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**ENGLISH MAJOR**

**MODALITY: RESEARCH REPORT**

**THEME:**

Total Physical Response (TPR) method to develop the English listening skill in EFL students

Research report before obtaining the bachelor degree in National and Foreign language Pedagogy, English Major

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## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

Poalacin Pilaguisin Alicia Maribel, with citizenship card No. 1753798048, Aysalla Guanoluisa David Fernando, with citizenship card No. 1724478563 declare to be authors of the present RESEARCH PROJECT: **“TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) METHOD TO DEVELOP THE ENGLISH LISTENING SKILL IN EFL STUDENTS”**, being Fabiola Soledad Cando Guanoluisa, MSc., Tutor of the present work; and, I expressly exempt the Technical University of Cotopaxi and its legal representatives from possible claims or legal actions.

Furthermore, I certify that the ideas, concepts, procedures and results expressed in this research work are my sole responsibility.

Pujilí, August 22, 2024



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## ENDORSEMENT OF THE TUTOR OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

As Tutor of the Research Project on the title:

**TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) METHOD TO DEVELOP THE ENGLISH LISTENING SKILL IN EFL STUDENTS**", by Alicia Maribel Poalacin Pilaguisin; David Fernando Aysalla Guanoluisa, from the career of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages, I consider that said Research Report is worthy of the endorsement of approval by complying with the technical standards, translation and formats provided, as well as it has also incorporated the observations and recommendations proposed in the pre-defense.

Pujilí, August 21, 2024



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ENDORSEMENT OF APPROVAL OF THE DEGREE TRIBUNAL


As the Readers' Tribunal, approve the present Research Project according to the regulations issued by the Technical University of Cotopaxi, and by the Pujilí Extensión; because, the applicants: Alicia Maribel Poalacin Pilaguisin; David Fernando Aysalla Guanoluisa, with the title of the Research Project: **“TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE (TPR) METHOD TO DEVELOP THE ENGLISH LISTENING SKILL IN EFL STUDENTS”** , has considered the recommendations issued timely and meets the sufficient merits to be submitted to the act of substantiation of the degree work.

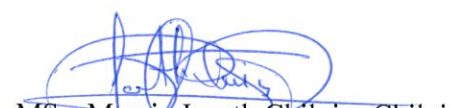
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Alicia and David

## DEDICATION

I would like to thank God, my creator and guide, who has been my fundamental pillar and source of inspiration in every moment of my life. Thank you for your love, wisdom and strength. To my dear mother, Carmelina, for your unconditional love and constant support. To my father, Marco, whose influence on my life has been profound and significant, teaching me to be a strong, brave and determined woman, despite the distance and circumstances that have kept us apart. To my siblings, for your companionship and encouragement in times of challenge. To my aunt Josefa, who has been a mother to me; no matter the distance, you will always be in my heart and in my achievements. To my family, for being my source of inspiration and strength. To my boyfriend, for your patience and understanding during moments of intense dedication. To my friends, for your friendship and support in times of celebration and overcoming. And to my professors, for your guidance and direction in my academic training. With gratitude and love, I dedicate this thesis to all of you who have been fundamental to my personal and academic growth. Without your support, this achievement would not have been possible.

Alicia

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate my thesis mainly to God for giving me the necessary strength to complete this goal. With much love to my mother, the feistiest and strongest person I can know, who pushes me to be better every day and helps me get up after every fall. To my family for providing me with moral support and for accompanying me in every step I take in the search to be a better person and professional. Also, to my professors at the Technical University of Cotopaxi who have helped me grow professionally. And finally, to those who did not believe in me, with their attitude they managed to make me gain more momentum.

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**THEME:** Total Physical Response (TPR) method to develop the English listening skill  
in EFL students

**Authors:**

Poalacin Pilaguisin Alicia Maribel  
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**ABSTRACT**

In teaching English to preschool children, the TPR method is presented as an effective alternative by combining physical actions and body movement with the principles of natural language acquisition. This research analyzes the use of the Total Physical Response method for the development of listening skills in students from 3 to 4 years of age in a private English course in San Felipe of Latacunga in 2024. Triangulation was used as a method of data analysis, combining various sources of information to obtain a more complete view of the phenomenon studied. The research techniques included direct observation, for which a teacher's diary, observation sheet and reflection form were used. Triangulation was used as a method of data analysis, combining various sources of information to obtain a more complete view of the phenomenon studied. The research techniques included direct observation, for which a teacher's diary, observation sheet and reflection form were used. An increase in their ability to understand and respond to short instructions in English was observed, as well as increased motivation and participation in the activities. In addition, some challenges were identified, such as the need to adapt activities to the different learning rhythms of each girl and the importance of having varied and attractive teaching materials, so it is concluded by pointing out that the TPR method is effective for the development of listening skills in preschool children.

**Keywords:** Auditory ability, cognitive and motor development, real objects, toddlers, TPR method.

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**RESUMEN**

En la enseñanza de inglés para niños en preescolar, el método TPR se presenta como una alternativa efectiva al combinar las acciones físicas y el movimiento corporal con los principios de la adquisición natural de la lengua; Esta investigación analiza el uso del método de Respuesta Física Total para el desarrollo de la capacidad de escucha en estudiantes de 3 a 4 años de edad de un curso privado de inglés en San Felipe de Latacunga en el año 2024. Se utilizó la triangulación como método de análisis de datos, combinando diversas fuentes de información para obtener una visión más completa del fenómeno estudiado. Las técnicas de investigación incluyeron la observación directa, para lo cual se empleó un diario del profesor, ficha de observación y un formulario de reflexión. Los resultados obtenidos sugieren que la implementación del método TPR tuvo un impacto positivo en el desarrollo de la habilidad auditiva de las niñas. Se observó un aumento en su capacidad para comprender y responder a instrucciones cortas en inglés, así como una mayor motivación y participación en las actividades. Además, se identificaron algunos desafíos, como la necesidad de adaptar las actividades a los diferentes ritmos de aprendizaje de cada niña y la importancia de contar con materiales didácticos variados y atractivos, por lo que se concluye señalando que el método TPR es efectivo para el desarrollo de la habilidad escucha en niños de preescolar

**Palabras clave:** Acciones físicas, habilidad auditiva, instrucciones cortas, método TPR, movimiento corporal.

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Appendix 5: Lesson plan based on TPR method

## 1. General Information

**Theme:** Total Physical Response (TPR) method to develop the English listening skill in EFL students

**Starting Date:** May, 2024

**Ending Date:**

**Place of Research:** Latacunga, Cotopaxi

**Sponsoring Faculty:** Pujilí

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**Knowledge area:** Education

**Research line:** Education, Communication and professional development of the English teacher.

**Research sub-line:** pedagogical, didactic, curricular, and inclusive practices in the areas of knowledge.

## 2. Problem Statement

Childhood is part of the formative stage of the human being because the brain of children in their early childhood, between 0 and 5 years old, is the period of most accelerated brain development and “where cognitive skills are generated within various cognitive domains.” Swider-Cios et. to the. (2023, p. 1) such as: memory, reasoning, problem solving or thinking. In this regard Piaget (2002) stated that in early childhood children's brains act like a sponge for its capacity to absorb information from their environment at an accelerated rate, which facilitates the acquisition in a natural way of a second language, similar to learning the mother tongue (Scheffler & Dominska, 2018).

At a global level, UNESCO (2003) and OECD (2008) suggest starting English language teaching at an early age, highlighting that currently, teaching practices in English continue to be applied that are ineffective and do not meet development needs of the basic abilities for the acquisition of a second language, which in the preschool stage, represents a great challenge for the teacher because he must capture and maintain the attention of the children in the short time allowed due to the limited attention capacity that they lend, because they are easily distracted or lose interest.

Children learn better through activities and associate their vocabulary with their actions, therefore, one of the biggest problems is the lack of use of didactic materials according to age because it does not generate interaction, there is no variety and adaptability to the topics treated, as stated by Li (2010) when he points out that children demonstrate greater understanding through what they see. Learning English in children in Latin America is increasingly necessary, despite the efforts made by the region, the educational system is not generating the necessary level of English proficiency, schools are incapable of teaching English classes due to the lack of trained teachers and those who teach English classes, these are of low quality and fail to compensate for deficiencies in the development of basic skills in the acquisition of a language (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).

In this regard, Ram (2014) states that teacher training to teach English to preschool children is scarce; There is only training for teachers from primary school onwards and

they are aimed at linguistic improvement or the specific and adapted methodology to be used according to the school level of basic general education. In Ecuador, the teaching of English at the initial levels does not use specific methods to develop listening skills in preschool children, which represents a constant challenge due to the lack of specialized teachers, limitations in terms of material and technological resources for teaching the language and the lack of clear coherence between the different educational levels, which hinders progression in language learning (Castillo, 2018).

The present study takes place in a private English class for children aged 3 to 4 years, in the San Felipe sector of the city of Latacunga, where little motivation and interest in learning was observed due to the lack of application of appropriate methods according to the age of the children and their specific learning needs.

English classes are held within an unstimulating environment, it is observed that children fail to capture and maintain the attention, they are easily distracted. The topics that are developed are very extensive, abstract and complex to understand the concepts that are being taught because the content is not associated with the children's environment, and they lose interest. The didactic material is not attractive, colorful, adapted and interactive according to age, which generates difficulties for the development of listening skills as a fundamental element to learn and produce a language.

- How the TPR method develops listening skills in students aged 3 to 4 years in a private English course in San Felipe, city of Latacunga?

### **3. Objectives**

#### **3.1 General objective**

To analyze the use of the Total Physical Response method for the development of listening skills in students from 3 to 4 years of age in a private English course in San Felipe of Latacunga in 2024.

#### **3.2 Specific objectives**

1. To set up the theoretical and scientific aspects related to the TPR method in the teaching of the English language to preschool children.
2. To implement lesson plans with TPR in 3-4 years old students in a private English course to develop listening skills.
3. To describe the pre-service teachers' experiences during the use of the TPR method for listening skill in English class.

#### 4. Activities and task system in relation to the objectives proposed

Specific objective	Activities	Verification Means
To set up the theoretical and scientific aspects related to the TPR method in the teaching of the English language to preschool children.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Look for information in books chapters and institutional websites.</li> <li>2. Read and select relevant information for the theoretical framework.</li> <li>3. Classify topics and subtopics to write a draft.</li> </ol>	Theoretical framework
To implement lesson plans with TPR in 3-4 years old students in a private English course to develop listening skills.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collect observer' information</li> <li>2. Collect pre-service teacher' experiences about the use of Total Physical Response to develop listening skills.</li> <li>3. Collect information to feedback and strengthen the development of listening skills.</li> </ol>	Semi-structured observation guide Teacher's Diary  Teacher reflection
To describe the pre service teachers' experiences during the use of the TPR method for listening skill in English class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Based on the positive and negative Asher (2009) of the TPR method to categorize the positive and negative aspects.</li> <li>2. Analyze the results of pre-services teachers' experiences.</li> <li>3. Interpret the analysis of the pre-service's experiences of the application of the TPR method to develop listening skills.</li> </ol>	Triangulation

## **5. Justification**

Research on the TPR method for the Development of listening skills in children aged 3 to 5 years is a necessity since the teaching of English at an early age has become increasingly relevant in the globalized context. However, there are few studies that investigate the effectiveness of the TPR Method in Ecuadorian children, therefore, this research would fill a gap in the existing literature and provide empirical evidence on the applicability of this method in a specific context.

It is important, because the development of listening skills in English at an early age is essential for success in learning foreign languages. The TPR Method, by associating words with physical actions, facilitates the understanding and memorization of vocabulary, which lays the foundation for more solid learning in later stages. In addition, this research can contribute to the improvement of pedagogical practices in teaching English in the first years of schooling in Ecuador.

It is feasible because there is support from the Director of a private English teaching course, so that the researchers can implement the TPR method in 9 classes. The direct beneficiaries of this research are girls aged 3 to 4 years who regularly attend class.

This research is pertinent because it addresses a crucial stage in the cognitive and linguistic development of girls; it focuses on a teaching method that has proven to be effective in other contexts, but requires further research in the Ecuadorian context, the results of this research could serve as a guide for the design of more effective English teaching programs in preschoolers and contribute to the training of future teachers.

## **6. Scientific and technical foundation**

### **6.1. Research background**

There are studies on the use of TPR for the development of listening skills in primary school students, which shows that it is a method widely used in preschool children because it allows the proposed learning results to be achieved; Tandilo Mamma & Sirjon (2014) In this study carried out for the Pendidikan Ganesha University of Indonesia, we analyzed the effectiveness of the TPR (Total Physical Response) method on listening skills of children aged 5-6 years. This research uses a quantitative approach with a type of experimental research that adopts a pre- and post-test design of a group of 15 children selected by the intentional sampling method, the problem being low hearing skills; the technique used was observation and the statistical test to test the hypothesis was the t-test. The main conclusions broadly support the effectiveness of the TPR method not only in developing children's listening skills but also in increasing vocabulary and helping them to use command sentences effectively.

Consequently, the application of the TPR method offers many advantages in learning English by allowing concepts and words to be associated with movements, creating networks of meaning to stimulate long-term memory and develop listening skills. Osorio (2014) in a research carried out in Ecuador, had as the general objective to demonstrate the influence of the Total Physical Response method on the development of listening skills in kindergarten children. A quasi-experimental, quantitative and cross-sectional research design was used. The data collection technique was a survey and direct observation applied to teachers and 40 students of the preparatory level of the first year of parallel basic A and B. The research concludes by pointing out that there is a positive influence of the TPR method on the development of listening skills in kindergarten children, because it facilitates the acquisition of a second language in children.

The TPR method promotes listening skills because it associates words and actions that capture children's interest in learning. This method will be very useful to implement in a private English course where girls have not had previous contact with the teaching of English. In this language, the TPR method will facilitate the comprehension and long-

term retention of vocabulary by generating playful and highly meaningful learning environments. According to Moreno (2021), the Technical University of Cotopaxi focused on determining the influence of the TPR method on the development of English speaking skills in the first year of basic general education students at 'Grandes Genios' Educational Institution. It is a descriptive, explanatory, documentary and field study, due to its nature it was qualitative, the technique for collecting information was the checklist focused on the level of English speaking skills of the students and a survey of teachers. To know the reality of the environment. The results obtained from this research allow us to propose the creation of a brochure that contains activities based on the TPR method focused on children from 5 to 6 years old, which turned out to be effective for the development of oral skills.

The research reviewed shows the effectiveness of the TPR method in the development of basic English language learning skills, enabling adaptation to all ages and educational levels, which is why it is expected to develop significant learning at a rarely applied level of teaching, where Teaching English is a constant challenge due to the design of topics and teaching materials that capture interest in the little time that children allow.

## **6.2. Theoretical framework**

### **6.2.1. Learning English at an early age**

Children from an early age have the mental capacity to interact with a foreign language, but it is necessary to develop grammatical features, phonetic conventions, alphabet and vocabulary (Hounhanou, 2020) therefore, the teaching of English at an early age has gained great relevance in recent years in response to contemporary trends in English as a global language (Alenezi, et. al, 2022). This practice is based on the idea that children are linguistic sponges and that, by exposing them to a second language from an early age, their acquisition is facilitated and important cognitive skills are developed; that is why teaching must be playful and experiential, taking advantage of children's natural curiosity and energy (Tandilo Mamá & Sirjón, 2024).

According to Alcivar & Macias (2023) Some techniques and methods that are recommended are the following:

- **Games and songs:** They are an excellent tool for language development especially in children, games encourage them to participate and include themselves in groups to socialize, role plays can also be used, children's songs and rhymes are fundamental tools to introduce vocabulary and basic grammatical structures (Fikroni, 2022).
- **Stories and stories:** The rhythm of a song improves children's linguistic fluency; there are some benefits of using songs as a means of teaching English vocabulary and improving pronunciation (Listyani, 2020).
- **Manual activities:** Making crafts, drawings, and projects related to the class topic reinforces learning and encourages creativity (Asher & Price, 1967).
- **Visual and manipulative material:** The use of images, objects, and tactile materials facilitates understanding and makes learning more attractive (Fikroni, 2022).
- **Immersion techniques:** We seek to create an environment where English is the main language, using songs, games and activities in this language throughout the session.
- **TPR (Total Physical Response) Method:** Used to teach vocabulary and skill development through physical actions (Asher & Price, 1967).
- **Educational Technology:** through applications, videos and digital platforms to complement the activities and make learning more interactive.

### 6.2.2. Importance of Teaching English in Kindergarten

Learning English at an early age stimulates the child's cognitive development, improves memory, attention and problem-solving skills, as well as facilitating learning because young children have a greater ability to acquire languages naturally and effortlessly (Alcívar & Macías, 2023).

In this sense, one of the challenges in this task is teacher training, to provide the preschool child with an optimal and safe emotional and social environment; using playful, fun pedagogical methods and strategies that capture children's interest in learning. A trained teacher will effectively manage the classroom, organizing children to achieve natural and meaningful learning from the first years of life.

### 6.2.3. Total Physical Response Method

Total Physical Response is a method of language teaching, based on the idea that a language is most effectively learned when it is linked to specific movements or physical actions. Richards and Rodgers (1986) define it as a “language teaching technique built around the coordination of speech and action” (p. 167). The “basic principles that guide TPR learning are based on developmental psychology, learning theory, brain research, and humanistic pedagogy” (Richards & Rodgers 1986, p. 73). Both body movement and speech are innately linked in the brain, so by using Total Physical Response, the child is being taught to speak a second language as if it were his or her mother tongue, observing, imitating and responding to what he or she sees and hears (Vera, 2014).

The brain processes information more quickly and accepts it as reliable if listening is followed by movement (right-brain learning), without speaking or translating (left-brain learning), children should remain silent to avoid “brain overload”: by responding silently to commands, the new language (phonology, vocabulary, grammar, and semantics) is internalized simultaneously, without any analysis, and speaking, reading, and writing develop after having created a solid foundation has been created through TPR method (Asher & Price, 1967). The aforementioned principles are based on three learning hypotheses:

1. **The existence of a bioprogram:** Language learning follows an innate pattern, starting with listening comprehension and evolving towards oral production.
2. **Brain lateralization:** The Total Physical Response takes advantage of the functions of the right hemisphere to facilitate language acquisition and reduce cognitive load.
3. **The importance of context:** As in first language acquisition, the Total Physical Response method creates a meaningful and stress-free context, favoring language comprehension and production (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, 74-75).

The TPR method was developed by Asher (1968) to naturally mimic language learning, and focuses on teaching how to speak and communicate (Putri, 2016). It achieves this through gradual exposure to new words and grammatical structures, building on what has

already been learned. As part of communicative teaching, TPR promotes the use of language to interact in a meaningful way, reducing the importance of formal grammatical explanations. While very useful for acquiring the basics of a language, especially for children, its approach may not be sufficient to develop more advanced speaking skills (Cameron, 2008)

In this regard, Mahmud (2018) states that the main role of the TPR method is the presentation of physical actions about the activity being taught, which facilitates the process of teaching and learning a second language in preschool children.

### **6.2.3.1 Importance of Total Physical Response**

Among the important points for the application of the TPR method in the teaching of English to kindergarten children, Castillo (2018) argues that listening comprehension is about understanding what someone says, not just hearing the words. It helps children grasp the meaning of what they hear and connect it to their own thoughts. Good listeners can understand, remember, talk about, and even retell stories. This is a crucial skill to learn early on because it helps children become better communicators as they grow up; ultimately, listening comprehension is a foundational skill that allows children to build a solid foundation for language and communication development. By understanding and processing oral information, children develop the foundations to become communicative and successful individuals in their academic and social lives.

### **6.2.3.2 Positive aspects**

Total Physical Response is an effective method for teaching a second language, especially to young children. It is based on the idea that students learn best when they combine language with physical actions. According to Asher (2009), some of the main positive aspects include:

**Natural and fun learning:** By associating words with physical actions, learning becomes more intuitive and entertaining, similar to how children learn their native language.

**Increased memory:** The ability to memorize new information is increased by applying the TPR method.

**Encourages active participation:** Children are constantly engaged in activities, which keeps their attention and motivates them to participate.

**Develops listening comprehension:** The emphasis on understanding spoken commands without the pressure of speaking significantly improves your listening skills.

**Inclusivity:** It is effective for students with learning difficulties, as it combines physical learning with verbal learning.

**Reduces anxiety:** By avoiding early oral production, a relaxed and stress-free learning environment is created.

**Stimulates creativity:** TPR activities are varied and allow children to express their creativity through movement.

**Brevity:** Sessions should be short and varied to keep children's attention.

**Repetition:** Repetition is key to language acquisition, so it is important to repeat commands and actions several times.

Asher (2009) considers the TPR Method a very valuable tool for teaching English to preschool children. By being aware of its strengths and limitations, teachers can take full advantage of this method and create a stimulating and effective learning environment.

### **6.2.3.3 Negative aspects**

The TPR method, while effective for teaching English to young children, has several disadvantages:

**Limitation in oral expression:** The focus on comprehension can delay the development of speaking skills.

**Difficulty teaching abstract concepts:** Concepts such as time, space or emotions can be difficult to represent through physical actions alone.

**Requires a large repertoire of commands:** teachers must have a wide vocabulary and a good ability to create new activities.

**It can be repetitive:** If activities are not varied, children may lose interest.

**Age of Students:** TPR is particularly effective with young children, but can be adapted for students of all ages.

These negative aspects must be identified by the teacher in order to apply immediate solutions in order to achieve the proposed learning objectives.

#### **6.2.3.4 The principles of Total Physical Response**

This method is particularly beneficial for children, as it satisfies their innate curiosity and need for physical activity, making the learning experience enjoyable and effective. According to Baiza (2020) the TPR method has several principles for teaching such as:

- The meaning in the target language is conveyed through actions, and memory is triggered by the students' responses.
- Students acquire an understanding of the language before they begin to speak.
- Students can learn part of the language through physical movement.
- Observing actions and actively participating in them facilitates learning.
- It is essential that students experience success, as this reduces anxiety and enhances learning.
- Language learning is more effective when it is done in a fun way.
- Spoken language should be prioritized over written language.

- Students will begin to speak when they feel ready (Baiza, 2020).

### **6.2.3.5. Total Physical Response in the English class**

The use of TPR as a method of teaching the English language allows for participatory work, where the teacher is the model to imitate, both in their physical actions and in the instructions given in order to acquire knowledge (Er, 2013); (Ummah, 2016). In this sense, it is necessary that the teacher and the student be in the classroom so that they can listen to and observe the movements or actions that the teacher performs, in such a way that learning is generated (Singh, 2011).

Instructions designed on a specific topic through this method must be done using letter figures, with steps that are easy to imitate in the teaching process so that learning is more fluid (Verma & Padun, 2021). To do this, the teacher must create a comfortable learning atmosphere to enhance learning. Gestures must be combined with listening comprehension to increase long-term retention.

### **6.2.3.6. Techniques Total Physical Response**

Flashcards and real objects are extremely valuable tools in the implementation of the TPR method, especially in teaching English to preschool children. These visual and tactile resources provide a clear and understandable context for oral language, facilitating the acquisition of new words and grammatical structures. According to Asher (1969) and Larsen-Freeman (2004), flashcards and real objects offer the following advantages in the teaching-learning process:

**Connection between the auditory and the visual:** By associating sounds with specific images or objects, a stronger neural connection is created, which facilitates the retention of auditory information. This connection is essential in the early stages of language development.

**Meaningful learning:** Young children learn best when activities are meaningful and relevant to their everyday lives. Real objects and flashcards create authentic and engaging learning situations.

**Promoting attention:** Using these visual resources helps to maintain children's attention, especially in the early stages of learning when their concentration capacity is limited.

**Developing comprehension:** By listening to words and phrases associated with images or objects, children develop the ability to understand the meaning of language in a specific context.

**Basis for oral production:** Listening comprehension is the basis for oral production. By understanding what they hear, children will be better prepared to express themselves verbally.

#### **6.2.3.7. Role of the teacher**

The Total Physical Response (TPR) method assigns the teacher a fundamental and active role in the teaching-learning process. The teacher not only transmits language knowledge, but also creates an immersive and motivating learning environment where students learn through action and experience.

**The teacher as guide and model:** The teacher acts as a guide who introduces the new language through commands and physical demonstrations. As Larsen-Freeman (2004), points out, the teacher is the model that students imitate. By performing the actions themselves, they provide a clear, visual context for new vocabulary and grammatical structures. This model function is crucial, especially in the early stages of learning, as it allows students to connect language to meaning in direct and tangible ways.

**The teacher as the creator of a meaningful learning environment:** The teacher is responsible for creating a safe and fun learning environment where students feel comfortable experimenting and making mistakes. According to Asher (1969), TPR is

based on the idea that language learning should be a stress-free and enjoyable experience. The teacher achieves this by using a variety of activities and games that involve the body and mind, making learning more engaging and memorable. Furthermore, the teacher must be able to adapt the activities to the needs and interests of the students, thus ensuring that everyone feels involved and motivated.

**The teacher as a facilitator of communication:** The teacher not only transmits language, but also facilitates communication between students. By creating opportunities for students to interact with each other using the new language, the teacher encourages the development of their communication skills. For this reason, TPR is based on the idea that language is best learned when it is used to communicate in a meaningful way

#### **6.2.3.8. Student Role**

The Total Physical Response (TPR) method assigns the student an active and participatory role in the process of learning a foreign language. Unlike traditional methods where the student is a passive receiver of information, in TPR the student becomes a main actor who learns by doing.

**The Student as Imitator:** In the early stages of TPR, the student focuses primarily on mimicking the teacher's actions in response to verbal commands. This physical imitation is essential to connect the meaning of words with corresponding actions. As he points out Asher (1969), This connection between language and action facilitates the acquisition of vocabulary and grammatical structures in a natural and intuitive way.

**The student as communicator:** As students acquire more vocabulary and feel more confident, they begin to use language to communicate with their peers and with the teacher. TPR encourages interaction between students, creating a collaborative learning environment where they can practice language in real situations (Larsen-Freeman, 2004).

**The student as a constructor of meaning:** The student is not only an imitator or a communicator, but also an active constructor of meaning. By performing the actions and

participating in the activities proposed by the teacher, the student creates his or her own connections between language and his or her personal experience. This individualized construction of meaning is what makes learning more lasting and meaningful for each student.

### **6.2.3.9 Listening comprehension in children**

To develop auditory competence in preschool children, it is essential to implement an approach that combines auditory stimulation, interaction and the use of visual and gestural resources. Below are several key aspects of the process, supported by information from the sources consulted.

Teaching children specific listening strategies, such as attention to keywords and content prediction, is critical. Vandergrift (2020) mentions that the explicit teaching of listening strategies can increase the effectiveness of listening comprehension in students; This implies that educators must guide children on how to listen actively and effectively. So, developing listening competence in preschoolers learning English as a second language involves a comprehensive approach that combines auditory stimulation, playful activities, use of visual resources, development of listening strategies, and continuous assessment.

By implementing these strategies using the TPR method, teachers can facilitate more effective and meaningful learning (Asher, 2009). By listening to instructions and performing actions, children develop their ability to understand the language in a natural way.

### **6.2.3.10 Develop listening comprehension through TPR**

The Total Physical Response (TPR) method offers a solid framework for developing listening ability in foreign language learners. By directly connecting oral language with physical actions, TPR creates an immersive context that facilitates listening comprehension (Asher, 1969). The practical activities that the TPR method uses to develop listening skills can be the following:

**Listen and point:** The teacher names an object or shows an image on a flashcard and the children must point to it.

**Flashcards:** Place them face down and the teacher names a picture, the children must find it and turn it over. The use of images can also complement physical actions and facilitate understanding.

**Stories with objects:** Real objects are used to create simple stories. The teacher narrates the story while manipulating the objects and the children listen attentively.

**Gesture songs:** Children's songs with gestures are used to encourage listening comprehension and active participation.

**Real objects:** refers to concrete and very interesting objects for children used in the classroom to teach English, they facilitate the connection between vocabulary and the real world; by manipulating and exploring objects such as kitchen parts, animals, fruits, parts of the human body, school supplies, children build their own knowledge in an active and meaningful way; in this regard, Harmer (2007) states that real objects turn the learning process into a more dynamic and enriching experience. Therefore, the use of flashcards and real objects in the TPR method is a highly effective strategy for developing listening skills in young children. By providing a visual and tangible context for language, these tools facilitate understanding, retention, and enjoyment of learning a new language.

**Gestures and actions with TPR:** gestures and actions are fundamental in teaching the English language to children, because they facilitate the assimilation of vocabulary teaching more effectively; this strategy that combines narration with pantomime has proven to be effective in consolidating the development of listening skills (Lalaleo, 2022).

**Audio and video:** the combination of images and sound offers a richer learning experience than audio, however, its effective use in the classroom requires a careful selection of materials and the implementation of appropriate methodologies, according to the age of the children and their level of learning in order to guarantee their motivation,

active participation and capture their interest. Techniques such as playing videos without sound, fast-forwarding extracts or freezing images can encourage children's active participation, stimulating their ability to predict, describe and analyze the visual and auditory content presented (Harmer, 2007).

## 7. Methodology

### 7.1 Research Approach

This study uses qualitative research, which for Hammersley (2013) involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions or experiences, as well as data on experiences or emotions with the meanings that people attribute to them; for this reason, the results are expressed in words. This approach allowed researchers to analyze the experiences of future teachers after the application of TPR to develop listening skills in children aged 3 to 4 years, during the 9 sessions taught in an English class.

### 7.2. Research Method

In this work, the action research method was implemented in the classroom, which is defined by Long (2024) as a process carried out by educators that allows them to reflect on their teaching practice, identify problems in the teaching-learning process and systematically apply solutions. For Meesuk, et. al. (2020) it is a constructive search, where the researcher builds his knowledge on specific issues through planning, action, evaluation and reflection of the teaching experience in order to improve educational practice. This method is characterized by being cyclical and reflexive, meaning that it is repeated and adjusted as the research progresses. The steps are as follows according to Atweh et. al. (2022):

- a) **The problem identification stage:** In this phase, the specific learning needs of the girls in the classroom were identified and areas for improvement were detected. This involved observing how the girls interact and what difficulties they face during the English language teaching-learning process. Lack of motivation, disinterest in learning, lack of attention, lack of concentration, confusion in relating the object to the concept and difficulties in developing listening skills in English were observed.
- b) **The Planning stage:** Once the problem was identified, the researchers proceeded to analyze articles, journals from scientific platforms; undergraduate theses from

university repositories that offer the Language Pedagogy degree with topics on teaching the English language with the TPR method; books by authors of the TPR method such as Asher & Price (1967) to learn how the TPR method is implemented, its positive and negative aspects as well as the principles in applying it to children, in order to implement what was planned correctly.

Based on scientific literature, the content and topics to be taught were selected; actions were designed through movements, visual, auditory and interactive teaching materials such as flashcards and real objects were prepared to motivate children's interest in learning the English language.

- c) The Implementation stage:** In this phase, the researchers presented an informed consent form to the parents of the participating girls, informing them of the research objectives and the procedures to be carried out (Anexo 1).

As planned, nine lesson plans of 30 minutes each were implemented; during the implementation, the researcher observed how the teaching-learning process developed and filled out the teacher's diary (Annex 2). Next, the observation form was filled out with the purpose of collecting the positive and negative aspects as indicated by Asher (2009), to categorize the findings of the class taught (Anexo 3).

- d) The reflection stage:** At this stage, the information from the teacher's diary was analyzed, where the positive and negative aspects were recorded at the end of each lesson; the observation sheet that records the teacher's first impressions and experiences was also analyzed; Using the principles of the inductive-deductive method and the approaches analyzed during the implementation of the TPR method, the teacher reflection form was completed, the purpose of which was to identify strengths and weaknesses of the teaching-learning process at the end of each lesson (Anexo 4).

### **7.3. Research context and participants**

The research was conducted in a private English course in the San Felipe sector of the city of Latacunga, Cotopaxi province. The course included the participation of four girls who were selected through the convenience sampling method, which consists of collecting data in which participants are selected based on their availability and accessibility to the researcher (Golzar & Tajik, 2022).

This technique was especially relevant in the context of the research with 3 to 4 year old girls, where the ease and commitment of attendance of the girls to the English course was determinant for the selection; in this case, parents played a fundamental role in the implementation of the research project.

The participating girls have had no previous experience in teaching the English language in any formal or informal context, their attention span is still limited and their way of thinking is mainly concrete; at this age, children are learning to form simple sentences and their vocabulary is constantly growing, so it is essential to use a methodology such as TPR that involves physical actions, real objects and games so that they develop the listening skill of English as a second language in a natural and fun way. Specific characteristics of the participating population are described below.

The first girl, aged 4 years and 11 months, has nervous tics when she is anxious, she is affectionate, a little shy and respectful. The second girl is 4 years and 8 months old, she is very active, with skills for running, jumping and playing; in addition, she is affectionate, respectful, sociable and caring. The third girl is 3 years and 8 months old; she manipulates and handles small objects without difficulty and with great skill; she is sociable, respectful, charismatic and playful. The fourth girl, 3 years old, does not socialize easily with strangers.

#### 7.4. Data analysis

For the analysis of the information, the triangulation approach used in qualitative research was used. It consists of combining multiple data sources, methods, researchers or theories to study the same phenomenon. According to Patton (1999) Triangulation is a qualitative research process that consists of contrasting data from different sources to obtain a deeper and more reliable understanding of a problem. This technique allows you to verify the coherence of the information and strengthen the validity of the results. In this study, the researchers combined data from the teacher's journal, observation sheet, and reflection form.

The data collection technique was direct observation, which consists of actively observing the interactions, teaching methods and behavior of the girls; observation allowed collecting data in real time, reflecting on the teaching practice to improve the teaching-learning process. For this purpose, three instruments were used, which are detailed below:

- **Teacher's diary:** It was used as a personal recording tool where daily experiences in the classroom were documented, observations on children's behavior, participation and development of physical actions and planned movements, their pedagogical decisions, the challenges encountered, providing an internal view of their experience and identification of patterns in their practice.
- **Observation sheet:** It objectively reflects classroom interactions using teaching materials and children's behavior in implementing the TPR method. It analyzes in detail the activities carried out and certain aspects of the process.
- **Teacher reflection form:** It consists of a more structured reflection on specific aspects of the class, such as: description of positive and negative aspects, interpretation, generalization and improvement plan.

By combining these three instruments, a triangulated approach was achieved for the analysis and interpretation of results, which allowed obtaining a more complete and in-depth view of the teaching-learning process implemented through the TPR method in teaching English to children aged 3 to 4 years.

## **8. Analysis and Discussion of the Results**

To answer the research question about pre-service teachers' experiences teaching English to 3- to 4-year-old children using the Total Physical Response method, positive aspects were analyzed from semi-structured observation data, teacher diary, and teacher reflection.

### **POSITIVE ASPECTS**

#### **Comprehension and retention of vocabulary**

##### ***Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:***

*This stage of using school supplies to perform movements helped students better understand vocabulary.*

*All students listen and respond to movements with classroom objects, sometimes making mistakes, but most of the time responding with correct movements.*

*For greater ease, it is advisable to teach 2 to 3 maximum vocabulary since children from 3 to 4 years of age can get confused when teaching several words.*

##### ***Pre-service teacher's diary:***

*I could notice that by saying short sentences the children remembered the vocabulary they had learned, since the children performed each action, for example “**In my bedroom I sleep**” this action taught them with their hands and told them that we are going to sleep and that it was in a “bedroom” that helped them retain the vocabulary.*

*In the pre teaching key vocabulary stage, students were able to identify body parts such as head, shoulders, and legs. Maybe because I presented the vocabulary through toy dolls, it helped to improve vocabulary understanding.*

***Extract from teaching reflection***

*This stage of using flashcards and making movements was more effective because the children finished understanding by making movements based on the vocabulary.*

*In this stage of listening, watching and doing, sentences with real objects were used to teach about school supplies through movements, this helped students better understand the vocabulary.*

The researchers observed that children respond better to teacher instructions when physical actions and real objects are used to teach vocabulary. To improve the association of concepts through action, teaching should be limited to 2-3 words, this significantly facilitates the understanding and retention of vocabulary in children of this age. The teacher's diary shows that the use of flashcards, physical actions and movements allows for the creation of dynamic environments because it not only facilitates the association of concepts with the object but also stimulates the girls' interest in learning. Teacher reflection allows us to observe that the representation of objects, actions or concepts in a concrete way through flashcards facilitates the construction of concrete meanings for words in English, since the repetition of the same words through different physical actions, movements and objects reinforces learning and facilitates the understanding and memorization of vocabulary.

These results suggest that children under 4 years old should be taught a maximum of 2 to 3 words. On the other hand, the implementation of flashcards and physical movements has proven to be an effective strategy in teaching vocabulary, as it allows children to better understand sentences through physical actions. The results collected through the observation sheet confirm the effectiveness of the TPR method in vocabulary comprehension and retention, since children respond correctly to the physical actions given by the future teacher; in this way, it coincides with what Hounhanou (2020)

determined when referring that the TPR method not only allows the development of the listening skill but also unconsciously memorizes vocabulary. Both Li (2010) and Hamer (2007) agree that the use of flashcards stimulates the brain to actively remember visual information, creating stronger neural connections that help retain vocabulary in the long term.

### **Promote pronunciation practice**

#### ***Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:***

*They hold up the flashcards and repeat the name of each object after hearing the phrase that the teacher mentions, for example when she tells them: **When I'm scared, I cover my eyes**, the students only repeat the word scared and hold them up without being asked in the listen and do stage.*

*All children correctly repeat the presentation of the vocabulary: book, pencil, eraser, ruler, book, book, pencil, eraser and ruler.*

*The students continue to repeat words a lot and it can be identified that they respond to the movements, although not all children respond immediately. Girl T: repeats a lot of what Alicia says when showing the fruits during the fruit presentation.*

#### ***Pre-service teacher's diary:***

*The 4-year-old repeats the words and performs the action. She started repeating the words without being asked to repeat them, so I realized that the TPR method can also be used to practice pronunciation.*

*Even using videos with songs in this method helps children practice pronunciation because they began to repeat what the song said while doing the activity.*

### ***Extraction from teaching reflection***

*In this class, students continue to repeat vocabulary a lot even though they are not asked to repeat, in turn repeating vocabulary can also help improve their pronunciation.*

*Students listen, repeat the sentences and perform the movements correctly on the kitchen sentences.*

The researchers interpreted that the girls significantly practice voluntary pronunciation of vocabulary through constant repetition of words. They tend to repeat any word they hear and also respond to gestures, although not all do so immediately. In the same way, the teacher shows that, even without being instructed to repeat the words, they began to do so on their own because they felt motivated to learn. This reaffirms the effectiveness of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method for practicing pronunciation. Even through videos and songs, the children started to repeat what they saw and heard. The teacher's reflection emphasizes the benefits of practicing vocabulary pronunciation for memorization.

These results recommend that constant repetition of words and movements enhances the learning of a second language, as it optimizes the acquisition of pronunciation and vocabulary, making the learning process even more effective and natural. In the words of Kartikasari et al. (2014), “repetition exercises allow students to become aware of the relationship between form, meaning, and language use, and also help them memorize words or phrases and use them in oral exercises” (p. 6). Additionally, Islami (2019) states that “teaching English using songs has many advantages for students when it comes to improving their pronunciation, as it provides knowledge about the differences between British and American pronunciation” (pp. 5-6).

According to Rodríguez (2022), “for many language students (and their teachers), repetition is highly valued, whether it involves repeating vocabulary, grammatical conjugations, sounds, or phrases” (p. 29). Consequently, the TPR method contributes not only to the development of listening skills but also to the voluntary, automatic repetition of vocabulary, which significantly enhances the natural learning of English.

**Promote active participation with action movements.**

***Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:***

*The girls respond correctly to the action given by the teacher, when she repeats the instruction, “peel the banana”- bite the apple.*

*Students are familiar with the topic of numbers and it motivates their interest in learning, which makes it easier to follow the teacher's instructions to perform actions and movements.*

*Students respond very well to movements such as jump times one and also repeat the learned phrase of the numbers.*

*The children enthusiastically imitate Alice's movements as they repeat the number sentences, actively participating and paying full attention to the class.*

*Girls are motivated to learn through movements with real objects and short sentences.*

***Pre-service teacher's diary:***

*I noticed that students pay more attention to the movement activity with the fruits when they see that they are real fruits and not pictures.*

*The students peeled the banana imitating me and repeating the phrase "peel the banana" even the girl K., aged 3, carried out the activities spontaneously and fun.*

*The students showed interest in the class of expressing feelings and emotions because they did it through body language and with fun movements, even after the girls repeated some phrases out loud while performing the action.*

### ***Extract from teaching reflection***

*The "listen and do" stage was carried out correctly, the girls responded to the sentences with movements and body expressions that they associated with the flashcards presented in class about emotions.*

*Using real animal toys was a lot of fun because they associated it with their English vocabulary, repeating the movements of each animal.*

*Using flashcards and doing movements to teach numbers was very effective in getting students to associate them with numbers in English.*

*This action of making movements imitating the teacher was of great help in learning vocabulary through movements.*

The researchers say that students show greater interest and attention when performing physical movements related to the teacher's instructions using real objects during activities. They respond positively to short phrases and enthusiastically repeat the actions, facilitating learning and participation. Similarly, the teacher observes that the girls show more interest in learning with movements and body expressions rather than flashcards. In the same way, the teacher's reflection mentions that associating learning with movements and body expression generates greater interaction, dynamism, and enthusiasm for learning and participating in class.

Additionally, learning about animals through the use of real toys facilitated the identification and imitation of the animal's own movements. The imitation of the teacher provided an auditory reference that the girls imitated. These results indicate that active learning through physical movements and the use of real objects, rather than solely relying on visual materials like flashcards, allows for a more enjoyable and consequently more meaningful learning experience. This is because understanding is facilitated through interaction with the objects. The integration of movement and body expression in the classroom offers multiple benefits for children aged 3 to 4 years. These techniques

promote a more dynamic and effective learning environment. Hamer (2009) supports the idea that movement is a valuable tool in education, especially in the early stages of child development.

### **Facilitate listening understanding**

#### ***Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:***

*The girls perform the movements corresponding to the numbers and respond appropriately to the instructions given during the "listen and do in jumble order" stage. All the girls repeat the movements according to the sentences instructed by the teacher about the fruits.*

*I think the girls gained a better understanding by performing the movements during the emotions lesson in the "listen, watch, and do" stage.*

*This time, the girls do not repeat the sentences that Alice says; instead, they focus more on listening and performing the movements that she demonstrates during school supplies class in the "listen and do in jumble order" stage.*

#### ***Pre-service teacher's diary:***

*The girls easily recognized the objects and understood each sentence, even when they were expressed in a disordered way. They imitated the actions without any problem.*

*The girls participated in activities related to each emotion and managed to relate body expressions with an action. The activities were repeated several times using real movements and facial expressions, completing the activity without difficulty. Each new word was demonstrated with a different action accompanied by various related facial expressions.*

*Upon hearing the word "pencil" the girl T.P began to simulate the action of writing on the table with enthusiasm.*

*The girls listened attentively to each instruction, this helped them generate correct responses by themselves with each sentence I said; for example: "number five, jump five times" upon hearing the instruction they immediately jumped and repeated it out loud.*

### ***Extraction from teaching reflection***

*The "listen and do" stage was carried out correctly, when the instruction was given, the girls immediately responded with the correct action of the fruits.*

*The girls follow instructions without difficulty and execute the animal-related movements effectively.*

*Students understand instructions about emotions very well, correctly performing movements and actions during the "check understanding" stage.*

The researchers noted that the girls respond well to the instructions given by the teacher, understand and correctly perform the movements, and repeat according to the sentences they hear. They focus more on executing the movements without repeating the sentences. Similarly, through imitation and movement, active listening and mechanical recognition of the objects were facilitated. The teacher mentioned that she observes a better understanding of the phrases heard, even when presented in a different order.

The activities are carried out without difficulty, and the girls reproduce actions through their facial expressions. The teacher's reflection refers to the gradual development of the listening skill that the girls acquire as different instructions and movements are presented, accompanied by short sentences and phrases. They respond correctly and follow instructions without difficulty. These results suggest the effectiveness of the TPR method for the gradual development of listening comprehension in children aged 3 to 4 years, as it allows for immediate responses to verbal instructions through movements or body expressions.

This reinforces the connection between language and action, promoting active participation without the pressure to speak immediately (Asher, 2009). Research conducted by Ulfa (2016) and Osorio (2014) has already demonstrated that TPR is effective in teaching English to children, as this is the stage of imitation and action, which are fundamental for learning through movement and body expressions that foster motivation, facilitate listening comprehension, and enhance their ability to follow instructions in English.

### **Flashcards avoid distraction**

#### ***Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:***

*The girls show great interest in the images and in what the teacher says, which encourages their active participation.*

*All the girls pay close attention to the flashcards and Alicia's explanation, staying completely focused and without distractions. The quick presentation of the vocabulary also contributes to their concentration, as I notice that they repeat the vocabulary words without losing attention.*

*All the girls identify the numbers through flashcards in Spanish. However, when they are presented in English, it seems to be something new for them, and they repeat it while listening to Alicia.*

*I think the girls identify numbers through movements, but they have a bit more trouble recognizing them when they are presented in English along with images.*

*During the activity with flashcards, the girls were very receptive and attentive to the topic of emotions, they were not distracted and maintained interest in the topic.*

***Pre-service teacher's diary:***

*The girls showed greater concentration and participation when I used flashcards to introduce them to new vocabulary.*

*Using flashcards during the lesson on feelings and emotions kept the girls interested and reduced distractions, facilitating a more meaningful learning environment.*

*T.P. already knew some numbers in Spanish, and during class she was able to identify the numbers in English. This was possible because I initially presented the numbers using flashcards, supplemented with the help of fingers.*

*The bright colors and clear images on the cards caught the girls' attention, preventing them from getting easily distracted during the numbers lesson.*

***Extraction from teaching reflection***

*The "listen and do" stage was successfully completed using flashcards, along with finger movements, to teach numbers.*

*This strategy of using flashcards combined with movements was very effective in helping the girls relate numbers in English.*

The researchers considered that students show interest and attention towards the images and explanations from the teacher, repeating vocabulary words without distractions, although they sometimes find it a bit difficult to identify concepts using only images. Similarly, the teacher demonstrated that the children were more focused and participative when using flashcards, which helped maintain their interest and avoid distractions. The bright colors and clear images on the cards captured the children's attention during the lesson. The teacher's reflection mentions that the use of flashcards aids in the concrete visualization of numbers, which is fundamental for these girls as they are developing their abstract understanding.

These results indicate that the use of flashcards and movements in teaching the English language is highly effective in maintaining the interest and attention of the girls, thereby facilitating their learning. By displaying the image of the number and pronouncing it in English, a strong connection is created between the visual symbol and the sound, enabling memorization. Flashcards prove to be an effective educational resource that enhances learning by providing visual support and ensuring that the educational process is meaningful for children and students (Harsanty et al., 2020).

### **Enhanced attention and retention through real objects**

#### ***Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:***

*Girls continue to show a keen interest in real toys, which encourages their active participation.*

*Girls work most effectively with real fruit, allowing them to connect learning to tangible experiences.*

*All the girls pay close attention to the real toys and to Alicia's explanation. They are very attentive and repeat the vocabulary enthusiastically.*

*All girls identify the real toys and show curiosity about the use of each kitchen object, which enriches their learning.*

*Girls perform specific movements when using real toys, making it easier for them to understand and retain the content.*

#### ***Pre-service teacher's diary:***

*In my opinion, the girls quickly connected with the activities more easily using real fruits. All the girls imitated the activities that I carried out, which facilitated their learning.*

*In my opinion, better results are achieved by using real objects in the application of this method. For example, girl S., who did not participate in any activities in the previous class, managed to perform all the actions in this session.*

*All the girls, without exception, showed greater enthusiasm during the lesson when they saw the real fruits. In fact, before I could give a clear explanation, they began to spontaneously identify the fruits, calling them by name.*

*The girls showed a higher level of engagement when I used real toys to teach new words related to the animal theme. This hands-on approach made a tangible connection between real objects and English words and their meaning.*

#### ***Extraction from teaching reflection***

*Using real animal toys was a great help for students to identify animals in English and replicate the movements that each one makes.*

*The use of real objects, related to the topic being taught, helped students pay more attention during class*

*Teaching vocabulary with real fruits was very beneficial, the girls were able to manipulate the fruits while listening to each sentence, which provided a real and meaningful context for vocabulary learning.*

*By using real objects, play and exploration situations can be created, which positively reinforces learning.*

The researchers noted that English classes showed that children demonstrate a continuous interest and curiosity in using real toys and work more effectively by repeating vocabulary and movements. Likewise, the teacher evidenced that students correctly associated words with the object; real toys allow girls to interact in a multisensory way with the object, which reinforces the connection between improved attention and retention in a natural

learning context, generating a fun and motivating process. The teacher's reflection mentions that the use of real toys helped students improve their understanding of the subject and repeat the associated movements; real objects fulfilled the objective of capturing attention and avoiding distractions that reduce attention and retention in class. The use of real objects proved to be more effective because an improvement in some students' participation and overall enthusiasm was evident.

Students showed a higher level of engagement when learning new words with real toys. Teacher reflection mentions that the use of real toys helped students improve their understanding of the topic and repeat the associated movements. Real objects increased students' attention in pre-activities using toys from previous topics, allowing for automatic feedback and association of previous knowledge with the new topic. In this regard, Asher (2009) states that the use of toys creates a play environment that facilitates the natural process of language acquisition. Kang (2006) adds that a "show and tell" activity is a perfect way to get students interested in the lesson with their own toys.

### **Active interaction through videos**

#### ***Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:***

*When girls show interest in the video, they begin to move slightly during the "classroom commands" classes at the "listen, watch, and do" stage.*

*At the beginning of the video, students appear entertained and react to movements related to the vocabulary learned about body parts.*

*The video gets students moving a bit and feeling more excited, but not all students respond to the movements when the video is presented.*

***Pre-service teacher's diary:***

*I noticed that students started paying attention when presenting a video in classroom commands during the listen and do stage.*

*The children responded positively to the combination of visual and auditory elements. By presenting songs about body parts through videos, I was able to keep their interest and active participation for a longer period.*

*In addition, the students began to follow the actions and activities that I performed along with the video of the song that said 'head, shoulders, knees and toes.*

*The animations and bright colors of the video captured attention due to the interaction generated, which captured the girls' full attention.*

***Extraction from teaching reflection***

*Students in the "listen, watch, and do" stage pay more attention to the lesson when a video about body parts is presented, which contributes to their learning.*

*The video was very helpful because the students felt more excited to perform the movements they saw and heard through the class commands.*

*The videos with songs facilitated the active participation of the girls, who sang and performed the movements of the body parts with great enthusiasm.*

The researchers interpreted that students are interested in the video during class, that they are entertained and react positively to the vocabulary movements. Although the video encourages them to move a little, not all of them respond in a similar way to the movements presented. For her part, the teacher demonstrated that the students paid attention and responded well to the combination of interactive elements. The videos with songs captured interest and encouraged them to have active participation. The animations

and bright colors of the videos helped to maintain the interest of students, even those who are normally easily distracted. Teacher reflection mentions that students pay more attention and show greater enthusiasm when a video related to the topic being taught is presented.

From the analysis carried out, it can be concluded that the incorporation of technological resources in teaching English to children enriches the traditional learning experience, reinforcing the connection between language and movement, a fundamental principle of the TPR method. Girls are motivated and attracted by the images and sounds of the interactive video, increasing their participation and interest in learning. Additionally, the videos present real-life situations, helping them understand how the phrases are used in different contexts. In this regard, Vidyalyaya (2023) considers that the incorporation of videos in the teaching of English to children aged 3 to 4 years offers significant benefits that improve the learning experience of students, as they generate greater engagement and help them retain attention.

### **Memory enhancement through warm-up.**

#### ***Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:***

*The warm up activity was easy for students, allowing them to identify greetings and farewells simply by moving their hands.*

*The selected warm-up activities were based on a topic from the previous class, which made it easier for students to become willing to learn by using their bodies and remembering class commands.*

*Students follow the teacher's instructions without difficulty and are able to imitate the movements he performs during the warm-up.*

*It was observed that girls showed a notable increase in participation and in their ability to remember words when warm-up games were integrated that combined physical actions with new vocabulary on the topic.*

***Pre-service teacher's diary:***

*The students showed interest when they saw the toys and began to pay attention from the beginning of the class. We started with the game "Simon Says" using the topic of school supplies that we had already reviewed. Since they were familiar with this topic, it was fun for them to participate in the game.*

*At the beginning of the class, I reminded them of what we had learned in the previous session by asking them to sit down and stand up. I think using topics from previous classes makes the warm-up activity easier for the students.*

*I have observed that warm-up games capture children's attention and help them remember previously learned vocabulary, which shows an improvement in word retention.*

***Extraction from teaching reflection***

*Students responded positively to movements related to previously seen topics, which made it easier to carry out the warm-up activity effectively during the class on feelings and emotions.*

*Conducting a warm-up using a topic already reviewed is very practical, it allows students to reinforce what they have learned in previous classes and participate in a more effective warm-up activity.*

*Using warm-up games allowed students to associate vocabulary with specific movements, which not only improved their comprehension, but also their ability to remember the words in later classroom situations.*

The researchers identified that the warm-up activities implemented in class were effective, facilitating the students' identification of greetings and farewells through manual movements. The choice of a previously covered topic allowed the students to carry out the activity successfully, without difficulties in applying the commands learned or in following the teacher's instructions. In addition, the incorporation of games that combined physical actions with new vocabulary led to a significant increase in the children's participation and in their ability to retain words. In the same way, the teacher showed that the teacher's diary documents that students demonstrated high concentration and attention at the beginning of the class, thanks to the implementation of the game "Simon Says", which was based on the previously taught topic.

This familiarity with the content facilitated the active participation of the students, showing that the use of topics from previous classes enhances warm-up activities. In addition, it was observed that warm-up games not only attract children's attention, they also favor the retention of previously learned vocabulary, thus improving their ability to remember words. The teaching reflection mentions that, Students showed a positive response to the movements during the warm-up activity in class, and it also facilitated the use of previously covered topics. This strategy allowed for the reinforcement of previous concepts and optimized the warm-up. In addition, the implementation of warm-up games favored the association of vocabulary with specific movements, which improved both students' comprehension and their ability to retain the words in subsequent classes.

These results advice that integrating pre-teaching and interactive games into warm-up activities not only improves student engagement and attention, but also optimizes their ability to retain and recall vocabulary. These pedagogical practices are essential to creating an effective and dynamic learning environment that fosters both student interest and academic performance. According to Chowdhury (2020) Warm-up activities play a crucial role in enhancing student engagement and energy in the classroom. Their primary purpose is to create a stress-free environment that fosters motivation and encourages active participation, thereby facilitating effective learning.

## **NEGATIVE ASPECTS**

### **Difficulty in teaching a class of different ages**

#### **Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:**

*When working with children aged 3 to 4, it is advisable to teach a maximum of 2 to 3 vocabulary words, to avoid confusion when trying to learn multiple terms at the same time.*

*Working with older students proved to be more effective using this methodology.*

*Teaching children of different ages simultaneously makes it difficult to implement a single teaching material; younger children require more basic and repetitive instructions, while older children need additional challenges to maintain their interest and encourage their learning.*

#### ***Pre-service teacher's extracts:***

*During the class, I observed that children reacted differently to the same activities, which created an uneven learning environment and made it difficult to plan activities.*

*I had a hard time keeping all the children's attention because of the differences in their ages and developmental levels. While some were ready to follow more complex instructions, others were easily distracted by tasks because they did not fully understand. I found that activities that worked well for 4-year-olds turned out to be too challenging for 3-year-olds, leading to misunderstanding in some cases.*

#### ***Extraction from teaching reflection:***

*Three-year-old children do not respond to movements through flashcards, but they do react positively to movements involving real objects or toys.*

*The difference in cognitive and motor development between 3- and 4-year-olds presents challenges in planning activities, with some being too advanced for younger children and too simple for older children*

*The planned activities did not capture the interest of all the children due to their different levels of development*

The researchers interpreted that it is better to teach a reduced vocabulary based on the age of the students, younger children get confused with several vocabularies, while working with 4-year-olds using this methodology is more effective; from which it follows that working with children of different ages makes it difficult to implement learning strategies. In the same way the teacher showed that the children reacted differently to the same activities, creating an uneven learning environment that makes it difficult to achieve learning objectives; three-year-old girls have a shorter attention span and are easily distracted unlike four-year-old boys, who have a longer attention span, allowing them to concentrate on longer tasks, follow detailed instructions and participate in more structured activities.

The teaching reflection mentions that younger children do not respond well to flashcards, but they do respond well to movements with real objects or toys due to their different levels of cognitive and motor development. These results propose making plans limiting the vocabulary to two or three words to avoid confusion when applying the class, in this way, the planned learning objectives would be achieved. Regarding these aspects as mentioned earlier, young learners have limited attention spans. For children aged 5 to 10, it is beneficial to transition quickly between activities. Spending more than 10 to 15 minutes on a single activity can lead to boredom as children tend to lose interest easily (Shein, 2006).

### **Distraction with real toys**

***Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:***

*Using real toys with the TPR method helps to obtain better results in the classroom; however, it can also distract students, sometimes they want to play and do other activities while manipulating the toys.*

*Despite clear instructions, the real toys caused distraction for some children, taking them away from the planned topic and diverting attention from learning English.*

*Using real kitchen-related toys led some girls to focus more on the toy than on the instructions provided for the activity.*

***Pre-service teacher's extracts:***

*I noticed that some girls were distracted by the actual toys during the "listen, watch, and do" stage, which caused them to not pay attention to instructions and get sidetracked from the main activity.*

*In the body parts class, the dolls caused some girls to become distracted, diverting their attention from learning about body parts to playing.*

*I think that giving each kitchen toy to the girls without giving clear instructions was a poor choice; instead of serving as an educational tool, it became a source of distraction during the listen, watch and do stage, which reduced the students' participation during the activity.*

***Extraction from teaching reflection***

*Students are a little distracted by real objects and instinctively want to do other activities.*

*Students manipulate objects, but do not always follow instructions.*

*The distraction caused by real toys made it difficult to manage the class, children became distracted and showed less interest in the proposed educational activities.*

The researchers noted that the use of real toys helps to obtain better results in class, but it also generates distractions in the students. Being so attractive, they become a source of distraction as they invite symbolic play and free exploration. In the same way, the teacher showed that although learning with toys encourages the development of social skills such as cooperation and communication, it is observed that it can generate significant distractions that affect the learning process.

Although TPR is based on physical interaction and imitation, introducing real objects can divert children's attention from the verbal instructions and vocabulary being taught; Handing out toys without clear instructions generated distraction and decreased student participation. The teaching reflection mentions that students are distracted by real objects and tend to do other activities. Although they manipulate the objects, they do not always follow the instructions, generating less interest in educational activities.

These results indicate that the use of real toys allows children to establish an emotional connection with the learning object, facilitating the memorization of vocabulary and the performance of actions; but at the same time it can be a source of distraction, especially if children engage in free play unrelated to the activity, thus losing focus on the learning objective. In this regard, Wulan (2011) points out that toys are very effective tools to advance vocabulary development and introduce new concepts, increasing the probability of acquiring more knowledge, retention and improving their performance in the skills they are expected to master; furthermore, incorporating toys into lessons makes children more eager and committed to learning vocabulary during English classes.

### **Fatigue or disinterest due to the length or complexity of the topic.**

#### ***Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:***

*Girl K appears very distracted and begins to perform activities other than the movements requested in the "classroom commands" class during the "listen and do" stage.*

*It was observed that the 3-year-old girl had difficulty following complex instructions during the activity.*

*Students get confused when there are long sentences when doing activities in a disordered manner about the parts of the house, and it is difficult for them to understand and carry out the movements on their own without the help of the teacher.*

*They respond to the movements, but it is difficult for them to do them without seeing and repeating what the teacher does. It was a class with long sentences and a bit complicated for children of this age.*

*The girls seem tired in this last lesson about the parts of the house and eager to go home soon. The topic is very extensive and a bit complicated for 4-year-olds.*

***Pre-service teacher's extracts:***

*In the class on parts of the house, I noticed students getting confused when imitating the movements indicated in the long and complex sentences 'In my dining room, I eat soup. Three-year-old children do not respond to the movements; I wasn't sure if it was due to shyness or if the method simply does not work with very young children during the classroom commands class.*

*In addition, the girls did not want to do some actions at the beginning of the classroom commands class because they may not have understood the vocabulary.*

***Extraction from teaching reflection:***

*Younger students had difficulty following complex instructions, resulting in confusion and errors when performing movements relevant to the topic.*

*Students become confused when trying to perform the movements indicated with long sentences of the parts of the house, and respond with a movement different from the one in the sentence, which makes it difficult to synchronize the instructions with the actions. Students confuse sounds with movements that the teacher requests, because the phrase requested by the teacher is quite complex.*

The researchers noted that some girls, especially the younger ones, had difficulty following complex instructions because their cognitive development is still in progress and they have short attention spans. Despite responding positively to the requested movements, their interest in the activity is short and even more so when they are given instructions in long sentences. In the same way the teacher showed that Students had difficulty following the movements indicated in long sentences as they seemed distracted or confused but the introduction of real objects and movements facilitated student understanding. The teaching reflection mentions that the younger girls had difficulty following complex instructions, they also had problems with long sentences, responding with movements other than those indicated.

These results propose that children, especially 3-year-old girls, had trouble following complex instructions. Although they responded to the movements, they became confused when using long sentences, making it difficult to understand and execute the movements without assistance. In this regard, according to studies cited by UNICEF (2019), 3-year-old boys and girls may have language development up to 16 months behind their 5-year-old peers, depending on their socioeconomic level.

This means that a 3-year-old girl may have a language equivalent to a 2-year-old girl, which makes it difficult for her to understand and follow complex instructions in English. 3-year-old girls also have a more limited attention span than 4-year-old girls. According to Asher (2009), TPR is based on physical response to verbal commands, which requires sustained concentration. Younger girls may become fatigued more quickly by long sentences and complex topics, losing interest and participation in the activity.

### **Difficulty in topic selection**

#### ***Extracts from the analysis of the peer observation:***

*During the lesson on animals, I observed that the children showed difficulty in maintaining interest, possibly because the topic was not as attractive to them compared to other topics.*

*The students do remember the topics from previous classes, but they get tired easily, which makes it difficult to perform the movements. It was difficult for the teacher to choose topics that have dynamic activities to motivate the girls to learn.*

#### **Pre-service teacher's extracts:**

Lack of experience in working with young children limits the selection of topics appropriate to the age, needs and cognitive development of girls, to teach with the TPR method

The lesson on parts of the house presented challenges, some students were disinterested and had difficulty imitating the activities.

#### ***Extraction from teaching reflection***

*The students were unmotivated and distracted because they were not interested in the subject as it was extensive and a little more complicated for three-year-old students.*

*Selecting topics using the TPR method with preschool children is complicated by the lack of knowledge of working with children aged 3 to 4 years. The teaching method is different from that applied to school children, which makes the selection of topics difficult.*

From the excerpt, it is inferred that the lack of training in the use of teaching strategies for preschoolers limited the appropriate selection of topics according to the children's age, which affected in capturing the attention of 3-year-old girls with long instructions. This situation was a great challenge for the teachers in training. In the same way the teacher

showed that Due to the limitation of selection of topics suitable for the TPR method by the future teacher, inserting activities with simple sentences into the topics, but at the same time attractive to capture the attention of the students.

The teaching reflection mentions that Students were unmotivated and distracted because the topic was extensive and complicated for their age and cognitive development, which led to a lack of understanding of the content. The selection of topics using the TPR method was made difficult by the lack of teaching experience in working with preschoolers. These results advice that future teachers had limitations in selecting topics appropriate to the age and cognitive development of children aged 3 to 4 years due to the lack of specialized knowledge in early childhood strategies for working in these educational sublevels.

According to Yang and Rusli (2011), the key to the success of the early childhood teacher is the availability of effective strategies and adequate teacher training; without training, complex or abstract vocabulary suitable for children aged 3 to 4 years could not be selected, making it difficult to understand and associate words with actions. In addition, the topics chosen may not be relevant to the interests and experiences of children, which would decrease their motivation and participation. This, in turn, would generate confusing learning that does not fit the topic.

## **9. Research impact**

The impacts generated by this research include the need for specialized training for the proper application of the TPR method to develop the ability to listen to English in students aged 3 to 4 in a creative and natural way. This impact is a direct response to the problem of little knowledge of teaching children aged 3 to 4 through the TPR method. Throughout the implementation of the 9 planned sessions, positive and negative aspects generated from the observer's extract, the teacher's diary and the teacher's reflection were categorized.

This work will be of great help to researchers who work with children aged 3 to 4 years, since it contains a wide scientific literature on aspects to take into account for the correct

implementation of the TPR method. Finally, this research motivates future professionals to specialize in teaching English to preschoolers, since working with them is different from what is learned in the university classroom.

## **10. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **10.1. Conclusions**

The TPR Method created by James Asher is based on solid theoretical and scientific sources of learning that explain its effectiveness in language teaching. By leveraging the experiential nature of learning, the connection between language and action, and the principles of Piaget's developmental psychology; The Total Physical Response method offers an innovative and effective alternative for language teaching, especially for young children.

The implementation of lesson plans with the TPR method in girls aged 3 to 4 years in a private English course to develop listening skills had a positive impact, an increase in the ability to understand and respond to short instructions, greater motivation and interest in learn. On the other hand, it represented a challenge for the researchers due to the rigorous selection of topics and teaching material adapted to the age of the children and their environment, to capture the interest in learning within the short attention span that children at this age provide.

The TPR method proved to be an effective tool to develop listening skills in children aged 3 to 4 years in the context of teaching English in a private course. Through action research in the classroom, not only progress in children's listening comprehension was evident, but also the enrichment of teaching practice. The integration of physical movements with short and long verbal instructions created a more dynamic and motivating classroom environment.

## **10.2. Recommendations**

Specialize the teacher to teach English to preschool children because the application of teaching methods and techniques adapted to the environment and age of the children is required. Teaching specialization in preschool education is essential to ensure that children receive a quality education that allows them to develop their full potential. Specialized teachers have the tools and knowledge necessary to create enriching learning environments and promote the comprehensive development of children.

Balancing the spontaneity of the TPR method with a clear and short structure of lesson plans, TPR is a dynamic learning method, it is essential to establish a clear structure in classes so that children feel safe and can anticipate activities. Combining physical actions and body movements with predictable routines and sequences will allow children to fully benefit from the advantages of TPR without losing focus on learning.

Prioritizing interaction and repetition to maximize learning through TPR in children aged 3 to 4 years, it is essential to create a class environment where the interaction between the teacher and students is constant and the repetition of commands and vocabulary is frequent. Through games, songs and physical activities, children will associate English words with concrete actions, thus facilitating language acquisition in a natural and fun way.

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