

# USING THE TPR METHOD TO DEVELOP THE EFL PRIMARY PUPILS' USE OF ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS

Mona ELSayed Abd ELwahab

## Abstract:

The current research aimed at investigating the use of TPR method to develop the EFL primary pupil's use of English prepositions for this purpose, 68 participants at the primary school level grade 6 were selected and assigned equally into two experimental and control groups. The study instrument included a achievement test which includes prepositions of (location-movement –time) and collocations of prepositions. Results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental and control groups on the post- administration of the prepositions achievement test favoring the experimental group. In addition, the result of the study showed that the pupils' progress in mastering English preposition during the teaching learning activity by using Total Physical Response method was good. The pupils' achievement In English preposition improved. By comparing the post- test scores and the pre- test scores.

**Key Words:** TPR, total physical response method.

## ملخص البحث:

يهدف البحث الحالي لتنمية مهارات استخدام طريقة (TPR) لتطوير استخدامات حروف جر اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية لتلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية وقد تم مشاركة 68 تلميذ من الصف السادس الابتدائي وقد تم تقسيمهم الي مجموعتين متساويتين احدهما مجموعته ضابطه والاخرى تجريبية وتتكون اداة هذا البحث من اختبار تحصيلي لحروف جر اللغة الانجليزية وتشمل (مكانية-حركية-زمنية) ومتلازمات حروف الجر مع الافعال والصفات وقد توصلت الدرسة الحاليه الي وجود فرق ذو دلالة احصائية عند مستوي 0,01 بين متوسطي درجات طلاب المجموعة التجريبية و المجموعة الضابطة على التطبيق البعدي لاختبار مهارات استخدام حروف جر اللغة الانجليزية لصالح المجموعة التجريبية وقد اوضحت النتائج الكيفيه خلال الدرسة من تقدم مهارات التلاميذ لاستخدامات المتعدده لحروف جر اللغة الانجليزية اثناء تدريسها بالانشطه وقد حقق التلاميذ تحصيل اعلي لاستخدامات حروف جر اللغة الانجليزية (TPR) وقد تم ملاحظه ذلك من خلال مقارنه درجات الاختبار البعدي لكلا من المجموعه الضابطه والتجريبية لصالح المجموعه التجريبية.

## Introduction:

Teaching young learners or students of Elementary school is not the same as teaching adults because they have different characteristics and motivation, as stated by Helaly: *Unlike adults, children are not self motivated and do not have an immediate need to learn English. They are not concerned with a job or university degree that required knowledge of English. Their daily games, events of interests to them, new knowledge* (Helaly 1987:49)

English preposition is one of the items of English grammar that has differences from Arabic preposition. So it is possible if the teacher in teaching English preposition faces difficulties. They are caused by the differences between them. English preposition has been called the biggest little words in

English.”(American Book Company 1986: 288). They have very important function in sentences and different preposition can make different meaning for the sentences.

There can be no doubt about the importance of mastering prepositional usage in a foreign language. Although all humans may have similar experiences of time and space, the way that different languages encode these relationships vary significantly. In this sense, it is hardly surprising to find that the most prominent grammars of the English language or EFL course books contain at least one or, in most cases, several sections or chapters devoted to this aspect of the language.

Prepositions are one of the most used parts of speech in English. In many cases, it is not always easy to work out which preposition is the most appropriate for every particular context. Many second

---

---

language learners have difficulties with prepositions as they are one of the most problematic areas (Lindstromberg, 1991 and Capel, 1993). The difficulties faced by learners in understanding how prepositions are used in sentence construction highlights the need for an effective teaching method. One way of overcoming this problem is by using TPR method in teaching. It doesn't have to be difficult to teach prepositions to your young E f L students.

#### **Teaching English Preposition.**

When English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers are surveyed regarding their teaching problems ( as in Lovitt, 1976), preposition emerge as a serious problem and are mentioned almost as frequently as articles: the teachers feel that preposition are the second most Difficult aspect of the English Language for their students. a). Information that is signaled by a preposition in English is often signaled by an inflection on a noun pr an article in a highly inflected language .b). If compared with other language that have preposition, the number of preposition in English tends to be greater .c). The facts that preposition often do not translate or match up well between related languages. As part of the grammatical system, prepositions seem to occur everywhere in speaking and writing (Morenberg, 1997).

#### **Total Physical Response (TPR) Method**

TPR is a teaching learning strategy developed by Dr. James Asher in the 1970 ,a professor of psychology at San Jose State University, where the students understand the new language first before they have to speak it, or write it, or read it . just as a child learns language the first time.. "Asher reasoned that the fastest, least stressful way to achieve.

The classifying and ordering of TPR classroom drills seem to be built on

assumptions that owe much grammar based views of language. Asher states that most of the grammatical structure of the target language and Hundreds of vocabulary items can be learned from the skillful use of the imperative instructor.

The general objectives of TPR are to teach oral proficiency at a beginning level. Comprehension is a means to an end, and the achievable aim is to teach basic speaking skills. A TPR course aims to produce learners who are be able for an unrestricted communication that is intelligible to a native speaker.

#### **The importance of TPR method in English Preposition teaching**

The major technique in this research is the use of commands to direct behavior. Asher acknowledges that, although this technique is powerful, a variety of activities is preferred for supporting student interest.

**According to (Asher,1996) viewed the techniques of teaching TPR method :**

##### **a. 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 step lively, it is necessary for a teacher to Plan in advance just which commands she will introduce in a lesson progresses, the step 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.

##### **b. Role reversal**

Students command their teacher and classmates to perform some actions. Asher says that students will want to speak after ten to twenty hours of instruction,

---

---

although some students may take longer. Students should not be encouraged to speak until they are ready.

### **c. Action sequence**

At first the teacher will give three connected commands. For example, the teacher told the student to *take out a pencil, put it in his/ her pencil case, and put the pencil case in his / her bag*. 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.

### **The study**

#### ***The setting and the participants***

The participants were a sample of sixth year public primary school pupils. sixty-eight sixth year pupils at Fakhr EL Dakhliya academic year (2014-2015) primary School in Mansourah were chosen to participate in the study. 34 participants were assigned randomly as the experimental group who studied using the TPR method in teaching English prepositions. The other remaining thirty-four participants were assigned as the control group who studied the regular way.

#### **Instruments**

the following instrument was designed and used in the study:

1-An achievement prepositions test to be used as a pre ,and post test.

#### **The achievement prepositions test**

##### **Aim of the test**

The prepositions test was used as a pre –post test to measure the level of the students in the control and experimental groups before being exposed to the traditional and the TPR method in prepositions teaching.

##### **Source of the prepositions test**

1. Identifying the prepositions embedded in the first five units from time for English 6 first term.
2. Reviewing previous studies concerned with language tests.
3. Identifying the requirements of prepositions knowledge

### **Hypotheses of the study:**

- 1)There is statistically significant difference between the mean score of the pre and post- test for the same group of pupils concerning their ability of using prepositions in favor of post- test.
- 2)The second hypothesis which addressed the differences between the mean scores of the control group and those of the experimental group on the post application of the achievement test.

### **Design**

The current study used the experimental design employing two groups. one group was the control group which received instructions through the traditional method .the second group was the experimental group that received instruction through TPR method .A pre-post test was administered to the two groups.

In this study the researcher took the sixth grade students of which consisted of 34 students. All of them were selected as the sample. Before giving the treatment, the researcher conducted a pre- test for the sample group. It was conducted on (15-10-2014). The preposition test Consisted of 40 items in the form of multiple choice items.

After conducting the pre- test, the researcher gives pupils treatment which began on(22-10-2014)After conducting the treatment, the researcher gives a post- test to the students. It was conducted on (6-12-2014).

#### **Aims of TPR in this research**

- 1-Enhancing prepositions acquisition of the sixth year primary school pupils.
- 2-Improving pupils' achievement in learning (location-time-movement) prepositions by using TPR method.
- 3-Improving pupils' ability of using prepositions combinations by using different kind of TPR activities.

4-Create fun atmosphere and low stress environment that encourage rapid learning and retention of using learned prepositions.

**Content of the TPR method**

The researcher designed a teacher's guide that includes the five units which are taught by TPR method .the teacher's guide includes the teaching procedures for each unit .each unit is presented in four lessons .there is a list for each unit which includes the vocabulary .after the list of prepositions, there is a topic which is composed using the target prepositions of the unit .then there are the teaching procedures for each lesson.

**Materials**

The use of TPR required making use of varied materials such as activities, pictures, handouts, relia, toys, colours, classroom objects and gestures .some materials were provided by the students after listening to orders.

**Research Design**

Experimental research describes what will happen when certain variables .Are

**Table (1):** Establish homogeneity between the control and experimental groups before noticing the study.

Domains	Group	N	Mean	SD	T	Df (n1+n2-2)	Level Of Sig	Sig (2-Tailed)
Prepositions of location	Exp	34	5.3	2.4	0.3	66	0.8	Not sig
	control	34	5.2	2.0				
Prepositions of movement	Exp	34	3.9	1.1	0.3			
	control	34	3.6	0.9				
Prepositions of time	Exp	34	5.0	1.7	0.3			
	control	34	4.8	1.7				
Collocations of prepositions	Exp	34	2.9	1.6	0.5			
	control	34	2.7	1.3				
Total	Exp	34	14.1	4.0	0.4			
	control	34	16.7	4.1				

The above table indicates that the homogeneity between the control and experimental groups are not significant in the two domains and in the total score of the achievement test; this proves that there

carefully controlled or manipulated. In this research, TPR method was used to teach. English preposition as the treatment. Thus, the writer wanted to see how TPR method affects the students' achievement in mastering English preposition.

**Procedures of the Experiment**

In this study the writer took the sixth grade students of which consisted of 34 students. All of them were selected as the sample. Before giving the treatment, the writer conducted a pre- test for the sample group. It was conducted on (15-10-2014). The preposition test Consisted of 40 items in the form of multiple choice items. After conducting the pre- test, the writer gave a treatment which began on(25-10-2014)After conducting the treatment, the writer gave a post- test to the students. It was conducted on (10-12-2014).

**Duration**

The implementation took about one month and half three sessions per week .the time for each session was 45 minutes.

are no significant differences between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups on the pre-test. In other words, the two groups are equivalent in their teaching types of prepositions .

**Table (2):** Results of t-test of the control and experimental groups on the post-administration of the achievement test

<i>stages</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Df (n1+n2-2)</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
Prepositions of location	Exp.	34	٩,٩	١,١	9.4	66	Significant at 0.05
	Control	34	٥,٨	٢,٢			
Prepositions of movement	Exp.	34	٥,٤	٠,٦	7.2		
	Control	34	٣,٥	١,٣			
Prepositions of time	Exp.	34	١٠,٦	١,٥	14.7		
	Control	34	٥,١	١,٥			
Collocations of prepositions	Exp.	34	٨,٩	١,٣	11.3		
	Control	34	٤,٦	١,٧			
Total	Exp.	34	٣٤,٩	٣,٣	16.9		
	Control	34	١٩,٢	٤,٢			

T-test for independent samples was used to compare the mean scores of the control and experimental groups. Table (2) shows that the mean scores of the experimental group students in teaching prepositions and in the total score were higher than those of the control group. The table illustrates also that the estimated t-

value is significant at .05 level. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the prepositions achievement and in the total score on the post-administration of the test.

**Table (3):** Value of ( $\eta^2$ ) and Levels of Effect Size

<i>Independent variable</i>	<i>The dependent variable</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Df (n1+n2-2)</i>	<i>Value of Eta-square (<math>\eta^2</math>)*</i>	<i>Level of effect size</i>
<b>Using TPR method</b>	Prepositions of location	9.4	66	0.5	High
	Prepositions of movement	7.2		0.4	
	Prepositions of time	14.7		0.7	
	Collocations of prepositions	11.3		0.6	
	Total score	16.9		0.8	

\* The effect size was estimated using the following formula:  $\eta^2 = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + df}$

---

---

Results in the previous table reflect the effect size of the proposed program is high on the academic achievement of the experimental group students in comparison with those of the control group in learning prepositions .

### Results

The current study proved that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group pupils and the control group pupils according to post application of the test in favor of the experimental group pupils .this result indicates that the teaching method used in teaching prepositions for the experimental group (TPR) was more effective than the teaching method used with the control group (traditional method).

- 1- There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group pupils and the control group pupils on the post application of the test in favor of the experimental group pupils .this result indicates that the teaching method used in teaching prepositions for the experimental group (TPR) was more effective than the teaching method used with the control group (traditional method).
- 2- There was statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group pupils on the pre and post application of prepositions test in favor of the post application. That result illustrates The above mentioned results reveal that there is an obvious improvement in the experimental group pupils' prepositions achievement effectiveness of TPR in enhancing prepositions acquisition. it is important to consider the fact that

TPR enhanced prepositions achievement.

### Discussion

The main concern of the present study was to investigate the effect of the TPR method in teaching English prepositions. It is worth mention that results of the present study are consistent with the results of the conducted by Larsen(2000), Morenberg (1997),Swan(1988),Sano(1986),Asher(1993) and Swaffor and Woodruf(1993).

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that TPR was effective in enhancing prepositions achievement of the sixth year school pupils . that effectiveness was evident in the following features:

- 1-Pupils were capable of learning prepositions and using them in meaningful situation.
- 2-After the experiment pupils' ability to recognize prepositions types , meaning and use were developed.
- 3-Pupils enjoyed English lessons through using TPR activities which create fun atmosphere and low stress.
- 4-Pupils drew very attractive drawing for the prepositions commands as they enjoy TPR activities.

### Finding

**First**, to my point of view, adopting TPR teaching method requires more of the teacher than adopting traditional method. It needs teachers to be patient and excited. The teacher should lead students to do the action rather than stand in front of the blackboard and just talk, so he needs energy. He needs enthusiasm because if he is not creative and active enough, children will be tired by the repetitive practice. **Second**, TPR is not very effective in big class. This method works on the base of

---

---

practice of giving commands and showing response. If there are too many students in one class, it will be hard for the teacher to promise that every child gets enough practice .

**Finally**, TPR works well with imperative instructions and vocabulary, but it may not function well With more complex grammar.

According to Sebelius (2002), there are mainly three steps of adopting TPRS .**First**, the teacher teaches new prepositions through traditional TPR.

**Second**, the teacher tells short stories which are full of repetitions of the new prepositions.

**Third**, pupils act out the stories which includes new preposition, answer questions about them, revise them, or retell them.

#### **Conclusion**

With reference to the results of this study, following points were concluded;

- The current study provided evidence to the effectiveness of using TPR method in enhancing prepositions achievement .this result added validity of other studies investigating similar aspects such as that of Asher (1993), Werstler (2002) and Brune (2004).
- The present study provided evidence to the effectiveness of using TPR method enhancing prepositions use.

#### **Recommendations for further research:**

**First**, English teacher, especially English teacher of elementary school, must be able to create his own technique in order to raise his or her pupils' interest in following his or her teaching since it is the first time for the students in Primary school gets English.

**Second** , using Total Physical Response method in English preposition is recommended as an alternative

technique for the English teachers, especially for the elementary school teachers to attract the students' Interest and motivation in learning English.

**Third**, Teachers should discover new strategies for teaching various types of English prepositions for achieving successful use of English prepositions.

**Finally** ,using TPR method in teaching English prepositions , prepositional phrase and collocations with(verbs-adjectives-adverbs)are recommended to teach in other grades like secondary level.

#### **References**

- Asher, James 1996. Learning Another Language through actions: The complete Teacher's Guide book.(5th edn )Los Gatos CA : sky oaks production.
- Abdulkarim, H. (2008). *The Communicative approach to teaching English prepositions to Arab students*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.(<http://www.cnaa.acad.md/en/thesis/8179/>). (January 20, 2009)..
- Biber, D. et. al (2000). *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Cain.R (2000). Total Physical Response , ET Professional, Issue.
- Celce-Murcia, M. & Larsen-Freeman, D. (1999). *The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course (2nd edition)*. USA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.C.
- Richards, Jack and S. Dianne, Larsen- Freeman. 2000. *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Elliot, John. 1991. *Action research for Educational Change*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Harmer, Jeremy. 2002. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. England: Longman.

---

Howarth, P. (1998). Phraseology and second language proficiency. *Applied Linguistics*. 19(1): 24-44.

Morley, J. 1991. Listening comprehension in second/foreign language instruction[A]. In M. Celce-Murcial(Ed.), teaching