

**THE USE OF TEACHING PROFICIENCY THROUGH READING AND  
STORYTELLING (TPRS) TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' LISTENING  
COMPREHENSION  
(Pre-experimental research at a second grade of a junior high school in  
Bandung)**

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**Abstract:** This pre-experimental study investigates whether the use of Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) is able to improve students' listening comprehension and its advantages and disadvantages. The data were gained through pre-test, post-test, and interview which was viewed from teacher's and students' perspective. The data from pre-test and post-test were analyzed by using dependent t-test from the SPSS 18.0 program for Windows. Data attained from interview were analyzed in order to explore teacher's and students' responses towards the advantages and disadvantages of using TPRS. The study shows that the null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, there is likely a difference in students' listening comprehension before and after the TPRS technique was done. Both teacher and students confirm that TPRS is able to improve students' listening comprehension, students' vocabulary mastery, lets the students understand more about the story, and considers as a good, fun, stress free technique.

**Keywords:** *TPRS, comprehension, pre-experimentall, pre-test, post-test, dependent t-test*

### **Introduction**

Speaking, listening, writing and reading are commonly known as four skills. Those four skills are significant to sustain the language performance and communication (Brown 2001). However, some people consider that reading and writing are more important than listening and speaking.

Improving listening skill is not as easy as improving other skills because of some reasons such as: the learners do not get special treatment from the teacher during the course; the learners do not use and practice their skills intensively (Pinter 2006:45; Mandelson 1984). Moreover, Brown (2001) mentions some troubles that the students have to face while learning English as EFL like:

clustering, redundancy, reduced, performance, colloquial language, rote delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation, and interaction.

Regarding this, there is a technique found by Blaine Ray in 1900. It is named teaching proficiency through reading and storytelling (TPRS). This technique is an extension from its previous method, i.e. Total Physical Responses (TPR) which was developed by Asher. Further, TPRS was used to gain the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary. This belief comes from a research conducted by Sumiati (2006) who proves that TPRS is effective to teach Vocabulary. Furthermore, it is found that the story in TPRS technique has many benefits by bringing motivation, joy, and fun to the classroom (Wiliyanti 2008). McKay Cites in Asher (2000) compared one class with TPRS and another with ALM (audio lingual method), and the result is the performance of the class with TPRS which has 3 steps to be applied such as: establish meaning (presenting difficult words); reinforce the structure (introducing the outline of the story); and reiterate the material (asking PQA, or Personalized Questions and Answers) is higher than ALM class.

Based on the results of McKay's research, the focus of this study is to find out whether or not TPRS is going to improve students listening comprehension and its advantages and disadvantages.

This study uses pre experimental design which used one group pre test-post test design. Data of this study was collected by pre-test, post-test, and interview which was viewed from teacher's and students' perspective. This technique occurs in one class, firstly the try out was held, then the class was given both pre and post test. Treatment of TPRS was acquired after the pre test and before post test. Both pre test and post test are measured and compared in order to find out whether or not TPRS is able to improve student's listening comprehension.

## Data Presentation and Discussion

- Pre Test

The pre test was conducted in order to assert the students' score before the treatment. The pre test result is statistically analyzed by using SPSS 18 program for Windows. The result shows that the average of pre-test score is 17.7. The research asserts that the midpoint is 19 and the most frequently appearing score is 11. Besides, the standard deviation of pre test result of this study is 6.85. Pre-test highest score is 28 and the lowest score is 4.

- Post Test

The post test was conducted in order to assert the student's final score after TPRS was given. The post test result is statistically analyzed by using SPSS 18 program for windows. The result shows that the mean or the average of post-test score is 31.35. The study asserts that the midpoint is 30. The most frequently appearing score is 25. Besides, the standard deviation of post-test result of this study is 4.76. Post-test highest score is 40 and the lowest score is 25.

- Hypothesis testing

The hypothesis is conducted to find out whether or not TPRS is able to improve student's listening comprehension. This study uses null hypothesis which stated that there was no difference in students' listening comprehension before and after the TPRS technique was done. The formula of null hypothesis is as follows:

Ho:  $\mu$  pretest =  $\mu$  posttest

This study uses paired t-test on SPSS 18.0 program for windows to test the hypothesis. And the result is as follow:

**Table 1**  
**Paired sample t-test**

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Posttest - Pretest	13.6500	2.92494	.65404	12.28109	15.01891	20.870	19	.000

It shows that the value of  $t_{obt}$  is 20.870. Regarding the significance of the test ( $t_{crit}$ ) should be .05 and the significant level  $df = n - 1$ , where  $n$  is the number of subject in the research.  $df = 20 - 1 = 19$ . The value of  $t_{crit}$  is .05 can be seen in  $t$  distribution for one-tailed of 19 is 0.456.

The fact that the value of  $t_{obt}$  is 20.870 regarding the significance of the test ( $t_{crit}$ ) should be .05  $t_{crit}$  which can be seen in  $t$  distribution for one-tailed of 19 is 0.456. It concludes that  $t_{obt} > t_{crit}$  ( $20.870 > 0.456$ ), and it means that the null hypothesis is rejected. In other word, there are differences in students' listening comprehension before and after the TPRS technique was done, and TPRS can improve students' listening comprehension.

- Interview Analysis

The interview is designed to obtain students' and teacher's opinions about the advantages and the disadvantages of using TPRS. The students' interview was

done after the treatment. It involved 10 out of 20 students which consist of five boys and five girls. The students' involved were chosen randomly.

1) Advantages and disadvantages of TPRS viewed by students

In order to find out the advantages and the disadvantages of TPRS, the students were asked "what do you think about TPRS?" and the result is as follow:

**Chart 1**

**Advantages and disadvantages of TPRS viewed by the students**

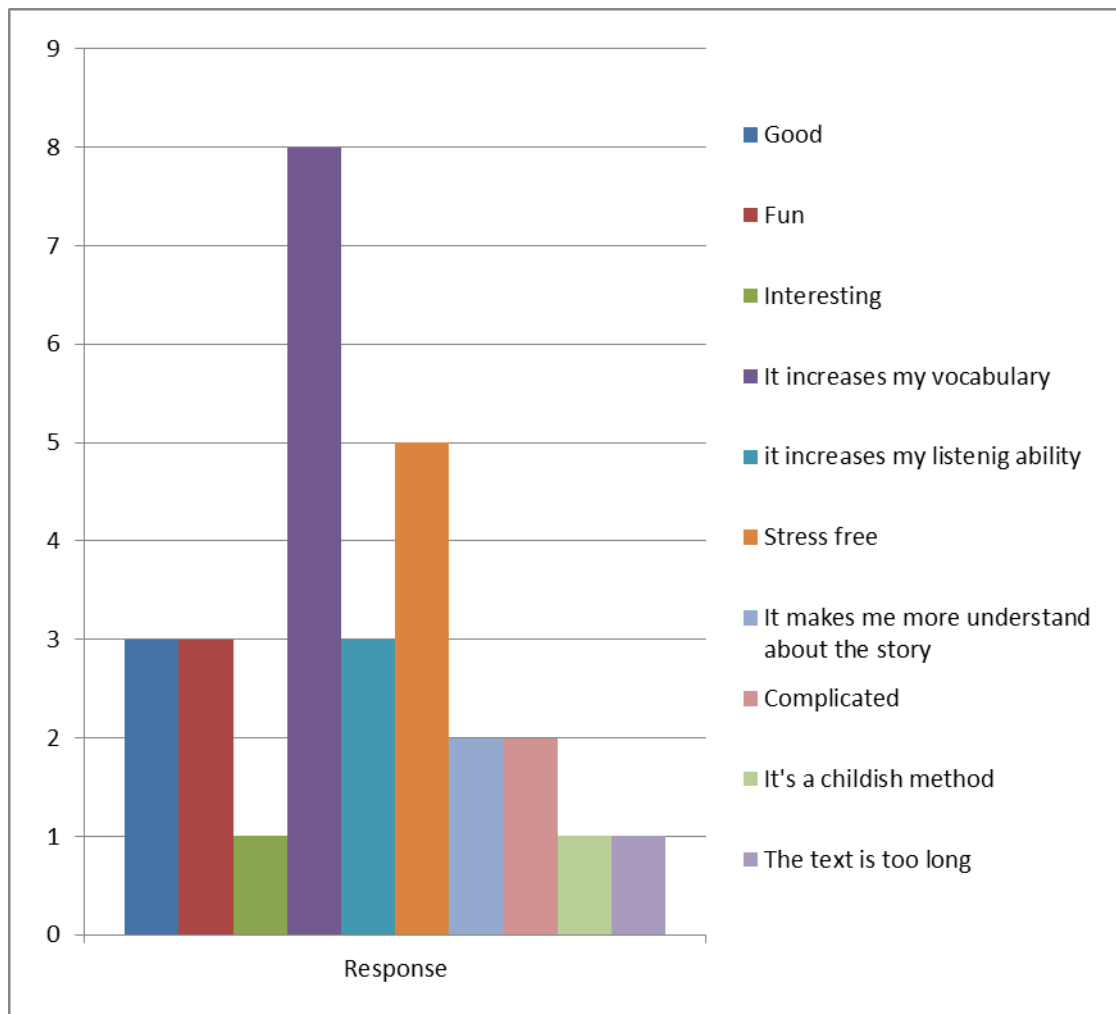


Chart 1 reveals that there are 10 students' responses and most of them believe that TPRS increases their vocabulary mastery. Stress free falls on the second place after increasing their vocabulary. The items which get the less response are interesting, TPRS as childish method, and the text is too long.

The students considered this technique is good, fun, and interesting. TPRS lets the students to understand more about the story which they never heard before. Moreover, they assume that the use of TPRS potentially increases their vocabulary and listening ability. TPRS also reputed as a stress free technique.

On the other hand, the disadvantages part of TPRS technique is the complication in terms of its steps. The student states that the material (story) which is not given in the first place causes confusion. A student also mentioned that TPRS technique was more suitable to be used for children not teenager.

## 2) Advantages and disadvantages of TPRS viewed by teacher

In this study, the teacher came up with ideas which were separated into two parts: the advantages and the disadvantages.

The teacher mentioned advantages of TPRS technique as one of good techniques to improve students' vocabulary especially in listening TPRS technique let the students involve in every single activity, and it made the students' feel invited in the teaching learning process.

On the other hand, the teacher also mentioned the disadvantages of TPRS technique. In his opinion, he mentioned that he was aware that every technique had its own limitation, and according to him, the limitation of TPRS technique was that TPRS could only be applied in story based materials with story based.

- Discussion

Based on the finding above, it indicates that TPRS is likely improving students' listening comprehension. Calculation result of pre-test and post test shows  $t_{obt} > t_{crit}$  ( $20.870 > 0.456$ ). It asserts that null hypothesis is rejected. It means that there is a difference in students' listening comprehension before and after the TPRS technique implemented. It is not only confirmed by calculation

result, but it is also confirmed by the students and the teacher as a good technique to improve listening comprehension.

The key words which were given in the first place created confusion for some students. On the other hand, it built curiosity among other students as well. They were likely eager to find out what the story is about. Musthafa (2008:9) states that stories build chances for learning continuity. For most students, answering teacher's questions about some key words orally is also capable to improve their vocabulary mastery. This activity is able to improve students' vocabulary mastery because it requires the students to relate those key words into their daily life.

Despite the length of the text is concerned as a technical problem, it turns out that students' vocabulary improvement is also improve students' understanding about the story. It matches one of Asher's advantages of using TPR which is "instant understanding of the target language". Therefore, the students' listening comprehension, in a second grade class in one of private junior high schools in Bandung was higher after TPRS treatment was held four times.

The students and the teacher confirmed that students' listening comprehension also increased whether or not it is caused by vocabulary mastery. The students also assumed that they understand more about the story. The students also consider it as a good, fun, stress free technique. Moreover, the teacher added that the students are likely involved in every single activity and it encourages them to participate in learning process. In other words, they feel comfortable in learning English. The statement is in line with Gaab (2006) that TPRS provides gesture, visual imagery, spatial imagery, spatial memory aid, body language and voice inflection. All of these natural communicative aids make messages more comprehensible and make student more comfortable.



## Conclusion

The study concludes that TPRS is likely to improve students' comprehension especially in listening. TPRS gives advantages to both teacher and students. It is evident by the following things: students can guess the meaning of words in the story; students can upgrade their vocabulary; students consider TPRS as a good, fun, stress free technique; and students can understand more about the stories.

However, to certain extent, TPRS gives disadvantages, mostly, to teachers. Teachers are demanded to have good competence in telling stories; teachers are also demanded to be able to encourage the students to guess some vocabularies; teachers must base their teaching materials on stories. To conclude, TPRS is one of techniques that is suitable to apply in teaching narrative text.

Based on the study, it is suggested that teachers or other researchers who intend to conduct a research about TPRS to be more knowledgeable about students' need. It is also suggested that TPRS is used to teach other skills i.e. speaking, reading, or writing.

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