THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) APPROACH IN HELPING SLOW YOUNG LEARNERS WITH LOW ACHIEVEMENT ACQUIRE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Total Physical Response (TPR), an approach to teach imperatives to learners of foreign language was developed by James Asher in 1965. It promotes learning language in a less stressful ways. This research aims to study the effectiveness of TPR approach in helping slow young learners in acquiring English as a second language. This study adopted a pre-test and post-test quasi-experimental design, a quantitative method. A purposive sampling method is used and 48 Year 2 pupils who are listed as the low achievers are selected from a whole population of Year 2 pupils within South-west district in Penang. The pupils are assigned to appropriate group, experiment and control. A test item is built based on the specification and requirement of selected unit of the textbook. An independent samples t-test are conducted using SPSS 20.0 to test the hypotheses built. The test indicates a significant effect between TPR approach and language acquisition. The test also shows that TPR helps to close the gap between the experiment group and the control group.

Keywords: The Effectiveness, Total Physical Response Approach, Helping Slow Young Learners with Low Achievement

1. INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, English Language posed as a legacy worth more than a century as it is acquire since British Colonial rulings. Vinodini (2003) stated the importance of English as a global lingua franca as motivating factors in learning and using the language in Malaysia.

Standard-Based English Language Curriculum clearly indicates that English is taught as a second language in all Malaysian primary and secondary schools. Thus, the curriculum is designed to help pupils acquire the language in order to help them use it in their daily lives, to further their studies, and for work purposes (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Malaysian pupils learn English for various reasons. Nesamalar, Saratha and Teh (2004) listed five reasons of why they learn English. The first reason is because of the curriculum. The second reason is because of the education purpose. The third reason is because of career purposes. The fourth reason is for status purpose. The final reason of learning English is because of friendship. According to them, pupils learn English so they can communicate with their friends and neighbors’.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

McCloskey (2002) stated that there is a critical period for first-language development. According to her, although a child might be born with all necessary equipment to develop language, language may not develop normally if the development is not triggered by language input at a certain age.

Haynes (2005) mentioned that Piaget (1970) indicated that in the pre-operational stage (child between ages 2 to 7), children are not able to think abstractly but need concrete situations to process ideas. During concrete operations stage (child between ages 7 to 12), children have enough experiences to begin conceptualise and do some abstract problem solving, though they still learn best by doing. In explaining the importance of involving children in action and activity, Gardner
(1999) indicates that brain learns best and retains most when the organism is actively involved in exploring physical sites and materials.

The Standard-Based English Language Curriculum Year 1 and 2 (Ministry of Education, 2010) listed five underlying pedagogical principles. The first principle, back to basics, aims to inculcate basic listening and speaking to help pupils enrich their understanding of the language. Asher (2001a) stated that in TPR, the first achievement in language acquisition is in understanding the target language. He referred this process as comprehension literacy. According to Asher (2001a) it indicates that one of the benefits of TPR is rapid understanding of target language. The principle of TPR can be observed from the interaction between adults and infants in intimate caretaking transactions. The process of an adult speaks and the baby responses with a physical response are referred by Asher (2001a) as “language-body conversations”.

The second principle stated in the new curriculum is about learning which is fun, meaningful and purposeful. Sun (2003) stressed that aside than promoting fun, kinaesthetic activities can help young learners, especially English language learners to develop decoding skills, fluency, vocabulary, syntactic knowledge, discourse knowledge and meta cognitive thinking.

The third principle mentioned in the new curriculum is about teaching. According to it, teaching should be learner-centered. Lessons and curriculum materials must suit the differing abilities of pupils. The fourth principle is integration of salient new technologies with high hopes to enhance communication in line with emergent technologies and globalization. Finally, the fifth principle of the new curriculum is on the assessment for learning. It also promotes a continuous assessment as integral part of learning. Richards (2003) stated that improvements in language teaching would come through the adoption of new and improved teaching approaches and methods that incorporated breakthroughs in our understanding of language and how language takes place.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nesamalar, Saratha and Teh (2004) stated that there is a high percentage of students fail to achieve acceptable level of competence in English. Vinodini (2003) indicated that the sharp decline of English proficiency is largely because of backlash effect from a change implemented in the early 1960s and 1970s when Bahasa Malaysia replaced English as medium of instruction in schools and official matters.

Muhammad Sofi (2003) expressed his concern about the real scenario of English Language Teaching (ELT) in primary schools in two distinctive parts which are: (a). over-riding concerns for examinations; and (b) teaching to the test phenomenon. In teaching to the test concerns, he stated that teachers teach English in Bahasa Malaysia. Asher (1981, 2001) also mentioned that teacher communicate the meaning of a foreign word or phrase by explaining or translating. The issue is however, do pupils internalize the meaning of the word.

According to Asher (1981), linguists and psychologists have studied children’s language development for years. He realised that most researchers only investigate at the point when the child begins to talk. He believes that most of the clues to development have vanished by that time. To him, the most critical period to investigate is the age of silence which is from birth to the appearance to talk.

Muhammad Sofi (2003) describes one of English Language Teaching (ELT) scenario in Malaysia is that most teachers use typical instructional techniques in the ESL classrooms. According to him, two most frequent techniques used are rote learning and pattern drilling. To him rote learning is the teaching of rules of the language, applicable to the learning of grammar, which was an important component of the UPSR English language paper. This method according to Asher (1981) relies so heavily on verbal discourse as an instructional strategy geared to the left hemisphere of the brain. Thus it traumatizes most beginners. Thus he proposed learning second language the way infant learn their native language.

Nesamalar, Saratha and Teh (2004) put motivation as an extremely crucial factor in successful language acquisition. A motivated learner will want to learn English which in turn will make English language acquisition process a success. A successful acquisition will develop competence and performance. This will finally provide satisfaction from the experiences and again boost learner’s motivation. In providing motivation to young learners with low achievement, adopting TPR approach is the best solution.
Handoyo (2005) listed eight advantages of using TPR approach. The advantages are:

a. TPR is a lot of fun as learners enjoy it and it can lift the pace of a lesson and the mood;
b. TPR is a memorable activity as it assist students to recognize phrases or words;
c. It is good for kinaesthetic learners who are required to be active in class;
d. It can be used both in a large class or in a small class because as long as the teacher takes the lead, the learners will follow;
e. It works well with mixed-ability classes because the physical actions get across the meaning effectively so that all learners are able to comprehend and apply the target language;
f. There is no requirement of preparing a lot of preparation or materials. The most important part is being competent of what you want to practise;
g. It is very effective with teenagers and young learners; and
h. TPR involves both left and right-brained learning.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

There are two domains this research aims to justify. The objectives are listed below.

a. To study the effectiveness of TPR approach to help slow young learners with low achievement.
b. To study the difference between two groups of pupils’ score, the experiment group and the control group.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Two indispensable questions in this study, which will be further elaborated in this research is stated below.

a. Do TPR approach help slow young learners with low achievement acquire English as a second language?
b. Is there a difference in pupils achievement score when using TPR approach and rote learning with drilling technique?

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS STATEMENTS

To answer the first research questions, this study will at the descriptive data represented by means and standard deviation.

The second questions will be analysed with independent samples t-test. The hypothesis statements are stated below.

H₀: μ₁=μ₂
(There is no significant difference between the mean of the pre-test scores for the experiment group and the mean of the pre-test score for the control group.)

H₀: μ₁=μ₂
(There is no significant difference between the mean of the post-test scores for the experiment group and the mean of the post-test score for the control group.)

H₁: μ₁≠μ₂
(There is a significant difference between the mean of the pre-test scores for the experiment group and the mean of the pre-test score for the control group.)

H₁: μ₁≠μ₂
(There is a significant difference between the mean of the post-test scores for the experiment group and the mean of the post-test score for the control group.)

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Six important keywords to be defined has been identified, which are TPR approach, young learners, low achievement, acquire, effectiveness and English as a second language.

1.6.1 TPR approach

Paper on TPR was presented by James Asher in 1965. It is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and actions which attempts to teach language through physical activity (Jai, 2011; Haynes, 2004). Jai (2011) stated that the mode of teaching language according to TPR approach is motor activity. It is based on the premise that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring natural language on earth, including the sign-language of the deaf (Asher 2001a; Asher 2001b).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used gestures, modelling pictures and realia whereby young learners will show understanding by watching, touching, listening and imitating.
1.6.2 Young learners

Dickinson (2010) defined young learners as learners between five and twelve years of age. Li, Wu and Hou (2001) also defined young learners as children from the first formal schooling, five or six years old to eleven or twelve years of age. However, for the purpose of this study, young learners will be defined as children who attend normal public school within formal schooling period, seven to twelve years of age.

1.6.3 Slow learners

Eastmead (2004) described slow learners as those who have problems with abstract thinking and often has a short attention span. They also stated that slow learner is a lifelong problem and a slow learner child has a low IQ which caused them complications in keeping up in the classroom.

Griffin (1978) refers to slow learners as pupils who fail to learn at the same rate as the majority of other pupils learn. Brennan (1974) however elaborated on the definition of a slow learner. According to him, slow learners are pupils who are unable to cope with the normal school work for their age group and cannot be explained by the presence of any handicapping condition defined in the ten categories of handicapped children.

1.6.4 Low achievement

Through various readings, the specific term of low achievement is not attainable. However, for purpose of this research, I will address low achievement as pupils who scored Band 1 in the KSSR School-based Assessment System.

1.6.5 Acquire

Asher (2001a; 2001b) stated that the process of acquiring a language happens on the right side of a brain which promotes visualisation and movements that aims to achieve comprehension literacy. In his keynote address at a conference in Calgary, Canada, Asher stated that the right side of the brain is non-verbal (mute), non-critical and pattern seeking. According to him, the brain will try to communicate by whispering faintly and use body language such as gestures. When the pattern-seekers find cause-effect relationship, they will store them in long-term memory.

1.6.6 English as a second language

Nesamalar, Saratha and Teh (2004) indicate that English as a second language referred to two things. First, the political position which English occupies as second most important language after Bahasa Malaysia. Secondly, it refers to the fact that it is the first foreign language they learnt after their mother tongue.

1.6.7 Effectiveness

Specific term of effectiveness was unable to be produced even after loads of readings. Hence, for the purpose of this study, effectiveness will be measured by their English Language pre-test and post-test result.

1.7 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

Language acquisition among young learners of ESL within rural areas is relatively poor. Thus, a study to help these groups of learners who are classified as Band 1 achievers or scored less than 40 percent in their summative and formative test is crucial. Findings from this study can be used as future guide to ESL teachers, so they can strengthen their teaching professionalism by exploring and applying an effective method to teach young learners with low achievement to acquire English as a second language.

TPR approach is not a newly developed language teaching method. It was developed in 1965 by James Asher. Although ESL teachers do unconsciously use TPR in their instruction, it is executed without thorough plan. Therefore, this study can be used as future reference by ESL teachers, so they can plan and use TPR as one of a powerful language tool to help their pupils.

Traditional language teaching approach as stated by Gardner (1999) tends to traumatized young learners with low achievement further referred as slow learner as their language acquisition level is still very low. Drilling and explaining the context methods force this group of learners easily give up on the language. This research however will provide a different dimension to the way of
learning English as a second language in low achievers’ classrooms. It will help young learners with low achievement acquire English Language in a less stressful way.

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

As any other researcher, I have identified three limitations of this research. The first limitation faced by this study is the sample for this research will only involve ESL teachers and pupils from a rural primary school in South-west district, Penang. The reason for this is because most of the low achievers for English language originate from the rural primary schools. This limitation also occurs due to the method used for this study.

Second limitation faced by this research lies within the ESL teachers’ practice, perception and own approach in teaching English Language. ESL teachers might have their own approach and strategies to help their learners in acquiring English language. Some of the teachers might not feel comfortable with TPR approach as they need to rely much on physical movements.

The third limitation refers to the instrument used to measure the effectiveness of TPR approach. As Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) is a newly developed curriculum, the evidence for Standard Achievement Document has either limited or no standardized testing scheme. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will develop a set of testing scheme and evidence which will preceded by a pilot test and verification by experts.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach. It uses the non-equivalent control group design, a type of quasi-experimental design to gather data and analysis. This research uses pre-test and post-test where two treatment groups are pre-tested, administered a treatment to an experiment group and post-tested (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2009; Chua, 2006). The rationale of choosing this type of research is because it is parallel with the purpose of the study.

2.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Method

A realistic choice is made (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2009) from a population of 23 public primary schools (Sekolah Kebangsaan) located in rural areas in South-west district, Penang. The enrolments of pupils in these schools in total are summed up to be 15,474. There are 941 boys and 909 girls enrol in Year 2 public primary school in the area which comes to a total of 1850. Purposive sampling method which is a non-random sampling strategy is used for this study. The underlying purpose of conducting this sampling method is because the researcher teaches in one of the school in South-west district, therefore it will be easier for the researcher to conduct an observation on the selected sample. Furthermore, the researcher has connection with other colleagues who also teaches within South-west district areas and applies TPR approach in their instructions.

According to Cohen (1992) with the alpha value .05, the sample with large effect required is 24, minimum effect requires 64 and small effect requires 393 pupils. Thus, for the purpose of this study, two groups of pupils in one of the selected schools have been chosen. The pupils shared homogeneous traits and were the low achievers. The experiment group consists of 24 pupils and the control group has an equal number of pupils.

2.3 Data Collection Procedures

There are three important variables in this study. TPR approach and slow young learners with low achievement are categorized as independent variables whereas English as a second language acquisition is labelled as dependent variable. These variables were tested to study significant difference between the scores of both experiment and control group. Pre-test was given to both groups. Treatment is given to the experimental group. After two weeks, post-test was conducted to both groups. A permission to conduct a research was granted by the Planning and Education Policy Research Department.

As for procurement analysis method, data will be collected using a combination of adapted TPR Class Progress Record form developed by Silver, Adelman and Price (2003) and a Whole Class Record of Band Achievement by Child, which is developed in accordance with School-based Assessment Management System, which is an online programme and Year Two Standard Achievement Document (2012). To measure the effectiveness of TPR approach and English language acquisition, pupils’ pre-test and post-test test scores will be collected.
2.4 Data Analysis

Two types of data analysis will be used in this study. For the first part of the study, analysis of the descriptive statistic will be conducted based on the pupils pre-test scores English achievement scores. The analysis will be done by comparing the means, standard deviation, minimum scores and maximum scores. A frequency table of scores will also be used to describe the pattern on both pre-test and post-test of the two groups. The second part of analyzing data involves inferential statistic, independent sample t-test. These tests compare the mean of the scores. All scores were calculated using SPSS 20.0.

2.5 Instrumentation

An adopted TPR Class Progress Record form developed by Silver, Adelman and Price (2003) is used as an observation record of the study. The progress report is structured in accordance with KSSR Whole Class Record form. Scores will be recorded based on the test item. A minimum of ten new vocabularies will be introduced for each lesson. Lesson planning form adopted from the Native Program will be used for the purpose of the study.

Individual language acquisition score was recorded using a developed checklist in accordance with the Malaysian Standard Assessment Document for Year 2 (Ministry of Education, 2012). The document listed six bands of language acquisition. The first band is awarded if the pupils know basic skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Band two is awarded if the pupils know and understand words, phrases and sentences heard, spoken, read and written. Band three is awarded when the pupils know, understand and apply knowledge obtained through listening, speaking, reading and writing. Pupils will be awarded band four if they can apply knowledge of listening, speaking, reading and writing in various situations using good manners. Band five is awarded if pupils can demonstrate well the ability to apply knowledge of listening, speaking, reading and writing for various purposes using admirable manners. Band six, which is the highest level of acquisition is awarded if pupils are able to appreciate literary works by performing and presenting ideas using exemplary manners.

Caroll and Hall (1985) indicate that it is important to have a constant intact between the specification and test coverage, so the test papers developed are categorized according to curriculum specification listed in the basic module of Standard Document for English Year 1 and 2 (2011) and the requirement of the Malaysian Standard Assessment Document for Year 2 (Ministry of Education, 2012). There are eight categories of items ranging from band one to band six and consists a total of 50 items.

a. The first category is coded as B2 DB2 E1, consists of eight items. B2 stands for band 2, DB refers to reading descriptor and E1 means evidence number one. For this category, the aim is for the participants to read and recognise words and apply word attack skills by grouping words according to word families (Malaysian Standard Assessment Document for Year 2, 2012).

b. The second category is coded as B2 DT1 E1 and has 10 items. DT stands for writing descriptor. This category intended for the participants to write words with the correct spelling (Malaysian Standard Assessment Document for Year 2, 2012).

c. The third category B1 DB2 E1 / B2 DB1 E1 has eight items. Participants will read and recognise words and apply word attack skills by matching words with spoken words (Malaysian Standard Assessment Document for Year 2, 2012).

d. B3 DB1 E1 is the fourth category and has five items. B3 refers to band 3. Participants need to be able to recognise, read and match pictures with phrases (Malaysian Standard Assessment Document for Year 2, 2012).

e. The fifth category is B4 DL1 E2 and it has five items. DL stands for oral and listening descriptor. The category intends to test participants’ to listen and demonstrate their understanding of oral texts by giving true or false replies (Malaysian Standard Assessment Document for Year 2, 2012).

f. The sixth category has four items and coded as B4 DB2 E1. It requires the participants to read and understand simple
sentences in non-linear text and transfer them to another non-linear presentation (Malaysian Standard Assessment Document for Year 2, 2012).

g. The seventh category uses B5 DB1 E1 and has five items. It requires the participants read simple fiction texts for information and answer ‘Wh’ questions (Malaysian Standard Assessment Document for Year 2, 2012).

h. The last category has five items coded as B6 DB1 E2. These items aim for the participant to read and show comprehension of simple non-fiction texts by answering true or false questions (Malaysian Standard Assessment Document for Year 2, 2012).

The topic selected for the item is ‘I am special’, from Unit 5 of Year 2 textbook. Underlying reason of choosing the topic is because it is the topic that the teachers need to focus on in March. This is due to Year 2 planning and mapping on the scheme of work.

2.6 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted to ensure that the language content and the use test instruments are appropriate with the level of the pupils. Pilot study need to be done for test papers because the researcher needs to adjust the timing so that the pupils will be able to finish answering in time. The pilot study on the test instruments were conducted on 32 non-participating pupils from the neighbouring school. The pilot test was conducted in the third week of March, 2013.

2.6.1 Validity

Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) stated that validity refers to the degree to which a test measures what it supposed to measure and consequently permits appropriate interpretation of scores. For the purpose of this research, content validity is used to see whether the tests are relevant to the measurement of the intended content area (Chua, 2006; Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2009).

Three specialists on English as a second language in the primary schools and School Based Assessment Management System (SPPBS) have validated the instrument. The first specialist is Puan Norma Bt Jamil, a coordinator for Sekolah Kebangsaan Seri Bayu SPPBS implementation. The second specialist is Puan Agnes Silvanathan, a head panel for English Language at SK Seri Bayu. She has been teaching and using the assessment instrument for almost 3 years. The third specialist is Miss Olena Benedyktova, who is an expert in Language Teaching, KSSR and phonics. Based on the comments by the specialists, several modifications were made.

2.6.2 Reliability

The testing instruments used in this study is developed by the researcher, thus a pilot test has been conducted and measured using an internal reliability. This research used Kuder-Richardson 21 (KR-21) calculation.

\[
\frac{(K)(SD^2) - \times(K-\bar{x})}{(SD^2)(K-1)}
\]

\[r_{total\ test}\]

Where,

- \(K\) = the number of items in the test
- \(SD\) = the standard deviation of the scores
- \(\bar{x}\) = the mean of the scores

The number of item is 50 whereas the mean is 41.28 and the standard deviation of the test scores for the pilot test is 4.517. Therefore,

\[
r_{total\ test} = \frac{(50)(4.517^2) - 41.28(50 - 41.28)}{(4.517^2)(50-1)}
\]

\[= \frac{(50)(20.40) - 41.28(8.27)}{(20.40)(49)}\]

\[= \frac{1020.16 - 359.96}{999.76} = .66\]

Frisbie (1988) indicated that reliability score for teacher-made tests are normally an average of .50. He also pointed that educational experts in measurement informally agreed that if the decision is about a group of individuals .65 is set as the minimum standard. The reliability score for the test
3. FINDINGS

3.1 Test Scores, TPR Approach and English Languages Acquisition

The objective of this study is to see whether TPR is an effective approach to help slow young learners with low achievements acquire English as a second language. Two groups of pupils were selected and assigned to both experiment group and control group. The control group maintains the use of visual aids, rote learning styles and drilling whereas the experiment group adopted TPR besides using visual aids as a treatment. A post-test was carried out two weeks after the first test and the findings are represented in Table 1.

The table shows that both groups showed an improvement after the post-test was carried out. The minimum score of the experiment group for the post-test is 38, the maximum score is 72, $\bar{x}=40.42$ and $SD=9.774$. The minimum score of the control group for the post-test is 34, the maximum score is 76, $\bar{x}=60.83$ and $SD=10.84$.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test for Experiment Group and Control Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Min Score</th>
<th>Max Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>40.42</td>
<td>7.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>56.67</td>
<td>9.774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>56.75</td>
<td>10.497</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the frequency table of pre-test and post-test for both groups. For the pre-test, nine pupils scored below 40 marks, 15 scored between 40 marks to 54 marks and none exceed more than 55 marks. However, for the post-test, only one pupil scored below 40 marks, which is between 35 marks to 39 marks. 11 scored between 40 marks to 59 marks and 12 pupils scored between 60 marks to 74 marks.

The table also displays the number of pupils in the control group’s scores for pre-test and post-test. Only one pupil scored less than 40 marks, which is between 30 marks to 34 marks. 11 scored between 40 marks and 59 marks. 12 scored between 60 marks and 74 marks. For the post-test, the number of pupils scored less than 40 marks remains the same. 8 scored between 40 to 59 marks and 15 pupils scored between 60 marks to 79 marks.

3.2 Comparison Between Experiment Group and Control Group

In order to see the difference between the two groups performance on pre-test and post-test, this research uses independent samples $t$-test. The null hypotheses are stated below.
H₀: µ₁=µ₂  
(There is no significant difference between the mean of the pre-test score for the experiment group and the mean of the pre-test score for the control group.)

H₀: µ₁=µ₂  
(There is no significant difference between the mean of the post-test score for the experiment group and the mean of the post-test score for the control group.)

For this test the α value is set at .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis will be rejected if p < .05 and fail to be rejected if p ≥ .05. To test whether the score is normally distributed in the population, normality test is executed using SPSS. Based on Table 3, p > .05, therefore pre-test scores for experiment group are assumed to be normally distributed in the population. Pre-test scores for control group are also assumed to be normally distributed in the population because p > .05. To test the normality of the post-test scores, Table 8 indicates, p > .05 for post test scores of the experiment group, therefore they are assumed to be normally distributed in the population. The post-test scores for the control group are also assumed to be normally distributed in the population because p > .05.

Table 3: Test of Normality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment Group</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test Control Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>.133</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment Group</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test Control Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levene’s Test shown on Table 4 is significant because p > .05. Therefore pre-test scores for experiment and control group are assumed to have equal variance in the population. Post-test scores for the experiment group and control group are also assumed to have equal variance in the population because p > .05.

Table 4: Levene’s Test Between Pre-test and Post-test Between Experiment Group and Control Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test Score</td>
<td>1.772</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test Score</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.759</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 5, the null hypothesis for pre-test scores is rejected because p < .05. The mean score for control group (M=56.75, SD=10.50) is higher than the experiment group (M=40.42, SD=7.801). There is a significant difference on pre-test scores between the experiment group and the control group [t(23)=-6.118, df=46, p=.00]. The effect size (d) = D/ SDpooled = -.178. According to Cohen (1988), it has small effect. A negative d value can be interpreted that the control group performed better than the experiment group on pre-test. There is a difference of less than one and a third standard deviation between means of the two groups.

The null hypothesis for post-test scores is fail to be rejected because p > 0.05. There is no significant difference on post-test scores between the experiment group (M=56.67, SD=9.774) and the control group (M=60.83, SD=10.84). t(23)=-1.40, df=46, p=0.17.
4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 TPR Approach and English Language Acquisition

The descriptive statistic clearly indicates that the experiment group performs better in post-test than pre-test. There is about 0.36% increase on the minimum scores for the experiment group and 0.38% of increase on the maximum scores. A nonindependent samples t-test conducted showed a significant result.

The frequency display on Table 2 revealed that about 88.89% of decreased number of pupils scored less than 40 marks for the experiment group, whereas the number of pupils scored less than 40 marks for the control group remains unchanged. There is also a slight decrease on the number of pupils, which is about 26.67% in the experiment group and 27.27% in the control group, who scores between 40 marks to 59 marks. The percentage of difference at this level is almost the same.

The most outstanding improvement for those pupils in the experiment group is when they show a 100% increase in the post-test result for scores between 60 marks to 74 marks. For the control group, they also show an improvement for this level of scores, which is about only 20%. The table clearly indicates that after the treatment process, pupils perform better in the test. However, pupils in the experiment group show bigger improvements than pupils in control group.

The treatment process which is to incorporate TPR approach while still using visual aids, do help pupils in the experiment group to perform better. The study conducted by Chen (2010) supports this statement by concluding that TPR is able to stimulate the interest of pupils thus improve their learning interest. Krashen (1982) indicates that young learners tend to block out second language input if the anxiety level is high, low confidence and no motivation. Wei and Shang (2010) study investigate the relation of attitudes toward TPR and concluded that it enhance pupils motivation to learn. Gardner (1999) stated that young learners tend to feel traumatized by the traditional language teaching approach which ends up with giving up on the language.

4.2 Comparison Between Experiment and Control Group

Two groups of pupils were selected and were assigned respected group, experiment and control. Control group remained the use of rote learning, drilling and visual aids. Experiment group adopted TPR approach as addition to visual aids. A pre-test was given to both groups. The experiment group were given TPR as treatment. After two weeks, a post-test was conducted. In order to make comparison between the two groups performance, independent samples t-test was conducted using SPSS 20.0 for both test. The hypotheses are built to compare the mean of pre-test scores and to compare the mean of post-test scores for both groups.

The first hypothesis which compares the pre-test scores among the two groups shows a significant result. A negative t-value was produced. It indicates that the control group perform better in pre-test than the experiment group. The selection of samples was made according to their band placement using the SPPBS online results end of 2012. The difference between their pre-test scores is due to certain factors. Input and attributes are the two factors that affect second language acquisition (Brown, 1991; Curtain and Dahlberg, 2004). Two elements are categorised as input, which are the element of quantity and the element of quality. Language experience, allocated instructional time and time on task are categorised as input for quantity. Nature of instruction is listed as an input for quality. The second factor is attributes which consists of age, L1 literacy, cognitive abilities, personality, motivation, social factors and et-cetera. According to Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) there is an interaction between the two factors. Even if the best input has been produced but neglect to consider the attributes factor, the lesson might fail.

The second independent samples t-test was conducted in order to analyse the second hypothesis which is to see whether there is a significant difference between the mean of the two groups on post-test scores. After running the test using SPSS, the output shows that it is not significant. In other words, the null hypothesis is failed to be rejected. There is no significant difference between the post-test mean scores of the two groups. As discussed earlier, the two groups showed improvement on post-test. The result of the statistical analysis implies that the experiment group that uses TPR
approach and visual aids has successfully closed the achievement gap.

Linse and Nunan (2006) discussed the positive aspects of TPR. The first aspect is it utilizes the auditory, visual and tactile learning channels. The second positive aspect is it helps pupils to listen attentively and follow instructions. These two are the important skills for academic success. Third, children are allowed to listen and choose the time they feel comfortable to start speaking. The fourth aspect is that it can be adapted in many different ways to teach young learners.

Children use many senses in the acquisition process (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2009). The use of TPR and visual as treatment to the experiment group exposed to children maximising the use of senses. When teacher starts the lesson with TPR, teacher says the word and does some actions to make it comprehensible to the children. Pupils will listen and repeat the action. It involves auditory, sight and touch (tactile learning). Incorporating as much senses into the lesson will help the input to be comprehensible. Harmer (2007) stressed the importance of presenting the language that the children can understand. Abstract words or phrase are sometimes difficult to be represented or explained. With the use of appropriate TPR, the word can be comprehended as it is represented through action. This is because brain searches the meaning through patterning (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2004; Asher, 2001b).

4.3 Recommendations

A motivated learner will make language acquisition a success. TPR approach promotes learning English as a second language in a less stressful way. For future research, it would be recommendable to take into consideration the duration of time to execute the treatment process. Another criteria that should be taken serious attention to is to have a more thorough sample selection process to ensure that the sample have similar characteristics. A regression discontinuity design seems more appropriate since the samples are identified through cut-off point.

Further research for TPR in different dimension should be taken into consideration such as a case study on the effectiveness of TPR approach to help children with Anti Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or other learning disabilities problems. The reason of suggesting a case study is because it will be more useful to study the effect of TPR in detail. Another suggestion for further research is a study on teachers’ readiness to incorporate TPR into their instruction because TPR requires the use of action, so it uses a lot of physical action.

4.4 Conclusion

This research is conducted based on two main objectives, to study the effectiveness of TPR approach to help slow young learners with low achievement and to study the difference between two groups of pupils’ score, the experiment group and the control group.

Although quasi-experimental design cannot prove the cause and effect link between TPR approach and language acquisition, however the descriptive statistics data shows that the post-test result for the experiment group that adopt TPR present a significantly promising positive change. The post-test scores which are not significant indicate that the scores of the two groups are equal in the population. This implies that the experiment group shows better improvement than the control group for post-test. In conclusion, this study shows that TPR approach is effective to help slow young learners with low achievement acquire English as a second language.

REFERENCES


