

## **TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) METHOD IN TEACHING ENGLISH.**

**Jumaniyazova Muxabbat Matrasulovna**

**Rahimova Laylo Mo`minboevna**

**Rahimova Shahnoza Abdusharipovna**

Lecturers of the department of Interfaculty Foreign Languages, Urgench State University, Uzbekistan.

**Abstract:** When teachers teach the English vocabulary about parts of the body, they use rhythm and body movements while mentioning its name. It is called Total Physical Response (TPR) method. This article investigated the implementation of the TPR method in teaching English vocabulary to students in English classes. Additionally, problems faced by teachers as well as potential solution for those problems. Teachers used qualitative descriptive to understand the way of implementing TPR in their class. Data from the study indicated that, from the principles of TPR method found that; The difficulties faced by the teachers implementing TPR stemmed from their lack of understanding about the implementation of the TPR method even they did not distinguish the appropriate theoretical basis of TPR. Finally, to address challenges in implementing TPR, the teachers expect additional training related to teaching English to students especially with a specific theory related to TPR method so that they can implement it well and have more practice with the principles of TPR method in teaching English to students.

**Keywords:** Total Physical Response, Teaching, Memorability of words .

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Teaching english to the leaners is not an easy task since it requires a lot of creativity. According to Harmer (2001), students who learns english as a second language differently from native speakers. 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 students psychology, learners 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.(2001) states that many teachers still apply traditional method in teaching English for learners. For example, teachers make the students keep learning through teachers 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 learners this method is uninteresting. However there are many methods that can be used in teaching English to learners. But the applied methods need to be not only interesting but also effective in teaching language. Cameron (2001) sais that students will not be able to speak foreign language well just my memorizing lists of words, repeating mechanically some useful expressions, and so on. If learners do not understand the

spoken language, they can't learn it effectively. Harmer says that some students forget the material easily because they are not active during learning process or involved in learning process directly; there are no good atmosphere and environment of learning process in the class if there is no interaction or response between students and teacher. If students just sit in their chairs and listen to teachers explanation it will make students bored. and they will not enjoy the learning process. Harmer (2007: 84) states that " the students must be encouraged to respond to texts and situations with their own thoughts and experiences, rather than just answering questions and doing abstract learning activities. The teacher must give them tasks which they are able to do, rather than risk humiliating them". Therefore the Total Physical Response activities developed by James Asher provide ideas to create the activity for the success of the English language learning. In this article, we will introduce peculiarities of Total Physical Response method and how this method is practiced to learners in English classes. We will also discuss why and how TPR can help teachers to improve their teaching through analyzing the features of students learning.

### **AUTHOR`S REVIEW**

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method that was developed by James Asher, a professor of psychology at Jose State University, California, in 1977 ( Brown, 2001). This method built on coordination of speech and action; it attempts to teach language through physical ( motor) activity. According to Diaz (2005), who is a former language teacher and consultant in TPR and language instruction in general, the research base for TPR dates back to the 1960s, and experiments performed with epileptic volunteers whose right and left brain hemispheres were surgically severed. (The idea was that epileptic seizures begin on one side of the brain and migrated to the other, so if they could isolate the event to one side of the brain, the seizures might be less extreme.) Asher, as a psychologist, was one of the researchers. From then on, he began to investigate some interesting relationships between language and movement. His work led him to formulate the theory known today as Total Physical Response, or TPR. Asher (as cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001:75) developed TPR relying on three learning hypotheses facilitate and inhibit foreign language learning. Those hypotheses are the bio-program, brain lateralization, and reduction of stress.first hypothesis is the Bio-program. Asher believed that first and foreign language learning is parallel process. Asher mentioned three processes as essential: first children develop listening competence before the ability to speak. Second, students ability in listening comprehension is learned because children are required to respond physically to spoke language in form of parental command. Third, when listening comprehension has been established, speech develops naturally and effortlessly. According to Asher, brain and nervous system is biologically programmed both in a particular sequence and mode. The sequence is listening before speaking. The mode is to deal language with the individuals body.second hypothesis is brain lateralization. Asher suggested that TPR tend to right-brain learning. The Ashers belief based on jean Piagets work ( as cited in Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 75) that suggested that children acquire language through motor movement - a right-hemisphere activity. A right-hemisphere activity should precede left-hemisphere activity to process the language for production.

Right-hemisphere activity will encourage left-hemisphere to produce language when the right-hemisphere activity has occurred. Therefore, the right-hemisphere activity should expose in the process of the students language learning because learners frequently learn language indirectly rather than directly. Besides, the right-hemisphere activity emphasizes on the things that seems to be fun. Garcia(2001) explains further that the TPR approach is a right brain method of learning a language because the language is taught mainly through actions. In the other words, commands play as the core of the course. third hypothesis is reduction of stress. The fundamental factors for successful language learning is the absence of stress. If students are free from stressful situation, they are able to devote full energy for learning (Richard and Rodgers, 2001)(2004) says that Asher's language learning theories are reminiscent of the views of some behavioural psychologists. She agrees with Asher and sais that his premise is based on Chomskys theory of LAD, which insists that humans are born with a special biological brain mechanism, called a Language Acquisition Device (LAD). This theory supposes that the ability to learn language is inborn, that nature is more important than nurture and that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any language spoken. TPR is a language learning method which is based on the coordination of speech and action. It is linked to the trace theory of memory, which holds that the more often or intensively a memory connection is traced, the stronger memory will be. In TPR classroom, students respond to commands that require physical movement. Three important hypotheses lying behind his method: the bio-program, brain lateralization, reduction of stress.

## PRINCIPLES

**1) Stimulating memory with psychomotor associations:** Language in the form of the teacher's commands is synchronized with body movements. According to Asher, this is the way to recreate the process by which children learn their first language. Beginning foreign language instruction should address the right hemisphere of the brain, the part which controls nonverbal behavior.

**2) Comprehension before production:** Students are not required to produce in the second language until they themselves decide that they are ready. Therefore students are allowed a silent period; an often lengthy period during which learners do not try to speak but they internalize the language by listening and comprehending it. Input (the new language material) is made comprehensible through listening and watching the teacher's modeling of commands and later fulfilling these commands.

**3) Lowering the student's anxiety and stress reduction:** This is achieved through the following: (1) students are not required to produce in the new language before they feel ready, (2) the teacher's commands are often zany and humorous in order to make language learning as enjoyable as possible, (3) students first perform the commands together with the teacher and in groups, (4) early error correction is very unobtrusive and mistakes are allowed in the classroom at the beginning period.

**4) Inductive teaching of grammar:** The target language is presented in chunks and the focus is on meaning rather than on form.

**5) Unobtrusive error correction in the early stages:** Asher believes that it is more important to let the students just talk in order to lower their anxiety about

making mistakes. Once their confidence in speaking is high they can be fine tuned to produce the subtleties of speech that approximate the native speaker. Moreover, Asher states that the emphasis on error-free production and correct form is risky and if done so most children and adults will give up before reaching even the intermediate level.

**6) Selection of grammatical features and vocabulary items from the immediate classroom surroundings:** These are the imperatives in the first place and concrete nouns. With imagination, almost any aspect of the linguistic code for the target language could be communicated using commands. E.g., the future and present tenses can be embedded into a command as, "When Luke walks to the window, Marie will write Luke's name on the blackboard!"; Abstract nouns are presented at the later stages once the students are ready to decode the grammatical structure of a language.

### **Implementing Total Physical Response in the English Class**

When using Total Physical Response in the classroom, a proper teaching cycle should be used; after following the cycle of teaching new language, words, or concepts, a variety of games can be played with the strategy.

The proper teaching cycle to use when employing TPR starts with preparation. The teacher gathers the vocabulary words, phrases, sentences, and/or passages that allow for enactment. The words and phrases should include highly descriptive nouns that are representable by actions, verbs that can be physically shown, or language that is not abstract.

After preparation the teacher models by stating the word, phrase, etc. and then by creating a physical movement to represent or define that which was stated. Next the teacher asks a sampling of students to represent the language using their own physical movements.

Following the teacher's model and the student volunteers' models, all students are asked to participate or engage. The teacher repeats the word, phrase, sentence, etc. and all students define it or demonstrate meaning by creating physical movements to match.

Up to this point, the interaction with language has included auditory stimuli, which is the verbally stated language, and physical stimuli, which is the definitions through motion. Now that students have made connections to the language and can demonstrate their understanding, teachers should write the words, phrases, sentences, etc. for students to see. The teacher or the group reads and then physically responds to show meaning. By writing and reading the content, visual stimuli and visual literacy is involved.

Repetition and practice with the same words and language will increase the longevity of the learning, so it should be done consistently.

#### **Assign student roles**

The principle of listening before speaking should be at the forefront of your TPR lesson plan. Students will need to listen individually and as a class in order to respond effectively to commands.

Your students will eventually take on their own commands and you should encourage them to speak when they are ready.

### **Assign teacher roles**

The role of teachers in TPR activities is to instill confidence, reduce stress and make sure all your students are having fun.

Having a plan in place will help you build on the target language gradually and make it easier for your students to comprehend. Focus on simplicity and give crucial feedback.

### **Provide props**

With students experiencing TPR for the first time, you will usually not need any materials to have a successful class, as they will be focused on your straightforward commands.

For more advanced TPR classes, you can begin implementing objects, such as having a student walk to the back of the classroom, grab something, then bring it to another student. You can also use doors, windows and light switches.

### **Activities for Putting TPR into Practice**

Before you begin, remember to always view your lesson from a student's perspective. You'll need a strong understanding of your students' individual needs and English levels to create a stress-free and informative lesson plan.

It's also important to go over all the relevant concepts before beginning. Start by warming up your students with a quick activity to review any recently learned grammar and vocabulary.

### **The Teacher Walkabout**

This activity focuses on the quick response time your students will need when navigating the English world abroad.

In the teacher walkabout activity, you will slowly float around the classroom and suddenly command a nearby student to respond to your command within seconds. (It's essentially an expanded version of **duck, duck, goose.**)

### **Instructions:**

- Have your students seated with their eyes pointed toward the front of the classroom.
- Begin your stroll around the room and pick a student by tapping on their shoulder or desk. After they complete the task, you can continue searching for your next unsuspecting TPR victim.
- You can reward each student with candy after they correctly complete the command. In the end, give everyone candy to ensure no students feel left out!

### **Charades**

Charades has been used in teaching for decades, and it's a **perfect example of how to use the TPR method:** pure, energetic, physical response in the form of student enthusiasm.

### **Instructions:**

- Charades can be an exercise for the whole classroom, but separating your class into groups will help your students build teamwork skills while learning.

- Once everyone is done strategizing, ask each group for one actor. Each representative will come to the front to act out the command while their group tries to guess the answer.
- If the first group cannot figure it out, you can let another group try to get the answer themselves (but be sure to give the first group ample time to guess).
- Repeat this cycle for as long as desired, then crown the group with the most points as the victor.

### **Advantages and disadvantages:**

#### **ADVANTAGES OF THE METHOD**

- It's fun.
- Helps to remember.
- It is a good activity for those students who learn best through actions and observation, and for those who prefer to be in motion.
- Can be used in any size class, with any number of students.
- As in suggestopedia, both hemispheres of the brain are worked.
- It is easy to prepare and hardly any materials are needed.
- Focusing on listening allows students to engage in language acquisition without being in an environment that is conducive to anxiety.

#### **DISADVANTAGES**

- It is not designed for the comprehensive method. It represents a set of ideas rather than a complete method.
- As students progress further, it becomes more difficult to give other commands. It is most useful for freshmen and sophomores.
- Very little emphasis on precision.
- Students may feel embarrassed.
- It can be very repetitive.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Learners in TPR have the primary roles of listeners and performers. However teacher in Total physical Response, is the one, who decides what to teach, who models and presents the new material. Teacher is encouraged to be well prepared and well organized so that the lesson flows smoothly and predictable. TPR method proposes some general teaching principles which should be applied in teaching-learning process. Even understanding that first and second languages are parallel and should be taught the same way, though not all the teachers go by these principles and still uses old teaching methods, which require students to memorize or learn by heart, forces children to speak and constantly corrects children mistakes. Because of lack of knowledge teachers think that TPR requires lots of preparation;

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