
Effect of TPR and CLT on young EFL learners' speaking anxiety, oral proficiency, and vocabulary learning

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Abstract

The teaching of English to young learners is a relatively new development in Turkish education system, and there is a need for research to determine the most effective teaching practices for this demographic. It is worth noting that worldwide, TPR studies have mainly focused on vocabulary learning, while CLT studies have focused on oral proficiency. However, despite the extensive research, there have been no attempts to compare the impact of TPR and CLT on young EFL learners' speaking anxiety, oral proficiency, and vocabulary learning. This study aimed at investigating the impact of Total Physical Response (TPR) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on young Turkish EFL learners' speaking anxiety, oral proficiency, and vocabulary learning. Following a quasi-experimental research design, the participants' speaking anxiety, oral proficiency and vocabulary knowledge were tested before and after the TPR and CLT interventions. The statistical analyses of the data revealed that both CLT and TPR reduced the participants' speaking anxiety and improved their oral proficiency and increased their vocabulary knowledge. When compared, however, the improvement within the TPR group was significantly higher than the CLT group.

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1 Introduction

Foreign language education for young learners has been gaining importance worldwide. Likewise, in Turkey, the recent changes in the educational field have paved the way for starting English education at 2nd grade in primary schools. In spite of conflicting ideas regarding the convenience of starting language education earlier, it is in the instructors' hands to adapt the teaching conditions

and methods to benefit their learners no matter what age they are (Damar, Gürsoy & Korkmaz, 2013). The primary point is to choose the most appropriate teaching method and combine it with suitable activities so that learners can improve their overall language proficiency in a friendly learning environment. Although there is no consensus on the best method to be employed in classrooms, the studies show an agreement on the use of visual-aids, play, and songs with young learners, either in isolation or altogether (Ara, 2009; Awaluddin, 2013; Er, 2014; Pérez Niño, 2010; Yüksel, 2016).

Today, the emphasis is put on the acquisition of communicative skills in English. Many instructors worldwide opt for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to teach learners what traditional methods fail to address. Oral proficiency, which is neglected in conventional EFL classrooms, is of great importance in Turkey nowadays, and CLT, in this sense, is believed to be one of the best methods to improve learners' communicative competence so that they can effectively use the language for communication (Heng, 2014; Ohashi, 2015). CLT enables learner-centred foreign language education where teachers serve as a guide in the classroom. Students are encouraged to engage in communication with the help of activities including role play and games (Sherwani & Kılıç, 2017).

When teaching English to young learners, the characteristics of the age-group should be taken into account as well. Young students are known to be eager to learn without affective filters which are claimed to develop after puberty (Er, 2013). Children also like being physically active and playing games (Rokhayani, 2017) which explains why Total Physical Response (TPR), like CLT, is widely exploited in ELT. However, different from CLT, TPR is mostly used for young EFL learners because, since in TPR, learners are expected to respond to their teachers' commands by physical actions, it provides opportunities for learners to move around the classroom (Toghyani Khorasgani & Khanehgir, 2017).

Teaching English has received a good deal of attention in Turkey so far, and for better language learning outcome, the age to start English at school has recently been decreased so teaching young EFL learners is a quite new topic in Turkish context, hence, the need for studies into what kind of teaching practices benefit Turkish young EFL learners best. In addition, worldwide, TPR studies mostly evolve around vocabulary learning and CLT studies around oral proficiency. However, there has been no attempt to compare the effectiveness of TPR and CLT on young EFL learners' speaking anxiety, oral proficiency, and vocabulary learning. This study, therefore, aimed to contribute to the literature by investigating the effect of two popular methods, CLT and TPR, on young EFL learners' speaking anxiety, oral proficiency and vocabulary learning and providing an insight into the impact of the two methods on Turkish young EFL learners' language learning progress.

2 Literature review on TPR and CLT in English language teaching

2.1 Total Physical Response (TPR)

Developed by James Asher, an American psychologist, and dating back to late 1960s, Total Physical Response (TPR) is still one of the most commonly used methods in teaching English to young learners. This method is primarily based on giving commands to which young learners respond by providing actions (Savić, 2014). In the process of acquiring their mother tongue in the first few years of life, children receive a lot of commands from their parents such as 'come here' or 'don't touch the pot' and they respond to those commands by simply doing what they are told to. As can be inferred from the explanations above, listening comprehension is expected to foster before oral proficiency in life. The main idea behind TPR is that young learners can acquire a foreign language following the same path as in the acquisition of their first language (Rokhayani, 2017). In TPR, teachers follow a naturalistic approach to language acquisition. The lessons evolve around commands, physical responses and follow-up practices to make sure that all the commands are clearly understood (Putri, 2016). A period during which learners do not speak is naturally welcome in TPR as the main focus is on grasping the meaning of the commands. The learning environment should be free of stress, and instructors are expected to maximise learning outcomes by decreasing affective

filters (Kuo, Hsu, Fang, & Chen, 2014). This method is considered to work best when combined with songs, stories, games, and demonstrations, as suggested by Er (2013). Different from traditional teaching method, listening is not the source of information. Rather, listening is for promoting actions in the classroom. All the actions that learners perform become a part of their learning (Pinkasová, 2011).

Several studies confirmed the potential benefits of TPR in teaching English to young learners. The comprehensive quasi-experimental study by Zhen (2011), for example, suggested enhanced learning outcomes in foreign language with the help of TPR. The participants of the study included 30 students aged 11. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of TPR on students' performance of learning English adjectives. For this, the participants were randomly divided into two groups. The experimental group was taught English adjectives using TPR. The control group, on the other hand, received lessons in the traditional way. The results showed a significant difference between the groups' learning outcomes in favour of the one who was taught through TPR. The author concluded that TPR can be effectively used for teaching English adjectives to young learners.

Another study with similar results was carried out by Qiu (2016). Of the 40 third grade primary school students, half were taught by TPR while the other half were taught using a traditional method. The comparison of the pre and post test results showed that the students in the experimental group had a better knowledge of the target vocabulary at the end of the study.

Ghani and Ghous (2014) conducted a quantitative study with the participation of 48 primary school students. The participants were chosen from the students that were labelled as slow learners of English as a second language. The study followed a quasi-experimental research design and compared pre and post-test results for measuring the impact of TPR on the participants' performance. The descriptive and inferential analyses of the data revealed the effectiveness of TPR in foreign language education. According to the findings, TPR method can help slow learners with low English proficiency improve their performance.

The study by Obitube, Mbah, Babarinde (2019) investigated the value of TPR for teaching lexis and structure of a second language. The participants were 100 Nigerian students aged between 10 and 15. Half of the participants received audio-lingual method lessons while the rest received TPR lessons. The findings revealed that the TPR group outperformed the other group at the end of the intervention, suggesting TPR can be used to teach a second language.

2.2 Communicative Language Teaching in English language teaching

In 1970s, when the purpose of the language education was being widely questioned, Hymes (1972) attracted attention by claiming that learning a language should go beyond having the knowledge of grammar rules. According to Hymes (1972), it is equally important to gain an understanding of the language use (Ohashi, 2015). The increasing interest in using English worldwide as a means of communication requires putting greater emphasis on the teaching of communicative skills (Ahmad & Rao, 2013).

CLT is expected to solve the problems that the traditional and other popular methods have failed to solve, which is the lack of communicative competence (Pokorna & Vasylieva, 2014). However, CLT may not seem appropriate for certain countries where traditional methods are still readily welcome (Wei & Lin & Litton, 2018). The study by Islam (2016) reveals that the implementation of CLT can be hindered by factors such as improper teaching environment or learners' biases against English courses. The study by Farooq (2015) also points to the challenges encountered in classrooms taught through CLT. According to the study, the challenges include lack of audio-visual aids, low learner proficiency, and crowded classrooms.

The success of CLT method is embedded in both teachers' and students' readiness to accept it (Shinta & Tedjaatmadja, 2014). This method, on its own, may not be efficiently exploited in EFL classrooms in countries with so many challenges to deal with. When this is the case, the instructors can opt for a weaker version of the method to ensure a smooth transition from traditional methods to CLT (Karakaş, 2013).

As the main focus of CLT is on learners' speaking skills, most of the studies have investigated its impact on learners' oral proficiency. Samira (2014), for example, conducted a comprehensive study into the effectiveness of CLT in improving learners' oral proficiency. The participants consisted of 40 students with 8–11 years of English learning experience. The results of the study indicated that CLT can be effectively used in EFL classrooms for enhanced oral proficiency. Likewise, the comprehensive study by Sanaa (2013) also suggests a positive impact of CLT on learners speaking skills.

The quantitative study conducted by Aalaei (2017), the participants of which consisted of 40 third grade high school students, also reached conclusions that indicate effectiveness of CLT for improving learners' listening and speaking skills. According to the findings, CLT can benefit learners even in the countries such as Iran where methods other than the traditional ones are somewhat difficult to gain acceptance.

Similarly, Kasumi (2015) examined the impact of CLT on learners' overall language performance and reported enhanced English proficiency for the participants which included 150 students from both urban and rural schools.

Ghofur, Degeng, Widiati, and Setyosari (2017), on the other hand, compared CLT and audio-lingual method in terms of their impact on learners' English proficiency across diverse learning styles. The results of their statistical analyses showed that the participants who were taught through CLT outperformed those in the ALM group irrespective of their learning styles. According to the findings, CLT can be effectively used to develop learners' oral proficiency.

Motivation is undoubtedly one of the most important factors in education, and the study by Ochoa, Cabrera, Quiñónez, Castillo, and González (2016) confirms the positive impact of CLT on learner motivation in EFL classrooms. The study followed a mixed-methods approach and a total of 180 students and 8 teachers participated in it. The participants agreed that CLT is a motivating way of teaching and learning language.

The findings revealed by Kapurani's (2016) study also indicate that CLT plays an important role in increasing learner motivation in EFL classrooms. The study also highlights an increase in primary students' overall achievement in English course.

Another study with young participants was conducted by Reid (2016). The study was designed as a long-term study with the participation of 27 first-grade primary school students. For the full educational year, the students' oral skills and overall attitude towards the course were measured. The analyses revealed positive attitudes and enhanced communicative skills at the end of the study.

Although studies like that of Kapurani (2016) and Reid (2016) confirm that CLT can benefit young EFL learners, the convenience of CLT for young learners arouses interest. The study by Ohashi (2015) indicates that with a number of changes in the implementation, CLT can benefit young EFL learners as well. Indeed, compared to their older counterparts, young learners in various countries are more adapted to the idea of English being the *Lingua Franca*.

With the advances in technology and the impact of globalisation, young learners also have a wider range of opportunities to engage in real communication with native or non-native speakers of English all around the world. To succeed in teaching through CLT in young EFL classrooms, it is required to have a deep understanding of children's nature. The activities in the classroom should be redesigned to address young learners' need and attract their attention.

2.3 Research questions

The relevant literature has demonstrated that both TPR and CLT enhance learning outcomes among young EFL learners. To add to the existing body of literature, this research is intended to specifically study their effects on the speaking anxiety, oral proficiency, and vocabulary acquisition of young Turkish EFL learners. Specifically, the research questions are as follows:

1. Is there a significant difference between the young EFL learner groups who engage in TPR and CLT activities in terms of speaking anxiety?

2. Is there a significant difference between the young EFL learner groups who engage in TPR and CLT activities in terms of oral proficiency?
3. Is there a significant difference between the young EFL learner groups who engage in TPR and CLT activities in terms of vocabulary learning?

3 Methodology

In education, researchers generally opt for experimental design to measure the impact of an intervention by comparing experimental and control groups (Creswell, 2012). Since random assignment was out of question as the students were already divided into four classrooms by their school management prior to the study, this quantitative study followed a quasi-experimental research design with an experimental group and a control group. Of the 4 classrooms, 2 were randomly chosen to receive TPR lessons. The remaining 2 classrooms received CLT lessons during the intervention.

3.1 Participants

The study began with the participation of 75 students who were chosen on the basis of random sampling. However, some of the students had to be excluded due to absence in the process of the intervention or at the time of either pre or post-test. The number of the students who were present during the whole study was 56, 30 being in the first group (TPR) and 26 in the second group (CLT). The participants were all in second grade. They had been previously divided into four classrooms (A-B-C-D). For the study, classroom C and D were randomly selected as the TPR group while A and B were CLT group. Both groups had 2-hour English lessons a week taught by one of the researchers during the intervention.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

Before the data collection started, both the school management and the parents were informed about the study and data collection procedure. However, their permission excluded video and audio recording as well as the inclusion of another researcher in the classroom. Therefore, the data were collected and evaluated by one of the researchers who worked as a teacher during the study.

The study started with testing students for the variables in the study, which are speaking anxiety, oral proficiency and vocabulary knowledge. The pre-tests included a speaking anxiety questionnaire which was originally developed by Horwitz et al. in 1986 (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014). The scale consisted of 18 likert-type items. The reliability of the scale was found to be high ($\alpha=.91$). The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire both prior to and after the study. For the young participants to understand the questions, the researcher explained each item in detail using simplified language and drawing facial expressions on the board for values ranging from one to five (5=very happy, 4=happy, 3=Neither happy nor unhappy, 2=unhappy, 1=very unhappy). After each explanation, they were asked to mark their opinion about the item.

To be able to determine the participants' development in speaking, their oral proficiency was evaluated using a rubric developed by Marek and Wu (2011). The rubric originally included 5 sections including fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and content and the total score would be 25, 5 points for each section. However, as the participants were young EFL learners and the focus was not on grammar, the grammar section was excluded. So the total score students could get from the rubric was 20. Each student was expected to interact through responses to the oral questions which were similar for pre and post-test.

A vocabulary test was also prepared in accordance with the text-book they were following. The purpose of the test was to measure the participants' vocabulary knowledge of the first 6 units of their textbook. The test included 39 pictures for each of which students had to choose the meaning from the given 4 options. The total score of the test was 39, one point for each correct answer. Both TPR

and communicative activities after the pre-test evolved around the same vocabulary during the intervention.

4 Results

This section presents the results of the data analyses conducted by the researchers to explain the impact of TPR and CLT on young EFL learners' speaking skills, speaking anxiety, and vocabulary learning. The findings are separately presented under the heading of each related research question.

4.1 Research question 1

The first research question was whether there is a significant difference between the young EFL learner groups who engaged in TPR and CLT activities in terms of speaking anxiety?

In the first step, the pre and post-test speaking anxiety questionnaires filled by the young EFL participants were analysed to determine differences in the pre or post-test results between the TPR and CLT groups.

Table 1.

Independent Samples T-test for both groups' pre and post-tests regarding speaking anxiety

	Group	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
Pretest	TPR	30	4,24	,58	1,31	54	0,08
	CLT	26	3,97	,93	1,27	40,54	
Posttest	TPR	30	3,97	,87	,84	54	,76
	CLT	26	3,78	,85	,84	53,16	

As can be seen in Table 1, there is no significant difference in the groups' speaking anxiety level prior to the study ($t(54) = 1.3, p > 0.05$). So, both groups started from a similar point in terms of their speaking anxiety. Another independent samples t-test was run for the post-test results of both groups, and it also revealed no significant difference in speaking anxiety levels after the study ($p > 0.05$), which suggests that the effects of TPR and CLT on the participants' speaking anxiety were similar.

To gain a deeper understanding into the first research question, further statistical tests were conducted. A paired-samples t-test was run to compare each group's pre and post-test speaking anxiety results.

Table 2.

Paired samples t-test for both groups' speaking anxiety results

Paired Samples Statistics

	Group	Mean	N	SD	Std. Error Mean
TPR	pre-test	4,24	30	,58	,10
	post-test	3,97	30	,87	,15
CLT	pre-test	3,95	26	,94	,18
	post-test	3,74	26	,85	,17

	Gain score	SD	95% confidence interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
TPR	,27	1,08	-,13	,67	1,36	29	,18
CLT	,20	1,41	-,38	,79	,72	24	,47

The results of the paired-samples t-test, as seen in Table 2, revealed a drop in speaking anxiety, which means the participants reported to feel less anxious after the intervention ($M=3.9$, $SD: .87$) when compared to their starting point prior to the study ($M=4.2$, $SD:0.58$). Yet, the difference was found out to be insignificant ($t(29) =1.3$, $p>0.05$). The same statistical test was conducted to find out whether there is a significant difference in the CLT group's pre and post-test results. As seen in the table above, the results of the second group also show a drop in speaking anxiety as the mean value dropped from 3.9 ($SD=0.94$) to 3.7 ($SD=0.85$). However, the p value suggests that the difference is not significant ($t(24) =0.72$, $p>0.05$).

4.2 Research question 2

The second research question was whether there was a significant difference in the oral proficiency between the young EFL learner groups who engaged in TPR and CLT activities?

To be able to provide an answer to the second research question, initially, the TPR and CLT groups' pre-tests were analysed through independent samples t-test to determine whether their starting point was similar. Table 3 shows that groups' evaluated oral proficiencies are similar prior to the study ($t(54)=1.2$, $p>0.05$). The same statistical test was conducted to determine if the participants' post-test oral proficiency significantly varied after the study. Based on Table 3, it can be said that there is no significant difference between the groups' post-test results ($t(54)=1.3$, $p>0.05$), which altogether means, when compared, both groups' oral proficiency was similar both prior to and after the intervention when compared to each other.

Table 3.

Independent samples t-test for both groups' pre-tests in oral proficiency

	Group	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
Pre-test	TPR	30	10,00	3,01	1,26	54	,99
	CLT	26	9,00	2,89	1,26	53,40	
Post-test	TPR	30	15,26	3,98	1,33	54	,36
	CLT	26	13,69	4,82	1,32	48,63	

With an aim to shed further light on the second research question, the pre and post-test results of each group were tested to determine whether the change in two different group's oral proficiency is statistically significant. The following table, Table 4, shows the paired samples t-test results for both groups' pre and post-test oral proficiency.

Table 4.

Paired Sample T-Test results for both groups' pre and post-test oral proficiency

Paired Samples Statistics

	Group	Mean	N	SD	Std. Error Mean
TPR	pre-test	10,00	30	3,01	,55
	post-test	15,26	30	3,98	,72
CLT	pre-test	9,00	26	2,89	,56
	post-test	13,69	26	4,82	,94

	Gain score	SD	95% confidence interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
TPR	-5,26	5,10	-7,17	-3,36	-5,65	29	,00
CLT	-4,69	4,55	-6,53	-2,85	-5,24	25	,00

As can be seen in Table 4, the mean value increased from 10 (SD=3) to 15.2 (SD=3.9) and the p value is smaller than $p=0.05$ value, which means there is a significant improvement in the TPR group's oral proficiency at the end of the study ($t(29) = -5.6, p < .001$). The comparison of the pre and post-test oral proficiency results of the CLT group was also evaluated through paired samples t-test. Table 4 clearly shows that the CLT group enhanced their oral proficiency ($M=13.6, SD=4.8$) when compared to their starting point before the study ($M=9, SD=2.8$) and there is a significant difference between the CLT group's pre and post-test results ($t(25) = -5.2, p < .001$). It can be said that CLT helped the participants improve their oral proficiency as well as TPR did.

4.3 Research question 3

The third question was whether there was a significant difference between the young EFL learner groups who engaged in TPR and CLT activities in terms of vocabulary learning?

The statistical analyses to answer the third research question started with an independent samples t-test to compare both groups' pre and post-test vocabulary knowledge. The results are given below:

Table 5.

Independent samples t-test for both groups' pre and post-test vocabulary knowledge results

	Group	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
Pretest	TPR	30	19,03	5,06	-2,63	54	,18
	CLT	26	22,26	3,93	-2,68	53,40	
Posttest	TPR	30	28,06	3,40	,93	54	,67
	CLT	26	27,19	3,57	,93	52,00	

Table 5 suggests a significant difference in the participants' vocabulary knowledge prior to the study, CLT group being more knowledgeable ($M=22,26$) than the TPR group ($M=19$) in this case ($t(54) = -2.6, p < 0.05$). The post-test results of the groups were compared through independent samples t-test as well. As shown in Table 5, both groups improved their vocabulary knowledge by the end of the study, the means of the tests being higher. The mean value for the TPR group's vocabulary test increased from 19 to 28 ($SD=3.4$) while the CLT group's increased from approximately 22 to 27 ($SD=3.5$). In addition, the TPR group seems to have grown their vocabulary faster as their mean ($M=28,06$) is higher than the CLT group's ($M=27,19$) after the study while their pre-test mean was lower. However, as can be concluded, there is no significant difference between the groups' post-test results ($t(54) = 0.936, p > 0,05$), which suggests the TPR group improved their vocabulary faster than the CLT group and caught up with the CLT group but arrived at a similar level of vocabulary knowledge.

To further analyse the impact of TPR and CLT on the vocabulary knowledge, paired samples t-test was conducted for the pre and post-test results of each group. The results are as follows:

Table 6.

Paired samples t-test results for both groups' pre and post-test vocabulary knowledge

	Gain score	SD	95% confidence interval		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
TPR	-9,03	5,97	-11,26	-6,80	-8,27	29	,00
CLT	-4,92	5,20	-7,02	-2,81	-4,82	25	,00

The results of the analysis, as seen in Table 6, show that there is a significant difference in the TPR group's pre and post study vocabulary knowledge ($t(29) = -8.2, p < .001$). The difference between the CLT group's pre and post study vocabulary knowledge is also statistically significant (t

(25)=-4.8, $p<0.001$). So, both TPR and CLT seem to work fine for learners' vocabulary acquisition.

5 Discussion

This section includes the discussion of the findings under separate headings for each research question.

5.1 Research question 1

The first research question in this study aimed at finding out the effect of TPR and CLT on speaking anxiety. The initial statistical analysis revealed no significant differences between the TPR and the CLT groups. However, post-study analyses pointed to a drop in both groups' levels of speaking anxiety although the difference when compared to the groups' speaking anxiety prior to the study is not significant. It can be concluded that both types of activities seem to decrease speaking anxiety to a certain degree, and both can be used in classroom to facilitate young EFL learners' oral proficiency in a relatively less threatening learning environment.

Parallel to the findings of current study, previous studies also suggest that both TPR and CLT can help lower overall anxiety among students. The study by Amano (2014), for example, revealed decreased anxiety levels among students after receiving TPR lessons. The researcher in a later study (2017) also found out that learners' unwillingness to communicate, along with their anxiety, decreased with the help of TPR. As suggested by the results of the present study, EFL teachers, particularly while teaching young learners, can benefit from TPR which is believed to help young learners with their speaking anxiety by providing a friendly and relaxing learning environment (Shi, 2018).

Although the impact of CLT on speaking anxiety is rather scarcely investigated, teachers are still encouraged to benefit from CLT in order to offer a friendly learning environment (Tanveer, 2007). The study by Alghonaim (2014) investigated students' attitudes towards communicative and non-communicative activities in English courses and concluded students preferred a combination of both, but still, communicative activities were more likely to cause anxiety. However, the participants were university students and the results may be due to the fact that affective filters get stronger when older. Instead of one-on-one speaking activities, small group activities might help learners with their anxiety (Occhipinti, 2009; Fujii, 2019).

It is a well-known fact that decreasing the overall anxiety experienced by EFL learners is a priority in language classrooms because anxiety has been noted to hinder foreign language learning process (Sanaei, Zafarhandi & Sabet, 2015; Oda, 2011). The effect of anxiety may become more prominent when it comes to speaking the target language (Melouah, 2013; Sari, 2017; Oflaz, 2019). Therefore, teachers should aim to decrease the anxiety level for better learning results.

5.2 Research question 2

The second research question in this study aimed to examine the differences in oral proficiency, if any, between TPR and CLT groups. The statistical analyses run for this purpose revealed no significant differences between the groups after the treatment. The difference between pre and post-tests within each group, however, was statistically significant, which means both groups significantly improved themselves in terms of their speaking abilities. This finding is relatively interesting as research into TPR seems to have centred around teaching vocabulary to young learners rather than speaking abilities (e.g. Sariyati, 2013; Kuo, Hsu, Fang & Chen, 2014; Astri & Wahab, 2019). Although there are few studies investigating the effect of TPR on learners' speaking skills with positive results, including the studies of Ratminingsih (2010), Andas (2016), and Mahmud (2018), the number is limited probably because TPR is primarily attributed to vocabulary learning.

CLT, on the other hand, as its name suggests, directly focuses on speaking skills and there are

numerous studies investigating the impact of CLT on oral proficiency. The majority of the studies concluded CLT improves speaking skills in EFL classrooms (e.g. Aalaei, 2017; AL-Garni & Almuhammedi, 2019; Owen & Razali, 2018). The studies which found out no or little progress in oral proficiency, on the other hand, attributed the results to the instructors who knew little about how to apply the technique (Mangaleswaran & Aziz, 2019; Yasin, Aziz & Jannah, 2017).

Based on the findings of this study, it can be inferred that TPR is not only effective when teaching vocabulary as it is famous for. It can, indeed, be as beneficial as CLT for improving speaking skills when applied in the right way.

5.3 Research question 3

The last research question investigated the potential differences between the groups in terms of their vocabulary learning. The post-test results in this study showed no significant difference between groups in terms of vocabulary knowledge. However, this finding is quite interesting on its own because the pre-test results showed a significant difference in the groups' vocabulary knowledge, in favour of the CLT group. In other words, TPR group must have improved their vocabulary knowledge quite fast to overtake the CLT group. The second set of analysis also reveals that there is a significant difference between both groups' pre and post-test results, which means both CLT and TPR are beneficial in teaching vocabulary to young learners, TPR being more effective based on the findings of the current study. The finding that TPR is effective in teaching vocabulary is parallel to the findings of the previous studies that compared TPR with other methods and revealed TPR's superiority in vocabulary teaching (e.g. Ekawati, 2017; Ibrohim, Septianti, Sadikin, 2019; Ilwana, 2010; Sariyati, 2013)

CLT, on the other hand, has generally been researched for its effectiveness in improving oral proficiency, and it is believed to be difficult to implement when either teachers or students are used to traditional methods and refuse to change. In Turkish context, the study by Karakaş (2013) shows that EFL teachers are indecisive about the effectiveness and implementation of CLT. However, it is still possible to use CLT to teach a foreign language, including vocabulary teaching, by paying attention to certain points (Wu, 2009). CLT creates a meaningful learning environment where learners can work on their vocabulary as well as their pronunciation. The key is to adapt the method to learner needs' by adding a diversity of activities and teaching material (Yuliyawati & Aprillia, 2019).

6 Conclusion

This study indicated that the use of both CLT and TPR methods resulted in a reduction in the participants' anxiety towards speaking, an improvement in their oral proficiency, and an increase in their vocabulary knowledge. Nevertheless, when compared, the TPR group demonstrated significantly higher improvements than the CLT group. These findings suggest that in order to achieve better learning outcomes, teachers should prioritize reducing the anxiety levels of their students. While both CLT and TPR approaches are beneficial in teaching vocabulary to young learners, the current study suggests that TPR is more effective. Nevertheless, it is still feasible to use CLT for vocabulary instruction in a foreign language by paying attention to specific aspects. By creating a meaningful learning environment that focuses on vocabulary and pronunciation, CLT can still be effective. The key is to adapt the teaching method to the learners' needs by incorporating a variety of activities and teaching materials.

It is necessary to mention the limitations the current study suffers from. First of all, the study started with 75 participants however, because of the measles outbreak, the final number of the participants decreased to 56 and the small size of the participants prevents the generalisation of the findings in Turkish context. In addition, it was difficult to implement CLT and the relevant questionnaire with young participants. Other researchers following a different research method with a higher number of participants in a different context may shed light on the effectiveness of TPR and CLT with young EFL learners from various perspectives.

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