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## **The benefits of Total Physical Response in teaching English**

Ismailova R.S., Khabibrakhmonova D.I., Urolov S.B., Ubaydullayeva M.Kh.

National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek

Tashkent

**Abstract:** Teaching English to the primary school students is not an easy task since it requires a lot of creativity. According to Harmer, young learners learn differently from older learners, adolescents, and adults. They easily get bored, losing interest after ten minutes or so. Their world is still full of enjoyable activities. If English is taught interestingly, it will motivate them to learn it better. According to child psychology, children's language ability is developed through practical application; thus, the acquisition of language should be nature and direct. Brown (2001) states that people speak first instead of both reading and writing. In the classroom, speaking is used twice as often as listening and the most often used skill.

Cameron (2001) states that many teachers still apply traditional method in teaching English for young learners. For example, teachers make the students keep learning through teacher's explanation of new words or grammar. In fact, this method is not effective because students will easily forget the words and the material if they learn different topics. Especially for young learners, those who are seven to twelve years old, this method is uninteresting. However there are many methods that can be used in teaching English to young learners. But the applied methods need to be not only interesting but also effective in teaching language. Cameron (2001) says that students will not be able to speak foreign language well just by memorizing lists of words, repeating mechanically some useful expressions, and so on. If young learners do not understand the spoken language, they can't learn it effectively.

The way children learn depend on their developments stage. As they have very short attention and concentration span their activities should include movement and involve the senses. Children are unique and think differently than adult. They have special characteristics in the way of learning and according to child psychology, children's language ability is developed through practical application. Children are interested to learn by doing or actively involved in the learning process which requires joyful activities and nice environment. TPR activities allow children have motor activities in their lessons and allows silent period before children start speaking.

Concerning children's characteristics, a teacher needs to make teaching be more interesting and motivate children to learn. The primary school students still need a specific guide from teacher and people around them in order to follow the lesson well. Students can learn English in an interesting way and learn it through the Total Physical Response method. Therefore we are going to discuss what are teachers and learners roles in order to succeed good teaching results. However, the learners and the teacher play different roles.

Learners in TPR have the primary roles of listeners and performers. They listen attentively and respond physically to commands given by the teacher. Learners are also expected to recognize and respond to novel combinations of previously taught items. They are required to produce novel combinations of their own. Learners monitor and evaluate their own progress. They are encouraged to speak when they feel ready to speak—that is, when a sufficient basis in the language has been internalized (Richard and Rodgers 2001: 76).

According to Larsen and Freeman (2000), the students are imitators of the teacher's nonverbal model. There will be a role reversal with individual students directing the teacher and the other students. In TPR, learners monitor and evaluate their own progress. They are encouraged to speak when they feel ready to speak that is when a sufficient basis in the language has been internalized. In the first stage of TPR training, learners should mainly listen to teacher's commands in silence and watch him or her performing the action. In the next stage pupils respond to the commands with physical action, still keeping in silence, which builds up learner's confidence for later correct pronunciation. At first they respond to commands as a group, later individually. When students become familiar with commands and feel ready to talk, they can overtake the teacher's role and instruct other students with their own commands. However, this stage usually comes a bit later as learner's confidence in understanding develops through the silent period.

TPR is very effective teaching method because can be adapted for all kinds of teaching situations, teacher just needs to use his/her imagination. Using TPR it is a lot of fun. Students enjoy it and it can be a real stirrer in the class. It lifts the pace and the mood. This method is very memorable. It really helps students to remember phrases or words. TPR can be used in large or small classes. It doesn't really matter how many students teacher has as long as teacher is prepared to take the lead, the students will follow. The physical actions get across the meaning effectively so that all the students are able to understand and use the target language. It doesn't require a lot of preparation or materials.

The ability to mastery a language is related with the ability in mastering the vocabularies. If the students are not able in mastering the vocabularies of the language, they will have difficulties in mastering the language. The vocabularies should be introduced and taught to the students appropriately, by using formal techniques which encourage the students to give active participation in the classroom. It is necessary to teach vocabulary as early as possible, as the learning method. The appropriate method can affect the learning results. One of the appropriate language teaching methods is Total Physical Response (TPR). TPR is an approach in language teaching which developed by James Asher, an American psychologist, when the implementation is based on how the children acquires their mother language. Understanding is the integral aspect from TPR method. The findings which support Asher's theory are some us teach the language unsuccessfully, since we ignore the natural order when acquire languages.

The learning activities will be more interesting when followed by physical activities. Physical activities can reduce children's anxiety, which reduce the affective filter which facilitates language learning. This physical activities refer to the direct and spontaneous activities in language learning, since the children needs direct involvements when. Children show their understanding through their native language by doing physical responses.

The implementation of TPR method in vocabularies learning can be divided into several stages. First, one-word stage, when the children can follow teacher's instruction in one word. For example "sit down, stand up, get up" and etc. Second, one sentence stage, where in this stage, the instruction is said in one sentence. For example "walk to the door, sit in the chair" and etc (Asher, 2009).

Understanding is an integral aspect of TPR method. Asher reveals a strong evidence which supports the theory how foreign language teaching is not successful since we ignore the natural orders, such as listening and understanding before speaking off. Asher also states that the children will observe and try to understand their parents' languages for a while, which called as silent period. Therefore, the children should not be forced to produce the language suddenly, and it should be postponed until the children are ready.

To sum up, there are lots of advantages using TPR method. TPR activities are enjoyable, memorable and fun. This method is very effective and does not require a lot of preparation and materials. However this method can be embarrassing for some students and if used a lot it would become repetitive. Thus, TPR activities are interesting, challenging and motivating, and almost all the students enjoy them. The use of TPR shows us fun way of teaching and learning English.

### **The List of used literature**

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