USING TPR METHOD IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN PRE-SCHOOL

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Abstract: This study examines the use of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in teaching English to preschool children. Developed by James Asher, TPR combines language learning with physical movement to support natural acquisition. The research highlights how this method improves vocabulary, listening skills, and student engagement in early childhood classrooms. The findings show that TPR creates an enjoyable, low-stress environment that helps young learners retain language more effectively.

Keywords: Total Physical Response (TPR), English Language Teaching, preschool education, young learners, language acquisition, vocabulary development, listening skills, kinesthetic learning, classroom interaction, and early childhood education.

The teaching of English in early childhood education requires methods that match the developmental characteristics of young learners. Preschool children tend to learn best through movement, play, and interaction rather than through traditional instruction. One effective approach that supports these needs is the Total Physical Response (TPR) method, developed by James Asher. This method combines language input with physical actions, allowing children to respond to commands through movement, which reflects the natural process of first language acquisition.

TPR is based on the theory that language learning begins with listening comprehension. Just as children learn their native language by responding physically before speaking, TPR encourages learners to first understand English through actions such as pointing, jumping, or miming. This approach reduces stress and anxiety, creating a comfortable learning environment where children are not forced to speak until they are ready. As a result, learners develop confidence and gradually begin to produce language naturally.

In preschool classrooms, TPR can be applied through various engaging activities. Teachers often use simple commands like “stand up,” “sit down,” or “clap your hands,” accompanied by demonstrations. Songs, games, and storytelling can also be integrated with TPR techniques to reinforce vocabulary and comprehension. These activities help maintain children’s attention and make learning enjoyable. Since young learners have short attention spans, the use of movement keeps them actively involved and prevents boredom.

Research indicates that the TPR method significantly improves vocabulary retention and listening skills among preschool learners. Physical involvement helps strengthen memory because children associate words with actions. In addition, TPR promotes active participation and increases motivation, as learners feel more engaged in the lesson. The method is especially beneficial for beginners, as it allows them to understand meaning without relying heavily on translation.

Despite its advantages, TPR also has some limitations. It is more effective for teaching basic vocabulary and simple sentence structures than for developing advanced language skills such as reading and writing. Therefore, teachers should combine TPR with other teaching methods as learners progress. Careful lesson planning is also necessary to ensure that activities remain meaningful and aligned with learning objectives.

In conclusion, the Total Physical Response method is a highly effective approach for teaching English in preschool settings. By combining language with physical movement, it supports natural language acquisition, enhances memory retention, and creates a positive learning environment. Although it should be complemented with other methods at higher levels, TPR remains a valuable tool for introducing English to young learners in an engaging and effective way.

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