

**USING TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE IN ESP CLASSES**

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**Abstract**

Total Physical Response has many benefits on the part of the learner. One of them is being characterized by simplicity since the verb forms used for commands are in simple form. Another one is long-term retention; the constant repetition makes language memorable and makes students remember almost everything they learn. Besides, TPR decreases stress and makes EFL learners come across relaxed and pleasing experiences. It also increases students' motivation during lessons thanks to its high rate of success. More than that, TPR makes learners interested in learning English as a foreign language as it is funny and students enjoy it and it makes them full of energy and enthusiasm. This is besides the fact that it takes into account two learning styles: the auditory and the kinesthetic Learning.

This theory also has many benefits on the part of the teacher. In this respect, simple TPR activities do not require neither a great deal of preparation, nor expensive or demanding materials. So, as long as the teacher is competent, just an easy rehearsal beforehand can help. Concerning the formative assessment of students, teachers will know immediately whether or not students understood what was taught.

**Keywords:** Total Physical Response, EFL learners, TPR, vocabulary, language, advantages, teaching, communication, enthusiasm, knowledge.

**Introduction**

The forthcoming generation is support of any society and people. The flourishing of the country mostly depends on the intellect, knowledge, aspiration and enthusiasm of its young men and women. Since the early days of Uzbekistan's independence, care about the harmonic development of the younger generation, its physical moral and spiritual upbringing has become one of the most important priorities of state policy. In 1997, upon the immediate leadership of first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, the national program for Cadre Training was developed. Thanks to its implementation, the country has been maintaining the permanent deepening and renewal of the general educational and professional training through the organic unity combined with historical and spiritual heritage of the people. Reforms in the systems of education in Uzbekistan and the large- scale programs which are aimed at the happy future of our children, are now rendering their true results.

The National Education Policy, 2012 has brought some changes in the English syllabus for higher level. It focuses on skill based teaching and learning through communicative method. The use of technology in language classroom can play an important role to implement the new curriculum. Nowadays some of the educational institutions are using different technology and internet to teach language. On December 10, 2012 President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov signed a decree "On measures to further improvement of foreign language

learning system". It is noted that in the framework of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On education" and the National Program for Training in the country, a comprehensive foreign languages' teaching system, aimed at creating harmoniously developed, highly educated, modern-thinking young generation, further integration of the country to the world community, has been created.

English is as an international language. In Uzbekistan, English has been applied for any levels. It has been applied from kindergarten up to college. It means that, English is not something new in our country. Many people use it to communicate each other in daily life. In fact, children also use it to communicate each other, to sing a song (kid songs), and to mention simple something such as numbers, colors, animals, etc. They use it like their first language although, sometime they use it by using bilingual. They are enough brave to practice it. Actually, they are still children but they are easy to memorize something that they ever see and listen it. One of the appropriate methods that was implemented by the English teacher at RA. Nurul Hikmah Pamekasan was TPR (Total Physical Response) method. It is one of the English teaching approaches and methods developed by Dr. James J Asher. It has been applied for almost thirty years. This method attempts to center attention to encouraging students to listen and respond to the spoken target language commands of their teacher.

**The objectives** of the article are:

- to give general information about Total Physical Response;
- to analyses principles of Total Physical Response;
- to know whether Total Physical Response can improve students' English vocabulary
- to know the most significant improvement of students' English vocabulary by using total physical response.
- to identify the advantages of total physical response in improving students, English vocabulary
- to give advantages of using Total Physical Response in teaching language skills;
- to highlight the importance of Total Physical Response in teaching English

English plays an important role in globalization era. It is widely used as a means of communication among people around the world. For example: the use of English as a means of communications among all the nations. Uzbekistan has taken step to introduce English as a subject in the school curriculum in the primary years. Several arguments supporting the importance of English for Elementary School students are: (1) speaking English in Uzbekistan is required for the demands of tourism industries; (2) nowadays, the result of final examinations in many schools is unsatisfactory; (3) some educators believe that the earlier the children learn a foreign language, the more opportunity they will acquire a high proficiency in the target language; and (4) the Uzbekistan has automatically prepared the human resources for the future.

### **Materials and Methods**

There are many methods in teaching languages and one of them is Total Physical Response (TPR). To be fitted with the students' age, this method seems to be appropriate to teach

vocabulary since children seem like playing and moving all the time. As they are interested in body movement, vocabulary actually can be taught through action. Basically, first vocabularies for children are easy to be conveyed in action. Take it for granted, all of students are willing to do some actions in the classroom together with their friends. Therefore, the researcher would apply Total Physical Response as a method in teaching vocabulary in class. Total Physical Response is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action. It attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity. TPR makes learning become enjoyable and less stressful.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method developed by Dr. James Asher, a professor of psychology, in the early sixties. Since that time it has become one of the most effective teaching methods used by teachers all over the world. Its usefulness is given by natural coordination of speech and action that is presented by the body language. Asher explains his theory on the natural way that an infant acquires language first through listening as the baby is not able to speak when it's born. It learns to speak when listening and watching people around. For example, the mother of the infant would say: "Look at mummy. Look at mummy." The infant's face turns to the direction of the voice and mother would exclaim, "He's looking at me!" This is what Dr. Asher calls body language conversation because the infant reacts with a physical response such as looking, smiling, turning, crying and so on to parents speaking.

When the child understands the language it begins speaking spontaneously. This takes some time and when it happens the child at first doesn't speak correctly and parents do not tend to correct him either. It comes naturally that when the child grows and observes people it understands more and begin speaking more properly. Asher thinks that during this period of listening, the student like the infant may be making a mental "program" of the language that will make it possible to produce spoken language later and he suggests being tolerant for student's speech errors at the beginning and narrow the tolerance as language skills progress. Not only Asher but also other psychologists have similar views as him. For example, the psychologist Arthur Jensen suggests a model describing the development of verbal learning in children. The first stage of his model he calls Sv-R type learning, which another psychologist John De Cecco interprets as follows:

In Jensen's notation, Sv refers to a verbal stimulus—a syllable, a word, a phrase, and so on. R refers to the physical movements the child makes in response to the verbal stimulus (or Sv). The movement may involve touching, grasping, or otherwise manipulating some object. For example, mother may tell Percival (age 1) to get the ball, and Percival, distinguishing the sound "ball" from the clatter of other household noises, responds by fetching the ball and bringing it to his mother. Ball is the Sv DeCecco, J.P. *The Psychology of Learning and Instruction: Educational Psychology*. Prentice-Hall, (verbal stimulus), and Percival's action is the response. At Percival's age, children respond to words about four times faster than they respond to other sounds in their environment. It is not clear why this is so, but it is possible that the reinforcing effects of making proper responses to verbal stimuli are sufficiently strong to cause a rapid development of this behavior. Sv-R learning represents, then, the simplest form of verbal behavior.

The main roles of learners in TPR are listening and performing. Learners should listen carefully and then react physically to commands given by the teacher. Combination of listening and physical reaction would cause comprehension and with it relating long term recall. Learners can react either individually or as a group. Content of learning is given by the teacher who gives either familiar command such as: “Stand up” and “Sit down” or unfamiliar commands: “Stand on the chair” or “Sit on the table” Students are taught to understand both kinds of commands and create their own ones. It is important not to force learners into speaking but let them speak when they feel ready otherwise they may feel embarrassed and lose interest in language learning.

TPR allows students to internalize a large portion of concrete vocabulary that needs no translation vocabulary like the body, clothes, classroom and household objects, and family members. Once students have received enough input, they begin to give one-word answers to simple ‘yes/no’ questions like, “Is he raising his hand?” or simple ‘or’ questions like, “Is he raising his hand or his mouth?”. The premise behind TPR is that we shelter vocabulary, not grammar, which is the same model followed by parents teaching children their first language. Also like first-language acquisition, students initially listen but do not repeat. This delayed oral production period is comparable to the 2-year silent period we had as children. It is needed so that internalization of grammatical structures can occur more naturally and without stress. Yet unlike babies, adults need only hours or days before they are ready to speak after instruction through TPR.

### **Results and Discussions**

In a developmental sense, Asher sees successful adult second language learning as a parallel process to child first language acquisition. He claims that speech directed to young children consists primarily of commands, which children respond to physically before they begin to produce verbal responses. Asher feels adults should recapitulate the processes by which children acquire their mother tongue.

Asher's emphasis on developing comprehension skills before the learner is taught to speak links him to a movement in foreign language teaching sometimes referred to as the Comprehension Approach. This refers to several different comprehension-based language teaching proposals, which share the belief that:

- a) comprehension abilities precede productive skills in learning a language;
- b) the teaching of speaking should be delayed until comprehension skills are established;
- c) skills acquired through listening transfer to other skills;
- d) teaching should emphasize meaning rather than form;
- e) teaching should minimize learner stress.

The emphasis on comprehension and the use of physical actions to teach a foreign language at an introductory level has a long tradition in language teaching.

According to Asher what I understand, TPR is based on the premise that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any natural language on earth - including the sign language of the deaf. The process is visible when we observe how infants internalize their first language. It looks to the way that children learn their native language. Communication between parents and their children combines both verbal and physical aspects. The child responds physically

to the speech of their parent. The responses of the child are in turn positively reinforced by the speech of the parents. For many months the child absorbs the language without being able to speak. It is during this period that the internalization and code breaking occurs. After this stage the child is able to reproduce the language spontaneously. With TPR the language teacher tries to mimic this process in class. In conclusion, TPR has been developed based on the process of acquiring language of children. They start to acquire language by listening and are going to be able to respond physically, uttering the words or sentences that are often repeated. Further, they perhaps will be able to read or even write a particular words or sentences that are always shown to them through picture or modeling. Asher draws the above principles on three very influential learning hypotheses: there is an innate language learning bio-programme which involves the following steps and processes: children develop listening comprehension before they start to speak; children's listening comprehension is acquired by responding physically to parents' commands; solid listening comprehension enables speech to develop naturally, with no effort; TPR is directed to right brain learning (unlike most language teaching methods), and right brain activities make it possible for the left brain hemisphere to process language for speaking, reading and writing;

First language acquisition happens in and is fostered by stress-free environment, which means that similar conditions should be created in target language learning: TPR reduces anxiety by sequencing the introduction of skills and by focusing on meaning (by combining listening comprehension and physical response) instead of on language form and grammatical structures. However, the main aim of TPR method is to teach basic speaking and communication skill, and it is achieved by exposing learners to carefully graded vocabulary and grammar structures as „the material gradually increases in complexity so that each new lesson builds on the ones before “. TPR is a form of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which was developed in the 1980's, proposing that learners learn a target language best when using it for meaningful communication, while grammar explanations are not needed. Although TPR can enable learners to reach high proficiency levels and to build up considerable knowledge, its potential is limited when it comes to developing speaking skills. Still, this method is widely used in teaching beginners and is quite effective when teaching children: the complexity of the input is gradually increased, children are involved in listening, responding to commands, and doing actions with a song or a story, and after some time they take over from the teacher and give commands themselves. Total Physical Response or TPR is a language teaching theory that has gained a significant fame during the last two decades. In order to define it, point out that “TPR is a language teaching theory built around the coordination of speech and action; it attempts to teach language through physical activity.” That is to say that it is a teaching theory whereby a learner responds to the verbal input of the teacher with body motions. So, in TPR, instructors give commands to students in the target language, and students are meant to respond with body movements and actions.

This theory is based on several principles. First, before starting to perform actions, students have to understand first the spoken language of their teacher. This is why TPR emphasizes the importance of listening more than speaking, especially in the early stages of learning. Second, students are meant to learn grammar and new vocabulary items through action. This is why imperatives are the main structures to communicate with students. In this way, grammar is not

taught explicitly, but rather implicitly and students are expected to acquire the target language subconsciously. Third, teachers have to avoid over-correction and correct very little and not interrupt to correct mistakes. Otherwise, learners will be inhibited and won't be encouraged to learn. The TPR process consists of six steps:

1. The instructor models new vocabulary (demonstrates actions described in the target language), only three new words at a time.
2. The instructor delays modeling, using the pause between the narrative and students' reaction to assess how much more modeling is needed.
3. Once students are reacting to narratives without hesitation and with no modeling, the instructor moves on to three more new words but continues to recycle old items throughout.
4. The instructor presents novel, unexpected combinations of familiar vocabulary. The he or she presents chain commands (linking 2-3 shorter commands together); students do not perform the action until the instructor has stopped speaking.
5. The instructor varies the group size by addressing just the girls and then the boys; the right side of the room and the left, etc. As one group performs, the other watches.
6. The instructor provides a formative assessment of the material. At first this may involve simply having students close their eyes and perform actions so the instructor can gauge hesitation and accuracy among individuals. With TPR, the instructor can work with up to 25 words a day, which will be recycled with new vocabulary in the days that follow. The instructor does not proceed to new material until at least 80% of the class scores 80% or better. Speech comes spontaneously after anywhere between 3-25 hours, depending on each individual student.

In order to put this theory into practice, there is a variety of TPR activities that cannot only be used to teach vocabulary and grammatical items, but also to teach classroom language as well as instructions. These activities include:

1. **Commands:** They are the combinations of known words into a sentence that is imperative. So, the teacher would use a group of commands and students are said to act them out. These commands can be like: Stand up, raise your hand, take your pen, put it back on the table, sit down. To make these commands clear, teachers can use body language and facial expressions and through these commands, students can learn new words like hand, pen, table...etc.
2. **Games:** Commands can also be given in form of many games and one of them is Simon says. The latter is a game in which the teacher can take the role of "Simon" and give instructions to his/her students who are supposed to perform commands. In this game, when a student doesn't perform a command in the correct way, s/he is out of the game. This is just one example of the games that require physical response, other include back to the board, jigsaw reading, etc.
3. **Storytelling:** TPR Storytelling is based on telling short stories by teachers and their students are meant to act them out. It is a tool that enables students to fix events of a story in their memories.
4. **Singing:** It is one of the enjoyable ways that add variety to the class. It can help students acquire new vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and above all it is a powerful way to learn language and not to forget it. It can be more useful especially if the teacher plays meaningful songs that transmit moral messages and valuable pieces of advice.

In Total Physical Response, students and teachers play different roles. On the one hand, students play the role of listeners in the sense that they listen attentively to the verbal input of their teachers. They also act as performers since they respond physically to commands given by the teacher both individually and collectively. Therefore, learners have little influence over the content of learning; they are not encouraged to speak or to contribute in the lessons especially in the first stages of learning.

However, on the other hand, teachers play an active and direct role. In fact, the teacher is the one who determines the content of lessons, he or she direct classroom interaction as well as turn taking, and above all the teacher has the responsibility to provide the best kind of exposure to language. The teacher also presents new materials like realia, pictures flashcards, videos, and several activities. Last but not least, concerning feedback, the teacher is meant to follow the example of parents and provide students with a parent-like feedback, as we said earlier, through avoiding over-correction.

TPR has also been criticized for focusing only on receptive skills, mainly listening, at the expense of productive skills. That is to say, the learner is not expected to expand any efforts or to express their own thoughts in a creative way. This is besides the fact that it is more useful with children, otherwise, preparation becomes an issue for teachers at higher levels. Above all, from the psychological point of view, TPR activities might be embarrassing for shy students to whom it might be challenging to perform actions for the whole class.

#### **TPR can be used to teach and practice many actions.**

- Vocabulary connected with actions (smile, chop, headache, wriggle)
- Tenses past/present/future and continuous aspects (Every morning I clean my teeth, I make my bed, I eat breakfast)
- Classroom language (Open your books)
- Imperatives/Instructions (Stand up, close your eyes)
- Storytelling
- It can be adapted for all kinds of teaching situations; we just need to use our imagination.
- 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.
- It is very memorable. It really helps students to remember phrases or words.
- It is good for kinesthetic learners who need to be active in the class.
- It can be used in large or small classes. It doesn't really matter how many students you have as long as you are prepared to take the lead, the students will follow.
- It works well with mixed-ability classes. 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. As long as you are clear what you want to practice, it won't take a lot of time to get ready.
- It is very effective with teenagers and young learners.
- It involves both left- and right-brained learning.

Total Physical Response is in a sense a revival and it has enjoyed some popularity because of its support by those who emphasize the role of comprehension in second language acquisition. Krashen, for example, regards provision of comprehensible input and reduction of stress as

keys to successful language acquisition, and he sees performing physical actions in the target language as a means of making input comprehensible and minimizing stress. The experimental support for the effectiveness of Total Physical Response is sketchy and typically deals with only the very beginning stages of learning. Proponents of Communicative Language Teaching would question the relevance to real-world learner needs of the TPR syllabus and the utterances and sentences used within it. Asher himself, however, has stressed that Total Physical Response should be used in association with other methods and techniques. Indeed, practitioners of TPR typically follow this recommendation, suggesting that for many teachers TPR represents a useful set of techniques and is compatible with other approaches to teaching. TPR practices therefore may be effective for reasons other than those proposed by Asher and do not necessarily demand commitment to the learning theories used to justify them.

There is a lot physical manipulation and action language accompanying early input. Throw the ball to Rudi', put your arm ought here', etc. This action language, encouraging physical manipulation, is couched in the imperative". From the above description, the students try to comprehend the utterances of language before trying to produce verbal language. They learn by using physical movements or actions. To make it easy for the students, the teacher should not give abstract words first. It can be delayed until students can comprehend the target language.

Asher stated that: "Abstractions should be delayed until students have internalized a details cognitive map of the target language. Abstractions are not necessary for people to decode the grammatical structure of a language. Once students have internalized the target language». To know more about Total Physical Response, the following is the basic principles of Total Physical Response which was created by Asher: When should stress comprehension rather than production at the beginning levels of second language instruction with no demand on the learners to generate the target structure themselves. We should obey the 'here and now' principle. We should provide input to the learners by getting them to carry commands. These commands should be couched in the imperative".

**Advantages of TPR:**

- It is fun and easy
- It does not require a great deal of preparation on the part of the teacher.
- It is a good tool for learning vocabulary.
- Class size does not need to be a problem.
- There is no age barrier.
- It is good for kinesthetic learners

**Disadvantages of TPR:**

- It is not a very creative method. Students are not given the opportunity to express their own views and thoughts in a creative way.
- It is easy to overuse TPR.
- It is limited, since everything cannot be explained with this method. It must be combined with other approaches.

- It is challenging for shy students
- It is for children only

Asher claims that his strategy is still popular for three reasons:

Firstly, it is aptitude-free. The acquisition of the mother tongue is not limited by aptitude, so the acquisition of a foreign language in the same way is for everybody, unlike the traditional grammar-translation method.

Secondly, there are no age barriers; every age group can be successfully instructed by the method. Finally, it is stress-free, as we have mentioned before. Total Physical Response is highly motivating for students. At the very beginning, Asher claims that the teacher has only five minutes to convince students they really can learn the language. After this short time period student get to act on a couple of imperatives and they can feel the success of understanding a foreign language. The strategy is motivating for teachers too. It is a challenge to change the traditional class into an imperative – action form; it is a refreshing change of teaching style. In research, students evaluated TPR classes as more interesting and the teacher more inspiring than classical lessons.

## CONCLUSION

Total Physical response is one of an interesting method for teaching young learner because they directly practice the command with the physical movement. It is only suitable for teaching young learner, it is not suitable to be practiced for teaching adult. Based on the researcher, it is better method for teaching young learner who has kinesthetic learner style. In practicing this method, the teacher does not need much preparation to use this method in teaching learning process. It is good for teaching listening, speaking skills and improving students' vocabularies.

In teaching English activities, there were three phases in the English teaching and learning process. They are pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching. Each of them has different activities. It depends on a certain topic that discussed by the teacher. In teaching English, the teacher also combined TPR (Total Physical Response) method with the English song in order to make the students interest to joint with the English teaching process in the classroom. So, they were not boring and lazy to learn it. In the first observation, the students more motivate and to join with English teaching process in the classroom at the whilst-teaching. While the second observation, it appeared at the whilst-teaching and post-teaching. In this case, generally, most students were interest, happy when they joined with the English teaching and learning process because they could practice it directly in the classroom.

TPR also uses techniques that allow students to switch back and forth between the right brain and left-brain thinking, which not many traditional teaching techniques allow. While the left brain responds to watching and learning including input such as: analyzing, critiquing, explaining, talking and telling, the right brain response to motor movement such as: acting, drawing, games, gesturing, metaphor and physical movement. Another thing about TPR I wanted to point out and which can be also found in article is the fun, active and low-stress approach to teaching language. Learners are highly motivated by TPR because of the continual and fast-moving action, the high rate of success, and the low level of stress involved.

I believe teachers would be enjoying TPR as much as their students but they should remember that in the beginning; there should be some tolerance for students' speech errors and as TPR progresses, the tolerance for speech errors should narrow.

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