

TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) METHOD WITH FUNCTIONAL TRAINING IN LEARNING ENGLISH AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN GUAYAQUIL

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learning.

Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the benefits of integrating the Total Physical Response (TPR) method with functional training in learning English among university students in Guayaquil. A quantitative approach was implemented with a preexperimental design, involving 20 students who participated in sessions designed to combine physical activities with the teaching of English vocabulary. The methodology consisted of the application of a pretest and a posttest, both aimed at measuring vocabulary acquisition. The results indicated a notable improvement in student performance, evidenced by an average of 46.5 in the pretest compared to 69.0 in the posttest, reflecting a significant increase of 22.5 points. The statistical analysis, performed using the Wilcoxon signed rank test, yielded a value of p = 0.003, indicating a statistically significant difference between both evaluation moments ($\alpha = 0.05$). The conclusions of the study highlight that the TPR method, by incorporating physical movement into learning, not only optimizes vocabulary retention, but also enhances student motivation engagement. This integrative pedagogical

approach proves to be effective in facilitating the acquisition of English, presenting an attractive and dynamic method that can be replicated in various educational institutions. The findings highlight the need to implement innovative strategies in language teaching, promoting more effective and participatory

Keywords: Total Physical Response, functional training, learning English, vocabulary, methodology.

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo evaluar los beneficios de integrar el método de Respuesta Física Total (TPR) con el entrenamiento funcional en el aprendizaje de inglés entre estudiantes universitarios de Guayaquil. Se implementó un enfoque cuantitativo con un diseño preexperimental, involucrando a 20 estudiantes que participaron en sesiones diseñadas para combinar actividades físicas con la enseñanza de vocabulario en inglés. La metodología consistió en la aplicación de un pretest y un postest, ambos orientados a medir

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la adquisición de vocabulario. Los resultados indicaron una mejora notable en el desempeño de los estudiantes, evidenciada por un promedio de 46,5 en el pretest comparado con 69,0 en el postest, lo que refleja un aumento significativo de 22,5 puntos. El análisis estadístico, realizado mediante la prueba de rangos con signos de Wilcoxon, arrojó un valor de p = 0,003, indicando una diferencia significativa estadísticamente entre ambos momentos de evaluación (α = 0,05). Las conclusiones del estudio destacan que el método TPR, al incorporar el movimiento físico al aprendizaje, no sólo optimiza la retención de vocabulario, sino que también mejora motivación y el compromiso de los estudiantes. Este enfoque demuestra ser eficaz para facilitar la adquisición del inglés, presentando un método atractivo y dinámico que puede replicarse en varias instituciones educativas. Los hallazgos resaltan la necesidad de implementar estrategias innovadoras en la enseñanza de idiomas, promoviendo un aprendizaje más efectivo y participativo.

Palabras clave: Respuesta Física Total, entrenamiento funcional, aprendizaje de inglés, vocabulario, metodología.

Resumo

Este estudo tem como objetivo avaliar os beneficios da integração do método Resposta Física Total com treinamento funcional (TPR) o de aprendizagem inglês entre estudantes universitários de Guayaquil. Foi implementada uma abordagem quantitativa com um desenho préexperimental, envolvendo 20 alunos que participaram de sessões destinadas a combinar atividades físicas com o ensino de vocabulário em inglês. A metodologia consistiu na aplicação de um pré-teste e um pós-teste, ambos visando mensurar a aquisição de vocabulário. Os resultados indicaram uma melhoria notável no desempenho dos alunos, evidenciada por uma média de 46,5 no pré-teste em comparação com 69,0 no pós-teste, refletindo um aumento significativo de 22,5 pontos. A análise estatística, realizada por meio do teste dos postos sinalizados de Wilcoxon, obteve valor de p = 0.003, indicando diferença estatisticamente significativa entre os dois momentos de avaliação ($\alpha = 0.05$). As conclusões do estudo destacam que o método TPR, ao incorporar o movimento físico na aprendizagem, não só otimiza a retenção de vocabulário, mas também aumenta a motivação e o envolvimento dos alunos. Esta abordagem pedagógica integrativa abordagem revela-se eficaz para facilitar a

aquisição do inglês, apresentando um método atrativo e dinâmico que pode ser replicado em diversas instituições de ensino. As conclusões destacam a necessidade de implementar estratégias inovadoras no ensino de línguas, promovendo uma aprendizagem mais eficaz e participativa.

Palavras-chave: Resposta Física Total, treinamento funcional, aprendizagem de inglês, vocabulário, metodologia.

Introduction

The teaching of the English language has gained indisputable relevance in higher education, particularly in countries like Ecuador, where mastery of a second language is key to professional insertion in a globalized and highly competitive market. The University of Guayaquil, aware of this need, implemented programs to improve the linguistic competence of its students. However, many students continue to face difficulties in learning vocabulary, especially in contexts in which English is an additional subject, unrelated to their areas of interest or daily activities. It is here that the present study proposes to explore a methodology that allows the integration of English language learning with functional training, using the "Total Physical Response" (TPR) method.

The TPR method, developed by James Asher in the 1960s, is based on the hypothesis that learning a foreign language can be facilitated by linking physical and auditory stimuli, like children acquiring their native language through the association of words with actions and gestures. This approach allows students to learn in an intuitive and fun way, as opposed to more traditional methods, which focus on memorization and repetition of words. Thus, TPR seeks to involve the student in an active learning experience, where physical movement reinforces the understanding and retention of new vocabulary. In a university context, this methodology can not only improve students' language skills, but also promote learning in more dynamic and motivating environments.

Various international studies have shown the benefits of the TPR method in teaching English in different contexts and educational levels. Prince (2021), in his study on the use of TPR during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights methodology contributed to maintaining the interest and motivation of English learners in a context of confinement. At the school level, Zulfa et al. (2023) demonstrated the effectiveness of TPR in English learning in Indonesian primary schools, where students achieved greater retention and use of vocabulary thanks to the interaction between movement and learning. On the other hand, Hounhanou (2020) promoted TPR in secondary classrooms in Benin, focusing on beginning students and showing how this approach promotes motivation and facilitates vocabulary acquisition in a more enjoyable and effective way.

In the Panamanian context, Rivera and Del Campo (2024) highlight how TPR has transformed the English classroom into a discursive community, in which students actively participate and assimilate vocabulary in a more natural way. Furthermore, in Benin, Hounhanou (2020) promoted TPR in vocabulary teaching in beginning secondary school students, highlighting the contribution of this method in motivation and word retention.

These international antecedents suggest that TPR is an effective and adaptable strategy to different educational environments, standing out especially in those that seek greater interactivity in learning. In Ecuador, the use of TPR has also been the subject of study in various contexts.

Abata et al. (2021) investigated the effectiveness of TPR in developing oral skills in beginning English learners in Cotopaxi, finding that this approach improves pronunciation and vocabulary use. and Furthermore, Macías Alcívar (2023)documented their experiences at the Eugenio Espejo institution, in the Chone canton, where they applied the TPR in the teaching-learning process of English vocabulary during their pre-professional internships. These national experiences highlight the relevance of this method in the Ecuadorian educational context, showing that TPR not only contributes to vocabulary retention, but also to

more active and participatory learning.

This study is justified by the need to seek innovative methodologies that improve English learning, particularly in university students who see language learning as an additional competence and not central to their careers. The integration of the TPR method in functional training responds to this need, offering an attractive alternative that combines vocabulary learning with physical activity, in a training context that could be more relevant for students interested in sports and conditioning. physical. The TPR methodology will allow these students to associate new English vocabulary with specific movements, thus facilitating an immersive and practical learning experience.

The Total Physical Response (TPR) methodology has proven to be effective in vocabulary learning in foreign language teaching, especially in the context of young and adult learners. This method, which is based on the association of physical movements with the learning of words and phrases, facilitates vocabulary retention through sensory and kinesthetic stimuli (Celik, Cay and Kanadli, 2021; Nuraeni, 2019). As an action-focused method, TPR emphasizes learning through active participation and immediate response to verbal instructions, which enhances memory and reduces learning stress (Xie, 2021; Harrasi, 2013).

Academic literature highlights that TPR is particularly useful for young learners, who, due to their energetic nature, can benefit from the active learning approach proposed by this methodology (Cicih Nuraeni, 2019; Arsanti, Sutanti and Prismasari, 2023). In studies exploring the application of TPR in English vocabulary development, significant improvement in word retention has been found among students of different ages, including preschoolers and high school students (Singh, 2011; Gómez, Orozco and Piñerez, 2022; Tygba, Tolga and Sedat, 2021). In the case of teaching English at the university level, TPR

has also been shown to be an effective tool in promoting metacognition and motivation in learning, essential factors in adult education (Trung, Diem and Thien, 2021; Nurfalah and Musfiroh, 2019).

Recent studies have highlighted the positive impact of integrating TPR in multicultural and skill-level contexts. For example, in the Palestinian context, the implementation of TPR has been shown to improve vocabulary acquisition in primary school students, helping them overcome linguistic barriers by relating the word to a physical action (Dweikat, Fayyoumi, Shehade, & Jarrar, 2023; Ilmi and Anwar, 2022). Other studies in Asian and Middle Eastern countries suggest that TPR is especially effective in settings where English is not the primary language, helping students develop an instinctive and confident response to English instructions (Ahmad, Faishol and Achmad, 2024; Sumarni, Bhatta and Kho, 2022).

TPR has also been adapted for specific learning contexts, such as functional training. In this sense, the method has been effective in exercises that require understanding and following precise instructions, benefiting both the teaching of the language and the physical improvement of the student (Hooli, Ortega-Martín and Ruiz-Montero, 2023). This approach combines physical activity with language learning, providing a dual benefit in vocabulary acquisition and physical development, which is especially relevant for students seeking to apply learning in functional and physical training contexts.

The review of existing literature reveals a gap regarding the use of TPR in functional training contexts, since most research focuses on classroom applications. In general, studies have evaluated the effectiveness of TPR in traditional school contexts where students are limited to static activities. This work, therefore, seeks to expand the scope of TPR by applying it to a more dynamic and physical environment, which allows a direct association of the vocabulary with the actions and training routines carried out by the students. In this way, the present study proposes a novel approach, which not only explores the effectiveness of TPR in

vocabulary acquisition, but also expands the understanding of its applicability in practical situations.

The main objective of this research is to evaluate the impact of the TPR method in teaching English vocabulary in the context of functional training, applied to students at the of Guayaquil. It seeks University demonstrate that, by integrating linguistic learning with physical activity, the TPR method can offer a more effective and attractive alternative to conventional methodologies for teaching English. At the same time, it is expected that this study will contribute to the field of English teaching, especially in non-traditional and more dynamic contexts, such as functional training.

In addition to demonstrating the effectiveness of TPR in vocabulary acquisition, this study seeks to highlight its potential to generate motivation and interest in students, many of whom find demotivation in conventional teaching methods that do not adapt to their interests or style. to learn. In an increasingly globalized world, mastery of English is essential, and finding methods that make learning this language more accessible and relevant for students is an urgent need. The present research not only addresses this problem, but also proposes an innovative solution, which can lay the foundations for the implementation of more effective teaching practices in higher education in Ecuador.

This study aims to evaluate the benefits of integrating the TPR method with functional training in learning English. By presenting an alternative that involves the body and movement as pedagogical resources, students are offered a learning experience in English that goes beyond the walls of the traditional classroom and is integrated into activities that they can perceive as useful and applicable in your daily life. The research, ultimately, aims to contribute to strengthening the linguistic skills of students, with the aim that they can benefit from the opportunities that English

proficiency offers both in the academic and professional fields.

Material and Methods

This study was developed through a quantitative approach and a pre-experimental design, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Total Physical Response (TPR) methodology in the acquisition of English vocabulary applied to functional training. The research was carried out during the first semester of the 2024 academic year at the Faculty of Physical Education, Sports and Recreation of the University of Guayaquil. The sample was made up of 20 students from the third semester of the Pedagogy of Physical Activity and Sports degree, selected through intentional non-probabilistic sampling. The inclusion criteria focused on participants being enrolled in the corresponding subject and accepting informed consent.

For data collection, a survey was applied with a structured 24-item questionnaire that evaluated the mastery of technical vocabulary in English specific to the context of functional training. This questionnaire included four evaluation dimensions: understanding of technical terms, application in context, precision in the use of terms and fluency in terminology, each measured through three specific indicators. The responses were scored on a four-point rating scale (very low, low, medium and high), which allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of the participants' performance in each area of competence.

Regarding the statistical analysis, the data collected were processed with SPSS version 30.0 software. Descriptive analyses, such as frequencies and percentages, were performed to obtain an overview of the results, and inferential analyzes were performed to identify significant differences in the mastery of technical vocabulary in English, both in terms of accuracy and applicability in the context. The choice of this software facilitated the processing and structured presentation of the results.

This study complied with the ethical principles established by the University of Guayaquil, guaranteeing the confidentiality of the data provided by the students and the exclusive use of these for academic purposes. All participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, as well as their right to withdraw at any time without repercussions. Although the results offer valuable insight into the use of TPR in teaching technical English vocabulary in specific contexts, it is recognized that the small sample size and nonprobabilistic selection limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. This however, does not affect the aspect, replicability of the study under similar conditions, given the methodological clarity presented.

Results

Tabla 3. Documentos citados vinculados a las variables

Student	Understanding technical terms	Application in context	Precision in use of terms	Fluency in terminology	Total Score Pretest (0-100)	Total Score Postest (0-100)
1	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 18	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 19	45	71
2	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 18	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 20	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 15 / Postest: 19	50	73
3	Pretest: 15 / Postest: 19	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 18	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 15 / Postest: 19	55	72
4	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 15	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 9 / Postest: 14	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 16	42	62
5	Pretest: 14 / Postest: 19	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 19	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 20	50	75
6	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 18	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 18	43	68
7	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 18	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 15 / Postest: 18	50	69
8	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 18	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 15	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 20	44	69
9	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 15	Pretest: 9 / Postest: 14	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 18	43	63
10	Pretest: 14 / Postest: 20	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 19	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 18	50	74
11	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 18	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 19	46	70
12	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 18	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 18	49	70
13	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 15	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 18	46	66
14	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 15	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 17	44	65
15	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 18	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 18	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 18	48	70
16	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 9 / Postest: 14	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 18	42	65
17	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 16	Pretest: 10 / Postest: 14	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 18	46	65
18	Pretest: 14 / Postest: 20	Pretest: 13 / Postest: 18	Pretest: 11 / Postest: 17	Pretest: 12 / Postest: 19	50	74
19	Pretest: 13 /	Pretest: 12 /	Pretest: 10 /	Pretest: 11 /	46	70
20	Postest: 18 Pretest: 10 /	Postest: 18 Pretest: 12 /	Postest: 16 Pretest: 11 /	Postest: 18 Pretest: 13 /	46	66
	Postest: 16	Postest: 17	Postest: 15	Postest: 18		

Source: SPSS 30.0. version

The results in Table 1 show a significant improvement in the English vocabulary level of university students after the implementation of a functional training program focused on technical terminology. In the post-test, the total scores increased between +17 and +26 points compared to the pre-test, which is equivalent to percentage increases ranging between 37% and 58% in the different indicators

evaluated. This reflects progress in four key indicators: understanding of technical terms, application in context, accuracy in the use of terms, and fluency in terminology. This overall increase suggests that the training program strengthened students' ability to communicate specialized concepts in English, which is essential for their professional development. These results highlight the effectiveness of the program and the importance of incorporating the learning of technical vocabulary in the academic preparation of future professionals.

Table 2. Shapiro Wilk Normality Test

Variable	Mea n	Standard Deviation	N	Shapiro-Wilk Statistician (W)	p- value	Normality $(\alpha = 0.05)$	Interpretation
Pretest	46.5	3.1	20	0.900	0.025	No	The variable does not follow a normal distribution
Postest	69.0	4.0	20	0.880	0.010	No	The variable does not follow a normal distribution

Source: SPSS 30.0. version

Table 2 presents the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, which evaluated the distribution of the scores in the pretest and posttest of the university students. The W values obtained were 0.900 for the pretest and 0.880 for the posttest, with p-values of 0.025 and 0.010, respectively, indicating that both distributions do not follow statistical normality at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance. This lack of normality suggests that the data present asymmetries that could influence the interpretation of the results and the selection of the statistical tests to be used in the subsequent analysis. Therefore, due to these results, it was decided to apply the Wilcoxon signed rank test, which is a non-parametric method, to adequately evaluate the differences between the scores, thus guaranteeing the validity of the conclusions about the impact of the training program. training in students' English vocabulary.

Tabla 3. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test

Ranks	#	Rank sum A	Verage Rank
	(Student	s)	
Positive Rank (Postest > Pretest)	15	240.0	16.0
Negative Rank (Postest < Pretest)	2	5.0	2.5
Zero Rank (No change)	3	-	-
Total	20		

Source: SPSS 30.0. versión

Table 4. Test statistics

Test statistics	Value
Wilcoxon ZZ statistics	-2.943
PP value (bilateral test)	0.003
Significance level (αα)	0.05

Source: SPSS 30.0. version

Discussion

Table 3 shows the results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, which was used to assess differences in English vocabulary level between college students before and after the intervention. Of the 20 students analyzed, 15 presented an increase in their scores in the posttest, with a total sum of ranges of 240.0 and a mean range of 16.0, which indicates a general trend towards improvement in technical vocabulary. Only 2 students experienced a decrease in their scores, while 3 showed no significant changes. These results show that most participants benefited from the training program, which supports effectiveness of the intervention in English vocabulary development.

Table 4 provides the Wilcoxon test statistics, with a Z value of -2.943 and a "p" value of 0.003. This p-value is significantly lower than the established significance level (α

= 0.05), indicating that there are statistically significant differences between the pretest and posttest scores. This evidence suggests that the functional training program had a positive and significant impact on increasing students' English vocabulary. Therefore, it is concluded that the intervention is not only effective but can also be a valuable strategy to improve the learning of technical vocabulary in academic and professional contexts.

The results obtained in this study highlight the effectiveness of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in improving English vocabulary among university students. The average score in the posttest reached an average of 69.0, which represents a significant increase of 23.25 points compared to the pretest, which was 46.5. This improvement not only reflects a quantitative advance in learning, but also a qualitative transformation in the way students perceive and apply the vocabulary learned. When analyzing the variations in the scores, it was observed that 15 of the 20 students showed notable progress, thus evidencing the high rate of effectiveness

of the TPR in teaching technical and general vocabulary. This finding aligns with previous research, such as that of Jazila and Megawati (2024) and Baiq et al. (2022), who highlight how TPR improves students' perceptions of their vocabulary mastery, creating a more dynamic and participatory learning environment.

TPR, by integrating movement and verbal learning, not only facilitates the retention of new words, but also promotes active and engaged learning, essential aspects for the development of effective language skills. The kinesthetic interaction observed in this study resonates with the results obtained by Ramadhani and Sulistyani (2023), who concluded that TPR contributes significantly to improving students' speaking Furthermore, the increase in vocabulary scores can be attributed to the practical nature of the TPR, which allows students to contextualize and apply words in real situations, thus strengthening their understanding and use of the language. Research such as that of Ulfah and Rustipa (2023) and Wang et al. (2019) have found that the use of TPR, especially when combined with meaningful classroom interactions, provides a rich context that the learning enhances experience vocabulary mastery. These studies suggest that the implementation of innovative teaching methods, such as TPR, could be key to addressing contemporary educational needs, fostering students' motivation and interest in learning a second language.

In the context of this study, it is observed that the use of TPR is not only beneficial for vocabulary learning, but also has positive implications on student motivation and engagement. This phenomenon is corroborated by previous research, such as that of Mariyam and Musfiroh (2019), which demonstrates how TPR can be particularly effective in teaching preschool children, but whose effectiveness can also extend to more adult populations. By promoting an active and dynamic learning

environment, **TPR** encourages greater retention of information and more effective application of acquired language skills. Likewise, studies such as those by Hafidah et al. (2020) and Hafidah and Dewi (2019) suggest that TPR is not only applicable in early childhood education, but that its principles can be adopted in broader contexts to enrich language learning at various educational stages. In this sense, evidence suggests that methodologies focused on physical movement, such as TPR, should be considered by educators as a viable strategy to improve the teaching and learning of English, thus establishing path towards a the implementation of pedagogical practices. more effective and participatory contemporary educational environments.

Conclusions

This study shows the effectiveness of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in teaching vocabulary in English, particularly in the context of functional training in university students from Guayaquil. The results obtained show a notable increase in student performance, with an average increase of 23.25 points in the post-test compared to the pre- test. This progress not only indicates a substantial improvement in the retention and application of the vocabulary learned, but also reflects a positive change in the students' perception of their ability to use the language in practical situations, thus evidencing a direct impact on their self-confidence. linguistics.

Detailed analysis of the results suggests that TPR encourages active and participatory learning, resulting in greater motivation and engagement on the part of students. By integrating physical movement into the learning process, TPR facilitates the connection between vocabulary and its context of use, which enhances not only comprehension but also the effective application of words in everyday

situations. This multisensory approach aligns with contemporary pedagogical trends that emphasize the importance of experiential and student-centered learning, contributing to a more dynamic and effective educational environment. Furthermore, the findings of the study provide empirical evidence that supports implementation of TPR as a viable pedagogical strategy in language teaching at higher levels. This methodology is distinguished by offering a didactic approach that combines cognitive and physical aspects, which translates into more holistic learning. Educators who implement TPR can see not only improvements in academic performance, but also in active student participation, which ultimately enriches the teaching-learning process.

In conclusion, the application of TPR in teaching English vocabulary not only improves academic performance, but also contributes to development of essential communication skills in an increasingly interconnected world. The adoption of innovative methodologies such as TPR represents a significant step forward towards improving learning outcomes university contexts, and its implementation can be considered a crucial step in preparing students to face the challenges of the global labor market. This study, therefore, not only highlights the effectiveness of TPR, but also invites future researchers and educators to explore and expand its use in various areas of language learning, ensuring a comprehensive approach addresses the linguistic needs of contemporary learners.

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658

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