

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) VS TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR)

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Abstract. This article compares Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Total Physical Response (TPR), analyzing their principles, advantages, and limitations in language teaching. It highlights their effectiveness in different contexts and suggests combining both approaches for optimal learning outcomes.

Keywords: CLT, TPR, language teaching, communication, learning methods

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada Kommunikativ til o'qitish (CLT) va To'liq jismoniy javob (TPR) metodlari taqqoslanadi, ularning tamoyillari, afzalliklari va kamchiliklari tahlil qilinadi. Turli sharoitlarda samaradorligi ko'rsatilib, optimal natijaga erishish uchun ularni birlashtirish tavsiya etiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: CLT, TPR, til o'qitish, kommunikatsiya, o'qitish metodlari

Аннотация. В данной статье сравниваются методы коммуникативного обучения языку (CLT) и полного физического реагирования (TPR), анализируются их принципы, преимущества и недостатки. Рассматривается их эффективность в различных условиях и предлагается комбинированный подход.

Ключевые слова: CLT, TPR, обучение языку, коммуникация, методы обучения

Introduction

When teaching languages, we constantly seek effective ways to enhance students' communication and comprehension. Two popular methods are Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Total Physical Response (TPR). Both aim to facilitate language learning but employ different approaches. In this essay, I will compare these methods and share my opinion on which is more beneficial, especially in current times.

Methods

Dr. James Asher developed TPR in the 1970s. [1] He noticed that the dropout rate among second-language learners in traditional programs could reach 95%. Curious about why many struggle despite no issues with first-language acquisition, he reflected on how babies learn language—not by memorizing lists, but by understanding words and meanings before verbalizing. This approach closely mimics how young children acquire their mother tongue.

Parents engage in 'language-body conversations' with their children—parents give instructions, and children respond physically. Children learn new words through actions associated with these instructions. For example, a parent might say, "Look at mummy" or "Give me the ball," and the child responds accordingly. Teachers can use this method in the classroom by acting as parental figures. The teacher might say a word ('jump') or phrase ('look at the board') while demonstrating the action. Students then repeat the command and act. Repeating multiple times can extend to students giving commands or directing each other, preferably in a circle or while walking around, to make it more engaging. Some students may feel shy, which can be a challenge, but if the teacher demonstrates, students tend to be more comfortable copying. Grouping students also helps shy learners participate without having to

perform publicly. Repetition and active engagement strengthen memory associations, increasing recall. Using games or role play can create a lively mini-language community in the classroom. Core to TPR are action verbs. Dr. Asher aimed to create a stress-free, enjoyable language-learning experience, incorporating many principles of first-language acquisition. [2] The method reduces anxiety by not forcing students to speak until they are ready, beginning with commands that require physical responses. Activities include games and skits that emphasize speaking and create an enjoyable atmosphere. TPR is especially effective for beginners and young learners. Students focus on meaning through movement, with grammar taught inductively. Understanding is fostered through actions, and teachers are encouraged to be tolerant of errors, viewing students as primary listeners and performers. The teacher provides optimal exposure to the language, and the benefits include enjoyment of movement, suitability for all ages, vocabulary building, and engagement. Disadvantages include challenges for shy students and limited opportunities for creative expression.

On the other hand, CLT emerged in the 1970s as a response to traditional methods, emphasizing interaction and communication as both means and goals. Its main aim is to develop learners' communicative competence-the ability to use the language effectively in real-life situations. CLT prioritizes meaning over perfect grammar, using authentic materials like asking for directions, discussing plans, or role-playing to promote real-world communication. Students often work in pairs or groups, focusing on fluency, though accuracy remains important. The teacher acts as a facilitator, providing guidance and feedback to help learners improve. Benefits of CLT include increased motivation, better practical communication skills, and greater confidence. Challenges involve the need for well-trained teachers, flexibility, and the potential struggle of learners who lack a strong grammar foundation.

Results

If we take a moment to consider, TPR is more effective for beginners and young learners that they can learn new language by physical movements and easily remember words . For example, the teacher says the word “eat” and shows with action then ask students to repeat the word and move like him/her . It also can help students improve their mood and it would be funny for them. TPR is like a little entertainment game method that students will start to listen, act and imitate. As a result the word will be remembered by itself. On the other hand, CLT focuses on learning through communication, encouraging students to speak and interact in real-life situations like discussions and role-plays. TPR mainly helps with understanding at the early stages, while CLT helps students become more fluent and confident in speaking. The teacher's role is also different: in TPR, the teacher gives instructions and students follow them, but in CLT, the teacher supports and students actively communicate with each other. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages, so using them together can be more effective depending on the students' level and learning goals.

Discussion

To conclude, an effective approach may involve choosing and combining these methods based on the context. TPR is highly suitable for young learners or beginners, as it encourages understanding in a stress free and interactive way but might be less engaging for adults, whereas CLT can be effective across ages if adapted creatively. Ultimately, teachers should tailor their strategies to address the strengths and limitations of each method to optimize language acquisition. To conclude, an effective approach may involve selecting and combining these methods depending on the learning context. TPR is highly suitable for young learners or beginners because it builds comprehension in a low-stress and engaging way,

although it may be less effective or motivating for adult learners who need more complex language use. In contrast, CLT can be applied across different age groups, especially when adapted with creative and meaningful activities that reflect real-life communication. In practice, combining these methods can provide better results: TPR can be used in the early stages to introduce vocabulary and basic structures, while CLT can gradually develop learners' speaking, interaction, and fluency skills. This balance helps learners not only understand the language but also use it confidently. However, teachers should also consider factors such as learners' needs, class size, and learning goals when choosing their approach. Ultimately, by understanding the strengths and limitations of both TPR and CLT, teachers can design more effective and flexible lessons that support successful language acquisition

References

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