

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

English, as an international language, plays a crucial role in the current era of globalization. Proficiency in English is not only necessary for international communication but also serves as a key to accessing knowledge, technology, and future economic opportunities. The goal of English instruction at the elementary school level is to build a foundation of basic English language skills that students can retain and further develop at higher levels of education (Yanti et al.2024). English learning at the elementary level focuses on developing four fundamental language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Student participation is a vital component of the learning process, particularly in speaking activities (Hasanah et al.2025). Participation reflects students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement in classroom tasks, such as responding to questions, following instructions, and interacting with peers and teachers (Hasanah et al.2025). In English language learning, participation is closely related to speaking performance because students must use oral language to demonstrate understanding and communicative ability. Nevertheless, many elementary school students struggle to participate actively due to anxiety, insufficient vocabulary, and limited opportunities for meaningful language practice. These challenges are more pronounced in rural educational contexts (Laila et al.2023).

To gain a deeper understanding of the classroom condition, the researcher conducted a pre-observation in the fifth-grade class at MI Ma'arif NU Jipang. The results showed that students' participation in English learning activities was still relatively low, with only 20% of students participating actively. This

showed that only a few students actively responded to the teacher's questions, asked question, participated well in lesson, while many students tended to remain passive during speaking activities,

Furthermore, based on a preliminary interview with the English teacher at MI Ma'arif NU Jipang, several problems related to the students were identified. The teacher explained that the speaking ability of the fifth-grade students was still relatively limited.

“siswa nya kurang menguasai untuk berbicara bahkan untuk hal-hal yang dasar. Selain itu anak-anak juga lagi di fase aktif nya ya Mba”

‘Speaking skills of fifth-grade students are still lacking, as there are several factors including environment. Typically, when practicing speaking with just one sentence, they still read word for word, sometimes shy and hesitate to speak.’

Many students had difficulties expressing their ideas and responding orally during speaking activities. Some students lacked confidence when speaking English and tended to remain silent because they were afraid of making mistakes. In addition, although some students showed enthusiasm during the learning process, several students still tended to be passive and reluctant to participate actively in classroom interactions.

“masih ada mba siswa yang pasif selama pembelajaran Mba. Kadang yang bener-bener gamau bergabung.”

‘There are still some students who remain passive during class. Sometimes there are those who really don't want to participate’

This condition indicated that students' participation and speaking skills still need improvement. Therefore, an appropriate instructional method is needed to encourage students to participate more actively in speaking activities. One instructional method considered effective for young learners is Total Physical Response (TPR), developed by James J. Asher. According to Yang (2024), TPR

emphasizes language learning through physical movement in response to verbal commands.

This approach is founded on the ideas that language acquisition is more successful when students react physically before generating verbal output and that listening comprehension comes before speaking. TPR creates a low-anxiety learning environment and mirrors the natural process of first language acquisition, making it particularly suitable for elementary school students. Moreover, TPR is especially relevant for improving students' participation because it encourages learners to respond actively to teacher instructions through physical actions and gradual verbal responses. By integrating movement and language, TPR supports vocabulary acquisition, enhances engagement, and builds learners' confidence in speaking.

Previous studies have demonstrated that Total Physical Response (TPR) can improve students' participation in English learning activities (Ramadhani & Pd, 2023). In addition, several studies have reported that TPR is effective in enhancing student's speaking skills, especially in terms of vocabulary development and oral performance (Wahyu et al.2022). However, most existing research focuses on vocabulary mastery rather than examining participation as a primary variable, particularly in rural elementary school contexts. Therefore, this study aims to improve students' participation and speaking skills through Total Physical Response (TPR) method at MI Ma'arif NU Jipang. The findings are expected to contribute both practically and theoretically to English language education.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the research background, the researcher formulated the following research questions:

- 1.2.1 Can the Total Physical Response (TPR) method improve the participation of fifth-grade students in English language learning at MI Ma'arif NU Jipang?
- 1.2.2 Can the Total Physical Response (TPR) method improve the speaking skill of fifth-grade students in English language learning at MI Ma'arif NU Jipang?

1.3 Purposes of The Research

Based on the research questions, the primary purposes of this study are:

- 1.3.1 To improve the participation of fifth-grade students in English language learning at MI Ma'arif NU Jipang.
- 1.3.2 To improve the speaking skill of fifth-grade students in English language learning at MI Ma'arif NU Jipang.

1.4 Significance of The Research

The significance of this study entitled *“Improving Students’ Participation and Speaking Skill through Total Physical Response (TPR) Method at MI Ma’arif NU Jipang”* is expected to provide benefits for teachers, students, and the researcher as follows:

1.4.1 Teachers

This study is expected to provide English teachers, particularly those at elementary school level, with useful insights into the implementation of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method to improve students’ participation in English learning. The findings may serve as a reference for teachers in designing more engaging and interactive English learning activities that encourage active student involvement.

1.4.2 Students

Through the implementation of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, students are expected to become more active and confident in participating during English learning activities. Increased involvement may also help students improve their basic speaking skills, particularly in providing verbal responses during classroom interactions.

1.4.3 Researcher

This study is expected to enhance the researcher's understanding of Classroom Action Research (CAR) and the practical application of Total Physical Response (TPR) in real classroom settings. In addition, this research provides valuable experience in identifying classroom problems and implementing appropriate teaching strategies to improve students' participation in learning English.

1.5 Scope of The Research

The scope of this research on *“Improving Students’ Participation and Speaking Skill through Total Physical Response (TPR) Method at MI Ma’arif NU Jipang”* was as follows:

- 1.5.1 This study focused on improving students’ participation in learning English through the implementation of Total Physical Response (TPR) method.
- 1.5.2 This study focused on improving students’ speaking skill in learning English through the implementation of Total Physical Response (TPR) method.
- 1.5.3 The research was conducted at MI Ma’arif NU Jipang Karanglewas, Banyumas, involving fifth-grade students in the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year.
- 1.5.4 The learning materials were based on the English syllabus and textbook applied at the school.

1.5.5 This study was limited to students' classroom participation, which was observed through students' verbal and physical responses during English learning activities.

1.5.6 The research employed a Classroom Action Research design conducted in two cycles. The data were collected through observation, tests, and documentation. The improvement was analyzed by comparing the results of Cycle I and Cycle II.

1.6 Definition of Key Term

To avoid misunderstanding, the following terms are defined operation as follows:

1.6.1 Students Participation

According to Fredricks (2004), Students' participation refers to students' active involvement in the teaching and learning process. In this study, students' participation refers to students' involvement during English learning activities through the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, including responding to the teacher's instructions, participating in classroom activities, answering questions, and performing physical actions related to the lesson.

1.6.2 Speaking Skills

According to Ur (2009), Speaking skills refers to an interactive process in which learners produce, receive, and respond to language to convey meaning. In this study, speaking skills refer to students' ability to communicate orally in English through simple dialogue activities. Students' speaking performance was assessed based on pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

1.6.3 Total Physical Response (TPR)

According to Richard & Rodgers (2001), Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method that emphasizes the coordination

of speech and physical movement. In this study, TPR refers to the teaching method used by the teacher to improve students' participation and speaking skills through verbal commands, physical actions, and interactive classroom activities.

1.6.4 Classroom Action Research (CAR)

As referenced by Kemmis & McTaggart Classroom Action Research (CAR) is a systematic, teacher-conducted inquiry approach that involves the planning, implementation, observation, and reflection on interventions or changes made within the classroom environment. In this study, Classroom Action Research was conducted collaboratively between the researcher and the English teacher through two cycles to improve students' participation and speaking skills by implementing the Total Physical Response (TPR) method.