

The Effectiveness of the Total Physical Response (TPR) Method in Improving the Mandarin Vocabulary Skills of 4th-Grade Students at "X" Elementary School in Surabaya

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.903SEDU0083>

Received: 03 February 2025; Accepted: 07 February 2025; Published: 12 March 2025

ABSTRACT

In this research, the author uses the Total Physical Response (TPR) method to teach directional vocabulary in Mandarin. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of this method in improving the Mandarin vocabulary of fourth-grade students at a private elementary school in Surabaya. This final research provides an overview of the learning process using the Total Physical Response method, which focuses on enhancing students' vocabulary skills.

This research is a quantitative study in which student test results are collected, processed, and compared. The final results indicate an increase in the class average from the pre-test to the post-test by 53.3 points, demonstrating that the fourth-grade students at SD "X" Surabaya showed improvement in their understanding of the taught vocabulary. To further increase the success rate of TPR implementation, teachers can design this method in the form of a game.

Keywords: Total Physical Response, Chinese vocabulary, effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Language is an important aspect of life and has become a crucial part of communication. Besides being a mean of communications, language can also enhance a person's self-worth. Therefore, it is important for society, especially the younger generation, to master foreign languages, such as Mandarin. Mandarin is the second most spoken language in the world (Kasih, 2021), which is why schools have made Mandarin a mandatory subject for students.

Mandarin is still considered one of the most difficult languages to learn today (Berlianto, 2023). Therefore, teaching Mandarin requires a variety of methods and instructional media to assist and facilitate learners in studying the language. One of the teaching methods used in language learning is the Total Physical Response (TPR) method. TPR is an easy-to-use method in language learning because it incorporates physical movement, which helps learners better understand the material (Astutik and Aulina, 2017: 198).

The research conducted by Novitasari (2019) is focusing on the effectiveness of the TPR method for listening and speaking skills in Mandarin language learning. Both the author's research and Novitasari's study are using TPR method for Mandarin language learning. The difference lies in the implementation—Novitasari applied the TPR method to improve listening and speaking skills for fourth-grade students at SD Santa Lorent Surabaya, while the author will apply the TPR method for vocabulary introduction to fourth-grade students at SD X Surabaya.

Similarly, the research conducted by Carolina in 2021 discussed the effectiveness of the TPR method for mastering vocabulary in online learning. The similarity between this study and the author's research is the use of the TPR method for vocabulary learning. However, the difference is that the author conducted the learning process offline, whereas the previous research was conducted online.

Furthermore, the research by Churota'ayun and Aprilia (2022) examined the effectiveness of the TPR method in enhancing vocabulary skills among TK-A and TK-B students. Both studies apply the TPR method to improve Mandarin vocabulary skills. However, the difference is that the author's research focused on elementary school students, while the previous study was conducted at the kindergarten level (TK-A and TK-B).

Based on the background presented, the author is conducting this study to determine the effectiveness of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in enhancing the Mandarin vocabulary skills of fourth-grade students at SD "X" Surabaya.

Research Methodology

This research conducted at X Elementary School in Surabaya from September 2023 to June 2024 was using a quantitative method that analyzed the class average scores from the pre-test and post-test. The researcher collected data from a series of tests and processed them into usable data to determine the final research results. According to Ardiawan et al. (2022:1), quantitative research uses statistical methods to collect quantitative data from research studies.

Data Analysis Technique

The results from the pre-test and post-test scores will be averaged. These averages will be used to determine the impact of applying the Total Physical Response (TPR) method on Mandarin vocabulary learning.

To calculate the average (mean):

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n} \quad (1)$$

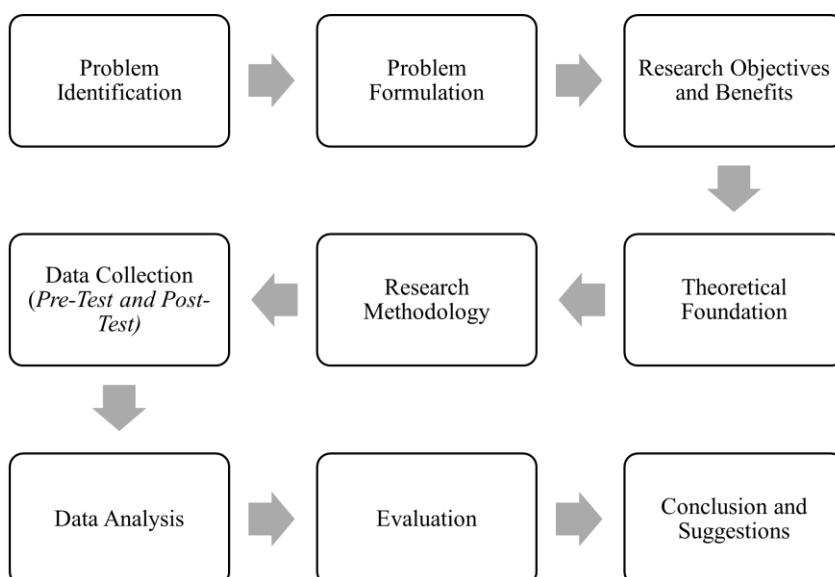
Explanation :

\bar{x} : average (mean)

$\sum x$: total score of the class

n : number of data point / students

Research Procedure



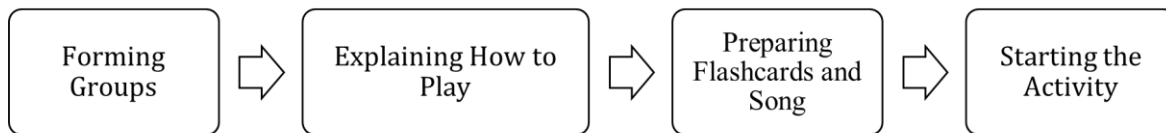
Picture 1. Research Procedure

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Application of the Total Physical Response Method

Before implementing the TPR method in the learning process, the researcher needs to prepare several things, namely:

Activity flow.



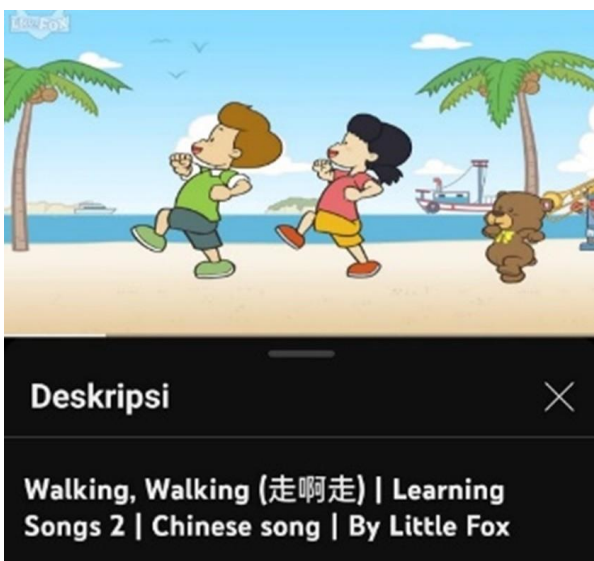
Picture 2. Activity Flow

Flashcards



Picture 3. Photos of Flashcards

The song used to accompany the activity is "走啊走" (Walking, Walking).



Picture 4. Screenshot of the video used

Several command sentences, such as:

你们要站在他们的前边。

[You must stand in front of them.]

你们要站在他们的后边。

[You must stand behind them.]

你们要站在他们的左边。

[You must stand to their left.]

你们要站在他们的右边。

[You must stand to their right.]

The term "你们" refers to the students who are circling around the student in the middle (他们). These sentences will serve as commands during the activity.

Pre-test and post-test

选词填空！ Choose the correct word to fill the blank !

zuǒ 左	hòu 后	qián 前	zǒu 走	yòu 右
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1.



Didi zài shù de _____ bian.
弟弟在树的_____边。

2.



Didi zài shù de _____ bian.
弟弟在树的_____边。

3.



Didi zài shù de _____ bian.
弟弟在树的_____边。

4.



Didi zài shù de _____ bian.
弟弟在树的_____边。

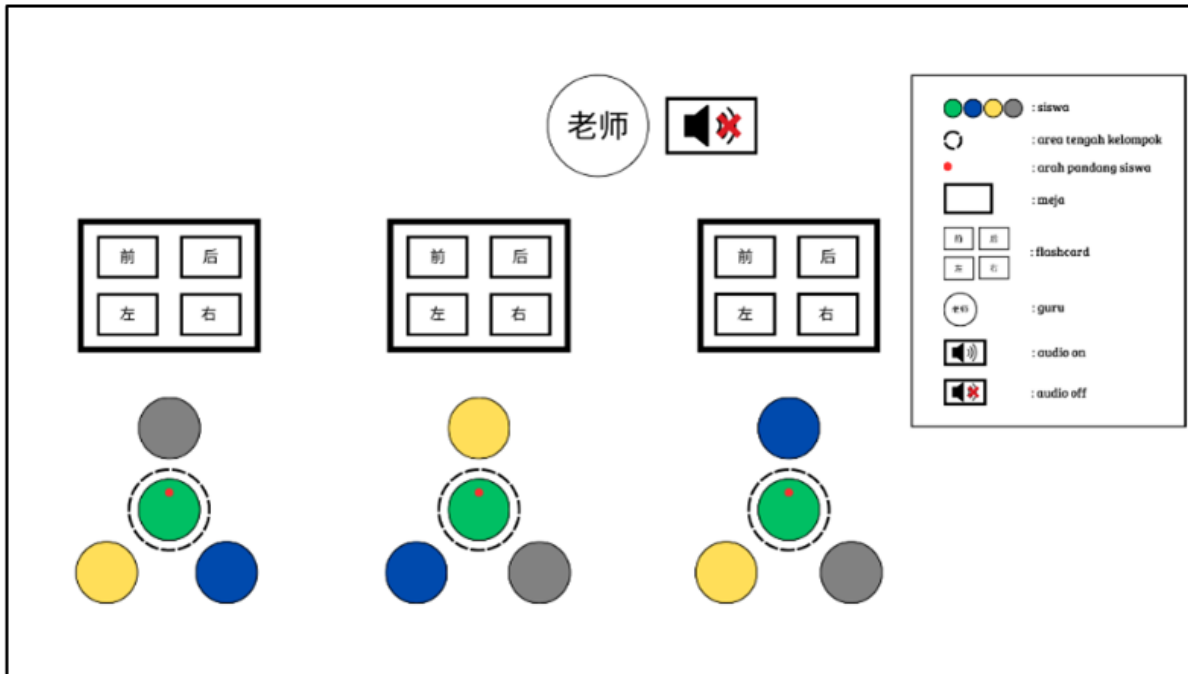
5.



Tā _____ de hěn màn
他_____得很慢。

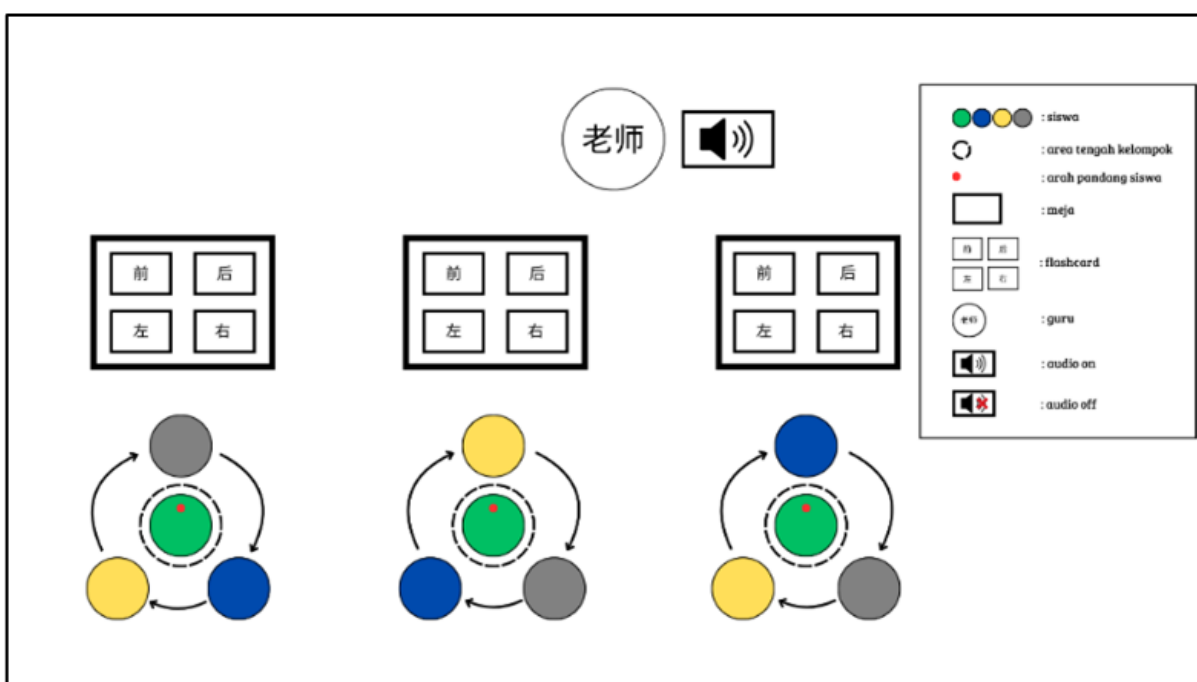
Picture 5. Pre-test and Post-test

In the first session, the researcher administered a pre-test to the students to assess their abilities before the lesson. The researcher also explained the vocabulary in the chapter used for the research and demonstrated how to write it. In the second session, the researcher reviewed the vocabulary to be used in the TPR method with the song 左和右 (Left and Right), followed by the implementation of the Total Physical Response method. The TPR method was applied through an activity supported by flashcards and audio media.



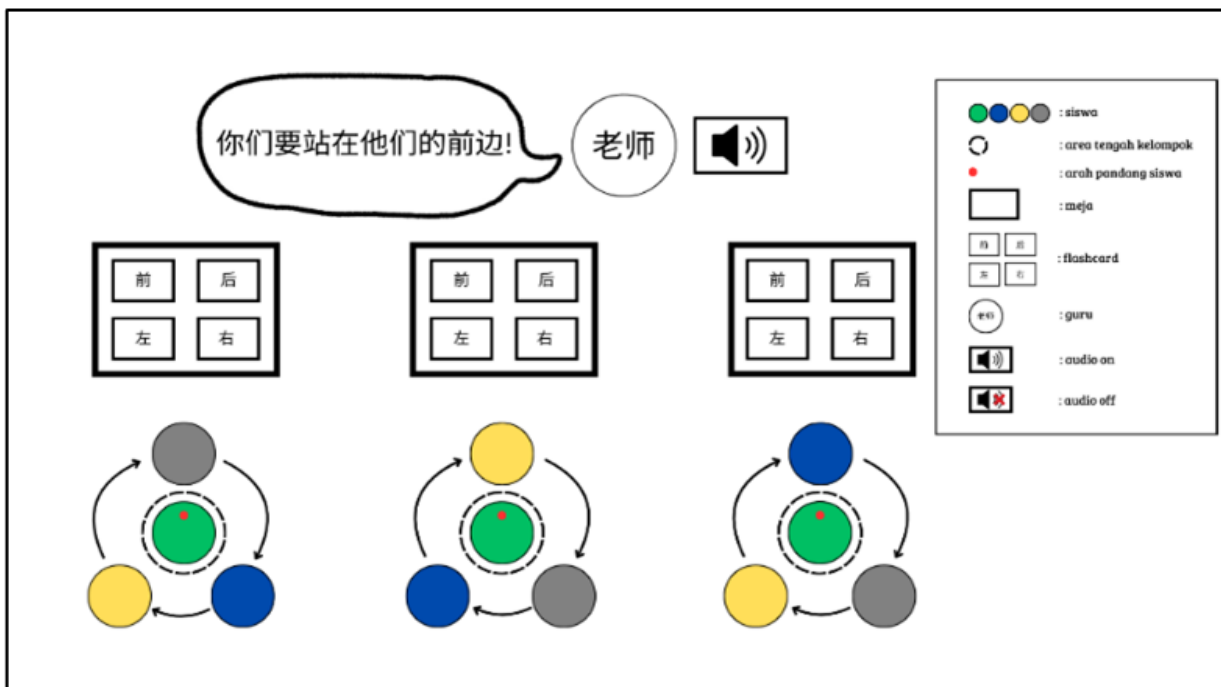
Picture 6. First Illustration of TPR Method's Application

Before the activity began, the teacher first grouped the students, with each group consisting of four students: one student in the center and three others standing around them. The teacher then explained the rules of the game and provided an example. Additionally, the teacher prepared several flashcards (front, back, left, right) on a table in front of the students.



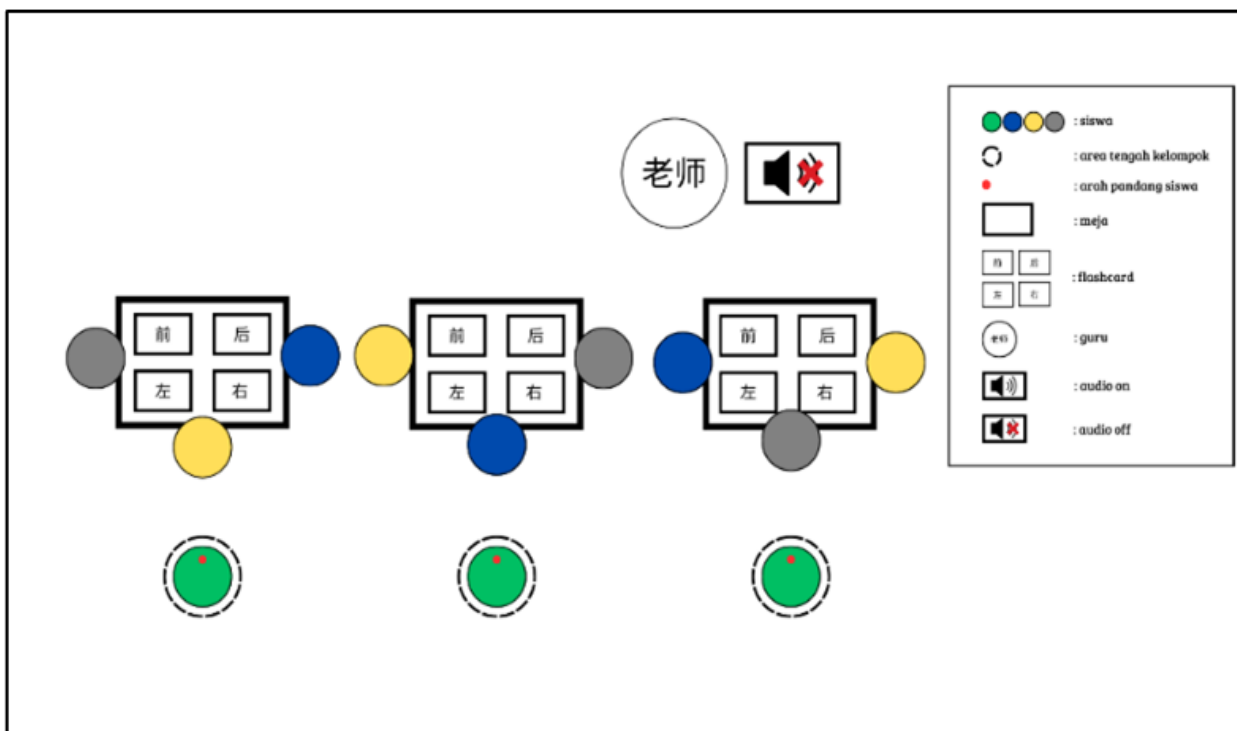
Picture 7. Second Illustration of TPR Method's Application

The researcher played the song used to accompany the implementation of the TPR method. The three students standing around had to rotate in a circle around the student in the center.



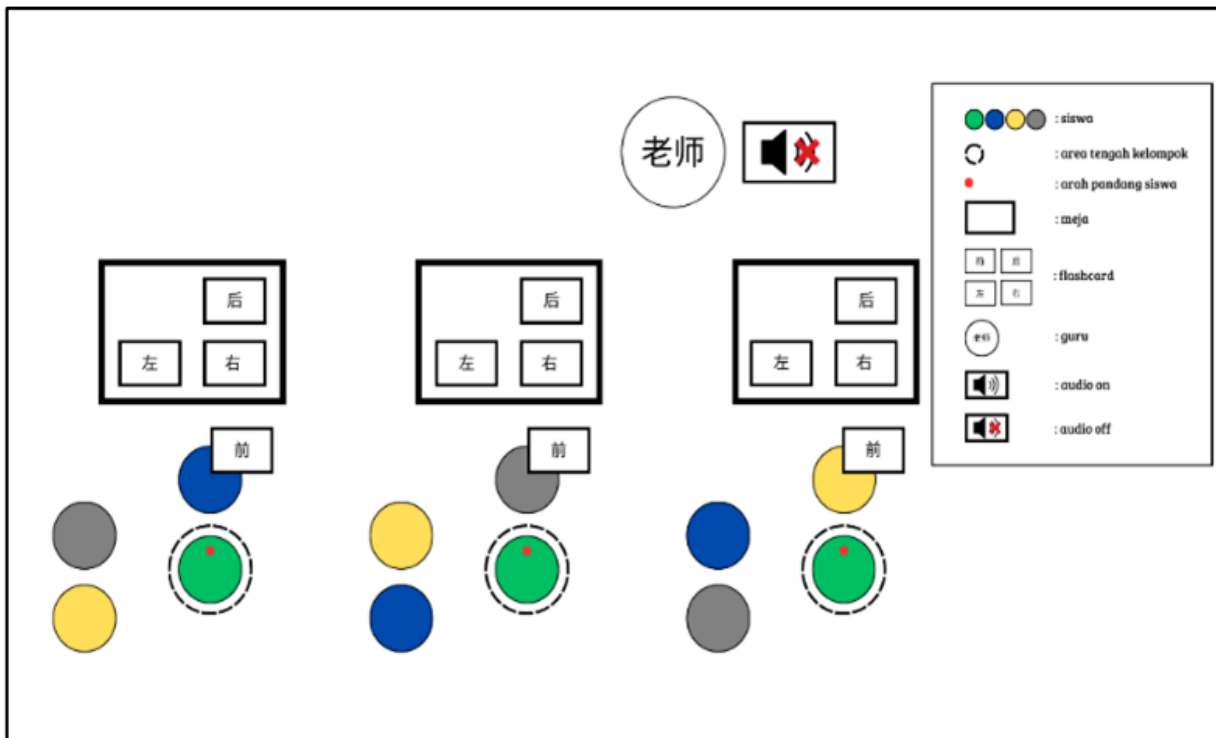
Picture 8. Third Illustration of TPR Method's Application

As the song continued to play and the students kept circling the student in the center, the teacher called out a command that the students needed to listen to. The command was randomly selected from the available options.



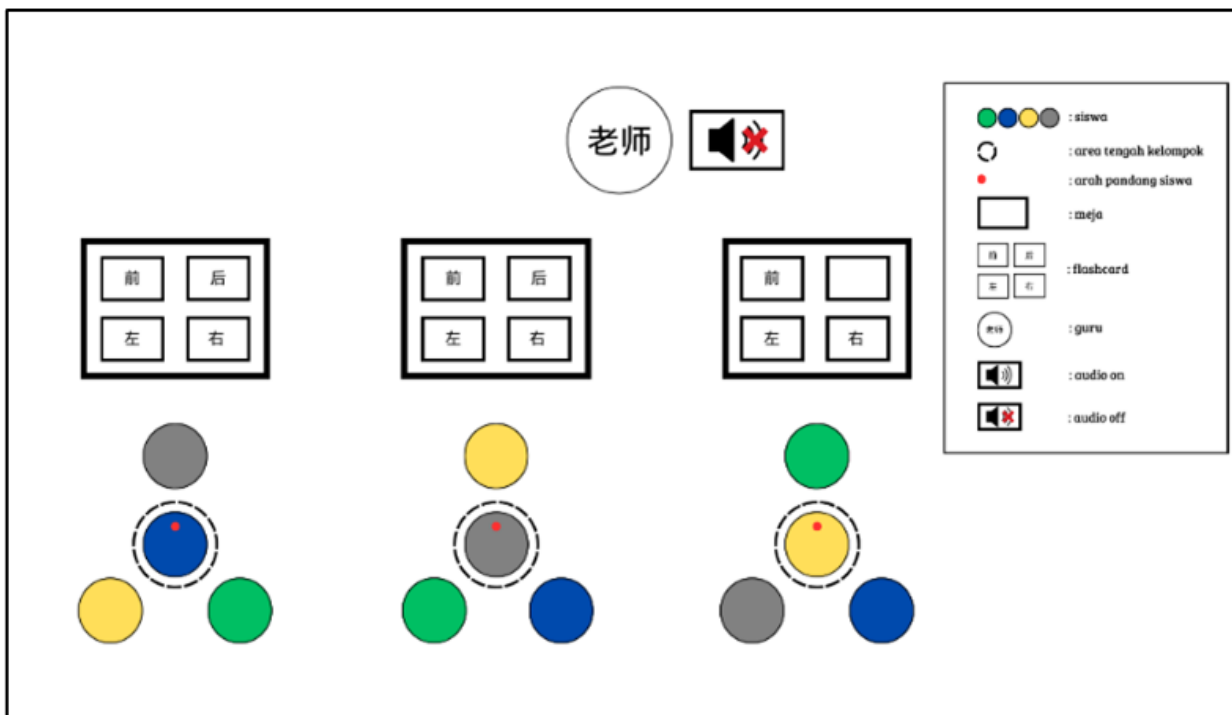
Picture 9. Fourth Illustration of TPR Method's Application

After giving the command, the teacher stopped the music. The three students then had to race to grab the correct directional vocabulary flashcard based on the command that was given.



Picture 10. Fifth Illustration of TPR Method's Application

The student who successfully grabbed the correct vocabulary flashcard must stand according to the command given by the teacher, using the student in the center as a reference. In the illustration, it is shown that the student with the correct flashcard stands in front of the student in the center, following the teacher's instructions.



Picture 11. Sixth Illustration of TPR Method's Application

The student who successfully positions themselves correctly must switch places with the student in the center of the group. This activity is repeated several times with different commands, and it is possible for the same command to be repeated.

With the introduction of the new teaching method, the students were very active in participating in the learning process. This was evident from their participation in the activity. The students were able to follow directions and engage in the activity with enthusiasm. On the other hand, since the TPR method involved group activities, many students were busy talking and joking with their group members. Some students also did not follow the instructions correctly and continued to circle around the student in the center. Additionally, some students were confused when searching for the requested vocabulary. After obtaining the correct flashcard, the students did not position themselves according to the given command. Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of the TPR method did not proceed as effectively as intended.

Results of the Total Physical Response Method Implementation

Along with the implementation of the TPR method, the researcher also conducted evaluations by administering pre-tests and post-tests. Below is a table comparing the students' scores:

Table 1. Total Physical Response Method Evaluation Result

No.	Name	Pre – test	Post – test
1.	APE	20	40
2.	AKK	20	–
3.	AAH	0	100
4.	AW	0	60
5.	CJE	20	100
6.	CCH	20	90
7.	DAT	60	100
8.	GEH	20	100
9.	GYAA	0	60
10.	JAK	20	50
11.	JWS	40	100
12.	MCH	–	–
13.	RRK	0	60
14.	SIB	100	100
Class Average		26,7	80

From the data above, it is shown that the scores of 2 out of 14 students are invalid because these two students did not participate in either the pre-test or the post-test. The class average can state that the scores of all students have improved, with an increase of 53.3 points. However, some students have not reached the minimum score set, which is 75, yet. Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of the TPR method is effective in enhancing understanding of directional vocabulary in Mandarin.

The effectiveness was measured using four indicators, namely:

Student Response

The students were very active in the learning process. It can be shown by participating in all activities, repeatedly stating the directional vocabulary mentioned by the researcher in command sentences, singing the song before it was played again, and answering questions posed by the researcher. On the other hand, some students were distracted by playing on their own and talking with their group members.

Student Learning Outcomes

The effectiveness of the teaching method can also be observed from the students' learning outcomes. Based on the test results, eleven students had shown improvement.

Classroom Time Management

The implementation of the TPR method requires a significant amount of time. However, the learning process was conducted on schedule according to the lesson plan that had been prepared.

Utilization of Resources

Utilization of resources refers to how the learning objectives can be achieved. In this case, the researcher used methods and media appropriate for the learning material. Additionally, the researcher utilized facilities and resources that supported the learning process.

Therefore, it can be concluded that most students responded positively, student learning outcomes improved, the implementation time was in accordance with the lesson plan, and the methods, media, and resources were effectively utilized. Hence, it can be said that the TPR method is effective for enhancing directional vocabulary in Mandarin for 4th-grade students at "X" Elementary School in Surabaya.

Author's Note

Before implementing the TPR method, the researcher first explained the vocabulary to be used. The explanation of the vocabulary at the beginning is a standard part of the learning process. Additionally, the TPR method can be used as a primary teaching method, not just as a supplementary method. If it was used as a supporting method, it would be beneficial to include a test after explaining the vocabulary and before applying the TPR method, so that the effectiveness of the TPR method could be measured more accurately.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The implementation of the Total Physical Response method should be designed as attractively as possible, not only to improve students' learning outcomes, but also to develop motivation and encourage active participation during learning activities. This can be seen from the students' involvement and enthusiasm in participating in lessons using this method.
2. The use of the Total Physical Response method has been proven effective in improving Mandarin vocabulary for 4th-grade students at X Elementary School in Surabaya. Students were able to demonstrate movements that correspond to the given instructions.
3. During the implementation process, detailed and clear instructions are necessary to ensure that activities run smoothly.

Based on the effectiveness indicators, it can be stated that the Total Physical Response (TPR) method is effective in improving vocabulary recognition skills among fourth grade students at "X" Elementary School in Surabaya.

SUGGESTIONS

Considering the research conclusions, the following suggestions are made:

1. The use of a teaching method should be attractively packaged to create an enjoyable learning environment. This can develop students' curiosity and willingness to learn.
2. Before implementing the Total Physical Response method, teachers need to make several preparations, such as developing lesson plans and preparing necessary tools and materials. The teacher's readiness greatly influences the success of the learning activities.
3. Teachers should explain the activities using simple and clear language, making it easier for elementary school students to understand.

DOCUMENTATION



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