



## THE USE OF TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE METHOD IN TEACHING YOUNG LEARNERS

**Esbergenova Xurliman Maxsetovna**

Nukus Branch of Tashkent University of Information Technologies

Named After Muhammad Al- Khwarizmi

Assistant teacher

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14592172>

### ARTICLE INFO

Received: 26<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Accepted: 30<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Online: 31<sup>th</sup> December 2024

### KEYWORDS

Total Physical response, natural method, physical activities, spoken language, physical actions, nonverbal communication.

### ABSTRACT

*This abstract explores the core principles of TPR, detailing how it works and highlighting its key benefits for young learners, including increased engagement, reduced anxiety, and the promotion of active and memorable learning experiences. Furthermore, it addresses effective implementation strategies, such as the use of simple commands, visual aids, and incorporation of games and songs, to maximize the method's potential in a classroom setting. The study concludes that TPR is a valuable and adaptable tool in early language education, enhancing comprehension, fostering confidence, and creating a dynamic learning environment suitable for all young learners.*

Dr. James J Asher established several English teaching methodologies and strategies, including TPR. It has been used for about 30 years. This strategy focuses on encouraging students to listen to and respond to their teachers' spoken target language orders. In other terms, TPR is a language education method based on the synchronization of voice and action; it aims to teach language through physical (motor) activities. Asher's Total Physical Response is a "natural method" since he sees first and second language learning as concurrent processes. He believes that second language education and learning should mirror the naturalistic processes of first language learning. For this reason, there are three central processes:

a) Before youngsters develop the ability to speak, they develop listening skills.

During the early stages of first language acquisition, infants may comprehend complex words that they are unable to produce or copy spontaneously. Asher considers that while listening, a student may create a mental blueprint of the language, allowing for later production of spoken language.

(b) Children develop listening comprehension through physical responses to parental commands.

(c) Once a foundation in listening comprehension is built, speech naturally grows from it. [3:20]

Asher feels that it is important to base foreign language learning on how children learn their mother tongue; in other words, TPR is based on how children learn their mother tongue. In this regard, TPR considers that one learns best when he is actively involved and grasps what he hears.] [4:20]



The main classroom activity in TPR is imperative drills, which are usually designed to highlight physical actions and activity on the part of the learners. In this sense, learners play two main roles: listeners and performers, paying close attention and physically responding to teacher instructions.

(Learners need to respond both individually and collectively; they have minimal impact on the substance of learning inasmuch as content is decided by the teacher. At the outset of learning, learners are also required to detect and respond to unique combinations of previously taught elements. Such unique utterances are recombinations of constituents that the teacher employed during training. For example, the teacher urges students to 'Walk to the table!' and 'Sit on the chair!' These are known to students because they have practised responding to them. Learners are also expected to come up with their own unique combinations. Learners monitor and assess their own development. They are encouraged to talk when they feel ready (e.g., when they have a sufficient base in the language).

In TPR, the teacher assumes a dynamic and prominent role, akin to a director overseeing a theatrical performance where the students take on the roles of performers. It falls to the teacher to determine the curriculum, demonstrate and introduce new concepts, and curate additional materials for the classroom. As a result, it is essential for the teacher to be thoroughly prepared and organized to ensure the lesson proceeds seamlessly and predictably. It is strongly advised to write down the exact phrases the teacher will use, particularly the new commands, as the pace of the activities is brisk, leaving little time for spontaneous improvisation.

In this context, classroom interactions and turn-taking are primarily guided by the teacher rather than the students. Consider the following example: Teacher: Maria, please pick up the box of rice, pass it to Miguel, and ask him to read the price. Additionally, the teacher should be more tolerant of speech errors; excessive correction in the initial phases should be avoided, as interrupting to correct mistakes may discourage students from taking action or participating in discussions.

In TPR, the instructors are tasked with giving directions and observing the actions carried out by the students. Conversely, the students act as imitators of the teacher's verbal and non-verbal cues. The initial phase of the teaching-learning process involves modeling. Here, the instructor provides commands to the students and takes part in the actions alongside them. In the subsequent phase, students indicate their understanding of the commands by executing them independently while the teacher supervises their actions. Ultimately, the dynamic between the teacher and students is characterized by the teacher verbalizing and the students responding without words. As students become more verbal over time, the instructor engages with them through nonverbal communication (Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Rodgers, 2003).

Total Physical Response (TPR) has its pros and cons. The advantages include:

- 1) It is highly enjoyable. Students find it fun, and this approach can really energize the classroom, enhancing both pace and atmosphere;
- 2) It aids retention. It helps learners recall words and phrases effectively;
- 3) It benefits kinesthetic learners who need to be physically involved in the learning process.
- 4) It can be utilized in both large and small classroom settings. Regardless of the number of students, as long as you are ready to take the initiative, the learners will follow your lead;



5) It is effective in mixed-ability classes. The physical movements convey meaning effectively, allowing all learners to understand and use the target language

6) There is no need for extensive preparation or materials when using TPR. In this respect, as long as you are knowledgeable about what you intend to practice (a rehearsal in advance can be beneficial), it won't require much time to prepare;

7) Effective for teenagers and young learners.

8) Combines left and right brain learning.

In addition to these benefits, TPR has drawbacks. Among them are: Students who aren't used to such situations may find it embarrassing. Initially, students may feel more comfortable copying if the teacher is willing to perform the actions. Furthermore, the students work in groups and are not required to perform in front of the entire class. This pleasure is reserved for the teacher. It is only really appropriate for novice users. Though it can be used successfully at Intermediate and Advanced levels, it is evident that it is much more beneficial at lower levels because the target language is well-suited to such activities. In this regard, it is imperative that the language be modified appropriately. For instance, TPR can be used when teaching intermediate students the verbs for cooking (whisk, stir, and grate) and teaching advanced students the "ways of walking" (stumble, stagger, and tiptoe).

It is not flexible enough to teach everything, and it would get monotonous if used frequently. When combined with other strategies and tactics, this approach is an enjoyable way to alter the dynamics and tempo of a lesson.

In conclusion, TPR should ideally be used in conjunction with other strategies because it requires a lot of energy to keep language learners from becoming weary of the process. Despite its many advantages, TPR has drawbacks when used in the classroom. The use of this method by teachers is one of its shortcomings.

TPR will struggle to teach abstract words or expressions in their lesson. The teacher can fix this by writing the word on cards that, if appropriate, have an image. Another drawback is that if a teacher employs TPR for an extended length of time without interspersing it with other activities that aid in teaching the target language, it may become ineffective. TPR tends to overlook narrative, descriptive, and conversational forms of language because it primarily consists of commands.

## References:

1. Asher J. Language Impact. Helping Language Learners Learn Language. 2000. - p.14
2. Asher J. The Total Physical Response: Review of the evidence. 2009. - p.17
3. Asher J. Language by command. The Total Physical Response approach to learning language. 1997. - p.20
4. Asher J. James Asher's Total Physical Response. A short Introduction. 1998. - p.20
5. Asher J. Language Impact. Helping Language Learners Learn Language. 2000. - p.14
6. Asher J. The Total Physical Response: Review of the evidence. 2009. - p.17
7. Brown H. D. Teaching by principles. Longman: A Pearson Education Company. 2001. - p.25
8. Bishop N. Tools developed by Teacher Support Specialists. First District RESA. 2001. - p.10
9. Brown H. D. Principles in language learning and teaching. Longman: A Pearson Education Company. 2000. - p.23



10. Diaz L. TPR foreign language instruction and dyslexia. 2005. - p.31
11. Frost R. British Council. TPR world. Total physical response - TPR. 2007. - p.36
12. Garcia Ramiro. Instructor's Notebook: How to Apply TPR for Best Results.. Sky Oaks Productions. 2002. - p.41
13. [www.teachenglish.com](http://www.teachenglish.com)
14. <http://cnets.iste.org/totalphysicalresponsemethods.html>.