

**THE IMPORTANCE OF USING TPR METHOD AND PROPER  
MATERIALS IN TEACHING YOUNG LEARNERS**

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the application of Total Physical Response (TPR) in English language instruction, focusing on its effectiveness with young learners. TPR's integration of physical activity and verbal commands is examined as a means of enhancing comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and overall student engagement. The study analyzes the versatility of TPR, demonstrating its adaptability to various learning contexts and its ability to cater to different learning styles. Furthermore, the paper investigates the positive impact of TPR on reducing learner stress and fostering a motivating learning environment. The findings support the conclusion that TPR constitutes a valuable pedagogical approach, particularly for young learners, contributing significantly to both language acquisition and overall learner development.

**Key words:** Total Physical Response (TPR), English language teaching, young learners, kinesthetic learning, vocabulary acquisition, classroom engagement, stress reduction, language acquisition, pedagogical approach, movement, commands.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The pedagogical challenges inherent in effective English language instruction for young learners necessitate a sophisticated and multifaceted approach that extends beyond the mere application of basic teaching methodologies. Successful instruction in this context demands meticulous preparation and a deep understanding of child development, encompassing the strategic integration of engaging techniques to capture and maintain students' attention. As Ummah (2017) [6] emphasizes, effective teaching in this context necessitates the skillful

deployment of various motivational strategies, ranging from the judicious use of incentives and rewards to the cultivation of intrinsic interest in the learning process itself. The ability to consistently sustain focused engagement among young learners, notorious for their relatively short attention spans and susceptibility to distractions, requires a sophisticated understanding of child psychology and a repertoire of effective classroom management strategies. Moreover, fostering a positive and supportive learning environment is paramount. Truly effective teachers are not simply those who convey information proficiently, but rather those who actively cultivate a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning, eliciting enthusiastic participation and positive responses from their students, transforming the learning process into an engaging and enriching experience. This necessitates a nuanced understanding of individual learner needs, the strategic use of differentiated instruction, and the consistent creation of a supportive and inclusive classroom climate that empowers students to actively participate in and benefit from the learning process.

The distinct developmental differences between children and adults necessitate a differentiated approach to English language instruction. While adults generally exhibit greater self-directed learning capabilities and sustained attention spans, young learners are often characterized by high levels of verbal fluency alongside shorter attention spans and a strong inclination towards social interaction. This necessitates that teachers adopt a patient and engaging teaching style, marked by adaptability and a capacity for effective classroom management. The teacher-student relationship is paramount, and creating a positive learning environment is crucial for success (Rokhayati, 2017) [5]. Employing age-appropriate techniques, incorporating interactive and playful elements into lesson delivery, and providing clear and engaging instruction are key to maximizing learning outcomes and cultivating a positive attitude toward English language acquisition in young learners.

Total Physical Response (TPR) aligns with several established learning theories (Khorasgani, 2017) [1], leveraging the inherent connection between physical

activity and language acquisition. The method's emphasis on kinesthetic learning seamlessly integrates movement and play into language instruction, promoting not only linguistic development but also physical well-being and enhanced engagement beyond the classroom. TPR in English language teaching involves the teacher issuing commands that students physically enact. This might involve actions performed in response to instructions embedded within songs, stories, or role-playing scenarios. For instance, a teacher might instruct students to "run," and then have them repeat the command while performing the action. The repetition of these action-command sequences, often conducted in a circle formation to facilitate participation, reinforces both vocabulary and comprehension. This approach is particularly effective because physical activity has been shown to mitigate stress, a key factor in second language acquisition. A stress-free learning environment optimizes learning outcomes (Putri, 2016) [4], as the reduction of affective filters enhances receptive capacity. The enjoyable nature of TPR fosters motivation and contributes to more effective language acquisition.

The high energy levels and relatively short attention spans typical of young learners necessitate instructional approaches that incorporate movement and active participation. This aligns with research indicating that early childhood represents an optimal period for language acquisition, with the ease of language learning diminishing with age (Ghasemi & Hashemi, 2011) [3]. Young learners, particularly those under seven who are pre-literate, benefit from activities that do not rely on written materials. Total Physical Response (TPR) methods, which utilize oral instructions and visual aids such as pictures, are particularly well-suited to this age group. Students can respond to verbal prompts by pointing to corresponding images or enacting actions described in a story, creating a dynamic and engaging learning experience (Er, 2013) [2]. This kinesthetic approach capitalizes on young children's natural inclination towards physical activity and their strong connection to their immediate environment, maximizing their engagement and learning outcomes.

The advantages of using Total Physical Response in English teaching and learning activities: (1) is fun, so many children enjoy participating this type of teaching and learning process, (2) can help the students remember English words and expressions, (3) can be applied in large and small class, (4) is not

only appropriate for young learners but also adult learners, (5) is suitable for active students in class (Rokhayati, 2017) [5].

Total Physical Response (TPR) methodologies in language education typically employ a pedagogical approach centered on the execution of physical actions in direct response to verbal instructions provided by the instructor. This kinesthetic learning strategy facilitates a direct correlation between linguistic input and physical output, thereby enhancing comprehension and retention. The versatility of TPR allows for a wide range of activities, adaptable to diverse learning contexts and pedagogical objectives. One common application of TPR involves vocabulary acquisition through the manipulation of visual aids. For example, in a lesson focused on food vocabulary, the instructor might issue a series of commands such as "Point to the banana," "Touch the apple," or "Pick up the orange," using flashcards or other visual prompts to reinforce the connection between the spoken word and the corresponding object. The incorporation of hand gestures further enhances the kinesthetic engagement, strengthening the learner's association between the linguistic element and its physical representation.

Beyond the controlled environment of the classroom, TPR extends seamlessly to outdoor settings, where the potential for dynamic movement significantly enhances the learning process. In such contexts, more elaborate and complex action commands can be employed, engaging learners in a variety of physical activities that reinforce both vocabulary and grammatical structures. For instance, instructions like "Run to the tree," "Jump over the puddle," "Take three steps forward, then two steps to the left," or "Throw the ball to your partner" not only reinforce the meaning of the directives themselves but also encourage spatial awareness and coordination, creating a multi-sensory learning experience. This approach capitalizes on the inherent engagement fostered by physical activity and promotes deeper and more lasting vocabulary retention, illustrating the versatility and effectiveness of TPR across various learning environments.

In conclusion, Total Physical Response (TPR) offers a dynamic and effective approach to language instruction, particularly well-suited to young learners. Its

integration of physical activity and verbal commands creates a multi-sensory learning experience that enhances comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and overall engagement. The adaptability of TPR, allowing for diverse activities ranging from simple gesture-based exercises to complex movement sequences, makes it a versatile tool for educators across various learning environments. By mitigating stress and promoting a fun and interactive learning atmosphere, TPR significantly contributes to increased confidence and motivation, fostering a positive and effective learning experience. The inherent connection between physical action and linguistic understanding, central to the TPR methodology, underscores its potential to significantly benefit language acquisition and overall learner development.

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