

TEACHING GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY USING TPR METHOD FOR A2 LEVEL LEARNERS

Hoshimova Dilso'z Tohir qizi

*UZSWLU student of 3rd course of
English second faculty*

*Scientific advisor: Khayrullayeva Dilorom Sayfutdinovna
Senior teacher, UzSWLU*

Abstract. *This action research investigates the effectiveness of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in teaching grammar and vocabulary to A2 level learners. The study aims to determine whether TPR enhances students' understanding, participation, and retention of new language items. Data were collected through observation, questionnaires, and pre-and post-tests. The findings reveal that integrating movement with language instruction significantly improves learners' engagement and memory. Students demonstrated better performance in post-tests compared to pre-tests. The research concludes that TPR is an effective and motivating method for teaching beginner-level learners in real classroom settings.*

Keywords: *Total Physical Response (TPR), grammar teaching, vocabulary learning, A2 level learners, action research, young learners, language acquisition, classroom interaction, communicative activities, learner engagement*

INTRODUCTION

In modern language teaching, developing effective methods for teaching grammar and vocabulary remains a key priority, especially for A2 level learners who are still building their basic language competence. Traditional teaching methods often focus on memorization and repetition, which may not fully engage learners or support long-term retention. Therefore, teachers increasingly seek interactive and student-centered approaches that make learning more meaningful and enjoyable. One such method is Total Physical Response (TPR), developed by James Asher, which integrates physical movement with language learning. TPR is based on the idea that learners understand and remember language better when they respond to verbal input with physical actions. This method is particularly effective for young and beginner learners, as it reduces stress and creates a natural learning environment similar to first language acquisition. This action research focuses on teaching grammar and vocabulary through the topic "Family Photo" using TPR techniques in an A2-level classroom. The study aims to explore how TPR influences students' participation, comprehension, and retention of new language items. By applying various TPR-based activities such as games, role-play, and movement tasks, this research seeks to evaluate whether this method can improve the overall learning experience and outcomes in a real classroom setting.

This research article goes with answering the following questions:

- 1) Do the teacher use the TPR effectively in teaching grammar and vocabulary?
- 2) Is TPR really productive during real-classroom environment?
- 3) How do learners acquire grammar and vocabulary via TPR?

4) What kind of pluses and minuses arose in using TPR?

Literature review

As research methodology is to investigate TPR method, it is necessary to look through different resources due to our chosen topic. As a result, we are looking through five resources carefully.

The first recourse is the internet site called Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. According to this encyclopedia. TPR is a language teaching method developed by James Asher and it is based on coordination of language and physical movement. This method includes commands by teacher and physical response by students.

The second resource is the book named “Learning another Language” Through Actions” by James. J. Asher, the originator of the Total physical Response known worldwide as TPR, published in 2012. He highlighted that listening is front of other skills and learners and learners are not forced speaking immediately. This idea reduces learners’ anxiety and creates a stress-free learning environment, which is very important especially for beginners. When they feel free to speak then, they are welcomed to speak. This method is copied of children’s natural ability that they initially listen to the surroundings, then speak their first language. In addition, Asher believed that memory is enhanced when language is connected with physical movement. The book, also provided many practical classroom activities and step-by-step lesson activities. These activities usually include commands, gestures, real-life actions that make lessons more interactive. And this method is mainly used for beginners and young learners, but not for advanced level students. However, some elements TPR can still be adapted for higher levels to introduce new vocabulary or warm-up activities.

The third resource is from the article named “Total physical response”-TPR. This article explains the main principles of the method and how teachers can use it in the classroom. According to the British Council, TPR is based on the connection between language and physical movement. This connection helps learners understand meaning without direct translation. Students learn better when they listen to commands and respond with actions. For example, a teacher may say “Stand up” or “Open the book” and students physically perform the action. The article explains that TPR is especially effective for young learners and beginner. Moreover, this method supports different learning style, especially kinesthetic learners who learn best through movement.

The fourth source is the video about the Master TPR in Teaching 3 Must- Try TPR Activities on You Tube. In this video, the teacher claims how Total physical Response (TPR) works in real classrooms. The main idea is that students learn a language better when they move their bodies while learning new words and phrases. The video also demonstrates how teachers can gradually increase difficulty of commands to develop students’ understanding. The teacher shows that TPR activities help learners connect language with real actions making the learning more memorable and fun. Additionally, such activities increase student engagement and participation, especially in large classrooms.

Final source about TPR is the book named Total Physical Response for Primary English by Graham Workman (2010). In this book author expands on how to utilize TPR in real classroom. This book includes background information about the method and considers why using movement helps learners remember and understand language.

It also provides a variety of classroom techniques, such as games, role-plays, and action-based storytelling. Furthermore, the author explains the repetition through actions helps reinforce vocabulary and grammar structure. This book emphasizes the teacher's role in giving clear instructions and modeling actions actively.

Data collection

Research Methodology:

A) Qualitative Analysis is a research method that focuses on understanding ideas, meanings, and people's experiences instead of using numbers. It helps researchers explore a topic in depth by looking at opinions, feelings, and reasons behind certain actions or events. This type of analysis is useful when we want to answer questions like why something happens or how it happens. For example, interviews, observations, and open-ended questions are often used in qualitative analysis.

B) Quantitative Analysis is a method of studying something by using numbers, measurements, and statistical data. It is more structured and focuses on collecting information that can be counted and analyzed mathematically. This type of analysis helps answer questions such as how many, how much, or how often. Researchers often use surveys, tests, or experiments to gather numerical data, which can then be shown in charts, graphs, or tables.

C) Comparative Analysis is a method used to study two or more things by comparing them carefully. The main purpose is to find similarities and differences between them. This method helps researchers better understand each subject by looking at how they are alike or different. Comparative analysis can be used in many fields, such as education, culture, or science, to make clear and meaningful comparisons.

Research Tools and Devices: Microsoft word, Canva, Excel, Cap Cut, Smartphone, CamScanner, RAR, ChatGPT5, All PDF reader, and My Bib

This study employed a classroom-based action research design to investigate the effectiveness of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in teaching grammar and vocabulary to A2 level learners. Action research was chosen as it allows the teacher-researcher to identify a problem, implement an intervention, and evaluate its impact in a real classroom setting.

Participants

The participants of the study were 16 students from Grade 5 at a secondary school. The learners were at A2 (pre-intermediate) level and had basic knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary. The students were selected as a whole class without any sampling, as the research was conducted during regular lessons.

Instruments

Several data collection instruments were used in this study to ensure reliability and validity:

Observation list: Classroom observations were conducted to monitor students' participation, engagement, and response to TPR activities.

Questionnaire: A short questionnaire was administered to gather students' opinions about the effectiveness and enjoyment of the TPR method.

Pre-test and Post-test: These tests were designed to measure students' knowledge of grammar and vocabulary before and after the intervention.

Procedure

The research was carried out in several stages. First, a pre-test was administered to assess students' initial level of grammar and vocabulary. Then, I implemented two lessons using TPR-based activities, including games, role-play, and physical movement tasks such as "Family Corners," "Human Family Tree," and "TPR Detective." These activities required students to respond to verbal instructions with physical actions, promoting active learning.

During the lessons, observations were recorded to evaluate students' engagement and participation. After completing the instructional phase, a post-test was conducted to measure any improvement in students' performance. Finally, students completed a questionnaire to reflect on their learning experience.

Observation list:

Three different classes of one teacher was chosen to make an observation and to fill three observation lists. The purpose of the observation was that how the teacher used selected TPR method on her common classes and which principles does she use and how the students react to the teacher, how does this method influence the class environment and students' engagement. In the duration of observation in teacher's lesson, she used the method somehow satisfactory. But she lost the classroom management that made students noisy during the tasks. It makes to come to conclusion that due to lack of space and shortage of the time teacher is limited in the classroom to use this method.

Interview with the teacher:

Interview with the main teacher includes seventeen questions for teacher to answer. With the help of interview finding out the teacher's knowing and awareness of my chosen method TPR or if she has not enough about this method or does she use it on a daily basis was easily done.

When the teacher was offered to get the interview, she did not reject it and accepted it openly. However, she asked for giving the interview questions beforehand. It was done so and the time was dealt to get interview. At the very time, the interview was recorded, even, captured in the video. She friendly responded given all questions related to the TPR method in English without any issues.

According to her answers, she is well aware of the principles of TPR method and she tries to use it in her lessons. In spite of knowing all kinds of benefits of this method she does not use all principles of this method in one class because the school condition is not appropriate. She said: 'Because of the limited space and limited technology of the classroom, I can not utilize this method regularly. Interview results and observation results both match to each other.

Pre- Test:

Before conducting lesson with target 5th grade learners, their background knowledge about the chosen topic should have been known in advance. Actually results of pre- test is important to predict the upcoming outcomes of lesson and to compare to the results of post- test. So pre-test contains 10 questions assessing general knowledge of learners. Questions are not challenging and hard enough that are related to tenses, family members, to be form questions.

Post- Test:

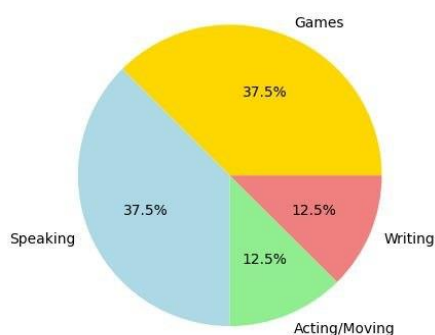
After conducting lesson with A2 level learners, finding out whether TPR-based lesson is productive or less productive. Therefore, post- test was taken from learners

after conducting two lessons via TPR method. The questions of post- test are related to vocabulary of “Family picture” and past form of verbs that learners were taught during two lessons. Additionally, there are 10 questions evaluating overall knowledge and range of vocabulary and usage of past tense of learners.

Data analysis

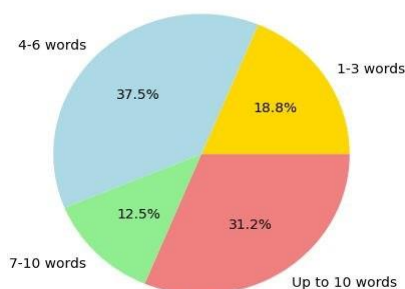
It is asked student to choose the what main part of lesson do they mostly like. Speaking and Games part of my lesson was mostly like by students (37,5% as equally).

What Students Enjoyed Most in Today's Lesson



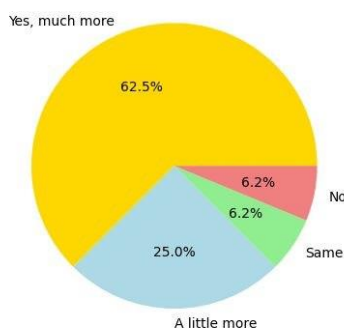
As a second question, the students were asked how many words they learned when two demo lessons were conducted. They should be honest about the number of the learned vocabulary. 37, 5% of the students learned 4-6 words while 12,5% of students remembered 7-10 words. 31.2 % of them chose up to 10 words.

New Words Remembered by Students



Demo lessons were mostly impressed my target lesson much more then usual one. Therefore, 62,5% of the student ticked “Yes, much more” option while 25% of my target students found my lesson “a little more” differentiated from the traditional lessons.

Students' Opinion on Today's Lesson



Interview analysis

As for interview with the teacher, she has already been aware of TPR method and used some details of TPR method during her common lessons, however only for younger students, The reason why, there is a weakness in classroom management. From her point of view, it would be better when only some strategies of this method are used in class of public schools in Uzbekistan. Furthermore, she would recommend to use this method for Vocabulary-based lessons rather than Grammar ones. According the teacher's opinion, the limited space is a major issue when teachers conduct the lesson through TPR method.

RESULTS

While doing research, 3 special and typical lessons were observed and 2 demo lessons through TPR method were conducted as an experiment. The one was devoted for Grammar teaching, the other is for vocabulary. After conducting the lessons, my target students were given post test related to taught topics and there was a chance to compare the results of post-tests with pre-test (before the demo lesson). So as to calculated the Mean score, Gained score and Hake gain score, the following formulas were utilized:

1. Mean Score

$$X(pre) = \frac{84}{16} = 5,25$$

$$X(post) = \frac{99}{16} \approx 6,2$$

The average scores are:

- **Pre-test mean score: 5.25**
- **Post-test mean score: 6.2**

1. Gained Score

Gain score = Post – pre

$$\text{Gain score} = 6,2 - 5,25$$

Gained Score = 0.95

2. Hake Gain Score (Normalized Gain)

$$\text{Hake Gain} = \frac{6,2 - 5,25}{10 - 5,25}$$

Hake Gain Score \approx 0.20

In this research, it was analyzed that how Total Physical Response (TPR) helps in teaching grammar and vocabulary. This experience was very useful because it could be seen how students learn in a real classroom. As a result of hake gain, 02% increase was observed.

Firstly, the teacher can use TPR effectively, especially for vocabulary and simple grammar. When actions, gestures, and movement were used, students understood words more easily. For example, when they were commanded “stand up” or “open your book,” students did the action and learned the meaning quickly. It was also helpful for simple sentences. However, it was not very easy to teach difficult grammar with TPR.

Second, TPR was productive in the real classroom. Students were active and happy during the lesson. They liked moving, playing, and learning at the same time.

Because of this, they were not bored and they were not afraid to make mistakes. But sometimes the classroom became a little noisy, and it was hard to control all students.

Thirdly, how students get grammar and vocabulary through TPR was seen. They learn by listening and doing actions. This helps them remember words better. When they repeat actions many times, they understand and remember more. It is easier than only reading or writing.

There were some pluses and minuses of using TPR. The main advantages were that students were more interested, more active, and more confident. Even shy students joined the activities. The lessons were fun and easy to understand. However, the disadvantages were that it takes more time, it can be noisy, and it is not good for teaching complex grammar.

In microteaching students' participation increased a lot. They were more involved in the lesson and enjoyed learning. Their vocabulary results improved in the post-test. This was a big gain. However, there was a small decrease when students worked with grammar without actions. They found it more difficult.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this action research indicate that the Total Physical Response (TPR) method had a positive impact on A2 level learners' acquisition of grammar and vocabulary. The improvement observed in the post-test results suggests that integrating physical movement with language instruction enhances students' understanding and retention of new language items. This supports the idea that learners benefit from multi-sensory input, especially at lower proficiency levels.

One of the most noticeable outcomes was the increase in students' engagement and participation during the lessons. TPR-based activities such as "Family Corners" and "Human Family Tree" encouraged learners to actively respond to instructions, which reduced passivity often seen in traditional classrooms. Students were more willing to participate, as the activities were interactive, game-like, and less stressful. This aligns with the theoretical assumption that a low-anxiety environment facilitates better language acquisition.

In addition, the use of movement helped students associate vocabulary and grammatical structures with real actions. For example, when students physically positioned themselves in a "family tree," they were able to better understand relationships and spatial language such as "next to," "behind," and "in front of." This connection between language and action appears to have strengthened memory retention, as reflected in improved test performance. However, the study also revealed some limitations. While TPR was highly effective for concrete vocabulary and simple grammatical structures, it may be less suitable for teaching abstract concepts or more advanced language forms. Furthermore, managing movement-based activities in the classroom requires careful planning and classroom control to ensure that all students remain focused.

Overall, the results of this study support the effectiveness of TPR as a teaching method for beginner and lower-intermediate learners. The findings are consistent with previous research, which emphasizes the role of physical activity and meaningful interaction in language learning. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers integrate TPR with other instructional methods to achieve more comprehensive learning outcomes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research article has demonstrated that the Total Physical Response (TPR) method is an effective approach for teaching grammar and vocabulary to A2 level learners. The findings show that integrating physical movement with language instruction increases students' engagement, motivation, and active participation during the lesson. Learners were able to understand and retain new vocabulary and grammatical structures more effectively compared to traditional methods.

The comparison of pre-test and post-test results indicates noticeable improvement in students' performance, which proves the positive impact of TPR in a real classroom environment. Moreover, the use of games and interactive activities helped create a stress-free and enjoyable learning atmosphere, encouraging students to use the target language more confidently.

However, the research also revealed that TPR may have some limitations, such as being less suitable for more advanced learners or for teaching abstract concepts. Therefore, it is recommended to combine TPR with other teaching methods for better results.

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