

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

1. Vocabulary

1.1 Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a fundamental element in language learning that plays a crucial role in the development of language skills. Rashid, and Hui (2022) define vocabulary as a collection of words possessed by an individual or used in a particular language, which serves as the foundation for effective communication. In the context of English as a second language (L2), vocabulary mastery significantly influences learners' abilities in reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Zwier & Boers, 2022). Therefore, vocabulary knowledge is considered essential for learners to understand and use a language effectively.

Vocabulary mastery can be developed through various learning processes and instructional approaches. Antia and Creamer (2021) Emphasize the importance of explicit and contextual approaches in vocabulary instruction to enhance learners' comprehension and appropriate word usage in daily communication. Similarly, Schmitt (2022) explains that depth of vocabulary knowledge, which includes understanding word meaning,

form, and use, is as important as the number of words learned for effective language proficiency.

Furthermore, Al-Harbi (2019) states that vocabulary learning strategies such as using synonyms, concept mapping, and repetitive practice can help learners expand their vocabulary knowledge. Supporting this view, Nation (2022) explains that vocabulary acquisition can occur through two main approaches, namely explicit learning and implicit learning. Explicit learning involves direct instruction and practice, while implicit learning occurs naturally through language exposure in meaningful contexts.

In addition, Normurodovna (2025) states that strong vocabulary mastery can be developed through extensive reading, the use of contextual clues, and digital media integration. Teng (2022) also highlights that repeated exposure to vocabulary items in meaningful contexts plays a significant role in improving long-term vocabulary retention. This repeated exposure allows learners to encounter words in various situations, which helps strengthen their understanding and memory.

Moreover, Milton (2023) argues that vocabulary size has a strong correlation with overall language proficiency, indicating that learners with a richer vocabulary tend to perform better in language learning.

Based on these explanations, vocabulary mastery is a crucial component in English language learning, as it supports learners' ability to communicate effectively and develop their overall language skills.

Therefore, based on the literature above, vocabulary can be defined as learners' knowledge of word meanings, forms, and uses that is acquired through explicit and implicit learning processes and plays a crucial role in supporting effective communication as well as the development of overall language skills.

1.2 Vocabulary Mastery for Elementary School Students :

Vocabulary mastery is a fundamental component in learning English, especially for elementary school students. At the elementary level, students are in the early stage of language acquisition; therefore, vocabulary becomes the foundation for developing other language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Nation, 2020). Without sufficient vocabulary mastery, students may experience difficulties in understanding instructions and expressing ideas in English.

For elementary school students, vocabulary learning should be concrete, contextual, and meaningful. Young learners tend to learn more effectively through visual aids, physical movement, and real-life contexts rather than abstract explanations (Harmer, 2021).

Therefore, vocabulary related to daily life, such as parts of the body, is considered appropriate and relevant for elementary students because it is familiar and easily observable.

Vocabulary mastery of parts of the body includes students' ability to recognize, understand, remember, and use words such as head, eyes, ears, hands, legs, and other body-related terms correctly. According to Cameron (2022), vocabulary mastery for young learners involves not only knowing the meaning of words but also being able to respond to instructions and use the words in simple contexts. In this case, students are expected to understand vocabulary through actions, commands, and physical responses.

However, elementary school students often face difficulties in mastering vocabulary, particularly in memorization and application. Many students are able to recognize vocabulary items but struggle to use them actively in learning activities (Linse, 2023). This difficulty may be caused by teaching methods that do not match students' characteristics, such as the lack of physical involvement and engaging activities.

Therefore, teaching vocabulary related to parts of the body requires an appropriate method that supports students' learning characteristics. Methods that involve

physical movement and direct interaction, such as the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, are considered suitable for elementary school students because they help students associate words with actions, making vocabulary learning more effective and meaningful. This material is also in line with the Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi (2021) in the Kurikulum Merdeka for Grade 5 English.

2. Total Physical Response (TPR) Method

2.1 Definition of TPR

The Total Physical Response (TPR) method was first developed by James Asher in the 1970s as an approach to foreign language teaching that emphasizes the connection between language and physical movement. Asher (1977) stated that second language learning should imitate the natural process of first language acquisition, where children learn by listening and responding physically before they begin to speak. In other words, TPR allows students to comprehend language through actions rather than memorization or direct translation. This method is rooted in behaviorist theory, particularly the stimulus–response model, which suggests that learning becomes more effective when students respond physically to verbal stimuli.

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2021) explain that TPR reduces students' anxiety because learners are not required to speak immediately. Instead, they respond through actions, which makes them feel more confident and comfortable during the learning process. Richards and Rodgers (2022) state that TPR is highly appropriate for young learners since it integrates listening comprehension with physical movement. This combination makes the learning process more engaging, interactive, and meaningful for students. Furthermore, Sutopo (2022) emphasizes that physical movement in TPR helps students connect words with actions more effectively. As a result, students can improve their vocabulary mastery and retain new words for a longer period of time.

Therefore, the Total Physical Response (TPR) method is a teaching approach that integrates language input with physical movement to facilitate learners' comprehension and vocabulary development, particularly for elementary school students.

Overall, TPR provides various advantages in language learning, particularly for young learners. These include helping students quickly understand word meanings, improving memory retention, creating an enjoyable classroom atmosphere, and encouraging greater

participation. According to Asher (1977) The teaching procedure of TPR typically involves several stages: (1) the teacher prepares a list of simple commands and visual aids, (2) the teacher models the command through movement, (3) students repeat the commands several times, (4) the teacher gives commands without modeling so students respond independently, (5) the teacher combines multiple commands to increase complexity, and (6) the teacher reviews the lesson through interactive games or activities. Through these procedures, which were applied in this study, TPR enables a natural, interactive, and meaningful language learning experience that effectively supports students' vocabulary mastery.

2.2 TPR in English Language Teaching

The application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in English language teaching has been increasingly implemented, especially at the elementary school level, due to its effectiveness in facilitating active learning and expanding vocabulary. TPR is highly suitable for the developmental stage of children, who are more easily engaged in activities involving movement and play. According to Nasution and Fitria (2021), TPR keeps children active and focused during learning because it turns language learning into an interactive experience,

thereby reducing the boredom often found in traditional teaching methods.

In classroom implementation, TPR can be incorporated into daily activities, such as giving commands ("stand up", "sit down", "open your book") as well as in themed vocabulary instruction. The use of commands and movements allows students to associate words with actions, which strengthens their memory. As stated by Haris and Marlina (2022), students are more likely to remember new vocabulary when they are physically involved in the learning process, as movement can stimulate both cognitive and emotional engagement.

In addition, TPR supports the development of listening skills. Since students must listen carefully to instructions before giving a physical response, this enhances their auditory skills. According to Yuliani and Siregar (2023), learners who are taught using TPR show significant progress in listening ability compared to those who rely solely on written or visual materials.

Apart from enriching vocabulary and listening skills, TPR also encourages classroom interaction. Teachers can facilitate pair or group activities involving commands, songs, and games, all using English as the language of instruction. Such an immersive environment helps students build self-confidence. As noted by Dewi

and Nugroho (2022), TPR contributes to reducing students' fear of making mistakes because the focus is on action rather than on speaking accuracy.

Furthermore, TPR can be adapted to the use of digital tools and multimedia resources. For example, the use of instructional videos or educational applications that combine movement and voice commands can enhance the effectiveness of this method. Wulandari and Setiawan (2023) emphasize that integrating TPR with technology provides a multimodal learning experience, which is highly beneficial for 21st-century learners. However, in this study, TPR was implemented through direct classroom activities using teacher-given commands and students' physical responses without the use of digital tools or multimedia resources.

2.3 Advantages of Total Physical Response (TPR)

Method

Several studies have shown that using TPR can increase students' motivation, engagement, and vocabulary retention. According to Nguyen (2022), TPR creates an active and low-anxiety learning environment, allowing students to better comprehend and remember new vocabulary. Furthermore, García and Torres (2023) found that students taught through TPR demonstrate higher vocabulary retention rates than those taught

through traditional methods such as direct translation. By involving physical movement, students also activate their sensory and motor memory, which strengthens their understanding of the target language (Richards in Lestari & Suryani, 2022).

In addition to improving vocabulary comprehension, TPR also has a positive impact on students' confidence and comfort in learning a foreign language. According to Kim and Park (2022), TPR creates an enjoyable and stress-free classroom environment that reduces students' anxiety in using English. This finding aligns with Krashen's language acquisition theory (as cited in Anderson, 2021), which asserts that a relaxed learning atmosphere enhances the effectiveness of second language acquisition. Thus, TPR not only helps students understand vocabulary but also fosters a positive attitude toward learning English.

Overall, TPR provides various advantages in language learning, particularly for young learners. These include helping students quickly understand word meanings, improving memory retention, creating an enjoyable classroom atmosphere, and encouraging greater participation. According to Asher (1977) The teaching procedure of TPR typically involves several stages: (1) the teacher prepares a list of simple commands and visual

aids, (2) the teacher models the command through movement, (3) students repeat the commands several times, (4) the teacher gives commands without modeling so students respond independently, (5) the teacher combines multiple commands to increase complexity, and (6) the teacher reviews the lesson through interactive games or activities. Through these procedures, which were applied in this study, TPR enables a natural, interactive, and meaningful language learning experience that effectively supports students' vocabulary mastery.

B. Conceptual Framework

1. Independent Variable:

Total Physical Response (TPR) Method The TPR method is a language learning approach that combines physical movement with language comprehension. Students respond to verbal commands with actions, which helps them understand and retain vocabulary more effectively.

2. Dependent Variable:

English Vocabulary Mastery Students' ability to recognize, understand, and use English vocabulary in appropriate contexts. This includes aspects such as word meaning comprehension, usage in sentences, and long-term retention of learned words.

3. Logical Argumentation:

3.1 TPR and Vocabulary Mastery

The TPR method allows students to associate words with physical movements, enhancing memory retention and vocabulary comprehension. This movement-based learning is particularly effective for beginners or young learners.

3.2 The Connection Between Movement and Memory

According to the Multisensory Learning Theory, learning that engages multiple senses (such as hearing and movement) is more effective than passive methods. TPR applies this principle by linking language to physical experiences.

4. Enhancing Engagement and Motivation

TPR creates a fun and interactive learning environment, which increases student engagement and reduces anxiety in language learning.

5. Conceptual Framework Diagram

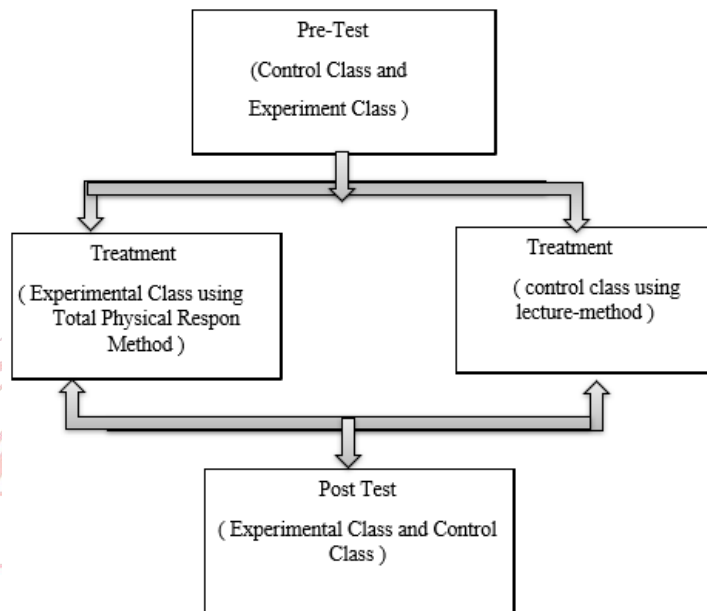


Figure 1. The conceptual framework

C. Previous Studies

Research on the Total Physical Response (TPR) method had been conducted in various language learning contexts. One relevant study was conducted by Rahmawati (2021) entitled *The Effectiveness of Total Physical Response (TPR) Method in Teaching Vocabulary to Young Learners*. This study demonstrated that the implementation of TPR significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery. The statistical test results showed an increase in the average scores from the pre-test to the post-test, which confirmed the

effectiveness of this method in teaching English at the elementary school level.

Another study was conducted by Li and Zhang (2022) entitled Enhancing Vocabulary Retention through Total Physical Response: A Study on Primary School Students in China. The findings revealed that the TPR method helped students remember and understand vocabulary better than traditional methods. By incorporating physical movement into the learning process, students were able to associate word meanings more easily and retain vocabulary for a longer period.

Additionally, a study by Johnson and Brown (2023) entitled Total Physical Response in EFL Classrooms: An Experimental Study compared the effectiveness of the TPR method with conventional teaching methods in vocabulary instruction. The results indicated that students who were taught using TPR achieved higher vocabulary retention rates and showed greater learning motivation than those in the control group who used traditional methods.

Another related study, although not directly focused on TPR, was conducted by Riswanto et al. (2022) entitled The Effect of the Shaw English Online Channel on EFL Students' Speaking Ability. This quasi-experimental study revealed that the use of digital media, particularly YouTube videos, effectively improved students' speaking skills.

Although the study focused on speaking rather than vocabulary, the findings were relevant because they highlighted that engaging and interactive learning strategies could enhance students' language performance. This supported the idea that student-centered and activity-based approaches, including TPR, contributed to better learning outcomes.

Based on the previous studies, it could be concluded that the Total Physical Response (TPR) method had a positive impact on improving students' vocabulary mastery, particularly in teaching English to young learners. By combining movement and language, this method assisted learners in understanding and retaining new vocabulary. The similarity between the previous studies and the present research lay in the shared focus on the use of the TPR method to enhance vocabulary mastery among elementary school students. All studies agreed that TPR supported students in memorizing and understanding vocabulary through enjoyable and contextual physical activities. The differences were found in terms of location, subjects, and research design. Rahmawati (2021) conducted her study in Indonesia using a quantitative approach, Li and Zhang (2022) examined primary school students in China by comparing vocabulary retention between TPR and traditional methods, while Johnson and Brown (2023) implemented an

experimental study in EFL classrooms to observe differences in motivation and learning outcomes. Meanwhile, the present study was conducted at SDN 182 Bengkulu Utara with fifth-grade students and employed a quantitative method to measure the effect of the TPR method on students' vocabulary mastery in the Indonesian school context.

D. Hypothesis

1. H₀ (Null Hypothesis):

There is no significant difference in English vocabulary mastery between students taught using the Total Physical Response (TPR) method and those taught using conventional methods.

2. H_a (Alternative Hypothesis):

There is a significant difference in English vocabulary mastery between students taught using the Total Physical Response (TPR) method and those taught using conventional methods.