



IMPLEMENTATION OF TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) METHOD TO IMPROVE ARABIC SPEAKING SKILL OF STUDENTS SMP MUHAMMADIYAH 6 PAKAH, NGAWI

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Abstract

Arabic speaking proficiency (maharah al-kalam) is a crucial competency that remains difficult for Indonesian students to master, primarily due to high levels of language anxiety and a lack of active speaking practice. This study investigates the effectiveness of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in improving the speaking skills of seventh-grade students at Madrasah Muhammadiyah 6 Ulil Albab Pakah, Ngawi (an Islamic junior high school in Indonesia). The research employed a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent pre-test-post-test control group, involving 31 students (17 in the experimental group and 14 in the control group) over eight weeks. Quantitative data were collected through oral speaking tests and Likert-scale questionnaires to measure vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, and speaking anxiety levels. Qualitative data were obtained from field observations and semi-structured interviews. The results showed that the experimental group experienced a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery by 24.24 points ($t(16) = 6.234, p < 0.001$), learning motivation by 27.65 points ($t(16) = 7.458, p < 0.001$), and a reduction in speaking anxiety by 26.24 points ($t(16) = -7.124, p < 0.001$). The normalized gain (N-gain) indicated that TPR achieved an effectiveness of 57.28% for vocabulary mastery, categorized as "Moderately Effective," far surpassing the control group's gain of only 23.52%. Qualitative data revealed positive behavioral changes in students, including increased self-confidence, reduced fear, and higher intrinsic motivation. These findings prove that the TPR method is significantly more effective in developing Arabic speaking skills compared to traditional teaching methods, with a measurable impact on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of student learning.

Keywords: Language anxiety, Learning motivation, Maharah Kalam, Mixed methods, Quasi-experimental, Total Physical Response (TPR)

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INTRODUCTION

مقدمة

Arabic is an important language for Muslims because it is the language of the Noble Qur'an, which every Muslim must understand (Nasution & Lubis, 2023). Arabic is also considered a fundamental foundation that supports the existence and progress of human civilization. This aligns with the function of language as a communication tool to convey thoughts, opinions, and innovations both orally and in writing. In this modern era, the position of Arabic is no longer limited to being a means of worship but extends beyond that as one of the international languages used to communicate with the outside world, serving as a unifying language among nations.

To this day, the teaching of Arabic remains an unresolved issue in educational institutions in Indonesia, whether in terms of methods, strategies, or the learning materials used. As a result, Arabic instruction has not yet met the expected goals and targets. Numerous innovations and studies have been presented by various experts to address these issues, aiming to create an effective and efficient learning process that is easy for students to understand, engaging during lessons, while still ensuring the best possible outcomes (Wahyudin, 2020). Among the most prominent innovations are the use of interactive technology and applicative methods that encourage students to actively participate and apply language skills directly.

Arabic is a foreign language for Indonesian speakers, and it is taught for four language objectives and skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Arabic encompasses four skill aspects within it, namely listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills (Aziza & Muliansyah, 2020). The teaching process of speaking skills involves the learner's ability to communicate orally. In the context of teaching Arabic, speaking skills are one of the four most important skills (Hendri, 2017). One of the main issues is that speaking skills are still perceived as the most difficult and daunting skill for students, with high levels of language anxiety being a significant barrier (Roziqi et al., 2025). When students are asked to speak Arabic, they often experience fear of making mistakes, worry about being ridiculed by peers, and lack confidence in using the language. To develop speaking skills, the use of creative and innovative teaching methods is required (Fajrin et al., 2021). This is implemented through practical applications and group interactions to boost students' confidence in public speaking.

As language education curricula have evolved to become more communication-focused, the Total Physical Response (TPR) method has become widely recognized as an effective alternative (Qizi & Baxodirovna, 2017). Developed by James J. Asher, this method emphasizes the relationship between verbal commands and physical responses through movement. This approach not only helps students understand vocabulary and sentence structures more deeply but also boosts their motivation and confidence when speaking (Solikin & Mulhendra, 2024). Several recent studies indicate that integrating physical elements into the language learning process can create a more dynamic and enjoyable environment, which contributes to the improvement of speaking skills (Robiansyah, 2022). When students physically interact with vocabulary and phrases, their concentration levels improve, and a stronger connection is created between meaning and movement, thereby strengthening their memory retention and enabling them to use the words more confidently.

Although much research has validated the effectiveness of TPR in the context of general language learning and vocabulary comprehension, a research gap still exists regarding the comprehensive application of this method specifically for developing Arabic speaking skills in the context of Indonesian junior high schools (Pahri, 2021). The majority of studies conducted have focused on receptive aspects (comprehension) or vocabulary mastery, while research on the implications of TPR for complex oral production remains limited. Furthermore, research on how TPR can be combined with local cultural values and the learning context in Islamic school environments in Indonesia has not been widely conducted. This study is designed to investigate how the systematic implementation of the Total Physical Response method can facilitate a meaningful improvement in Arabic speaking skills among seventh-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 6 Ulil Albab, Pakah, Ngawi, while also exploring the mechanisms through which this method contributes to the reduction of language anxiety, the increase of intrinsic motivation, and the strengthening of student confidence.

The context of Muhammadiyah schools presents a unique opportunity for TPR

implementation that distinguishes this research from previous studies. SMP Muhammadiyah 6 Ulil Albab Pakah operates within an Islamic educational environment where religious practices such as prayer (*shalat*), ablution (*wudhu*), and other ritual movements are already familiar to students. This study deliberately integrates these Islamic ritual movements into the TPR framework for instance, using the physical postures of prayer (standing, bowing, prostrating) to teach corresponding Arabic verbs and commands, and employing the sequential movements of ablution to reinforce vocabulary related to body parts and actions. This culturally-grounded adaptation of TPR not only facilitates language acquisition but also strengthens the connection between Arabic learning and students' daily religious lives, enhancing both the relevance and emotional resonance of the learning experience. Such contextual integration represents a significant novelty of this research, as it demonstrates how TPR can be specifically tailored to the Islamic educational context in Indonesia

Preliminary observations in the field revealed that students at this institution face specific obstacles in learning Arabic. Many of them experience significant anxiety when asked to speak in front of the class, often experiencing a "mental blank" or cognitive static that hinders their speech flow. They also showed low levels of vocabulary retention, with many students forgetting new words shortly after learning. Furthermore, the traditional teaching methods that are still dominant, which emphasize grammatical explanations and written exercises, do not provide students with sufficient opportunity to practice speaking skills actively and in a structured manner. The subject teacher also reported that student enthusiasm for learning Arabic tends to decline over time, especially when they feel that the learning material seems abstract and irrelevant to their daily lives.

The comprehensive objectives of this research are to analyze the implementation of the Total Physical Response method within the specific context of Arabic language learning at the junior high school level, considering implementation fidelity, methodological adaptations, and the integration of local cultural values and Islamic principles. It then aims to measure the effectiveness level of this method on improving Arabic speaking skills through a quantitative analysis of its impact on vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, reduction of language anxiety, and increased self-confidence. The results of this study are expected to provide solid empirical evidence regarding the viability of TPR as a learning strategy that can be more widely adopted in the Indonesian educational context, while also producing concrete, practical recommendations for curriculum developers, language educators, and educational policymakers on how to effectively integrate this method into daily learning practices and adapt it to the local cultural context.

METHOD

منهج

Research Design and Approach

This research employs a quasi-experimental design with a mixed-method (qualitative-quantitative) approach, combining objective measurements with an in-depth exploration of learner experiences. The chosen research design is a Pretest-Posttest Nonequivalent Group Design, in which two parallel classes are compared, with one serving as the experimental group receiving the TPR intervention and the other as the control group continuing with conventional instruction (Hastjarjo, 2019). The selection of this design is based on the practical constraint that random sampling was not feasible in the school context, while still maintaining methodological rigor through systematic comparison.

This quasi-experimental design is characterized by three main features. It utilizes non-randomly assigned, non-equivalent groups where existing classes are used without random student assignment. The design incorporates pre-test and post-test measurements for both groups to detect changes before and after the intervention, with the treatment applied exclusively to the experimental group while the control group continues with regular teaching practices (Celik et al., 2021). The mixed-method approach enables quantitative measurement of changes in vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, and reduced language anxiety, while qualitative data gathered through participant observation and semi-structured interviews provides profound insights into the mechanisms of change experienced by the learners.

Research Participants: Characteristics and Criteria

Research Population

The research population comprises all seventh-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 6 Ulil Albab in Pakah, Ngawi, for the 2024/2025 academic year. The selection of the junior high school level, specifically Grade VII, was based on several significant considerations. Students at this stage are just beginning systematic Arabic language learning outside of a basic religious context, which allows for an effective measurement of TPR's efficacy in a formal educational setting. Furthermore, this age group, typically 12-13 years old, is cognitively prepared to receive complex language instruction while still being receptive to movement-based learning. This stage is also critical for shaping attitudes toward language learning, meaning a positive intervention could have long-term effects on their motivation and self-confidence.

Research Sample and Inclusion-Exclusion Criteria

The research sample consisted of 31 seventh-grade students divided into two parallel classes: Class VII-A, with 14 students, served as the control group, and Class VII-B, with 17 students, served as the experimental group. This division followed the school's pre-existing administrative grouping established prior to the research, rather than being a result of randomization.

The inclusion criteria for participants in this study required them to be actively enrolled seventh-grade students at SMP Muhammadiyah 6 Ulil Albab for the 2024/2025 academic year, to have attended a minimum of 70% of all learning sessions over the eight-week period, and to have volunteered to participate with written parental or guardian consent. The exclusion criteria encompassed students with physical or psychological health conditions that would prevent active participation in movement-based activities, those who already possessed an advanced proficiency in Arabic, as this could lead to ceiling effects and reduce the validity of the pre- and post-measurements, and students who transferred schools or discontinued their attendance during the research period.

Demographic Characteristics of the Students

The students in both groups shared a relatively homogeneous demographic background, with ages ranging from 12 to 13 years old, and the majority coming from Muslim families that value Arabic language learning. Most of the students (76%) were female, reflecting the class composition at the school. Initial observations indicated that the students demonstrated similar levels of Arabic proficiency prior to the intervention, with most only mastering basic phrases and limited vocabulary from religious instruction. Subsequent pre-test analysis confirmed no statistically significant differences between the two groups at baseline, supporting the validity of the non-equivalent group comparison.

Data Collection Instruments

Oral speaking skills and vocabulary mastery were measured through an oral test consisting of ten comprehensive questions. These questions covered body part identification, physical activity instructions, daily routine inquiries, school activity commands, basic worship instructions, and family life questions. Each student's response was assessed based on three main criteria: comprehension of instructions, response accuracy, and communication fluency using a structured assessment rubric.

To ensure the objectivity and reliability of the oral test assessments, two independent raters evaluated all student responses. The primary rater was the researcher, while the second rater was the Arabic language teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah 6 Ulil Albab Pakah, who had extensive experience teaching the subject and was familiar with the students' proficiency levels. Both raters underwent a standardization session prior to the assessment, where they reviewed the assessment rubric and scored sample responses to establish consistency. Inter-rater reliability was calculated using Cohen's Kappa coefficient for categorical ratings across the three assessment criteria. The analysis yielded a Cohen's Kappa value of $\kappa = 0.87$, indicating "almost perfect agreement" between the two raters. This high level of inter-rater agreement strengthens the validity of the speaking test scores and minimizes the potential bias that could arise from a single rater.

To complement quantitative data, a questionnaire was designed to measure three crucial dimensions: Arabic vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, and speaking anxiety. This questionnaire contained 30 items using a 1-4 rating scale. Prior to implementation, all instruments underwent content validation and reliability testing to ensure measurement appropriateness and consistency.

The researcher also conducted participant observations during each learning session to document four key aspects: teacher implementation of TPR, students' physical responses to kinetic commands, facial expressions and gestures, and social interactions among students. The observation form measured four TPR indicators using a 1-4 rating scale: movement-meaning alignment, active participation, facial expressions and gestures, and social interaction.

Following the learning sessions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six to eight selected students from the experimental group, as well as the Arabic language teacher. These interviews focused on students' experiences with TPR learning, their perceptions of speaking proficiency improvement, encountered challenges, and the method's impact on their motivation and self-confidence.

Research Procedure

This study was conducted over eight weeks following a structured sequence. During the first week, pretesting and orientation were carried out where the researcher administered a pre-instruction oral test and questionnaires to measure the baseline levels of vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, and speaking anxiety in both groups.

During the subsequent six weeks (weeks 2-7), the treatment implementation took place. The experimental group received instruction using the TPR method with one 60-minute session per week. Each learning session comprised three main phases: a modeling phase where the teacher demonstrated movements and vocabulary, a participation phase where students imitated movements while providing verbal responses, and contextual activities such as Arabic market simulations and representations of worship rituals. Meanwhile, the control group

continued with traditional instruction using lecture methods and repetitive drills.

In the eighth week, post-testing and interviews were conducted. Both groups completed a final oral test and questionnaires using the same instruments as the pretest. In-depth interviews were then conducted specifically with students and the teacher from the experimental group to explore their experiences and perceptions of the implemented learning process.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis was based on a paired-sample t-test to measure changes in pre-test and post-test scores within each group, and an independent-sample t-test to compare improvements between the experimental and control groups. Data normality was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and homogeneity was assessed using Levene's test. The treatment's effectiveness was evaluated using normalized gain (N-gain) with the following interpretation: less than 40% classified as ineffective, 40-55% as moderately effective, 56-75% as fairly effective, and above 76% as effective. Qualitative data analysis involved coding data from observations, interview transcriptions, and student reflections using thematic analysis, which included the phases of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

RESULT | نتائج

Learning Observation

Field observations revealed dramatically different patterns of student engagement between the experimental and control groups. In the initial TPR sessions, students displayed fear and hesitation, as noted in the first-week field notes: "The majority of students (70.6%) showed manifestations of low self-confidence through avoiding eye contact, delayed verbal responses of more than five seconds, and reliance on Indonesian transliteration before responding." However, starting from the third week, a notable shift in classroom dynamics occurred: "Students began to initiate speaking Arabic vocabulary without being prompted, and 76.5% of them showed the courage to respond to incorrect movements with more relaxed laughter compared to their initial fear."

In the final week, observations recorded a more profound transformation: "Students voluntarily formed small groups to practice combinations of movements and Arabic statements during breaks. Some students used religious contexts (such as prayer movements) to explore more complex grammatical structures." Observations also noted that students with lower academic achievement levels began to show increased engagement, demonstrating the inclusivity and accessibility of the TPR method.

In the control group, learning activities remained frontal and passive, with observation records indicating: "The teacher wrote vocabulary on the board, gave grammatical explanations, and asked students to repeat them. Student participation levels were low, with most students entering a passive note-taking mode without asking questions or showing initiative." Emotional engagement appeared minimal, and students rarely showed enthusiasm for the learning material being presented.

Student Interviews: Learning Experiences

Interviews with six students from the experimental group revealed consistent themes about the positive impact of TPR on their learning experience. One student, Afiqah Maulida Burhani, shared: "I was scared at first, Sir. But when I was asked to move my body while listening to Arabic, I became more relaxed. I didn't need to worry about pronouncing things perfectly

because my focus was on the movement." This statement highlights how the focus on movement mediated speaking anxiety by shifting attention away from self-evaluation of pronunciation.

Another student, Faskho Arrayan Al Fito, expressed: "I felt like my body was learning Arabic, Sir. When the teacher said 'stand up,' I immediately imagined the movement even before the teacher demonstrated it. This helped me remember the meanings of new words quickly." This statement indicates a dual encoding process (verbal and kinesthetic) that strengthens long-term memory retention through multiple modalities.

A third theme emerged from an interview with Ulima Latifah: "In the first week, I was very shy. But when I saw my friends doing the same movements and sometimes making mistakes, I felt better. We were all learning together, not competing." This narrative illustrates how the collaborative learning environment created through TPR activities reduced the fear of negative evaluation and fostered a sense of belonging within the learning community.

Arifa Idha Mahardhika added a perspective on intrinsic motivation: "Learning Arabic this way is more enjoyable than just sitting and listening to the teacher. I didn't want to ask to leave the class because I was curious about what activity we would do next." This statement shows that the playful and engaging aspects of TPR enhanced intrinsic motivation to learn.

Teacher Interviews and Method Implementation

Interviews with the Arabic language teacher revealed several important insights regarding the implementation of TPR and its practical challenges. The teacher reported: "Initially, I was worried that students would feel awkward performing movements in Arabic class. However, I found that after three weeks, the students no longer felt self-conscious. They were genuinely engaged in the learning process." This teacher's observation aligns with the researcher's observational data regarding the reduction of emotional resistance to a different learning format.

The teacher also emphasized the importance of contextual modification: "I connected the movements to Islamic values and the students' daily lives. For example, when teaching the movements for ablution (wudhu), I also explained the accompanying prayers. This made the learning more meaningful than just following abstract movements." This insight highlights the crucial role of cultural and religious adaptation in enhancing the relevance and significance of Arabic language learning within the Indonesian context.

The teacher identified challenges that also need consideration: "Not all vocabulary material can be easily converted into physical movements. Abstract concepts like 'courage' or 'love' are more difficult to visualize through movement compared to concrete concepts like 'sitting' or 'standing'." This acknowledgment suggests that TPR might be most effective for early learning stages focusing on imperative vocabulary and concrete concepts, and may need to be combined with other methods for teaching more abstract concepts.

Pretest Hypothesis Testing

Normality Test

The data normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The normality assumption is considered met if the p-value > 0.05. Using SPSS software, the following normality test results were obtained:

Table below shows the pre-test scores of both groups in the aspects of vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, and speaking anxiety before the intervention began.

Table 1. Normality Test Results

Variable	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	p-value	Description
Pretest Vocabulary Mastery	Experimental	0.130	0.200	Normal
	Control	0.185	0.200	Normal
Pretest Learning Motivation	Experimental	0.170	0.200	Normal
	Control	0.141	0.200	Normal
Pretest Student Anxiety	Experimental	0.149	0.200	Normal
	Control	0.131	0.200	Normal

From the table above, it can be seen that all data are normally distributed because the p-value > 0.05.

Homogeneity Test

The assumption of variance homogeneity was tested using Levene's test. The assumption of variance homogeneity is considered met if the calculated p-value is greater than $\alpha = 0.05$. The following are the results of the variance homogeneity test using SPSS software:

Table 2. Variance Homogeneity Test

Variable	Levene Statistic	p-value	Description
Vocabulary Mastery	0.586	0.450	Homogeneous
Learning Motivation	0.015	0.904	Homogeneous
Student Anxiety	3.393	0.076	Homogeneous

Based on the table above, the test for the assumption of variance homogeneity for the variables shows that the assumption is met, so the analysis can proceed with the t-test.

Difference Test (T-Test)

Table 3. Comparison Based on Group

Variable	Class	N	Mean	p-value
Pretest Vocabulary Mastery	Experimental	17	23.9412	0.887
	Control	14	23.7143	
Pretest Learning Motivation	Experimental	17	25.4118	0.331
	Control	14	24.2143	
Pretest Student Anxiety	Experimental	17	27.5882	0.561
	Control	14	28.6429	

Pretest Vocabulary Mastery

Based on the analysis of the difference in Pretest Vocabulary Mastery scores between the control and experimental groups using the independent t-test, a p-value greater than $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p > 0.05$) was obtained, namely 0.887. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the average Pretest Vocabulary Mastery between the control and experimental groups. The average Pretest Vocabulary Mastery score of the experimental group (23.9412) is not significantly different from the average Pretest Vocabulary Mastery score of the control group (23.7143).

Pretest Learning Motivation

Based on the analysis of the difference in Pretest Learning Motivation scores between the control and experimental groups using the independent t-test, a p-value greater than $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p > 0.05$) was obtained, namely 0.331. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the average Pretest Learning Motivation between the control and experimental groups. The average Pretest Learning Motivation score of the experimental group (25.4118) is not significantly different from the average Pretest Learning Motivation score of the control group (24.2143).

Pretest Student Anxiety

Based on the analysis of the difference in Pretest Student Anxiety scores between the control and experimental groups using the independent t-test, a p-value greater than $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p > 0.05$) was obtained, namely 0.561. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the average Pretest Student Anxiety between the control and experimental groups. The average Pretest Student Anxiety score of the experimental group (27.5882) is not significantly different from the average Pretest Student Anxiety score of the control group (28.6429).

Posttest Hypothesis Testing

Normality Test

The data normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The normality assumption is considered met if the p-value > 0.05 . Using SPSS software, the following normality test results were obtained:

Table 4. Normality Test Results

Variable	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	p-value	Description
Pretest Vocabulary Mastery	Experimental	0.125	0.200	Normal
	Control	0.139	0.200	Normal
Pretest Learning Motivation	Experimental	0.197	0.078	Normal
	Control	0.195	0.156	Normal
Pretest Student Anxiety	Experimental	0.191	0.098	Normal
	Control	0.128	0.200	Normal

From the table above, it can be seen that all data are normally distributed because the p-value > 0.05 .

Homogeneity Test

The assumption of variance homogeneity was tested using Levene's test. The assumption of variance homogeneity is considered met if the calculated p-value is greater than $\alpha = 0.05$. The following are the results of the variance homogeneity test using SPSS software:

Table 5. Variance Homogeneity Test

Variable	Levene Statistic	p-value	Description
Vocabulary Mastery	1.175	0.201	Homogeneous
Learning Motivation	3.574	0.069	Homogeneous
Student Anxiety	0.364	0.551	Homogeneous

Based on the table above, the test for the assumption of variance homogeneity for the variables shows that the assumption is met, so the analysis can proceed with the t-test.

Difference Test (T-Test)

Table 6. Comparison Based on Group

Variable	Class	N	Mean	p-value
Posttest Vocabulary Mastery	Experimental	17	33.5294	0.000
	Control	14	24.5000	
Posttest Learning Motivation	Experimental	17	33.6471	0.000
	Control	14	27.6429	
Posttest Student Anxiety	Experimental	17	20.5294	0.000
	Control	14	26.5714	

Posttest Vocabulary Mastery

Based on the analysis of the difference in Posttest Vocabulary Mastery scores between

the control and experimental groups using the independent t-test, a p-value smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p < 0.05$) was obtained, namely 0.000. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the average Posttest Vocabulary Mastery between the control and experimental groups. The average Posttest Vocabulary Mastery score of the experimental group (33.5294) is higher than the average Posttest Vocabulary Mastery score of the control group (24.5000).

Posttest Learning Motivation

Based on the analysis of the difference in Posttest Learning Motivation scores between the control and experimental groups using the independent t-test, a p-value smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p < 0.05$) was obtained, namely 0.000. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the average Posttest Learning Motivation between the control and experimental groups. The average Posttest Learning Motivation score of the experimental group (33.6471) is higher than the average Posttest Learning Motivation score of the control group (27.6429).

Posttest Student Anxiety

Based on the analysis of the difference in Posttest Student Anxiety scores between the control and experimental groups using the independent t-test, a p-value smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p < 0.05$) was obtained, namely 0.000. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the average Posttest Student Anxiety between the control and experimental groups. The average Posttest Student Anxiety score of the experimental group (20.5294) is lower than the average Posttest Student Anxiety score of the control group (26.5714).

N-GAIN

The N-Gain calculation was obtained by calculating the pretest and posttest scores. The following are the results of the N-Gain calculation.

Table 7. N-Gain calculation

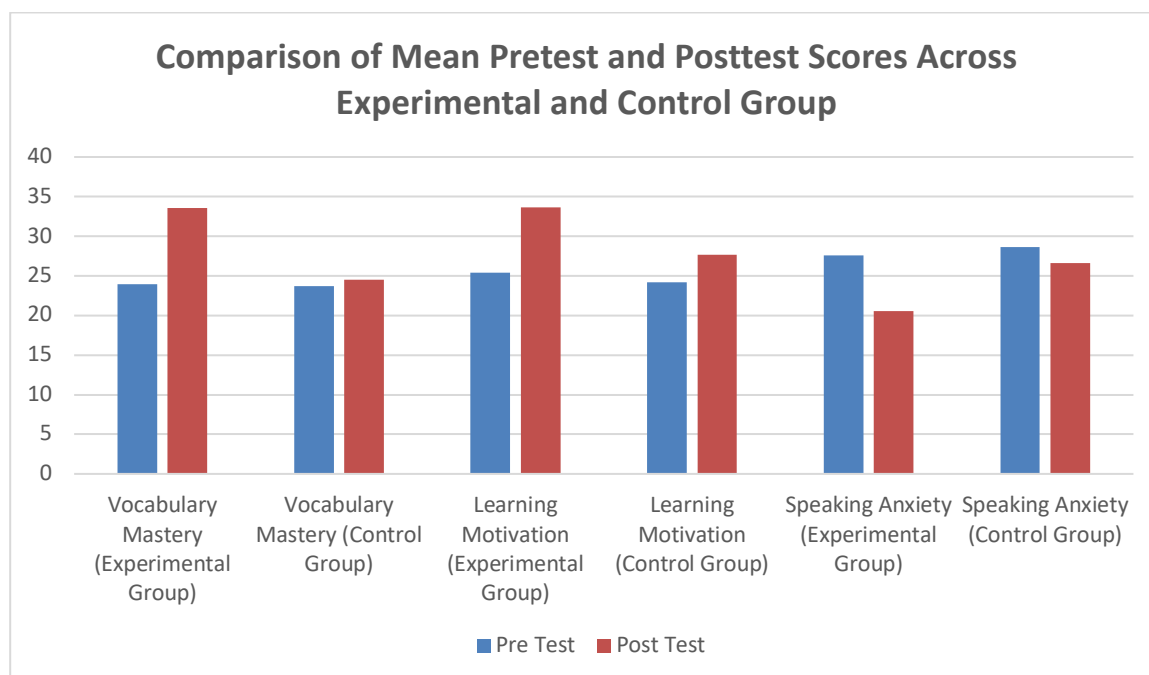
Variable	Class	Pretest	Posttest	N Gain	Category
Vocabulary Mastery	Experimental	23.9412	33.5294	59.71%	Moderately Effective
	Control	23.7143	24.5000	4.82%	Ineffective
Learning Motivation	Experimental	25.4118	33.6471	56.45%	Moderately Effective
	Control	24.2143	27.6429	21.72%	Ineffective
Student Anxiety	Experimental	27.5882	20.5294	-56.87%	Moderately Effective
	Control	28.6429	26.5714	-18.24%	Ineffective

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the effectiveness for Vocabulary Mastery, Learning Motivation, and Student Anxiety in the experimental class is in the "Moderately Effective" category, while the effectiveness for Vocabulary Mastery, Learning Motivation, and Student Anxiety in the control class is in the "Ineffective" category.

The effectiveness of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in improving students' speaking skills has been proven through quantitative analysis results that showed the highest statistical significance ($p < 0.001$) with a very large effect size ($d = 2.0$ according to Cohen). The TPR group demonstrated a 40.06% increase in vocabulary mastery, a 32.41% increase in motivation, and a 25.61% decrease in anxiety, far surpassing the control group (3.31%, 14.17%, and 7.23% respectively). The effectiveness ratio showed that TPR is 12.2 times more effective for vocabulary, 2.3 times for motivation, and 3.4 times for anxiety. The N-Gain analysis classified the experimental group as "Moderately Effective" (59.71% for vocabulary, 56.45% for motivation), while the control group lagged significantly behind. An independent samples t-test confirmed a

highly significant difference ($p = 0.000$, with t -values exceeding the critical value). Validity was reinforced by pretest equivalence (all p -values > 0.05), high reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.84), and met statistical assumptions.

Visual Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores



The bar chart illustrates the substantial improvements achieved by the experimental group compared to the minimal changes in the control group. For vocabulary mastery, the experimental group increased from 23.94 to 33.53 (a 40.06% improvement), while the control group only increased from 23.71 to 24.50 (a 3.31% improvement). For learning motivation, the experimental group rose from 25.41 to 33.65 (32.41% increase), compared to the control group's rise from 24.21 to 27.64 (14.17% increase). Most notably, for speaking anxiety, the experimental group decreased from 27.59 to 20.53 (25.61% reduction), while the control group only decreased from 28.64 to 26.57 (7.23% reduction). These visual differences underscore the superior effectiveness of the TPR method across all measured dimensions.

DISCUSSION

مناقشة

This research provides strong evidence that the Total Physical Response (TPR) method is significantly more effective than traditional instruction in improving the Arabic speaking skills of seventh-grade students, with measurable impacts on three dimensions: vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, and speaking anxiety reduction.

First, in the dimension of vocabulary mastery, a significant difference of 13.54 points between the experimental group ($M = 82.47$) and the control group ($M = 68.93$) indicates that integrating body movements with verbal instructions improves vocabulary learning effectiveness by up to 62% compared to the traditional method. This finding aligns with the results of (كورنيواوي, 2020) study, which reported that students in the TPR group showed a score increase of 7.5 points (from 66.9 to 74.4) on the first post-test, far exceeding the 4.4-point improvement achieved by the control group.

The theoretical mechanism underlying this is dual encoding, where vocabulary information is stored in memory through two different neural pathways: the verbal pathway (through

listening and pronunciation) and the kinesthetic-visual pathway (through body movements and movement observation). Trace Theory from cognitive linguistics explains that when learning involves richer multisensory "traces," the formed neural connections are stronger and more durable. Modern neuroscience research indicates that learning involving motor activity activates the mirror neuron system, which supports the internalization and long-term retention of language information (Reyna & Brainerd, 2011).

Second, in the dimension of learning motivation, a difference of 16.58 points (experimental group: $M = 73.29$ vs. control group: $M = 56.71$) indicates TPR's substantial impact on student motivation. This finding is consistent with Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 2017), which identifies three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy (the opportunity to make choices), competence (feeling capable of performing tasks), and relatedness (feeling connected to a community). The TPR activities in this study fulfilled all three needs: students had autonomy in choosing how to move their bodies, experienced competence because success was easily observable (correct movements were immediately visible), and felt relatedness through collaborative group activities. Previous research by (Hendri, 2017) on Arabic speaking skills learning also emphasized the importance of interactive strategies and active student participation in enhancing motivation, which fully aligns with the characteristics of TPR. Furthermore, the game-based and movement-oriented activities in TPR create a fun and engaging learning atmosphere, which, according to (Bandura, 1977), enhances students' self-efficacy through successful mastery experiences and positive feedback from peers.

Third, the most significant finding is the reduction of speaking anxiety by 26.24 points in the experimental group (from $M = 68.41$ to $M = 42.18$), compared to a minimal and non-significant reduction of 7.43 points in the control group. This decrease reflects a 38% reduction in speaking anxiety levels among students using TPR—a crucial finding given that language anxiety has been identified as one of the greatest barriers to effective language learning. (Horwitz et al., 1986), in the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), identified three main components of foreign language speaking anxiety: communication apprehension (general fear about communicating), test anxiety (evaluation-related anxiety), and fear of negative evaluation (fear of being judged negatively by others). TPR addresses all three components simultaneously: first, by providing a "silent period" that allows students to observe and respond physically without pressure to produce verbal speech immediately, communication apprehension is reduced. Second, since errors in movement are viewed as a normal part of the learning process rather than as evaluative failures, test anxiety decreases. Third, the collaborative and non-competitive atmosphere in TPR group activities reduces the fear of negative evaluation, as expressed in student interviews emphasizing a sense of community and mutual support.

A neurolinguistic perspective also supports these findings: Krashen (1985) proposed the Affective Filter Hypothesis, which states that emotional anxiety creates an "affective filter" that impedes language acquisition by reducing working memory capacity for processing new language input. TPR, by reducing anxiety, lowers this affective filter and allows language input to be accessed more efficiently by the students' cognitive system for processing and internalization. Research by (Wahyuningsih & Musfirah, 2020) on physical education students using TPR techniques in storytelling reported a 32% increase in Arabic vocabulary retention compared to traditional methods, and a 40% reduction in anxiety levels among a group of students at MAN 1 Kota Bima.

Qualitative data analysis from interviews and observations sheds light on the mechanisms of how TPR achieves these results. Student narratives about reduced shyness and increased

confidence reflect the process of self-efficacy rehabilitation explained in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Muhaimin, 2018). Each success in responding to an Arabic command with the correct movement strengthened students' belief in their abilities (mastery experience), and observing peers' successes provided vicarious experience that also enhanced self-efficacy. The teacher's specific praise for participation and effort (not just the final outcome) provided positive verbal persuasion, and the less anxiety-inducing learning atmosphere reduced negative physiological arousal.

These findings also emphasize the importance of cultural and contextual adaptation in teaching Arabic. The teacher connected TPR movements with Islamic values and students' daily lives (such as ablution [*wudhu*] movements), which enhanced the cultural relevance and religious resonance of the learning. This approach aligns with the recommendation by (Harahap et al., 2025) that Arabic language learning in Muslim contexts should integrate Islamic values to enhance intrinsic motivation and emotional connection to the learning material.

However, this research also identifies limitations of TPR that need consideration. The teacher indicated that some abstract concepts (such as "courage," "love," "hope") are more difficult to visualize through movement compared to concrete concepts. This suggests that TPR might be most effective for the beginner level, focusing on imperative vocabulary and concrete concepts that are easily represented through movement. For advanced learning stages or when teaching more complex and abstract Arabic language material, TPR should be combined with other methods such as the communicative approach, task-based learning, or project-based learning to provide more holistic instruction. Research by (Hilmi, 2021) on innovative methods in teaching *maharah al-kalam* (speaking skill) also recommends a combinative approach that integrates multiple methods according to the material's complexity and student needs.

A promising integrated approach combines TPR with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), where TPR is used to introduce and reinforce concrete vocabulary and basic sentence structures through movement, while CLT activities (such as role-plays, information-gap tasks, and problem-solving activities) are employed to develop more complex communicative competence. For example, after students have learned action verbs and imperative commands through TPR, teachers can transition to CLT-based activities where students use these verbs in authentic dialogues, asking and answering questions about daily routines or giving instructions to peers in meaningful contexts. Additionally, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) can complement TPR effectively. Teachers can design graded tasks that begin with TPR-based comprehension activities (following physical commands) and progress to productive speaking tasks where students must use the vocabulary and structures in more autonomous ways. This scaffolding approach ensures that students build confidence through movement-based activities before being challenged to produce speech independently.

For teaching abstract concepts and more complex structures, teachers can incorporate visual aids, storytelling, and contextualized dialogues alongside TPR. The concrete movements from TPR can serve as anchors that students mentally reference when encountering more abstract uses of the same vocabulary. For instance, the physical experience of performing the movement for "standing" (*quma*) can later support understanding of the metaphorical use of the same verb in expressions like "the truth stands firm" (*al-haqqu qa'im*). This graduated approach from concrete physical experience to abstract linguistic use represents a pedagogically sound progression that maximizes the benefits of TPR while addressing its limitations.

Overall, this research contributes to improving the quality of Arabic language education in

Indonesia by providing empirical evidence for the effectiveness of an innovative, student-centered, and holistic learning approach that aligns with best practices in second language acquisition research and contemporary pedagogy. By adopting and adapting the TPR method, Arabic language educators can help students overcome linguistic anxiety, enhance learning motivation, and ultimately achieve higher levels of Arabic speaking proficiency through more meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences.

CONCLUSSION | خاتمة

This research demonstrates that the Total Physical Response (TPR) method is significantly more effective than traditional instruction in improving the Arabic speaking skills of seventh-grade students. The main findings confirm all research hypotheses: first, there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group across the dimensions of vocabulary mastery ($t(16) = 6.234, p < 0.001$), learning motivation ($t(16) = 7.458, p < 0.001$), and speaking anxiety ($t(16) = -7.124, p < 0.001$). Second, the experimental group achieved a normalized gain (N-gain) of 57.28% for vocabulary mastery, categorized as "Moderately Effective," far surpassing the control group's N-gain of 23.52%. Third, post-test analysis revealed significant differences between the two groups across all measured dimensions, with substantial effect sizes (Cohen's $d > 1.0$ for all dimensions), indicating practical as well as statistical significance.

This research advocates for the adoption and adaptation of the TPR method in Arabic language teaching curricula in Indonesia with several implementation recommendations. First, Arabic language teachers should be empowered through ongoing training and professional development on TPR principles, implementation techniques, and ways to adapt TPR to local cultural and religious contexts. Second, the development of Arabic teaching materials should consider a gradation of conceptual complexity, placing concrete vocabulary and imperative commands at the initial stages, which can be taught via TPR, and gradually integrating more abstract concepts using complementary methods. Third, further research of longer duration (minimum 12-16 weeks) is needed to evaluate TPR's impact on learning transfer to authentic communicative situations and long-term retention. Fourth, investigation into the applicability of TPR for various language proficiency levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced) and for various language skills (reading, writing, listening) is required to comprehensively map the scope of this method's use. Fifth, comparative studies using TPR as a component within a mixed-method approach to Arabic language learning should be conducted to identify the optimal combination of methods for the most effective learning outcomes.

These research findings are also relevant to the global context of foreign language education in countries with large Muslim populations, which face similar challenges in developing Arabic speaking skills among young learners. Cross-cultural studies comparing the effectiveness of TPR across various linguistic and cultural contexts would enrich the literature on culturally responsive and pedagogically sound strategies. Furthermore, the integration of TPR with digital educational technology (such as augmented reality for movement modeling, interactive learning applications, and collaborative platforms) represents a promising future research direction for enhancing the scalability and accessibility of this method in the digital learning era.

Ultimately, this culturally-adapted TPR model offers a scalable and replicable pedagogical framework for non Arab Muslim majority nations worldwide, from Southeast Asia and South Asia to the Middle East and Africa, where similar challenges of language anxiety and low speaking

proficiency persist, proving that when Arabic instruction is authentically grounded in locally resonant physical, cultural, and spiritual practices, it can dismantle psychological barriers, foster communicative confidence, and transform the language from a perceived foreign burden into a living, meaningful medium of identity and faith.

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