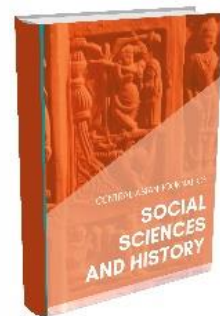




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The role of Total Physical Response in teaching young learners, Characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of TPR and the application in the classroom

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ABSTRACT

The present article deals with the aim to highlight the role of Total Physical Response (TPR) in teaching young learners English as a foreign and second language. Teaching English for young learners needs some good methods because English here is as a second or foreign language.

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INTRODUCTION

Young learners do not practice to make communication using English with their families or people around them. So, it will be difficult to teach them if the teacher only use a common way. As an English teacher, choosing good method to make their students learning English easily is a must. And Total Physical Response is one of an alternative good method for teaching English for young Learners. It can help young learners to memorize some commands or some vocabularies easily through use their physical movement. The students will not only learnable but also interesting and enjoyable. Total Physical Response is very good method for Kinesthetic learner who need to be active in the classroom. This method tries to introduce the language skill in an action and the English teacher has three

responsibilities: as an instructor, as a role model, and an action supervisor until they are ready to imitate what the teacher said and did. This method is good for improving students listening and speaking skills. Teaching English for young learners needs some good methods because English here is as a second or foreign language. Young learners do not practice to make communication using English with their families or people around them. So, it will be difficult to teach them if the teacher only use a common way. As an English teacher, choosing good method to make their students learning English Easily is a must. And Total Physical Response is one of an alternative good method for teaching English for young Learners. It can help young learners to memorize some commands or some vocabularies easily through use their physical movement. The students will not only learnable but also interesting and enjoyable. Total Physical Response is very good method for Kinesthetic learner who need to be active in the classroom. This method tries to introduce the language skill in an action and the English teacher has three responsibilities: as an instructor, as a role model, and an action supervisor until they are ready to imitate what the teacher said and did. This method is good for improving students listening and speaking skills.

MAIN PART

The study of foreign languages in modern society is becoming inseparable professional training of specialists of a very different profile and on the quality of their language training in many respects successful solution of issues of professional growth and growth depends expansion of contacts with foreign partners. Therefore, the school is designed to provide a certain level of proficiency in a foreign language that could allow it to continue study during the period of university and postgraduate education, as well as yourself. The success of training largely depends on the method of work foreign language teacher, from his ability to use various modern methods in the context of solving specific educational tasks.

Up to now, teaching English, particularly at elementary schools in Uzbekistan has totally been encouraged. This attempt is geared to familiarize pupils with English at an early stage. As English teaching achieves its prominence at elementary schools, English is taught commencing from the first grade. For this reason, English teachers who are concerned with teaching children should be aware of the nature of their psychology in addition to mastering all crucial components in teaching them. So far, English teachers have been experiencing difficulty in teaching children since they are less sufficient especially in implementing appropriate teaching materials and methods. Thus, the selection of the two elements should be on the basis of learners age. To successfully conduct English teaching at elementary schools, teaching materials and methods are well suited. For this reason, one method considered one of the efforts to English teaching for children, should be introduced. This method is known as Total Physical Response (TPR). Prior to discussing such a method in detail, this paper starts with describing characteristics of children.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method proposed by Dr. James J Asher (1988)[1], a professor of psychology at San Jose State University, California. According to Asher, TPR is based on the premise that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any natural language in the world. The acquisition process is visible when we observe how children acquire their mother tongue. Communication between parents and children combines both verbal and physical aspects. Children respond physically to their parents' speech. The responses are in turn positively reinforced by the parents' speech. For months children absorb the language without being able to speak; this is a period of internalization and code breaking. After this stage children are able to reproduce the language spontaneously.

With TPR the language teacher tries to mimic this process in the classroom. This method is,

therefore, also referred to as “the Comprehension Approach” because it gives emphasis on listening comprehension prior to production. In designing TPR, Asher carefully considered how infants acquire language and based on his method on three principles of first language acquisition: listening precedes speaking, language learning is associated with body movement, and listening skill prepares a child for speaking. When speaking to a kid, parents commonly point to an object and clearly state its labels, e.g. “ball” or instruct the child, “pick up the ball”, and show through action what they mean by utterance. Children are able to show comprehension by responding physically to the parent’s utterance. With no pressure, children slowly but surely learn to respond and eventually try to speak. Asher claims that second language acquisition, Asher views, follow the same process to child first language acquisition, that is, the speech addressed to children usually consists primarily of commands which they respond to physically. Adults, therefore, could follow the way children successfully acquire their mother tongue. In other words, Asher’s TPR is a ‘Natural Method’[2] in a sense that second language learning follows the naturalistic process of first language learning. For this reason, there are three such central processes:

(a) 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 account that a learner may be making a mental ‘blueprint’ of the language that will make it possible to produce spoken language later during this period of listening;

(b) children’s ability in listening comprehension is acquired because children need to respond physically to spoken language in the form of parental commands; and

(c) 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. Asher’s TPR is basically based on behaviorist psychology for its learning theory. Learning is the result of stimulus response sequence. However, he elaborates this theory by adding some tenets to account for what facilitates or inhibits learning. He draws three hypotheses about learning from different scholars such as Lenneberg. The three hypotheses are as follows:

1. **Bioprogram** There exists a specific innate bio- program for language learning, which defines an optional path for first and second language development. The brain and the nervous system are biologically programmed to acquire language in a particular sequence and in a particular mode. The sequence is listening before speaking and the mode is to synchronize language with the individual’s body. Children or learners, therefore, should first internalize a cognitive map of the target language through listening exercises and listening should be accompanied by physical movement; speaking skill then comes later.

2. **Brain lateralization** is the divisions of functions within the brain different learning function in the left brain hemispheres. Children acquire language through motor movement (right brain activity) then it is processed for the production in the left brain. Right brain activities must occur before the left brain can process language for production. Similarly, adult should develop language mastery through right brain motor activities, while the left brain learns. When a sufficient amount of right brain learning has taken place the left- brain will be triggered to produce language.

3. **Reduction of Stress** Stress (an affective filter) intervenes between the act of learning and what is to be learned; the lower the stress the greater the learning. An important condition for successful

language learning is stress free. The key to stress-free learning is to strike into the natural bio-program for language development and this can bring back the relaxed experiences during the first language learning. by focusing on message which is interpreted through movement, the learner is said to be freed from stressful situation. Adult language learning often causes stress and anxiety and thus adult should learn second language as children acquire their mother tongue. In this way, second language learners will be freed from foreign language syndrome (i.e, stress, shy, anxiety, lack of self confidence, etc).

Total Physical Response has characteristics. Asher who developed this method, focused in particular on two characteristics of first language acquisition which is written in David Nunan's book [3].

1. The child gets a vast amount of comprehensible input before beginning to speak. Young children comprehend language which is far in excess of their ability to produce.

2. There is a lot physical manipulation and action language accompanying early input. Throw the ball to Rudi', put your arm through 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 (1991, 244) stated that[4]:

"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 (1974, 244)[5]: 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".

Age features are the anatomical, physiological and mental qualities characteristic of a certain period of life. Age tenaciously holds development and dictates its will. Taking into account age characteristics is one of the fundamental pedagogical principles. Younger school age is considered to be the age of children is about 7 to 10-11 years old, which corresponds to the years of his studies in primary classes. This age is relatively calm and uniform physical development. Magnification height and weight, stamina, vitality the lungs are walking fairly evenly and proportionally. School enrollment introduces critical changes in the child's life. The whole his way of life, his social position in team, family. Main, leading activity henceforth becomes teaching, the most important duty- the duty to learn, acquire knowledge. And the teaching - this is a serious work that requires organization, discipline, volitional efforts of the child.

Initially, primary school students learn well from their relationships in the family, sometimes the child studies well based on relationships with the team. Big role personal motive also plays: the desire to get a good assessment, approval of teachers and parents. Age features of memory in the younger school age develop under the influence learning. The role and proportion of verbal, semantic memorization is increasing and is develop in the ability to consciously manage your memory and regulate its manifestations.

Thinking begins to reflect the essential properties and signs of objects and phenomena, which gives the ability to make the first generalizations, the first conclusions, draw the first analogies, build elementary reasoning. Creative imagination as creating new images related to transformation, processing

impressions of past experience, combining them into new combinations, combinations are also developing. At primary school age, it is laid the foundation of moral behavior occurs assimilation of moral norms and rules of behavior, public orientation of the personality. Teaching of English for young learners is not a simple problem; it is because English is not their first language. In learning language, young learners need process for combines both verbal and physical aspects. According to Asher (1988)[6] children respond physically to their parents' speech. For months, they absorb the language without being able to speak; this is a period of internalization and code breaking. After this stage, they will be able to reproduce the language spontaneously.

In learning language, children begin learning 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)[7].

Children aged 8-10 are mature enough; they have a particular point of view; they are able to describe the difference between facts and fictions; they are curious of asking questions; they believe in what is said and the real world to express and comprehend meaning/message; they have distinct options about what they like and what they dislike; they are open to what happens in the classroom and begin asking a teacher's decision; and they can cooperate with each other and learn from others.

TPR can be used to teach and practise such many things as: vocabulary connected with actions (smile, chop, headache, wriggle); grammatical items, including 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); and Story-telling. There is generally no basic text in a Total Physical Response course. Materials and realia have a demanding role, yet in forthcoming learning stages. In this case, the teacher's voice, actions, gestures, and common classroom objects, such as books, pens, cups, and so on are great importance in the learning-teaching process using TPR. The teacher may be required to use pictures, realia, slides, and word charts to set an interactive activity.

According to Muhren (2003)[8], the basic technique of TPR is simple. Learners act out commands given by the teacher or their fellow pupils (at a later stage). These commands, or series of commands, are simple at the beginning (*stand up, sit down*) but after some time they may become more complex (*I want the boys to stand in a circle please*). A TPR sequence can be a chain of actions relating to a compound task (*take pen and paper, sit down, begin at the top of your paper, write down: Dear ...*) or even contain a story-line. Most importantly, a teacher helps learners to be totally involved in TPR activities so that they can act out what they have heard. There is no pressure on them to speak the foreign language. Before any learner can commence to speak out a foreign language spontaneously as well as creatively, she must feel the inner readiness to do so. When learners are ready, they feel that the words of the language-sound and meaning integrated and combined into larger utterances spring from *within* themselves. This inner readiness will develop gradually but inevitably with prolonged exposure to the sound of understood language and an active involvement in its meaning.

English teaching and learning between young learner and adults cannot be equated. This is reflected by the different developmental characteristics of adults and children. Children are very talkative, having less concentration, having their own business, and they are fond of talking to friends. Consequently, the teachers must have the spirit of patience and high hospitality. The teacher and the students are the main elements in the class. The teachers should be able to manage the class well. Many

experts reveal that the use of appropriate techniques used by the teachers can attract the children in class, especially in English classes. In the level of young learner, the teachers must relax and create fun approaches to delivering the materials to children. In addition, teachers must create a good learning environment and appropriate instruction for learners. Teaching English, especially for children, should be enjoyable, interesting, repetitive, and understandable. In doing so, there should be appropriate methods for teaching English to them. One of the alternative methods that can be applied in the classroom is the called Total Physical Response. This method tries to introduce some language skills or components in an action in which a teacher serves three roles: an order taker, a model provider, and an action monitor in which learners serve as models and action performers until they feel ready to speak out.

When TPR is applied in the classroom, a teacher is required to provide a model. The model has three vital features: 1) grasping the spoken language must come prior to speaking, 2) comprehension is developed through body movement, and 3) the period of listening period helps a learner to be ready to speak. Such a model does not force the learner to speak. It is also recommended that TPR be applied for only short periods of time because the learner will get tired of doing it. The TPR method also emphasises two crucial elements: the use of movement as a memory enhancer and imperatives as the only method of instruction the teacher uses commands to direct the learners. Most importantly, when applying such a method, the use of mother tongue is deemphasized. If there are abstract words, a teacher is required to write down them on the white/black boards without expressing those words. The meaning of words is comprehended generally through an action.

CONCLUSION

In my point view, 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 kinaesthetic 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.

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