

TEACHING ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOL USING TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE BASED ON COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a useful technique in teaching English in Primary School (SD) as it stimulates children to give response with speaking or expression and it stresses to a free activity for children in SD. By analyzing the teaching activities by using TPR, the strengths and the weaknesses of this technique can be drawn. Thus the theoretical framework provided in this paper can be employed to analyze the application of TPR in the English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. This technique can be supported by Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The reason is that CLT is a broad approach to teaching that resulted from a focus on communication as the organizing principle for teaching rather than a focus on mastery of grammatical system of the language. It contains the principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom. The goal of the language teaching and learning is communicative competence. Both the technique and the approach can be implemented in teaching English, especially in the primary school.

Keywords: total physical response, communicative language teaching, primary school

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English for young learners, like in Primary School is different from teaching English for adults, like in Senior High School or even in higher school (university). Young children tend to change their mood every other minute, and they always move all the time. On the other hand, they show a greater motivation than adults to do thing that appeals to them.

Although English has been taught by teacher for many years in primary school, the students' competence in English still poor. The fact that most of students of primary school cannot speak English is quite clear. It means that teaching English in primary school has not got good result.

According to Diaz and Rico (2004) that teaching in the primary classroom is very different from teaching teens or adults because of energy children have. Knowing how to channel this energy, or when to 'stir' and when to 'settle' children will help achieve balanced lessons without children becoming over-excited on the one hand or bored on the other.

Teachers need to take many factors into consideration when planning a balanced primary lesson and it is important to plan varied lessons. Those are:

1. Different kinds of activities to practice the different skills need to be balanced against each other.
2. Teachers need to be aware that children have a much shorter concentration span than adults and this will affect the number of different of activities we plan for a single lesson.
3. Place and timing are important considerations-at primary level. It is better to use short, sharp activities so that children can sustain their attention. If concentration flags, change the activity. Teachers need to plan a balance of 'heads up' and 'heads down' activities, alternating the interaction patterns between individuals/pairs/groups and whole-class activities.
4. Likewise teachers will need to take into account the learning styles of the different children in the class. Different types of activities will be more suited to visual/auditory/kinesthetic/tactile learners.
5. Finally, there is often a need to build in some 'quiet time' into a lesson. This time helps students as well as teacher sanity. Silent reading or an individual quiet activity can help prepare a class for learning – for example if they arrive after noisy P. E. lesson. The teacher can take the opportunity during these kinds of activities to deal with classroom admin, check who knows what and/or give individual help where necessary.

While according to the curriculum of English language in "Standar Isi" issued by the National Education Department in 2006, the aims of teaching English in Primary School are:

1. Develop communicative competence orally for language accompanying action based on school context.
2. Having the realization of importance of English to improve global competence. (2006; 122)

These statements are related with the characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). They are: (1) students' communicative competence through linking grammatical development to the ability to communicate. Hence grammar is not taught in isolation but often arises out of communicative task, thus creating a need for specifics items of grammar. Student might carry out a task and then reflect on some of the linguistic characteristics of their performance, (2) they create the need for communication, interaction, and negotiation of meaning through the use of activities such as problem solving, information sharing, and role play, (3) they provide opportunities for both inductive as well as deductive learning of grammar, (4) they make use of content that

connects to students' lives and interests, (5) they allow students to personalize learning by applying what they have learned to their own lives, (5) classroom materials typically make use of authentic texts to create interest and to provide valid models of language. These are stated by Richards and Rodgers (2001)

Furthermore, related to the characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching referring to the communicative competence Celce-Murcia, M.z. Dornyei, S. Thurrell (1995) states clearly that in communicative competence the learners have to master discourse competence containing linguistics competence, socio-cultural competence, strategic competence and actional competence. They have to know how language is used by the community to express their purposes and in what circumstances the language is used, either in speaking or writing.

However, like the writer said above that research shows the result of teaching English in Indonesia is still unsatisfactory or unsuccessful because most of students are unable to use the language in communication. The causes of unsuccessful are among others: the limited number of hours of English classes, the overcrowded classes, the expensive supplementary reading materials for most students and the social situation which is so far not particularly conducive to learn English. One of other causes is technique.

Therefore, in this paper the writer tries to discuss the use of Total Physical Response (TPR) technique in teaching English in Primary School based on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

DISCUSSION

Some cases that the writer must discuss related with the implementation of teaching English by using Total Physical Response (TPR) based on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which is carried out in the Primary School, namely:

a. The principles of TPR and CLT

According to Haley and Austin (2004) that general principles of TPR are: (1) listening comprehension develop before speaking, (2) understanding should be developed through movement of the students' body, (3) language learners should not be forced to speak, (4) TPR is listening-speaking approach, (5) the teacher says each command and then models the actions several times, (6) contiguity principle – a command is immediately followed by the corresponding action and body movement, (7) frequency principle – commands, grammatical structure, and vocabulary are repeatedly linked to their referent, and (8) feedback principle – there is a cause and effect relationship between the uttered command and the action that follows.

Based on Hudelson (1993), TPR is very useful in teaching English for young learners because of some reasons: (1) it is a lot of fun, students enjoy it and it can be a real stirrer in the class. It lifts the pace and the mood, (2) it is very memorable. It really helps students to remember phrases or words, (3) it is good for kinesthetic learners who need to be active in the class, (4) it can be used in large or small classes. It does not really matter how many students you have as long as you are prepared to take the lead, the students will follow, (5) it works well with mixed-ability classes. The physical actions get across the meaning effectively so that all the students are able to understand and use the target language, (6) it does not require a lot of preparation or materials. As long as you are clear what you want to practice (a rehearsal beforehand can help), it will not take a lot of time to get ready, and (7) it is very effective with teenagers and young learners.

While the principles of communicative language teaching stated by Richards and Rodgers (2001), namely: (1) second language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication, (2) effective classroom learning tasks and exercise provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, expand their language resources, notice how to language is used, and take part in meaningful intrapersonal exchange, (3) meaningful communication results from students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting, and engaging, (4) communication is a holistic process that often calls upon the use of several language skills or modalities, (5) language learning is facilitated both by activities that involve inductive or discovery learning of underlying rules of language use and organization, as well as by those involving language analysis and reflection, (6) language learning is gradual process that involves creative use of language and trial and error. Although errors are a normal product of learning the ultimate goal of learning is to able to use the new language both accuracy and fluency, (7) learners develop their own routes to language learning, progress at different rates, have different needs and motivations for language learning, (8) successful language learning involves the use of effective learning and communication strategies, (9) the role of the teacher in the language classroom is that of a facilitator, who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect on language learning, (10) the classroom is a community where learners learn through collaboration and sharing.

b. The correlation between TPR and CLT

TPR is a kind of techniques referring to the use of communication. It can be used to practice and teach various things. It is well-suited to teach classroom language and vocabulary. It can be used to teach imperatives and various tenses. It is also useful for story-telling. In the classroom the teacher plays the role of parents.

Halley and Austin (2004) state that TPR is also highly interactive sense by its definition. It involves asking students to listen and to react to a series of commands. The strategy leads itself nicely to content-based instruction since the teacher can vary the commands according to themes or topics being taught.

While CLT is a genetic approach, and can be seen non-specific at times in terms of how to actually go about using practices in the classroom in any sort of systematic way. It is suitable with Brown's view (2000) that approach is as a theory of language and a theory of language learning underlying the teaching of a language. The approach not only plays very important role in determining the objective to accomplish, but also other aspects of teaching such as learning materials, learning activities and the procedures developed by the teacher in the classroom and or it is theoretical positions and beliefs about the nature of language, the nature of language learning and the applicability of both to pedagogical setting.

Based on the description above that the correlation between TPR and CLT is stressing the importance of communication. TPR is included in one of CLT's elements stressing to the communicative competence. Both are related with the implementation of communication. So if the teacher uses TPR means that he/she applies what the CLT's concepts state.

c. The implementation of TPR in the primary school

Teaching English especially in SD, the teacher must be careful because it is the first experience for them studying English. Therefore he/she must find an appropriate

technique in teaching English. One of the techniques that he/she may use is TPR. In TPR, the lessons may be used as the basis for language experience by using procedures.

Larsen (1996) describes the procedures used in TPR's activities in the classroom. Those are:

- a. The teacher gives a command in the target language and performs it with the students.
- b. The students say nothing.
- c. The teacher gives the commands quite quickly.
- d. The teacher sits down and asks volunteer to give command.
- e. The teacher directs students other than volunteer.
- f. The teacher introduces new commands after he/she knows that the first commands have been mastered.
- g. The teacher changes the order of the commands.
- h. When the students make an error, the teacher repeat the command while acting it out.
- i. The teacher gives the students commands they have not heard before.
- j. The teacher says a strange command "jump to the desk"
- k. The teacher writes the new commands on the blackboard.
- l. A few weeks later, a student who has not spoken before gives command.
- m. A few student say "shake hand with your neighbor.

While the activities that the teacher must use with TPR is always fun and comfortable for children. The way the teacher uses for activities depend on a number of factors, including the students' age, the level of English background, and willingness to take apart in a group setting. Here are some examples of the activities that the teacher can use:

- 1) *Bingo* – Teacher distributes a piece of paper containing pictures of topic (fruits, parts of body, sports, etc.) to every students or group. Teacher says the name of object accurately. Student covers the object in his/her paper by coin. Someone who gets three pictures in line says "Bingo"
- 2) *Simon says* – Teacher gives instruction to students by saying "Simon says...." Students have to act what the teacher instructs only if there is "Simon says...." Students do not have to act if there is no "Simon says...." Teacher repeats the instructions with the variety of "Simon says...or without it"
- 3) *Telling time* – Students stand in a circle with one student in the middle. The student in the middle calls out the time in target language. The students in the circle use their arms and hands to show the time "become the clock"
- 4) *Clothing game* – This can be played in a group or a whole class. The object is for students to identify what clothing is worn. The description of clothing is read aloud and student must go stand in front of appropriate picture.
- 5) *Bring me* – Every group has various things or cards. The teacher says "Bring me" The students have to bring one thing based on the instruction.
- 6) *Point or race to the flash cards* – Stick flash cards around the class. Say one of them and students point or race to it. Students can then give the instruction to classmates. The teacher can extend this by saying "hop to the cat" or even "if you have blonde hair, swim to the fish" etc. The teacher can also incorporate flash cards into a game of Simon says. "Simon says, jump to the T-shirt" etc.

Factually, there are many activities that the teacher can use related with the TPR. The important things are that target language used is easy and simple so that the students are easy to understand. The topics or themes are closed with the students' atmosphere, dealing with the students' ability therefore the teacher must know the students' level, in the case is the primary school students. These statements are relevant with the Tomlinson's opinion (1996).

However, the role of the teacher in TPR technique is extremely important. The teacher's role is a director because he/she has a central role in TPR activities. Therefore Harmer (2003) insists that due to this role, he/she can support students through: (1) slow and clear instructions, initially together with demonstration/actions, (2) repeating the instructions, (3) using different grouping of students, e.g. whole class, group, or individual so students could learn by watching others, (4) providing a meaningful purpose for listening, (5) creating a context, (6) providing rewards, e.g. that's right, excellent, good, and (7) providing feedback, etc.

Furthermore Linse (2005) adds that as the director in the TPR activities, the teacher can create progression of students' improvement based on: (1) from slow to speed or faster speed of delivery/pace, (2) from listening (receptive) to speaking (productive), (3) from concrete support e.g. action or more abstract e.g. words only, (4) from whole class (less threatening) or individual, (5) increase in number of commands, e.g. begin with two and then increase to six or more, and (6) same sequence of commands or vary sequence of commands.

Talking about evaluation, TPR technique is very easy to evaluate. It is a process assessment. It means the teacher can evaluate or assess during the activity of the teaching learning process. For example; if the student can respond the commands well, he gets target language. The evaluation can be taken from aspect of listening and speaking. Cameron (2001) defines that the principles for assessing childrens' language learning are:

- a. Assessment should be seen from a learning-centered perspective.
- b. Assessment should support learning and teaching
- c. It should fit comfortable with childrens' learning experience
- d. Assessment is more than testing
- e. Assessment should be congruent with learning.

It is important for teachers to use assessment techniques that are child-friendly. In order to understand what children have learnt, teachers may use a variety of assessment methods. Observation is one of assessment methods which is suitable for TPR activity.

Pinter (2006) states that observation is non-intrusive because children are often not even aware that they are being assessed. The same sort of task is given to children in class again until they are used to it and then the teacher observes the performance.

Based on the description above, most of the students learn a new language feeling very different from their own. They may not understand why they learn English, It needs an underlying consistency to make children adopt a positive and active approach. It is natural that all approaches in teaching have strong and weak points, and that standard approaches may not fit our particular teaching situation even in communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. In the case the teacher needs on ideas from a number of different approaches.

If the teacher wants the students to learn English successfully and with enjoyment, he/she needs to make sure their learning materials and activities are child-friendly. It means that they are designed to take account of childrens' special

characteristics and abilities. The conditions are also designed to support their learning. Beside that in choosing techniques the teacher must know that the most important thing is for children to feel deeply involved in the lesson. Game is one of the best ways in achieving this. Game also provides a non threatening environment for coping with new learning. When children are having fun, they are more likely to take risks, make mistakes without having of failure. Total Physical Response (TPR) which provides “listen and do” activity is one of an effective technique in teaching a new language for young learners especially in the Primary School.

CONCLUSION

TPR is one of techniques of teaching English as a Foreign Language. This technique is affective to teach oral proficiency at a beginning level (primary school) because imperative drills are the major classroom activities. It is relevant with CLT's concepts as CLT is a teaching and learning approach containing a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom. It tries to develop students' grammatical competence and communicative competence through linking grammatical development to the ability to communicate. Both of them have the similar perspective that is the importance of the use of communication in teaching English.

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