Improving Students' Speaking Ability Under
Total Physical Response at Class VII of SMP Negeri 8 Kendari

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Abstract

The reason to conduct this study was to improve student's speaking ability at class VII A in SMPN 8 Kendari by using Total Physical Response Technique. There were 24 students as the subject of this study. This study applied Action Research which involved planning, action, observation, and reflection. The researcher designed three cycles to see the students' improvement in speaking ability. To get accurate data, the researcher used four kinds of instruments such as speaking test, observation sheet, tape recorder, and note taking. Analytical and statistical analysis was used to measure the students' speaking ability. In analytical analysis the researcher examined what found in observation sheet and note taking. While, in statistical analysis the researcher calculated what found in students' speaking test. After analyzing the data, this research found that there was a significant improvement on students' speaking ability under TPR. It was indicated by the students' criteria of success 65% was achieved. It also found that under TPR students were not afraid to express their idea anymore, they seemed to enjoy the activity as they understand how to be an instructor and performer, and the students more active to participate all the activity in classroom.

Keywords: TPR, speaking ability, accuracy

A. Introduction

Speaking is not an easy task particularly for EFL learner, since that speaking contain many elements either linguistic or non-linguistic which as a requirement to produce an effective oral communication and the ability how to use the language appropriately in social interaction (Stovall, 1998). As speaking is complicated, it is not enough for the students to hear or listen to the speech only, here the students should get a situation where they are comfort to produce English language. One of the important person that is able to provide such a condition is a teacher. As stated by River (1968) to teach speaking, teacher must equip themself by various technique which enable the students to do a communication..

In current situation, most of the teacher lack of ability to encourage their students in order to speak in English. Many teachers simply concerning on teaching grammar which make students become a passive learner because they only asking to memorize a grammatical terms. The teacher miss the idea of learning a language means a learner should be able to use the language as communication. Learn a language is not only to know the component of language likes; vocabulary and grammar, but also a learner must master those components and perform it in the way of speaking. So, no wonder teachers can not cope with the students' hindrance in speaking English.

The phenomenon above was found in SMPN 8 Kendari especially at class VII A. At this class, most of students had never been exposure to produce English, because when teaching teacher only concern on grammar and the students had not any chance to practice their English orally. Moreover, students were not supported by enough facilities which made them interested in learning English.

To overcome such problem the researcher would apply TPR as a technique to improve students' speaking ability. The rationale reason why the researcher chooses this technique due to the process of TPR is learning the language through physical activity which is similar to the infants in acquiring the language (Asher in Richard&Rodgers, 1986:89). In line with Asher, Palmer in Wallace (1998) stated that instructional strategy in TPR provide a silence of period for learner, it means that in acquiring the language learners were not forced to speak, nevertheless they have enough time to visualize the language through command before they ready to utter the language itself. Asher (1997) cclaimed that TPR attempts to mirror the process of children acquire their language. In this case, when the teacher apply TPR in a classroom the language presented in the form of command which were modeled by the teacher and fulfilled by the students, individually of in groups.

Several studies related to this research had been examined by some researchers, such as Rasyu (2004) & Mualimin (1996). Both of them used experimental study that focused on the effectiveness of using TPR in teaching vocabulary, the result of their research showed that TPR was an effective technique to increase students' achievement in vocabulary. Rasyu (2004) claimed that TPR is simple technique to build the students' understanding in learning a language, TPR was able to reduce students difficulties in memorizing some word and through TPR students feel relax and enjoy the lesson. To open a new path in TPR research, this study would concern on other skill in English language namely speaking. Here, the researcher would use TPR as the technique to improve students' speaking ability.

B. Literature review

1. Total Physical Response (TPR)

TPR was developed by James Asher, a professor of psychology at San Jose State University, California in the 1960. It is an instructional strategy which attempts to teach the language physical activity, where this technique imitate the model of how children learn their first language.

The application of TPR relies on the assumption that human brain has a biological program for acquiring any natural languages on earth including the sign language of the deaf. The process is visible when we observe how infants internalize their first language (Finocciaro, 1989). Here, communication between parents and children combines both verbal and physical aspect, the child responses physically to the speech of their parents. The responses of the child are positively reinforced by the speech of the parents. For many months children just absorbs the language without being able to speak. It is called the period of internalization and code breaking occurs. After this stage, the child will be able to reproduce the language spontaneously.

In TPR, comprehension should be supported by listening skill because to make input more comprehensible a learner will recognize the word or sentences that they hear from someone. So that, the process of speaking is delayed until comprehension skill are established. As Burns (1997) contended that comprehension abilities precede productive skills in learning a language. Which means in teaching speaking the teacher should emphasize on meaning rather than a form to minimize the learner stress.

From above definition, it can be inferred that TPR is a process to immitate how infant acqiure the language. In teaching activity teachers become a model who build the students' comprehension first before asking them to produce second language in the classroom. At this stage, speaking skill may not be forced, but it will appear naturally as a playful activity. And when speaking ability had appeared, it will not be in right way anymore, there were so many

errors. Nonetheless, if we are as tolerant of students' error as we ore of infants acquiring the first language, gradually speech will shape itself in the direction or instruction.

2. Teaching Speaking

Speaking is one of productive skill to produce verbal or nonverbal utterance to convey the meaning that involves an interactive process, producing and processing information. Speaking is not only making the right sounds, choosing the right words or getting the construction grammatical correctly, nonetheless speaking is more complex as it covers many components and units such as phonology, morphology, syntax, discourse, text, utterance, etc. which function together when learner speak in English (Van Lier, 1995: 15).

In the same line, Bailey (1994) reveals that speaking English can be particularly difficult than the other skill because speaking is occur in a real time. It means that, in one situation two or more people talk each other about things that they think are mutually interesting, each participant both a speaker and listener taking turn to speak in which they have to provide any contribution, monitoring each other while speaking, and giving immediate feedback from one's another. Moreover, because spoken communication happens in a real time, the opportunity to plan and edit what we wish to say is limited, unlike in written communication, a learner has time to plan or revise what she/he wants to write.

Additionally, to break the complexity of speaking, Brown (1994: 45-46) suggest that speaking should taught into three major stages, they are; introducing the new language, practice, and communicative activities. At the first stage, the teachers have several role likes, introduce a new language to the students, explain the meaning of the language, the way to pronounce and write it grammatically. While, at the second stage, students are asked to practice the oral drills such a asking and answer the question. And at the endof the stage, students are involving in communicative activities that enable them to communicate in a varied used of language.

3. Teaching Speaking Under TPR

In teaching and learning process under TPR, Asher in Richard & Rodgers (1986: 95-96) reveals that TPR may be proceeded in six way of teaching, those are; review, new command, other items introduce, role reversal, and reading and writing.
a. Review means that students are moved with commands, i.e. stand up please, open the door, etc.
b. New command means that the teacher introduces a new instruction to the students. Here, the teacher should introduce a various command i.e. Look for the jasmine picture.
c. Other items introduce. It means that, the teacher introduce and modeled the items to the students, here, the teacher ask a simple question which students are able to answer by using gesture, like pointing.
d. Role reversal, it means that if the students are ready to speak they will volunteers their self by giving an instruction to their friends.

Reading and writing. Here, the instructor write on the whiteboard each new vocabulary items and sentences to illustrate the items, the teacher also speak each item and acted it out the sentences. The students listen while read the material, they may copy the information in their notebook.

C. Methodology

1. Research Design

This study used an action research, which was proposed by Kemmis & Taggart (1989). The researcher applied three cycles that consists of planning, action, observation, and reflection.
a. Planning. In planning, researcher arranged what kind of activities were done in the field, such as the researcher inform to the Headmaster and an English teacher of SMPN 8 Kendari that the researcher will carry out a research concern on improving students' speaking ability by using TPR, the researcher and the teacher discussed the lesson plan related to the material, and the teacher and researcher prepare the instrument of the research.
b. Applying Action and Observation. In this session, the teacher and the researcher applied the action based on the planning that has been arranged before. While, in the observation, the researcher collected the data deal with the application of TPR in teaching speaking, the strategy of the teacher to solve students' problem, and students speaking accuracy.

c. Reflection. Reflection means to evaluate the strength and weakness of the previous classroom activities. Here, researcher determined whether the solution is successfully done or not. Researcher also worked collaboratively with the teacher to analyze the result of students speaking ability under TPR.

2. *Subject of the Research*

The subject of this research was the seventh class of SMPN 8 Kendari who enrolled 20008/2009. The total subject of the study was 26 students.

3. *Technique of Data Collection*

The researcher used all the research instruments to collect the data. The researcher first filled the observation sheet to see the students and teacher activities under TPR, second the researcher also taking note accordance with the students activities in the classroom, third, the researcher used tape recording to record the students' speaking presentation. It is used to get an accurate data about students' accuracy in speaking. The last, the researcher did a test to measure the result of students' speaking ability related to accuracy.

4. *Instruments*

The researcher used four kinds of instrument likes; observation sheet, speaking test, note taking, and tape recorder.

5. *Technique of Data Analysis*

The researcher analyzes the data qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitatively, the researcher described the data found in observation into word. It covered teachers' strategy to solve students' problem in each cycle. While, quantitatively, the researcher examine statistically data found in students' speaking test.

D. Findings and Discussion

To find out the data of students' ability in speaking, the researcher designed three cycles in which each cycle consist of three meetings. The following paragraph explained those cycles clearly.

1. Cycle 1

This cycle consist of three meetings, the material for each cycle was similar, namely "kinds of flowers". In teaching and learning activities, the researcher asked the students to work in pair, the researcher also named every pairs with flowers. i.e.; pair A got sun flower, pair B as Tulip, etc. After that, the researcher explained the procedure of TPR. Here, the researcher described the duty of instructor and performer, the researcher modeled the way of becoming instructor and performer either. In demonstrating the use of TPR, the researcher simply noticed on three grammatical features such as; imperatives sentences, preposition of place, and possessive adjective. This thing was done to make input more comprehensible before students asked to produce the target language.

The major problem in this cycle were most of students lost their idea when initiate to speak, it was due to the lack of vocabulary, therefore, in conveying the instruction the students tend to use Indonesian language and a little bit English. Furthermore, the researcher found that students who acted as instructor still did not understand how to instruct their friends, they simply spoke out the utterance without giving any modeled, that's why students who acted as performer felt confuse and did nothing.

Other students' problems were dealing with the grammatical using. Here, the students composed an imperative sentences ungrammatically, likes; "please to piqi to stand up", "you Resmi please to go to group sun flower", etc. The students got problem either on the using of possessive adjective correctly, such as; "you picture", "you friend", he bag", etc. The students as well had many obstacles on the field of pronunciation and lexical choice. Most of them pronounced the word based on the word written, for example; the word "come here" was pronounced by /komher/. In lexical choice the students could not distinguish how to use verb word, past, and past participle.

Referring to the problems above, researcher collaboratively with the teacher designed the next cycle which emphasized on treating the students' vocabulary mastery by giving them vocabulary lists based on the material would be taught. It was to facilitate the students who

eager to speak. Besides that, the researcher noticed the using of imperative sentences, preposition of place, and possessive adjective correctly to minimize the students' mistaken on grammatical aspect. Obviously students' achievement could be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Students' Speaking Score in Cycle One

NO	Remark	Score	Number of Students
1	Passed	72	2
2		70	2
		67	3
3	Failed	64	3
4		61	3
5		59	3
6		56	1
7		50	3
8		29	1
9		27	3
Total			24
Maximum Score			72
Minimum Score			27
Mean			57,3
Percentage			46%

The table above revealed that there had not been an improvement yet after the implementation of TPR. In this first cycle, most of the students were still unfamiliar with this technique, they got confuse when performing the role either as the instructor or performer. Besides that, the students could not produce English because they lack of vocabulary related to the teaching material. As the table shown that from 24 students, only 7 students (29,16%) passed the test, while 17 students (70,83%) failed the test. The data also confirmed the maximum score of students' speaking ability was 72 and their minimum score was 27. From the data, the researcher concluded that the students' ability in speaking was low, there should be a next cycle to treat their problems. Moreover, the criteria of students' success had not been achieved yet, as the percentage was fewer than 65%.

2. Cycle 2

This cycle was the continuance of the first cycle. It was consist of three meetings, in which every meeting the students would be treated by using TPR to improve their speaking ability. The material would be taught was "Planting Equipment" while for the grammatical features was still focused on the using of imperative sentences, preposition of place, and possessive adjective. As the aimed of this cycle was to re-examine of students' problem which found in the previous cycle, hence, the researcher equipped the students with the way to deal with their problems, such as; on vocabulary mastery, the researcher asked the students to make a list of vocabulary which was related with the material. It was to enable the students to memorize any words when initiating to speak. On lexical choice problem, the researcher provided the lists of regular and irregular verb in order the students was able to distinguish the verb word, past, and past participle. On pronunciation problems, the researcher assisted the students with the list of minimal pairs which was useful to help them in understanding how to pronounce the word properly.

In teaching and learning process, the researcher practiced one game called "Simon says". This game intended to reduce student's anxiety in learning process under TPR. The students felt free to express their idea when this game being applied, the students had already understand how to give a command to their friend and as a performer the students' were not confuse anymore since their friend gave the instruction by using a gesture. In this cycle, only few students looked anxious to speak, while some of them seemed to enjoy all the activities in a classroom.

A slight problem occurred in this cycle, most of the students had understood well about the duty of instructor and performer. They were able to give an appropriate instruction to the other who act as performer. And also in giving command the students had already used a gesture which reflects to the instruction. However, there was still a few student who did not focus on

classroom activity, such as they did not make vocabulary list which related to the topic being taught, therefore it affected to their performance in demonstrating the idea by using TPR.

Considering the criteria of students' success had not been achieved yet, the researcher and the teacher worked collaboratively to design the third cycle with the aimed to force students to speak by using TPR.

3. Cycle 3

This cycle consists of three meetings, it was designed to enhance students' ability in speaking, especially in accuracy. The topic would be taught was "the procedure of planting". Here, the students would take turn as instructor and performer in commanding their pairs to plant a flower. Students' speaking accuracy was focus on the use of imperative sentences, preposition of place, and possessive adjective.

Generally, the students' performance was better than the previous cycle. It was indicated by most of the students were ready to speak in English, they looked very enthusiastic to present their idea in front of the classroom, the students also enjoyed their activities since they were really like planting the flowers. Besides that, the students could minimize their mistake in terms of grammatical, lexical choice, and pronunciation.

Considering the students' ability in speaking had been improved significantly by achieving the criteria of students' success, thus the treatment was accomplished in third cycle. So, the researcher and the teacher did not design the next cycle anymore. The students' score could be seen in table below

Table 2. Students' peaking score in cycle three

No	Remark	Score	Number of Students
1	Passed	81	4
2		78	4
3		75	3
4		72	3
5		70	3
6		67	3
7	Failed	61	1
8		59	1
9		44	2
Total			24
Maximum Score			81
Minimum Score			44
Mean			68,4
Percentage			83%

Based on the table above, it could be concluded that there was a significant improvement on students' speaking ability. In this cycle, the students had got through the process of language internalization, in which the speaking was delay until they comprehend the language through listening and gesture. The students' problems on vocabulary had been overcome as well. The data showed that there were 20 students (83,33%) got score ≥ 67 which meant they passed the test, while only 4 students (16,66%) failed the test who got score ≤ 61. Thus, the researcher concluded that TPR was a good technique to improve students' ability in speaking, that's why the next cycle would not be designed anymore due to the students' criterion of success was achieved.

The result of this study indicated that there was a significant improvement of students' ability in speaking since they were treated by using TPR for three cycles. The students' increasing was obviously described at their score in speaking test. As reported in cycle one most of the students got score ≤ 67 and the percentage of students' success was 46%. While, at the second test which was conducted in cycle three the percentage of students' score increased 37%. So at the end of the cycle the students got 83% that was meant the criteria of students' success had been achieved.

The improvement of students in speaking was affected by some factors. First factor was TPR attempted to mirror the process of children acquired their first language. In this case, the teacher presented the language in a form of instructional strategy which covers teaching material such as; imperatives sentences, preposition of place, and possessive adjectives. Those

would be demonstrated by the teacher and fulfilled by the students individually or in pairs. As Finnociaro (1989) stated that in TPR students would learn the language just like infants learn their mother tongue. It means that when introducing the new language, the teacher should refer to the communication between parents and children which combine both of verbal and physical aspect.

The second factor was TPR minimized the students' anxiety when initiating to speak. Here, the students might not be forced to speak, they allowed to speak unless they were ready. So before getting ready to speak, there was a period of silence in which students only listen and comprehend the language through gesture or command. As revealed by Weir (1990) that TPR emphasized on developing students' comprehension. It means that in teaching and learning process by using TPR, teacher had to build the students' language comprehension before asked them to produce the language. So that, the process of speaking was delayed until the comprehension skill was established. To comprehend the language, students needed to listen attentively to the teacher instruction which was synchronizing through the body movement.

The third factor was TPR raised the students' confidence. Most of students perceived trying to speak in English was difficult thing where before talking they must convince that what they wanted to say was appropriate in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and lexical choice. Thus, only a few students had a braveness to speak while the other just kept silence. In addition, the students were fear of making mistake because when they made any mistaken, the other students would laugh at them. However, TPR could cope with those hindrances, as Asher (1977) confessed that in correcting students' error, the teacher should follow the way of parents giving feedback to the children. In this case, the teacher refrain their self to give much correction to the students' error, the teacher just letting the students to speak, because too much correction at the early stage may inhibit leaner to produce the language. Here, the teacher simply making a note on students' errors. After that, at the end of the class the teacher explained those mistaken generally without saying a mistake belong to whom.

Based on the above explanation, it could be concluded that TPR was a good technique to improve students' speaking ability in SMPN 8 Kendari. TPR overcome students' hindrances in speaking because the process of TPR facilitates the students to comprehend the language deeper. Whereas, they would not ask to speak until they were ready to produce the language, they only listen and visualize the instruction through body movement. Naturally, their ability to speak would appear as a playful activity.

6. Conclusion

This present study had explored the use of TPR to improve students' speaking ability at SMPN 8 Kendari. Based on the result of finding and discussion in chapter four, it could be concluded that;

After applying TPR for three cycle, there was a significant improvement on students' speaking ability. The percentage of students' speaking score increased 37% at the third cycle. TPR coped with the students' problem in terms of grammatical, lexical choice, and pronunciation. It indicated that TPR was a good technique to be applied in language learning especially in speaking skill.

There were three main factors that made TPR succeeded to improve students' speaking ability. Firstly, in learning the language TPR relies on the way of how children learn their mother tongue. Here, the teacher present the language either verbal or physical aspect. Secondly, TPR developed comprehension through listening skill which was relating with gesture. The students only need to listen to the command and shaped the language into instruction. They were not forced to speak as long as they were ready to produce the language. Thus, this kind of atmosphere comforts the students to be an active speaker in a classroom. Lastly, TPR minimize the students' anxiety in speaking. They were not afraid of making a mistake in using the language because the teacher would not interrupt when they had any errors in speaking accuracy, instead, the teacher allowed them to speak and her feedback would explain generally at the end of the class.

As mentioned previously, the findings of this study positively improve students' ability in speaking. However, this study was far from conclusive and had some limitations. Therefore, further research was needed. The suggestion were as follows

a. This research was simply focus on the aspect of accuracy, for the next research, it might be better to cover both of accuracy and fluency.
b. This is a classroom action research, for the further research might use the other method like experimental research, comparative study, and so forth.

This study took junior high school as the subject, the next research might take a different level of students, because TPR could be applied in any level.

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