

Teachers' Perceptions on Using Total Physical Response in ELT for Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore teachers' perceptions on using Total Physical Response as a teaching method in English language teaching for students with mild intellectual disabilities. Previous research has discussed the effectiveness of the TPR method in teaching English to students with mild intellectual disabilities. However, not many have examined teachers' perspectives as facilitators in using this method. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through an open-ended questionnaire and interviews. The participants in this study were five class teachers at SMALB level in Semarang who also teach English in their classes. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's thematic analysis, resulting in four emerging themes: teachers' conceptual knowledge of TPR, the benefits perceived by teachers in using the TPR method, the challenges and difficulties faced by teachers in implementing TPR, and variations in the classroom use of TPR. Findings show that most teachers understand and intuitively apply TPR, perceiving TPR as effective for material comprehension, increasing motivation, enjoyment in learning, and helping memory retention in some cases. Challenges include teaching abstract material, academic diversity, and short attention spans. Also, the teacher adapts TPR using realia and video. This study highlights that TPR is a suitable and supportive

method for teaching English to students with mild intellectual disabilities.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Mild Intellectual Disabilities, Perceptions, Teacher, Total Physical Response

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is gaining increasing attention in global education discourse, particularly the right of students with disabilities to receive a quality education on a par with their peers. The goal of inclusive education is not only to improve the quality of education but also to build a society that values diversity, equality, and social justice for people with disabilities (Nurullayevna et al., 2025). Several schools in Indonesia have implemented inclusive education, but numerous obstacles remain. These include a lack of facilities and infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers to teach students with disabilities, and other barriers. Sometimes, these obstacles lead some parents to entrust their children with special needs to special education institutions (special needs school) or specialized services such as homeschooling, which focus on educating students with special needs.

According to Indonesian Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System, chapter six, part eleventh, article 32, paragraph one, the education system recognizes various types of students in special needs schools, such as autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities, hearing and visual impairment, physical disabilities, multiple disabilities, and students who are either gifted or talented. Among the various categories of disabilities, students with mild intellectual disabilities represent a unique subgroup whose learning needs require a thoughtful pedagogical approach. Students with mild intellectual disabilities are those who have intellectual disabilities, but at a mild level. Students with mild intellectual disabilities have IQ scores between 50-70. In this condition, their development is slower than students without intellectual disabilities. However, despite their limitations, they can communicate and learn basic skills (Ke & Liu, 2012). Nevertheless, strategies must be concrete, engaging, and

support these students' learning pace.

The Emancipated Curriculum, also known as Kurikulum Merdeka, now in use in several educational institutions, including special schools, recommends providing English language learning to students with special needs who are deemed capable. However, the practical implementation of this, particularly in special schools, presents significant cognitive and linguistic challenges for students with mild intellectual disabilities. Despite the teachers' thoughtful approach, the subject of English poses complex challenges. Previous research has explored various dimensions of the problem and challenges of teaching EFL to students with special needs, including those with mild intellectual disabilities (Linusi et al., 2022; Lestari et al., 2022; Jumainah, 2023; Fahmi et al., 2024; Ismayani et al., 2024). It has also examined language teaching strategies for students with mild intellectual disabilities, with a focus on teacher instructional strategies (Mohammadian & Dolatabadi, 2016; Dhermawati et al., 2019; Karuppannan et al., 2021; Apriliyanti, 2023).

Teaching English to regular students is sometimes tricky, let alone teaching students with special needs, especially those with mild intellectual disabilities. Teachers have their own challenges when teaching English to them. For example, students with intellectual disabilities often struggle to understand complex sentences and require clear, simple instructions (Saini et al., 2024). Even simple instructions must be repeated until they are understood. Teachers also face difficulty in helping students remember the English vocabulary they have been taught, and another challenge for teachers is getting students to stay focused on the lesson (Lestari et al., 2022).

Teachers must be able to provide appropriate methods and strategies in teaching the English language to students with mild intellectual disabilities who have memory difficulties. Previous research has shown that some teachers and researchers who teach English to students with mild intellectual disabilities use the Total Physical Response method (Lestari et al., 2022; Lisbeth, 2023; Nemes, 2024). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Lestari et al (2022) examined English Language learning for students with mild

intellectual disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic at SLB Wartawan. The primary focus of the study was students' interaction and language skills, as well as how students could learn online via Zoom and offline at home with their parents (blended learning). The article also noted that the teacher used the TPR method in teaching English to students with mild intellectual disabilities during the pandemic. TPR was implemented via Zoom, where teachers demonstrated words with body movements, and parents imitated the movement, helping students understand the vocabulary. Furthermore, Nemes (2024) explicitly mentions in his article that the TPR method is used by many teachers in Hungary to teach English to students with mild intellectual disabilities.

Lisbeth (2023) analyzed the experience of a pre-service English teacher in teaching English to students with mild intellectual disabilities in her research. One of her research results shows that total physical response is beneficial in improving student understanding, reducing anxiety, and increasing motivation through movement, repetition, and visual materials. There is also research by Yáñez et al. (2024), which demonstrates that the TPR method, when combined with realia, can effectively enhance English vocabulary for students with mild intellectual disabilities in Spain.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language learning method introduced by James Asher. This method is a language learning method that combines verbal practice with action (Asher, 2012). Total Physical Response is considered an effective method to help students improve their vocabulary. Generally, teachers use the TPR method to teach foreign vocabulary to young learners. However, this method is also used by adult learners, particularly students with mild intellectual disabilities who struggle with language learning. This method is also suitable for high school students with intellectual disabilities, as even though they are over 15 years old, their cognitive level is almost the same as that of twelve-year-old students without intellectual disabilities (Nugraheni & Kristian, 2019). They tend to have the same mental and cognitive abilities as elementary school students (Hapitri, 2022).

In the context of teaching English using TPR for students

without disabilities, several studies have been conducted, for example, research on students' perception of teaching English vocabulary using the TPR technique at SMPN 2 Plered, Purwakarta was conducted by Ibrohim & Septianti (2018). In addition, a study on teachers' experiences in using TPR to teach vocabulary to elementary school students was carried out by Jayanti & Rachmawati (2025). Another study conducted by Ghani et al. (2025) focuses on teachers' perspectives on applying TPR with 30 English teachers in Pekalongan as the research participants. The study above mainly focuses on teachers' perspectives in regular classes and has not addressed research on perceptions of TPR in the context of special schools.

In the context of students with mild intellectual disabilities, Nugraheni and Kristian (2019) have implemented Total Physical Response with these students, demonstrating the positive impact of using this method in improving the vocabulary skills of students with mild intellectual disabilities in grade 11 at SLB N Magelang. Other studies by Astri & Wahab (2019) also show that using the TPR strategy for students with mild intellectual disabilities can improve their academic ability. Furthermore, the use of TPR in teaching English to students with intellectual disabilities has received negative responses from teachers, as noted in a study examined by Rapti et al. (2021). Rapti et al. (2021) examined teachers' beliefs regarding foreign language teaching for students with intellectual disabilities. They interviewed ten English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers who teach in Greek special/vocational schools at the secondary education level. Based on the interview, some teachers express doubts about the use of Total Physical Response in teaching English to students with intellectual disabilities.

Despite such skepticism, TPR might offer an approach that significantly aids students with cognitive barriers in their understanding. Therefore, it is important to understand and interpret the teacher's perception of the TPR method in teaching English to students with mild intellectual disabilities, especially in the local context. This study aims to explore teachers' knowledge of TPR, its benefits, and challenges when using TPR, as well as the variations in TPR usage in English

language teaching for students with mild intellectual disabilities, thereby contributing to the field of education. It can be used as a literary resource in English language teaching practices in special schools, particularly for students with mild intellectual disabilities.

METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to explore teachers' perceptions on using the Total Physical Response (TPR) strategy in teaching English to students with mild intellectual disabilities. Qualitative descriptive is chosen because this research design offers a comprehensive summary of research, facts, and data obtained in the field, which are then presented coherently and correctly (Sandelowski, 2000). The data for this study were obtained from two sources: a questionnaire and an interview. The open-ended questionnaire was distributed to special education teachers in one of the special schools in Semarang. The questionnaire contained ten questions, which were used as secondary data. The questionnaire was designed to gather initial information about teachers' conceptual knowledge and experiences with implementing TPR and was completed by five participating teachers. All participants are class advisors who also teach English in their class (SMALB level) in the same special needs school and did not graduate from an English education program. Participants who completed the questionnaire in this study were identified using a code consisting of a "P" letter followed by a sequential number (e.g., P1, P2, P3, etc.). Below are the profiles of the teachers who participated in completing the questionnaire.

No	Teacher code	Gender	Grade/level taught	Experienced in teaching MID students
1	P1	Female	Grade 12	> 3 years
2	P2	Female	Grade 11	> 3 years
3	P3	Male	Grade 10	> 3 years
4	P4	Female	Grade 12	> 3 years

5

P5

Female

Grade 10

6 months

After collecting the questionnaire data, the researcher conducted further exploration through semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to express their perspectives more deeply. A semi-structured interview guide was developed to systematically explore the research objective: teachers' conceptual knowledge of TPR, its benefits and challenges, and the variations in using TPR in English language teaching for students with mild intellectual disabilities. Interviews were used as a primary data source and were conducted with two teachers as informants. The selection of interview informants was based on the intensity of teachers' use of Total Physical Response in class. Both teachers frequently used the TPR method in English classes for students with mild intellectual disabilities. Informant 1 (I1) is the class advisor for twelfth-grade students with mild intellectual disabilities and has been involved in the special needs education field for three years. Informant 2 (I2) is the class advisor for students with mild intellectual disabilities in the eleventh grade and has been involved in the special needs education field for seven years. The informants are graduates from a special education program. Interviews with two informants were conducted face-to-face at the school. Moreover, each informant's question-and-answer session lasted approximately 10 minutes. The language used in the interview session is Indonesian. The results were then translated into English by the researcher.

For data analysis, this data was analyzed using a qualitative approach, employing thematic analysis as described by Miles and Huberman. According to Miles & Huberman (1994), data analysis in qualitative research consists of three components: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) drawing conclusions. Data condensation involves simplifying emerging data to focus on aspects relevant to the research objectives. In this study, all data from the questionnaires and interviews were systematically organized to facilitate analysis and focus on the research objectives, which are teachers' understanding of the TPR method, the benefits perceived by

the teacher, the challenges that arise when applying the TPR method, and the use of TPR in the classroom for students with mild intellectual disabilities. Then, data display is the process of arranging data in a structured and organized form. The researcher labels and codes keywords related to the research focus in this section of the transcript. The results obtained are grouped into categories and developed into themes and sub-themes. Drawing conclusions means interpreting data based on the data that emerged during the research process. The researcher analyzed data by comparing field findings with the Total Physical Response theory, teaching theories for students with mild intellectual disabilities, previous studies, and other relevant theories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the thematic analysis results from the questionnaire and interviews conducted with teachers at a special school in Semarang, four themes were identified to address the research questions regarding teachers' perceptions of using the Total Physical Response (TPR) in teaching English for students with mild intellectual disabilities in the local context. The identified themes are: (1) teachers' understanding of Total Physical Response, (2) the benefits of Total Physical Response, (3) the challenges of Total Physical Response implementation, and (4) variations in the use of Total Physical Response.

1. Teachers' Understanding of The Total Physical Response

1.1 Conceptual knowledge of TPR

The questionnaire results revealed variations in teachers' understanding of the term TPR. 80% of teachers were able to write a precise definition of TPR. For example, "*A learning method that links language or speech with physical movement*" (P3, questionnaire). Nevertheless, one teacher demonstrated no prior knowledge of the term TPR and was unable to define it. "*I do not know the TPR method yet, so I do not understand what TPR is*" (P5, questionnaire). These findings indicate that teachers' conceptual understanding of TPR varies. Some teachers already understand the terms and concepts of TPR, and there is also a teacher who is unfamiliar with the term.

The varying understanding of TPR among teachers reflects their diverse experiences and knowledge. This indicates a fundamental gap in their professional development repertoire. P3 has a precise definition and has developed a cognitive schema about TPR, allowing him to apply the method effectively. In contrast, P5's lack of understanding creates a gap that likely prevents her from utilizing TPR, even though the method may be suitable for her students. Furthermore, it potentially limits the learning strategies that can be implemented for students with different learning styles. This finding aligns with teacher cognition theory, as proposed by Borg (2003), which posits that a teacher's thoughts, beliefs, understanding, and knowledge significantly influence all decisions and actions in the classroom. Teacher P5 never used the TPR method because she was unfamiliar with and did not understand the concept of TPR.

1.2 Practical use of TPR without awareness

Interview results revealed a discrepancy between conceptual knowledge and practical awareness in the classroom.

According to my understanding, Total Physical Response is a teaching method that involves physical movements. Sometimes, I use this activity. In general, I have recently become aware that it is called TPR; however, in practice, teachers in special schools certainly utilize this TPR concept extensively, especially those who teach English. (I1, interview)

"...I often use this method, which is a learning approach that combines verbal commands with physical movement. However, I did not know that this method is called TPR, but I sometimes use it in the class" (I2, interview). In the interview results, both teachers conveyed the concept of Total Physical Response as a method that combines verbal instruction with physical movements. This is in accordance with the TPR theory proposed by Asher (2012), which states that TPR is a foreign language learning method that emphasizes the relationship between verbal commands and physical movements. The teacher has implemented the Total Physical Response strategy during English lessons in a class for students with mild intellectual disabilities, and this approach is sometimes used in

the classroom.

Based on the data questionnaire, P2 believes students can understand the material more easily by seeing and doing. It was also found that the teachers only recently knew that the method they use has a special term, Total Physical Response. It can be inferred that the teachers were unfamiliar with the phrase 'Total Physical Response,' but were familiar with the concept of TPR itself. This is interesting because it indicates that the implementation of Total Physical Response by teachers is not just a theoretical method, but also a practical strategy tailored to the needs of students with mild intellectual disabilities. This finding can be understood through Schön's and Edwards's concept of reflection-in-action (as cited in Masharipova, 2025). The teachers had developed a tacit, intuitive understanding of linking movement with language instruction because they had observed its efficiency in their own classrooms. Their knowledge was embedded in their practice rather than in theoretical labels. The teachers tend to use body language as a communication strategy to make a message or material more easily understood by students, and ask students to imitate it.

2. Benefits of the Total Physical Response Method Implementation

Teachers who implement the TPR method for students with mild intellectual disabilities perceive several benefits.

2.1 Help students quickly comprehend the material

80% of the teachers believe that the Total Physical Response method is very effective and helps students with mild intellectual disabilities to understand English material through direct activities and physical movement. According to the interview, teachers perceived that students grasped the material more quickly, which suggests that TPR aids the English learning process for students with mild intellectual disabilities. *"For students with mild intellectual disabilities, in my opinion, this method is very effective as it helps them quickly comprehend the material through practical movement."* (I1, interview). Questionnaire results from other teachers also support this finding. *"I feel students understand the lesson more*

quickly, especially regarding daily activities.” (P3, questionnaire). Based on the results of questionnaires and interviews, TPR helps teachers transfer information to students. Students also find it easier to understand the meaning of the English vocabulary taught to them. This aligns with Asher (1969), who states that students can comprehend vocabulary faster using TPR.

2.2 Increase motivation and interest in English learning

Based on the data questionnaire, 80% of teachers believe that using TPR in teaching English to students with mild intellectual disabilities can increase their motivation and interest in learning English. This was emphasized by the informant in the interview session. *“In some students, this method can increase motivation and interest in English learning.”* (I1, interview). TPR can increase students' motivation for learning English. The questionnaire data also show similar results, for example, *“Students become more interested and enthusiastic.”* (P4, questionnaire). These findings align with Jayanti & Rachmawati (2025), who state that using TPR in the classroom can help increase students' motivation to learn. However, based on the interview section, the teacher emphasized that increased motivation was only seen in a few students. Nevertheless, at least with TPR, some students demonstrated motivation in the learning process. Some showed enthusiasm and were actively involved in the learning process. The teacher also stated that students with mild intellectual disabilities show very little interest in English, unlike students with autism spectrum disorder.

2.3 Fun learning

80% of teachers believe that using TPR in the classroom can make English learning more enjoyable. *“...The learning atmosphere becomes fun”* (P3, questionnaire). The statement expressed by P3 about the learning atmosphere becoming more enjoyable or fun when using TPR is one of the effects of students' enthusiasm. The TPR method offers fun and enjoyment that can put students with mild intellectual disabilities in a positive mood. Teaching the English language to students with mild intellectual disabilities must be fun (Sab'na et al., 2024). So, a fun learning environment is crucial

in class for students with mild intellectual disabilities because it can reduce students' anxiety. Therefore, teachers attempt various strategies while teaching. Fortunately, TPR is a method that can be integrated with various activities. Through questionnaire data, teachers also apply TPR with songs and games. Combining the TPR method with a song can make students happy (Jayanti & Rachmawati, 2025). This makes the classroom atmosphere more lively. Furthermore, enjoyable and relaxed learning environments create or stimulate meaningful learning experiences for students. Here, students with a kinesthetic learning style greatly benefit.

2.4 Increase ability to remember vocabulary

In terms of memory skills, in some cases, TPR has shown an improvement in English vocabulary recall for students with mild intellectual disabilities, as experienced by P2. *"...and there is a visible increase in the ability to remember vocabulary, especially for noun material"* (P2, questionnaire). Regarding memory ability, only P2 (20%) felt an increase in vocabulary among students with mild intellectual disabilities. The material considered most successful was nouns. The nouns used were objects around the students. Thus, it can be concluded that TPR improves students' vocabulary retention. This finding is also supported by research conducted by Nugraheni & Kristian (2019). Nevertheless, the fact that only one teacher reported the improvement in students' vocabulary retention indicates that the success of TPR is influenced by several factors or variables in the classroom, such as students' variables, teacher variables, and the learning environment.

3. Teachers' Challenges of Total Physical Response Method Implementation

Besides the benefits teachers derive, they also face challenges or difficulties when preparing and implementing TPR.

3.1 Challenge of teaching abstract material

The challenges encountered by teachers in using TPR to teach English vocabulary to students with mild intellectual disabilities were related to teaching abstract material. 20% of teachers reported this challenge in the questionnaire. I1 reiterated this finding during the interview session. T1

revealed that she had difficulty using TPR on abstract material. The teacher has difficulty finding actions that match the vocabulary she wants to teach. *"The challenges are greater than teaching students without disabilities: TPR is less suitable for abstract material, such as greetings. So, when studying material like that, I only use the lecture method,"* (I1, interview). Unlike nouns and action verbs, which can be readily demonstrated through gestures (e.g., running, jumping, eating), abstract concepts tend not to have explicit physical representations, thus limiting the application of TPR (Latifovna & Qizi, 2024). This difficulty reflects the broader limitations of TPR as a teaching method. While TPR is helpful for learning concrete and action-based vocabulary, its benefits diminish when lessons shift to more symbolic or intangible content. As a result, teacher often resort to a lecture approach.

3.2 Challenge of academic diversity

According to the questionnaire data, 80% of respondents reported that the challenge they faced when using TPR in the classroom for students with mild intellectual disabilities was the varying academic abilities or diversity of the students. As stated by I1 in the interview session, she revealed that when using TPR, she still has to repeat instructions to some students until they understand. *"... And TPR for students with mild intellectual disabilities requires more repetition than for students without disabilities. The material is limited, but the repetition is extensive"* (I1, interview). Based on this statement, some students are able to understand instruction and material fairly quickly in class. At the same time, other students need more time to absorb the instruction and material. So, repetition is a mandatory strategy. Nevertheless, the intensity of repetition is still the same for all students. For students who understand more quickly, repetition serves as reinforcement. Meanwhile, for slower students, repetition is done more and more intensively so they can catch up. In this case, Repetition is a crucial strategy for ensuring successful learning comprehension. This is in line with teaching strategies for intellectual disabilities that repetition can help them in learning because of their limitations in remembering and processing information (Elkot et al., 2025)

"...In my class, students' abilities vary. Some are kinesthetic

learners, while others are not; some students are passive from the beginning of learning to the end of learning. Therefore, adjustments must be made when using the TPR method." (I2, interview) According to I2, differences in learning styles pose a barrier to implementing TPR in the classroom. One example is the challenge of students' physical participation. Some students are not always willing and able to engage in physical movement, thus hindering the effectiveness of the TPR method. The passive and reluctant students are not only experienced by students with mild intellectual disabilities. Students without disabilities also sometimes exhibit similar behaviour. Students sometimes feel embarrassed when practicing the TPR method (Ghani et al., 2025). Then, students' lack of physical participation requires teachers to adjust, for example, by combining TPR with other strategies to engage passive students in the learning process.

3.3 Challenge of maintaining students' attention and focus

60 % or 3 out of 5 teachers who filled out the questionnaire revealed that students' focus was an obstacle to implementing TPR. *"...and the difficulty of maintaining students' focus."* (P2, questionnaire). The interview results with I2 also support this finding. I2 revealed that she had difficulty implementing TPR due to the low level of students' focus. *"The challenges are that the focus of students with mild intellectual disabilities is short; sometimes, in the middle of concentration, they get distracted. So, I, as a teacher, have to remind them"* (I2, interview). The teacher also identified challenges in implementing TPR, particularly student attention span. Keeping students focused is difficult for teachers while implementing the TPR method. As I2 explained, students with mild intellectual disabilities often have difficulty maintaining concentration for long periods, requiring the teacher to provide repeated reminders and instructions. This is in line with research by Sab'na et al. (2024), who state that one of the challenges in teaching the English language to students with intellectual disabilities is their limited focus or attention span. Furthermore, students' low attention span can reduce TPR's effectiveness. The TPR method generally requires students to focus on listening to the teacher's instructions and performing the movement after the instructions are given.

4. Variations in the Use of TPR for Students With Mild Intellectual Disabilities

4.1 The use of Concrete Objects in TPR

When using the TPR method, teachers modify the media used. Teachers do not just use the body as a medium. They also integrate TPR with other media deemed appropriate to students' needs, considering each student's varying abilities and learning styles. *"Every student in my class has different potential and interests."* (I2, interview). Because of these differences, the TPR media has also been adapted to students' needs. The questionnaire data show that 20% of respondents integrate TPR with concrete objects as a medium. *"I have combined TPR with pictures, realia, songs, and videos"* (P2, questionnaire). Through the statement, the teacher realizes the importance of integrating the TPR method with other media and activities, so that students remain enthusiastic and involved in learning.

In the interview, one informant reiterated that she sometimes integrated TPR with images and concrete objects. *"I tend to use TPR more often with pictures and concrete objects"* (I2, interview). I2 feels TPR is effective when vocabulary has a concrete representation that can be demonstrated through body movement and physical objects around students. This aligns with research by Yáñez et al. (2024) that shows that using TPR with realia is appropriate in English learning. It can be easily understood by students with mild intellectual disabilities because they can see, hold, and perform the actions. Meanwhile, other teachers did not utilize concrete objects with the TPR method, which may be related to the inappropriateness of the material when associated with real objects and the relatively high cost of procuring concrete objects.

4.2. The Integration of TPR with Visual and Technological Media

The questionnaire data show that 80% of teachers integrate TPR with visual media, such as videos, in teaching English to students with mild intellectual disabilities. *"I have used TPR several times with visual media such as videos that*

already contain practice, but I strive to cover all the needs of the students in the class.” (I1, interview). From the statement of I1, it is known that in learning, the teacher tries as much as possible to use other media that can make students interested in participating in English learning. The teacher chose a video that already included practice, so the teacher did not have to create physical instructions from scratch. This shows that the teachers are trying to adapt the TPR method to the classroom conditions and students’ needs. The use of this video has several implications, such as increasing teacher efficiency. Traditional TPR requires the teacher to provide physical instructions and demonstrate repeatedly actively. However, with the help of video, some burden has been shifted to the media. The teacher is less tired because the video provides examples of movement practices, while the teacher functions as a facilitator. Video is also a strategy to address the differences in student learning styles, as some students may learn more easily and comfortably through audiovisuals than direct instructions alone. The use of video also indicates that the teacher integrates the TPR method with technology.

The interview revealed that teachers are more likely to use TPR with realia or concrete objects and video because both are easier for students to visualize. These findings are supported by one of the approaches in teaching students with mild intellectual disabilities, namely multisensory learning theory, which involves students’ senses, hearing, and kinesthetic, which can increase learning motivation (Pérez-Valverde et al., 2021). By combining auditory (teacher instructions), visual (pictures and videos), and kinesthetic (body movements) modalities, teachers provide redundant input that helps compensate for students’ limited working memory and slower information processing. In short, teachers’ modification of TPR with multisensory principles demonstrates their pedagogical awareness of the cognitive needs of students with mild intellectual disabilities.

CONCLUSION

This research showed four themes related to teachers’ perceptions on using TPR in teaching English to students with mild intellectual disabilities. First is the teachers’ conceptual

knowledge of the TPR. The teacher admitted to being unfamiliar with the phrase "Total Physical Response," but was familiar with the TPR concept, a method that involves combining verbal instruction with physical activity. Second, the benefits perceived by teachers in using the TPR include helping students quickly grasp the material, increasing motivation and interest in English learning, making learning enjoyable, and enhancing the ability to remember vocabulary. Third, teachers' challenges in implementing total physical response include teaching abstract material, addressing academic diversity, and maintaining students' attention and focus. Fourth, variations in the use of TPR for students with mild intellectual disabilities. Teachers do many variations of TPR, but the most common is combining TPR with a video that already contains practice. Overall, participants in this study perceived the TPR as an appropriate method for the learning context and cognitive level of students with mild intellectual disabilities. However, its implementation is not without challenges.

In this article, the author provides several recommendations. Programs such as workshops on teaching English to students with special needs are needed for policy initiatives. Although English is not a core subject in special needs schools, workshops are necessary. The goal is to equip teachers with practical skills to make English learning more engaging and relevant to students' daily lives. This highlights a gap in professional development since teachers have never received training or workshops on teaching English to students with special needs. Furthermore, the results of this study might not be generalized widely because this study was only conducted in one school at the SMALB level. Future researchers can conduct research at various levels of SLB (SDLB, SMPLB, and SMALB) to obtain comprehensive results.

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