

Total Physical Response Activities to Foster Listening in EFL Children's Classroom

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NOTA DE RESPONSABILIDAD

Las ideas aportadas en este Proyecto de Trabajo de Grado, son de responsabilidad exclusiva de los autores, artículo 1° acuerdo # 324 del 11 de Octubre 1966 del Honorable Consejo Directivo de la Universidad de Nariño

Nota de Aceptación

ASESOR

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Resumen

Este documento de investigación contiene información sobre la utilidad del método de Respuesta Física Total o TPR por sus siglas en inglés (Total Physical Response), el cual es muy recomendable para los profesores ya que con él es posible hacer una combinación de la acción y la práctica obteniendo resultados productivos en el aula de clases. Este trabajo también hace referencia a que mediante su implementación se consigue una reducción de estrés en el aprendiz si se considera el uso de juegos o la aplicación de situaciones cómodas para el estudiante. Logrando así un aprendizaje significativo y/o agradable.

Abstract

This research paper contains important information about the usefulness of the Total Physical Response method which is very recommendable for teachers since it is possible make a combination of action and practice getting more productive results in classroom. This work also refers to the fact that through its implementation a reduction of stress is achieved in the learner, if the use of games or the application of comfortable situations for the student is considered.

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Introduction

This research aims to show and suggest strategies that help to improve listening skill, which is a challenging skill in the teaching and learning process. Specifically, the current investigation exposes its content based on causes and consequences within the English learning process by means of the TPR (total physical response) on the learners' listening skill. In addition, the proposal to this paper is to collect and adapt some activities for our context, taking into account the needs of the children.

Therefore, this research is being done so that it could offer a good methodology to help the learning process by providing conceptual information, technical and practical elements to maximize the development of the teaching and learning process.

Also, this research discusses important concepts like listening, teaching a listening skill, Total Physical Response method, and teaching listening by using Total Physical Response method taking into account definitions given by authors like Freeman, Richards and Rodgers, Brown among others.

JUSTIFICATION

The target of learning any language is to be able to communicate in the target language. In our country, the target language is English. Consequently, the process of teaching and learning a second language should give emphasis to help students to communicate in this language. To achieve this objective, the process of

teaching and learning should be centered on developing the main language skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking.

According to Educational First (E.F), In 2013 Colombia ranked 44 out of 60 countries for its level of English, it has not held such an important role in our country, for this reason, the Colombian government proposed "Colombia Bilingue" for the next 4 years. (Craig Corbett, 2014).

For this reason, learning English has become a constant and demanding process at all levels mainly from the elementary levels in our country. In our context, The Colombian government has tried to develop and reinforce the knowledge of English by the implementation of the project "Colombia Bilingue" (MEN, 2014)

For this reason in this study, there will be an amount of information related to the topic to work on. In other words, the reason why this topic was chosen is to collect and create a little booklet that includes some activities to teach basic vocabulary to children by using Total Physical Response. The purpose of this booklet is to facilitate or help the learning process and guide the new English teachers towards this process.

Literature Review

Listening Comprehension

Listening is one of the four skills that play a very important role in language learning. According to Saricoban, (1999), the process of understanding what the

speaker is saying is considered “Comprehension”. The student must understand and define sounds, vocabulary, and grammatical structures. For this reason, listening is considered a difficult mental process. Listening is an important skill that is developed when learning a new language since it provides learners with important linguistic input. It has an important role in human communication and even more in second language learners given the fact that listening is significant not only to understand the language but also to learn the language (Rost, 2002).

According to the webpage *skills you need* listening includes paying attention to what is being said and also how others use their bodies (2011). Listening is an invisible and mental process, the students have to differentiate between sounds, understanding vocabulary, and grammatical structures, and also they have to interpret the cultural context in which the discourse appears (Wipf, 1984).

Teaching Listening

Taking into account that listening provides the essential input that serves as the basis for good language acquisition and enables learners to interact in spoken communication, The English teacher must show students how they can adjust their listening behavior to deal with a big variety of situations, different kinds of input, and listening purposes.

Listening is as active as speaking, and in some ways even more difficult; Brewster & Ellis (2004) explain that listening to a foreign language is hard work, especially for kids. It will require attention, though, interpretation, and imagination. Consequently, children have to listen as much English as possible. Paul (2003)

explains that the level should be easy to match their level. If the level is too difficult, children may lose confidence and positivity as well as motivation to learn this second language.

According to Swift (2007), the teacher should focus on the specific problems that the students have and plan listening activities in order to help to solve the listening problems. Brown (1990) states that the objectives of teaching listening are producing good listeners who construct reasonable interpretations based on explicit input. In addition, it is necessary for the teacher to follow stages in teaching listening with the hope the students will be able to comprehend the utterances.

According to Swift (2007), there are two approaches involved in the listening process:

1. Bottom-up processing

The first step in comprehension is to decode the little elements of what they hear from their environment.

2. Top-down processing

The top-down approach takes into account the background knowledge in a non-linguistic context where the listener must interpret the environment sounds in order to understand the situation.

In this process, probably almost all responsibility is on the teacher, he or she has to share the knowledge with the students and create a good environment in the class in order to encourage them to do listening. Also, the teacher must provide

situations for the students to practice listening and become engaged in the listening process.

According to Rost, (2002), there are three phases of the listening learning process; pre-listening, while listening and post-listening.

a. Pre-listening

It happens when listening is part of an activity and it is connected to past action activity. At the beginning of class information, vocabulary and information are given by the teacher. Also, the teacher gives some previous exercises to make students pre-view what is coming.

b. While listening

In this stage, the student has some vocabulary, and the teacher can do some activities like listening to some short phrases and ask the students some questions about the phrases. In this kind of activities, the students need to be encouraged to complete the activities, Moreover, the teacher should make the students aware of the meaning between the lines, the speaker's tone and the body language.

c. Post-listening

In this final stage, students need to respond to what they have heard in order to clarify the meaning and extend their thinking. Teachers should plan post-listening activities in order to recheck how far the students have attended the message in the audios and to check where the students have a problem in comprehending the audios.

Thus, teaching listening is a process of giving the students chances to learn the language through information, they will be able to obtain and understand the general idea of the information.

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the developing of listening skill is an important part of learning a second language in a classroom; in addition, there are different ways to teach listening. so, the use of a different method should be a good idea because this method should be appropriate to the purpose of the assessment and make use of the best instruments and procedures available.

Total Physical Response

TPR is one of the English teaching methods developed by Dr. James J. Asher, a professor of psychology at San Jose State University, California. Asher (1960) describes TPR as a method that uses physical movement to teach students a new language. They react to verbal input while physical movement minimizes their blockage and also decreases their affective filter. TPR gives students the possibility to react to input without thinking too much about it.

Asher compares adult language learning and child language acquisition like a parallel. He argues that speech directed to kids embrace primarily in commands, the kids respond physically before producing verbal responses, hence he believes adults should use the same process by which kids acquire the first language. (Brown, 2001).

In addition, this method attempts to teach any language through physical activity, voices, images, and videos to help students remember the meaning of what

they see or hear. This approach will make the student respond physically to the simple requests that the teacher makes (Reyhner, J, 2003).

Richards and Rodgers (2001) agree with Asher that TPR involves teaching a language through physical (motor) activity, but they also highlight that “TPR is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action”.(p.87)

According to Larsen-Freeman (2000), TPR was developed in order to reduce the stress people feel when studying foreign languages and thereby encourage students to persist in their study beyond a beginning level of proficiency. TPR is most effective in the early stages of learning and TPR should be used in association with different methods and techniques.

Benefits of TPR

Asher (1960) cited by Brown (2001), compares the adult second language learning with child first language acquisition, he claims that verbal response comes after the physical response, also he recommended reviewing the process of how the kids acquire the first language.

Total physical Response is associated with theories of mother tongue acquisition in children where learning is enhanced through association with physical movements. It creates a link between speech and action that boosts language learning. Asher explains that actions help to strengthen the connections in the brain

because the language enters the brain through the right hemisphere where an understanding of language is stored (1960)

In addition, Larsen-Freeman (2000) states that TPR makes students enjoy their experience in learning a foreign language by reducing stress. It means that a good atmosphere can make kids feel better and facilitate their learning in a real context.

Total Physical Response in Teaching Listening

According to the MEN (n.d), TPR respects the silent period and uses physical activities for showing understanding. For this reason, TPR fosters the kid's comprehension. In addition, Asher explains that TPR could be used like an instructional strategy that is found in a model of how children learn the first language because TPR was developed in order to decrease the stress that students can feel when they are studying a foreign language, In this case, English.

In this process, teachers and students have an active role, the teacher decides what to teach, when, and how to present the new materials, and in the same way she or he has the responsibility of providing the best exposure to the English language in order to the kids internalize the basic rules or target language. It means the teacher controls the input. On the other hand, the student is a listener. In the first stage, he or she listens carefully and responds physically to commands given by the teacher. Also, students have to recognize and produce words or short phrases on their own. They are encouraged to speak when they feel ready to speak, it means when they have a good basis of the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The teacher must conduct the process of learning by using TPR, and Philips (1993) suggested an optional procedure in order to develop the class, it is a TPR class example

1. "Write the words on the board, and check that the children know them
2. Put cards in two piles: verbs and adverbs, Take one card from each pile so that you have one verb and one adverb, and ask the children to do the action. For example, *jump quickly, or sing loudly*.
3. Then, ask for a volunteer to take a card from each pile. They should not say what is on them out loud but do the action.
4. The class has to guess which words he or she has got" (p.30).

Hence, there are two important ideas to highlight, the first one is that the teacher is the master chief in the class and he or she is the director and the second one is that the students are the actors, they have to perform the commands while the teacher is monitoring.

Didactical Proposal

Introduction

Every day, teachers have to prepare classes, different kinds of activities in order to develop the main skills, listening, reading, writing, and speaking. This process takes a lot of time; moreover, the activities should attract the student's interest. For this reason, this proposal wants to provide to the teachers with a tool, in which the teachers will find examples of basic lesson plan activities, examples of basic procedures to apply TPR in primary school English classes.

This proposal is the creation of a booklet, which according to the web page *Businessdictionary* is a publication that has less than 20 pages, it is easy to use and manageable, this booklet includes important information that will guide teacher with school classes.

This booklet contains TPR activities which are a good way to get started, for this reason, this booklet is a tool for new teachers in order to promote learning English as a second language. This research arises from an institutional necessity since serious difficulties were observed in the acquisition of listening skills for understanding the English language.

This booklet provides the teacher with practical activities like songs; games, among others; which increase the listening skill and at the same time integrate and motivate the child during the process of learning.

These kinds of activities allow the child to use objects and things for their classroom learning while interacting with the teacher because TPR is an interactive methodology that needs movement, games, imitation, and gestures by the teacher and students.

Another objective of this booklet is to encourage the teachers to see the TPR as a useful tool for supporting classroom teaching. Also, the different kinds of learning can be promoted by using the different activities of this booklet.

All the activities are inside of a didactic unit, for this reason, it is necessary to explain some definitions and characteristics of what a didactic unit is.

Didactic Unit

A didactic unit is a collection of activities or lesson plans which the teacher in the classroom uses as a guide. According to Garcia Aretio (2009) a didactic unit is “un conjunto integrado, organizado y secuencial de los elementos básicos que conforman el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje (objetivos, contenidos, métodos y estrategias) con sentido propio, unitario y completo que permite a los estudiantes apreciar el resultado de su trabajo” (p. 1)

Moreover, a didactic unit should have different elements as proposed Marote (2013) like the objective of the didactic unit, to who is addressed, level of the activities, resources the teacher will need, among others. In addition, Diez (2007) suggest some elements like time, space.

The first lesson plan is a classic example of Total Physical Response, in it, the students can practice the commands, (Appendix)

The second and the third lesson plans are developed by using TPRS that was developed by Blaine Ray in 1990 adding another component to Dr. Asher's TPR, storytelling. This method focuses on learning a foreign language with gestures, translations, and pictures. Then creating a repetitive story based on the new vocabulary learned. Children begin to realize the meaning of words unspoken in history observing posture, stress, and tone of voice of the narrator, it means that students get enough exposure to the target language, also they can use the new word in a context (Appendix)

The last activity is a mix of TPR and Realia, in it, the teacher uses mimic in order to teach a topic also the students enjoy doing thing by themselves

To conclude, it is valuable to clarify that this set of lesson plans is just a proposal from which the classroom teachers can benefit.

Conclusions

Teaching is a difficult process, since we as teachers have to be capable to make our students internalize the English language, also teach the listening skill is considered a difficult challenge, since listening is one of the most important skill because it allows people to understand what someone is talking, a good listening allows the students to be more productive.

Total Physical Response could be a methodology that fosters listening, since it is developed in the students' imagination, curiosity, creativity, also it is important because it involves student participation and encourages him/her to explore other environments.

In addition, the use of Total Physical Response in teaching listening can be effective because TPR creates an enjoyable atmosphere in class, also this method does not require a special setting or resource. But the biggest attraction of this is its accessibility and motivation to the learner to acquire new things.

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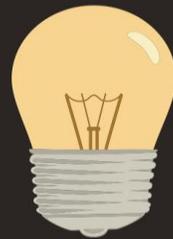
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Appendix

A little Guide

T.P.R
Activities

For New Teacher



By



Presentation

This booklet is a set of activities, based on Total Physical Response; it aims to develop the listening skill. Each activity tries to teach or reinforce a specific topic.

This lesson plans could be applied with beginners because the activities were addressed to develop the basic topic of grammar, also this booklet is intended for use by teachers and hoping to continue adding activities and thus be able to create a real book of useful activities for new teachers.

Enjoy

TPR activities

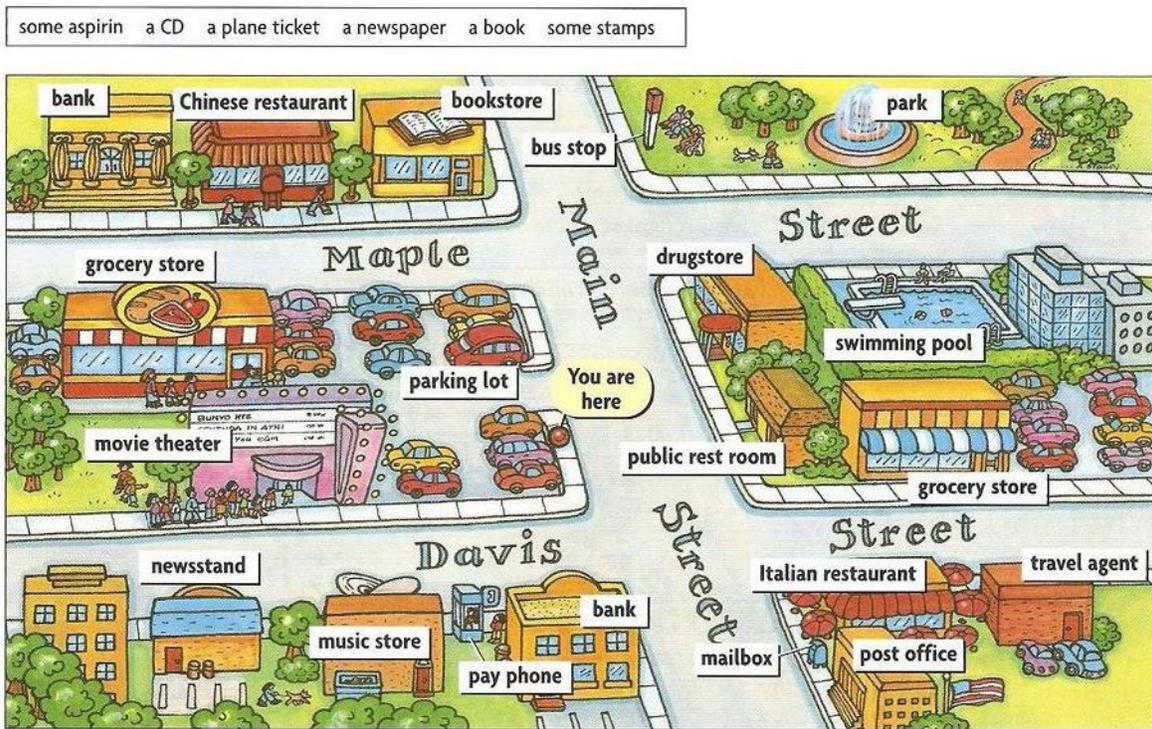


Lesson plan N° 1	Commands, body parts, vocabulary
Teacher	
English level	Beginners
Objectives	To motivate and practice listening To reinforce or teach commands To teach or reinforce parts of the body To teach some classroom objects
Time	20-30 minutes
Materials	None
Procedure	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Try to organize the students into a half-circle or a circle(it depends on the number of students)so they can see who is acting the action.2. On the board, the teacher should draw a king (Simon) and draw a word balloon from the king's mouth and write some commands like "touch your hand" in the word balloon.3. The teacher should read the phrase while he or she touches his or her mouth.4. The teacher could repeat the example Simon says "touch your neck" Simon says "touch your" <p>Note: the students should not do any action if the teacher does not say "SIMON SAYS"</p>
Recommendation	<p>The teacher must continue with the examples until several students have caught on.</p> <p>After, the teacher should take the role of Simon and the students should do the orders</p> <p>Allow students to take turns in order to be Simon</p> <p>If you want, you can change the name of Simon example "the president says..." or "the King Arthur says" or some students name.</p>
Plan B	Song "Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes"



Lesson plan N° 2	Vocabulary – prepositions
Teacher	
English level	Beginners
Objectives	Learn some places city names Prepositions
Time	20-30 minutes
Materials	Pictures, story outline (only for teacher)
Procedure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before the story, show the picture of Hamelin city (If you want, you can change the city picture by an image of a place well known by students). Image 1 2. Tell the story, mime it and show the pictures. E.g., image 2. 3. Every time the teacher uses a preposition, he must perform the mimic or explain the action using a toy 4. At the end of the story, ask the students if in their city there are places like in the story. 5. Ask the students to draw the map of their city and draw where the pied piper left the rats.
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to use big images or posters • A good option could be the use of toys in order to demonstrate the prepositions
Plan B	

Image 1.



Story outline (Teacher)

Once upon a time, there was a town called Hamelin (**Pasto, Bogota**).

The people in the town had a problem: the town was full of rats (**bats, spiders**)! There were rats **in** the *street*, in the **houses**, in the *schools*, in the *shops*, in the **church**, in the **police station**, even in their beds! “We must get rid of the rats!” The people said. But how? Then, one day, a strange man (**woman, kid**) came to the town.

He wore a tall hat and had a flute. “I can get rid of the rats”, he said. “What will you give me if I take them all away?” “Lots of money!” said the people. So the Pied Piper started to play his flute. Strange music came out of the flute, and soon rats came out of all the shops, houses and schools.

The road was full of rats! They all followed the Pied Piper. The Pied Piper led the rats:

Over the bridge, **Up** the hill, **Down** the hill Round the art gallery, **Along** the road, **Past** the supermarket, **Through** the garden of the aquarium, **Into** the park, **Out** of the wood And **into** the river.

Image 2



Lesson plan N° 3	Verbs, commands, family members
Teacher	
English level	Beginners
Objectives	Involve the children in the story
Time	30-40 minutes
Materials	Markers
Procedure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the beginning, in Spanish teacher have to tell the students that he is going to tell the story about the rabbit family, (kangaroo,). 2. The teacher will draw the family rabbit on the board. 3. The teacher asks the students questions about the rabbit like “have you ever seen a rabbit ” 4. The teacher tells the story, the teacher uses lots of gestures in order to make meaning of the words very clear 5. The teacher tell the story again but this time five students have to act the story.
Recommendation	The teacher can add names, places, and sizes.
Plan B	

Rabbit Family.

This is a story about a big Daddy rabbit, a beautiful Mummy rabbit, a Sister rabbit, Brother rabbit, and Baby rabbit.	<i>Point to the pictures as you name the rabbits.</i>
It was hot - very hot,	<i>Wipe your forehead, and make "hot" gestures.</i>
And Daddy rabbit	<i>Point to the picture of Daddy rabbit and squat down beside the pond.</i>

Went jump, jump and sat on the edge of the pond.	<i>Jump three times</i>
Mummy rabbit was hot - very, very hot.	<i>Point to Mummy rabbit, squat by the edge of the pond and make "hot" gestures.</i>
So Daddy rabbit said, "Come here!"	
Mummy rabbit went jump, jump, jump and sat on the edge on the pond.	
Sister Rabbit was hot - very, very hot.	<i>Point to Sister rabbit, squat by the pond and make "hot" gestures.</i>
So Mummy rabbit said, "Come here!"	<i>Point to Mummy rabbit, return to the edge and beckon to Sister rabbit.</i>
Sister Rabbit went jump, jump and sat on the leaf on the pond	<i>Point to Sister rabbit, squat by the pond and jump three times to sit on the edge by Mummy rabbit.</i>
Brother rabbit was hot - very, very hot.	<i>Point to Brother rabbit, squat by the pond and make "hot" gestures.</i>
So Sister rabbit said, "Come here!"	<i>Point to Sister rabbit, return to the edge and beckon to Brother rabbit.</i>
Brother rabbit went jump, jump and sat on the leaf on the pond.	<i>Point to Brother rabbit, squat by the pond and jump three times to sit on the edge by Mummy rabbit.</i>
The baby rabbit was hot - very, very hot...	<i>Point to Baby rabbit, squat by the edge and make "hot" gestures.</i>
So Brother rabbit said, "Come here!"	<i>Point to Brother rabbit, return to the edge and beckon to the Baby rabbit.</i>
The baby rabbit went jump, jump, jump and sat on the leaf on the pond.	<i>Point to the baby rabbit, squat by the pond and jump three times to sit on the edge by Brother rabbit.</i>
And then - SPLASH - they all fell into the water!	<i>Start to move backward and forwards, as if you are losing your balance and fall into the pond.</i>

Lesson plan N° 4	Body parts, colors
Teacher	
English level	Beginners
Objectives	Involve the children in the story Learn body parts
Time	30-40 minutes
Materials	Clay in different colors,
Procedure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring to the class a Clay monster that you make yourself 2. Show the students your clay monster 3. Describe your monster using your body e.g.. My monster has a big nose (you touch your nose), my monster has a long hair (you touch your hair). Etc. 4. Now, the students have to make a monster following teacher instructions e.g.: make a monster with a big head, make a monster with three legs. Etc. 5. After that, let the student make a monster for themselves, And try that the students describe the monster 6. In the end, when all the monsters are finished, the students can give names.
Recommendation	Be sure that there is enough clay for each student. Your monster has to be the biggest. Write on the board the new vocabulary.
Plan B	Making a puppet