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TEACHING PROFICIENCY THROUGH READING AND STORYTELLING (TPRS) AS A TECHNIQUE TO FOSTER STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL

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Abstract: Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) is quite essential to improve EFL learners' speaking ability. It can be done successfully by means of the basic concept of TPRS known as comprehensible input in second language acquisition (SLA). This paper presents a study on learners' speaking ability through TPRS making use of three important steps; Showing, Telling, and Reading. This is a quantitative study using *quasi-experimental* as the two intact groups are used; experimental and control group. The data are obtained from pre-test, post-test and questionnaires viewed from both students' and teachers' perspective. The data from pre-test and post-test are analyzed by using *independent sample t-test*. The experimental and control are ascertained to be homogenous in term of English performance from the pre-test analysis. The post-test are carried out from both groups after the treatment and the the result of the test are compared in order to prove if the null hypothesis is rejected indicating that there is significant difference performance between the two groups. The result of the study is expected to be beneficial for English teachers, EFL learners, and further researchers.

Keywords: Speaking Skill, Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS)

INTRODUCTION

Studying any language–including English as a foreign or and a second language–requires an appropriate method in order to be

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effective and efficient to improve the language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The application of methods such as Audio Lingual Method, Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Total Physical Response, Communicative Approach, Contextual Teaching and Learning, and Communicative Language Teaching has their own strength and weaknesses. Therefore, a language teacher or a lecturer should be able to select the method mostly needed by learners based on their need and interests. Story is one of learners' preference most in teaching and learning process in the classroom since it enables learners not only to be entertained but learned the language as well.

As most teachers and lecturers aware that speaking and writing are productive skills in English taking relatively longer time to master and therefore learners should learn this particular language step by step. The practice of speaking English is one of skills to give opinion, convey messages, give comments, and refuse other people's opinion whenever it is not in accordance with our thought. Also, it is the ability to have question and answer in practicing to speak this language. Nevertheless, learners still have difficulties to convey message in English particularly their fundamental concept of having question and answer to undertand utterances from others. Therefore, this article discusses a method of teaching English by means of Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling known as TPRS.

Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling is one method to teach English designed to improve or develop fluency of using the target language to tell some interesting stories in teaching and learning process in the classroom. So, TPRS is a language teaching method designed to develop real fluency. Students and teachers spend class time speaking in the target language about interesting, comprehensible stories. Hedstrom (2012) states that stories are the heart of the method and a good story is one of the most valuable tools to deliver compelling comprehensible input to your students, but the story is only a part of it. To really understand TPRS

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we need to be clear on the theory that supports it. In other words, TPRS is a method that meshes seamlessly with the Natural Approach, particularly the idea of Comprehensible Input.

Several studies on TPRS method have been conducted and the use of this particular method outperformed the traditional one. First, Davidheiser (2001) who discussed the integration of grammar instruction with TPRS at the college level reports that TPRS improves pronunciation and vocabulary memory, reduces anxiety, is a natural way to learn language, promotes active learning, and is good for different types of learners. Next, Braunstein (2006) conducted a research study on student attitudes towards TPRS in a class of 15 adult ESL students. It was found that even adult ESL students, who expected more traditional instruction, responded positively to TPRS. Students were enthusiastic about the class and reported that the methods helped them to remember vocabulary, and understand English.

The next author, Watson (2009) did a comparison study on two beginning high school TPRS classrooms and one traditional classroom by testing the students with a final exam and an oral exam. Results showed that the TPRS classes outscored the traditional students on both tests, and that the distribution was wider in the traditional classes. This means that when taught with traditional methods, some students fail and others succeed, whereas more students can succeed with TPRS. Meanwhile, Spangler (2009) found that middle school and high school students in TPRS classrooms significantly outperformed classrooms using Communicative Language Teaching on speaking, and that the two groups of students performed the same on reading and writing.

In addition, Foster (2011) found that TPRS students outperformed traditional classes on a grammaticality judgment task and on writing fluency, and equaled traditional classes on three other measures (speaking accuracy, writing accuracy, and reading). However, processing instruction students outperformed the other groups on speaking accuracy and writing accuracy of these

constructions. Processing instruction students equaled TPRS students on a grammaticality judgment task and on reading, but underperformed TPRS students on writing fluency. Finally, Dziedzic (2012) compared four sections of Spanish 1: two that he taught traditionally and two that he taught using TPRS. Both groups also participated in sustained silent reading. At the end of the year, 65 students who had never learned Spanish previously took the Denver Public Schools Proficiency Assessment. The groups did equally well on listening and reading, but the TPRS students significantly outperformed the traditional students on writing and speaking, with large effect sizes on these two production measures.

From the previous findings elaborated ealier in the Introduction section, it is assumed that there is significant difference between the use of TPRS and the traditional one. Furthermore, the use of this method has beneficial influence to develop ESL/EFL learners' speaking performance since it can perform better than the traditional method of teaching English. Therefore, this research investigates the learners' speaking performance by using TPRS.

This research-based paper aims, in general, at investigating the different achievement between the use of TPRS in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and the absence of TPRS to develop learners' speaking performance. More specifically, the following research problems are proposed.

1. Does EFL learners' speaking performance improve better by using TPRS method than those using the traditional one?
2. What are the students' and teachers' perspective about using TPRS method?

It is assumed that there is significant difference between the use of TPRS and the traditional one and the use of this method has beneficial influence to develop ESL/EFL learners' speaking performance since it can perform better than the traditional method of teaching English. Therefore, the theoretical hypothesis of this study is stated that the use of TPRS in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language outperforms the traditional one.

Muzammil & Andy, *Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) as a Technique to Foster Students' Speaking Skill*

METHOD

This is a research-based paper and the study was conducted to the freshmen at Kanjuruhan University of Malang aimed at investigating the different achievement between the use of TPRS in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and the absence of TPRS to develop learners' speaking performance. An experiment was carried and *quasi-experimental study* was used since the two existing groups were employed. The data obtained from speaking performance test were analyzed using *independent sample t-test* since the result of the test were taken from two different group–the experimental and the control group. Questionnaire was given not only to the freshmen in order to get a clear picture of the learners' feeling and opinion after the use of TPRS but to the English teachers having experience in the application of TPRS as well.

The participants were taken from the freshmen at Kanjuruhan University of Malang taking English subject for non-English Education Department. There were sixty EFL learners in the second semester majoring different field of study. The rationale behind choosing these particular learners to be the subjects of this study is that they still have difficulties to express their idea in using English. Thirty (30) EFL learners become experimental group and the other thirty (30) become control group. Pre-test was assigned to both groups, experimental group and control group, and it was done in order to get to know the homogeneity of the group. Post-test was done in the form of *Speaking Performance* by telling a story in the stage of *Reading* in TPRS.

The Steps to TPRS

The steps of TRS suggested by Gab (2008) and Hedstrom (2012) were applied in the current study and they introduced three steps of TPRS and these three basic steps to TPRS included: *Show*, *Tell* and *Read*. As these three steps are repeated, they lead into three

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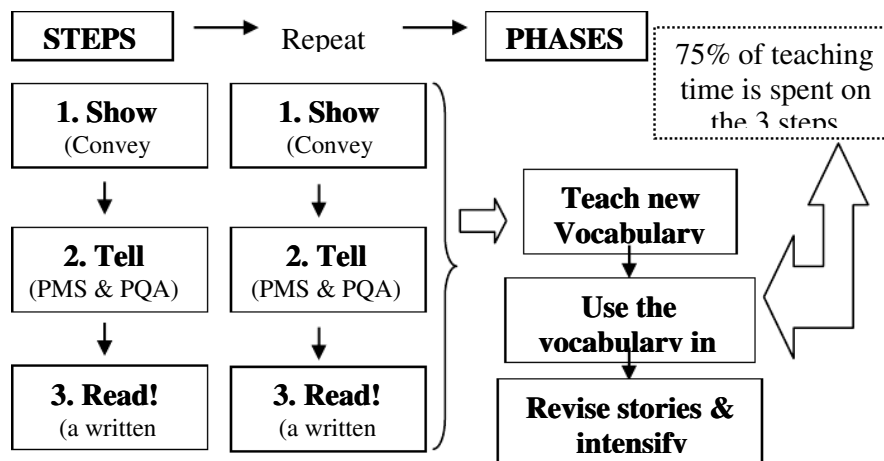phases. The following graphic organizer (Figure 1) illustrates the sequence and organization of a TPRS unit.

Figure 1. The Steps to TPRS proposed by Gab (2008) in Hedstrom (2012)

Step 1: Show / Establish meaning

It is the step of conveying or establishing meaning.

Pick useful grammatical structures (usually three target structures) and establish meaning with written translation and TPR gestures for a few minutes. This is not "listen and repeat." Students are showing they understand with gestures. Begin to get it deeper into students' memories with novel commands, very short "mini-stories" and comprehension checks. Once students have the vocabulary and structures in short term memory, begin asking personalized questions (PQA) and then play with their answers—this phase can last much longer—you can spend a *lot* of time here. Hours. Days.

Step 2: Tell a Class Story

It is the step of telling the story by making personalized question and answer (PQA) and personalized mini story (PMS).

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The class story is uniquely built by asking questions using the target structures. It is sometimes described as "asking" the story. The goal of the story is to provide compelling comprehensible input. The story is short, simple and interesting—it contextualizes the target structures and provides repetitions. It is told slowly with constant comprehension checks and ideas from the students.

Step 3: Read

It is the step of reading the story by different variation. Reading is based on the material in the two previous steps—it reinforces the content in a different format. Reading can be at a slightly higher level than the spoken language in the classroom because students can comprehend more vocabulary and more grammar forms since the input is more under the reader's control.

Data were obtained from speaking performance test to answer the first research question and from questionnaire to answer the second research question. *Speaking Performance Test* was done by the participants after having experience in TPRS teaching learning process for experimental group and having experience of teaching learning process in traditional method for control group. Both experimental and control group have eight meetings of English instruction before doing the test. The participants were to choose one of the three stories provided by the instructor and the stories included were (1) At a Party, (2) In the Bathroom, and (3) The Rabbit and the Butcher. They had to tell the story again using their own style and different format of the texts. While telling the story, the utterances were recorded using their own cellphone, and the result of the recording was submitted to be transcribed and analyzed.

Data from questionnaire were required to obtain both learners' and teachers' perspective about the practice of TPRS in the classrom instruction. There were twelve questions being addressed to learners consisting of 10 close-ended and 2 open-ended questionnaire, and there were also twelve questions addressed to teachers in the form of close-ended questionnaire. The data being collected were analyzed by

means of statistical program (SPSS) and *independent sample t-test* was used to know the different performance between experimental and control groups. This sort of t-test performs all the measures of speaking performance based on the speaking scoring rubric including pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency as seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Scoring rubric of speaking test

Domain	Scores	Criteria
Pronunciation	5	Phonetically correct, Almost error-free, Awareness of accent, Genuine effort to sound like native speaker
	4	Comprehensible, generally correct, Occasional error
	3	Frequent errors that confuse listener and require guessing at meaning
	2	Many errors that interfere with comprehensibility
	1	Most utterances contain errors, Many utterances are incomprehensible, Little communication
	0	No attempt
Vocabulary	5	Very good; wide range, Uses appropriate and new words and expressions, Interesting response
	4	Good, appropriate vocabulary, Generally good response
	3	Vocabulary is just adequate to respond, No attempt to vary expressions, Basic
	2	Inadequate vocabulary or incorrect use of lexical items, Communication difficult
	1	Does not complete responses, Responses one or two words in length, Vocabulary repeated
	0	No attempt, Totally irrelevant answer
Grammar	5	No grammatical errors, Speaker self-corrects without hesitation
	4	Two or fewer syntax errors, Minor errors

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		that do not impede communication
	3	Frequent errors, Self-corrects on some
	2	Many errors (agreement, verb forms), Errors in basic structures, Errors impede communication
	1	Most structures incorrect, Constant use of infinitive; no conjugation, Listener understands only because of past experience
	0	No attempt or repeat cue
	5	Smooth flow, Quick, continuous flow, Natural pauses
	4	Occasional hesitation, searching for words, Speaker can self-correct and respond to cues
Fluency	3	Halting, hesitating, Visibly translating before responding, Can rephrase and respond
	2	Frequent hesitations, searches for words, Overly translates questions before response, Eventually responds
	1	Constant searching for vocabulary, verb tense, Does not complete utterances
	0	No attempt, May repeat cue

FINDINGS

The finding of this study was divided into two parts. Part one is the experimental result and part two is the learners' and lecturers' perspective on using TPRS method. This first part is related to the finding of the study before and after the treatment of TPRS toward two different group–the experimental and control group. The experimental group is a group using TPRS method and the control group is a group using non-TPRS method. As it was said in the previous section of this paper regarding the measurement of speaking performance based on the scoring rubric containing the domain of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency become one part of speaking performance. The result of the test after the treatment was measured using SPSS and it was found that the speaking performance of the two group was significantly different at .05 level since the

probability due to sampling error was .015 which was lower than the significant level (.015<.05) as it was seen in Table 2.

Table 2 Mean Difference in Speaking Performance after the Treatment

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.	t	Sig.*
Experimental (TPRS)	30	70.83	16.56	10.28	.002	2.52	.015
Control (Non-TPRS)	30	62.17	8.97				

* *Significance was set at .05 level.*

From Tabel 2, we can say that the null hypothesis which was stated that "the learners' speaking performance using TPRS method do not improve better than the non-TPRS" is rejected since the probability due to sampling error is .015 which is lower than the significant level which is set at .05 (ρ = .015 < .05). It means that there is significant different speaking performance between the use of TPRS and non-TPRS. On the other hands, the researcher's hypothesis which was stated that "the use of TPRS in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language outperforms the traditional one" is accepted since the experimental (TPRS) group performs 8.66 better than the control (Non-TPRS) group (70.83-62.17=8.66).

The mean difference of each domain on speaking performance can be seen in Chart 1 and we can say that the domain of pronunciation (0.80) is the higherst score of speaking performance compared with the other domains like vocabulary (0.40) and grammar (0.43) and the domain of fluency is in the lowest score compared with the others. It means that EFL learners' pronunciation improve the most and the fluency least when they are performing their speaking skill after the application of TPRS method.

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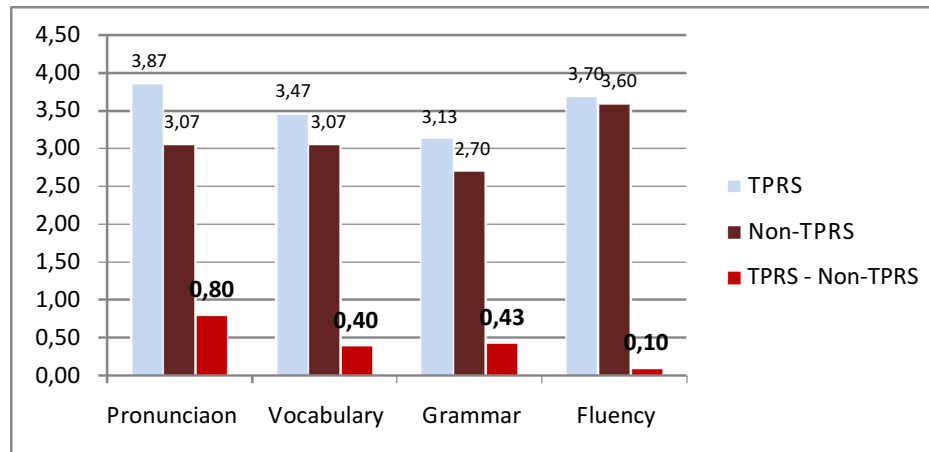

Figure 1 Mean Difference of each Domain on Speaking Performance

The second part of the finding was related to the perspective of learners and lecturers on the application of TPRS. First, it was found that most participants (57%) agreed that TPRS was a new method for them and they also agreed that this method made them feel happy (63%). The learners strongly agreed to say that this method helped them to learn new vocabularies (57%) and accepted grammar (63%). Next, learners were helped to understand reading in the story and they (50%) strongly agreed because the steps done in TPRS lead them to understand the story easily. This method also encouraged them to participate in listening to the other friends' storytelling indicated by having agreement of (57%). Furtermore, they agreed to state (63%) that this method helped them to remember vocabulary well and encouraged learners (57%) to communicate using English. Finally, learners were helped to understand indirect speech in English (67%) which was used when they were telling the story and and they agreed to say that it encouraged them to express their idea based on the context of the story (70%). The result of questionnaire for learners was summarized in Table 3 as follows:

Table 3 Learners' response from close-ended questionnaire

No.	Statements for the Questionnaires (*Pernyataan Dalam Kuesioner*)	Response*			
		A	B	C	D
1	TPRS method is new to me (*Metode TPRS baru bagi saya*):	3%	27%	57%	13%
2	I love studying English using TPRS Method (*Saya merasa senang dengan metode TPRS):*	0%	10%	63%	27%
3	TPRS method helps me learn and recognize new vocabulary (*Metode TPRS membantu saya belajar dan mengenal kosakata baru*):	0%	3%	50%	57%
4	TPRS method helps me learn and recognize correct sentence structure (*Metode TPRS membantu saya belajar dan mengenal gramatika kalimat yang benar*):	0%	7%	63%	30%
5	TPRS method helps me learn and understand reading comprehension (*Metode TPRS membantu saya belajar dan memahami bacaan*):	0%	3%	43%	50%
6	TPRS method helps and encourage me to participate more actively in the classroom (*Metode TPRS membantu dan mendorong saya lebih berpartisipasi dalam kelas*):	0%	3%	57%	40%
7	TPRS method helps me learn to remember vocabulary well (*Metode TPRS membantu saya dalam mengingat kosakata dengan baik*):	0%	7%	63%	30%
8	TPRS method encourages me to participate more actively in English communication (*Metode TPRS mendorong saya lebih aktif mencoba berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris*):	0%	0%	57%	43%
9	TPRS method helps me learn to create indirect speech (*Metode TPRS membantu saya dalam belajar kalimat tidak langsung*):	0%	0%	67%	33%
10	TPRS method encourages me to learn context-based English expression (*MetodeTPRS mendorong saya lebih berekspresi sesuai konteks*):	0%	0%	70%	30%

* Notes for Learners' response:

A = Strongly Disagree; B = Disagree; C = Agree; D = Strongly Agree

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The other response was obtained from the open-ended questionnaire that requires learners' own opinion which are mixing in terms of feeling after experiencing the teaching and learning process using TPRS method. What is meant by mixing here is that the learners' emotion tend to be overwhelmed which migh sometimes get confused with it.
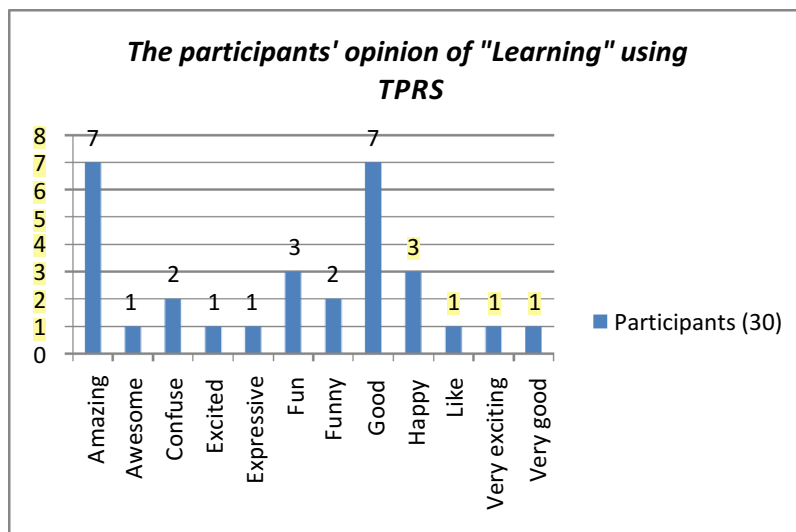
The participants' opinion of "Learning" using TPRS

Amazing	7
Awesome	1
Confuse	2
Excited	1
Expressive	1
Fun	3
Funny	2
Good	7
Happy	3
Like	1
Very exciting	1
Very good	1

■ Participants (30)

Figure 2 The participants' opinion of "Learning" using TPRS

They say that *Learning* using TPRS are "Amazing (7), Awesome (1), Confuse (2), Excited (1), Expressive (1), Fun (3), Funny (2), Good (7), Happy (3), Like (1), Very Exciting (1), and Very good (1)" as seen from Figure 2. And they say that *Teaching* using TPRS are "a good method (1), Amazing (1), Awesome (2), Confuse (2), Fun (2), Funny (1), Good (2), Good job (1), Happy (5), Nice (1), Pleasing (1), Very good (10), and Very very happy (1) as seen from Figure 3.
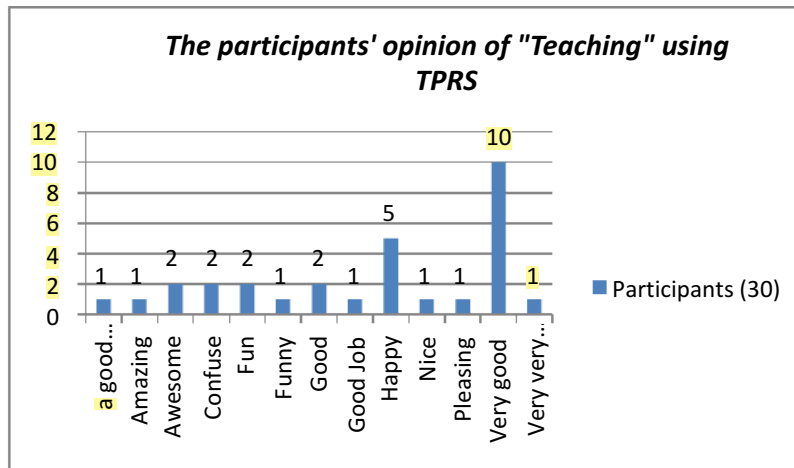
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Figure 3 *The participants' opinion of "Teaching" using TPRS*

The result of questionnaire for lecturers was summarized in Table 4. It was shown that most lecturers gave positive response to the application of TPRS by giving an agreement that TPRS method facilitates lecturers in making class livelier (71%), to build appropriate contextualized situation (71%), to establish meaning of a matter newly introduced to the students (86%), to encourage the students to be more willing to take risk in communication in English (57%), to introduce new glossaries (86%), to have long term-memory of newly-taught glossaries (86%), to help students comprehend better (43%), to introduce nd contextualize the newly taught grammatical structure (100), to help the students apply newly taught grammatical structure (86%), and is helpful, easy, and convenient to be employed teaching activity.

Table 4. Lecturers' response from close-ended questionnaire

No.	Statements for the Questionnaires	Response*			
		A	B	C	D
1	TPRS method is new to me	0%	43%	57%	0%
2	I have experience in looking at the teaching process with TPRS method	0%	29%	71%	0%
3	TPRS method facilitates me in making the class situation livelier	0%	0%	71%	29%

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4	TPRS method facilitates me to build appropriate contextualized situation	0%	0%	71%	29%
5	TPRS method helps me to establish meaning of a matter newly introduced to my students	0%	0%	86%	14%
6	TPRS method helps me encourage my students to be more willing to take risk in communicating in English	0%	0%	57%	43%
7	TPRS method helps me introduce new glossaries	0%	0%	86%	14%
8	TPRS method helps me make my students have long term memory of newly taught glossaries	0%	14%	86%	0%
9	TPRS method facilitates me to help my students comprehend the text better	0%	0%	43%	57%
10	TPRS method facilitates me to introduce and contextualize the newly taught grammatical structure	0%	0%	100%	0%
11	TPRS method facilitates me to help my students apply newly taught grammatical structure	0%	0%	86%	14%
12	In general, TPRS method is helpful, easy, and convenient to be employed in my teaching activity	0%	14%	43%	43%

* Notes for Lecturers' response:
A = Strongly Disagree; B = Disagree; C = Agree; D = Strongly Agree

DISCUSSION

By looking at Table 2 and Chart 1 from the finding discussed earlier from this research, it can be claimed that the measures of speaking performance containing four language domains: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and fluency for EFL learners speaking performance are statistically significant at .05 level of significance. The difference is that learners perform their speaking skill better by using TPRS method than using non-TPRS (70.83 > 62.17). In other words, experimental group outperformed 8.66 greater than the control one. In this case, using TPRS method outperformed the traditional method is in line with Davidheiser (2001). Therefore, applying the current method of TPRS obtains more superior result than the traditional one.

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From Tabel 2, we can say that the null hypothesis which was stated that "the learners' speaking performance using TPRS method do not improve better than the non-TPRS" is rejected since the probability due to sampling error is .015 which is lower than the significant level which is set at .05 (ρ = .015 < .05). It means that there is significant different speaking performance between the use of TPRS and non-TPRS. On the other hands, the researcher's hypothesis which was stated that "the use of TPRS in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language outperforms the traditional one" is accepted since the experimental (TPRS) group performs 8.66 better than the control (Non-TPRS) group (70.83-62.17=8.66). It is in line with Watson (2009) stating that the TPRS classes outscored the traditional students and Foster (2011) who found that TPRS students outperformed traditional classes on a grammaticality judgment task and on writing fluency, and equaled traditional classes on three other measures (speaking accuracy, writing accuracy, and reading).

The mean difference of each domain on speaking performance can be seen in Chart 1 and we can say that the domain of pronunciation (0.80) is the higherst score of speaking performance compared with the other domains like vocabulary (0.40) and grammar (0.43) and the domain of fluency is in the lowest score compared with the others. It means that EFL learners' pronunciation improve the most and the fluency least when they are performing their speaking skill after the application of TPRS method. It is in line with Davidheiser (2001) who discussed the integration of grammar instruction with TPRS at the college level reporting that TPRS improves pronunciation and vocabulary memory and the present study on speaking performance is also the integration of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and fluency.

From the result of questionnaire, both learners and lecturers give positive response to the application of TPRS in teaching and learning process. It is easy for teachers to utilize this method and the method application make learners happy and enthusiastic to join the class. Therefore, they agree that this teaching method can help learner

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remember new glossaries and it is in line with Braunstein (2006) who found that even adult ESL students, who expected more traditional instruction, responded positively to TPRS. Students were enthusiastic about the class and reported that the methods helped them to remember vocabulary, and understand English.

CONCLUSION

The present study was to examine the improving of EFL learners language speaking performance using TPRS method applied to two different groups of participants—experimental and control groups—on speaking performance including four language domains: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and fluency. This study could be beneficial for language learners, language users, and teachers in the field of speaking skill used for EFL learners. The findings, on the one hand, show that learners on experimental group (using TPRS method) performed significantly better than those of control group (using non-TPRS) in their speaking performance.

An important implication that can be drawn from this study is that teachers are able to create learning atmosphere overwhelmed with joy when telling learners story using gesture and mimicry in teaching learning process following the steps of *Showing*, *Tell*ing, and *Reading*. Yet, language users should be aware that producing spoken language can be highly motivated after reading interesting stories to retell them using their own ways of expressing ideas. Therefore, language users are recommended to choose any appealing stories they like and practice retelling in order to improve their ability to speak English.

For practical implication, teachers are recommended to emphasize the learners' goal in speaking performance and this TPRS method is clearly guided and hopefully it is useful to encourage learners to practice speaking in front of other people.

Similarity

Similarity from a chosen source

abc Possible character replacement

Citation

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