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# **EDUC580: Educational Research: Designs and Procedures**

**Module Assignment: Action Research Paper/Report**

**Bishnupriya Dutta**

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# **Examining the Efficacy of Total Physical Response in Enhancing Listening Skills among High School ESL Students: A Mixed-Methods Study**

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

The International School Bangalore has been offering an IBDP program in the Bangalore region for twenty-one years. In 2008 the school established a dedicated ESL department to promote English as a Second Language (ESL) for foreign students. The original intake of students was 12. But recently, the department has had a permissible intake of 120. The school—and the department—are permanently affiliated with the International Bachelorette Board Geneva (IBDP). Students pursue their IBMYP and IBDP programs in the school, but their evaluation is split between the school and the IB. All courses are run on a semester system, approximately sixteen weeks, including tutoring and assessment.

English as a Second Language (ESL) learners often face difficulties developing proficient listening skills, which are crucial for effective communication and academic success. Total Physical Response (TPR) is specifically designed to integrate physical movement with language learning activities to facilitate comprehension and retention. This research proposal aims to investigate the effectiveness of TPR in improving listening skills among high school ESL students through a comprehensive mixed-methods study.

The teachers from the ESL department are encouraged to conduct two mid-term assessments before the students can finally take an examination conducted by the board. Mid-terms are called internals, and the IB examination is called externals. The ratio of marks that internals and externals contribute to the final total score is 40 to 60. The first mid-term evaluation is generally scheduled eight weeks into the course, and the second mid-term evaluation is done two weeks before the external examination. Each mid-term examination is conducted for a maximum of 40 marks, and the final internal score sent to the board would be the average of two mid-term assessments.

There are two premises on which the project goes forward. Firstly, evaluation systems gain credibility as they become more consistent. In other words, the evaluation system should be able to reflect the student's ability as it is. The second premise is that the students do not significantly change their learning capacity over one semester. While this is possible, such instances may be treated as special or unusual. Therefore, the scoring pattern of a student on any given subject should be fairly flat when plotted on all three assessments in a semester. Otherwise, if there is a large variance seen in the scoring pattern, then there must be a variance either in the assessment method or in awarding the scores—either of which will only hurt the credibility of the evaluation system.

## **Problem Statement**

The percentage difference in the contribution of internal assessments and external assessments to the final scores in the “Listening Test of final IBDP” stands at an average of 25% over the last three years. Also, during that period, the correlation of scores on internals and externals stands at a low value of 0.2. This indicates a random scoring pattern. This variance has raised many questions from students about the veracity of the evaluation system.

## **Goal Statement**

- To reduce the average variance in the contribution of internal and external assessments to the final scores to 15% in the next two years.
- To increase the correlation between scores on internal and external assessments to 0.5 in the next two years
- Targets to be reached by the end of the assessment cycle for the 2025 admitted batch

## **In Scope**

- There are four modules of the language assessment in the ESL IBDP program, of which only “Listening for specific information using TPR” and “Listening for comprehension using TPR” are brought into this project. These courses’ syllabi and evaluation systems did not change in the last three years and are not expected to change in the next three years.

## **Out of Scope**

- The project is limited to studying the scoring pattern of The International School Bangalore students. The department is affiliated to IB Geneva, whose evaluation system is part of the project, but not all students of The International School are covered in the study.
- Individual differences—such as gender, age, caste, and medium of instruction— leading to different scoring patterns are not part of the study.

## **Business Case**

- Unless the evaluation system becomes more objective and consistent, building trust in students can be difficult. Over time, this can influence admissions.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Literature Review**

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a teaching method specifically developed for language teaching by James Asher in the 1960s. It emphasizes the use of physical movement to facilitate language learning. TPR is grounded in the belief that the acquisition of language is most effective when learners are actively engaged in meaningful experiences. This literature review explores the theoretical foundations of TPR, its practical applications in language classrooms, and its effectiveness in promoting language acquisition.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is an innovative approach to language teaching that emphasizes the integration of physical movement and verbal commands to facilitate language learning. Asher and van den Bos (NIB Zeist, Netherlands) introduced TPR as a method for engaging learners in meaningful language acquisition experiences (Mooijman & van den Bos, MPG London)

Previous research on TPR has demonstrated its effectiveness in facilitating language acquisition, particularly in vocabulary acquisition, grammar comprehension, and oral proficiency (Asher, 1996; Segal, 1982). Asher (1969) found that TPR promotes language learning by capitalizing on the natural relationship between physical action and cognitive processing, improving retention and comprehension.

Additionally, studies have highlighted the motivational benefits of TPR, as learners often find the interactive and kinaesthetic nature of the method engaging and enjoyable (Celestino, 1993; Cook, 2008). However, while TPR has shown promise in various educational settings, its application and efficacy in high school ESL contexts warrant further investigation to inform evidence-based teaching practices.

Asher's seminal work on TPR highlights its effectiveness in second language acquisition, demonstrating its positive impact on vocabulary retention and grammatical comprehension (Asher, 1966; Asher, 1969). Through TPR, learners are encouraged to associate linguistic concepts with physical actions, leading to enhanced language fluency and communicative competence (Asher, 1996).

Segal (Bertha Segal, Inc.) further explores the practical implementation of TPR in language classrooms, emphasizing the importance of interactive and engaging instructional strategies (Segal, Bertha). Similarly, Silvers (Sky Oaks Productions, Inc.) advocates for the use of TPR as a communicative approach to language learning, promoting student-centered and experiential learning experiences (Silvers).

Research by Cook (2008) and Larsen-Freeman (2000) provides theoretical insights into the principles underlying TPR and its alignment with communicative language teaching methodologies (Cook; Larsen-Freeman). Byram (2000) contextualizes TPR within the broader framework of language teaching and learning, highlighting its significance in promoting learner autonomy and communicative competence (Byram).

Furthermore, empirical studies by Conroy (1999) and Wolfe & Jones (1982) investigate the effectiveness of TPR in diverse learning contexts, including second language learners with visual impairments and dyslexia (Conroy; Wolfe & Jones). These studies underscore the versatility and inclusivity of TPR as an instructional strategy.

Overall, the literature on Total Physical Response underscores its multifaceted benefits in language education, ranging from vocabulary acquisition and grammar comprehension to fluency development and learner engagement. By integrating physical movement and verbal commands, TPR offers a dynamic and experiential approach to language teaching that promotes active participation and linguistic proficiency among learners.

This literature review synthesizes key findings from scholarly articles and publications on Total Physical Response, providing insights into its theoretical foundations, practical applications, and empirical evidence supporting its efficacy in language education.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Research Framework:**

To assess the impact of Total Physical Response on the listening skills development of high school ESL students.

To explore students' perceptions and experiences of using TPR as a language learning approach.

This study aims to identify potential challenges and limitations associated with implementing TPR in the ESL classroom and propose strategies for overcoming them.

### **Methodology:**

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to understand the research questions comprehensively. The participants will be high school ESL students aged 14-18, recruited from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The research will be conducted for six weeks and divided into three phases: pre-intervention assessment, TPR intervention implementation, and post-intervention evaluation. Quantitative data will be collected through pre-test and post-test assessments to measure changes in listening skill proficiency. In contrast, qualitative data will be obtained through surveys, interviews, and classroom observations to explore students' perceptions and experiences of using TPR.

### **Data sheet of research**

The attached file contains marks of 217 students over the last three batches, i.e., 2020 admitted to 2023 admitted; variable in a study is the difference in the contribution of internal assessment and external assessment to the final score; it is a continuous variable. And the sigma level for two courses, FAA and QABD are measured appropriately.



docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1dR9S8X4SV4qRhA-gOE1Yeyfmqld0vYV/edit#gid=873354821

Bishnupriya\_TPR\_Research Framework- Data

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A1 I FAA\_INT

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
1	I	FAA_INT	FAA_EX	FAA_VAR	I	QABD_INT	QABD_EX	QABD_VAR										
2	36	44	16.67	36	39	25.00												
3	35	28	40.83	31	37	15.83												
4	35	27	42.50	31	36	17.50												
5	38	29	46.67	31	38	14.17												
6	35	24	47.50	30	39	10.00												
7	36	30	40.00	26	34	8.33												
8	36	32	36.67	38	42	25.00												
9	36	35	31.67	36	32	36.67												
10	37	28	45.83	32	36	20.00												
11	35	32	34.17	35	33	32.50												
12	38	25	53.33	30	36	15.00												
13	36	34	33.33	29	28	25.83												
14	36	35	31.67	33	38	19.17												
15	38	29	46.67	38	38	31.67												
16	37	44	19.17	34	29	36.67												
17	35	28	40.83	28	24	30.00												
18	36	42	20.00	36	43	18.33												
19	38	37	33.33	35	43	15.83												
20	35	32	34.17	33	38	19.17												

LISTERNING FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION( FAA)  
Z calculation for Continuous data

Enter USL	15.00
Enter Mean	33.06
Enter Standard Deviation	12.56
Z <sub>LT</sub>	-1.4381
Z <sub>ST</sub> (Sigma Level)	0.0619

LISTERNING FOR COMPREHENSION (QABD)  
Z calculation for Continuous data

Enter USL	15.00
Enter Mean	19.26
Enter Standard Deviation	10.49

Sheet1 Sheet2 Sheet2 (2) Sheet3

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A1 FAA\_VAR

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	FAA_VAR	QABD_VAR			t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances										
2	16.67	25.00				FAA_VAR	QABD_VAR								
3	40.83	15.83				Mean	33.05683564	19.25883257							
4	42.50	17.50				Variance	157.6649646	110.1445011							
5	46.67	14.17				Observations	217	217							
6	47.50	10.00				Pooled Variance	133.9047329								
7	40.00	8.33				Hypothesized Mean Difference	0								
8	36.67	25.00				df	432								
9	31.67	36.67				t Stat	12.42033022								
10	45.83	20.00				P(T<=t) one-tail	0								
11	34.17	32.50				t Critical one-tail	1.648388493								
12	53.33	15.00				P(T<=t) two-tail	0								
13	33.33	25.83				t Critical two-tail	1.965470509								
14	31.67	19.17													
15	46.67	31.67													
16	19.17	36.67													
17	40.83	30.00													
18	20.00	18.33													
19	33.33	15.83													
20	34.17	19.17													
21	29.17	35.83													
22	14.17	22.50													
23	41.67	26.67													

Sheet1 Sheet2 Sheet2 (2) Sheet3

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A1 | QABD\_VAR

Bin	Frequency	Cumulative	Bin	Frequency	Cumulative %
8.765024	42	19.35%	29.75497	68	31.34%
19.26	65	49.31%	19.26	65	61.29%
29.75497	68	80.65%	8.765024	42	80.65%
40.24995	41	99.54%	40.24995	41	99.54%
50.74492	1	100.00%	50.74492	1	100.00%
More	0	100.00%	More	0	100.00%

variance cannot be negative in this study

Sheet1 | Sheet2 | Sheet2 (2) | Sheet3

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A1 | z-Test: Two Sample for Means

	FAA_VAR	QABD_VAR
Mean	33.05683564	19.25883257
Known Variance	157.665	110.1445
Observations	217	217
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
z	12.42032943	
P(Z<=z) one-tail	0	
z Critical one-tail	1.644853627	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0	
z Critical two-tail	1.959963985	

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

#### **Hypothesis test**

H<sub>0</sub>: The mean variance in FAA and QABD are equal.

H<sub>1</sub>: The mean variance in FAA and QABD are not equal.

It is a two-tail test. And it appears that the null hypotheses can be rejected, since the computed z-statistic [12.42] is much above the critical z-statistic [1.95], and the p-value is also much below 0.05 levels. (Sheet 3—Attachment)

#### **Root Cause Analysis**

##### **Discussion Notes: (perceived cause, perceived effect)**

1. Faculty's concern on pass percentages; inflation in internal evaluations
2. Faculty's concern on student feedback; inflation in internal evaluations
3. Indifference of evaluators in external evaluation; deflation in external evaluations
4. Students' fear of facing external evaluation; deflation in external evaluations
5. Smaller course load for mid-term evaluations; inflation in internal evaluations
6. Knowing internal evaluation results ahead of external evaluation; skewed preparation for external evaluation among students
7. Multi-level corrections (normalization) in external evaluations; skewed assessment on a student-by-student basis
8. Favorites among teachers; inflation in internal evaluation for some students
9. Predictability of questions in internal evaluations; inflation in internal evaluations
10. Nature of topics; subjects involving known articles offer more scope for scoring, whereas subjects not unseen pages offer lesser scope for scoring
11. Students respond to teachers more than courses; skewed preparation for internal evaluations among students
12. Experience of previous students with internal evaluations; sets expectations in students on internal evaluation procedures and results—cultural determinant
13. Reliance on guides before external evaluation; inflation in external evaluations
14. Presentation fetches more marks; skewed preparation for external evaluation among students

## Failure Mode Effect Analysis: Overall Student Evaluation

<u>Process Step</u>	<u>Failure Mode</u>	<u>Root Causes</u>
Deciding the eligibility of students	Inflation of attendance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School's concern to make more students eligible to appear in the examination</li> </ol>
Internal Evaluation	Inflation of internal contribution to final score	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. More manageable course load on students</li> <li>3. Predictability of evaluation system due to the regular interaction with teacher</li> <li>4. Teacher's concern for better student feedback</li> <li>5. Teacher's concern for better pass percentages</li> <li>6. Teachers playing favorites</li> </ol>
External Evaluation	Inconsistency in scoring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Students' fearing the external examination</li> <li>8. Knowing internal evaluation scores ahead of external exams resulting in skewed preparation of students</li> <li>9. Reliance on guides that are different from the prescribed texts</li> </ol>
	Inconsistency in marking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Indifference of board evaluators, i.e., evaluation based on subjective perceptions of evaluators rather than a common objective marking system</li> <li>11. Level 1 correction at the Chief Examiner of each evaluation center</li> <li>12. Level 2 correction before declaration of results, in normalizing the scores entered into the system</li> </ol>

## List of Root Causes

1. School's concern to make more students eligible to appear in the examination
2. More manageable course load on students
3. Predictability of evaluation system due to the regular interaction with teacher
4. Teacher's concern for better student feedback
5. Teacher's concern for better pass percentages
6. Teachers playing favorites
7. Students' fearing the external examination
8. Knowing internal evaluation scores ahead of external exams resulting in skewed preparation of students
9. Reliance on guides that are different from the prescribed texts
10. Indifference of IB evaluators, i.e., evaluation based on subjective perceptions of evaluators rather than a common objective marking system
11. Level 1 correction at the Chief Examiner of each evaluation center
12. Level 2 correction before declaration of results, in normalizing the scores entered into the system

*(Out of control causes are marked in red)*

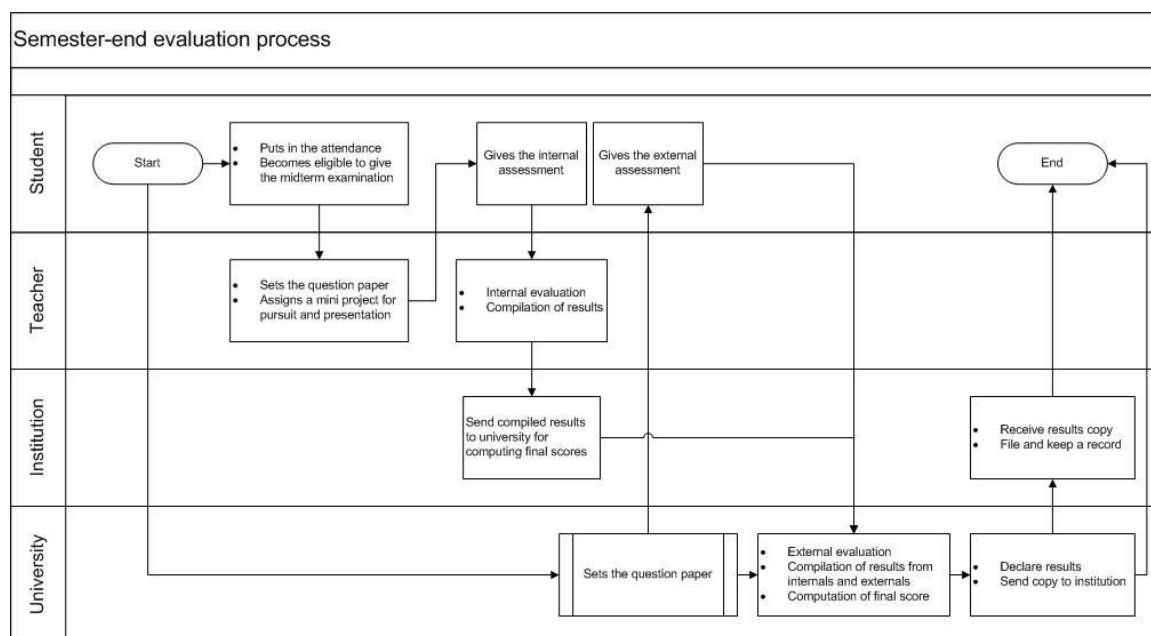
## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### Data Analysis:

Quantitative data analysis will involve statistical techniques such as paired-sample t-tests to compare pre-test and post-test scores and assess the significance of any improvements in listening skills following the TPR intervention. Qualitative data from surveys and interviews will be assessed thematically to identify recurring patterns and themes related to students' attitudes, motivations, and challenges encountered during the TPR activities. Additionally, classroom observations will provide valuable insights into TPR's implementation fidelity and instructional dynamics in the ESL classroom context.

#### Value Stream Mapping



Role	Step	Classification
Student	Puts in attendance and becomes eligible for examination	Value adding
	Gives internal examination	Value adding
	Gives external examination	Value adding
Teacher	Sets the question paper	Value enabling
	Internal evaluation	Value enabling
Institution	Send compiled results to the university	Value enabling
	Receive results copy and file them for record	Non-value adding
University/IB Board	Sets the question paper	Value enabling
	External evaluation	Value enabling
	Declaration of results	Value adding

## **Expected Outcomes:**

It is anticipated that the findings of this study will contribute valuable insights into the effectiveness of Total Physical Response in enhancing listening skills among high school ESL students. Specifically, the research aims to demonstrate the impact of TPR on students' listening comprehension abilities and their perceptions of TPR as a language learning approach. Furthermore, the study seeks to identify potential barriers to implementing TPR in the ESL classroom and propose practical strategies for optimizing its effectiveness. Ultimately, the research outcomes aim to inform evidence-based pedagogical practices and curriculum development initiatives to support ESL learners' language acquisition and proficiency.

## **Efforts to Improve**

### **Role Play**

Each class of students has a student representative who would look after several academic and administrative affairs in class organization. Also, each student is assigned to a teacher to be his/her mentee through the complete program. We had asked these student representatives to sit with their respective mentors and try a role swap—discussing what could make the internal evaluation better reflect students' abilities.

One major observation from the exercise was 'Periodicity of evaluation' – that there should be a continuous evaluation system in place, wherein there are micro tests/pop quizzes to assess students regularly. This type of assessment need not necessarily be graded, but yet can form a reliable basis for correcting the graded internal evaluation scores. There were few other observations on students' attitudes or teacher's classroom management that did not fit the evaluation system's purview.

### **Analogy**

In major cricket tournaments, it is expected that players would have the same level of preparation for all games; that preparation would reflect in performance. But occasionally, it is observed that some matches lose the spirit, causing lower preparation and performance from players—especially when some teams have outperformed others, and everyone knows which team is playing in the finals. This mostly results from knowing the qualifier results well ahead of finishing the round-robin schedules. The concept of bonus points has come in to reduce the likeliness of having such passive games. It is an opportunity for the underperforming teams to see if they can deliver that one big performance to get back into qualifier contention.

Similarly, instead of releasing the internal evaluation results well before students go on to external examination, colleges could consider holding back the internal evaluation results and encourage students to go for a pre-external examination. Based on the pre-external examination results, the college could consider making final corrections to the internal evaluation scores. This also facilitates establishing the readiness of a student to face the external examination.

### **TRIZ three principles**

Local quality: The focus is on improving the quality of the internal evaluation system so that it is in sync with the outcomes of the external evaluation system. To that end, an additional step, continuous assessment, is being introduced to improve the internal evaluation system's capacity to reflect the students' learning and reproduction ability.

Universality: Counselling and continuous assessments are well-established best practices in education systems.

Periodic action: Under the current system, mid-term evaluations happen with a gap of 8 weeks between them. Instead, having a continuous assessment provokes more student preparation and requires better preparation from the teacher, too.

### **List of proposed action items to reach the goal**

- Establish a continuous micro-testing system better to assess a student's relative position among his classmates, provoke improved attendance, and make preparation part of the routine for students.
- Have mentors counsel students on facing external examinations.
- Have a pre-external examination to assess the readiness of students.

### **Conclusion:**

This research proposal outlines a comprehensive mixed-methods study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of Total Physical Response (TPR) in improving listening skills among high school ESL students. By integrating quantitative assessments with qualitative insights, the study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of TPR's impact on students' language learning experiences and outcomes. Through rigorous data collection and analysis, the research seeks to provide significant insights into the domain of language education, informing best practices and instructional strategies for supporting ESL learners' listening proficiency and overall language development.

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## **Reference and Acknowledgements:**

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