

EFFECTS OF TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSES ON VERY YOUNG LANGUAGE LEARNERS.

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Abstract: Language learning can be challenging, but that doesn't mean it has to be boring or tedious! One of the most popular ways to make the experience more enjoyable is to use a variety of different language teaching approaches. One common approach is Total Physical Response (TPR). This innovative and interactive style sees the mind and body work together to enhance language acquisition. In this blog post, we will explore the principles of TPR and its numerous benefits for language education.

Keywords: TPR approach, vocabulary, young learners, speaking fluency, English teaching, characteristics of young learners.

English today becomes a global phenomenon in the 21st century and English learning has become an important educational issue in Asia in general and in Vietnam particularly. Nowadays, English is considered a foreign language and has been included in elementary schools' language curriculum in Uzbekistan. Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) has become its own field of study as the age of compulsory English education has become lower and lower in countries around the world. Even in countries where families may choose the foreign language for their children to study, English is "overwhelmingly the first choice". The growing demand for English, plus parents' belief that English skills provide their children with a better education and better employment opportunities, are the forces driving English, to be introduced at earlier ages. Many students now start English at younger and younger some as low as the ages of five or six. There are two major reasons for an early start in English: the value of English for education and employment, and the educational benefits of early language learning. Total Physical Response is a language teaching approach that relies on the coordination of language and physical movement. It was developed by American psychologist James Asher in the 1970s.

The main concept behind TPR is that learners respond physically to L2 commands issued by the educator. For example, the teacher might say, "Stand up," and the students respond by standing up. This process engages the body, creating a connection between the spoken language and the corresponding action. Advocates argue that by listening to the target language and converting it to action, speaking will eventually manifest itself. This form of motor activity encourages right-brain learning and long-term storage, in a process somewhat akin to learning to ride a bicycle. TPR is

particularly useful for, but not limited to, teaching beginners and/or younger students and is highly effective for teaching imperative-based languages, where the commands are easily expressed through actions.

The TPR strategy is highly flexible and can be used in a variety of different ways in the language classroom. Teachers can deploy it to help students learn new vocabulary, to demonstrate comprehension of words, phrases and sentences, to show their understanding of a sequence of sentences, or even the progression of events in a story. Whatever the learning objective, there are some common characteristics that help to define the approach.

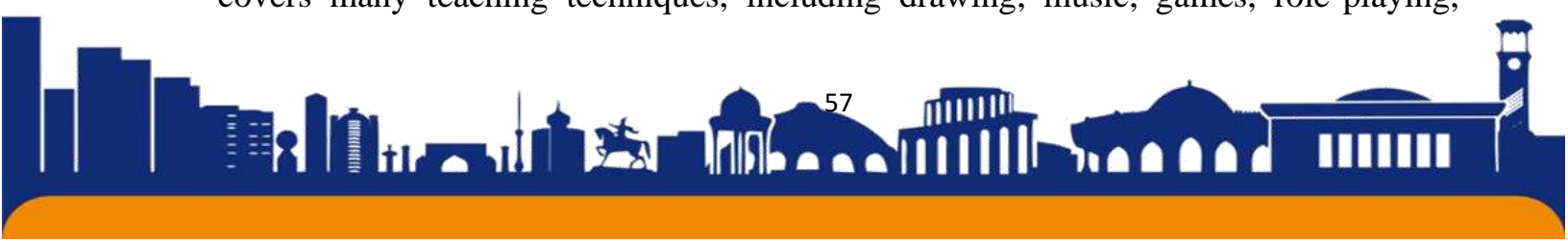
Firstly, TPR emphasises language comprehension before production. Learners first internalise the L2 by responding physically to commands without having to produce any spoken language themselves. This reduces anxiety and allows them to acquire the language more naturally. TPR also relies on repetition to reinforce language learning. By repeatedly performing actions in response to commands, learners strengthen their memory and their understanding of the vocabulary and grammar structures. Importantly TPR creates a low-anxiety environment in which learners don't feel pressured to speak immediately. Instead, they feel comfortable and confident, gradually building their language skills before engaging in oral production. If you've decided to try out the TPR approach, here are some hints and tips to support your teaching practice. The best place to start is to teach a set of simple commands and their corresponding actions in the target language. For example, instructions like "stand up," "sit down," "turn around," and actions like clapping, pointing or raising hands. Take the lead by demonstrating each command and encourage students to follow along.

As students' language development speeds up, try introducing more complex vocabulary and grammar structures. For instance, move from single words to simple sentences, such as "Pick up the book" or "Open the window." Furthermore, as learners become more confident and comfortable, gradually transition from physical responses to spoken production. Allow them to also initiate commands and act as instructors themselves. Students' understanding and retention can be significantly improved by using visual aids and expressions. Another great way to maximise engagement is to incorporate music and rhymes into your TPR activities. Singing or chanting commands always makes the learning experience more fun and memorable. Similarly, games like Simon Says can have a positive effect by adding an element of competition and excitement to the learning process.

Whatever approach you take, contextualising the language in real-life situations reinforces its practical application. For instance, why not act out a scene at a restaurant

where students play the roles of customers and waiters, using TPR to order food or serve dishes? Finally, while TPR is an excellent tool for initial language acquisition, it should usually be complemented with other language teaching methods as students advance. Try integrating TPR with speaking, reading, and writing exercises to promote a well-rounded language learning experience. And, as always with a new teaching approach, Sanako's recommendation is to test and try it in your setting and then tailor it to your specific circumstances.

The teacher must be a model in the classroom and has 3 basic features: Mastering the spoken language, Developing understanding with body language, and Getting students ready to speak. Students are not forced to speak in any way, but they are expected to be ready because it is believed that the second/foreign language will be learned in the same way as the mother tongue is learned. For this reason, first exposure to language, understanding, observing physical reactions and then speaking are expected. In time, students who see the teacher as a role model will start to imitate their teachers. They begin to show their reactions to the commands given by the teacher. While implementing this method, students should not be corrected directly, they should be encouraged to speak, and they should be tried to make sense of the situation in the process. Trying to correct every word of individuals learning a new language and interrupting their speech will have negative effects on them. More corrections may occur as conversations improve. It is more effective to use the method with beginners and young students. It is important that this method is used especially for students between the ages of 7-11, children learn better when they see and learn by doing, so movement is the basis for their learning. Beginner students can physically react to commands given. It is expected that students who actively learn and use their physical intelligence will show more success. It is a method in which both the right and left parts of the brain work actively at the same time. There is not much material to use in the classroom. The important thing is the competence of the teacher and the ability to use body language. Teaching a foreign language to young learners or children differs from teaching adults, especially because it involves fun with movement and physical participation. In addition, Shin stated that the more fun learners have, the better they will remember the language they have learned. Ytreberg emphasized that "Children's understanding comes from hands, eyes and ears, and the physical world is always dominant in learning." Similarly, the "Total Physical Response" method also argues that language learning should refer to physical actions. At the same time, the method covers many teaching techniques, including drawing, music, games, role-playing,



storytelling, competition, etc. Children are more likely to remember words associated with a fun game, an interesting picture, a song, or an absurd situation.

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