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Application of Total Physical Response (TPR) in the Development of Chinese as Second Language Module

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Abstract

This study aims to apply the Total Physical Response (TPR) method for developing MyDialogKopitiam Module in learning Chinese Language National Primary School (Bahasa Cina Sekolah Kebangsaan *BCSK*) in national primary school. The TPR method combines language and body movements and has various teaching forms and rich teaching processes. Therefore, different Chinese language teachers have paid attention to it in recent years. TPR method also plays a vital role in teaching Chinese as a second language. In this paper, the authors will discuss the use of the TPR method, which consists of Game Teaching Methods, Drawing Teaching Methods, Music Teaching Methods, Simulation Teaching Methods, Movement Teaching Methods, Cardboard Teaching Methods and Mimicry Teaching Methods in developing MyDialogKopitiam Module for learning Chinese as a second language in school. This study also describes the TPR method activities carried out by teachers and students in using MyDialogKopitiam Module. The implication of this paper is to act as guidance for teachers and educators that apply the TPR method in developing a module for second language learners.

Keywords: Total Physical Response (TPR), MyDialog Kopitiam Module, Chinese as a Second Language, Bahasa Cina Sekolah Kebangsaan, National Primary School

Introduction

Malaysia is a multi-racial society consisting of three primary races, namely Malays (53.3%), Chinese (26.0%), and Indians (7.7%). About 13% of the population consists of several smaller ethnic groups, including Eurasian and indigenous ethnic groups (e.g., Kadazan, Dusunus, Murut, Ibans, Bidayuhus, and Penan), mainly in Sabah and Sarawak (Khader, 2012). In this multi-racial society, people's association and communication will be limited within their own people if they only master their mother tongue. Thus, the ability to communicate in a foreign

language, whether a second or third language, efficiently and fluently in the run-up to this era of globalisation is an advantage for students.

In line with the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, the Malay language is to ensure that all students from all ethnic groups and communities are encouraged to learn at least three languages to enable them to collaborate and communicate effectively with peers among Malaysians as well as neighbouring countries in today's global world (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012). Among the cores in PPPM is to produce students who have the knowledge, high-level thinking skills, 21st-century skills, bilingual skills, ethics and spirituality, and national identity to compete globally.

Therefore, Chinese Language National Primary School (Bahasa Cina Sekolah Kebangsaan, BCSK), Tamil Language National Primary School (BTSK), Arabic and other mother tongues such as Iban, Semai and Kadazandusun are offered as additional subjects as well. BCSK is the leading choice in national schools (Chuah et al., 2020). This will help non-native students strengthen access and opportunities to learn languages other than their mother tongue. In contrast to the rapid increase in the teaching and learning of Chinese outside China, there is an inadequate understanding of the teaching of communication competencies (Gong et al., 2020) that includes listening and speaking.

However, the researcher found that all the units' skills in the Year 4 BCSK textbook are unevenly distributed. The analysis revealed that the learning standards for listening and speaking skills, reading skills and writing skills in the BCSK textbook is 27 items: 56 items: 26 items (the ratio is around 1:2:1). It can be concluded that the Year 4 BCSK textbook focuses on cultivating students' reading skills more than listening, speaking, and writing skills. Besides, many factors influence students' development in listening and speaking skills. Among them, student anxiety is one of the main reasons. Applying the Total Physical Response (TPR) method can reduce students' anxiety while learning a second language (Ofiaz, 2019). Thus, this study focuses on applying the TPR method to the development of the MyDialogKopitiam Module to help improve the listening and speaking skills of Year 4 students in national schools.

Literature Review

Chinese Language as Second Language

Listening skills are critical in language teaching (Kannan, 2019). Through listening skills, students can understand something heard correctly and clearly. Listening skills are essential skills in the process of learning the language that is compulsory for students (Abdullah & Ahmad, 2012). Good listening ability will help them produce good speech. The teaching process in training students' listening skills is usually through the teacher's voice in the classroom. Azizan et al (2014) have shown that students need direct guidance from teachers to understand the topics. Teachers should vary the tone and intonation of voice to facilitate students' understanding during teaching and learning listening skills.

A student can master a language effectively to achieve learning goals through learning strategies and styles (Bojović, 2020). To be proficient in L2 listening skills, a student also needs to be proficient in L2 speaking skills (Yaacob et. al, 2018). Therefore, effective strategies will help a student in the process of second language learning (Hasim et al., 2018), especially strategies on speaking skills.

Therefore, strategies, methods and styles in the teaching and learning of second / foreign languages are often carried out by researchers (Oxford, 2003; Cohen, 2008; Lavasani & Faryadres, 2011; Hassan, 2017; Jiang & Cohen, 2018; Yaacob et. al., 2018; Asbulah et al., 2019; Wen & Piao, 2020; Klimova & Pikhart, 2021). Next, the TPR method is the one that is widely used in language classrooms in the early childhood period (Er, 2013), especially improvement in listening and speaking for second language learners. Therefore, BCSK students are expected to be actively involved in teaching and learning through the TPR method.

Total Physical Response (TPR)

In developing the MydialogKopitiam Module, the teacher's role is to help build students' understanding through appropriate methods and according to each student's ability. So, the activities in the Mydialogkopitiam Module are developed based on the application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method primarily designed for the use of students. TPR is a teaching method proposed by James Asher, an American professor of psychology in second language acquisition, entitled Learning Another Language Through Actions in the 20th century. TPR is a method of language teaching based on speech and behaviour that prioritises language through physical activity. Many researchers have suggested teaching a second language through physical activity, i.e. the TPR method (Richard & Rodgers, 2001; Rokhayani, 2017; Pahri, 2021; Xie, 2021). This is because the effectiveness of teaching and learning through physical is to use style learning methods that are structured in instruction, speech and movement in teaching.

The TPR method is suitable for students following a second language (L2). Oflaz (2019) selected 61 students who followed German as a second language as the study subject. The mother tongue for 61 students in English. The experiment was conducted for six weeks (two hours a week in a German class). The study's findings have proven that students are more willing to speak German than English. Not only that, TPR is the most suitable teaching method for students when learning L2 at an early stage (Er, 2013; Copland et al., 2014; Rokhayani, 2017; Astutik et al., 2019; Pahri, 2021; Xie, 2021). Meanwhile, Er (2013) and Shao (2015) have suggested some suitable methods such as singing songs, stories, games and others to improve the performance and achievement of students learning L2. This will grab their attention and foster interest in L2 learning.

In addition, the TPR does not require teachers to give too many instructions to students. Teachers can provide instructions directly to students without translating them into the student's first language (Elliott & Yountchi, 2009; Er, 2013; Nuraeni, 2019). Therefore, this is in line with the application of TPR in the MyDialogKopitiam module as a second language learning material. Meanwhile, Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2011) have defined 13 guiding principles in the TPR (Table 1):

Table 1:

13 guiding principles in the TPR (Source: Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011)

Principle	Description of TPR
1	Pupils are first pronounced in words for the target language, rather than continuously mentioned in sentences.
2	Students' understanding of the target language should be developed before they begin to speak.
3	Pupils will move their body quickly when they start learning a part of the language.
4	Needs are an important linguistic tool by which teachers can observe student behavior.
5	Pupils can learn on their own through observation as well as doing their own actions.
6	Pupils will feel successful and lower anxiety in learning.
7	Pupils do not try to establish a regular routine.
8	Corrections should be carried out inadvertently.
9	Pupils can understand a combination of novels in the target language flexibly. Pupils need to understand more than the sentences used in the exercise.
10	Language learning is more effective when students learn in a fun atmosphere.
11	Spoken language should be emphasized through written language.
12	Pupils will start speaking when they are ready.
13	Pupils are expected to make mistakes when starting to speak. Teachers have to tolerate with them.

Martell (2017); Calcagni & Lago (2018); Vanlommel et al (2018) each suggested that teachers do not need new methods in teaching, but they need practical teaching methods to create students' abilities in a communicative environment. So, it seems that the TPR method is recognised by L2 researchers abroad. Yet, many teachers who teach L2 are still hesitant to adopt the whole method in a class, especially in BCSK class which requires straightforward to understand instructions by non-native speakers. This is due to the lack of clear guidelines and full disclosure of the TPR method to teachers. Researchers (Er, 2013; Damanik, 2016; Rokhayani, 2017; Astutik et al., 2019; Nuraeni, 2019; Pahri, 2021; Xie, 2021) have proven that the TPR method is appropriate in L2 learning. Thus, applying elements of the TPR method into the development of the MyDialogKopitiam Module can increase students' interest in L2 learning, especially in listening and speaking skills.

According to Rokhayani (2017), the advantages of using the TPR method in teaching and learning activities are (1) entertaining so many students are happy to follow the teaching and learning process through the TPR method, (2) can help students remember words and expressions in the language, (3) can be applied into large or small classes, (4) is not only suitable for primary school level students but also suitable for secondary school level students and (5) suitable for active students in the class.

The application of the TPR method improves students' understanding and imagination, but more importantly, students can use and practice the advantages of TPR effectively daily (Zhu, 2017). Methods such as game teaching method, drawing teaching

method, music teaching method, simulation teaching method, movement teaching method, cardboard teaching method, mimicry teaching method (Er, 2013; Shao, 2015) from TPR method is applied into the development of MyDialogKopitiam Module. In addition, the TPR method does not require teachers to give too many instructions to students. Teachers can provide instructions directly to students without translating them into the student's first language (Elliott & Yountchi, 2009; Er, 2013; Nuraeni, 2019). Therefore, this is in line with applying the TPR method in the MyDialogKopitiam Module as L2 learning material.

In conclusion, the application of the TPR method into the content of the MyDialogKopitiam Module can effectively solve the problem of teaching the Chinese Language for non-native students. Teachers implement interesting TPR teaching method (Er, 2013; Rokhayani, 2017; Shao, 2015) in learning classes to enhance learning enjoyment.

Objectives

The objective of this research mainly focuses on:

- introduces the applying TPR method to developing MyDialogKopitiam Module for the Year 4 students from national primary school to improve Malay students' listening and speaking skills.

Application TPR in Developing Mydialogkopitiam Module

The application of the TPR method can improve students' understanding and imagination, but more importantly, students can use and practice the advantages of the TPR method effectively daily (Zhu, 2017). Techniques such as game teaching method, drawing teaching method, music teaching method, simulation teaching method, movement teaching method, cardboard teaching method, mimicry teaching method (Er, 2013; Shao, 2015) from the TPR method are applied into MyDialogKopitiam Module development. MyDialogKopitiam Module is shown in figure 1.



Figure 1: The MyDialogKopitiam Module

a. Game Teaching Methods

The game teaching method addresses features that the students like and realise, especially for students who are studying BCSK as L2. The application of game teaching methods in the MyDialogKopitiam Module engages in BCSK learning enthusiastically and encourages students' interest in education.

Finally, the effect of teaching BCSK of good students can be obtained. For example, the teacher sets a specific game situation; students act as a role in the game to learn BCSK in a harmonious environment to achieve the early learning effect of the application of BCSK through game teaching methods in the MyDialogKopitiam Module. Various teaching game activities can fully mobilise students' interest in learning and increase the teaching effectiveness of BCSK classes.

b. Drawing Teaching Methods

Pictures and drawings have a strong visual impact directly on primary school students' learning (Shao, 2015). In teaching BCSK students, teachers use the TPR method combined with teaching experience to realise the application of drawing teaching methods in the content of the MyDialogKopitiam Module. Pupils have an intense curiosity, especially for BCSK learning which is L2 for them. Thus, teachers can guide students to participate in drawing activities or use pictures to deepen students' memory of the teaching content. This can create a more precise and more intuitive impression of new knowledge learned. Thus, applying drawing pedagogy in the range of the MyDialogKopitiam Module can improve the quality and efficiency of teaching and enhance students' memory of BCSK learning.

c. Music Teaching Methods

Teachers use strong rhythmic musical melodies to guide students in relevant topics in the teaching and learning process through music teaching methods. At the same time, the students participated in several music-related activities to convey the learning more intuitively through the form of music heard. The process of teaching music can change the focus in the MyDialogKopitiam Module and is different from conventional classes that only focus on learning on textbooks only. Thus, the teaching model of the MyDialogKopitiam Module is expected to create a relaxed and pleasant environment so that students can be attracted to learning through singing and improve teaching and learning BCSK.

d. Simulation Teaching Methods

The simulation teaching method is a highly effective teaching method produced by applying the TPR method in teaching and learning. Teachers use various materials and music to create a situational atmosphere that is appropriate for students' teaching and learning. Pupils have strong simulation traits and performance psychology traits, so these traits will be combined with everyday life scenarios to plan teaching scenarios and help students apply by using listening and speaking skills collaboratively. At the same time, the teacher can guide the children to run simulations and communicate in different situations to achieve the teaching objectives. There are eight themes contained in the MyDialogKopitiam Module. Thus, teaching and learning by simulation based on actual problems from the eight themes are beneficial to students and stimulate students' interest to learn through simulation teaching methods in the context of the development of the MyDialogKopitiam Module.

e. Movement Teaching Methods

Teachers often use movement teaching methods to enhance further the impact of classroom teaching in the language teaching process. The movement teaching method is a teaching process where the teacher shows a clear movement presentation, and the student learns the vocabulary. Movement teaching methods can enhance the effect of classroom teaching and fully mobilise students' enthusiasm for language learning. For example, the teacher shows precise movements, such as 'walking, running, sitting, standing, crying'; the student can pronounce these while performing the exercises. This method greatly spurred interest in learning through the development of the MyDialogKopitiam Module.

f. Cardboard Teaching Methods

Teachers prepare cards with different shapes and contents through the cardboard teaching method. The cards can be shown with words in ordinary daily life such as colours, greetings, animals, plants, tangible objects. In addition, the teacher makes complete dialogue sentences through these cards to help students remember the words to achieve the effect. Better teaching. Although students learn words from cards, they can learn sentences and improve skills through the application of the MyDialogKopitiam Module.

g. Mimicry Teaching Methods

Suppose students want to achieve an ideal teaching effect. In that case, teachers need to actively guide learning according to the different psychological characteristics of students, especially the use of rational mimicry teaching methods in the language teaching process. This method plays a role in enhancing the teaching effect. Pupils quickly pay attention to a few specific and intuitive things. The intuitive image of something can attract students' attention and stimulate their curiosity in the content of the MyDialogKopitiam Module. Thus, this can motivate students according to their voice, shape, or some intuitive feature to deepen students' memory of the knowledge of things that have been learned simultaneously.

Discussion

The use of modules in language learning is an increasingly popular and numerous method operated by various educational institutions. It has succeeded in attracting students' interest and increasing their confidence to follow the learning L2. Relying on the shortcomings of the BCSK textbooks that lack listening and speaking skills, the researcher needs to compile a set of listening and speaking skills modules suitable for Chinese as second language learners. Based on the literature review, the researcher has summarised the TPR method (Er, 2013; Shao, 2015) in developing MyDialogKopitiam Module for learning Chinese as a second language in school. The application of the TPR method into the content of the MyDialogKopitiam Module can effectively solve the problem of teaching BCSK students. Implementing an exciting TPR method teaching method (Jie, 2011; Er, 2013; Rokhayani, 2017) into BCSK learning classes will enhance learning enjoyment, significantly increasing students' listening and speaking skills.

Conclusion

Generally, mastery of good listening and speaking skills plays a vital role in teaching L2. Speaking skills are essential skills that need to be mastered by a student before learning other skills such as reading and writing skills (Yaacob et. al, 2018; Moradi & Talebi, 2014). Methods such as encouragement and stimulation to students to speak, space, and create opportunities

to improve speaking skills are given to students. Usually, students will be asked to speak in front of the class individually or in groups without looking at books or texts. Therefore, teachers should provide opportunities for students to speak a second language and always ensure that students understand what is said or expressed in the second language is essential when learning speaking skills.

In conclusion, students of different ethnicities rarely interact with each other. This will cause speech to each other to be limited if students cannot master speaking skills well. Lau, Ang, Soon, Law & Wong (2012) each suggested role-playing activities, language games, group assignments, mentor-guided systems, and extracurricular activities to enable non-native speakers to converse with each other in the Chinese language. Thus, teaching and learning the Chinese language as a practical second language enables interaction between students of different ethnicities in various educational institutions.

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