

## USING TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSES

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### ABSTRACT

So far teachers developed so many teaching methods. However not all of them useful. In this article we analyzed one of them. Total Physical Response mostly used method for young learner. We should admit that teaching language is difficult in primary classes. Because children can not concentrate on teacher or process of lesson. So teacher should attract them. That is why TPR very useful method. Total Physical Response is an approach to teaching second language that was developed in the 1970s by James Asher. His aim is teaching language with the help of mimics. Children have an amazing ability to absorb language through play and other activities which they find enjoyable. They pick up chunks and phrases because it helps them to communicate. Since concentration levels and attention spans are short, a variety of activities, pace and organization is necessary. On the other hand, children benefit from familiar situation and knowing the rules. The same stories and rhymes can be repeated for the same or different purposes. Playing with the language is common in first language development and it is natural in learning a foreign language too. They may not be aware of it, but children use language creatively and try to experiment and work out the rules. Singing songs, telling stories and making rhymes are the best ways to do it. Once pupils start to read and write, these skills help them grow in the language. In teaching we should accept the ability of learner. Learners cannot obtain lessons because of huge amount of materials. TPR method has privilege. As TPR takes into consideration children's ability.

**Keywords:** Total Physical Response, ability, acquiring, method, language, mimic, game, learners.

### INTRODUCTION, LITERATURE REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

In globalization century learning English becoming popular. Parents want to educate their children from young ages. Primary and private schools stressing English teaching. Teachers try to find proper method which will be useful obtaining language. One of the problems of teaching is vocabulary comprehension. Learning words demands patient, but young ESL learners don't have such kind of skill. That is why teachers use special methods to evaluate vocabulary knowledge. One of the popular and useful methods is Total Physical Response. Before discussing about TPR in detail, we describe characteristics of young learners. Because TPR is used in primary classes.

In learning language, children begin learning with simple expressions. Broadly speaking, children learn abstract rules of language from which they listen, and even they also learn expressions that they have never heard before. It is extremely important that teachers not only get children to learn language, but they also encourage them to learn it positively.

Teaching of English for children has been of particular concerns. For this reason, in teaching children English, there are some characteristics of whom presented by Scott and Lisbeth (1992)

- Children aged 8-10 are mature enough:
- They have a particular point of view:
- They are able to describe the difference between facts and fiction:
- They are curious of asking questions:
- They believe in what is said and “real” world to express and comprehend meaning:
- They have distinct opinions about what they like and what they dislike:
- They are open to what happens in the classroom and begin asking a teacher’s decision:
- They can cooperate with each other and learn from others.(Hondayo Wildodo 2005)

From the age of five to seven, pupils are usually at the beginner level. They can talk about present and past events, they can argue and explain their reasoning, their imagination is very vivid and they can understand direct human interaction. It is important in the TPR strategy that they understand situations more quickly than they understand the language used. They also use language skills before they are aware of them. The physical world is dominant for them, they understand through hands and ears. Young children are happy to work alone. Pair work and group work has to be introduced and slowly practiced. They love playing and learning. On the other hand, they hardly ever admit that they do not know something and praise is very important form of motivation. Pupils at this age cannot decide for themselves what to learn. At the end of primary school, when pupils reach eight to ten years, most of the characteristics mentioned above change. They may be at the beginner level or slightly higher, depending on their foreign language curriculum. These children have formed very decided views of the world and they know exactly what they like doing. They can tell the difference between fact and fiction. They rely on both the spoken word and the physical world to understand meaning. That are able to work with others and learn from others. They also are able to make some decisions about their own learning. Children of this age understand abstracts and symbols, they can generalize and systematize. They are aware of the rules of their mother tongue and they bring this language awareness to the foreign language classroom.

Children have an amazing ability to absorb language through play and other activities which they find enjoyable. They pick up chunks and phrases because it helps them to communicate. Since concentration levels and attention spans are short, a variety of activities, pace and organization is necessary. On the other hand, children benefit from familiar situation and knowing the rules. The same stories and rhymes can be repeated for the same or different purposes. Playing with the language is common in first language development and it is natural in learning a foreign language too. They may not be aware of it, but children use language creatively and try to experiment and work out the rules. Singing songs, telling stories and making rhymes are the best ways to do it. Once pupils start to read and write, these skills help them grow in the language.

At the age of ten, the pupil are still not able to cope with the grammar as such. Thus the barest minimum of grammar should be taught as grammar. The teacher should note the structures and function of language instead. Explaining grammar comes when a pupil asks for it or when the situation is convenient (Bc.Marketa Pinkasova, 2011).

In addition, Scott and Lisbeth say that children particularly aged 8-10 are competent mother tongue users. In this regard, they are aware of basic linguistic rules of their mother tongue. At

these ages, children can grasp abstracts and symbols, generalize language, and systematize it. Children are also capable of interpreting meaning without understanding words separately, are competent in using language creatively, are frequently fond of doing “exploration” and making a certain condition enjoyable: have established imagination: and are food of communicating (Halliwell, 1992).

In the context of teaching, most people assume that children learn a foreign language in the same way that they learn their mother tongue. Basically, children are potential in acquiring and learning a foreign language, and even they learn it more quickly than those who are learning the foreign language after puberty( McLaughlin). On the contrary, children are less capable of absorbing or acquiring a foreign language optimally (Long, 1990) (Hondayo Widodo, 2005)

So far many teachers and linguists study this method. Total Physical Response method is centered around the idea that memory is increased if it is connected with a physical movement. Similar to the Series and Direct Methods, TPR is intended to mimic childhood native language acquisition- children’s speech and listening is often accompanied by activities such as reaching, moving, grabbing, or looking ( Brown and Lee, 2015).TPR instructs learners to carry out an activity or movement in an imperative phrase, such as “go to the window” etc. As learners progress, more complex instructions will follow. Similar to childhood language learning, learners would eventually gain confidence in their understanding and begin to attempt speaking the language and ask and respond to questions. Some of the benefits of TPR is that it creates a less anxious and stressful environment for the learners, and is well suited for young students learning a new language. The biggest drawbacks to TPR is the need for a qualified instructor who is well versed in TPR theory, and the use of specialized materials and textbooks (Al Harrasi). Total Physical Response is a language teaching method which is based on the assumption that the coordination of speech and action will boost language learning. It was developed by James Asher in the 70s. He drew from a variety of areas, including psychology, learning theory and humanistic pedagogy. According to the trace theory of memory in psychology, the more often and intensively a memory is traced, the stronger the memory association will be and the more likely it will be recalled. The retracing can be verbal through repetition and in association with motor activity. This clearly reminds us of the behavioristic psychology which holds a Stimulus- Response model of learning. The stimulus in the TPR methods is verbal and the responses is physical. In this respect TPR has many similarities to the Direct Method.

From developing Psychology Asher draws the parallel, he contends exists, between first language acquisition and second language learning. Children get language through a series of commands from their parents to which they react physically. It is only later that they can produce verbal responses (cf Jean Piaget works). Asher contends that humans are endowed with a sort of bio program which follows this process of language learning and that, when teaching a second language we must follow the same process so that learning can be successful. Asher in this respect adheres to a naturalistic method of language learning (Mohammed Rhalmi, 2009)

Asher’s Total Physical Response is a “natural method” since Asher views first and second language learning as parallel processes. He argues second language teaching and learning should reflect the naturalistic processes of first language learning. For this reason, there are such three central processes:

1. Before children develop the ability to speak, they develop listening competence. At the early phases of first language acquisition, they are able to comprehend complex utterances, which they hardly can spontaneously produce or imitate. Asher takes into accounts that a learners may be making a mental “blueprint” of the language that will make it possible to produce spoken language later during this period of listening:
2. Children’s ability in listening comprehension is acquired because children need to respond physically to spoken language in the form of parental commands; and
3. When a foundation in listening comprehension has been established, speech evolves naturally and effortlessly out of it.

Asher believes that it is crucial to base foreign language learning upon how children learn their native language. In other words, TPR is designed based upon the way that children learn their mother tongue. In this respect, TPR considers that one learns best when he is actively involved and grasp what he hears (Haynes, 2004; Larsen- Freeman, 1986; Linse, 2005; Handoyo Widodo, 2005).

Imperative drills are the prominent classroom activity in TPR. They are typically geared to highlight physical actions and activity on the part of the learners. In this sense, learners play main roles: a listeners and a performer. They listen attentively and respond physically to commands by the teacher. Learners need to respond both individually and collectively; they have minor influence on the content of learning as much as content is determined by the teacher. At the beginning of learning, learners are also expected to recognize and respond to novel combinations of previously taught items. Such novel utterances are recombination of constituents the teacher has used directly in training. For example, the teacher directs learners with “Walk to the table” and “Sit on the chair!” these are familiar to learners since they have practiced responding to them. Furthermore, learners are also 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

In TPR, a teacher plays an active and direct role: the director of a stage play in which the learners are the actors”. It is the teacher who decides what to teach, who models and presents the new materials classroom use. Therefore, the teacher ought to be well prepared and well organized so that the lesson flows smoothly and predictably. It is highly recommended to write down the exact utterances the teacher will be using, especially the novel commands because the action is so fast – moving; there is usually no time for you to create spontaneously”. In this regard, classroom interaction and turn taking is teacher rather than learner directed.(Hondoyo Widodo, 2005).

We discussed theory of TPR methods. But every method has its own pluses and minuses. Its advantages include:

1. It is a lot of fun . Learners enjoy it, and this method can be a real stirrer in the class. It lifts the pace and the mood.
2. It is very memorable. It does assist students to recognize phrases or words.
3. It is good for kinaesthetic learners who are required to be active in the class.
4. It can be used both in large or small classes. In the case, it is no matter to have how many students you have as long as you are prepared to take the lead, the learners will follow.
5. It works well with mixed-ability classes. The physical actions get across the meaning effectively so that all the learners are able to comprehend and apply the target language.

6. It is no need to have a lot of preparation or materials for using the TPR. In this regard, as long as you competent of what you want to practice, it will not take a lot of time to get ready.
7. It is very effective with teenagers and young learners.
8. It involves both left and right – brained learning.

In addition to such advantages , TPR has disadvantages. Among them are:

1. Students who are not used to such things might find it embarrassing. This can be the case initially that if the teachers is prepared to perform the actions, the students feel happier about copying. In addition, the students are in a group and do not have to perform for the whole class. This pleasure is reserved for the teacher.
2. It is only really suitable for beginner levels. Whilst, it is clear that it is far more useful at lower levels because the target language lends itself to such activities even though it can successfully be applied at Intermediate and Advanced levels. In this respect, it is essential to adapt the language, accordingly. For example, when teaching “ways of walking” to an advanced class and cooking verbs to intermediate students, TPR can be employed.
3. It is not flexibly used to teach everything, and if used a lot, it would become repetitive. This method is a fun way of changing the dynamics and pace of a lesson used in conjunction with other methods and techniques. To sum up, TPR should best be combined with others since it needs much energy so that learners do not feel tired of learning language; and
4. Although the use of TPR in the classroom has often been effective, it does have its flaws. One of this method flaws is that when a teacher uses TPR in their lesson, they will have trouble teaching abstract vocabulary or expressions. As a remedy, the teacher can write the word on cards with a picture if applicable. Another flaw is that TPR can be ineffective if the teacher uses it for a long period of time without switching it with other activities that help teach the target language. Since TPR is made up of mainly of commands, it tends to neglect narrative, descriptions, and conversation forms of language (Hondayo Widodo, 2005).

TPR can easily be used in a everyday classroom routine. The teacher encourages the children to recognize and respond to simple classroom instructions and gestures, such as; hands up, sit down, wave goodbye. She can make visual associations with words that the children can learn and mimic, especially descriptive words. For example: big, happy, small, sad. It should be kept in mind that they love to mime professions, animals, vehicles etc. In such activities children first listen and then understand messages, decide whether they are right or wrong, and finally act accordingly (Pinter,2006)(Sühender Er, 2013).

A motivated learner will make language acquisition a success. TPR approach promotes learning English as a second language in a less stressful way. For future research , it would be recommendable to take into consideration the duration of time to execute the treatment process. Another criteria that should be taken serious attention to is to have a more through sample selection process to ensure that the sample have similar characteristics. A regression discontinuity design seems more appropriate since the samples are identified through cut-off point. Further research for TPR in different dimension should be taken into consideration such as case study on the effectiveness of the TPR approach to help children with Anti Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or other learning disability problems.

Foreign language teaching to young learners is a rapidly growing field all over the world. Very young age in acquiring a language is an advantage unless the presentation is done



accordingly. Language development is fast in early years and for the beginning level in a foreign language teaching, TPR is a suitable technique which is built around the coordination of speech and action. It is to teach language through activity (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Young learners do not know reading and writing yet so they learn through activities, songs, stories and games mostly. There are no texts so the classroom objects can be used easily. (Pinter, 2006). Among teaching methods TPR one of the most useful methods for young learner. Because provides not only funny teaching but also essential teaching.

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