Teaching English vocabulary to young learners through total physical response method

Nguyen Dinh Nhu Ha1*, Le Thi Thuy Trang2, Nguyen Thi Thanh Hue3

1Institute of Technical Education, Ho Chi Minh University of Technology and Education, Vietnam
2Faculty of Special Training, Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Vietnam
3Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology, Vietnam
*Corresponding author: handn.ncs@hcmute.edu.vn

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to investigate the effect of the Total Physical Response (TPR) Method on vocabulary retention and explore the young learners’ attitudes toward it. It involved sixty-two English young learners (YLs) aging from 10 to 11. All of them were attending English classes at Viet Uc English Language Center (VUC) in Bien Hoa City where the current study was conducted. Both quantitative and qualitative data was obtained through the three instruments, namely pre-and post-test and interview. Descriptive statistics was employed for data analysis. The results revealed that TPR affected the YLs’ vocabulary knowledge through an increase in their vocabulary retention after they underwent the treatment. Similarly, the findings of the study also revealed that the YLs had positive attitudes toward the use TPR in vocabulary teaching and learning. This study is expected to shed light on the implementation of teaching vocabulary methods in the VUC context and other similar contexts.

1. Introduction

In the globalization era, it cannot be denied that English, the most widely spoken language in the world today, is very important. Harmer (2001) stated that English offers many great employment opportunities to everyone owning sufficient English language knowledge. Also, it seems to be a vital tool for everyone that desires to enter the outstanding areas of the world, such as commerce, technology, medicine, science, education, and so on. Consequently, the demand for learning and using English has been increasing within the last few years in all classes and ages. Most parents agree that the sooner young learners (Yls) learn a second language, the better they will be in language learning (McKay, 2006; Pinter, 2006). Concerning vocabulary acquisition, linguists such as Nation (2011) and others have appreciated that vocabulary acquisition plays an essential part in the formation of the other skills. Nunan (1999, p. 101) claimed that lacking vocabulary is one of the main reasons that second language learners find it difficult to master English. Additionally, the aim of teaching English vocabulary to YLs is to motivate them to be ready and self-confident in learning English at a higher level of education. Most language teachers assent to Cameron (2001) that vocabulary has a crucial role in language YLs, and it is the first and most important step in acquiring a language. Thus, vocabulary always comes high on the list of priorities since they started learning English for the first time. Besides, learners' characteristics are also one of the crucial factors that the teacher would pay much attention to in the process of
teaching. Unlike adults, for YLs, it is hard to use verbal explanations to teach them the meaning of the words. Their levels of concentration and attention are short, so a variety of well-prepared activities, pace, and organization are necessary (Scott & Ytreberg, 1990, pp. 2-4). Only by having a thorough grasp of learners' features and teaching techniques can the teacher set learners' interest and motivation in learning English vocabulary. Of teaching language methods, Total Physical Response (TPR), which was put forward by James Asher, is considered to be an appropriate and effective method in introducing and consolidating the English vocabulary to YLs. This method bases on the process of acquiring the first language through physical movement in response to a direct command and works best with beginners or YLs (Richards & Rodgers, 1999).

In general, based on the significance of the TPR method on YLs' vocabulary retention and attitudes, the following research questions are formulated:

1) How does the TPR method enhance young learners' vocabulary retention?

2) What are young learners' attitudes towards the use of the TPR method in teaching and learning English vocabulary?

2. Literature review

In terms of the grammar-translation method (GTM), vocabulary is learned effectively through direct translation from the source language. Translation in learning a foreign language promotes understanding. In fact, both teachers and students find it easy to understand new words through GTM. Teachers commonly explain a foreign word by giving an equivalence in the target language. Krashen (1987) stated that GTM provides comprehensible input. In addition, Brown (2001) admitted that GTM is widely used and accepted by most of teachers and students who are not fluent enough in English. It is obvious that students need to know linguistic details in order to master a foreign language. Furthermore, it is considered the best way for teachers and students to communicate in their native language. Refaai (2013) conducted research about the use of GTM in teaching a foreign language. The results demonstrated that the translation enhanced the right performance of language and met the needs of students. According to Dagilienė (2012), he investigated the role of GTM in English language teaching. The study found that translation is a useful tool in teaching English words and skills.

A considerable number of studies on the use of TPR in teaching English to YLs in a variety of academic contexts could be found. Regarding studies conducted in the international context, firstly, it can count for Forero and Muñoz (2011), who conducted a research project with the aim of observing the impact of TPR on vocabulary acquisition of the third graders from "Gamma" school in Pereira, Colombia. The results revealed that teaching English vocabulary through TPR allows students to learn faster and easier. Another study on a similar issue was conducted by Zhen (2011) who used the TPR method to teach English adjectives to YLs to investigate whether the TPR method is effective in teaching English adjectives. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design with two groups: the control group and the experimental group. Besides, the questionnaires were deliberated. After the intervention program, he confirmed that the pupils' achievements were improved by the TPR method. Regarding the effect of TPR on Teaching Vocabulary to YLs, the first research was conducted by Pujiningsih (2013). The research was administered in MI NU Manafiuil Ulum Kudus for about seven months. The method of the research is classroom action research. The subject of the research was the students of the sixth grade. In collecting the data, the researcher used diaries, video recordings, interviews, and tests. The research findings showed that TPR could improve the students' English vocabulary, including meaning, spelling, pronunciation, and using words. In relation to the effect of TPR on English vocabulary mastery of elementary
school children, Sariyati (2013) carried out a study to seek the answer to the question of whether the application of TPR can enhance the primary school students’ learning English vocabulary efficiency rather than traditional teaching methods. This research employed a mixed-method, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. A quasi-experimental design involving two groups (control and experiment) was conducted in the first grade in the Islamic elementary school in Bandung. The result of the study showed that the application of TPR does have a greatly positive effect on the participants’ English vocabulary knowledge; specifically, the students of the treatment group achieve marks considerably in the post-test than the control group.

Regarding TPR studies conducted in the Vietnamese context, there have been few studies conducted to examine the effectiveness of TPR on teaching English to YLs. Hoang (2013) carried out research to find out the answers for the three main issues: the attitudes of teachers and students towards the teaching and learning vocabulary, the real situation of using TPR activities in teaching vocabulary to children, and the effect of using TPR activities in teaching this language element. Data was collected through one questionnaire in English for the teachers and one Vietnamese questionnaire for the students, and some follow-up interviews. The results revealed that first, although there are many difficulties in teaching vocabulary to children, most of the teachers are interested in working with them. Secondly, although TPR activities are not used with high frequency, they are proved to be very useful and effective in vocabulary learning and teaching to the children through experimental teaching. One more article was written by Ngo and Pham (2018) about the effect of using the TPR approach in teaching vocabulary to very YLs and exploring the attitudes of YLs towards learning vocabulary using the TPR approach. Nevertheless, he only provided the theoretical background of variations involving the topic, and none methodological method was conducted to measure the effectiveness.

Obviously, gaps are found in the literature relating to the application of TPR method in Vietnam. Besides, although these numerous empirical studies have been demonstrated the positive influence of TPR on YLs’ vocabulary retention as well as their attitudes toward this method, most of the studies were conducted in an EFL and ESL setting in which the participants were elementary learners at the same age in a classroom at a formal school. Some research has focused on a class of YLs aged from 10 to 11 years old at a language center. To fill these gaps, the current study aims to investigate the effect of TPR in teaching English vocabulary to YLs aging 10-11 at VUC language.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research setting and participants

Viet Uc English Language Center (VUC) is located in the center of Bien Hoa City. It is one of the top language centers in Bien Hoa city with a huge number of learners attending its English courses. The center is well equipped with facilities served for educational purposes such as micro, CD players, LCD TV, and projectors in each class. There are communication classes for Kids, teenagers, and adults, and classes for international academic English tests like TOEIC or IELTS. In the case of VUC, the total number of learners was 250. Among them, 73 YLs aged from 6 to 11 years old were attending the elementary English course at VUC. However, the researcher only chose YLs aging from 10 to 11 because all of them were the learners of the two classes which the researcher was teaching.

The participants in the present study consisted of 62 YLs (39 males and 23 females). They are ten-year-old and eleven-year-old students who were learning at VUC.
Table 1

Demographic information of the participants

| Variable | Categories   | Number of Participants | Percentage (%) | Total N=62 |
|----------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|------------|
| Group    | Control      | 31                     | 50             | N = 62     |
|          | Experimental | 31                     | 50             |            |
| Ages     | 10           | 21                     | 33.9           | N = 62     |
|          | 11           | 41                     | 66.1           |            |
| Gender   | Male         | 39                     | 63             | N = 62     |
|          | Female       | 23                     | 37             |            |

Source: The researcher’s data analysis

3.2. Research instruments

3.2.1. Tests

To investigate the effect of TPR on YLs' vocabulary retention, the quasi-experimental design was used involving two groups (control and experimental) and employing pretest and posttest. For a clearer description, the design could be seen in the figure below:

| Control Group | Pre-test | X (Treatment with GTM) | Post-test |
|---------------|----------|------------------------|-----------|
| Experimental Group | Pre-test | X (treatment with TPR method) | Post-test |

Figure 1. Experiment design description of tests

The pre-test and post-test were employed to get the score of the participants before and after teaching English vocabulary through TPR to evaluate the YLs' performance. This self-constructed test was adapted from the Smart Choice 1 workbook because the researcher found it appropriate for the purpose of this study. The pre-test and the post-test were designed to be similar to each other in terms of content, task types, allotted time, and numbers of the tasks.

It consisted of eight parts and eighty items in total. The first part was matching the twelve words in the box with twelve pictures. Next, in the second part, there were eight multiple-choice items in which the participants based on contextual clues to choose the correct option. The third part was to sort out fourteen words into the right category. The following part was "odd one out" with ten items. The fifth part, which required the participants to circle the missing words, included ten sentences. The sixth one was choosing six words in the box to complete the conversation. The seventh part embraced twelve items and was matching the words with the right pictures. The last one was matching ten words from two columns to make activities. The total score of this test was 10 points in which each correct got 0.125 for eighty items. In this study, it was used to find out whether there was a significant distinction of scores between teaching English vocabulary using TPR and teaching English vocabulary without using TPR for YLs at VUC.

3.2.2. Interview

For the interview, the closed-ended questions were used to gain qualitative data to explore the YLs' attitudes towards TPR in the progress of learning English vocabulary. In this study, the
researcher prepared nine questions to ask ten interviewees. Categories and themes relating to the YLS' attitudes towards the TPR were explored. The questions from the interview focusing on four variables: The first one was "Learning and teaching activities"; the next one was "The way teacher implemented TPR in teaching English vocabulary"; the following variable was "The effect of TPR on vocabulary retention"; the last one was "Benefits and Disadvantages of TPR".

3.2.3. Treatment

**Teaching English vocabulary to the experimental group through Total Physical Response**

The process of teaching in the treatment was divided into three parts. They are pre-activities, whilst- activities, and post- activities. The activities of these lessons included various techniques and TPR activities like the TPR-P and TPR-B and TPR-O. In the pre-activity phase, the researcher gave questions to the Yls about their experience as warming up. From these questions, the Yls can imagine their experience and the material. Then, she introduced the topic by giving simple commands like: "Touch your nose," "Walk quickly toward the door," or "Clean the board." Then, she continued giving commands related to the words of the unit, such as "play a computer game," "check email," "do homework," "watch TV." Secondly, in the "New commands" stage: First of all, the researcher showed the words on the slides; read them out loud many times in a turn. Afterward, whenever a word was shown, she demonstrated the correlative activity, simultaneously read out loud the verb phrases "go swimming, play football..." Then she asked the whole class to imitate her actions whenever she read the words, as well as the words, appeared on the slides. Next, in the "Role reversal" stage, the researcher organized the group activities with the game, "Simon says: Go swimming. Simon says: Go ices skating ....." and required the group to respond physically toward the commands. Then, members in a group controlled and conducted the game by themselves. With the following activity, she turned on the "Sports song" and required her students to listen to catch the activities in the song and demonstrate them. Then, the researcher divided into four groups and asked one of the Yls to be the instructor and gave the command to his classmates. The researcher monitored all of the Yls in the class and helped the Yls if they had difficulties to respond in action. Finally, with the "Reading and Writing" stage, the researcher wrote each new vocabulary item on the chalkboard with a sentence to illustrate the item. She wrote an extra conversation with the appearance of the words. Then she spoke each item, conversation, and acted out the sentence. The learners listened as she read the material. In post activities, it was time for Yls to memorize vocabulary. Fifteen minutes before the time was up; the researcher checked the Yls' vocabulary and their respond. At the end of the lesson, the researcher reviewed all vocabulary again and motivated the class for later times.

**Teaching English vocabulary to control group through Grammar Translation Method**

The researcher gave Yls a topic to write about in the target language. The topic was based upon some aspect of the reading passage of the lesson. Implementation of GTM was divided into four phases: first, the teacher gave Yls a reading text. Secondly, Yls ordered to read the text silently. Next, the researcher helped the Yls translate the text word by word directly by writing these new words on the board as well as giving some examples and at last, the Yls were required to memorize the grammar rule and the translation. The researcher applied some techniques, which are used in implementing GTM, included: Translation of a literary passage, Reading comprehension questions, Antonyms and Synonyms, Cognates, Deductive application of the rule, Filling in the blanks, Memorization, Using words in sentences, and Composition.
### 3.3. Data analysis

This study concerned two types of data: quantitative data gathered from the experiment and qualitative data for interviews. With the results of the pre-test and post-test, SPSS 19.0 was employed. T-test was used to analyze the results in order to measure the effect of TPR on vocabulary retention of the YLs.

### 3.4. Data collection procedure

The researcher took a total of 62 YLs as the sample and divided into two classes: the control group, which was taught with the traditional methods, and the experimental group which was taught with the TPR method. Each group had the same number of 31 YLs. In relation to the quantitative data, the process involved the following steps. First of all, all the YLs from the two groups in the study were administered to take the pretest. After conducting the pre-test, the researcher gave treatment: TPR method for the experimental group; also, the Grammar-Translation Method for the control group. After the treatment course, the posttest was given. Finally, all the two group’s scores from the two tests were collected to use for data analysis.

On the last day of the course, the researcher set up an informal structured interview with ten YLs individually to explore the learners' attitudes towards TPR. The answers to the questions of the interview were recorded and transcribed.

### 4. Findings and discussion

#### 4.1. Findings

##### 4.1.1. Results of research question 1

Research question 1 attempted to examine the extent to which TPR enhances the YLs' English vocabulary retention. The following results are the answers to the first research question.

The comparison of the mean scores of vocabulary test between the control group and the experimental group before the treatment

The pretest was utilized for experiment and control groups (experiment group with TPR method, control group with GMT) to measure the YLs' vocabulary knowledge before the treatment as well as consider the YLs' initial ability between the groups to make sure whether they had the same level. As stated earlier, to compare the mean difference and to prove the homogeneity of the control group and the experimental group in their English knowledge vocabulary before the treatment, the descriptive statistics, and Independent Samples T-test were run to analyze the scores of the pre-test. The results were displayed as follow:

**Table 2**

Descriptive Statistics of the mean scores of pre-test results of the two groups

| Groups of Students | N  | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|-------------------|----|-------|----------------|
| Control           | 31 | 2.661 | .8411          |
| Experimental      | 31 | 2.399 | 1.1589         |

Source: Data analysis result of the research

The findings of pretest measurement using independent T-test consisted of the findings of group statistics and independent samples test. The result of the pre-test from group statistics consists of the number of participants, the mean score and standard deviation. With the results
shown in Table 2, the total mean score of the control group (M=2.661) and that of the experimental group (M = 2.399) were just above the average on the scale of "1 as minimum" to "10 as maximum" which indicates that before the treatment, the participants did not know much about these vocabularies.

**Table 3**

Comparative results of the mean scores of the pre-test results of the two groups

|                  | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |  t-test for Equality of Means |   |   |   | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |
|------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|---|----------------------------------------|
|                  | F   | Sig. | t  | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | Lower | Upper |
| Pre-test         |     |      |    |    |               |                 |                     |       |       |
| Equal variances  | 1.984 | .164 | 1.019 | 60 | .312 | .262097 | .257196 | -.252371 | .776565 |
| assumed          |     |      |    |    |               |                 |                     |       |       |
| Equal variances  | 1.019 | 54.740 | .313 | .262097 | .257196 | -.253390 | .777583 |
| not assumed      |     |      |    |    |               |                 |                     |       |       |

Source: Data analysis result of the research

Table 3 shows the mean difference between the two groups (MD=.262097) was very low. It highlights that the two groups had the same initial level of English vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, the results in the Independent Sample t-test signify that the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances is non-significant. The Sig (2-tailed) value as .313 was much higher than .05 (level of significance). The finding implies that before the treatment, the levels of vocabulary learning of the two groups were not significantly different. In other words, it might be concluded that the homogeneity of the two groups in terms of vocabulary competence was established at the beginning of the experiment.

The comparison of the mean scores of vocabulary post-test results between the control group and the experimental group after the treatment

The post-test was designed to measure English vocabulary retention after the treatment in the study. This post-test was a self-constructed test, and it had the same format as the pre-test.

**Table 4**

Descriptive Statistics of the mean scores of the control and experimental group in the post-test

| Groups of Students | N  | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|------|----------------|
| Control            | 31 | 5.637| 1.3641         |
| Experimental       | 31 | 6.620| 1.0808         |

Source: Data analysis result of the research
Table 5
Comparative results of the mean scores of control and experimental group in the post-test

| Post-test | 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 |
| Equal variances assumed | .861 | .357 | -3.148 | 60 | .003 | -.983871 | .312585 | -1.609135 | -.358607 |
| Equal variances not assumed |        |      | -3.148 | 57.019 | .003 | -.983871 | .312585 | -1.609808 | -.357934 |

Source: Data analysis result of the research

The findings show that the mean difference among groups on the post-test was statistically significant. With the results shown in Table 4, after the treatment, the total mean score of the vocabulary test of the experimental group (M=6.620) was very much higher than that of the control group (M = 5.637) with the mean difference between the two groups (MD= .983871). In addition, an Independent Samples T-test was also conducted to evaluate whether there is a significant difference between the two groups in the English vocabulary knowledge after the treatment. The results in Table 5 signify that the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances is statistically significant. The Sig. (2-tailed) value is .003 (< .005) which indicates that after the treatment, the participants' English vocabulary knowledge between the two groups was significantly different: the level of English vocabulary retention of the experimental group was greater than that of the control group.

The comparison between the results of pre-test and post-test within each group

To compare the mean scores of the participants' English vocabulary retention within the control group and the experimental group before and after the treatment, the researcher run the Descriptive Statistics and Paired-Samples T-test to gain the participants' performance. The results were reported as follows:

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics of the mean scores within the control group and the experimental group before and after the treatment

| Groups of Students | Tests | N  | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|-------|----|------|----------------|
| Control            | Pre-test | 31 | 2.661 | .8411          |
|                    | Post-test | 31 | 5.637 | 1.3641         |
| Experimental       | Pre-test | 31 | 2.399 | 1.1589         |
|                    | Post-test | 31 | 6.620 | 1.0808         |

Source: Data analysis result of the research
Table 7
Comparative results of the mean scores within each group in the pre-test and post-test

| Paired Differences | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | t    | df  | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------|------|-----|----------------|
| The control group (A) |      |                |                 |                                          |      |     |                |
| Pre-test - Post-test | -2.975806 | .918796 | .165021 | -3.312824 - 2.638789 | -18.033 | 30  | .000          |
| Pre-test - Post-test | -4.221774 | .468497 | .084145 | -4.393620 - 4.049928 | -50.173 | 30  | .000          |

Source: Data analysis result of the research

From these two tests, it can be shown that after the treatment, both different treatment conditions' performance, the control group, and the experimental group, on vocabulary retention increased from the pre-test to the post-test. Concretely, for the control group, the mean score increased from the pre-test (M = 2.661) to the post-test (M = 5.637) with the mean difference (MD = 2.975806). Furthermore, Sig. (2-tailed) Value as .000 indicates there was a significant difference between the participants in the control group before and after the treatment. For the experimental group, the mean score increased from the pre-test (M = 2.399) to the post-test (M = 6.620) with the mean difference (MD = 4.221774). Moreover, Sig. (2-tailed) value as .000 revealed that there was a significant difference in the participants in the experimental group before and after the treatment.

However, when considering the values of the mean difference between the control group and the experimental group, it could be observed that the mean score of the experimental group was much greater than that of the control group after the treatment. In other words, the mean score of the experimental group was significantly developed after the treatment.

In conclusion, the findings of the study proved that using the TPR Method to teach English vocabulary to young learners actually had a great effect on YLs’ vocabulary retention. The method may facilitate YLS to develop and memorize their English vocabulary more easily and longer than traditional methods.

4.1.2. Results of research question 2

Research question 2 attempted to explore the YLs’ attitudes towards the use of the TPR Method in teaching and learning English vocabulary. Data was collected from the interview.

With the aim of exploring YLs' attitudes towards the use of the TPR method in teaching and learning English vocabulary at TELC, the researcher conducted an interview with ten interviewees. Ten YLS which took part in the interview were coded as L1 to L10. Their answers were recorded on a sheet. Five variables were identified: learning and teaching activities; the way the teacher implemented TPR in teaching English vocabulary; the effect of TPR on vocabulary retention; benefits and disadvantages.

The YLs’ attitudes toward teaching and learning activities

In term of the YLs' attitudes towards TPR teaching and learning activities including themes "the content, learning atmosphere and participation, the researcher gathered the responses as follow:

Regarding the content of activities and the learning atmosphere, all of them found teaching
and learning activities focused on the lesson content. Also, it was effective in introducing and reviewing vocabulary. Most of them were of the opinion that TPR activities were joyful and interesting, which allowed them to move all the time physically.

L1 reported that: "It's easy to understand and follow the instruction of learning activities." "They were very exciting and full of positive energy. I had no pressure in studying new words (L3)." "Moreover, the enjoyable class atmosphere made me feel emotionally easy with learning tasks (L4)."

However, one YL (L7) showed his feelings that he felt bored because of the repetition of activities. Additionally, the activities made the learning atmosphere chaotic (L7 and L10). They claimed that:

"The activities were not actually various which made me too familiar with them. Furthermore, some students seem too excited." and "The atmosphere was so noisy that we could not hear the teacher's instructions."

With respect to the class participants, they also agreed that they were fond of participating in every TPR activity. Particularly, the ones which they liked most were "The Amazing Race" and "Simon says."

L1 expressed: "I guessed everyone liked participating in TPR classes. I found that most of my classmates were excited when joining every activity of TPR". Similarly, L3 claimed: "I enjoyed the TPR activities very much."

Nevertheless, three learners (L5, L7, and L10) affirmed that not everyone participated in all of the TPR activities because of their shyness. For example, S7 stated that: "Most of them are exciting. But some students are shy. They don't like to go to the platform and responded to the commands."

**The YLs’ attitudes toward the way teacher implemented TPR in teaching English vocabulary**

Regarding YLs' attitudes toward the way teacher implemented TPR in teaching English vocabulary related to "teaching performance, organization, and management, behavior as well as the way giving feedbacks," data is presented as follows:

Most of the participants (6/10) asserted that the teacher's instruction and demonstration were easy to understand. Some of the learners expressed:

"She presented and illustrated attractively and humorously (L1)." "I felt easier to understand the English lesson explained by my teacher (L10)."

Strikingly, nearly all of YLs enjoyed the teacher's behavior and attitudes; particularly, the way the teacher gave feedback and assessment. Some learners expressed:

"The teacher fostered every learner and revised our mistakes politely and positively (L4)"….and, she never assessed our performance too strictly; on the contrary, errors made by us are usually overlooked, but she just corrected our errors (L7)."

However, there were some thoughts raising some issues about the teacher's teaching vocabulary through TPR. First of all, two interviewees (S3 and S6) reflected that the teacher seemed to overuse the imperative drills, which made the students easily get bored after a few days. Additionally, the two remaining participants (L2 and L9) commented that "Sometimes she was confused in teaching adjectives such as "smart," "confident". Besides, a few considered that the
teacher needed to improve her organization and management of the class activities.

"I thought that the teacher needs to manage in-class activities. Some learners got too excited and noisy. Although the teacher required them not to do that, they still repeated later (L4)."

**The YL’s attitudes toward the effect of TPR on vocabulary retention**

It was noteworthy that all interviewees appreciated the marked effect of TPR on their vocabulary retention. More specifically, they agreed that the TPR method facilitated memorizing meanings of words better than some methods, and it could be beneficial in improving their vocabulary learning. For example, S1 recognized that "I totally grasped the meaning of the new words for the first time the teacher demonstrated."

Specifically, when asked, "Do you think the TPR has an effect on your vocabulary retention?" Astonishingly, it has been found that all of the YLs had a high opinion of the value of TPR in understanding the meaning of the words as well as remembering them in a long time. Two responses from L3 and L4 as evidence:

"I strongly agreed that using the TPR method has great significance to my vocabulary retention. When encountering the words, I recall their meanings easily (L3)." and "I didn't think I could retain the meanings of many such words after a long time. My vocabulary knowledge has been increased considerably (L4)."

With the responses for explaining the reasons, the result showed that the YLs acknowledged the effectiveness of TPR on vocabulary retention because of two main advantages. Firstly, TPR effectively supported the learners to review the learned words. L3 said that: "We practiced with the commands owing to the words quite a few times. Whenever needing recall the words, I immediately remembered the physical attached to them. Then the meanings of these words come into my mind."

The second one is the learning atmosphere that TPR activities have made.

L9 confirmed: "Leaning atmosphere was also one of the remarkable advantages; ", that TPR was effective because it created an enjoyable learning atmosphere, and stimulated learners (L8)."

However, although they agreed that vocabulary knowledge had been increased, not every aspect of the word was managed well. Such as S3 accepted that "The written form was a challenge for me because the teacher occasionally gave us chances to write the words."

**The YL’s attitudes toward benefits and disadvantage**

The interview results indicated that the participants recognized TPR has many benefits after their training course. Most of them (5/10) claimed that it created a fun, easy, and memorable learning atmosphere and activities.

L9 reported: "We are interested in physical movements, imitation, songs, etc. And TPR has all techniques, which always make me excited". L3 asserted: "This method created a positive and lively atmosphere in the class."

One learner (L1) was in favor of the procedure of TPR which was fairly simple, suitable, and easy to follow. Moreover, TPR facilitates them to understand the target language without translation to the mother tongue.

However, with the last question “Did you meet any difficulties in learning English vocabulary through TPR? What limitations of TPR you think need to change or improve?” They
also shared some disadvantages of TPR which they experienced. As mentioned above in previous aspects, L2 and L3 complained to the researcher about "overusing TPR," which causes learners to bored.

"TPR procedure utilized too many imperative drills, which made me feel overloaded sometimes (L9)." Moreover, L4 reflected: "This method is not really creative. I do not have any opportunities to express my thoughts."

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. The effect of the TPR method on the young learners’ vocabulary retention

The results of the present study seem to be satisfactorily consistent with the above-mentioned theories. First of all, the finding supports the theory of learning of TPR. It can be said that the participants in the experimental group recalled the words more effectively because they follow children's naturalistic process of absorbing the native language. Particularly, TPR mimics the process of first language acquisition, which is applied in second language teaching and learning. TPR respects the brain lateralization involving the brain hemispheres' functions: listening comprehension before verbal production. Similarly, Peck (2001, p. 143) remarked that "YLs seem to learn a language quickly when there is a combination of brain and body." The final one which the researcher recognizes as a crucial factor is the reduction of stress which is stated that the fewer stress learners endure better learning results they have (Richard & Rodgers, 1999). Secondly, the current result is in agreement with the way young learners learn foreign/second language which the researcher had discussed in the literature review. As Scott and Ytreberg (1990, p.2) emphasized that "Young learners' understanding comes from hands and eyes and ears, and the physical world is dominant at all times."

Last but not least, the finding corroborates the ideas of Harmer (2007, p. 84), who suggested that the learners should be encouraged to use their own thoughts and experiences to respond to texts and situations, rather than just giving answers and learning theoretically. It indicates that it will be easy for the learners to acquire and remember the words for long-term retention if they combine their body in learning vocabulary. That is the reason why TPR helps the YLs understand and remember vocabulary for long-term retention effectively.

On the other hand, GMT is a teaching foreign language method which focuses on the development of students' appreciation of the target language literature and teaching the language. Translation and reading comprehension is the main concern. In GMT, with vocabulary teaching activities, the teacher writes the words on the board and translates them directly into the native language. The learners are passive during the learning process, which makes learners bored and forget the material easily. They are also not interested in the learning process. This condition is not relevant to the characteristics of young learners. They seem attracted to experiences than learning theories. In addition, they are fond of learning by practicing it or actively take part in the learning process. After considering the characteristics of those methods, it might be concluded that TPR can bring a better result to students' vocabulary retention.

The findings of the present study are consistent with Forero and Muñoz (2011), who conducted the research project to observe the impact of TPR on vocabulary knowledge of third graders from "Gamma" school in Pereira, Colombia. The results obtained revealed that teaching English vocabulary through TPR allows students to learn faster and easier. Also, the result from the research of Pujiningsih (2013) gave the consistent result that TPR enhanced YLs vocabulary acquisition. Also, the result was in accordance with the findings of the previous study of Ghani and Hanim (2014) which identified that TPR was suitable and meaningful for teaching English.
vocabulary to children at early stages of the learning process. Furthermore, the result is in line with that of the previous studies of Octaviany (2007), Sari (2015) and Qiu (2016).

4.2.2. The young learners’ attitudes towards the use of TPR

With respect to the YLs’ attitudes towards TPR, upon analyzing the results from the responses of the interview, it became evident that the YLs had positive attitudes towards the use of TPR. They reported in the affective reaction interview that they felt “interested,” “enthusiastic,” and “joyful” at higher frequencies than emotions such as “bored,” and “shy.” Furthermore, the YLs were all in accordance with many of the positive statements in the interview regarding nearly every aspect of TPR on learning vocabulary including learning and teaching activities.

In general, the YLs were eager to join class activity which was a considerable sign of the effectiveness of TPR. One possible explanation for this may be because of the increased level of YLs motivation in the experimental group in vocabulary learning. Supporting this view was Lightbown and Spada (1999), the two researchers claimed that high motivation could gain language learners’ enthusiasm and get their positive mood to learn the second language. TPR brought YLs an interesting experience in their vocabulary learning. Being provided the learning atmosphere full of physical movement, which is different from the traditional methods like Grammar Translation, the YLs seemed to be motivated and pay more interest in learning vocabulary. The TPR activities attract learners’ interest, intrinsic motivation, and enhance enjoyment in learning. They were designed to be funny, meaningful, and learner-centered, which gave the YLs an active role in participation; hence, their motivation increased.

These findings support the claims made by Hoang (2013), who conducted a study to find out the answers for the attitudes of teachers and students towards the teaching and learning vocabulary through TPR. It has been found that a stress-free environment allows children to be more receptive and motivated to learn the language.

However, the results reveal that noisy, cluttered learning atmosphere sometimes, the repetitive learning activities and the overused imperative drills made YLs boring and dissatisfied. Furthermore, some opinions were shown that because of its principal using the imperative, it is of limited utility to the learner. More considerably, the findings in terms of the disadvantages of TPR collected from responses of the interview in this study mirror those found in the previous research of Hoang (2013) and Ummah (2017).

It can be explained that the disadvantage of TPR is that the imperative and responses do not support learners' real-life environment. It leaves out the form of narrative, description, and conversation (Tomscha, 1986). Besides, despite the fact that most of YLs agreed that their teachers' teaching methods, behavior as well as the way giving feedbacks did have a positive effect on their learning; some of her shortcomings were reflected such as: overusing the imperative drills, confusingly teaching some items, organizing and managing as well as assessing the students’ performance. All issues which were raised related to the lack of experience of the teacher in organization and management. Moreover, although the teacher herself perceived that she clearly understood the principles of TPR, it does not mean that she used TPR in the right way.

5. Conclusion and implications

The results of this study have indicated that YLs' vocabulary retention could be enhanced by TPR. It was proven by the better performance in the post-test of the experiment group in comparison with the control group. In other words, after treated with TPR, the YLs' vocabulary retention has been improved. Hopefully speaking, they will gain more confidence in learning
English at a higher level of education thanks to TPR method. Moreover, the participants who are treated with TPR also had positive attitudes towards the use of TPR in learning English vocabulary.

The findings suggest several courses of action for EFL teachers and young English learners. For the EFL teachers, they should spend time to investigate the principles, benefits, and disadvantages of TPR in teaching vocabulary so that they can apply this method appropriately and effectively in their teaching process. To implement the TPR Method successfully, EFL teachers should prepare their lessons carefully before going to class. TPR should not be used for teaching vocabulary in isolation. Teachers should use this method in enhancing language skills such as listening, speaking and writing. Through the practice of skills, YLs may learn and memorize vocabulary better. To the English young learners, they should be encouraged to take part in activities during the lesson. They should concentrate on activities or assignments provided by the teachers so that they can acquire the language more easily under the guidance of the teachers.

However, the study was limited in several ways. First of all, the time of conducting the training experiment in this study was limited. This research was conducted within only a month, which means in total in four weeks. Therefore, if the study would be conducted for a longer time, it would be desirable to yield more generalizable findings. The second limitation lies within the teachers’ practice, perception, and own approach in teaching the English Language. That is to say, not all the activities relating to TPR were taught during the treatment. Finally, the participants were only 62 YLs in only one site of study so the findings may not be generalizable to other sites.

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