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ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) METHOD

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Annotation. *This article deals with the importance of TPR in teaching foreign languages and its benefits and drawbacks have been discussed with examples. Moreover, the author explains about how to use the TPR effectively and how educators can design immersive learning environments that encourage student engagement and comprehensive language development.*

Key words: *Total Physical Response (TPR), hands-on approach, physical activity, linguistic acquisition, language instruction*

Language learners often find it difficult to acquire English, especially when it comes to learning grammar and vocabulary at the same time. Educators have looked into a number of ways to involve students in the language learning process, and one such strategy is Total Physical Response (TPR), which has drawn attention for its creative and hands-on approach to language instruction. This article will explain the fundamentals of TPR and examine how it can be used to improve language learning.

TPR was developed by Dr. James Asher in 1970s. Asher himself was not linguistic, he was professor in psychology. TPR is the result of Asher's belief that children learn their first language by following their parents' instructions; in the teaching of first language, learners seem to do a lot of listening before they speak; learners have a connection to reality and materials should be taken by daily life; in this approach, language is acquired through listening to others say things, meaning is obtained through seeing and performing physical actions; it is stated that comprehension comes before production.

The brain responds to comprehension while the body responds to acts. The left brain processes information while performing an action, but the right brain retains knowledge. TPR is renowned for being a natural strategy that benefits people of all ages. "Sentences are understood by conducting physical activity which convey their meaning" - Asher stated. TPR is a powerful approach that is still in use today. Young students are keen to engage in physical activity. TPR is mostly intended for energetic, young learners.

Cons:

1. Limited Vocabulary: While effective for concrete vocabulary and commands, TPR may struggle with abstract or complex language concepts.

2. Dependence on Instructor: TPR requires a skilled instructor to guide learners effectively, which may not always be available.

3. Cultural Sensitivity: Some actions may be culturally inappropriate or misunderstood, requiring careful consideration and adaptation.

4. Limited Output: TPR primarily focuses on comprehension rather than production, so learners may not develop strong speaking skills without additional practice. TPR is unable to advanced levels. Mentors should speak English fluently or be native speakers.

Despite its limitations, TPR remains a strong method in language education due to its interactive and experiential nature.

Pros:

1. Engagement: TPR actively involves learners in the learning process, making it highly engaging.

2. Memorization: Physical movement helps reinforce vocabulary and grammar, aiding in retention and recall.

3. Naturalistic: TPR mimics the natural way children learn their first language, through action and imitation.

4. Universal: It can be used with learners of all ages and proficiency levels, as it is adaptable and intuitive.

5. Low Anxiety: The focus on physical activity can reduce language learning anxiety, making it suitable for shy or anxious learners.

Since there are three steps in the instructional process:

a. Teaching Stage: The teacher demonstrates commands clearly and consistently while saying the imperatives. Students are expected to respond by mimicking the teacher's actions without repeating the words. This stage helps students grasp the connection between words and actions, so the teacher should use both consistently to reinforce comprehension.

b. Practice Stage: Once students understand the commands, they practice performing the actions in order, while the teacher only says the words without demonstrating the actions. If students are still confused, the teacher can go back to the teaching stage to reinforce understanding.

c. Evaluation Stage: In this stage, students demonstrate their understanding by performing the commands randomly without the teacher demonstrating. Alternatively, the teacher can say the words, and students are expected to perform the corresponding actions, first in order and then randomly. This stage allows the teacher to assess whether students have mastered the material taught and practiced.

Furthermore, based on age and environment, there are three phases from beginner to intermediate. Using the mutually beneficial relationship between language and movement, Total Physical Response (TPR) provides a dynamic and engaging way to teaching English. TPR naturally and joyfully supports language acquisition by involving students in comprehension-based tasks. The first one called "Low" (touch the door). Second is high (put your bag on the table). The last one is higher one (throw the ball to student who wears white T-shirt). Using the TPR, educators can design immersive learning environments that encourage student engagement and comprehensive language development. It was explained wider as follows.

a. Pointing Game: Students are instructed to point to various things or concepts being taught. These could be real objects (like body parts, classroom items, or things found outside), pictures (showing objects, parts of objects, or sequences), colorful paper

strips, cards, etc. For example, the teacher might ask students to point to specific body parts or items in the classroom.

b. Identifying Emotions: After students have learned expressions like "cry," "laugh," "sneeze," and "angry," the teacher displays pictures of people or cartoons showing these emotions. Students are then asked to choose pictures that display a particular emotion. For instance, students might select a picture showing someone laughing to demonstrate understanding.

c. Putting On and Off Parts: Students assemble or disassemble objects with multiple parts under the teacher's direction. For example, a doll with various clothing items like pants, shirts, hats, ties, jackets, and shoes. Students are instructed to dress or undress the doll accordingly.

d. Manipulating Items: The teacher provides small items of different types and colors, which students use to learn about numbers, spatial relationships, and colors. For example, students might be given colored blocks and asked to sort them by color or arrange them in a specific order.

e. Bouncing the Ball: Students are assigned identities such as months or days of the week. For example, twelve students representing the months of the year stand in a circle. The teacher then instructs students to bounce a ball to a student representing a specific month. For instance, the teacher might say, "Bounce the ball to the student representing July."

In conclusion, TPR is an invaluable tool for language teachers, enabling students to confidently and enthusiastically begin their path to language mastery. Total Physical Response (TPR) offers a dynamic and interactive approach to English language instruction, capitalizing on the symbiotic relationship between language and physical movement. By engaging learners in comprehension-based activities and kinesthetic experiences, TPR facilitates linguistic acquisition in a natural and enjoyable manner. Educators can harness the principles of TPR to create immersive learning environments that promote active participation and holistic language development. As such, TPR

stands as a valuable tool in the arsenal of language educators, empowering learners to embark on their journey towards linguistic proficiency with confidence and enthusiasm.

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