatively.

CONCLUSIONS

The TPR method is an alternative in supporting the realization of Arabic skills in communication, but the planning must be made by the teachers carefully by considering various aspects related to learning. In addition, the implementation must also show the overall balance between what is said and what is performed. The TPR method creates a different learning atmosphere compared to the usual learning performed in Islamic boarding schools. The implementation of the TPR method in Arabic learning can minimize student awkwardness in using Arabic as a communication means in everyday life.

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