

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a wide-ranging description of the study. It comprises the background of the study, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, the aim of the research, and significance of the study. Below is a further description.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Teaching vocabulary to young learners is not an easy task. Vocabulary development plays a significant role in young learners to communicate in a foreign language. Vocabulary is central to English language teaching because, with sufficient vocabulary, students can understand others and express their own ideas (Lessard-Clouston, 2013). Vocabulary, as a fundamental part of language, is closely intertwined with language skills, especially in English. Hence, in speaking English as a foreign language, the students have to understand and memorize many words in vocabulary because, without vocabulary, they can say nothing. It is in line with the study conducted by Khakim and Anwar (2020) that the students' problems are in memorizing, spelling and pronouncing vocabulary and also using vocabulary in oral and written sentences.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is one of the effective strategies to teach vocabulary to young learners (Hounhanou, 2020). TPR can make the learning atmosphere more fun and reduce pressure so that children will feel like playing in learning. With the application of the TPR method, it is hoped that students will enjoy learning English without being stuck in space and time (Ekawati, 2022). Implementing TPR in teaching vocabulary to young learners in Indonesia is gaining attention because it offers a more interactive and engaging learning experience. It was supported by Hafidah and Dewi (2020) in their research that stated the TPR method makes it easier for kindergarten and early childhood teachers to develop themes and materials, create and use media, choose English vocabulary according to themes and materials, and apply English learning. By using physical movements, TPR allows students to actively participate in the learning process, which can boost

their motivation and help them remember words better. TPR is a good method for teaching vocabulary and encouraging students' self-confidence, creativity, curiosity, and motivation. It makes students enjoy and be enthusiastic about following the learning process. It has a positive impact on them because the topic given is familiar and easy to remember (Nuraeni, 2019).

In teaching vocabulary to young learners, the use of TPR is an effective method (Cabrera, 2022). Thus, there is a teacher who is integrating TPR with Visual Auditory Kinesthetic (VAK) learning style in the process of teaching and learning in one of the English courses in Pangandaran. The use of TPR in vocabulary teaching connects language with physical movement, allowing students to learn by associating words with actions. When students actively perform actions such as mimicking "jumping" or "running" this strengthens memory through sensory and motor engagement, helping them internalize vocabulary more effectively. By combining elements of visual, audio, and kinesthetic in TPR teaching to young learners, the teacher creates a more engaging and effective learning experience for children. The teacher teaches vocabulary to the children between the age of 4-7 years old. For example, in the visual learning style, the teacher uses colorful flashcards to engage the students' interest in front of the class. Songs are usually used by teachers to make the students engage in the implementation of kinesthetic and auditory learning styles. TPR allows for accommodating various learning styles, including auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. In a similar vein, the VAK learning style model, developed by Neil Fleming in 1987, consists of modes based on different senses including the Visual, Audio, Kinesthetics (VAK) model (Kluge, 2013). Recognizing that not every young learner learns in the same way is crucial when implementing TPR in language instruction because learning styles affect how well children can learn and retain information.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the use of the Total Physical Response method in improving students' vocabulary (e.g., Ekawati, 2022; Fadiana et al., 2020). Besides, the study that conducted by J & Hounhanou (2020), aimed at promoting the use of Total Physical Response (TPR) method, as a technique to introduce English language vocabulary to EFL beginners. The study showed that

teaching English vocabulary through Physical Response helps students learn more quickly and easily, as children benefit from the physical demonstrations provided by their facilitator or peers. However, the research that investigates the use of TPR in teaching vocabulary to young learners, which collaborates with the students' learning styles is very limited. This study is important to investigate because classrooms often consist of students with diverse learning styles. Understanding how TPR can be effectively integrated with the VAK learning styles helps to optimize vocabulary teaching, ensuring that it caters to the individual needs of students. Therefore, this study examines to fully understand how the teacher implements TPR in teaching vocabulary to young learners, which collaborates with VAK learning style. While, the implication of this research suggests opportunities for optimizing English language learning to young learners through TPR method from the strategic material development, and the encouragement of integrating and interesting learning environments.

## 1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background above, the problem formulation of this research is “How does the teacher implement TPR in teaching vocabulary which collaborates with VAK learning style?”

## 1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misinterpretation, the researcher has explained the keywords of this research.

- 1.3.1 Total Physical Response (TPR)** : TPR is a method that uses physical movement to teach language. In this aspect, the teacher use TPR aligns with the VAK learning style by involving physical actions in language instruction.
- 1.3.2 English Vocabulary** : A set of words in English that are introduced and reinforced through physical actions. The vocabulary includes everyday words and actions

that students connect with movements to make learning more fun and memorable.

**1.3.3 Young Learners** : Young learners are typically children who are in the early stages of their education. Young learners in this research are between 5 to 7 years old, who are kindergarten students and some of them are students in the first grade of elementary school.

**1.3.4 VAK Learning Style** : VAK learning style is a learning style that includes visual, auditory, and kinesthetics in implementation. In visual learning, some students prefer using visual tools to process and retain information. In auditory learning, the students prefer to learn by listening to audio or sound. Meanwhile, for the kinesthetics, the students learn through physical engagement.

#### **1.4 Aim of the Research**

Based on the problem formulation above, this study aims to investigate how the teacher implements TPR in teaching vocabulary to young learners, which collaborates with VAK learning style.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

##### **1.5.1 Theoretical Use**

This study enhance understanding of how the teacher implements TPR in the learning classroom which collaborates with VAK Learning style and enrich the existing literature on TPR, English vocabulary, young learners, and VAK learning style.

##### **1.5.2 Practical Use**

Practically, this study can serve as a reference and consideration for using TPR as a teaching method for vocabulary instruction in young learners, particularly when integrated with the VAK learning style.

### **1.5.3 Empirical Use**

This study provides more insight and understanding of how the teacher implements TPR in the learning classroom which collaborates with VAK learning style.