

The Foundation of TPR

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THE LANGUAGE LEARNER

Acquisition of a second language parallels first language acquisition in that:

- 1) Comprehension comes before speech
- 2) Grammar is gradually acquired
- 3) Physical movement is required to understand speech

First Language Development

- By the age of six months, babies have already “tuned in” to the “language station” of their choice
- Between 6-9 months old, babies create babbling sounds that are the beginning of speech
- Most babies begin talking at around the same time as the begin walking. This occurs universally, and is not reflective of the level of language difficulty.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

1. **First utterances are only one word long.**
2. **The subject matter of first words are always within the child's immediate surroundings.**
3. **After they know about 50 words, most children progress to using two word combinations.**
4. **Early speech is characterized by incorrect, or oversimplified grammatical forms.**

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNER

1. Generally, less confident and more unwilling to take a risk.
2. If past the critical period of language learning (puberty) may be physically unable to speak without a noticeable accent
3. May have less opportunity to practice speaking outside of the classroom situation.

ASHER'S COMPARISON: 1ST LANGUAGE & 2ND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

1st Language

- By the age of 6 a child has listened to approx. 17, 520 hours of language

2nd Language

- It would take a student taking an hour-long class 3 x a week = 120 hours of language training to equal this amount

- At this rate it will take 111 years for us to match the number of hours of exposure most 6 year olds have already received in the English language

MEMORIZATION OR ???

- Memorization can occur without the student actually understanding the material presented
- Internalization occurs when the student can retrieve the information and use it in appropriate situations.

Physical Movement

It does not matter whether learners act out or observe a model act...

but

...it is critical that each person at some point demonstrates comprehension by physically acting in response to commands

Concrete / Abstract

- Only introduce abstractions that are already known and understood by your students in their first language
- Abstract concepts can be introduced in English briefly (just give translation) and then treated like concrete objects, for example, “Ken, pick up ‘love’ (written or drawn on a card) and give it to Jane”; “Kathy, touch the ‘weather’ and push it to Annie”
- Abstractions should be delayed until students have internalized a detailed cognitive map of the L²

Rescue

- The teacher should always be ready to “rescue” a student that is having trouble or hesitating
- The longer someone searches for understanding the less likely they will retain what they have been taught

Repetition

- In order to truly comprehend a new word or concept in another language a person must hear the word many, many times
- Teachers must consciously introduce new vocabulary and remember to use and reuse the words in as many different ways as possible

Be Positive!

- Praise is an essential part of each lesson. Find ways to praise as often as possible with clapping, thumbs up, and words in your language such as “good job”; “you are so smart”.
- Never use any critical response such as “that’s wrong!” or “didn’t you study?” Students are already self-critical and any additional criticism may slow their progress