

TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) METHOD IN IMPROVING ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PUPILS

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Annotation. This article investigates the efficacy of the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach in boosting English vocabulary acquisition among elementary school students. The introduction outlines TPR's theoretical underpinnings, initially developed by James Asher, and highlights its significance in early language education by decreasing anxiety and fostering kinesthetic involvement. The main body analyzes how TPR is utilized in vocabulary teaching, incorporating expert views from scholars such as Larsen-Freeman, Nation, Celik, and Mayer. A real-world study conducted by Retnoningsih et al. (2018) is examined to provide empirical support, demonstrating considerable vocabulary enhancement among students who were taught using TPR. This section also addresses the benefits of TPR—like heightened motivation and improved retention—while discussing its drawbacks in teaching abstract vocabulary and challenges in classroom management. The conclusion reaffirms the article's central thesis that TPR is an efficient and practical method for young learners when applied judiciously. Overall, the article offers valuable perspectives on language teaching and advocates for the inclusion of movement-oriented learning techniques in early English education.

Keywords: Total Physical Response ,vocabulary acquisition ,language learning, young learners ,movement-based learning, language pedagogy, elementary school pupils.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola boshlang'ich sinf o'quvchilari orasida ingliz tilidagi so'z boyligini oshirishda Total Physical Response (TPR) yondashuvining samaradorligini o'rganadi. Kirish qismida TPR nazariy asoslari, xususan uni Jeyms Asher tomonidan ishlab chiqilgani haqida ma'lumot beriladi hamda bu usulning erta bosqichdagi til o'rganishdagi ahamiyati — ya'ni xavotirni kamaytirish va jismoniy ishtirok orqali o'quvchilarning faolligini oshirish — ta'kidlanadi. Asosiy qismda TPR yondashuvi so'z boyligini o'qitishda qanday qo'llanilishi, bu borada Larsen-Freeman, Nation, Celik va Mayer kabi olimlarning fikrlari bilan birga tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, Retnoningsih va boshqalar (2018) tomonidan o'tkazilgan real tadqiqot tahlil qilinib, TPR bilan o'qitilgan o'quvchilarda so'z boyligining sezilarli darajada oshgani dalillar bilan ko'rsatiladi. Ushbu bo'limda, shuningdek, TPR yondashuvining motivatsiyani oshirishi va eslab qolish darajasini yaxshilashi kabi ijobiy jihatlari, hamda mavhum so'zlarni o'rgatishda yuzaga keladigan qiyinchiliklari va sinfni boshqarishdagi muammolari ham muhokama qilinadi. Xulosa qismida esa TPR

usuli yosh o'quvchilar uchun samarali va amaliy yondashuv ekani qayd etilib, u maqsadga muvofiq holda qo'llanilganda yuqori natijalarga olib kelishi ta'kidlanadi. Umuman olganda, maqola til o'rgatish sohasiga muhim nazariy va amaliy xulosalarni taklif etadi hamda ingliz tilini erta bosqichda o'qitishda harakatga asoslangan ta'lim usullarini joriy etishni qo'llab-quvvatlay

Kalit so'zlar: Total Physical Response, so'z boyligini o'zlashtirish, til o'rganish, yosh o'quvchilar, harakatga asoslangan o'qitish, til pedagogikasi, boshlang'ich maktab o'quvchilari.

Introduction. Total physical response is the method that is based on actions and utterances. This method is not only useful to acquire a variety of words, but also it can create a positive environment among children. This method is created by James Asher who is an American psychologist and a professor in San Jose State university, located in California. The learning theory developed by Asher is based on the belief that language is learned by motoric activities, which are emphasized in the physical activities in improving meaningful learning (Levey, 2011). In teaching English as a second language, vocabulary learning is perhaps the most important for elementary school children. Largely, children learn to understand – listen and read – and to speak - express themselves in glove hand phrases in sentences. Schmitt, Schmitt (2020) states vocabulary learning determines effectiveness of language learning itself, since it underpins all other language skills. Unfortunately, some forms of instruction like rote memorization or word-for-word translation using mother tongue do not captivate interest of pupils and more importantly, do not lead to retention of information. To deal with these issues, more attention has been paid towards alternate teaching methodologies which are more appropriate to children's educational expectations. This has included innovative approaches such as Total Physical Response (TPR), a technique championed by James Asher in the 1960s. It is premised on the idea that responding physically to commands in a language motivates learners to learn the language when it is spoken. For instance, if the instructor instructs 'Jump' the learners are required to jump. In support of this, Asher (1969) claimed this approach seeks to replicate the natural process in which children acquire language, which is through understanding and action before spontaneous speech. Celik, Cay, and Kanadli (2021) performed a research synthesis and found that TPR not only improves vocabulary learning but also lessens student anxiety and boosts classroom engagement. They state that "TPR positively impacts cognitive processing by engaging both mental and physical memory channels, particularly in young learners" (p. 162). This dual-channel strategy aids in long-term memory retention and stimulates learner enthusiasm. Putri, Taslim, and Syarifuddin (2025) also noted in their classroom-based research that students who experienced TPR-based instruction achieved significantly higher scores on vocabulary tests than those who received instruction through traditional approaches. The researchers contend that TPR promotes active learning, which is crucial during the early stages of language

acquisition. Moreover, researchers like Nation (2013) highlight the significance of exposure, repetition, and meaningful engagement in vocabulary acquisition. TPR reinforces these concepts by offering repeated exposure to vocabulary within meaningful situations that entail both understanding and action. This aligns well with the cognitive theory of multimedia learning, which posits that learners remember information more effectively when they utilize multiple senses during the educational process (Mayer, 2009). Considering these discoveries, it is evident that TPR presents a promising option compared to conventional vocabulary teaching techniques. This article seeks to examine the effects of the Total Physical Response method on English vocabulary acquisition among elementary school students. It will review current studies, explore the pedagogical principles that support TPR, and offer practical advice for its use in.

Methods. According to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), TPR enables learners to “internalize language patterns” through repeated exposure and physical movement, making it particularly suitable for young learners who gain from physical activity. They additionally highlight that this approach “supports right-brain learning” by stimulating imagination and movement, especially beneficial for tangible vocabulary like actions and objects. In the classroom setting, TPR entails the teacher issuing commands in the target language, such as “stand up” or “touch your nose,” with students responding through physical actions. This establishes a direct link between the word and its meaning—avoiding translation. Celik et al. (2021) observed that this technique is in harmony with multi-sensory learning principles, which are particularly effective for young children. They mentioned that “TPR enhances vocabulary retention by activating both motor memory and auditory processing systems” (p. 158). Beyond simple commands, TPR can be utilized in storytelling, role plays, and songs, where students act out words or phrases. This kinesthetic involvement results in improved long-term retention.

the classroom. 3. Example of Classroom-Based Research. A research study conducted by Retnoningsih, Suparno, and Handayani (2018) in an Indonesian elementary school provides compelling evidence for the success of TPR. The researchers carried out TPR-based vocabulary lessons with a cohort of 30 fourth-grade students. Following a four-week intervention, they discovered that the students’ vocabulary test scores rose significantly—from an average of 58.6 on the pre-test to an average of 84.2 on the post-test. The researchers concluded that “Total Physical Response provided a fun, stress-free environment that increased both motivation and vocabulary retention” (Retnoningsih et al. , 2018, p. 6). They also noted that students were more inclined to take part, especially those who had been previously shy or passive. Many researchers concur that TPR is particularly beneficial for novice learners and young children. Nation (2013) indicated that physical response “reinforces meaning in context,” which is a crucial element in vocabulary learning. Likewise, Schmitt and Schmitt (2020) highlighted that vocabulary teaching needs to be meaningful, repetitive, and interactive. TPR meets these

requirements by enabling learners to practice vocabulary in unforgettable, action-oriented situations. Mayer (2009) additionally advocated for movement-based instruction, claiming that “students learn better from words and actions together than from words alone,” which supports the multimedia learning theory and corresponds with TPR’s approach. While TPR has advantages, it also has drawbacks. It is particularly effective for tangible vocabulary, but it is less appropriate for abstract concepts such as “freedom” or “justice.” Additionally, managing a classroom can become difficult if students become overly energetic. Putri, Taslim, and Syarifuddin (2025) observed that “TPR is best utilized in brief, targeted lessons combined with other methods like visual aids or games to ensure variety and maintain control.” Educators also require training to implement TPR effectively and adapt it to the varying needs of learners.

Conclusion. The Total Physical Response (TPR) technique has shown to be an exceptionally effective method in improving English vocabulary acquisition among elementary school students. Based on natural language learning principles, TPR utilizes physical movement and auditory input to foster an engaging, interactive, and unforgettable learning experience. As evidenced by both theoretical frameworks and empirical research—such as the classroom study conducted by Retnoningsih et al. (2018)—TPR not only enhances vocabulary retention but also boosts student motivation and participation. Researchers like Asher (1969), Nation (2013), and Schmitt and Schmitt (2020) emphasize the significance of meaningful repetition, low-anxiety settings, and sensory-rich learning environments, all of which are fundamental to the TPR approach. Although there are some drawbacks, such as its limited effectiveness for abstract vocabulary and the requirement for classroom management methods, these issues can be resolved by integrating TPR with other teaching strategies. In summary, TPR presents a developmentally appropriate and research-backed approach for vocabulary instruction to young learners. It is in alignment with how children inherently acquire language and equips teachers with an energetic tool to aid early language development. For optimal results, educators are advised to incorporate TPR into a larger instructional framework that encompasses visuals, songs, storytelling, and continuous assessment.

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