

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE METHOD LEARNING

Sri Hardini¹⁾ Zaini Munawir²⁾ Hikmawan Syahputra³⁾

Universitas Medan Area

srihardini@staff.uma.ac.id¹⁾ zaini@staff.uma.ac.id²⁾ hikmawansp@gmail.com³⁾

Abstract

The title of this Independent Research is An Analysis of The Total Physical Response Method Learning. In this method we will consider a new general approach to foreign language instruction which has been named “ the comprehension approach.” It is called this because of the importance it gives to listening comprehension. All the other methods we have looked at have students speaking in the target language from the first day. Method consistent with the comprehension approach, on the other hand, begin with the listening skill. The idea of focusing on listening comprehension during early foreign language instruction comes from observing how children acquire their mother tongue. The method has been developed from developmental psychology, learning theory and language learning procedures. The Total Physical Response Method Learning is based on the premise that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any language. The teacher does not correct any student errors during oral communication. In the Total Physical Response Method, students listen and respond to the spoken target language commands of their teacher.

Keywords : *total physical response, learning, method.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Total physical response (TPR) is a method developed by James J. Asher a professor of psychology at San Jose State University, California. Total Physical Response is based on the premise that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any language. Based on the developmental psychology, the proponents of Total Physical Response claim that memory is increased if it is stimulated through association with motor activity and the process of learning a foreign language is a parallel process to learning the first language (Brown, 1987:163). A research on language teaching through Total Physical Response conducted native by Asher and Brice (1982) provided data that when adults learn a second language under the same conditions as children, adults outperform children. The only advantage children have is acquiring a near-native pronunciation. In fact, the Total Physical Response Method 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.

The way to do this, Asher believes, is to base foreign language learning upon the way children learn their native language. Initially, the teacher is the director of all student behavior. The students are imitators of her no, in verbal model. At some point (usually after ten to twenty hours of instruction) some students will be “ ready to speak.” At that point there will be a role reversal with individual students directing the teacher and the other students.

The first phase of a lesson is one of modeling. The instructor issues commands to a few students, then performs the actions with them. In the second phase, these same students demonstrate that they can understand the commands by performing them alone. The observers also have an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding. The teacher next recombines elements of the commands to have students develop flexibility in understanding unfamiliar utterances.

These commands, which students perform, are often humorous. After learning, to respond to some oral

commands, the students learn to read and write them. When students are ready to speak, they become the ones who issue the commands. After students begin speak In, activities expand to include skits and games. The teacher interacts with the whole group of students and with individual students. Initially the interaction is characterized by the teacher speaking and the students responding nonverbally. Later on, the students become more verbal and the teacher responds nonverbally. Students perform the action together. Students can learn by watching each other. At some point, however, Asher believes observers must demonstrate their understanding of the commands in order to retain them. As students begin to speak, they issue commands to one another as well as to the teacher.

One of the main reasons the Total Physical Response Method was developed was to reduce the stress people feel when studying foreign languages. One of the primary ways this is accomplished is to allow learners to speak when they are ready. Forcing them to speak before then will only create anxiety. Also, when students do begin to speak, perfection should not be expected. Another way to relieve anxiety is to make language learning as enjoyable as possible. The use of zany commands and humorous skits are two ways of showing that language learning can be fun. Just as with the acquisition of the native language, the oral modality is primary. Culture is the lifestyle of people who speak the language natively. Grammatical structures and vocabulary are emphasized over other language areas. These are embedded within imperatives.

The imperatives are single words and multi-word chunks. One reason for the use of imperatives is their frequency of occurrence in the speech directed at young children learning their mother tongue. Understanding the spoken word should precede its production. The spoken language is emphasized over written

language. students often do not learn to read the commands they have already learned to perform until after ten hours of instruction. The method usually introduce in the students' native language. after the introduction, rarely would the mother tongue be used. Meaning is made clear through body movements. Teachers will know immediately whether or not students understand by observing their students' actions.

Formal evaluations can be conducted simply by commanding individual students to perform a series of actions. As students become more advanced, their performance in skits they have created can become the basis for evaluation. Language learners can learn through observing action as well as by performing the actions themselves (Larsen-Freeman,1986:114 and 2000). By observing actions and performing, they will understand the language they are learning. The meaning of words can be understood by making associations between the utterances they hear and the actions they are observing. This principle implies that the teaching of speaking is delayed until the comprehension skills are established. Speaking will be introduced later after language learners have enough understanding of the target language.

2. METHOD

Descriptively, data can be collected either by field research or library research. In this analysis the writer only concerns with one descriptive technique of collecting data, i.e. library research. Library research is done by selecting various books that are relevant to the analysis. The examples used in the analysis is taken from some source, such as text-book and other sources. The writer tries to choose and select the examples, as familiar as possible. Method Research based of Qualitative Research . Library Research and translate some reference books. The manner of data can be library do translate some books. Qualitative Analysis based of form theory explanation so that some

explain can be conclusion and discussion. By doing this, she hopes that the readers will understand them easily.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Total Physical Response Method believe in the importance of having their students enjoy
2. their experience in learning to communicate in a foreign language.
3. This primary skills to be developed are communication, listening, reading and writing
4. Language learning is more effective when it is fun.
5. Students will begin to speak when they are ready.
6. It is very important that students feel successful. Feeling of success and low anxiety
7. facilitate learning.

3.1 Experience in the class.

We follow the teacher as she enters the room and we take a seat in the back of the room. It is the first class of the year so after the teacher takes attendance, she introduce the method they will use to study English. She explains in Swedish, "You will be studying English in a way that is similar to the way you learned Swedish. You will not speak at first. Rather, you will just listen to me and do as I do. I will give you a command to do something in English and you will do the actions along with me. I will need four volunteers to help me with the lesson." Hands go up and the teacher calls on four students to come to the front of the room and sit with her in chairs that are lined up facing the other students. She tell the other students to listen and to watch.

In English the teacher says, "Stand up." As she says it, she stands up and she signals for the four volunteers to rise with her. They all stand up. "Sit down." She says and they all sit. The teacher and the students stand up and sit down together several times according to the teacher's command the students say nothing. The

next time that they stand up together, the teacher issues a new commands, "Turn around." The students follow the teacher's example and turn so that they are facing their chairs." Turn around," the teacher says again and this time they turn to face the other students as before." Sit down" "Stand up." Turn around. Sit down." She says, "Walk," and they all begin walking towards the front row of the students' seats. "Stop", Jump", Stop," Turn around. Walk. Stop. " Jump, Stop. Turn around, Sit down."

The teacher gives the commands and they all perform the actions together. The teacher gives these commands again, changing their order and saying them quite quickly." Stand up. Jump. Sit down. Stand up. Turn around. Jump. Stop. Turn around. Walk. Stop. Turn around. Walk. Jump. Turn around. Sit down." Once again the teacher gives the commands; this time, however, she remains seated. The four volunteers respond to her commands without her." Stand up. Sit down. Walk. Stop. Jump. Turn around. Turn around. Walk. Turn around. Sit down." The students respond perfectly. Next, the teacher signals that she would like one of the volunteers to follow her commands alone. One student raises his hand and performs the actions the teacher commands.

Finally, the teacher approaches the other students who have been sitting observing her and their four classmates. "Stand up", she says and the class responds. "Sit down. Stand up. Jump. Stop. Sit down. Stand up. Turn Around. Turn around. Jump. Sit down. " Even though they have not done the actions before, the students are able to perform according to the teacher's commands. The teacher is satisfied that the class has mastered these six commands. She begins to introduce some new ones. "Point to the door," she orders. She extends her right arm and right index finger in the direction of the door at the side of the classroom. The volunteers point with her." Point to the desk." She

point to her own big teacher's desk at the front of the room. "Point to the chair." She points to the chair behind her desk and the students follow. "Stand up." The students stand up. "Point to the door." The students point. "Walk to the door." They walk to the door. "They walk together. "Touch the door."

The students touch it with her. The teacher continues to command the students as follow; "Point to the desk. Walk to the desk. Touch the desk. Point to the door. Walk to the door. Touch the door. Point to the chair. Walk to the chair. Touch the chair. ' She continues to perform the actions with the students, but changes the order of the commands. After practicing these new commands with the students several times, the teacher remains seated and the four volunteers carry out the commands by themselves. Only once do the students seem confused, at which point the teacher repeats the command which causes difficulty and performs the action with them.

Next the teacher turns to the rest of the class and gives the following commands to the students sitting in the back row: "Stand up. Sit down. Stand up. Point to the desk. Point to the door. Walk to the door, walk to the chair. Walk. Stop. Jump. Walk. Turn around. Sit down. " Although she varies the sequence of commands, the students do not seem to have any trouble following the orders. Next the teacher turns to the four volunteers and says " stand up. Jump to the desk. " The students have never heard this command before. They hesitate a second and then

jump to the desk just as they have been told. Everyone laughs at this sight. "Touch the desk. Sit on the desk. " Again, the teacher uses a novel command, one they have not practiced before. The teacher then issues two commands in the form of a compound sentence, "Point to the door and walk to the door." Again, the group performs as it has been commanded.

As the last step of the lesson, the teacher writes the new commands on the blackboard.

Each time she writes the new commands on the blackboard. Each time she writes a command, she acts it out. The students copy the sentences from the blackboard into the notebooks. The class is over. No one except the teacher has spoken a word. However, a few weeks later when we walk by the room we hear a different voice. We stop to listen for a moment. One of the students is speaking. We hear her say, "Raise your hands. Show me your hands. Close your eyes. Put your hands behind you. Open your eyes. Shake hand with your neighbor. Raise your left foot. " We look in and see that the student is directing the other students and the teacher with these commands. They are not saying anything; they are just following the student's orders.

3.2 Thinking about The Experience

Now that we have observed the Total Physical Response Method being used in a class, let's examine what we have seen. We will list our observations and then try to understand the principles upon which the teacher's behavior is based.

Observations

1. The teacher gives a command in the target language and performs it with the students.

2. The students say nothing

3. The teacher gives the commands quite quickly.

4. The teacher sits down and issues commands to the volunteers.

5. The teacher directs students other than the volunteers,

6. The teacher introduces new commands after she is satisfied that

Principles

Meaning in the target language can often be conveyed through actions. Memory is activated through learner response. Beginning foreign language instruction should address the right hemisphere of the brain, the part which controls non verbal behavior. The target language should be presented in chunks, not just word by word.

The students' understanding of the target language should be developed before speaking.

Students can initially learn one part of the language rapidly by moving their bodies.

The imperative is a powerful linguistic device through which the teacher can direct student behavior.

Students can learn through observing actions as well as by performing the actions themselves.

It is very important that students feel successful. Feelings of success

the first six have been mastered.	and low anxiety facilitate learning.
7.The teacher changes the order of the commands	Students should not be made to memorize fixed routines.
8.When the students make an error, the teacher repeats the command while acting it out.	Correction should be carried out in an unobtrusive manner.
9.The teacher gives the students commands they have not heard before	Students must develop flexibility in understanding novel combinations of target language chunks. They need to understand more than the exact sentences used in training. Novelty is also motivating.
10.The teacher says, “ Jump to the desk. “ Every one laughs.	Language learning is more effective when it is fun.
11.The teacher writes the new commands on the blackboard.	Spoken language should be emphasized over written language.
12.A few weeks later, s tudents who hasn't spoken before gives commands.	Students will begin to speak when they are ready.
13. A students says, “ Shake hand with your neighbor.”	Students are expected to make errors when they first begin speaking. Teachers should be tolerant of them. Work on the fine details of the language should be postponed until students have become somewhat proficient.

3.3 Reviewing the Techniques

The major technique, as we saw in the lesson we observed, is the use of commands to direct behavior. Asher acknowledge that, although this technique is powerful, a variety of activities is preferred for maintaining student interest. A detailed description of using commands is provided below. If you find some of the principles of the Total Physical Response Method to be of interest, you may wish to devise your own techniques to supplement this one.

3.4 Using Commands to Direct Behavior

It should be clear from the class we observed that the use of commands is the major teaching technique of the Total Physical Response Method. The commands are given to get students to perform an action; the action makes the meaning of the command clear. Since Asher suggests keeping the pace lively, it is necessary for a teacher to plan in advance just which commands she will introduce in a lesson. If the teacher tries to think them up as the lesson progresses, the

pace will be too slow. At first, to clarify meaning,, the teacher performs the actions with the students. Later the teacher directs the students alone. The students' actions tell the teacher whether or not the students understand. As we saw in the lesson we observed,

Asher advises teachers to vary the sequence of the commands so that students do not simply memorize the action sequence without ever connecting the actions with the language. Asher believes it is very important that the students feel successful. Therefore, the teacher should not introduce new commands too fast. It is recommended that a teacher present three commands at a time. After students feel successful with these, three more can be taught. Although we were only able to observe one beginning class, people always ask just how much of a language can be taught through the use of imperatives. Asher claims that all grammar features can be communicated through imperatives. To give an example of a more advanced lesson, one might teach the past tense as follows :

Teacher	Ingrid, walk to the blackboard. (Ingrid gets up and walks to the blackboard)
Teacher	Class, if Ingrid <i>walked</i> to the blackboard, stand up. (The class stands up)
Teacher	Ingrid, write your name on the blackboard. (Ingrid writes her name on the blackboard)
teacher	Class, if Ingrid <i>wrote</i> her name on the blackboard, sit down. (The class sits down).

3.5 Role Reversal

Students command their teacher and classmates to perform, some actions. Asher

says that students will want to speak after ten to twenty hours of instruction, although some students may take longer. Students should not be encouraged to speak until they are ready.

3.6 Actions Sequence

At one point we saw the teacher give three connected commands. For example, the teacher told the students to point to the

- Take out a pen
- Take out a piece of paper
- Write a letter (imaginary)
- Fold the letter.
- Put it in an envelope.
- Write the address on the envelope
- Put it an envelope
- Seal the envelope.
- Write the address on the envelope
- Put a stamp on the envelope.
- Mail the letter.

The series of commands is called an action sequence, or an operation. Many everyday activities, like writing a letter, can be broken down into an action sequence that students can be asked to perform.

1. Go to the table. Touch the table. Sit on the table. Point to the table with your hands. Squat in front of the table. Turn around. Get up. Return to your seat.
2. Go to the table. Pick up the green book. Read the book. Scratch your stomach with the green book. Put the book in the box of fruit. Put your head in the box of fruit. Pick up the box of fruit. Put your head in the box of fruit. Take your head out of the box of fruit.
3. Go to the chalkboard. Salute the flag. Jump twice. Touch the chalkboard with your nose. Scratch your right foot.
4. Go to the chalkboard. Draw a school. Erase the roof of the school. Write the name of the teacher of English.

When the students reach a certain level of understanding of the target language through body movements, the students are ready for role reversal. They play the teacher's role and utter directions in the target language to cause action from other students or the teacher. The role reversal should be done gradually since the very essence of Total Physical Response is.

1. You arrive at your home. The neighbor's kids are playing in your front yard. They are pulling flowers, playing with the water rose, etc. give some commands suitable for the occasion.
2. You need some groceries from the store. You ask your friend to do it for you because you are very busy. Ask your friend to bring you a few things (vegetables and foodstuff).
3. You are in the wilderness. You come upon a place with tall grass and thick shrubs. Suddenly you see a snake. You have three friends with you. React to the situation with some commands.
4. You find a four-year-old girl in the middle of the street, she is crying and frightened. Try to communicate with her with several command.

door, walk to the door, and touch the door. As the students learn more and more of the target language, a longer series of connected commands can be given, which together comprise a whole procedure. While we did not see a long action sequence in this very first class, a little later on students might receive the following instructions :

3.7 Listening and Comprehension

Listening Comprehension can also be practiced by giving scenarios to the students. The scenarios below are taken from Gracia (1996:V-3)

Listening and comprehension before production. The teacher does not hurry the students into speaking. More advanced students can be encouraged to speak in the target language by providing scenarios. The following are examples of learning scenarios for advanced students (Gracia, 1996: V-27):

3.8 Writing and reading

So far the class deals with understanding and listening (to some extent speaking

As well). Writing may be introduced in the first days if needed. Total Physical Response flows from comprehension into reading and writing. Reading and writing in Total Physical Response may flow after the students are able to comprehend the commands. It is assumed in the following activities that the students have learned the words “ run, go, board, chalkboard”. The

I will write my name on the board

Juan, run to the chalkboard and write your name.

Jaime, go to the chalkboard and write your name.

Everyone, write your name on your paper.

For more advanced students, students’ names can be replaced with other concrete nouns, as follows :

Juan, go to the chalkboard and write what you see.

Jaime, walk to the chalkboard and write what you touch.

The commands are not only used to teach verbs of imperatives but they can be used to teach tenses. The following examples

- 1.Rita, touch the table (Pause) Shirou, touch the table that Rita is touching.

- 2.Juan, touch the chalkboard. (Pause) Maria, touch the chalkboard that Juan is touching.

- 3.Miguel, draw a square on the chalkboard.(Pause) draw a circle around the square that Miguel is drawing.

- 4.Maria, write your name on the chalkboard.(Pause) Juan, erase the name that Maria is writing.

It is assumed that in the above activities, the students have learned the verbs touch, draw, erase, write, and the nouns square, circle, table, chalkboard. The following is another procedure suggested by Asher (cited in Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 97) the instructor wrote on the chalkboard each new vocabulary item and a sentence to illustrate the item. Then she spoke each item and acted out the sentence. The students listened as she read the material. Some copied the information in their notebooks.

The Total Physical Response allows language learners to learn the target language in a manner similar to a child

main material to teach is “ name”. the word “ write “ may or may not have been introduced. The main consideration in giving commands is that there is no more than one new word. If there are more than one new word, the understanding of the commands is relatively difficult.

The following activities are meant to teach writing. This is the beginning of writing class and the commands are simple. (Asher,1988:4-8)

are the activities used to teach present continuous tense. (Ashers,1988:4-24-4-25)

learns his/her mother tongue. In a class that is taught through the Total Physical Response, a language teacher begins the class by modeling actions and students observe and act the same actions. The students guess meanings by observing and acting the commands from the teacher. The students follow simple commands and directions an then give commands to fellow classmates. Gradually, the students themselves will direct the class and decide who has to give commands. Language teachers or prospective language teachers have to ask themselves which principles can be implemented in English teaching in their condition and situation.

As suggested by Asher, the Total Physical Response should be used in association with other methods and techniques. Language teachers may develop some techniques deriving from the principles of the Total Physical Response and try out the techniques in teaching English in Indonesia. They do not necessarily take the whole procedure of the Total Physical Response. They may consider some of the underlying principles and the techniques which can be implemented in their language classes.

4. CONCLUSION

1. We have had a chance to experience a Total Physical Response Class and to examine its principles and techniques.
2. The teacher we observed was using the Total Physical Response Method with Grade 5 children ; however, this same method has been used with adult learners and younger children as well.
3. The teacher utters and models the commands for the students. The students perform the
4. Commands by listening to the teacher and by doing what he/she does.
5. The teacher creates situations in which a student has to choose between two items. The student already knows one item well therefore, by the process of elimination, the other item is immediately recognized.
6. With the introduction of a new word, the student has to choose from three items of which only one is known . if the person guesses the wrong one, another try is needed. If the guess is correct, the reward is a word of praise from the teacher.
7. The teacher introduces a new item by making very obvious to the students what to perform, either through gestures or other additional cues.
8. The teacher introduces new materials by performing the commands on a cassette. The instructor records his own voice and then follows each direction as it is uttered, but sometimes makes an incorrect response which is corrected by the voice on tape.
9. As the students increase their comprehensive vocabulary, it is of great value to include functional words such as of, with, and, etc. that keep the language smooth and together.
10. As the students learn more individual commands, it is an effective procedure to give several commands in sequence to be performed in a continuous action.
11. The teacher should be very cautious about the idea of introducing prematurely an over whelming number of vocabulary items. In the long run this is not desirable because it tends to create confusion. It is better to introduce a few items at a time.

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