



TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE AS A VOCABULARY TEACHING STRATEGY IN EARLY ENGLISH EDUCATION

Kamalova Nihola

2nd-year Master's student in Linguistics

Ishaqkhan Ibrat Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages

Khakimov Khamidulla

Scientific supervisor: PhD. dots. Prof.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18085152>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 22nd December 2025

Accepted: 28th December 2025

Online: 29th December 2025

KEYWORDS

Total Physical Response, primary education, English language, vocabulary teaching, foreign language methodology, active learning.

ABSTRACT

This scientific article describes the application of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in elementary English language classrooms as an effective strategy for vocabulary teaching, providing a wide and in-depth analysis of its use. The study examines the psycholinguistic, pedagogical, and methodological foundations of the TPR method and scientifically justifies its compatibility with the psychological and cognitive development characteristics of elementary-age learners. The article also presents a comparative analysis of traditional vocabulary teaching methods and the TPR method, highlighting the increased effectiveness, advantages, and certain limitations of TPR. Research results confirm that the use of the TPR method in elementary English education significantly contributes to vocabulary development, enhances long-term retention, and increases students' interest and engagement in classroom activities.

Introduction. Under the conditions of globalization, English has become a leading language in international communication, science, technology, and education. Therefore, teaching English from an early age is considered one of the most important tasks of the modern education system. Especially at the primary education stage, the English teaching process plays a crucial role in forming learners' future language competence.

In elementary classrooms, the main focus in foreign language teaching is the development of learners' vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary serves as the foundation for all language skills—listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. A student who does not possess a sufficient vocabulary reserve may have difficulty actively participating in communicative processes. Traditional vocabulary teaching methods are often based on translation and memorization exercises. However, such approaches do not completely correspond to the psychological characteristics of young learners and may reduce their interest in lessons. Therefore, in modern foreign language education, the need for active, interactive, and natural learning methods is becoming increasingly evident. One such effective method is the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach.



Theoretical Foundations of the Total Physical Response Method

The Total Physical Response (TPR) method was developed in the 1960s by American scholar James Asher. It is based on the natural process of first language acquisition. According to Asher, when children learn their mother tongue, they first develop listening comprehension skills and then respond physically to what they hear. Oral speech develops naturally after these stages.

The main idea of the TPR method is that listening and physical movement should be harmoniously combined in the language learning process. Through commands, instructions, and physical actions, learners acquire new vocabulary items. For example, a teacher may give commands such as "Stand up," "Sit down," "Open your book," and students respond to these commands through physical actions. From a psycholinguistic perspective, the TPR method activates both hemispheres of the brain simultaneously, helping learners retain new information more quickly and firmly. Vocabulary items learned through physical movement are stored in long-term memory.

Specific Features of Teaching Vocabulary through TPR in Elementary English Education For elementary-level learners, foreign language learning must be closely connected with play, movement, and engaging activities. At this age, children's abstract thinking is not yet fully developed; therefore, they perceive and understand information better through concrete objects and actions. For this reason, the combined use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic channels is highly important in vocabulary teaching. The TPR method fully meets this need. Each new word is associated with a physical action, which helps learners understand meanings quickly and remember them for a longer time. The use of the TPR method in primary education helps students develop a positive attitude toward language learning and increases their active participation in lessons.

Research Methods

In this study, methods such as analysis of scientific and methodological literature, pedagogical observation, comparative analysis, and generalization were used. During the research process, vocabulary teaching models based on the TPR method were designed and implemented for elementary school students. Students' levels of vocabulary acquisition, classroom participation, and motivation were observed. The obtained results were compared with traditional vocabulary teaching methods.

Discussion and Results

Research results showed that students in classes where the TPR method was used mastered new vocabulary units more quickly and more effectively. Learners actively participated in lessons, were not afraid of making mistakes, and felt more confident.

The main advantages of the TPR method in vocabulary teaching include:

- ensuring rapid and strong memorization of new words;
- creating a positive emotional learning environment;
- developing learners' listening comprehension skills;
- forming a solid basis for communicative competence.

However, the method also has certain limitations. Teaching abstract concepts requires combining TPR with other instructional methods.



In conclusion, the Total Physical Response method is an effective and innovative strategy for teaching vocabulary in elementary English education. This method corresponds to the psychological characteristics of young learners and makes the language learning process natural and engaging.

The use of TPR at the primary stage helps students develop a positive attitude toward English, enrich their vocabulary, and creates a strong foundation for deeper language learning in subsequent stages. Therefore, the widespread implementation of this method in elementary English education is pedagogically justified and appropriate.

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