

Word by Word: An Exploration of Vocabulary and English Conversations at Satu Kasih Orphanage Using the CLT and TPR Methods

Author Name: Sofiya Agustina¹ Herny Situmorang² Egia Febiyola³

Affiliation: Universitas Katolik Santo Thomas^{1,2,3}

Contact Information: sofiyaagustina114@gmail.com¹, hernyagatha78@gmail.com², egiafebiyola15@gmail.com¹,

Abstract

This community service activity was carried out at the Satu Kasih Orphanage in Medan, with the aim of improving the basic English language skills of children aged 10–15 through a fun and communicative approach. The activity was conducted over two days, using the Total Physical Response (TPR) method on the first day and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method on the second day. The first day focused on mastering vocabulary related to "body parts" through visual media, games, and physical activities. The second day focused on speaking skills with the theme of "everyday conversations" using dialogues, role play, and the game of truth or dare. Observations and field notes showed that the approaches used were effective in increasing the children's enthusiasm, courage, and understanding in using English. The results indicated that participatory and interactive learning is highly effective when applied in non-formal settings like orphanages. In addition to enriching vocabulary and speaking skills, this activity also helped build the children's self-confidence and interest in learning English.

Keywords: *English language learning, orphanage, Total Physical Response (TPR), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), vocabulary, everyday conversation.*

Introduction

One of the important skills to be learned from an early age is English, especially in the era of globalization, where people need to be able to communicate with others from different cultures. However, access to fun and interactive language learning is often limited for children living in orphanages. Children who are proficient in English will be able to easily access the world of technology and information. Children who learn English early will have a better foundation of knowledge before continuing to higher education levels. Making English communication skills one of the essential abilities for children (Triyanto & Astuti, 2021).

Orphanages assist school-aged children from various economic and social backgrounds. Most of the children in these orphanages show a desire to learn English, as evidenced by initial

observations. However, they lack opportunities and methods for learning in an enjoyable and communicative way. One approach to helping orphanage children with learning difficulties is by providing engaging learning activities or learning in a fun way (Metode et al., 2022). Therefore, a learning approach that fits their needs is required. Such an approach should enhance their ability to actively speak English, rather than just memorizing vocabulary. The combination of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method and Total Physical Response (TPR) offers an approach that aligns with the characteristics of children in orphanages. CLT encourages the use of language in meaningful social contexts such as role-playing and group discussions, while TPR integrates language instructions with fun and active body movements. According to Muttaqin (2024), CLT is effective in developing children's speaking ability naturally. Meanwhile, a study by Sugiarti Putri & Taslim (2025) shows that TPR significantly enhances students' participation and vocabulary mastery. The combination of these two methods not only makes learning more interesting and interactive but also strengthens the physical and emotional engagement of children during the learning process. This is crucial for children in non-formal environments like orphanages, who may have had negative learning experiences in the past. Therefore, the use of the CLT and TPR methods is expected to be an innovative solution that enhances motivation, self-confidence, and communication skills among orphanage children.

Literature Review

In the modern globalized world, the ability to communicate in English is more than just a skill; it is an essential tool for success. Learning English at an early age offers children the foundation for broader educational opportunities, including access to knowledge, technology, and future career prospects (Triyanto & Astuti, 2021). Early English education also helps children develop cognitive abilities, as language learning improves memory, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking (Bialystok, 2001). However, for children in orphanages, English learning is often limited by a lack of access to structured language programs and engaging methodologies

Methodology

This community service activity was conducted using a participatory approach, emphasizing the active involvement of participants throughout the entire process. This approach was chosen because active participation is crucial to producing a relevant, practical, educational, and sustainable program (Djauhari et al., 2021). The activity took place over two days at the Satu Kasih Orphanage in Medan, on June 6–7, 2025.

The target of the activity was children aged 10–15 at the orphanage who were interested in learning English but still had limitations in mastering the basics.

The activity was divided into two main sessions:

Day One – Application of the TPR Method (Total Physical Response)

In this session, the children were introduced to basic vocabulary through verbal commands linked to body movements. This approach helped the participants understand the meaning of words in context and reinforced their memory through kinesthetic activities. The activities were designed in the form of games, songs, and simple instructions such as "stand up," "point to the book," or "touch your head."

Day Two – Application of the CLT Method (Communicative Language Teaching)

On the second day, the focus of the activities shifted to developing speaking skills. The children practiced using English in simple contexts through dialogues, role-playing, and small group conversations. The goal was to build the children's confidence and courage to use English actively and naturally.

During the activities, the service team conducted direct observations of the participants' activity levels, enthusiasm, and responses to the methods used. Documentation was carried out through photographs and field notes, which were then analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of the approaches and participant involvement.

.

Findings

Results and Discussion

The activities on Day One focused on understanding the "Parts of the Body" vocabulary in English, utilizing the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach. This method was chosen because it combines physical activity and language to provide an enjoyable and memorable learning experience for the children. The series of activities was enthusiastically followed by children aged 10–15 years from the orphanage. The agenda for Day One was as follows:

- **Opening and Ice Breaking**

The activity began with a group prayer. To create a positive atmosphere, the children were invited to sing an English children's song as a warm-up activity.

- **Introduction to "Parts of the Body" Vocabulary**

The service team used a large cardboard drawing of the human body as a medium. Each body part, such as the head, shoulders, arms, legs, and knees, was depicted and explained directly. The children were then asked to write these vocabulary words in their notebooks.

- **Interactive Game: Illustrated Dice Throwing**

The children played a special seating game indicating body parts. They had to name the body part in English and point to the corresponding part of their own body when a die was thrown and a particular image appeared. This kinesthetic reinforcement of vocabulary was greatly aided by this activity.

- **Worksheet “Label the Body”**

The children were given a worksheet with a blank body outline and asked to write the names of the body parts they had learned. This activity reinforced visual memory and vocabulary writing skills.

- **“Simon Says” Game**

This game tested the children's comprehension and concentration on English instructions, such as "Simon says touch your nose" or "Simon says clap your hands." It greatly helped the children learn body vocabulary and commands.

• **Group Games: Word Search Puzzle**

The children were divided into three groups and tasked with finding the names of body parts from scrambled letters arranged in a box. This game improved spelling skills and teamwork.

Observations and Activity Results:

Direct observation and the results of the activities indicated a better understanding of body-related vocabulary in English. The children were now able to name and write many English terms correctly, unlike before. Their response to the TPR method was very positive: when asked to name vocabulary words, they appeared enthusiastic, active, and more confident. Furthermore, the activities showed that participants found it easier to accept learning that involved direct and physical interaction, especially in informal settings such as orphanages.

On Day Two, the focus shifted to speaking practice (speaking skills) through daily conversation dialogues using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. The aim of the activities was to enhance the children's courage, fluency, and understanding in using English actively and meaningfully.

The activities on Day Two began with:

• **Opening and Warming Up**

As with Day One, the activities began with a group prayer and a warm-up session. This helped create a relaxed atmosphere and made it easier for the children to focus on participating.

• **Review of Day One Material**

Before moving to new material, the service team reviewed or revised the "Parts of the Body" vocabulary learned previously. The results showed that most of the children still remembered the vocabulary well and were even able to recall it without looking at their notes.

• **Introduction to Daily Conversation Material**

The team used large cardboard media with six sheets of HVS paper, each containing simple, commonly used dialogues from daily life: Introduction, Greetings, Likes and Dislikes, Expressing Feelings, Habits, and Asking for Help.

Each topic was accompanied by a short dialogue, which was read aloud in the form of role-play. The team first explained the meaning of "conversation" and how to use these expressions in real-life situations. Then, the children took turns stepping forward to read the dialogues with the facilitator.

In addition to reading, the children were also asked to:

1. Imitate pronunciation,

2. Write down new vocabulary they found from each dialogue,
3. Answer simple questions based on the dialogue content.

• **Interactive Game: Truth or Dare (English Edition)**

To boost the children's courage to speak, the Truth or Dare game was modified as part of the learning process. The mechanism was:

- A die was thrown and passed around while music played.
- When the music stopped, the child holding the die had to choose a box containing either a “Truth” or “Dare” challenge.

Example

challenges:

- **Truth:** “What makes you sad?”, “What is your favorite fruit?”, “What is your dream job?”
- **Dare:** “Act like you’re sleeping and say: I wake up at 6 a.m.”, “Walk like a penguin and say: I go to school,” “Touch your muscles and say: I am strong.”

This activity was lively and fun. The children laughed, showed bravery in performing, and, unknowingly, began speaking in English in a relaxed and joyful atmosphere. All participants eventually had a turn and actively participated.

• **Impressions and Feedback**

Before concluding the activity, a few children were invited to share their impressions and feedback about the activities. They expressed happiness and hoped for more activities like this in the future. The orphanage caretaker also gave a closing speech, thanking the team for the smooth and enjoyable activities.

Discussion of Day Two Results:

Day Two demonstrated that the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach effectively helped the children speak English more naturally. The children did not feel pressured when speaking in front of their peers; instead, they were challenged and proud of their progress.

One of the best moments was the Truth or Dare game, as it not only entertained the children but also allowed them to use English expressions in real-life situations. These activities enhanced the children's language skills and also boosted their confidence, courage to perform, and enjoyment of learning English.

In conclusion, the combination of TPR on Day One and CLT on Day Two created a dynamic and interactive learning environment that helped the children improve both their vocabulary and speaking skills while also fostering self-esteem and enthusiasm for learning English



Figure 1. Documentation Word by Word: An Exploration of Vocabulary and English Conversations at Satu Kasih Orphanage Using the CLT and TPR Methods

Conclusion

Over the course of two days, the community service activity at the Satu Kasih Orphanage successfully provided an enjoyable, interactive, and meaningful English learning experience for children aged 10 to 15 years. By using the Total Physical Response (TPR) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methods, the participants were trained to use English in everyday communication.

The focus of Day One was vocabulary learning through physical activities and games. On the second day, speaking skills were practiced through role-playing and conversation activities. It was evident that interactive games such as *Simon Says*, *Truth or Dare*, and *Word Search* significantly boosted the children's interest and engagement in using English.

Based on observations and available documentation, it can be concluded that fun, active, and participatory learning methods like TPR and CLT are highly effective in non-formal settings such as orphanages. The children showed improvement in vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, and confidence in speaking in front of their peers.

It is hoped that these methods will inspire children's interest and self-confidence in learning English. Moreover, it is expected that this approach can serve as an inspiration for similar educational programs in other non-formal environments.

This positive experience suggests that interactive and engaging language teaching methods should be further integrated into non-formal educational programs to support the development of language skills, self-esteem, and social interaction among children in diverse settings.

References

- Djauhari, M., Abi, R., Putri, A., Adi, M., & Ayu Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Komunikasi Almamater Wartawan Surabaya Jalan Nginden Intan Timur, R. I. (2021). Pendekatan Partisipatif Dalam Memberdayakan Pemasaran Online UMKM di Kampung Krupuk Sukolilo Surabaya. *Prapanca : Jurnal Abdimas*, 1(1), 28–36.
<https://doi.org/10.37826/PRAPANCA.V1I1.134>
- Metode, P., Hybrid, B., Meningkatkan, D., Belajar, M., Panti, A., Kegiatan, M., Menyenangkan, B., & Tobing, R. (2022). Pengenalan Metode Belajar Hybrid Dan Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Anak Panti Melalui Kegiatan Belajar Menyenangkan. *ABDIKAN: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Bidang Sains Dan Teknologi*, 1(2), 114–120.
<https://doi.org/10.55123/ABDIKAN.V1I2.236>
- Muttaqiin, M. (2024). Learning English Through Communicative Language Teaching for Elementary School Students. *Education and Social Sciences Review*, 4(2), 94–101.
<https://doi.org/10.29210/07ESSR391700>
- Sugiarti Putri, C., & Muhammadiyah Bone Corresponding Author, U. (2025). The Effectiveness of the TPR (Total Physical Response) Method in Enhancing Students'

Vocabulary. *International Journal of Integrative Sciences*, 4(1), 29–40.
<https://doi.org/10.55927/IJIS.V4I1.13387>

Triyanto, D., & Astuti, R. Y. (2021). PENTINGNYA BAHASA INGGRIS UNTUK ANAK USIA DINI DI DESA PURWOASRI, 28 METRO UTARA. *SETARA: Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Anak*, 3(2), 45–55. <https://doi.org/10.32332/JSGA.V3I2.3787>
