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عنوان المحاضرة

**Total Physical Response**

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## **Introduction**

Most of the other methods we have looked at have students speaking the target language from the first day. In the 1960s, James Asher's research gave rise to the hypothesis that language learning starts first with understanding and ends with production. After the learner internalizes an extensive map of how the target language works, speaking will appear spontaneously. Of course, the students' speech will not be perfect, but gradually speech will become more target-like. Notice that this is exactly how an infant acquires its native language. A baby spends many months listening to the people around it long before it ever says a word. The child has the time to try to make sense out of the sounds it hears. No one tells the baby that it must speak. The child chooses to speak when it is ready to do so.

There are several methods being practiced today that have in common an attempt to apply these observations to language instruction. One such method is Total Physical Response. This approach shares certain features in which Emphasizes placed on students developing basic communication skills through receiving meaningful exposure to the target language

### **Total Physical Response**

It is a language teaching method developed by Dr. James Asher that emphasizes the importance of physical activity and body movement in language learning. The method is based on the theory that the memory of a language is stored not only in the brain but also in the muscles. Therefore, it encourages learners to use their bodies to respond to spoken language input in order to internalize the language. The teacher here provides a series of commands or instructions in the target language, and the learners respond with physical actions. For example, the teacher might say "Stand up," and the learners would stand up, or "Touch your nose," and the learners would touch their noses. As the lesson progresses, the commands become more complex and involve longer phrases and sentences.

This method is particularly effective for beginners and young learners, as it provides a fun and interactive way to learn a new language. It also helps learners to develop their listening skills, as they must pay close attention to the teacher's instructions in order to respond appropriately.

## **Principles of Total Physical Response**

1. Meaning in the target language can often be conveyed through actions. Memory is activated through learner response. Beginning language instruction should address the right hemisphere of the brain, the part which controls nonverbal behavior. The target language should be presented in chunks, not just word by word.
2. language should be developed before speaking.
3. Students can initially learn one part of the language rapidly by moving their bodies.
4. The imperative is a powerful linguistic device through which the teacher can direct student behavior.
5. Students can learn through observing actions as well as by performing the actions themselves.
6. It is very important that students feel successful. Feelings of success and low anxiety facilitate learning.
7. Students should not be made to memorize fixed routines.
8. Correction should be carried out in an unobtrusive manner.
9. 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. Language learning is more effective when it is fun.
11. Spoken language should be emphasized over written language.

12. Students will begin to speak when they are ready.

13. 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.

## **The Goals of Teachers Who Use the Total Physical Response**

Teachers who use Total Physical Response believe in the importance of having their students enjoy their experience of learning to communicate in another language. In fact, Total Physical Response was developed in order to reduce the stress people feel when they are studying other 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.

### **The Role of the Teacher and Learner**

Initially, the teacher is the director of all student behavior. The students are imitators of her nonverbal model. At some point (usually after 10–20 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.

### **Characteristics of the Teaching/Learning Process by Total Physical Response**

The first phase of a lesson is one of modeling. The teacher 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 speaking, activities expand to include skits and games.

## **Techniques of Total Physical Response**

### **• 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 TPR. 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. 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 walked 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 wrote her name on the blackboard, sit down.

(The class sits down.)

- **Role Reversal**

Students command their teacher and classmates to perform some actions. Asher says that students will want to speak after 15 hours of instruction, although some students may take longer. Students should not be encouraged to speak until they are ready.

- **Action Sequence**

At one point we saw the teacher give three connected commands. For example, the teacher told the students to point to the 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, which they act out:

Take out a pen, and take out a piece of paper.

Write a letter. (imaginary), and put it in an envelope.

Seal the envelope.

Write the address on the envelope.

Put a stamp on the envelope.

Mail the letter.

This 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.