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Total physical response storytelling (TPRS) in teaching Spanish as a foreign language: A method in improving students' oral interaction skill

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ABSTRACT

This undertaking endeavors to apply the TPRS in teaching ELE to improve the oral interaction skill of the students. Specifically, it posited answers to the performance of the students during the pre-test and post-test in terms of pronunciation, correctness, scope and coherence. It also tries to find out the significant difference between the performance of the students during the pre-test and post-test. From the pre-test of the students, their assessment in terms of their pronunciation, correctness, and coherence garnered 0 to 1 while in terms of scope, there was 1 from the control group while 2 frontal group who got 2. For their post-test, their pronunciation, the scores obtained were 3, 2, and 1. In terms of their scope, the control group has 7 who got 3, while 8 got 2. Lastly, for their coherence, there were 6 from the control group who got 3, while 4 got 2 and 10 got 1. This resulted to a satisfactory performance and for the experimental group, 11 got 1; 5 got 2; and 4 got 1. The data revealed that the result of the pre-test of both the control and experimental groups confirmed that the two groups of respondents are at the same level of speaking / oral abilities while the results of the post-test show a significant difference.

Keywords: Total Physical Response, storytelling, teaching Spanish, oral skill

1. INTRODUCTION

“Una lengua sirve como una puerta de entrada hacia otra cultura, otra tradición, otra historia, y

otra forma de ser. Conocer una lengua significa entrar en otro mundo.” – Coseriu

The quote only attests to the premise that learning a foreign language serves as a key to

open the door of the other world. Learning a foreign language allows us to obtain new opportunities that will lead us to prosper and progress [1].

To learn a foreign language is to inherit its benefits. It cannot be denied that one can discover a great amount of knowledge once has acquired it. It has at its command over the linguistic and cultural heritage of the language. It can transact business and foster relationships with native speakers of the language. He can travel around the world. With a stronger knowledge of a foreign language, one has in its entirety the great resources for his future [2].

"Spanish", is termed as "*the most beautiful language in the whole world*", acquires great importance since people prefer to learn and speak it more as compared to other languages. In Philippines, more than 300 years of historical links with Spain is linked by a durable sphere of cultural and educational heritage. Through this, the acquisition of the Spanish language has paved the way to the portals of secondary schools [3]. The reciprocity of support between Philippine and Spanish governments has been the guiding principle for the fulfilment and completion of the teaching of a foreign language in the country [4].

The teaching and learning of a foreign language such as Spanish has provided a feasible improvement in language promotion; implementation of language teaching strategies and tools; commitments to train teachers; and the opportunity to master the structure of language [5-6]. While it is logical to think that no individual would find it easy to learn a language

other than the native of their land, it is essentially mandatory, now that SPFL (Special Program in Foreign Language) has been introduced in the Philippine Educational System, among teachers to maximize their potential in teaching and among students to maximize their abilities to learn it [7].

Since 2009, the HCPSMSHS has been offering Spanish Language as one of its subjects. As one of the implementing public schools of SPFL-Spanish, it has been chosen as one of the five Centres of Excellence in Teaching Spanish Language in the country. With this accolade comes the expectation that students must be conversant and communicative using the Spanish language.

However, while it is a given fact that there are now highly technological means on how students can easily learn a language, still, our students find it very hard to master the rudiments of learning a foreign language like Spanish orally [8]. In class, it is always observed that students find it difficult to speak using the language. Considering the above mentioned concern comes to light the plan to apply the TPRS method in teaching ELE among grade 10th students. TPRS, as a form of narration, is very much associated with talking. It cannot be denied that talking is the most important skill in teaching a language to master it. By speaking, students can express their ideas, feelings and wishes to others. At school, students learn to speak more easily because there are teachers and friends who can be their facilitators and peers to practice.

In this study, students were exposed to the TPRS

method so they could develop their oral interaction skill. The method is very much fitted to their level which is A2 and is in accordance with the provision of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and Plan Curricular del Instituto Cervantes (PCIC).

This undertaking endeavoured to apply the TPRS in teaching ELE to improve the oral interaction skill of the students. Specifically, it posited answers to the following queries: (1) How may the performance of the students be described during the pre-test and post-test, (2) Is there a significant difference between the performance of the students during the pre-test and post-test? and (3) What is the mean gain score between the pre and post-tests performance of the students?

2. METHOD AND MATERIAL

2.1. Research Design

In choosing the samples, the random sampling technique was applied. The five questions used by the proponent during the pre and post-tests were crafted based on the provisions of the competencies included in the Plan Curricular Instituto Cervantes (PCIC). After the pre-test, the proponent integrated the TPRS method in the teaching and learning process.

2.2. Respondents

Forty students (20 per class), where selected from grade X through random sampling, served as the participants for the pre-test and post-test.

2.3. Research Instrumentation

In the process of evaluating and gauging the performance of the students during the oral expression and interaction test, an analytical scale, adopted from the one used by the Instituto Cervantes, with four categories and a holistic scale was used.

The proponent conducted a pre-test among the forty selected grade X students. The pre-test was an oral examination based on the standards provided by the PCIC. The instrument used was the standardized tool used by the IC in gauging the performance of the candidates during the oral examination of DELE (Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera).

2.4. Data Collection

After the experimentation period, the post-test was conducted in order to determine if there exists any improvement on the oral interaction skill of the students. It must be noted that the same student-respondents during the pre-test were invited again for the oral test. In evaluating the performance of the students, the same IC-made standardized tool was used.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Pre-Test Performance of Students

3.1.1. Pronunciation

Table 1 shows the pre-test performance of the students in terms of pronunciation.

In general, the assessment of students in terms of their pronunciation was 0 to 1. Although there were very few who received 2 (10% from both the control and experimental groups), most of them obtained 1 (35% from the control group

and (40% from the experimental group) and 0 (55% from the control group and 50% from the experimental group). The computed data show that the performance of the students from both groups in terms of their pronunciation needs improvement.

This may be due to their lack of mastery of several complex Spanish sounds that do not appear in English or Philippine languages [9]. In addition, they pronounce the words as in English. Another reason is that Spanish is not the official language and only in school where they are encouraged to use it and practice it [10]. This observation conforms to the provision of PCIC (Band 0 and 1): The pronunciation and articulation are only correct in memorized words and phrases. Understanding requires some effort for interlocutors not accustomed to dealing with speakers of the same language group. Its pronunciation and articulation are practically incomprehensible.

3.1.2. *Correctness*

Table 2 shows the pre-test performance of the students in terms of correctness.

Based on the data, the scores range from 0 (75% for the control group and 80% for the experimental group) to 1 (25% for the control group and 20% for the experimental group). It is a glaring reality that majority of the students fall short in terms of correctness. Both groups' overall performance is under the "needs improvement" level.

It is understood that since the grammatical structure from which the questions are based is new to them, they made erroneous expressions. However, they went out of their way to continually express themselves and told their story, even with mistakes. Some of them used "code-switching" because of the difficulty they experienced. There were also occasions when students responded using the present indicative. The concept was there, however, the structure was not adequate. Errors were also observed in terms of the agreement between subject and verb.

This finding can be attributed to the fact that students are sometimes confused with the conjugation process. This result is the same with the description provided by the PCIC (Band 0 and 1): The narrator shows insufficient control of simple grammar structures and models of short and basic sentences, for example: errors in the use of the present and in the subject concordance -verb, and use of infinitives instead of flexed verbs [11]. The numerous mistakes make communication very difficult: silent letters, single words, and isolated expressions or numerous errors and interferences from other languages that make the narration incomprehensible [12].

3.1.3. *Scope*

Table 3 shows the pre-test performance of the students in terms of scope.

Table 1. Pre-Test Performance of the Students in terms of Pronunciation

Score	Verbal Interpretation	Control	Group	Experimental	Group
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
3	Outstanding (O)	0	0%	0	0%
2	Very Satisfactory (VS)	2	10%	2	10%
1	Satisfactory (S)	7	35%	8	40%
0	Needs Improvement (NI)	11	55%	10	50%
	Total	20	100%	20	100%

Table 2. Pre-Test Performance of the Students in terms of Correctness

Score	Verbal Interpretation	Control	Group	Experimental	Group
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
3	Outstanding (O)	0	0%	0	0%
2	Very satisfactory (VS)	0	0%	0	0%
1	Satisfactory (S)	5	25%	4	20%
0	Needs Improvement (NI)	15	75%	16	80%
	Total	20	100%	20	100%

Table 3. Pre-Test Performance of the Students in terms of Scope

Score	Verbal Interpretation	Control	Group	Experimental	Group
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
3	Outstanding (O)	0	0%	0	0%
2	Very Satisfactory (VS)	1	5%	2	10%
1	Satisfactory (S)	6	30%	7	35%
0	Needs Improvement (NI)	13	65%	11	55%
	Total	20	100%	20	100%

Table 4. Pre-Test Performance of the Students in terms of Coherence

Score	Verbal Interpretation	Control	Group	Experimental	Group
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
3	Outstanding (O)	0	0%	0	0%
2	Very Satisfactory (VS)	0	0%	0	0%
1	Satisfactory (S)	4	20%	5	25%
0	Needs Improvement (NI)	16	80%	15	75%
	Total	20	100%	20	100%

In terms of scope, there was 1 (5%) from the control group while 2 (10%) from the experimental group who got 2. Meanwhile, the rest received 1 (30% from the control group and 35% from the experimental group) and 0 (65% from the control group and 55% from the experimental group). Although it is worth noting

that are students who fell under the very satisfactory level, still, more than half of the respondents were classified under the "needs improvement" level when it comes to the scope of their narration.

With respect to the vocabulary used by the students, it was observed that they had a very

limited vocabulary. They used simple words or even translated the words into English in the course of their narration. However, it is noted that during the interview, although the process was slow, the students were able to identify the words or even the structure little by little. This observation is consistent with the context of PCIC (Band 0 and 1): The narrator's linguistic repertoire is limited to a very small group of memorized words or exponents: personal data and issues of immediate need. Lexical inaccuracies and interference from other languages prevent you from reaching the communicative objective most especially when the repertoire is composed of some isolated word, so, numerous errors are committed [13].

3.1.4. Coherence

Table 4 shows the pre-test performance of the students in terms of coherence. The score range is 0 (80% from the control group and 75% from the experimental group) – 1 (20% from the control group and 25% from the experimental group). With regard to the coherence of the students' narration, both groups fell under the "needs improvement" level. This only goes to show that students were not able to weave utterances using cohesive / transitional device.

During the interview, there were times when the proponent had to intervene or even continue the students' responses. There were some who could not finish their answers. Most of them had no coherence as they continued to change the course of their narration.

The provision of PCIC (Band 0 and 1) is correct with this observation. The narration is

confusing. It is limited to isolated sentences, without elements of connection or only with the conjunction "and". The narrator requires repetitions and reformulations of the interlocutor and his answers sometimes do not correspond to the questions. The narrator is totally out of words to say or the conversation is based entirely on repetition and reformulation. The narration is confusing and incomprehensible.

3.2. Post-Test Performance of Students

Students are now more fluent in the pronunciation of words and enunciation of sounds. For the control group, the scores obtained were 3 (20%), 2 (50%), and 1 (30%). These data yielded a satisfactory over-all performance in terms of pronunciation.

On the other hand, for the experimental group, 10 (50%) got 3 while 9 (45%) got 1. Only 1(5%) got 1. With these data, it is interesting to note that the students under the experimental group recorded an over-all performance verbally described as very satisfactory.

The data are supported by the observation that the students could speak more clearly in such a way that the sounds were stated correctly. Although not so obvious, some of them sounded like Spanish when they spoke. Generally, this observation coincides with the provision of PCIC (Band 2) that says: The pronunciation and articulation are generally quite clear and understandable. The narrator has a foreign accent and makes occasional mistakes that cause understanding to require some effort.

3.2.1. Correctness

Table 5. Post-Test Performance of the Students in terms of Pronunciation

Score	Verbal Interpretation	Control	Group	Experimental	Group
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
3	Outstanding (O)	4	20%	10	50%
2	Very Satisfactory (VS)	10	50%	9	45%
1	Satisfactory (S)	6	30%	1	5%
0	Needs Improvement (NI)	0	0%	0	0%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>

Table 6. Post-Test Performance of the Students in terms of Correctness

Score	Verbal Interpretation	Control	Group	Experimental	Group
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
3	Outstanding (O)	5	25%	9	45%
2	Very Satisfactory (VS)	6	30%	9	45%
1	Satisfactory (S)	9	45%	2	10%
0	Needs Improvement (NI)	0	0%	0	0%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>

Table 7. Post-Test Performance of the Students in terms of Scope

Score	Verbal Interpretation	Control	Group	Experimental	Group
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
3	Outstanding (O)	7	35%	12	60%
3	Very Satisfactory (VS)	8	40%	5	25%
1	Satisfactory (S)	5	25%	3	15%
0	Needs Improvement (NI)	0	0%	0	0%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>

Table 8. Post-Test Performance of the Students in terms of Coherence

Score	Verbal Interpretation	Control	Group	Experimental	Group
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
3	Outstanding (O)	6	30%	11	55%
2	Very Satisfactory (VS)	4	20%	5	25%
1	Satisfactory (S)	10	50%	4	20%
0	Needs Improvement (NI)	0	0%	0	0%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>100%</i>

Table 6 shows the post-test performance of the students in terms of correctness.

In terms of correctness, the control group got the following: 5 (25%) got 3; 6 (30%) got 2; and 9 (45%) got 1. These results boiled down to a satisfactory over-all performance.

On the other hand, the experimental group obtained the following: 9 (45%) got 3; another 9 (45%) got 2; and only 2 (10%) got 1. For these data, a very satisfactory performance was recorded.

In both groups, it was observed that some of the students applied the method of self-correction.

They were aware of their grammar although they still had mistakes, but at least they could correctly distinguish when to use gerund, simple past tense, and present perfect tense. They thought carefully before speaking. This finding is the same with the description provided by the PCIC (Band 2): The narrators use some simple structures correctly, although basic errors systematically occur, such as confusion of tenses, lack of concordance, hesitations or misunderstandings due to influence of other languages [14]. However, mistakes do not prevent the understanding of what he intends to say.

3.2.2. *Alcance (Scope)*

Table 7 shows the post-test performance of the students in terms of scope.

The data show that out of 20 students in the control group, 7 (35%) got 3, while 8 (40%) got 2. On the other hand, 5 (25%) got 1. The group, for this area, had a very satisfactory performance.

Meanwhile, the experimental group also recorded a very satisfactory performance with the following score distribution: 12 (60%) got 3; 5 (25%) got 2; and 3 (15%) got 1.

With small difference, both groups are at par with each other in terms of the verbal description. This implies that the students learned many new words that make their vocabulary richer. Their responses in the post-test became more exhaustive due to the new vocabulary they acquired during the lessons. Their confidence could also be seen when speaking and responding. This observation is

consistent with the context of the PCIC (Band 3): The narrator's linguistic repertoire allows the narrator him to exchange personal information and their closest environment without much effort, and perform in everyday situations with sufficient efficiency and accuracy. He makes mistakes and inaccuracies when less predictable topics are asked.

3.2.3. *Coherence*

Table 8 shows the post-test performance of the students in terms of coherence. As regards the coherence of the narration, there were 6 (30%) from the control group who got 3, while 4 (20%) got 2 and 10 (50%) got 1. This resulted to a satisfactory performance. For the experimental group, 11 (55%) got 1; 5 (25%) got 2; and 4 (20%) got 1. Getting the mean, the group obtained a very satisfactory performance.

Based on the results, it could be inferred that, this time, the students were able to compose and tell stories with coherence. They were able to connect all the details of their narration effectively. They made use of connectors and words that mean order and transition. Apparently, this observation subscribes to the PCIC (Band 3): The narrator produces a fairly continuous speech and uses usual connectors ("besides", "therefore", "then"). He is able to hold a conversation about everyday topics of personal interest, although he may show some doubt or require some reformulation of the interlocutor.

3.3. *Significant difference between the pre- and post- tests performances of the students*

3.3.1. Pre-Test

Using T-test, the computed value of 1 for pronunciation; 1 for correctness; 1.83 for scope; and 1 for coherence which are all less than the t Critical value of 2.09 posit no significant difference at all. The result of the pre-test of both the control and experimental groups confirmed that the two groups of respondents are at the same level of speaking / oral abilities.

3.3.2. Post-Test

For the results of the post-test, the computed value of 4.82 for pronunciation; 4.82 for correctness; 3.20 for scope; and 4.07 for coherence which are all greater than the t Critical value of 2.09 only attest that there exists a significant difference. Mean gain score between the pre and post-tests performance of the students

3.3.3. Control Group

The mean gain scores of 1.35 in pronunciation; 1.55 in correctness; 1.70 in scope; and 1.60 in coherence denote that there is an improvement in terms of the performance of the students under the control group most especially in terms of scope of their narration.

3.3.4. Experimental Group

The mean gain scores of 1.85 in pronunciation; 2.15 in correctness; 1.90 scope; and 2.10 in coherence only show that the students under the experimental group improved after they were exposed to the TPRS Method. Among the four areas, the highest mean gain score recorded is under correctness.

4. CONCLUSION

The following conclusions are drawn based on the summary of the results presented above:

- As regards the pre-test results, the students' scores in all areas: pronunciation, correctness, scope, and coherence fell under the "needs improvement" level.
- For the post-test results, the students, in all areas, got a very satisfactory performance.
- There is a significant difference between the performances of the students during their pre-test and post-test.
- The mean gain score for the post-test is higher than the mean gain score for the pre-test.

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NA

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have declared that there is no conflict of interest.

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NA

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