Improvement of *Mahārat al-Kalām* in Arabic Learning through Total Physical Response Method

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**Peningkatan *Mahārat al-Kalām* dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab
Melalui Metode *Total Physical Response***

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Abstract
The Total Physical Response (TPR) learning method was developed by James J. Asher. He argues that direct pronunciation to children or students contains an order, and then children or students will respond physically before producing verbal or speech responses. The aims of this study were (1) to find out how far speaking skills (*mahārat al-kalām*) in Arabic have increased through the TPR method in MTsN 4 Jombang, and (2) to find out the supporting and inhibiting factors in increasing *mahārat al-kalām* through the TPR method in MTsN 4 Jombang. This research method uses a descriptive-qualitative approach with data collection techniques using observation, interviews, documentation, and oral tests. The data analysis technique uses data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The results showed that (1) with the TPR learning method, the final test score of Arabic learning for *mahārat al-kalām* in cycle 1 was 74.3% (good). After being given referrals again in cycle 2, it reached 87.6% (very good); (2) The supporting factors that influence speaking activities are language (linguistics) and non-linguistics, while the inhibiting factors are more dominant due to a lack of vocabulary (*mufradāt*) mastery.

Keywords
Arabic learning;
mahārat al-kalām;
total physical response;
mufradāt mastery

Introduction

Arabic entered Indonesia along with the introduction of Islamic teachings (Addiny & Hamidah, 2022; Adisianto et al., 2020). In the beginning, people learned Arabic as a means of worship (Helwe & Elbassuoni, 2019). The influence of Arabic as a religious language and its role in culture and science include the Quran language in the national curriculum component. It is used as a subject that almost always exists in Islamic educational institutions, starting from the kindergarten (*rawḍat al-aṭfāl* [RA]) level, *madrasah ibtidā'īyah* (MI), and college institutions (Ghofur et al., 2019; Nuha & Faedurrohman, 2022).

The main function of language is as a communication tool to convey ideas, opinions, and feelings to others (Neche et al., 2019). Through language, humans can relate to each other (communicate), share experiences, learn from each other, and improve their intellectual abilities (Ahmala et al., 2021; Husna & Arrodhi, 2019). There is still a lot of mastery and use of language as a good and correct communication tool that has yet to get maximum results. There are still several students who always need more time to speak. There is a fear of speaking up if you say the wrong thing or say the right thing in the wrong way. Class 7-A students experience this problem at MTsN 4 Jombang, Jawa Timur. Learning Arabic, especially the *mahārat al-kalām* material, becomes passive and unenthusiastic due to the lack of courage to speak. The speaking activity is interesting and lively in class, but the opposite often happens. Speaking activities become uninteresting, do not stimulate student participation, make the atmosphere stiff, and eventually get stuck.

The lack of students' speaking skills in Arabic subjects can be caused by various things, one of which is that Arabic is the second language studied (Suratman & Febriani, 2021). The more similarities there are between the second language learned and the mother tongue, the easier learning will be, while the more differences there are, the more it will hinder the learning process (Al-Ghamdi, 2021; Wang et al., 2021). If not anticipated, such conditions can negatively influence children's speaking abilities. Appropriate methods that are relevant to the stage of their learning development are needed to overcome this problem.

So far, the method of learning to speak Arabic in MTsN 4 Jombang is still the lecture method, where the teacher only lectures and the students are not trained in pronunciation or vocabulary. This causes the students' speaking skills to be very low, and if this is allowed to drag on, it will lead to failure in learning Arabic. So, efforts to apply new methods to improve students' speaking skills are necessary. To overcome the teacher's difficulties in teaching students to have the ability and courage to speak good and correct Arabic, it is better to use the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in learning Arabic.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method for improving speaking skills. The TPR language learning theory was first applied by James J. Asher, a psychology professor at the University of San Jose, California, who has successfully developed this method for teaching foreign languages to children. He argues that direct pronunciation to children or students contains an order, and then children or students will respond physically before producing verbal or speech responses (Afifah & Mashuri, 2022; Andrian, 2022; Antika & Sari, 2022).

This TPR method is straightforward and light in terms of language use. It contains elements of game movements so that it can relieve stress on students because of the problems they face in their lessons, especially when learning foreign languages, and can also create a positive mood in students, which can facilitate learning and increase student motivation and achievement in the lesson (Dullah, 2021; Fadlan et al., 2021). The meaning of the target language is learned during the action.

The teacher or instructor has an active and direct role in implementing this TPR method. According to Asher, the instructor is the director of a stage play in which the students are the actors, which means that the teacher (instructor) is the director of the story show and the students are the actors (Ishak & Mulyanah, 2019; Pahri, 2021). The teacher decides what will be learned and who will play and display the subject matter. Students in TPR have the central roles of listeners and doers. Students listen attentively and respond physically to instructions given by the teacher, both

individually and in groups. So, the TPR is a language learning method that is structured around command, speech, and action coordination and attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity (Cahyani et al., 2022; Prananti et al., 2019).

In this study, the TPR learning method focused more on students being instructed to respond to the teacher's commands by making appropriate physical movements, such as raising their hands, standing, or moving other body parts. This approach is very different from other conventional learning methods that focus on using words or phrases verbally. By incorporating physical movement, the TPR approach can help students associate the meaning of words and phrases with physical activity, which can strengthen understanding and activate motor memory. In this study, the discussion focuses on student motivation to be upgraded with methods that are rarely used in learning Arabic.

In fact, in developing the TPR method, there are many obstacles in an institution, including educators and students and the supporting tools needed, as well as factors from the students who do not have strong motivation and their perspective on the Arabic language. Considered problematic, inaccuracy in choosing the method offered could be more attractive. It causes students not to be enthusiastic about learning due to the limitations of existing media or the rules of schools in providing learning media (Amalia et al., 2022; Nuha, 2019). Departing from the background above, this research will discuss the improvement of *mahārat al-kalām* in Arabic learning through the Total Physical Response (TPR) learning method.

Method

The method used in this research is classroom action research. Classroom action research examines learning activities in the form of an action that is deliberately raised and occurs in a class together (Fitrah & Luthfiyah, 2018). These actions are given by the teacher or, with directions from the teacher, carried out by students. Classroom action research is included in qualitative research, although the data collected can be quantitative, where the description is descriptive in words; the researcher is the first instrument in data collection, and the process is as necessary as the product (Rahman, 2018).

Classroom action research in this study used a spiral model. This research was carried out by the Hopkins model research design, which began with preliminary actions and then continued with planning, action, observation, and reflection (Fitrah & Luthfiyah, 2018). The research was conducted in two cycles. The evaluation results in cycle 1 still needed to be completed, so improvements were made in cycle 2. The cycle 1 reflection was carried out to determine improvement steps in cycle 2. The data obtained from this study's results are qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data is obtained and analyzed not in numbers but in words (Abdussamad, 2022). The results of interviews with teachers and students, the results of observations of teacher activities, and the results of field notes are quantitative data. Quantitative data is obtained by calculating numbers (Anshori & Iswati, 2019). Quantitative data is in the form of observations of student activities and the results of student evaluation tests after participating in the learning process.

The source of data was obtained from class 7-A students at MTsN 4 Jombang, Jawa Timur to find out how much the *mahārat al-kalām* increased in learning Arabic using the TPR method. Data collection techniques used in this study were: (1) observation, involving two observers, including

teachers and researchers; the observation process is carried out by referring to the observation guidelines that have been prepared; (2) test, the form of the test used is an interview test, in which students are asked to name an object using Arabic; (3) interviews, in this study, used the type of guided free interviews and the results of the interviews were related to information about the media used by the teacher, student learning outcomes, the constraints faced by the teacher in learning Arabic using the TPR method, as well as the teacher's response regarding the application of learning Arabic using the TPR method; (4) field notes, in this study the researchers who wrote the field notes was the executor of the action.

Data analysis was carried out in a study to conclude all the data that had been obtained. The data analyzed are the results of observations of teacher and student activities, interviews, field notes, and student evaluations. Data in the form of observations of teacher activities, results of interviews, and results of field notes were analyzed in the form of descriptions and conclusions. Data from student evaluation results and observations of student activities were analyzed using numbers.

Results and Discussion

Researchers carried out pre-action activities that were carried out on June 27, 2022. Researchers conducted pre-action observations of learning in class 7-A MTsN 4 Jombang to determine the condition and character of class 7-A students. The researchers also interviewed the Arabic teacher in class 7-A to discover the problems with learning Arabic.

This classroom action research is conducted every Wednesday, according to the Arabic lesson schedule for class 7-A, which starts at 09.00 WIB and lasts until 10.20 WIB. The time allocation for each lesson is 40 minutes. This research consists of two cycles. With the details of cycle 1, they held three meetings, while cycle 2 held two meetings. Implementation of classroom action research in cycles 1 and 2 includes four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection.

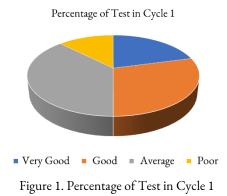### Improvement of Arabic Learning for *Mahārat al-Kalām* through the TPR Method

The results of the classroom action research that has been carried out include the results of the learning tests at the end of cycles 1 and 2, as well as the results of student interviews. The results of cycles 1 and 2 tests were used as a benchmark for students' *mahārat al-kalām*. Cycles 1 and 2 test scores can be seen in the appendix. All 24 students in class 7-A took the cycle 1 and cycle 2 tests. The following presents a comparison graph of the scores of 21 students who took the cycles 1 and 2 tests.

Table 1. Conclusion of Cycle 1 Test Value Score

No	Range of Test Scores 1	Criteria	Number of Students
1	81 – 100	Very good	5
2	61 – 80	Good	7
3	41 – 60	Average	9
4	21 – 40	Poor	3
5	0 – 20	Very poor	0

From the table above, it can be seen from the percentage diagram that the number of students who get scores based on the criteria in the cycle 1 test is as follows.

Percentage of Test in Cycle 1

■ Very Good   ■ Good   ■ Average   ■ Poor

Figure 1. Percentage of Test in Cycle 1
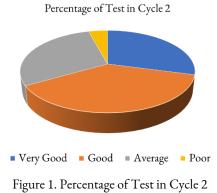
The 24 students who obtained cycle 2 test scores based on the value criteria can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Conclusion of Cycle 2 Test Scores

No	Range of Test Scores 2	Criteria	Number of Students
1	81 – 100	Very good	7
2	61 – 80	Good	9
3	41 – 60	Average	7
4	21 – 40	Poor	1
5	0 – 20	Very poor	0

From the table above, it can be seen from the diagram that the number of students who get scores based on the criteria on the cycle 2 test is as follows.

Percentage of Test in Cycle 2

■ Very Good   ■ Good   ■ Average   ■ Poor
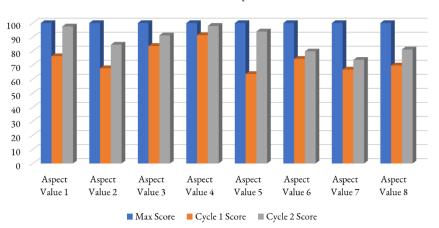
Figure 1. Percentage of Test in Cycle 2

Based on these indicators of success, namely the average class score in *mahārat al-kalām* on the speaking ability test for each cycle, at least with good criteria, has been achieved. This can be seen based on the average test results in the cycle 2 test, which are equal to 87.6 (very good). While the average score of the cycles 1 and 2 tests is based on each aspect of speaking, both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of the maximum score for each aspect of speaking can be presented in the following table.

Table 3. The Average Score of the *Mahārat al-Kalām* Assessment Aspect

No	Assessment Aspect of *Mahārat al-Kalām*	Maximum Score	Average Score	
			Cycle 1	Cycle 2
1	Fluency (*makhraj*)	100	76.4	97.6
2	Intonation	100	67.8	84.6
3	Choice of Expressions	100	83.7	91.2
4	Grammar	100	91.4	98
5	Smoothness	100	63.7	94
6	Courage	100	74.5	79.8
7	Topic Mastery	100	66.9	73.8
8	Comprehension	100	69.8	81.2
	Average score		74.3	87.6

A comparison of the average scores of the cycles 1 and 2 tests based on each aspect of speaking proficiency to the maximum score of each aspect of speaking can be seen in the following diagram.

Figure 3. Comparison of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of *Mahārat al-Kalām* Assessment Aspects

The percentage of the average score of the cycles 1 and 2 tests for the maximum score for each aspect of speaking proficiency is obtained based on their qualifications, as shown in the following table.

Table 4. Percentage of Average Score in *Mahārat al-Kalām* Assessment Aspect

No	Assessment Aspect *Mahārat al-Kalām*	Cycle 1		Cycle 2	
		Percentage (%)	Criteria	Percentage (%)	Criteria
1	Fluency (*Makhraj*)	76.4	Good	97.6	Very Good
2	Intonation	67.8	Good	84.6	Very Good
3	Choices of expressions	83.7	Very Good	91.2	Very Good
4	Grammar	91.4	Very Good	98	Very Good
5	Smoothness	63.7	Good	94	Very Good
6	Courage	74.5	Good	79.8	Good
7	Topic mastery	66.9	Good	73.8	Good
8	Understanding	69.8	Good	81.2	Very Good
	Total	74.3	Good	87.6	Very Good

From the explanation above, it can be understood that the success indicator is based on the percentage of the average score of each *mahārat al-kalām* aspect against the maximum score for each *mahārat al-kalām* aspect with a minimum qualification that has been achieved. The results of interviews between researchers and students can be concluded as follows: (1) students feel happy after participating in learning Arabic on the subject of stationery and objects in class with the TPR method; (2) students stated that there was a difference with the previous learning because, in the TPR method, Arabic subject matter became easier to understand; (3) learning Arabic with imperative formation helps students add Arabic vocabulary and use it in everyday conversations; (4) understanding and memory are well obtained by students through the body movements of students in answering or responding to commands.

Learning Arabic with the TPR method in class 7-A MTsN 4 Jombang has been carried out by the learning steps in the Learning Implementation Plan, namely: (1) in the preliminary activities, learning begins with an explanation of the tasks that must be carried out by students during learning activities going on; (2) in the core activity, learning Arabic is carried out with imperative forms that require student responses to do so; individual students can use these imperative forms to be responded to by their friends either individually or in groups; (3) in the closing activity, reflections are given on mistakes made during the learning process.

At this stage, the main feature of the TPR method used is to just postpone speaking to students until their understanding of spoken language is truly extensively established (Selviani et al., 2022; Jubaedah & Nurfadilah, 2022). In the core activities, the teacher uses forms of commands that require students' body movements in answering or responding to these commands. The imperative form of language is a powerful tool for manipulating the behavior of students and guiding them toward understanding through movement or action.

At this stage, the main characteristic of the TPR method used is to achieve success in understanding spoken language through utterances made by the instructor in the form of imperatives or orders. In the implementation of learning, students can also give orders to their fellow friends, which require body movements in answering or responding to these commands.

In the implementation of subsequent core activities, it appears that students, individually, in pairs, or groups, interact with one another. In this case, they test each other with different stationery that they carry. In addition, students also interact with teachers when they experience difficulties, so the teacher helps students understand more.

In the closing activity, reflection was given on the ease of acquiring proficiency in speaking Arabic if they increased their vocabulary. One of the ways to increase vocabulary could be by using commands that demand a physical response. In this study, indicators of students' ability to speak fluently were as follows: (1) Fluency, namely pronouncing Arabic with a really clear *makhraj* and paying attention to the length of the word and whether there is *shiddah*; (2) Intonation (tone and rhythm), namely how students pronounce question sentences and information sentences (answers) with the correct intonation; (3) Choice of expressions, namely the ability of students to develop sentence patterns and their variations; (4) Grammar, namely the ability of students to produce sentences according to the rules and correct grammar; (5) Fluency, namely, students do not repeat words or sentences in speaking; (6) Courage, that is, students dare to speak Arabic and practice it in class during the learning process; (7) Topic mastery, namely, students master Arabic learning

material, especially in speaking; (8) Comprehension, namely, students understand the new vocabulary they are learning, as evidenced by the correct response when there is an order.

From the explanation above, students have speaking skills that are used in the student learning outcomes test questions. In the cycle 1 test, some students still experienced some obstacles, including not pronouncing the word with the correct meaning. For example, the word "*qalam*" is still pronounced with the word "*kalam*", the word "*bāʾb[un]*" is still pronounced with the word "*bāb[un]*", and "*thalāshah*" is still pronounced as "*thalāthah*". Then, after the test is finished, the teacher explains and gives directions to the student. In the cycle 2 test, students have been fluent in practicing speaking and pronouncing words clearly and correctly. Based on the percentage score on the fluency aspect obtained by students in the cycle 1 test, it was 76.4% (good), and the cycle 2 test was 97.6% (very good).

The next aspect of language proficiency is intonation (tone and rhythm). In this aspect, students are required to pronounce a sentence with the correct intonation. For example, when they ask a friend, they must use a questioning intonation, not just flat and without intonation. In the cycle 1 test, some students still did not use intonation correctly. In the cycle 2 test, students experienced an increase based on the percentage score on the aspect of intonation obtained in oral test cycle 1 of 67.8% (good) and in the cycle 2 test of 84.6% (very good).

The next aspect is the selection of expressions, namely expressing intent by choosing the right sentence or word and the accuracy of the intent in the student's speech. In cycle 1, test results were 83.7% (very good), and in the cycle 2 test, 91.2% (very good). The next aspect is grammar, namely whether the student's expression is influenced by the grammar, especially in the use of demonstrative words. In cycle 2, test results were 98% (very good).

In addition to the aspects mentioned above, there are still several non-linguistic aspects that are part of other aspects of speaking proficiency, including fluency. In this aspect, students are required to be able to speak fluently without asking questions or getting stuck in the middle of the road. The results of the cycle 1 test were 63.7% (good), and the cycle 2 test results were 94% (very good). The next non-linguistic aspect is courage, which is important considering that initially students still feel embarrassed to practice speaking in front of the class. However, after several students came to the front of the class and practiced, they were finally motivated and brave. The cycle 1 test results were 74.5% (good), which increased in the cycle 2 test results to 79.8% (good).

The next non-linguistic aspect is topic mastery; namely, students are expected to be able to master speaking material so that they do not become passive and only answer questions from their friends. The results of the cycle 1 test were 66.9% (good), and the cycle 2 test results were 73.8% (good). The last non-linguistic aspect is understanding. This aspect of understanding requires students to get the correct response from their interlocutor, whether in the form of carrying out orders or giving answers. The results of the cycle 1 test were 69.8% (good), which increased in the cycle 2 test results to 81.2% (very good). From the aspects of speaking proficiency, both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects, from the cycle 1 test to the cycle 2 test, all experienced an increase. Then, the average score of the class learning outcomes test obtained by students increased from the cycle 1 test, which was equal to 74.3% (good), to the cycle 2 test, which was 87.6% (very good).

From the results of research interviews with students conducted at the end of cycle 2, researchers can understand that students feel happy in the process of learning Arabic using the TPR method, so

they find it easier to understand the material provided by the teacher and become active in the learning process in class. According to the responses of students who like Arabic lessons using the TPR method, students are more happy learning so that they can easily improve their speaking skills.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Increasing Arabic Learning for *Mahārat al-Kalām* through the TPR Method

Speaking of oral communication activities are individual activities to convey messages orally to a group of people, the audience, or the assembly (Al-Ghozali & Wahyudi, 2021; Nuha & Musyafaah, 2022). For the conversation or message to reach the audience properly, it is necessary to pay attention to several factors that can support the effectiveness of speaking.

Speaking activities also require things beyond language skills and knowledge. When speaking, (1) mastery of language is needed; (2) language; (3) courage and calm; and (4) the ability to convey ideas smoothly and regularly. Based on the research results conducted by researchers on class 7-A students of MTsN 4 Jombang, several supporting and inhibiting factors were encountered.
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Supporting Factors

The supporting factors for speaking activities that have been carried out by research at MTsN 4 Jombang are as follows: (1) Linguistic factors, including the accuracy of speech; the placement of tone pressure, joints, or appropriate duration; the choice of words; the accuracy of the use of sentences and grammar; and the accuracy of the target of speech. (2) Non-linguistic factors include a reasonable attitude, calm and not stiff; the gaze must be directed to the other person; willingness to respect others; appropriate gestures and expressions; the loudness of voice; fluency; relevance; reasoning; and topic mastery. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the factors that influence speaking activities are linguistic and non-linguistic order factors.

Obstacle factor

The results of the interview with Mr. Sulthon Sulaiman, the head of the madrasa, said that:

> "The factor that affects the lack of ability of students in speaking Arabic here is the lack of interest from the students themselves in learning Arabic, and then the lack of tutors as supervisors of students in carrying out conversations in Arabic is also a factor".
> (S. Sulaiman, personal communication, June 28, 2022).

According to Mr. Nurul Huda, an Arabic lesson teacher, he said that:

> "The lack of mastery of *mufradāt* and not being used to speaking Arabic immediately becomes the main factor that causes students to have difficulty interacting using Arabic. Then there is no Arabic-language environment that will make it easier for students to practice Arabic together and a lack of infrastructure that can support learning Arabic language skills".
> (N. Huda, personal communication, June 28, 2022).

Meanwhile, according to the students, many reasons were stated as factors inhibiting their ability to speak Arabic, including Muhammad Putra Saragih said:

"The factor that hinders our ability to speak Arabic fluently is the lack of hours of Arabic lessons provided by the school, then also helper facilities, which are still very lacking, and interaction between friends using Arabic, which is still very minimal for us to do".
(M. P. Saragih, personal communication, July 17, 2022).

Meanwhile, Muhammad Noval Hakim, he said

"What causes students to be less able to speak Arabic is due to a lack of interest from us as students to learn Arabic because Arabic is very difficult to understand, and a lack of memorizing vocabulary is also the main cause" (M. N. Hakim, personal communication, July 17, 2022).

According to researchers, based on the results of interviews with the head of the madrasa, teachers, and several class 7-A students of MTsN 4 Jombang, it can be concluded that several factors hinder students' ability to speak Arabic, including:

1. Lack of mastery of vocabulary (*mufradāt*)
   Vocabulary (*mufradāt*) is the key to being able to speak a foreign language, not only in learning Arabic but in all languages in the world. If you want to master a language, then the main key is to memorize the vocabulary of that language a lot. Without memorizing *mufradāt*, it will be difficult for someone to be able to speak Arabic.

2. Lack of interaction using Arabic
   Language is a subject that requires a lot of communication in practice. Likewise with Arabic, to be able to speak Arabic properly and correctly, there must be a habit of communicating using Arabic directly with fellow friends or with existing teachers because getting used to communicating using Arabic will also help in memorizing vocabulary.

3. Language environment
   The environment is a place where students carry out their daily activities. If the environment does not support being able to communicate in everyday Arabic, it will also be difficult for students to be able to speak Arabic properly and correctly (Ridlo, 2019).

4. Lack of learning hours
   Learning Arabic is not like learning Indonesian, which is the language of our country, and does not require many hours of lessons because we already understand its meaning. Studying Arabic requires a long and continuous time to achieve the goal of learning it, namely being able to speak Arabic properly. Because Arabic is a foreign language that is very difficult to learn in a short time, the letters in Arabic are also very different. The letters of the languages that exist in the world, that's what causes Arabic to take a long time to learn.

5. Lack of interest in student learning
   The desire to learn a lesson is also very influential in understanding and mastering the lesson. Likewise with Arabic, if you want to be able to speak Arabic, the most important thing is that you have to instill a sense of desire and love for Arabic itself.

Conclusion

Mahārat al-kalām in the subject of Arabic learning in class 7-A MTsN 4 Jombang has been carried out by the TPR method with the main characteristics of the TPR method, namely: (1) delaying speaking from students until their understanding of spoken language is true and steady extensively,

i.e., the teacher does not ask students to speak Arabic; (2) the success of understanding spoken language is achieved through utterances made by the instructor in the form of imperatives or commands. In this case, the teacher makes several command sentences that require a physical response from students to do so; (3) strive so that, in some cases, upon understanding spoken language, students will indicate or declare themselves ready to speak. This has been done by the teacher by giving assignments to one student and having another student take turns giving orders to each other. Besides that, students are also not afraid to ask questions. The implementation of learning Arabic with the TPR method can improve students' skills in speaking with basic sentence patterns that include "*dhālika*" and "*tilka*" (according to the competency standard 3.1) in class 7-A MTsN 4 Jombang. Students' speaking proficiency increased with a class average score in the cycle 1 test of 74.3% (good) and the cycle 2 test of 87.6% (very good). Based on the results of interviews with several students, they stated that they were happy with the learning that had been carried out using the TPR method. From my observations, the activeness of students in learning is also increasing. The students looked very enthusiastic when doing speaking practice.

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