



## An investigation of the effect of TPRS on vocabulary acquisition among third graders<sup>1</sup>

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### APA Citation:

Bulan, N., & Kasapoglu, K. (2021). An investigation of the effect of TPRS on vocabulary acquisition among third graders. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(Special Issue 1), 645-662.

Submission Date: 28/11/2020

Acceptance Date: 18/01/2021

### Abstract

This research aims to investigate the impact of total physical response-storytelling (TPRS) and grammar-translation (G-T) methods on the elementary school third grade students' acquisition of English vocabulary and the views of elementary school third grade students on these methods. In this embedded mixed-methods study, the data were collected from 49 elementary school third grade students in an elementary school selected by convenience in Kadınhanı/Konya, Turkey. For the analysis of the data which were collected through the Vocabulary Acquisition Test and student diaries, independent- and related-samples t tests and descriptive analysis were utilized. It is concluded that the TPRS method is effective in the experimental group students' vocabulary acquisition; the G-T method is effective in the control group students'; and that the TPRS method is not a more/less effective method than the G-T method in terms of vocabulary acquisition. In addition, most students in both groups reflect positive views on both methods in their diaries kept throughout the intervention.

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**Keywords:** total physical response-storytelling (TPRS); grammar-translation (G-T); third grade students in elementary school; English; vocabulary acquisition

## 1. Introduction

Many students experience anxiety and problems while learning English (Kudsiyah, 2009). Teaching language to young learners with full-time education, especially to students aged 6 to 16 requires understanding not only their language and learning needs, but also their cognitive and social needs (Reilly & Ward, 2000). Different needs may require using various instructional methods and techniques. One of these methods is the Grammar-Translation (G-T) method.

<sup>1</sup> Paper is from the first author's master's thesis entitled, "An Investigation of the Effect of TPRS on Vocabulary Acquisition among Third Graders" supervised by the second author at Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyonkarahisar, Turkey.

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The G-T method is one of the best methods used for teaching English as a second or foreign language (Al Darwish, 2017). Reading, grammar teaching and translation are targeted in G-T method (Durrani, 2016). The following techniques are used in the G-T method (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011): (1) Students can translate a literary text from the target language to the mother tongue in written, spoken or both. (2) Students can answer the questions in the target language that probe their knowledge and inferences about the text they read. (3) Students can find the synonyms or antonyms of a group of words given to them from the reading text or define the words mentioned in the text. (4) Students can recognize or memorize words of common etymology in the target and mother tongue. (5) Students can apply the grammar rules presented to them in detail and examples to different examples. (6) Students can fill in the blanks in sentences including missing words with new words. (7) Students can memorize words in the target language and their native language equivalents, grammar rules and paradigms (e.g. verb conjugations). (8) Students can form sentences consisting of new words they learn. (9) Students can write a composition in a target language on a given subject or they can summarize a text they read. Achievement is measured by grammar tests and pre-planned tasks (written translations, articles or oral presentations) (Whyte, 2011). In this method, communication in target language is not targeted because little attention is given to speaking and listening, and almost no attention is given to pronunciation (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). However, since the mother language hinders the acquisition of the target language, the G-T method has been criticized, and even the use of translation is prohibited in direct and audio-lingual methods (Asgarian & Musayeva Vefalı, 2015). Young learners can learn better with interactive and communicative vocabulary activities (Harida, 2013). One of the communicative approaches that can be used in teaching for this purpose is the Total Physical Response (TPR). Developed by Asher in 1965, the TPR method, which aims to improve listening comprehension and oral communication skills at the beginner level through physical activities, is criticized for the reason that it is limited by imperatives and some grammatical structures and neglects literacy skills (Oflaz, 2015). This raises the need to use different methods to increase comprehensible input. One of these methods is the Total Physical Response-Storytelling Method (TPRS).

The TPRS method was developed by the Spanish teacher Blaine Ray, who observed that his students were tired of reacting to a series of commands when he used Asher's TPR method (Alley & Overfield, 2008), in the 90s to support the TPR method and further language acquisition (Davidheiser, 2002). In the TPRS method, also known as "Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling", the teacher tells a story through visual images and repeats the story by adding new words to the story each time (Nurlaili et al., 2015). The stages of the TPRS process are as follows (Gross, 2003 cited in Dettenrieder, 2006, p. 18-19): (1) TPRS process starts with the introduction of the vocabulary. (2) After acquiring the vocabulary, the teacher tells the story, asks questions about the story and uses the circle technique. (3) After these first steps followed by reading, the teacher presents the mini-story lines with new 1-4 words. (4) After the students memorize the new 10-15 words, the teacher tells a strange and exaggerated mini-story that contains all the words and asks creative questions about the story. Then, the students answer these questions. (5) The teacher tells a main story that includes all the words in mini-stories. Students dramatize and re-tell this main story. (6) Students create a new story with the help of a teacher and the teacher tells it again. The teacher asks more questions about the story. Students answer these questions. Through interesting stories, the TPRS method improves the students' fluency of speaking the target language (Muzammil & Andy, 2017), language skills such as listening, imagining and guessing (Rokhayani, 2012), and their awareness, analysis and expression (Wright, 2004).

### *1.1. Literature review*

When the studies carried out abroad regarding the TPRS method are examined, it is suggested that the TPRS method is more efficient than the traditional method in grammar and fluent writing and more

effective than the other methods in fluent writing, and the TPRS method is as influential as the traditional method in fluent speaking and writing and in reading and as effective as the processing instruction in grammar and reading (Foster, 2011); that the TPRS method improves the English vocabulary of foreign language students and enables them to develop positive attitudes towards the techniques of the TPRS method (Jebeli, 2012); that the TPRS method is more influential in terms of speaking and writing skills of students who take Spanish I course and as influential as the traditional method in terms of listening and reading skills (Dziedzic, 2012); that the TPRS method improves listening skills and helps students desire to learn French more and trust themselves more when using French, and the traditional method improves listening and reading skills, but blunts speaking skills (Murray, 2014); that the TPRS method influences the first graders' acquisition of the English vocabulary of mathematical shapes and increases their motivation and creativity (Nurlaili et al., 2015); that the high school students exposed to the TPRS method in Spanish III course have higher levels of motivation to learn foreign languages, but those exposed to the communicative language teaching method have higher levels of reading proficiency (Blanton, 2015); that the TPRS method has positive effects on sophomores' acquisition of English vocabulary and perceptions (Pinos Ortiz, 2018); that freshmen exposed to the TPRS method have lower levels of anxiety about learning English and learn English more (Cedeño, 2019); that the 9-12th graders make more progress in vocabulary learning after their teachers attend the Blended Learning with Coaching Course on TPRS (DeBord, 2019); that the TPRS method intrinsically motivates secondary school students to learn foreign languages and draws their attention, and the autonomous nature of creating stories with the teacher results in a higher sense of personal ability and of group belongingness (Printer, 2019); that the Jigsaw IV technique is more effective than the TPRS method in developing elementary school students' vocabulary (Katemba & Sianipar, 2020).

When the studies carried out in Turkey about the TPRS method are investigated, it is concluded that the graduate students exposed to the TPRS method easily remember and do not forget Japanese words (Yavuz, 2011); that the pre-school children exposed to the TPRS method in English class are more successful than those exposed to the communicative approach (Demir & Çubukçu, 2014); that the TPRS method affects the vocabulary levels of middle school students and helps them express themselves fluently and accurately, and it improves the creativity of teachers and students, encourages them, and makes the classroom activities funny (Çubukçu, 2014); that the TPRS method positively influences students' grammar and vocabulary and contributes to fluent speaking (İlhan & Tutkun, 2016); that the TPRS method increases grammar and vocabulary performance of the students in Tourism and Hotel Management associate degree program and enables them to develop positive attitudes toward learning English (Asmalı, 2019); that the TPRS method reduces foreign language anxiety of the ninth grade students (Eryılmaz, 2019); that the TPRS method has a positive effect on the pre-school children's recall and retention of the receptive and productive vocabulary and is more beneficial to receptive learning (Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019).

When these studies conducted in Turkey and abroad are examined, experimental studies comparing the TPRS method with another teaching method are found. The TPRS method has been compared with teaching methods such as G-T method, traditional method, communicative language teaching method, processing instruction. These studies put emphasis on the effect of TPRS method on teaching English, French, Japanese and Spanish as a foreign language. Among the variables on which the effect of the TPRS method was investigated, ability to remember what is listened, achievement, attitudes towards the techniques of the TPRS method, confidence in using a language, creativity, desire to learn a language, foreign language anxiety, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, motivation, perceptions about teaching method, retention of learning, verbal skills, and vocabulary (acquisition) can be cited. When the findings were evaluated, it was found that the TPRS method was more efficient than the other teaching methods or as effective as the other teaching methods. Though few, there are also

studies which depict that the other teaching method is more effective than the TPRS as a teaching method. There are also studies that do not compare the TPRS method with the other teaching methods and contain no experimental and control groups. These studies were carried out with the participation of pre-school, elementary school, middle school, high school, associate, undergraduate, graduate students and adults. However, the research examining the effect of the TPRS on the acquisition of foreign language vocabulary at elementary school level is few in number. When the related literature is analysed, no research investigating the effect of the TPRS method on foreign language vocabulary acquisition of elementary school third grade students was found. Therefore, current research is expected to fill the existing gap in the literature.

Many students have difficulties in foreign language vocabulary acquisition in Turkey, they just memorize words without internalization and these words are forgotten in time. When it is considered that especially the English teachers in Turkey mostly prefer the TPR and G-T methods (Çakır & Kafa, 2013), and that they use grammar-based teaching at a high level and speaking-based teaching at a low level (Okmen & Kilic, 2016), it has been determined that the conditions lead students to memorize and not to learn long lastingly. It is thought that the TPRS method, through which students learn the words by internalizing them with visual and audio elements in the context, may be a solution. The TPRS method, which provides students with a large number of comprehensible inputs, aims to develop their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Since the TPRS method is expected to cause anxiety for the students at the optimum level, it is anticipated that the obstacles to learning will also disappear. Ray and Seely (2012) stated that the TPR and TPRS methods increase students' levels of understanding and motivation and decrease their anxiety levels (cited in Murray, 2014, p. 20). In parallel with this finding, the TPRS method is anticipated to increase the number of words acquired.

### *1.2. Research questions*

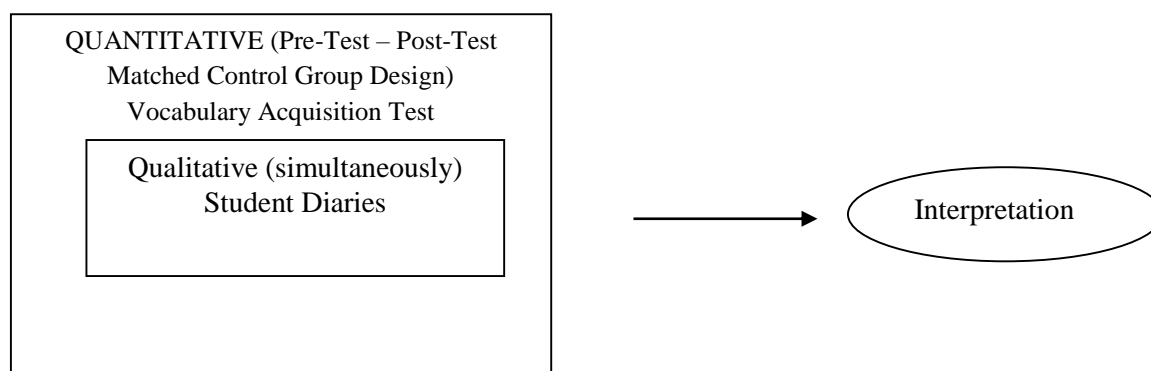
This study aims to examine the effects of the TPRS method and the G-T method as a traditional method on the elementary school third grade students' acquisition of English vocabulary and their views on these methods. The questions to be responded in the study are stated below:

1. What is the effect of the TPRS method and of the G-T method on elementary school third grade students' acquisition of English vocabulary?
  - a. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test scores of the experimental group and of the control group?
  - b. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group?
  - c. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group?
  - d. Is there a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental group and of the control group?
2. What are the views of elementary school third grade students on the TPRS method?
3. What are the views of elementary school third grade students on the G-T method?

## **2. Method**

The design of this study, which has a mixed method, is an embedded design. In an embedded design, a dataset is the supporter of another dataset (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2014, p. 98). Qualitative data play

a supportive role in this research. In other words, qualitative data are embedded in quantitative data (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Research Design

In the quantitative dimension of this research, one of the quasi-experimental designs, the pre-test - post-test matched control group design, was utilised as shown in Table 1 because the classrooms in the elementary school, where both experimental and control groups were formed, were selected at the outset of the 2017-2018 academic year. Since it is difficult to create equivalent groups, quasi-experimental designs are used in the most educational research (Ekiz, 2003).

**Table 1.** Pre-Test – Post-Test Matched Control Group Design

Group		Pre-test	Procedure	Post-test
Experimental	M	T1	TPRS	T1
Control	M	T1	G-T	T1

While the independent variable of the research was the TPRS method used for four weeks, the dependent variable was the scores gained by the elementary school third grade students from the “Vocabulary Acquisition Test” developed by the researchers. The pre-test was administered as a post-test after four weeks of intervention.

In the qualitative dimension of this research, the views of experimental group students on the TPRS method and of control group students on the G-T method were determined through the diaries students kept during the intervention.

### 2.1. Sampling

The research population consists of third-grade students studying in public elementary schools in Turkey, and the sample includes 49 third-grade students in a public elementary school in Kadınhanı/Konya, Turkey that is selected by convenience sampling. In the experimental group in which the TPRS method is used, there are 13 girls and 13 boys; and in the control group in which the G-T method is used, there are 14 girls and 9 boys. The students in both groups were matched according to their report card grades they earned from the English lesson in the second grade. Independent-samples t test results obtained to compare the report card grades students in both groups earned from the English lesson in the second grade are represented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Independent-Samples *t* Test Results Comparing Report Card Grades Students in Both Groups Earned From the English Lesson in the Second Grade

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Experimental	26	2.04	.72	.14
Control	23	2.26	.81	.17

$p > .05$ ; 1: poor, 2: fair; 3: good

According to the independent-samples *t* test results, there is no statistically significant difference between the mean report card grades students in both groups earned from the English lesson in the second grade [ $t(47)=-1.02, p>.05$ ].

## 2.2. Instruments

The Vocabulary Acquisition Test researchers have developed and student diaries were utilised to collect data in this research.

### 2.2.1. Vocabulary acquisition test

The Vocabulary Acquisition Test is developed by the researchers considering the objectives of the “Weather” unit in the 3rd grade English language curriculum that are stated as “E3.9.L1. Students define various weather conditions” and “E3.9.S.1. Students talk about weather conditions” (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2017). The “Weather” unit is chosen because it contains a large number of comprehensible inputs and can be dramatized via stories. For the Vocabulary Acquisition Test, the following 11 words in this unit have been determined (MoNE, 2017): “cold, cloudy, freezing, hot, nice, rainy, snowy, sunny, warm, wet, windy”. In addition, the listening texts and activities in the textbooks approved by the Board of Education and taught in public elementary schools in the 2017-2018 academic year have been reviewed, and the following 20 words and phrases appropriate for the aforementioned objectives have been added to the “Vocabulary Acquisition Test”: “desert, eating a sandwich, home, park, penguins, playing football, playing snowball, playing the piano, playing volleyball, raincoat, rainforest, reading a book, running, sea, snowman, swimming, the Sahara Desert, the South Pole, umbrella, walking”. Thus, a 31-item, three-choice test has been developed using a visual to represent each word. The content and face validity of the Vocabulary Acquisition Test have been ensured by the review of three experts in the field of English Language Teaching, an expert in the field of Measurement and Assessment and of two English teachers. The developed Vocabulary Acquisition Test has been revised according to the suggestions of these experts, and the number of items decreases from 31 to 28. Afterwards, the Vocabulary Acquisition Test has been pilot tested with 141 fourth grade students. The correct responses of the students are coded as 1, while the wrong ones and nonresponses as 0. As a result of the pilot testing, it has been found that the upper and lower 27% of groups consist of a total of 76 students. Item difficulty (*pj*) and discrimination (*rjx*) indices are given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Item Analysis Results of the Vocabulary Acquisition Test

Item No	<i>pj</i>	<i>rjx</i>	Item No	<i>pj</i>	<i>rjx</i>
I1	0.697	0.342	I15	0.539	0.500
I2	0.605	0.263	I16	0.842	0.315
I3	0.776	0.447	I17	0.552	0.421
I4	0.644	0.394	I18	0.592	0.289
I5	0.828	0.342	I19	0.460	0.500
I6	0.697	0.394	I20	0.368	0.368
I7	0.644	0.184	I21	0.763	0.473

I8	0.644	0.394	I22	0.842	0.263
I9	0.736	0.315	I23	0.315	0.315
I10	0.618	0.605	I24	0.657	0.526
I11	0.618	0.605	I25	0.842	0.315
I12	0.723	0.500	I26	0.592	0.605
I13	0.421	0.368	I27	0.697	0.605
I14	0.815	0.368	I28	0.697	0.552

As a result of item analysis, the 7<sup>th</sup> item, whose discrimination index ( $r_{jx}$ ) is less than 0.19, has been excluded from the test (Güler, 2016). Thus, the total number of items in the Vocabulary Acquisition Test decreases to 27. After these modifications, the calculated KR-20 reliability coefficient of 0.755 indicates that the Vocabulary Acquisition Test is highly reliable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In the main study, the KR-21 reliability coefficient has been calculated as 0.38 for the pre-test and 0.87 for the post-test used in the experimental group; and as 0.70 for the pre-test and 0.86 for the post-test used in the control group.

### 2.2.2. Student diaries

For four weeks, the students in the experimental group in which the TPRS method is used and those in the control group in which the G-T method is used have kept diaries in which they reflect their feelings and thoughts about the English lesson. It is aimed that students' reflections about the process support the quantitative findings of the research.

## 2.3. Data collection procedures

Permission was obtained from Afyon Kocatepe University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee and Konya Provincial Directorate of National Education to collect data from third grade students in a public elementary school. The parents of the students were informed about the aim of the study with the informed consent form and permission was obtained from the parents. They allowed their children to participate in the research. The Vocabulary Acquisition Test, utilised as pre- and post-test, was administered to experimental and control group students in their classrooms within a one-hour session (40 minutes). The students in the experimental group in which the TPRS method was used and those in the control group in which the G-T method was used had kept a diary for four weeks in order to reflect their feelings and thoughts about the English lesson.

The procedure includes the activities carried out by the researchers in both groups for four weeks (two hour-sessions per week) in the spring term of 2017-2018 academic year. The researchers developed lesson plans which aim at attaining the objectives of the “Weather” unit in the 3rd grade English language curriculum (MoNE, 2017) through the TPRS method in the experimental group and the G-T method in the control group. These lesson plans were subjected to the review of three experts in the field of English Language Teaching and reviewed. The lesson plans used in the experimental and control groups are explained in more detail below.

### 2.3.1. Data collection procedures in the experimental group

In the first week of the lesson, the experimental group students exposed to the TPRS method have been informed that they will learn the “Weather” unit/theme. The lesson began with asking the students what they think of the “Weather” and the word “Weather” was written on the board. Concepts related to the “Weather” have been expressed in Turkish by several students. Seven different English words to be taught in the first week were written on the board with their meanings in Turkish. Then, the word in the target language was shown using appropriate hand and arm gestures. For example, the word “rain” is expressed by moving the fingers from top to bottom. Then the Turkish equivalents of all the words

planned to be taught in the target language are explained in detail. In the second phase of the lesson, the “practice with words” phase, the students modelled seven different English words which were modelled by the researchers with hand and arm gestures and verbal commands. Volunteer students then gave commands to their peers. Later, the researchers went on giving the commands in a mixed order by putting their hands to their back, and all students followed the verbal commands using hand and arm gestures. The students were divided into three groups and a competition was held, and the groups were asked to show the commands given in a mixed order with hand and arm gestures. Students who did wrong were eliminated and the student who did exceptionally well was chosen as winner. After the competition, seven different English words in the target language were asked by using individualized questions. For example, the question “Do you like playing volleyball?” was responded as “Yes”. When the bell rang, visual images of the mini story that would be used in the second lesson were hung in a mixed order on the board, and when the lesson began, the students were provided with the mini story. After reading the story three times using the visual images, the students were asked some semantic questions about the story. While the researchers were reading the story for the fourth time, volunteer students dramatized the characters in the mini story. Meanwhile, the students read the mini story and showed the appropriate images on the board, and they dramatized the characters in the mini story if they were willing to do so. The lesson ended, and the students were assigned homework by telling them to review the story. At the end, they were asked to keep the diaries in which they reflect their feelings and thoughts about the lesson. Similar activities continued in the second, third and fourth weeks of the intervention.

#### *2.3.2. Data collection procedures in the control group*

In the first week in which the G-T method was used, the researchers provided the students with the mini story and activity sheets with related questions in order to teach seven different English words in the “Weather” unit. After writing the title “Unit 9: Weather” on the blackboard, the mini story was read by the researchers. In addition, these seven different English words were written on the board: “Rainy, umbrella, rainforest, walking, home, raincoat, playing volleyball”. Students tried to guess the Turkish equivalents of these words. Volunteer students read the mini story again and translated it into Turkish language. Students answered the reading comprehension questions about the heroes in the story. The students were given feedback by the researchers. The students easily guessed and filled in the blanks when the researchers said the Turkish equivalent of each sentence in the fill-in-the-blank activity. The researchers walked around the classroom and checked the students’ answers and gave the students feedback on their answers. The researchers explained the grammar topics with examples from the story and wrote the sentences of the story expressed in the “present continuous tense” on the blackboard. The students were told that the verb “-ing” was added to the end of the verbs in the present continuous tense, and the examples of “present continuous tense” were written on the board, and explanations about grammar were made. Toward the end of the lesson, the researchers asked the students to memorize grammar topics related to the “present continuous tense” and to fill in the blanks with appropriate words in the fill-in-the-blank activity. Later, the students were told to prepare a poster about the words they learned, and the students were assigned homework. At the end, they were asked to write the diaries in which they reflect their feelings and thoughts about the lesson. The researchers continued implementing similar activities in the following three weeks of the intervention.

#### *2.4. Data analysis*

The first question of this research was analysed by quantitative data analysis and the second and third questions by qualitative data analysis. The pre- and post-test scores earned by the students in both groups from the “Vocabulary Acquisition Test” formed the quantitative data. A student can get a maximum of 27 points from the three-choice “Vocabulary Acquisition Test”. The correct responses of the students



are coded as 1, while the wrong ones and nonresponses as 0. Since six students in the experimental group and five students in the control group were absent on the day of the pre-test and / or post-test, the data for these students were excluded from the analysis, and the data for 20 students in the experimental group and for 18 in the control group were analysed. Quantitative data were interpreted using statistical software. The data collected for the first research question were analysed using mean and standard deviation values as descriptive statistics and independent- and related-samples *t* tests as inferential statistics. Before analysing the data, it was examined whether the data were normally distributed or not. The skewness (0.85 and 0.33, respectively) and kurtosis (1.15 and -1.02, respectively) values for the pre- and post-test scores of the students in both groups were found to be between -10 and +10 (Kline, 2016). Therefore, it was assumed that the data were normally distributed, and parametric tests were performed to analyse the data. The diaries kept by 20 students in the experimental group and 18 students in the control group regarding the second and third research questions were subjected to descriptive analysis after the intervention. After students' diaries are carefully read, they are coded in accordance with the pre-determined themes namely, "positive views on the TPRS method", "negative views on the TPRS method", "positive views on the G-T method" and "negative views on the G-T method" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In order to ensure the anonymity, each student is given a pseudonym. The consistency of the data was ensured by the researchers and a specialist with qualitative research experience coding the student diaries independently (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Calculating the percentage of consensus among co-coders as 84.4% for the diaries about the TPRS method and as 86.8% for the diaries about the G-T method shows that the consistency is high (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Effect of the TPRS and G-T Methods on the Vocabulary Acquisition of Elementary School Third Grade Students

##### 3.1.1. Pre-Test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Results of the independent-samples *t* test done to determine whether the difference between the pre-test scores of the students in the experimental and control groups is significant or not are indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Independent-Samples *t* Test Results Regarding the Difference between Pre-test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Experimental	20	11.50	3.22	0.72
Control	18	11.33	4.49	1.06

$p > .05$

According to Table 4, the mean pre-test score of the students in the experimental group ( $M = 11.50$ ,  $SD = 3.22$ ) is higher than the mean pre-test score of the students in the control group ( $M = 11.33$ ,  $SD = 4.49$ ). As the variances are assumed as equal as a result of the Levene's test ( $p > .05$ ), it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the pre-test scores of the students in both groups [ $t(36) = 0.13$ ,  $p > .05$ ]. As a result, it can be suggested that both groups are homogeneous in terms of vocabulary acquisition.

##### 3.1.2. Pre- and Post-Test Scores of the Experimental Group

Results of the related-samples *t* test done to determine whether the difference between the pre- and post-test scores of the experimental group students is significant or not are indicated in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Related-Samples *t* Test Results Regarding the Difference between Pre- and Post-test Scores of the Experimental Group

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Pre-test	20	11.50	3.22	0.72
Post-test	20	15.20	6.37	1.42

$p < .05$

According to Table 5, the mean pre-test score of the experimental group students ( $M = 11.50$ ,  $SD = 3.22$ ) is lower than their mean post-test score ( $M = 15.20$ ,  $SD = 6.37$ ). It is concluded that the difference between the pre- and post-test scores the experimental group students earned from the “Vocabulary Acquisition Test” is significant [ $t(19) = -3.42$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. Based on this, it can be inferred that the TPRS method is effective in the experimental group students’ acquisition of vocabulary related to the “Weather” unit/ theme.

### 3.1.3. Pre- and Post-Test Scores of the Control Group

Results of the related-samples *t* test done to determine whether the difference between the pre- and post-test scores of the control group students is significant or not are given in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Related-Samples *t* Test Results Regarding the Difference between Pre- and Post-test Scores of the Control Group

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Pre-test	18	11.33	4.49	1.06
Post-test	18	15.72	6.19	1.46

$p < .05$

According to Table 6, the mean pre-test score of the control group students ( $M = 11.33$ ,  $SD = 4.49$ ) is lower than their mean post-test score ( $M = 15.72$ ,  $SD = 6.19$ ). It is concluded that the difference between the pre- and post-test scores of the control group students earned from the “Vocabulary Acquisition Test” is significant [ $t(17) = -4.26$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. Upon this, it can be expressed that the G-T method is effective in the control group students’ acquisition of vocabulary related to the “Weather” unit/ theme.

### 3.1.4. Post-Test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Results of the independent-samples *t* test done to determine whether the difference between the post-test scores of the students in both groups is significant or not are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Independent-Samples *t* Test Results Regarding the Difference between Post-test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Experimental	20	15.20	6.37	1.42
Control	18	15.72	6.19	1.46

$p > .05$

According to Table 7, it can be seen that the mean post-test score of the experimental group students ( $M = 15.20$ ,  $SD = 6.37$ ) is lower than the mean post-test score of the control group students ( $M = 15.72$ ,  $SD = 6.19$ ). Since the variances are assumed as equal as a result of the Levene’s test ( $p > .05$ ), it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the post-test scores of the students in both groups [ $t(36)$

= -0.26,  $p > .05$ ]. As a result, it can be suggested that the TPRS method is not more/less effective than the G-T method in terms of acquisition of the vocabulary related to the “Weather” unit/theme.

### *3.2. Elementary School Third Grade Students’ Views on the TPRS Method*

#### *3.2.1. Elementary School Third Grade Students’ Positive Views on the TPRS Method*

As a result of the descriptive analysis of the diaries written by the students in the experimental group in which the TPRS method was used during the four-week intervention, the students stated that they did not get bored in the lesson, had a lot of fun, were happy, dramatized the mini story, learned new words and the movements they did in groups and with the whole class and that they were involved in a competition and wrote diaries. In their diaries, the students also noted the English and Turkish equivalents of the English words they learned in the lesson. Many of the students mentioned that they liked the activities done in the lesson, they played games, and they understood the activities. The students reflected their feelings and thoughts as follows:

We played games today and had fun. We wrote stories, we did activities and we did their movements together. We learned to go to our house, hold an umbrella, walk and wear a raincoat. (TPRS group, Furkan, 1st week)

We learned some English words today and had a lot of fun. First, our friend Azra showed movements of the words written on the board. Then our teacher read the story written in English, and we did movements about the story. (TPRS group, Damla, 2nd week)

We learned words this week, dramatized the words and read the story. There were Spani Bob (sponge bob) and baks mani (Bugs Bunny). We selected three of our friends. Spani bob (Sponge Bob) was one of them, one of them was miki mor (Mickey Mouse) and the other was baks mani (Bugs Bunny) and the story was very nice. Then our teacher gave us a blank sheet of paper, then we wrote what we did today and so we finished this week. (TPRS group, Başak, 3rd week)

We have been very active today. Our teacher distributed the papers. Then our teacher said that we will have an exam next week. Then we repeated the words of the first week. We’ve done the movements of all words again. Then we learned the words of today. Then we learned the movements. We both had fun. Then the bell rang. When we arrived, our teacher hung the papers of the story we will learn and then started the lesson. Our teacher started reading the story. When our teacher finished reading, we started from the beginning of the story. It was about the words we learned today. We learned the words in an order. Then our teacher asked them in a mixed order. Then a group of friends stood up. Then we chose the best one and started writing this diary and then I finished it. (TPRS group, Cem, 4th week)

#### *3.2.2. Elementary School Third Grade Students’ Negative Views on the TPRS Method*

Very few students exposed to the TPRS method stated that they were bored during the lesson. One student stated that she got bored while learning the movements; another student stated that she was bored with the activities done in groups. In the second week of the use of the TPRS method, the students did not express any negative emotions or thoughts. The students reflected their feelings and thoughts as follows:

While I was learning their movements, I was bored and said ‘this is unfair’ (TPRS group, Gizem, 1st week)  
I’m bored. (TPRS group, Ekrem, 1st week)

We were divided into groups. I didn’t have much fun, but it was okay. (TPRS group, Azra, 3rd week)

I was a bit bored in the other lesson. I was bored in the other lesson, too. (TPRS group, Gizem, 4th week)

### 3.3. Elementary School Third Grade Students' Views on the G-T Method

#### 3.3.1. Elementary School Third Grade Students' Positive Views on the G-T Method

Many students in the control group exposed to the G-T method stated that they liked and enjoyed the lesson. They mentioned that they learned the present continuous tense, the weather, and the English words about the weather, had fun in the lesson, and enjoyed the topics they learned. Many students also wrote seven different words learned that week in their diaries. In addition, there are students who talked about grammar topics and activities performed every week. For example, they talked about synonyms and antonyms in English, fill-in-the-blank activities, and learning to ask weather in different cities. There are a few students who shared that they answered questions about stories and that the words taught previously were covered again during the lesson. The students reflected their feelings and thoughts as follows:

We learned the weather today. I liked and enjoyed the weather topic very much. I loved and learned the present continuous tense. Walking was “yürümek” and I had understood the lesson. Raincoat was a “yağmurluk” and I liked all. (G-T group, Ecrin, 1st week)

We had a lot of fun today and memorized things very easily. My English teacher asked us very good questions. Snowy means “karlı”, cold means “soğuk-üşütmek”, and snowman means “kardan adam” (G-T group, Sümeyye, 2nd week)

Today we learned weather, synonyms and antonyms, and questions about the story and I liked them all. We learned how the weather is in Ankara and Konya. (G-T group, Kerim, 3rd week)

The teacher wrote the Turkish equivalents of English words, and we covered the lessons we did and the lesson was very good. We filled in the blanks. Nobody spoke in the lesson and everyone wrote whatever the teacher wrote. The lesson was funny. (G-T group, Burak, 4th week)

#### 3.3.2. Elementary School Third Grade Students' Negative Views on the G-T Method

Very few students exposed to the G-T method mentioned that they were bored during the lesson or that the lesson was boring. The students reflected their feelings and thoughts as follows:

The lesson was a bit boring. (G-T group, Murat, 1st week)

I'm bored teacher. (G-T group, Murat, 2nd week)

I'm bored. (G-T group, Ravzanur, 3rd week)

Boring. (G-T group, Murat, 3rd week)

## 4. Discussion and Conclusions

In this research, it was concluded that the difference between the pre- and post-test scores of the experimental group students regarding the “Vocabulary Acquisition Test” was significant. According to this finding, it can be suggested that the TPRS method is effective in the experimental group students' acquisition of vocabulary related to the “Weather” unit/ theme. There are several studies that find that the TPRS method positively affects vocabulary acquisition (Jebeli, 2012; Mohammed, 2009; Nurlaili et al., 2015; Pinos Ortiz, 2018). The TPRS method has been found to increase the achievement of third grade students in speaking (Simanjuntak & Sihombing, 2015). Compared to communicative language teaching and G-T methods, the TPRS method has a positive impact on the elementary fourth grade students' verbal skills and ability to remember what they listen to (Yıldız Akyüz, 2018). In addition, Fagertun (2020) states that the TPRS method is more effective than the Reading Aloud in vocabulary learning of 6-8-year-olds learning English as a second language.

In this study, it was found that the difference between the pre- and post-test scores of the control group students regarding the “Vocabulary Acquisition Test” was significant. According to this finding, it can be suggested that the G-T method is effective in the control group students' acquisition of vocabulary

related to the “Weather” unit/ theme. Supporting this finding of the research, Beal (2011) concluded that the traditional method was more effective than the TPRS method in the achievement of high school students. In addition, a significant difference in terms of listening, grammar and writing is found to be in favour of the control group in which traditional methods that do not contain a story context are used when compared with the TPRS method (Merinnage De Costa, 2015).

In this study, it was concluded that the difference between the post-test scores of the students in both groups regarding the “Vocabulary Acquisition Test” was not significant. According to this finding, it is understood that the TPRS method is not more/less effective than the G-T method in terms of acquisition of the vocabulary related to the “Weather” unit/theme. There are studies that reveal the equal effects of the TPRS and G-T methods on vocabulary acquisition. For example, high school students in classes with lower socio-economic level in which the TPRS method was used performed as much as their peers in classes with higher socio-economic level in which traditional methods were used in terms of word- and sentence-level comprehension, reading comprehension and listening comprehension (Varguez, 2009). Castro (2010) found that the TPRS and G-T methods equally affected adults’ vocabulary of English as a second language. Türkeş (2011) found that the TPRS method affected the English vocabulary acquisition of elementary school 5th grade students as much as the traditional method (i.e. definition-based teaching method). It was found that students with learning disabilities, who were exposed to the TPRS and traditional methods, showed equal test performance (Holleny, 2012). Roberts and Thomas (2014) concluded that adults who have been learning Spanish for 35 hours with the TPRS method were as successful as students who have been learning Spanish for 1-3 years with more traditional methods.

The experimental group students exposed to the TPRS method during the four-week intervention stated that the lesson was too funny and that they felt happy and learned new words. However, few students stated that they were bored of the movements and group activities. Many students in the control group exposed to the G-T method stated in their diaries that they liked and enjoyed the lesson while very few students stated that the lesson itself was boring. Decker (2008) stated that most students had fun in the TPRS lesson, most students learned in the grammar lesson and that there was also a lower percentage of students who had fun and learned in both lessons. It was also stated that many students liked learning through visuals and note-taking in the grammar lesson and the interactive and participatory nature of the TPRS lesson. It was determined by Yati (2017) that the TPRS method and the materials used therein were well-received by the fifth grade students, the atmosphere of the classroom was positive, the students were happy, and the TPRS method developed the vocabulary of the fifth grade students. Türkeş (2011) stated that the fifth grade students gradually started to like the TPRS method due to stories, had fun during the lesson, found the topics covered in the lesson easy and learned new things. Nuraeningsih and Rusiana (2016) determined that the TPRS method improved vocabulary skills of second grade students, and all students had fun and were happy, and the TPRS method was a new, exciting experience for students. Examining the views of students on the G-T method, Griffiths (2008) found that the preferences of higher-level language students regarding learning methods were eclectic, and they preferred many other methods instead of methods that only emphasize grammar, translation or vocabulary.

As a result of the research, understanding of the fact that the TPRS method is not a more/less effective method than the G-T method can be considered as related to Prabhu (1990)’s argument of the eclectic method. It is argued by Prabhu (1990) that there is no best method, the effectiveness of a method depends on context, and that more than one teaching method can be used in the same context. Therefore, it is recommended that different teaching methods can be used in the same context. Furthermore, the recommendations for further research and practice can be listed as follows:

- (1) This study aimed to compare the TPRS method with one of the traditional teaching methods, G-T method. In further research, the TPRS method can be compared with more contemporary teaching methods (such as communicative language teaching / task-based language teaching / collaborative learning / experiential learning).
- (2) The elementary school third grade students participated in this study. The effect of the TPRS method can also be investigated with different and larger samples (e.g. elementary school second or fourth grade students). The number of experiment and control groups can be increased.
- (3) The duration of the intervention can be increased.
- (4) The effect of the TPRS and G-T methods on vocabulary acquisition can be examined through semi-structured interviews and observations to be carried out with elementary school students.
- (5) The techniques and activities used in the TPRS method can be used by teachers.
- (6) Subjects, mini stories and words appropriate for the nature of the TPRS method can be added to the English textbooks which are used by students in schools.
- (7) English teachers can be offered in-service training seminars and courses on current teaching methods and techniques. In order to provide easy access to these courses, Internet can be functionally used.

## 5. Ethics Committee Approval

The authors confirm that ethical approval was obtained from Afyon Kocatepe University (Approval Date: April 06,2020).

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## Tüm fiziksel tepki-öykü anlatma (TFT-Ö) yönteminin ilkökul üçüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin kelime edinimine etkisinin incelenmesi

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### Özet

Bu araştırma, tüm fiziksel tepki-öykü anlatma (TFT-Ö) ve dilbilgisi-çeviri (D-Ç) yöntemlerinin ilkökul üçüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin İngilizce kelime edinimine etkisini ve ilkökul üçüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin bu yöntemler hakkındaki görüşlerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu gömülü karma yöntem araştırmasında veriler, Konya Kadınhanı ilçesine bağlı bir ilkökuldaki 49 ilkökul üçüncü sınıf öğrencisinden toplanmıştır. Kelime Edinim Testi ve öğrenci günlükleri ile toplanan verilerin analizi için ilişkisiz ve ilişkili örneklemeler *t* testleri ve betimsel analizler kullanılmıştır. Deney grubu öğrencilerinin kelime ediniminde TFT-Ö yönteminin etkili olduğu; kontrol grubu öğrencilerinin kelime ediniminde D-Ç yönteminin etkili olduğu; TFT-Ö yönteminin kelime edinimi açısından D-Ç yönteminden daha az / çok etkili bir yöntem olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Ek olarak, her iki gruptaki çoğu öğrenci, uygulama boyunca tuttıkları günlüklerinde her iki yöntemle ilgili olumlu görüşler yansıtmaktadır.

*Anahtar sözcükler:* tüm fiziksel tepki-öykü anlatma (TFT-Ö); dilbilgisi-çeviri (D-Ç); ilkökul üçüncü sınıf öğrencileri; İngilizce; kelime edinimi

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