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CHILDREN AND TPR

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У статті "Діти і TPR" розглянуто один із інноваційних методів навчання англійської мови учнів початкової школи, за допомогою якого діти з інтересом і вільно оволодівають іноземною мовою. У статті продемонстровано один приклад уроку на основі цього методу.

Ключові слова: навчання англійської мови, інноваційний метод, учні початкової школи.

В статье "Дети и TPR" рассмотрен один из инновационных методов обучения английскому языку учащихся начальной школы, при помощи которого дети с интересом и свободно овладевают иностранным языком. В статье продемонстрирован один пример урока на основе этого метода.

Ключевые слова: обучение английскому языку, инновационный метод, учащиеся начальной школы.

The article "Children and TPR" deals with the problem of teaching English to young children using the TPR method. There is also shown the ways which are characterized for the above mentioned method and a sample lesson plan which vividly describes the teaching process with the help of the TPR method.

Key words: teaching English, innovative method, primary school pupils.

Abstract

One of the methods which is suitable for children in learning vocabulary is TPR. It is a method developed by Dr. James J. Asher. The method relies on the assumption that when learning a second or foreign language, language is internalized through a process of codebreaking similar to first language development and that the process allows for a long period of listening and developing comprehension prior to production. Students respond to commands that require physical movement. TPR is primarily used by ESL/EFL teachers, although the method is used in teaching other languages as well. The method became popular in the 1970s. Asher, James (1996). According to Asher, TPR is based on the premise that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any natural language on earth – including the sign language of the deaf. The process is visible when we observe how infants internalize their first language. It looks to the way that children learn their native language. Communication between parents and their children combines both verbal and physical aspects. The child responds physically to the speech of their parent. The responses of the child are in turn positively reinforced by the speech of the parent. For many months the child absorbs the language without being able to speak. It is during this period that the internalization and code breaking occurs. After this stage the child is able to reproduce the language spontaneously. With TPR the language teacher tries to mimic this process in class. The method also promises double efficiency in terms of rate of learning. Byram, Michael, ed. (2000). In the classroom the teacher and students take on roles similar to that of the parent and child respectively. Students must respond physically to the words of the teacher. The activity may be a simple game such as Simon Says or may involve more complex grammar and more detailed scenarios. Because of its participatory approach, TPR may also be a useful alternative teaching strategy for students with dyslexia or related learning disabilities, who typically experience difficulty learning foreign languages with traditional classroom instruction. According to its proponents, it has a number of advantages: Students will enjoy getting up out of their chairs and moving around. Simple TPR activities do not require a great deal of preparation on the part of the teacher. TPR is aptitude-free, working well with a mixed ability class, and with students having various disabilities. It is good for kinesthetic learners who need to be active in the class. Class size need not be a problem, and it works effectively for children and adults.

Body

Generally children like doing any kinds of activities as long as they feel happy. Children will choose the activities they like to do according to their own characteristics. The character of the children may be one of the signs of their development. Children ask questions all the time, they rely on the spoken word as well as the physical world to convey and understand meaning. They have definite views about what they like and do not like doing. Silver, M. Adelman B. Price E. (2004) They have developed sense of fairness about what happens in the classroom and begin to question the teachers' decisions. They are able to work with others and learn from others. Using the body movement in the process of learning is suitable to the characteristic of the children because children like to do physical movement. They like to move from one place to another place. They like to go around without thinking whether they disturb their surrounding or not. They don't like to keep staying in one place which forces them not to do something. Young children are physically active. Besides that children also like to imitate and mime. They will give attention to other people and try to imitate merely like other people do and say. This is the way how children learn and develop their knowledge. Nunan David (1991), Children love to imitate and mime: they are uninhibited in acting out roles, and they enjoy repetition because it gives them a sense of assurance and achievement. Children like to be involved in something active. To make them active, the teacher should be able to make the circumstance of learning process which is suitable to the characteristics of the children. It may give motivation to the students to learn effectively. So, hopefully the goal of the learning can be achieved well. The success of the learning process can't be separated from the advantages of TPR method itself. The advantages of using Total Physical Response Method in teaching English are wide.

Firstly, Total Physical Response method creates positive thinking which facilitates the student to involve in the learning process, so it can develop not only motivation but also the aim of students in learning. Besides that this method is very easy and the usage of language contains of action games, that's why it can help student to learn fast and effectively. Besides that it is also able to avoid the problem which students usually meet during the process of learning especially when they study foreign language. James Asher stated that "Use Total Physical Response method for new vocabulary and grammar, to help your students immediately understand the target language. This instant success is absolutely thrilling for students".

Secondly, teaching vocabulary to children by using Total Physical Response method is very useful for children because children like to give response by using physical response first better than using verbal response. It is very suitable when the process of learning is emphasized on physical response in the students' response. Children also not only like to respond and act out something new but also intend to know more and more about language by responding the action toward the given command. "Directly utterances to children contains of command and children or students will respond toward their physic before they start to produce verbal response".

Thirdly, this method can facilitate students with the meaning in real context. Students can memorize the vocabulary by looking at the action, even though the vocabulary is not translated. So the presence of action in the classroom is as an imperative to help teacher in explaining the materials for students and in understanding the meaning of vocabulary. Because of this method uses basic command and real context in the process of learning it is very helpful for students to know the meaning. By telling students to stand up, put their hands in the air, and pick up something and give it to another students, etc, are acting which commonly and naturally done by students so it is easy for them to memorize the vocabulary or utterance. 1) That "TPR trains students to respond quickly and naturally while also teaching vocabulary in a fun, lively lesson". The usage of Total Physical Response method emphasize in action so students are involved in activities in the process of learning. This circumstance is interesting to students. So by using this method students can accept the lesson easier and faster. Even though Total Physical Response Method is effective to teach vocabulary, teacher needs to think of media to set up the context in delivering the lesson of vocabulary to students. Besides teacher should be willing to create conducive learning.

Fourthly, using Total Physical Response method is interesting and fun. It is very suitable for the students' characteristics which have been mentioned before. By giving

something interesting and funny makes children attentively focused on the process of learning. Because of that situation children feel free to involve in learning process. Larsen-Freeman, Diane (2000). Besides that they are not under pressed by the threatening situation and condition. Students can get the aim of learning by keeping on learning and giving attention to the lesson. 1) supported that "It's fun! It's non-threatening. It keeps their attention. They learn!. For example: put your left hand in the air - put it down - put your right hand in the air - put it down - put both hands in the air - put them down - put your left foot in the air - put it down - put your right foot in the air - put it down - put both feet in the air! Students try jumping in the air or attempt a handstand on their desks! Another funny sequence of basic TPR is: - clap your hands - clap your hands three times - clap them five times - clap your hands 8 times ! - turn around - turn around twice then clap once - jump once - jump seven times - turn around, jump once and clap twice - turn three times, jump five times and clap twice! Students really struggle hard to remember this last one, but if you do it step by step and repeat often, they can do it eventually. The teacher introduces the language through the use of commands (imperative sentences) and has students demonstrate their understanding through action responses. A typical sequence of events might go like this: The teacher says the command (sit down; turn the page; get your pen out; etc.) as they perform the action. The teacher says the command as both the teacher and the students then perform the action. The teacher says the command but only students perform the action. The teacher tells one student at a time to perform the action. The roles of a teacher and student are reversed. Students give commands to teacher and to other students. The teacher and student allow for command expansion or produces new sentences. Richards, Jack C.; Rodgers, Theodore S. (2001).

How can EFL Teachers use it in class? In the classroom the teacher plays the role of a parent. She starts by saying a word ('jump') or a phrase ('look at the board') and demonstrating an action. The teacher then says the command and the students all do the action. After repeating a few times it is possible to extend this by asking the students to repeat the word as they do the action. When they feel confident with the word or phrase you can then ask the students to direct each other or the whole class. It is more effective if the students are standing in a circle around the teacher and you can even encourage them to walk around as they do the action. **When should EFL Teachers use it?** 1. TPR can be used to teach and practice many things. 2. Vocabulary connected with actions (smile, chop, headache, wriggle). 3. Tenses past/present/future and continuous aspects (Every morning I clean my teeth, I make my bed, I eat breakfast). 4. Classroom language (Open your books). 5. Imperatives/Instructions (Stand up, close your eyes). Story-telling. It can be adapted for all kinds of teaching situations; you just need to use your imagination! Harmer J. (1991), **Why should EFL Teachers use it in the classroom?** 1. It is a lot of fun, students enjoy it and it can be a real stirrer in the class. It lifts the pace and the mood. 2. It is very memorable. It really helps students to remember phrases or words. 3. It is good for kinesthetic learners who need to be active in the class. 4. It can be used in large or small classes. It doesn't really matter how many students you have as long as you are prepared to take the lead, the students will follow. 5. It works well with mixed-ability classes. The physical actions get across the meaning effectively so that all the students are able to understand and use the target language. 6. It doesn't require a lot of preparation or materials. As long as you are clear what you want to practice (a rehearsal beforehand can help), it won't take a lot of time to get ready. 7. It is very effective with teenagers and young learners. 8. It involves both left and right-brained learning. **A few useful variations.** When EFL Teachers use TPR, first they get the students to do the actions and then I do them and drill the students (chorally and individually) to give them an opportunity to practice making the sounds. They are then ready to give commands to each other. A game I like to play is to organize the students into a circle around me, I say the word and the last person to do the action is out. This person then stands behind me and watches for the student who does the action last. Eventually there is only one student, she is the winner. You can extend this by playing Simon Says. This time when you give a command, students should only do it if you say "Simon says..." at the start. I might say, "Simon says, 'slice some bread'" or "Simon says, 'chop and onion'" and the students must do the action. However if I say, "Whisk an egg" the students shouldn't do this. If anyone does the action that Simon doesn't say then they are out and have to watch for the mistakes of the other students.

Experiment

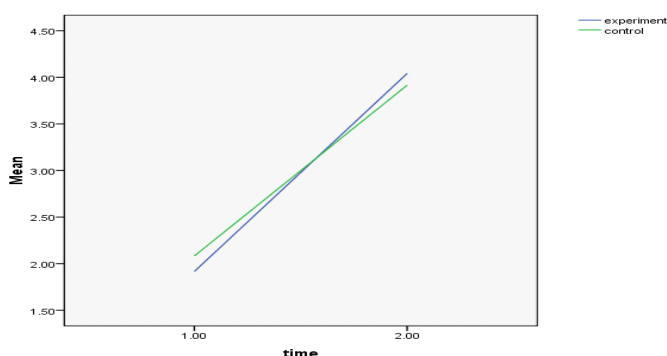
Research evaluation using both qualitative and quantitative approaches was conducted. The purpose of this investigation was to examine how children became more active and involved in the learning process. They developed their communication skills in the following ways: They were introduced with many interesting materials designed for EFL children and were encouraged to use them. We'll show one of the samples of the lesson used by the EFL teachers. E.G. At the beginning of the lesson the teacher introduces the method they will use to learn English. She explains in Georgian that the students will be learning English in a way that is similar to the way they learned Georgian. She says they will not speak at first. Rather, they will just listen to the teacher and do as she does. The teacher explains that she will give them a command to do something in English and the students will do the actions along with the teacher. The teacher says in English: 'Stand up', and as she says it, she stands up and signals for the students to rise with her. They all stand up. 'Sit down', she says and they all follow the teacher's command. The students say nothing. The next time they stand up together, the teacher gives a new command: 'Raise your hand'. The students follow the teacher's examples and raise their hands. Then the teacher gives three commands in sequence: 'Sit down, stand up, raise your hand'. The students perform the actions together. Then the teacher moves on to a new command: 'Clap your hands', and she does so as she says it. The students do the same. Then the teacher changes the order of the commands. 'Clap your hands, raise your hands, stand up, sit down'. When the students have mastered these commands, the teacher invites a volunteer student to perform the teacher's role. The teacher remains silent and the volunteer student gives the commands. The rest of the class follow these commands. Then the teacher invites other volunteers to give the commands. At the last step of the lesson, the teacher writes the new commands on the board. Each time she writes a command, she acts it out. The students copy the sentences. Teacher did all the activities according to the above mentioned above. EFL teacher wrote a class observation report weekly. Several other lessons (like the above mentioned) were conducted during the experiment.

The purpose of the experiment was to test the hypothesis, which was defined at the beginning of the study. In particular, we had to find out, how great was the role of TPR in the teaching - learning process. I held the research in stages:

First I carried out the mini experiment (4 weeks), to find out those difficulties and which might take place during the using the method of TPR ; and also to prove that it was worth holding the long-term experiment.

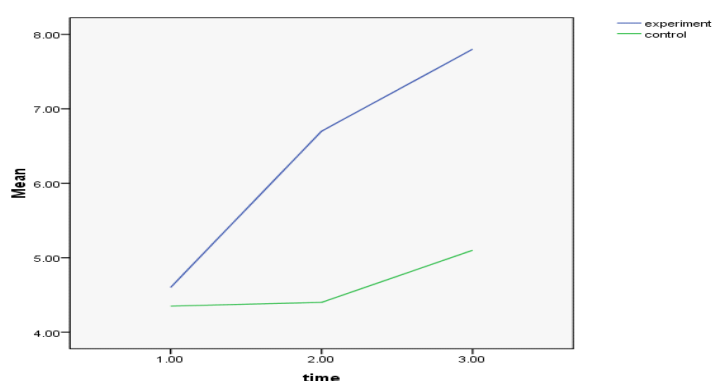
Then I held the long-term experiment (one year), to check the correctness of my hypotheses.

The mini experiment was held at Tbilisi public school № 24, 2010–2011. The duration of the experiment was five weeks. 48 third and fourth grade students took part in the experiment. They were divided into two groups: 24 students in the experimental and 24 in control groups. They were divided according to the tests. We formed as equal groups as possible by age, gender, social-economic and ethnic background. I used the same teaching materials in all the groups. In the experimental groups I used additional materials. The learning time was the same in the groups. The groups had to write tests: test before the experiment, in the middle of the experiment and final - after the experiment. The mini experiment proved that it was worth to deeply study this issue.

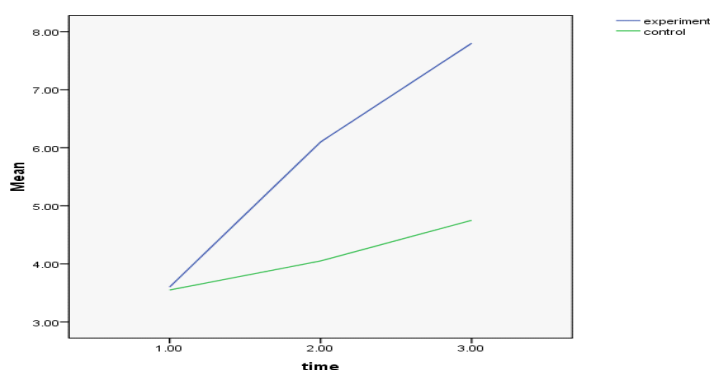


Graph 3.1. Comparison of the experimental and control groups

Besides, we held a questionnaire for students and teachers as well. It can be said that the questionnaires and their results were preliminary, the probation period for long-term experiment. Their results should have defined how to carry out of the long-term experiment, on which aspects we should have to pay special attention to, what was a priority for research and what not. **The long-term experiment** was held at Tbilisi public school # 24. I chose the third and fourth grade students. 48 students were divided into four maximally equal groups by their language skill level: two experimental and two control groups (12–12 students in each group). The groups were divided according to the results of pre-experiment tests. The duration of experiment was one academic year (2011–2012). I held the assessment tests three times: before, while experiment and after the experiment. Measurement of test results, as well as during mini experiment was implemented by the SPSs program. I used the same book in the groups. I collected additional materials from different sources. These were various kinds of topics based on the TPR methodology, so I chose the material according to the students' interests. Learning time was the same in the groups. See the results in the following graphs:



Graph 3.2. Comparison of the first experimental and control groups



Graph 3.3. Comparison of the second experimental and control groups

As it is seen on the graphs, the general level of all skills remarkably increased in experimental groups. As for controlling group there was a little growth, but it is much less than in experimental groups. The carried out tests results of the first and second experimental groups showed, that it is possible to increase the level of the skills of the students, if foreign language process is based on the TPR methodology. Therefore, the results of the experiment proved that the hypotheses of using TPR in the teaching process will be significantly simplified for the students if the English language teaching will take place simultaneously in the process of introducing the specific strategies. Thus, while language teaching we can't ignore the EFL teacher attitudes towards the students and the ways he/she tried to reduce the psychological stress. Moreover, teachers need to make appropriate pedagogical practice, acquire the necessary skills to facilitate teaching-learning process and help students to deal with TPR methodology.

Conclusion

Good language learners achieve fluency faster when they are immersed in activities that involve them in situational language use, learners often start their language

learning with a period of silence as they watch the effect of language on others, learners show comprehension by successfully accomplishing language-generated tasks, learners focus on overall sentence meaning rather than a sentence's grammatical parts, learners make faster progress when the language of instruction is consistent (though limited) on a daily basis, and learners make faster progress when the content involves language that is clearly usable or valuable outside the classroom. However, it is recognized that TPR is useful for beginners, though it can be used at higher levels where preparation becomes an issue for the teacher. It does not give students the opportunity to express their own thoughts in a creative way. Further, it is easy to overuse TPR – "Any novelty, if carried on too long, will trigger adaptation." It can be a challenge for shy students. The nature of TPR places an unnaturally heavy emphasis on the use of the imperative mood, that is to say commands such as "sit down" and "stand up". These features are of limited utility to the learner, and can lead to a learner appearing rude when attempting to use his new language. Of course, as a TPR class progresses, group activities and descriptions.

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