

Enhancing Social Awareness through Total Physical Response (TPR) in Teaching English at Elementary School

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Abstract

Teachers must equip students with several skills to face global competition in the 21st century. One of these skills is soft skills, one of which is social awareness. Ideally, teaching English to elementary school students should be child-friendly. Learning English in elementary schools trains students to communicate verbally using English in simple conversations and prepares students for social awareness. This study describes the stages in introducing Social Awareness through Total Physical Response (TPR) to teach English in Elementary Schools. This study used a qualitative approach, and the subjects of this study were the fourth grade, fifth, and sixth-grade students. The researchers collected the data by observing offline learning, interviews, and analyzing learning documents, such as textbooks, teaching media, etc. It was found that social awareness can be trained by selecting learning activities and suitable materials for young learners. The selected materials, such as daily activities, hobbies, and professions, give positive examples for the students. Learning activities such as working in-group groups/pairs and the material related to the current situation can improve students' social awareness, such as understanding the problem, empathy, and organization. It proves that TPR can be used to teach English and train the student's social awareness.

Keywords: *Social Awareness, TPR (Total Physical Response), English Learning*

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, students in Indonesia must be equipped with several skills to face global competition. By the 2013 curriculum, learning in schools must instill character education. One of them is *Social Awareness*. According to Goleman (1998), "*Social awareness*" is a person's ability to recognize other people or awareness that fosters a concern, showing one's ability to empathize with others. Based on this understanding, someone has empathy for social problems and understands what must be done to address these social problems. "*Social Awareness*" must be taught to children from an early age to foster a sense of empathy, mutual respect, and cooperation.

It is important to teach children *Social Awareness* at school early. Teachers may facilitate by using a certain learning model in the class. Suganda et al. (2018) state that a collaborative learning model can improve students' *socio-emotional* behavior, one of which is *Social Awareness*. *Social awareness* has a positive impact on children's behavior in the classroom. They become more active, communicative, and sensitive to the things

around them. *Social Awareness* also contributes to their English academic achievement, making them motivated and more confident in learning English.

Teaching English must empower students to be more active in practicing while the teachers also instill soft skills. They can create child-friendly learning by selecting materials related to students' needs and abilities. They can also choose the learning activities that promote students' soft skills. For example, they can choose various language games, sing songs, role play, etc.

Nurhajati (2020) stated that most of the English teachers in elementary schools in Kediri did not have an English educational background. The fact shows that not all English elementary schools realize child-friendly learning during the process at schools. It influenced the learning activities in elementary schools that focused more on children's cognitive development. They trained their students in the knowledge of language more than the affective aspect. The materials provided were not child-friendly. The materials should be by the world of children and their level of ability, and they are not only appropriate and needed by children. As a result, the materials and activities did not touch on character education.

One method that suits the child's character is *the Total Physical Response* method (TPR). It is a method that James J. Asher first developed. Through this method, children are directed to basic commands; children will respond physically before they start to produce verbal or speech responses (Fauziati, 2014). TPR is one of the child-friendly English learning methods used in foreign language teaching by imitating movements to describe foreign vocabulary and students having to mimic the movements made by the teacher. This method is quite interesting to apply in learning because children can remember vocabulary easily. This method combines the coordination of commands, speech, and gestures. (ummchahyaningrum, 2018) states that the TPR method can train children's listening skills with activities such as *imperative drills, action songs, and using flashcards*.

Based on previous research conducted by Ummah (2017), positive results were found where student responses were interested, happy, and enthusiastic during the learning process using the TPR method. During learning, students can follow instructions from the teacher by imitating the words spoken by the teacher. They understand more about the material being taught using pictures. The other study related to using the TPR method also showed positive results. Wijayatiningsih&Mulyadi (2014) prove that applying the TPR and repetition methods can help early childhood master simple vocabulary in English.

However, most of the previous research focuses on the application of TPR to teach the language. It is hard to find research that focuses on cultivating students' character through this method. In fact, in the learning process using the TPR method, teachers can include things or tasks that can train children's social awareness. Cahyaningrum, et al. (2017) stated that the cultivation of character education for early

childhood showed positive results through habituation and exemplary activities. Activities carried out such as assignments or praying before starting the lesson. Students' social awareness when following the English learning process in the classroom using this TPR method can be applied by students outside the school, especially in daily life.

The study was conducted to realize that Social Awareness can be trained through repeated learning activities done in TPR. The study aims to determine what social awareness attitudes arise during the learning process. The research tries to answer the questions: "What are the stages of teaching English using TPR to train *"Social Awareness"* at the elementary school?" and "What are the teaching materials that can instill *Social Awareness* to the students at the elementary school?"

In the 21st century, students in Indonesia must be equipped with a number of skills to face global competition. In accordance with the 2013 curriculum, learning in schools must instill character education. One of them is *Social Awareness*. According to Goleman(1998) "*Social awareness*" is a person's ability to recognize other people or awareness that fosters a concern, which can then show one's ability to empathize with others around him. Based on this understanding, that someone has empathy for social problems and understands what must be done to address these social problems. "*Social Awareness*" must be taught to children from an early age in order to foster a sense of empathy, mutual respect, and cooperation.

It is important to teach children *Social Awareness* at school from the early age. Teachers may facilitate by using a certain learning model in the class. Suganda et al.(2018) state that a collaborative learning model can improve students' *socio-emotional* behavior, one of which is *Social Awareness*. *Social awareness* has a positive impact on children's behavior in the classroom. They become more active, communicative, and sensitive to the things around them. *Social Awareness* also contributes to their English academic achievement where it makes them motivated and more confident in learning English.

The process of teaching English must empower students to be more active in practicing while the teachers also instill soft skills. They can create child-friendly learning by selecting materials that relate with students' needs and ability. They can also choose the learning activities that promote students' soft skills. For examples, they can choose varied language games, using songs, role play, etc.

The fact shows that not all English at elementary school realize about child-friendly learning during the process at schools. Nurhajati(2020) stated that most of the English teachers in elementary schools in Kediri did not have an English educational background. It influenced to the learning activities in elementary schools that focused more on children's cognitive development. They trained their students the knowledge of language more than the affective aspect. The materials provided were not child-friendly.

The materials should be in accordance with the world of children and their level of ability, and they were not only appropriate and needed by children. As a result, the materials and activities did not touch character education.

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However, most of the previous researches focus on the application of TPR to teach the language. It is hard to find researches that focus on cultivate students' character through this method. In fact, the learning process using the TPR method, teachers can include things or tasks that are able to train children's social awareness. Cahyaningrum, et al.(2017) stated that the cultivation of character education for early childhood showed positive results through habituation and exemplary activities. Activities carried out such as assignments or such as praying before starting the lesson. The social awareness that students get when following the English learning process in the classroom using this TPR method, can be applied by students when they are outside the classroom, especially in daily life.

Realizing the facts that Social Awareness can be trained through repeated learning activity done in TPR, the study was conducted. The aim of the study is to determine what social awareness attitudes arise during the learning process. The research tries to answer the questions: "What are the stages of teaching English using TPR to train *"Social Awareness"* at the elementary school?" and "What are the teaching materials that can instill *Social Awareness* to the students at the elementary school?"

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach, namely case studies. The case used was a teacher who taught English in elementary schools while instilling *soft skills*, namely *Social Awareness*. This research was conducted outside the classroom and with a model teacher who taught English. The teaching and learning process was carried out offline with a health protocol. The research subjects were an English teacher of an elementary school in Kediri and six children who joined a community service program in a village in the Kediri regency. They were the fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade students who lived in that village.

The data collection techniques used in this study were observation and interviews. Observations were carried out in the classroom. Researchers observed the material and stages of teaching English that the teacher used. They also observed what social awareness indicators appear in students during the teaching and learning process. The researchers were not directly involved in the teaching and learning process. They conducted interviews with teachers and several students. The purpose of the interview was to obtain data and clarify the data obtained in the observation. Interview was to know why the teacher used that material to be implemented to the students and why the teacher used stages of the TPR method. The interview was also done with the students to know the students' responses to the learning process. The data analysis followed the procedure proposed by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) that the system consists of data collection, categorization, research, and conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the results of observations and interviews conducted in July and August, it was found that the acquisition of Social Awareness at the learning stage using the TPR method.

1. Learning stages

The learning stages consist of 3 stages: *Pre-Teaching*, *Whilst-Teaching*, and *Post-Teaching*. During *Pre-Teaching* (Initial Activities), the first thing is that the teacher prepares students psychologically and physically to participate in the learning process, such as arranging learning settings (seating). After the students were ready to study, the teacher greeted the students and checked the students' attendance and led the prayer. After that, the teacher did a *warm-up* activity by singing together (*opening song*). An example of the music used was "*Good morning*," with the melody of the song "*Happy Birthday*." The two teachers explained the learning objectives or basic competencies to be achieved.

The Whilst-Teaching activity (core activity) consists of five stages: observing, asking questions, gathering information, associating, and communicating. Before entering the observation stage, the teacher invited students to follow the yell, "*If you're ready to study, say YES YES ...*". The teacher introduced vocabulary through the pictures displayed in front, followed by movements that presented the speech at the observing stage. The examples of language introduced were '*get up*, '*take a bath*, '*sweep the floor*, '*brush the*

teeth, etc. Then, the teacher asked the students to follow the movement. At the *questioning* stage, the teacher asked questions related to vocabulary. The teacher said the word, and students were asked to make movements according to the vocabulary spoken by the teacher. This stage aims to measure students' understanding and provoke them to ask questions. At the stage of *gathering information*, the teacher introduced vocabulary in the context of everyday expressions followed by movements and asked students to repeat what the teacher said. Examples of expressions are '*I take a bath, I sweep the floor, and I brush my teeth.*' At the *associating* stage, the teacher asked students in pairs with their next-door friends to practice saying the phrases taught. A: '*What do you do every morning?*' B: '*I take a bath.*' At the *communication* stage, the teacher gives a game by instructing several students to come forward in pairs to have a dialogue, then alternate interlocutors in sequence.

During *Post-Teaching* activities, the teacher conducted an assessment to measure the achievement of learning objectives. In addition, the teacher evaluated the entire series of learning activities and the results obtained and then jointly found direct and indirect benefits from the learning outcomes that took place by asking, "*What have we learned today?*". The teacher provided feedback on the learning process and results by praising students. The teacher and students sing a closing song as a sign of the end of the class and to motivate students to continue learning. The music sung was '*Good Bye*' with '*Gellang Si Patu Gilang.*'

The TPR applied by the teacher aims to introduce vocabulary and expressions without introducing their equivalent in Indonesian (translating). The way to introduce learning material is with repetitive movements; then, it was accompanied by the pronunciation of vocabulary/expressions in English. Using this method is that children can guess the meaning of movements, facial expressions, and repetition.

1. Materials

The materials used in learning are material from the child's world with the principle of '*here and now*', namely, a material whose themes they encounter every day—*hobbies, professions, and daily activities*. The material involves students, made like games, songs, pictures, and learning activities in pairs and groups. The linguistic scope includes everyday vocabulary and expressions (such as asking how things are, asking for things/favorites, etc.).

The process for training *Social Awareness* is by repeating the acts using TPR. The material was introduced using body movement, which the teacher stated orally. By observing what the teacher did, the students got examples. Basically, children learn through what they see, hear, and repeatedly do. This statement is supported by (Scott & Yetreberg, 2004) that a characteristic of young learners is their understanding comes through hands and eyes and ears. The physical world is dominant at all times. They imitated the model, in this case, the teacher. The teacher gave good models on how to use the language, and at the same time, she introduced the soft skill that is social Awareness.

Choosing the right material also trains students' *Social Awareness*. For example, in the material with the theme '*Hobby*,' the vocabulary chosen by the teacher is a positive hobby and encourages students to do positive things. For the material '*Daily Activity*,' the teacher introduces vocabulary with positive movements to suit current conditions, such as '*wear the mask*' and '*wash the hand*.' In conclusion, the selection of materials can encourage students in a positive direction and train students' Social Awareness, namely knowing each other and understanding the needs of others.

There are three indicators of *social Awareness*: understanding the situation (recognizing each other and knowing each other's needs), empathy, and organizational Awareness (Goleman, 1998). Through learning activities with the TPR method, the students can *understand the situation* by repeating the words read by the teacher with movements. For example, some students still do not follow the lesson well because they play and talk with their friends next to them. Then another friend reminded the child to refocus on the activities of the teacher. This activity also increases students' *empathy*. For example, the teacher always gives a positive response as feedback to students who can carry out orders, even though the students still make mistakes. With this example, students become accustomed to always respecting others. Ways that can be done are to praise '*Good*,' '*Excellent*,' '*Well done*, or '*Thank you* and *clap*. This activity stimulates the other students to act as the teacher by clapping.

Furthermore, TPR trains *organizational Awareness*, namely, students realize that they are part of the class and are responsible for what is done during learning. By being given games and assignments in pairs, communication between students is established by interacting with each other. Social Awareness that appears in students was found during observed the learning process.

If the result of the study is compared with some previous studies, there are some differences and similarities. The first difference is the focus of the study. This research focuses on training Social Awareness using TPR in teaching English. Research conducted by Astutik&Aulina (2018) focused on the process of teaching English in Kindergarten using TPR. The result shows that the students respond with physical or non-verbal movements and with speech or verbal responses and develop students' vocabulary. Then, Adnyani (2018) researched the TPR method to teach listening skills.

Furthermore, research conducted by Zulpan (2018) found that the TPR method improved the ability to read procedural texts. Moreover, a study conducted by Nuraeni (2019) examined the TPR method for teaching English vocabulary. Meanwhile, Gumiandari (2021) research shows that students are easy to digest and able to respond well in learning English. It can be concluded that previous studies are still focused on the cognitive aspect.

The gap between this research and the previous research in this research focuses on training students' social Awareness. Meanwhile, previous research still focused on the cognitive aspect. Social Awareness is needed to be instilled in the students since they

are young, especially in elementary school, because teaching students in elementary school must be child friendly, so that's why the teacher uses the TPR method according to the child's characteristics.

The result of the study supports some studies on how to build character education for children. Social Awareness is included in the socio-emotional category and is one of the characteristics of education that must be instilled in children. Research on socio-emotional was conducted by Suganda et al. (2018). The results show that a collaborative learning model can improve students' socio-emotional behavior, one of which is Social Awareness. Haryono (2020) conducted research on socio-emotional found that children's social emotionality increased through puzzle games, and children became more communicative. In other words, character education, one of which is social Awareness, can be instilled through the learning process. The results of this study also support the findings of this study, namely character education, one of which is social Awareness can be instilled through learning activities (the use of TPR in this case), material selection, and the process of interaction between teachers and students.

Finally, this research is the first step to examining how to build character especially social Awareness in children by choosing the TPR method. Future researchers can find solutions to instill 21st-century feelings (Collaboration, Creativity, Critical thinking, and communication) linked to hybrid learning (blended learning) for English children.

CONCLUSION

The Total Physical Response (TPR) method can be used to instill Social Awareness in the students. It can be done through repeated learning activities and selecting the suitable materials to teach English at elementary school. The process of acquiring *Social Awareness* through the TPR method can go through three stages, including *Pre-Teaching*, *Whilst-Teaching*, and *Post-Teaching*. At the *Pre-Teaching* stage, the teacher will convey greetings to students, arrange seats, pray and motivate students by doing warm-ups, namely by singing. At this stage, *Social Awareness* emerges, namely, *understanding situations* where students can follow the teacher's orders. *Whilst-Teaching* stage at this stage, the teacher introduces vocabulary with movements that present language and gives games to students. At this stage, *Social Awareness* appears, including *empathy*, *organizational Awareness*, and *understanding of the situation*. In the *Post-Teaching* location, the teacher gives worksheets to students, evaluates learning activities, and provides feedback to students. At this stage, *Social Awareness* that appears includes *understanding the situation and empathy*.

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