
TPR-STORYTELLING AS A COMMUNICATIVE FRIENDLY ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR CHILDREN

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Abstract

This information era leads to the effort of learning English as early as possible. This condition leads some educational institutions insert English as one of subjects learned by young children. Meanwhile, children are unique where they have their own way in learning something new, especially learning English as a foreign language. Their way of learning must be different with adults. Young children tend to be interested in physical activities in learning. The teacher also should consider on a well-formulated learning method. TPR-Storytelling intends to ask the young children developing an ear for language through comprehensible exposure to grammatically-correct language. This paper attempts to describe how TPR-S is a communicative friendly English teaching and learning for children. This study applied descriptive qualitative research design which took place in Isriati school in Semarang. The result of the study shows that TPR-Storytelling encourages and supports the need of children in learning English without losing their chance to have an enjoyable learning.

Keywords: *Children, TPR-Storytelling, English learning.*

INTRODUCTION

The world is a wide community. There is a need for people to communicate with society in different parts of the world. A tool needed is learning about foreign language. English is an international language. In Indonesian, English plays an important role of modernization development. English has become essential for finding good job prospects. Also, it made many contributions in some aspects, such as education, economic, politic etc. In education, English has been encouraged to help students for communicating in this global life.

The need of English asks some educational institutions insert English as a subject taught to young learners. They assume that starting learning English as soon as possible is good. As stated by Crain (2005) in Er (2012) that early childhood is a precious period when children get their most rapid performance in terms of emotional, physical, cognitive and language development. So, it can be assumed that English is easier taught to young learners than adults. Moreover, Lamendella in Yuvaraj (2009) claimed that young learners are at an advantage as the brain is more adaptable before puberty, and that acquisition of language is possible without self-consciousness at an early stage. At the same point, Sommer (2011) states that one of the main advantages of starting early is that children become accustomed to the intonation and sounds of the new language. These conditions lead some educators to teach English as early as possible.

In Indonesia, English is also learnt in kindergarten level since kindergarten students still

belong to young learners. Dickinson (2010) defined young learners as learners between five and twelve years of age. Moreover, Suhartatik in Nurainingsih (2016:52) classifies young learners into the following categories: Children about 4 to 12 years old, young Group (4-8 years old) and older group (9-12 years old). She further mentions some characteristics of young learners: (1) moody, (2) having short attention and concentration span, (3) having great motivation to do things they like, (4) curious of nearly everything, (5) fond of spoken language and real object, and (6) enjoy physical activities. These characteristics are also found in kindergarten students. They like to know and explore something new.

Teaching English to kindergarten students can be very challenging for a teacher. First, they have different characteristics from adult learners. According to Scot and Ytreberg in Sari (2016:354), one of the characteristics of the young language learners is they have a very short attention and concentration span. It makes them difficult to concentrate on one thing for a long time. Harmer (2007:82) also states that young learners can get easily bored and losing interest in ten minutes. Meanwhile, Piaget in Simatwa (2010) says children of 7 - 12 years of age are in concrete operational level of cognitive development. This means that they need concrete examples to give a clear understanding for them. In addition, Ellis (2008) explained that as foreign language learning styles of an adult and a child are different from each other. It is essential to prepare programs with suitable approaches, methods or techniques for adults and children separately. A teacher has to give

more interesting, fun and friendly teaching learning. Second, transferring a new language (English) to young learners is not an easy thing because English is not their first language and they do not use in their daily communication. Third, young learners do not know the importance of studying English. Therefore, the use of any methods and techniques of teaching English should be able to encourage them to learn English.

From the reasons above, English teachers have to find an appropriate method for teaching English as enjoyable, understandable and friendly subject for kindergarten students. TPRS (Total Physical Response Storytelling) is the combination between TPR and storytelling. It was most closely aligned with Krashen's theory and developed by Blaine Ray in 1990 with the purpose to develop an efficient technique for the teaching and learning language. Asher (2001), as stated by Rusiana et.al (2016) claims that TPR is a powerful right-brain tool at all levels of second language instruction while storytelling has long been used as a technique in language teaching. TPRS consists of two complementary pedagogical methods, namely: 1) Total Physical Response (TPR) and 2) Storytelling. However, the main idea of this method is storytelling where the teacher narrates a story by using visual aids, checks and repeats the story several times by increasing more vocabulary.

Total Physical Response Storytelling is a highly effective methodology that promotes listening and reading comprehension skills, and also speaking fluency (Youman, 2010:29). In addition, we consider TPR-Storytelling method of great significance in the foreign language teaching field because it introduces the language through the use of comprehensible input, namely stories (Blaine, 2008). This makes a student-centered class in a way that learners are the protagonists, who create their desire to communicate meaningful things in real-life communication and indeed, as Brown states, "it deals with the personality factors within a person that contributes in some way to the success of language learning" (1994:134). Meanwhile, for kindergarten children, TPRS is suitable method because they have not known reading and writing yet so they just learn English through watching and listening the action story. Thus, storytelling is popular activity which most children like. Pinter (2006) explains that children will pick up the new language easily because stories contain repetition that makes linguistic input more noticeable. Moreover, Rossiter (2002:1) points out that stories are effective as educational tools because they are believable, memorable, and entertaining. The believability

stems from the fact that stories deal with human-like experience that we tend to perceive as an authentic and credible source of knowledge. Stories make information more memorable because they involve us in the actions and intentions of the characters. In so doing, stories invite active meaning making. It is enjoyable, fun and friendly. They can always keep their interest during the lesson. Furthermore, Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) says that there are four characteristics of storytelling that benefit the early stages of interpretive language learning. First, stories are predictable and familiar. Secondly, stories are repetitive, making the memorization of patterns easier. Next, stories lend themselves to dramatization and pantomime easily. Finally, stories use visuals and realia to illustrate content.

Action stories help children to understand English at first. They are able to listen, watch and imitate through storytelling. According to Scott and Ytreberg (1990), children's own understanding comes through hands and eyes and ears and their physical world is dominant at all times. Moreover, Safdarian (2013:205) stated that stories as one of the important elements of literature are full of enjoyable events and characters that bring fun, creativity, enjoyment and authenticity to the language classrooms. In the same way, Harmer (2001) pointed out that young learners get their understanding not only from explanation but also from what they see and hear, learn when they have a chance to touch and interact with (experience it). The stories are created through a collaborative process among teachers and students. In addition, Ray (2012) asserted that story is interesting technique to increase the students' interest to listen each part of the story in a fully understanding. In other words, through story, student's attention will also be focused on language structures and new vocabulary given in the story. It encourages their creativity and creates a good atmosphere in the class. Also, Davidheiser (2002) finds that storytelling is effective because it appeals to the affective domain and helps build a sense of community and ownership in the classroom. The teacher may not be dominant in the class, let students be active and feel comfortable.

Although storytelling is also possible without TPR, but the use of TPR will help the students/ children getting ready in understanding the story when it is heard for the first time. Davidheiser (2002) followed a traditional TPRS by: 1) beginning with vocabulary gestures that would be mimicked by the students.; 2) having his students write out the commands for homework; 3) asking yes/no questions and factual questions to begin creating a plot to their class story using the vocabulary learned; 4) getting the students write the story in their own words; 5)

having the students complete a series of drawings, allowing for creativity by applying what they have learned to new stories and filling in the details. This will prevent the use of block memorization as the students learning tool.

This study is aimed to describe how TPR-Storytelling is as a communicative friendly English teaching and learning for children. Moreover, it defines how TPRS gives a positive response from both children and teacher. The result of this study is expected to give a contribution for teachers to create an English Teaching method for children without losing children's chance to have an enjoyable learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied descriptive qualitative research design. This study took place in Isriati Kindergarten. The writer observed the implementation of TPRS used by the teacher to see if TPRS gives positive response or not from the children. Moreover, an interview to teacher and children was done to support the result of the observation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The students of kindergarten are those who are around the age of four or five years old. They are categorized as young learners. In this study, the writer explored the activity of learning English at kindergarten in Isriati Semarang which focusing on using Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS). In conducting this study, the writer had made sure that the teacher had know about TPR-Storytelling well. The writer also had ever came to class and see how she applied TPRS. The writer observed what was going on during the class. It can be seen from interaction between teacher and students, the way of conveying the material, and students' response, activeness, and behavior.

This study took 20 students of kindergarten in Isriati school in Semarang. The instruments applied in this research were observation and interview. The writer only did observation on the application of TPRS done by the teachers.

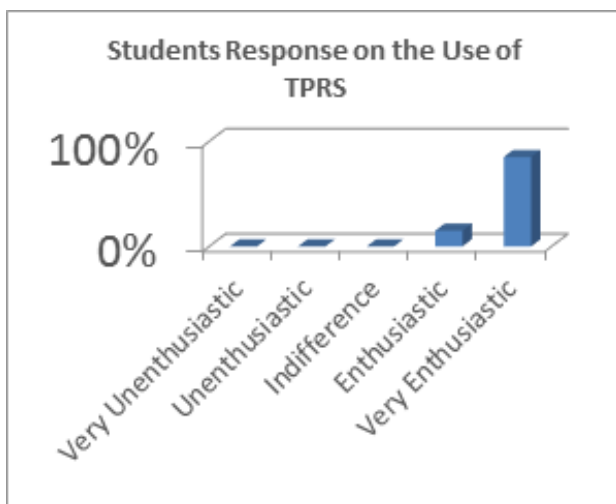
In applying TPRS, the teacher first introduced some vocabularies terms using gesture and picture. The teacher repeated the word and did a movement of the word then showed the picture. To check the students understanding on the vocabularies, the teacher gave some question like true/false, what/who/where. Then, the teacher played a picture identification game of new vocabularies with the students. She then directed a class story using new vocabularies. The teacher also had prepared the element which the students needed to contribute like setting, character, events and details. When it was

done, the student created their own mini-story with a partner.

The result of the observation shows some positive influences of TPRS for students. First, the students are more active in responding the activities in the class. TPRS is very fun to do in class both for the teacher and children. It can lift the mood. The students participate well in the activities provided by the teacher. The teacher tells that story with very good expression, gesture and intonation, so the students laugh at her. This will help the students decrease their anxiety on learning a new concept. In addition, the students are more interested because teacher disguise her voice. The second one is improving the students' confidence. The students are active in responding the question relating to a story given using vocabulary they have learned. Although, some answers are incorrect, the students answer them bravely.

Besides conducting an observation, the writer also did interview for the teacher and the students. The writer gave some questions for the teacher about the positive impacts and the obstacles of applying TPRS for kindergarten children. She explained that this technique is challenging for them because they have to be creative for conveying the material easily and friendly. Young learners have short attention and concentration that makes them feel bored easily. The teachers are forced to provide some ways to keep them active during teaching learning process. Also, the teacher must have more energy to ask students to keep silent and sit well during she tells the story. Furthermore, this technique takes more preparation before applying. For students, this technique is very friendly. Before teacher starts the lesson, the students seemed feel bored, noisy and sleepy. But after the teacher shows some animals doll and explains what they are going to do, the students looks more enthusiastic in following teaching and learning process. During the lesson, the students are active. They enjoy and pay attention with the story from their teacher.

This graph shows whether the TPRS gives better impact in learning English for kindergarten students or not. Based on the observation and interview, the result is shown from this graph.



Graph 1. Students Response on the Use of TPRS

That graph displays students response on the use of TPRS. It can be seen that there is 85 % students who feel very enthusiastic during learning English using TPRS. Meanwhile, the percentage of the students who feel enthusiastic is 15%. There is no students who feel very unenthusiastic, unenthusiastic or indifference during learning English using TPRS.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study proved whether using storytelling in kindergarten children has many influences on English teaching and learning. This technique was designed to describe how TPRS-Storytelling is as a communicative friendly. From the result and analysis, it can be concluded that Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) is appropriate technique for kindergarten children. It is a communicative friendly English teaching and learning for children. There are several reasons supporting the conclusion. The first is students are more active. It can lift the mood. The students participate very well in activities in class teaching. In addition, the students are more interested because teacher disguise her voice for the different characters and tells that story with very good expression, gesture and intonation. The second one is improving the students' confidence. The students ask questions and answer the questions from teacher confidently. It is quiet suggested that teaching English for young learners using Total Physical Response Storytelling is recommended.

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