

TEACHING ENGLISH TO PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH TPR METHOD

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to introduce the teaching method which is called Total Physical Response (TPR). For this purpose, the article describes the definition and history of TPR, its existing techniques and principles, as well as the information about this application. What is more, there are main characteristics of this method, and also, the benefits and drawbacks of TPR will be discussed in this article.

Key words: *teaching methods, Total Physical Response (TPR) method, young learners, traditional teaching method, task-based teaching.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

Целью данного исследования является введение метода обучения, который называется Total Physical Response (TPR). С этой целью в статье описывается определение и история TPR, его существующие методы и принципы, а также информация об этом приложении. Более того, в этой статье будут рассмотрены основные характеристики этого метода, а также преимущества и недостатки ТПВ.

Ключевые слова: *методы обучения, метод полной физической реакции (ТФР), младшие школьники, традиционный метод обучения, метод обучения на основе задач.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, it is a trend in many countries that the glance of many governments is at learning foreign languages, especially, English due to the fact that English education is improving significantly day by day over the world. Moreover, in our modern life, foreign languages play a vital role in an international communication and interaction. Based on the above requirements, a number of methods and techniques have been developed for teaching a foreign language in the educational system. For example: direct method, traditional method, task-based teaching, TPR teaching method and others. Especially, the process of learning should be exciting and accessible for young learners. With this reason, the alternative teaching materials and method should be selected by the instructors in order to educate the children.

TPR is known as one of the proper teaching style in which teachers can apostrophize in the classroom. (The full form of TPR is Total Physical Response) This method helps to teachers to make the lesson more useful by using physical actions during applying many language skills. By the help of this style the children may learn a second language without any difficulties.

FEATURES OF YOUNG LEARNERS

Not only teaching method should be chosen correctly, but the characteristics of children is defined to have an effective lesson. The main reason is that, children usually want to be taught and encouraged well at the learning time too.

“It is possible to point out certain characteristics of children which you should be aware of and take into account in your teaching” (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990,p.1).

There are some features of teaching English to young learners, in other words, primary school students. Most of them are characterized by Scott and Lisbeth (1992). These are given in this paper:

- ❖ Children who 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 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

To clear these characteristics, Scott and Lisbeth (1992) said that young learners, especially, aged from 8 to 10 are qualified their main language users. To be more precise, the primary rules of their mother tongue are introduced to the children before. Because, these children can perceive linguistic symbols and use them independently without misunderstanding. Also, they may use language creatively and they are keen on communicating (Halliwell, 1992). Furthermore, Clarke (2009, p.13) enounced that “Activities to assist babies and toddlers learning English as a second language are not different from those that are provided from children with English as their first language.” As can be seen from the above points, young learners typically learn a second language as the way in which they learn their main language.

THE DEFINITION OF TPR

As said above, TPR - Total Physical Response is considered as a teaching or learning method. Dr. James J Asher who is an American professor of psychology at

San Jose State University in California developed this approach in 1970s. The TPR method is based on some language skills, like, speaking and listening, and the function of this method is that children should be educated via physical movements. The people who are working with children have been applying it in their lesson for about 30 years. It is apparent that Total Physical Response method is effective and helpful teaching English method. The main reason is that pupils usually satisfy from an interesting lesson which has lots of actions and images, of course, related to their lesson. By TPR method, they may show their tendency in learning English. This teaching method can also help teachers to distract almost all children in the classroom during the lesson. As a result, both teachers and pupils may have an efficient lesson that they want.

TPR is considered as a valuable way to teach vocabulary, phrasal verbs and idioms in English. That is to say that the meaning of these words can be described by acting them. Most of the time, beginners and young learners often preferred this method while it is used with all age groups and all levels. For instance, in the Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning, TPR is often criticized as being only suitable for beginning students. Despite of the information that is given in the encyclopedia, there are a lot of editions related to how to use TPR among the students who are intermediate or advanced, too.

THE THEORIES OF TPR METHOD

Up to now, there are several theories about this teaching style. They are divided into two basic groups:

1. Psychological theories;
2. Linguistic theories.

Many researchers have introduced TPR teaching method. Some of them are in the follow:

- “TPR (Total Physical Response) is a method of teaching language using physical movement to react to verbal input in order to reduce student inhibitions and lower their effective filter. It allows students to react to language without thinking too much, facilitates long term retention, and reduces student anxiety and stress.” (“Total Physical Response” , James Asher)

- Asher said that understanding is the most basic skill before speaking. (Asher,1993, p.98)

- “Once they have internalized the complexity of the language, they have acquired a well spoken language, and the “psychological” mechanism of this acquisition will not disappear, and they will take the initiative to speak out a large number of languages.” (Yu Zhenyou, 1992, p.25)

•“No matter how complicated the language is or how long the time interval is, the TPR method can make the students understand quickly” (Asher, 1993, p.126).

•In James opinion, teaching vocabulary by TPR should be carried out in a large space in which the practice can be processed (James, 2001, p.2-14).

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TPR

The TPR teaching method is characterized by some specific principles as follow:

1. To develop the comprehension skill of learners before speech;
2. To act the meaning of the vocabulary by using actions to reduce tensity;
3. To pay more attention to encourage the children and make them feeling happy, less anxiety;
4. To repeat the data that the learners learn during the lesson;
5. To more practice on basic language skills, such as, listening or speaking to maintain clear memory.

Furthermore, the two primary characteristics of TPR method. they are “storytelling” and “risk-taking” principles. There are some statements about those components in the follow:

“A story is, in fact, a good mnemonic or memory aide. A story links words to be remembered and it causes you to build up scenes that have visual, aural and sensory actions for you. If you can create a powerful visual image between two words, remembering one will trigger recall for the other” (Rose, 1985, p.45).

“Successful language learners attempt to produce and to interpret language that is a bit beyond their absolute certainty” (Brown, 2001, p.63).

The tuition materials of TPR lesson, also, are chosen correctly. Because, they affect more the quality of lesson and support it to go effectively. Therefore, lesson materials should not only basic text. If they are so selected, the lesson may be more boring for pupils. In fact, there are unchanged materials that are applied by teacher in TPR lesson. Teacher’s voice, actions and facial expressions are the main materials for learners during the lesson, whilst, there are books, pens, furniture and such kind of items for after the learning process.

“Imperative drills, the pictures and games are the major classroom activities in the TPR teaching” (Richard & Rodgers, 2001, p.75).

In the TPR method, the teacher and pupils, also, play a significant role. For example, teacher has two kinds of role in TPR lesson: an active role and a direct role. In other words, they should give commands and monitor their pupils. Furthermore, the work of an impulsive mentor and feedback giver should be done by the teacher. When it comes to pupil’s role, they act as listeners and performers. Therefore, the children who are young learners should be motivated to talk with body language so

that they participate a lot in speaking activities, definitely, when they are ready for speech.

THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF TPR METHOD

The TPR teaching method has many positive features. Some of them are indicated below:

- To decrease the stress of students;
- To show the learning propensity of students;
- To improve the comprehension ability and some language skills, such as listening and speaking;
 - To help the pupils to recall the lesson's rules by using movements;
 - To lift the mood because of several physical actions;
 - To make children more active in the classroom
 - To grow the students' brain;
 - To maintain the attention of pupils during the lesson;
 - To give learners an opportunity to flash in a new atmosphere;
 - To help pupils to understand the meaning without other children's help, in other words, to construct the self-learning situation;
- To help teachers to be aware of their pupils' personalities and learning styles;
- To provide restricted teaching materials for teachers so that they do not face to problems during the lesson preparation.

However, there are some negative sides of TPR method, as given below:

- At the first place, some of the children can be reluctant of the attending in TPR lesson. The main reason is that they are shy and so they usually fear the mistakes during learning activities, for example, speaking
 - Secondly, only the teaching vocabulary or adjectives is mostly used in TPR method. But the rules of grammar may not be taught through actions.
 - Another negative side of TPR is insisting teachers to effort a lot for the preparation of this kind of lesson. As a result, they may be weariful after this preparation.
 - The TPR method may be an unproductive or boring for learners if the same activity is applied again and again. Thus, teachers should use different educational games during the lesson.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, as can be seen from the points in this study, there are numerous and important data based on TPR teaching method. According to the given information, it is an obvious that TPR teaching method is considered as significant and efficient way

of learning. Furthermore, almost all learners can be active in TPR lesson. That is to say, they respond to the activities or commands of their teacher by the help of the body language. Therefore, the TPR method is selected more by instructors who educate young children than traditional teaching method.

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