

TO HAVE OR NOT TO HAVE TPRS FOR PRESCHOOLERS^a

TPRS DİL ÖĞRETİM METODU OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRENCİLERİNE UYGULANMALI MI UYGULANMAMALI MI

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ABSTRACT: The language teaching method ‘Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling’, developed by a Spanish High school teacher named Blaine Ray in the 1990s, aims to develop fluent speech in language learners. ‘Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling’ arouses considerable interest in terms of its variety of teaching techniques and its high influence of two prevalent notions in foreign language teaching- Total Physical Response and the Natural Approach. ‘Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling’ sees comprehensible language input, which prompts learners to speak fluently and correctly in the target language, making the language classroom interesting and frequent repetition of vocabulary or language structures, as important ingredients to language acquisition. The purpose of our study is to reveal whether the language teaching method ‘Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling’ (TPRS) has any impact on lexical competence of preschool students, who learn English as a foreign language in Turkey, and whether there is a gender difference in terms of achievement. This quasi-experimental study was conducted in two preschool classes consisting of 39 students of the MEV College Private Schools Güzelbahçe during the academic year 2013-2014. In our study, 20 new lexical items were taught in the experimental group through TPRS and in the control group through the Communicative Approach. The researcher, being the teacher at the same time, applied a pre-test to the students in order to test their lexical knowledge before the intervention. During the four-week treatment period, the researcher taught the 20 target words to the experimental group with the TPRS method and to the control group with the Communicative Approach. After the intervention, both groups took post-tests, which were analysed statistically. The results showed that the experimental group, who was taught the target words with the TPRS method, statistically outperformed the control group in the post-test. Additionally, there was no significant gender difference in the post-tests in terms of achievement. Based on the study findings, it can be concluded that the TPRS method is effective on lexical competence and should be used in lexical teaching.

Key Words: TPRS method, lexical competence, preschool students

ÖZET: ‘Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling’ (‘Okuma ve Hikaye Anlatımı yolu ile Dil Beceri Öğretimi’) adlı dil öğretim metodu, 1990larda Blaine Ray isimli bir lise İspanyolca öğretmeni tarafından geliştirilmiş ve dil öğrencilerinde akıcı konuşma hedeflemektedir. ‘Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling’ çok çeşitli öğretim teknikleri ve dil öğretiminde önemli bir yer tutan Total Physical Response and Natural Approach gibi metodlardan oldukça etkilenmesinden dolayı, bir hayli merak uyandırmaktadır. ‘Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling’, dilin anlamlı girdi olarak sunulmasını, dersin ilgi çekici bir şekilde işlenmesini ve kelimelerin ya da dil yapılarının sıklıkla tekrar ettirilmesini dil edinimi için gerekli olduğunu savunmakta ve bu şekilde öğrencilerin dili akıcı ve doğru bir şekilde konuşabileceklerini vurgulamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye’de okul öncesi sınıflarında yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenimi gören küçük yaşta öğrencilerin sözcük bilgisinde TPRS dil öğretim metodunun etkisini ve öğrencilerin başarı durumunda cinsiyet farklılığını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu yarı-deneySEL çalışma, 2013-2014 eğitim öğretim yılında MEV Koleji Özel Güzelbahçe Okullarındaki toplam 39 öğrenciden oluşan iki okul öncesi sınıfta yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, kura yolu ile belirlenen deney grubunun sözcük öğretimi TPRS dil öğretim metodu ile gerçekleştirmiştir ve kontrol grubunun aynı sözcük öğretimi öğretimi İngilizce dersinde öğretim yılının başından

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itibaren derslerde kullanılan İletişimsel Yaklaşım ile sürdürülmüştür. İngilizce ders öğretmenleri olan araştırmacı, öğrencilere sözcük ön bilgilerini ölçmek amacıyla bir ön-test uygulamıştır. Dört hafta süren deneyde, araştırmacı deney grubuna belirlenen 20 hedef kelimeleri TPRS dil öğretim metodunu daha önce hazırlanan ders planları doğrultusunda öğretmiştir. Aynı 20 hedef kelimeler kontrol grubuna İletişimsel Yaklaşım yoluyla öğretilmiştir. Deneyin sonunda, her iki gruba son-test verilerek verilerin istatistiksel çözümü yapılmıştır. Verilerin analizi ile, TPRS dil öğretim metodunun sözcük bilgisi üzerinde herhangi bir etkisinin olup olmadığını, var ise ne kadar etkili olduğunu ortaya çıkarmaya çalışılmıştır. Sonuçlar TPRS ile öğretim gören deneysel grubun kontrol grubundan son-testte istatistiksel olarak daha başarılı olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bulgulara dayanarak TPRS dil metodunun kelime öğretiminde kullanılması gerektiği sonucuna varılabilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: TPRS dil öğretim metodu, sözcük bilgisi, okul öncesi öğrencileri

INTRODUCTION

Through travel, communication and the use of new technological hardware and software products, people have come much more in touch with other cultures and languages than ever. With the breakdown of international barriers and the rising need for global interaction in the technological age, English has become the common language of many countries. Brewster et al (2004, p.1) point out that English has an official status in sixty countries and a dominant position in twenty more countries. The widespread of English is explained with factors such as travel and tourism and the need for information exchanges on academic platforms and globalisation (Harmer, 2007, pp.14-15). Popular culture also triggered the rising use of English, since most popular music and Hollywood movies are in English. In addition, the remarkable growth in Internet use has given the English language the task of an international medium of communication (Crystal, 2003, pp.144-116).

In conjunction with this need for communication, lexical learning has started to gain importance. People have an increasing desire to learn and use lexical items in order to communicate internationally. Since most 'learners carry around dictionaries and not grammar books' (Schmitt, 2010, p.4), lexical acquisition has become the focal point of researchers studying foreign language teaching and of those language teaching methods developed in the past 30 years. Thornbury (2002, p.13) points to the importance of lexical knowledge and stresses that grammar knowledge gives language learners limited opportunity of expression, whereas lexical knowledge removes such a limitation completely. Since lexical acquisition is so important, the investigation of the impact of various language teaching methods on lexical knowledge is inevitable. Although the aims and techniques of language teaching methods differ, it is of immense value to examine their effect on lexical acquisition.

One of the newest language teaching methods, 'Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS)' and its developer Blaine Ray, who is still continuing his workshops on TPRS, have been attracting attention for a long time. TPRS aims to develop mastery of basic structures and vocabulary of the target language so that language learners can produce them fluently and accurately (Ray and Seely, 2012, p.51). Ray asserts that 'making the class 100% comprehensible is the key for the success of TPRS' (2012, p. 9). When even the slowest student understands the language, success is achieved. This assertive tone of TPRS in language teaching and the influence of critical names like James Asher and Stephen Krashen, it seems crucial to examine the effectiveness of TPRS on lexical acquisition.

Lexical Acquisition

Examining the history of language learning and language teaching methods, grammar and rote-memorization had the focus in the foreign language classroom and lexical acquisition was neglected by the early language teaching methods like the Grammar-Translation Method or the Audio-lingual Method. Even modern language teaching methods that emphasise the communicative aspect of language learning (e.g. Communicative Language Teaching or Task-based Learning), fail to consider

lexical learning, which has become an issue in only the last three decades. Lewis points at the ignorance of lexical acquisition in language teaching and states that ‘lexis is the core or heart of language input but in language teaching has always been the Cinderella’ (1993, p.89).

Lewis (1997, pp.255-256), the founder of the Lexical Approach suggests that language consists of lexical chunks and that even single words (e.g. ‘Look!’) have a function of ‘fully independent items’. Poly words like ‘upside down’ or institutionalised utterances like ‘I’ll get in touch.’ are proposed to be language chunks, which are typically used for oral communication. Even the written form of language consists of language chunks (e.g. Finally..., Secondly,...). Either serving for oral or written communication, language is seen as a set of lexical chunks that have to be taught by language teachers.

Crystal (2005, p.30) on the other hand, resembles language to a network, which consists of the relationships between units of meaning and that in the study of meaning, vocabulary has to be analyzed in terms of semantics. The term *word* is insufficient in terms of semantic analysis, and it has to be classified to its semantic unit. For this classification, Crystal (2005) coined the term *lexeme*, defined as the basic semantic unit of meaning (e.g. dog, good, write). For example, the lexeme ‘write’ is the minimal, abstract unit of meaning, whereas the words ‘writes’ or ‘wrote’, equipped with morphological inflections, are the forms of the same lexeme ‘write’. In other words, different words are classified to their single meaningful unit of meaning –their lexeme that have a semantic role in language, whereas words with various inflections have different syntactic roles.

The distinction between lexemes (or lexical items) and words are crucial in estimating vocabulary size since ‘if we count all the different words in Shakespeare, we reach a total of around 30,000. If we count all of the different lexemes, the total is less than 20,000’ (Crystal, 2005, p.32). Meara (1996, pp.38-50) also states that vocabulary size plays an important role in determining lexical competence, since language learners with a larger second language lexicon are more proficient in almost all aspects of L2 proficiency. Henriksen (1999, p.303) adds that the partial lexical knowledge of a language learner will become more precise with time as the language learner continues to experience the target language (Milton, 2009; Anderson and Freebody, 1981).

Meara (1996), Henriksen (1999) and Crystal (2003) are in agreement that language is a structured network, in which lexical items are collocated and sense related to each other. Language learners have a deep, structured knowledge of lexical items when they know that lexemes meaningfully relate to their synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms and collocations.

In addition, lexical knowledge is divided into productive and receptive lexical knowledge. Receptive knowledge indicates the comprehension of lexical items, whereas productive knowledge refers to the production of lexical items. A language learner can produce lexical items during speaking or writing or recognize them during listening or reading (Hiebert and Kamil, 2005, p. 3).

Other researchers like Kit (2003, p.2) deal with the cognitive dimension of lexical acquisition and argue that language input and the learner’s perceptual ability are important at the beginning of lexical input. Language input and proper perceptual ability helps to make lexical understanding and production possible.

Kaur, Othman and Abdullah conclude that ‘with adequate lexical knowledge and competence, learners are able to cope with the English language because vocabulary acquisition is a requisite and determinant of the extent of learners’ language literacy via the four language skills’ (2008, p.90).

Young Learners and Lexical Acquisition

It is a well known fact that children are enthusiastic and lively learners, who are eager to participate in any activity even though they do not quite understand it and children do not hesitate to speak the language and get a more native-like accent than older learners; on the other hand, they have

a short attention span and do not own the meta-language which is required to explain grammar or discourse (Cameron, 2003, p.1). Young foreign language learners are not able to understand language as an abstract concept, but they have language learning advantages (Raya et al, 2001, p.20). Children have a curious nature and are highly motivated to learn. Harmer (2007, p.82) adds that young learners grasp indirectly from everything they see, hear, touch and with what they interact with. They are more interested in tasks, games and activities, rather than understanding the point of the target language (Scrivener, 2011, p.321), and learn easily from context and repeat words or phrases until they acquire them.

However, Brewster et al (2004, pp.80-81) state that lexical learning is a difficult issue in teaching young learners since children are still in the acquisition processes of their native language vocabulary and concepts.

Though, Aitchinson (1987, p.87) describes the lexical acquisition of young learners and the three tasks that children undergo in the process of lexical acquisition: labeling, packaging and network-building task. Labeling implies understanding the association between the sounds of a word and an object or person, e.g., the word ‘daddy’ is associated with the child’s father. In the packaging task children discover what can be packed together under one label. They package the word ‘fish’ to its superordinate ‘animal’ and its subordinate ‘goldfish’, but what they first learn is the basic meaning ‘fish’ (Cameron, 1994, p.31). The network-building task is about making discoveries of how words relate to each other, e.g., discovering synonyms or antonyms (Meara, 1996, Henriksen, 1999).

It is important to mention that preschoolers are at the beginner language level and learn the basic lexical items and structures of a language first. The TPRS method aims to teach the basic lexical items and grammar structures. Therefore, language learners seem quite appropriate to examine the impact of the TPRS method on the lexical competence of preschoolers.

Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS)

‘Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling’ (TPRS) is a language teaching method aims to teach the basic structures and vocabulary of the target language in order to make the learner able to ‘express intelligibly in speech what one wants or needs to, without undue hesitancy or difficulty’ (Seely and Romijn, 1998, p.35). TPRS is highly influenced by the ‘Total Physical Response Method’ (TPR) and the ‘Natural Approach’ (NA).

Two features of the TPR method contributed to the development of TPRS. At first, TPR claims that language is best acquired through actions and by giving physical responses to commands of the target language. Asher (2000, pp.2-3) resembles the acquisition process of the first and second language and bases this resemblance on observations of young children. Young children, yet acquiring their first language, are not able to utter more than a few words, but show excellent comprehension of parent commands like ‘Come here!’ or ‘Stand still!’. Asher concludes that children listen and non-verbally respond to their parent’s commands and follow the imperative speech bodily. The ‘intimate relationship between language and the children’s body’ (Asher, 2000, pp.2-3), is considered by Ray (2012) as vital in the development of the TPRS method.

Secondly, Asher (2000) examines language learning on a neurological level. Other teaching methods focus on the left-brain activation in language learning, whereas he argues that both the left and right hemispheres are involved in language learning. First, the right brain that controls bodily movement should be activated through physical activities. And then, when the body and the right brain of the language learner are active, it will be the left brain’s duty to process these information and proceed to ‘produce language and to initiate other, more abstract language processes’ (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.75). Therefore, movement in language learning is crucial since it prepares learners for processing language. Ray (2012) is aware of the importance of the right-brain activation and motor movement. This is why, as he developed the TPRS method, he insisted that learners should be bodily involved in the lesson and that stories should be acted out.

TPRS is also mainly affected by the Five Hypotheses of the Natural Approach.

Acquisition-Learning Distinction Hypothesis

Similar to the Natural Approach, TPRS sees language acquisition as an unconscious process. According to Krashen's Acquisition-Learning Distinction Hypothesis (1982) children acquire their first language subconsciously and naturally in an informal environment. Here it is suggested that second language learners can acquire the target language subconsciously in the same way as native speakers acquire their first language. Adults will not exactly reach the same level of a native speaker, but if the second language is introduced in the same natural way, acquisition will take place. Similarly, since TPRS sets realistic goals, native-like and flawless oral production is not expected and errors during speech are allowed.

Input Hypothesis

Fluency, one of TPRS' teaching aims, is achieved when learners receive comprehensible language input. Krashen describes the importance of comprehensible input in his Input Hypothesis, which simply states that language acquisition occurs when language input is comprehensible (Krashen and Terrell, 1983, p.32). In the TPRS method, comprehensible language input is as crucial as it is in the Input Hypothesis. TPRS teachers play an important role in providing comprehensible input to the learners.

Affective Filter Hypothesis

The TPRS method is additionally influenced by the Affective Filter Hypothesis, which states that when learners are self-confident, comfortable, and emotionally ready to learn, their 'affective filter' will lower and their 'mental block', which would otherwise hinder them to receive language input, will disappear. In the TPRS method, it is important that learners feel comfortable, are self-confident and open to language input, so that they can acquire the target language without any hindrance of emotional disturbances. Especially practice in speaking decreases anxiety and increases confidence in the language learner (Ray and Seely, 2012, p.218).

Natural Order Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that grammar structures are acquired in a predictable order and in the language classroom, complex grammar concepts should be taught after lower level grammar structures have been acquired. The TPRS method does not focus on explicit grammar analysis, but it proposes to teach basic and frequent grammar structures and lexical items first.

Monitor Hypothesis

According to this hypothesis, *acquisition* initiates oral production of the second language in a fluent way and *learning* monitors and corrects the produced language (Krashen, 1982, p.15-16). Learning that is responsible for the knowledge of grammatical rules can edit and correct the speech output and it helps the language learner to monitor the language. TPRS claims that when learners have received enough language input, they can easily monitor speech without hesitation and then, learning will begin to be useful. Otherwise, learning, especially early learning can lead to hesitancy, which is the enemy of fluency (Ray and Seely, 2012, p.220).

The Three Pillars of TPRS

The TPRS method sees language input (a) comprehensible, (b) interesting and (c) repetitive essential to develop fluency of language learners. Ray and Seely (2012) state that comprehensible input helps learners to internalize language and even to acquire grammatically accurate fluency over

time. Through songs, chants, storytelling, act out and personalization activities the language input gets more interesting (Krashen, 1982, pp.32-66). Repetition, 'the mother of retention', on the other hand, contributes to learning and helps 'to keep a class totally comprehensible' (Ray and Seely, 2012, p.10, p.13; Hasan, 2008, p.46).

The Three Steps of TPRS

The lesson procedure of the TPRS method consists of three steps: (a) Establishing meaning, (b) Asking a story and (c) Reading.

(a) Establishing meaning: Since TPRS wants the language learners to master the basic structures and vocabulary, the language input is chosen among the common structures and frequent words of a language (Ray and Seely, 2012, pp.31-32). At the beginning of a TPRS lesson, the target structure or lexical item is introduced through gestures, translation or through personalized questions. The Personalized Question Answer (PQA) technique of TPRS helps the learners to practice the target input, where they are involved in a dialogue with the teacher and can share their personal feelings, experiences or needs with the whole class. For example, the aim of a TPRS lesson is to teach the target lexical item 'bedroom'. At first, the TPRS teacher can provide its meaning with its translation. Then the meaning of the word can be supported with a gesture (rubbing eyes, pretending to be sleepy, switching of the lights and saying 'Good night.'). Afterwards, the teacher asks personalized questions about the target word: 'What colour is your bedroom?', 'Is your bedroom big or small?', 'Do you have toys in your bedroom?' etc. The students are involved in a dialogue and have the possibility to practice the target item.

(b) Asking a story: At this second step of a TPRS lesson, the teacher starts asking a story. The TPRS teacher has a mini-story, which serves as a guide for the lesson and provides the target structures or lexical items. The story is asked in three locations. In the first location, the story is introduced with a problem. For example, a girl searches for a new carpet for her bedroom. In the second location, the problem of the story is tried to be solved but cannot. Here, the girl cannot find the carpet she wants for her bedroom. In the third location, the problem of the story is finally solved: The girl gets a nice, big, red carpet for her bedroom. The TPRS teacher encourages the students to name the main character of the story or to add story details and asks repetitive questions throughout the whole asking-a-story process: 'What's the name of the girl?' 'Where does she go?' 'What does she want?' The students can also create a parallel story, where there is a boy instead of a girl. This boy maybe could search for a new bed for his bedroom. The TPRS teacher also asks circling questions about each story statement in each location to ensure that every student has understood. The teacher asks a 'yes' answer question: Does the girl want a carpet for her bedroom?- Yes. Then an 'either/or' question: Does the girl want a TV or a carpet for her bedroom?- Carpet. Then a 'no' question: Does the girl want a lamp for her bedroom?- No. And finally the teacher asks a 'wh' question: What does the girl want for her bedroom? – A carpet. In this whole lesson process, the students can act out the story.

(c) Reading: The students can read the story together, discuss it and translate the story text. The TPRS teacher of young learners can read the story aloud, discuss the story with them, talk about the story pictures and can do follow-up activities. The students have time to digest the story and the target structure or lexical item. They can draw their own bedrooms and present their pictures to their classmates.

Throughout the whole TPRS lesson, the teacher has to ensure that each student, even the slowest learning student, has understood the language. The language input, independent if it is a structure or vocabulary item, has to be comprehensible, interesting and should be frequently repeated. The students are involved in the lesson and feel themselves appreciated and comfortable.

Design of the Lesson plan

First, the TPRS teacher introduces the target lexical item through gesture and translation, or the target structure with a very short explanation. As the focus is on meaning, TPRS avoids long explicit explanations about the target language. Instead, the teacher starts a class dialogue, where the target language is contextualized and the students can share their thoughts or ideas on the questions of the teacher. Secondly, the teacher starts to ask the story and introduces the first story statement and asks circling questions about it. When the students give other creative, interesting answers to the questions, the teacher immediately adds these answers to the story. For example, when the students want to name the main character of the story 'Johnny Depp', the teacher changes the name of the story character. It is important that students' fun answers are appreciated. The students also act out the story. Lastly, the teacher reads aloud or let the students read the actual story. The story text can be translated to the mother tongue, so that the teacher is sure that each student has understood the story. The class can discuss the story or can do follow-up activities.

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

This following study was conducted to answer the following research questions: What impact does the TPRS method has on lexical competence? What impact does the TPRS have method on lexical competence regarding gender difference?

Participants

The participants of this quasi-experimental study were two preschool classes consisting of 39 preschool students learning English as a foreign language in MEV College Private School Güzelbahçe İzmir in the academic year 2013-2014. The two classes were randomly assigned by the researcher as the experimental (19 students) and control group (20 students). The age of the preschool students in each group was six. The experimental group consisted of ten female students and nine male students. The control group consisted of eleven female students and nine male students. The participants were chosen as they are beginning language learners, who learn at first step the basic and most frequently used lexical items. Since the TPRS method aims to teach the basic vocabulary of a language (Ray and Seely, 2012, pp. 314-317), the participants were chosen appropriately.

Procedure

The experimental group was taught the lexical items with the language teaching method TPRS and its techniques and stories. The control group was taught the same lexical items with the Communicative Approach, with which the students were used to learning since the start of the school year. The researchers aimed to examine how effective the language teaching method TPRS was in terms of lexical development. Additionally, the researchers were interested in the effectiveness of TPRS on lexical competence regarding students' gender.

First, the target lexical items for this study were selected from the preschool English language teaching curriculum. The reason why 20 lexical items were selected was due to the fact that these items were the most frequently used ones in the book 'My Little Island' students were utilizing. These chosen 20 words were used to prepare a multiple choice vocabulary test of 20 test items. After having confirmed the test's reliability, it would be later conducted as pre- and post tests to the groups of study. The two preschool classes were randomly assigned as intervention and control groups. Both were given the pre-tests, in order to reveal their present level of lexical knowledge. Then, the implementation period of four weeks started. The lesson plans contained the target words and were designed according to the language teaching method TPRS and the Communicative Approach. The experimental group were taught the target words by the teacher, at the same time the researcher

herself, with the language teaching method TPRS, including stories, rhymes, songs, act outs, etc. The control group learnt the same target words through the Communicative Approach, including role plays, games, information gap activities, etc. Having four English lessons per week, the implementation process lasted 16 hours in total for each group. After the implementation period, both groups were given the post-tests and compared by means of their test scores. The statistically analyzed tests would reveal which study group's level of lexical knowledge is higher. After examining the data, it would be revealed whether the language teaching method TPRS had any impact on lexical competence, and on what degree. Additionally, any changes in the success rate in lexical development regarding gender would be revealed.

Instruments

The data collection instruments of this study were the pre- and post tests, that were designed to test the success level of the participants on the target lexical items. The test was applied to the experimental and control groups before the treatment as a pre-test, aiming to find out the students' knowledge about the target lexical items. After the treatment, the same test was applied to both groups as a post-test to reveal any differences between the groups in lexical development.

RESULTS

The collected data by means of the tests were compared and examined statistically by using independent sample test and paired-sample t-test to measure the proficiency level of students, and gender difference.

When students were given the pre-test, the results yield no difference between the intervention and control groups. When the same test was administered as the post-test, the results were shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *The Comparison of Post-test Scores of the Study Groups*

Study Groups	N	Means	Std. Dev.	-p-
Experimental	19	19.368	.831	.013
Control	20	18.600	1.984	

The mean score of the experimental group was calculated as 19.368 and the mean score of the control group was 18.600 in Table 1. The significance level of p was 0.013, and p lower than 0.05 showed that there was a significant difference between the study groups regarding lexical acquisition. The experimental group had higher scores in the post test and were better at lexical competence.

As to the second research question, whether there is a difference between the groups regarding gender, Table 2 displays the results.

Table 2. *The Post-Test Comparison of Female and Male Students' Level of Lexical Competence in the Study Groups*

Study Groups	Gender	N	Means	Std. Dev.	-p-
Experimental	Female	10	19.800	.422	.202
	Male	9	18.889	.928	
Control	Female	9	18.556	1.424	.577
	Male	11	18.636	2.242	

Table 2 shows that the role of gender makes no difference in the level of lexical learning, since p was lower than 0.05. Regarding gender, there was no significant difference between female and male students, indicating the same level of lexical competence.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of our study indicate that the experimental group, which was taught the target lexical items with the TPRS method, got higher mean scores in the post-test and were statistically more successful than the control group, which was taught the same target words with the Communicative Approach. The TPRS method has a notable impact on lexical development. In addition, the study results showed that there was no significant difference in lexical development between male and female students. In our study, the aim was not to compare the TPRS method with the Communicative Approach. Both language methods put communication on the centre in the language classroom, but whereas the benefits of the Communicative Approach have been known for more than four decades, it is the TPRS method, which attracts attention, as it is recent and less explored by researchers. Both methods have been investigated by many researchers and the consensus is that both have been shown to be beneficial in different areas of foreign language teaching. In our study, it is actually the TPRS method, where students outperformed. The experimental group, instructed with the TPRS method are statistically better than the control group that receive lexical instruction though the Communicative Approach. With this study it is proven that the TPRS method as impact on lexical competence.

Songs, chants, stories, act out, personalization, and reading aloud activities that are important components of the TPRS method, have widely recognized advantages in second language teaching (Gatbonton and Segalowitz, 1988; Brewster and Ellis, 1991; Eken, 1996; Asher, 2000; Schoepp, 2001; Beck, et al, 2002; Mishan, 2005; Ray and Seely, 2012.).

In addition, TPRS has a great variety of teaching techniques to present either a new grammar structure or a lexical item at the beginning of the lesson (Slavic, 2008). They can be flexibly used in the lesson in random order, since TPRS gives emphasis on how to teach beside on what to teach.

As a whole, TPRS consists of various important components, from its techniques to storytelling, from chants to reading or reading-aloud. All of these components have been regarded to have positive effects on second language teaching. But we, the researchers, do not divide all its components but consider TPRS as a whole. We can overall conclude that TPRS has a huge impact on the lexical competence of young learners, who are second language learners at the beginning level. It can be said, that storytelling and reading-aloud activities are essential in the language teaching program of preschool students. Teachers should do personalization activities and ask personalized questions, and add student interest and needs or simply the students themselves into the story and the lesson. Undeniably, various activities of the Communicative Approach are also beneficial, fun and effective in the lesson. Language teachers can, for example, combine TPRS' storytelling and the

Communicative Approach's information-gap activities to make the most out of the lesson. Teachers can enrich their lesson plans to get high achievement from learners, without regarding their gender.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

More research on the TPRS method and lexical competence should be conducted for further studies. The sampling should consist of more participants, the study could last for a longer period, and more target words to test lexical knowledge could be determined. Study groups of different ages, including adolescents and adults and different levels, could be taken into account, or even their educational background. A quantitative study could be combined with a qualitative study where study participants could express their attitudes and ideas on language teaching methods. There is very little research on the effectiveness of the TPRS method on lexical competence. Similar studies on TPRS would enrich the literature of second language teaching.

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