

TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE METHOD IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

Foreign language is now a must in every level of education. People begin to listen to foreign language and the try to master it. Listening is the language skills that are closely related to the daily life of human beings. Listening is the process of accepting verbal symbols with caring, understanding, appreciation, and the interpretation of information, here we capture the content or messages, as well as to understand the meaning of communication. While listening to a foreign language we will hear how the language is spoken. Therefore, listening is a basic skill that must be mastered by learners in learning a foreign language before speaking, reading and writing skills. But in fact, the foreign language learners have difficulties in Listening. The Total Physical Response method can desirable overcome this problem.

Key words : methods, listening skills, foreign language

1. Introduction

Listening is the language skills that are closely related to the daily life of human beings. Listening is the process of listening to verbal symbols with caring, understanding, appreciation, and the interpretation to obtain information, capture the content or messages, as well as to understand the meaning of communication uttered by speakers. While listening to a foreign language we will hear how the language is spoken. Therefore, listening is the basic skill that must be mastered by learners in learning a foreign language before speaking, reading and writing. But in fact, the foreign language learners have difficulties in Listening skills.

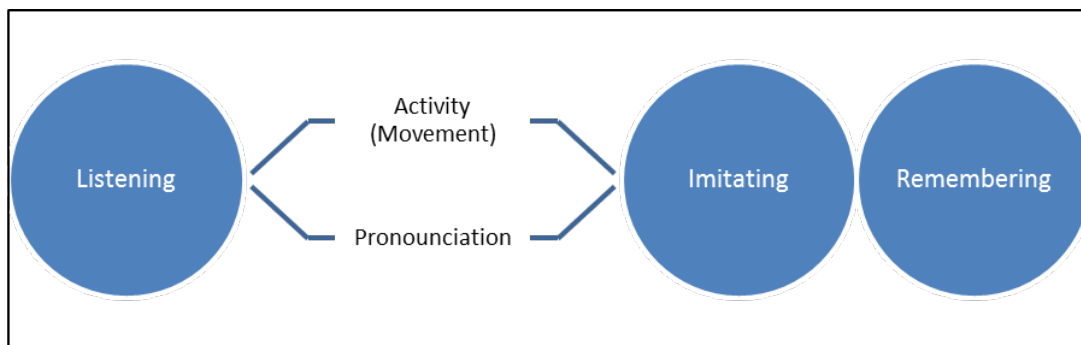
Listening skills can help learners to recognize sounds, distinguish meanings, acquire vocabulary and improve grammar. Listening skills is an important skill to acquire other skills. For the teacher it is a challenge to bring the original sounds of native speakers in the classroom, therefore the media and the main teaching materials used are textbooks that are equipped with an audio or audiovisual recording. But it is commonly not enough, because

the teaching of these skills requires a special way to be able to improve the ability of students continuously.

Based on the problems mentioned above, it is necessary for a breakthrough that can be used in teaching, particularly in the foreign language listening skills. These hopefully can improve listening skills of students, so that students are ready and able to get a good grade when they face the test. One attempt to do that is by applying the Total Physical Response method in learning the foreign language.

Total Physical Response method suggests foreign language teacher to perform directly on the pronunciation to the learner which contains a command, and then learners will respond physically before they start to produce a verbal response or utterance. This will stimulate them to remember not only verbally but also stimulate their memory by performing movements and see the pronunciation of a vocabulary. It can be formulated in a chart as follows.

Chart 1 Total Physical Response in Foreign Language Learning



This paper is expected to provide information on Total Physical Response method for improving listening skills of the foreign language students. In addition, this information can be used by learners and teachers of foreign language. Both learners and teachers can apply this method to optimize the learning the foreign language, mainly in listening skills, or perhaps could be developed more extensively in oral skills, i.e. listening and speaking skills.

2. Foreign Language Learning

According to Pringgawidagda (2002: 20) learning is a process to acquire or gain knowledge of the subject or skill of learning, experience and instruction. Learning is a complex aspect of human activity, which is not fully explained. Foreign language learning context is the context in which learners never use a language to communicate in the

classroom before (Brown, 2001: 116). Learners have never been or have not reached the minimum skills so they can use a foreign language in communicating.

Nunan (1989: 113) stated that foreign language learning, especially for entry-level range in daily activities, including (1) states the name of herself/himself and family, (2) states concerning about the person such as name, age and address, (3) participate in a short dialogue that focuses on the exchange of information between them, (4) provide information about a person, (5) to name the day, (6) understand the request for information from a person, and (7) to ask and say the conversation. A wide variety of these activities is the same all over the world, but it's performance is different in each language. In addition, the influence of cultural differences will also affect the understanding between speakers with different cultural backgrounds. Hardjono (1988: 28) explains the purpose of learning a foreign language according to the function of cross-cultural communication is to acquire foreign language skills as a communication tool to express themselves verbally and in writing through the system and terms, while the function of cross cultural understanding in foreign language learning is mutual understanding among nations whose language is learned, which can only be achieved if learners study also cultural, historical, social, economic and other aspects of the life of the language learned.

As already mentioned previously we can conclude that learning foreign language is a process carried out by someone to obtain a knowledge or the grammar of a language, either through study, experience, and instruction. Learning a foreign language at a beginner level is more devoted to materials about simple daily activities, because by studying things that are directly or vicariously will allow a beginner to reveal a purpose. Foreign language learning aimed at developing several oral and written communication skills to understand and express information. Learning a foreign language is a means to express an idea, thought or feeling to communicate both verbally and in writing with attention to cultural aspects and grammar of the language studied.

3. Listening Skills

Language skills consist of four components, i.e. listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills. Among those four skills, listening skills are the basic skills first learned by every individual.

Listening is a process in which the learner hears the sounds of language, identify, interpret the meaning of the sounds of language then assess and respond to these sounds. Language is a tool that is used to convey information or a message from the speaker to the

listener. In listening activities, there are several stages or process undertaken by listeners in order to capture the contents of text. These stages are the introduction of the sound, the stage of making predictions / interpretation, the stage of linking interpretation with prior knowledge of listeners, then the stage of making a conclusion. Someone who only heard cannot be classified as listening, because those kind of people are not necessarily consider carefully, even not necessarily reach the level of understanding and appreciation.

Listening can be taught through several activities. The activities are: (1) activities before the listening, listening to a text whose language or content easy, discussing the text with themes similar to the text that will be heard, (2) Activities during the listening, (a) intensive listening, with body movements corresponding the principles of Total Physical Response and, (b) extensive listening, working on multiple choice, crossing True – False questions, (3) Activities after the listening, Checking the understanding of learners through True – False and crosses questions. Listening skills aims to acquire or obtain information such as messages or facts in order to improve the linguistic knowledge. The purpose in listening adapted to the purpose of learning itself. In applying the method of TPR, the expected goals are that the learners can understand the intent of the teaching learning through physical activity, develop oral language skills, train to be usual to the perfection of understanding.

4. Total Physical Response (TPR) Methods

Total Physical Response method is the concept of language teaching developed by Prof. James J.Asher. This method is a method of teaching that builds on the coordination of speech and action; This method try to teach the language through physical activity or motor activity (movement) (Mahyuddin, 2010: 97). With this method, students are required to understand the foreign language they are learning through physical activity. This method also aims to realize the relationship between physical responses (motor) and language acquisition.

Asher noted that in language learning for the first time people tend to listen before they speak, and the activity of listening is accompanied by physical responses (grabbing, touching, moving, seeing, and so on). It also drew attention to the right-brain learning. Motor activity is a right-brain functions that precede the left hemisphere which is language processing. Thus, in its application of TPR class, the students do a lot of listening and acting. The teacher is directing the learners to concentrate in a performance of "The

instructor is a director of a play in which students are actors" (Asher, 1977: 43 in Brown 2007: 20).

Total Physical Response basically consists of structuring or compliance of an order or command given by the instructor / teacher involving physical responses. For example if the teacher says "Stand up please!" Then the students in the class go to stand up; another example, if the teacher say "Sit down please!" the students in the class go to sit down. Kennedy (2000) outlines that the Total Physical Response has five techniques or five application methods in learning activities, namely:

- a. The teacher says and performs a command.
- b. The teacher repeats the command, and the teacher and students perform the command.
- c. The teacher repeats the command, and the students perform the command.
- d. The teacher tells one student to perform the command.
- e. Students give commands to one another and perform each one.

The implementation of this method may be varies: (1) teachers give orders while doing the movement commanded, (2) teachers and learners alike doing movement commanded by the teachers, (3) teachers give orders but only learners who perform the command, (4) teachers just ordered one of the learners to perform the movements, (5) learners can give orders to teachers or other learners to perform the movements. This variation enables us to provide the opportunity for students to try out a wide range of vocabulary they learn. They will be fun to learn as they do it in creative ways.

Total Physical Response method can be used in foreign language classes, especially in improving listening skills. As stated by Nababan (1993: 83) that this method is more emphasis on the teaching of listening skills in the beginning phases. As we know that listening skills are the first skills learned. This method requires the students to understand the foreign language they are learning through physical activity. This is where the ability of learners to be dug before they learn to speak, read, and write.

This method also aims to realize the relationship between physical responses and language acquisition, provides learning materials in the form of an order/command, giving the meaning of the word in the form of a physical demonstration and aims to eliminate feelings of anxiety and boredom in language learning. In principle this Total Physical Response method is a method of learning that builds upon the coordination of speech through physical activity or motor. This method does have huge potential to enable the

learners to be active in the classroom because the situation in the classroom is life. The situation provides opportunities for students to try out their skills in a creative way.

5. Conclusion

Many lessons are only concerned with the involvement of just one part of the brain. TPR method allows learners to transfer functions between parts of the brain, right brain and left brain. Verbal activity such as speaking, reading, and writing using the left side of the brain, while the use of TPR in the form of acquiring new materials with physical responses using right-brain functions. TPR involves kinesthetic sensory system which is the most powerful learning tool, which in a traditional classroom language learning system is rarely used. Therefore, this method allows learners to maximize language acquisition quickly. In addition, learners are very motivated to use this method, because this method involves very little stress. Research has then mentioned that the TPR method preferred by both children and adults, both by learners and teachers.

Another advantage of the TPR method is with physical activity and verbal consecutively, this allows long-term memory. Therefore, this method is suitable for beginners and also for all levels of learners. But the use of this method continuously will also make learners tired and bored. It is still necessary to use other methods.

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