

Teaching Action Verbs to Young Learners

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Abstract: *All verbs express different occurrences, states, and actions done by a subject in a sentence. Action verbs are the most known verbs which make them the perfect start for all English learners from native speakers to ESL students. Also, teaching action verbs is very helpful for children when they start learn English language. With the help of certain kinds of methods it can be really easy and reasonable. In this case, children these verbs without even thinking about it, it is something that comes naturally to their mind.*

Keywords: action, TPR, learn, verb, game, movement, children, learner, conduct, songs, learning process.

Introduction

All the children in the world has a favorite hobby. Whether it is thinking, running, reading or playing with toys. All of these activities have in common, it can be named action verbs. They are also called “dynamic verbs”. Actually, there are a great number of verbs and action words that children can learn. However, learning the verbs in English may be very difficult for some children, because the verb is such an abstract concept for them to grasp. Children, even young learners may find difficult to study all these words at once. On the other hand, the earlier children start learning about action verbs, the more advantage they will have in their future education.

It is very vital for the little ones to start little by little, learning the most common ones that are frequently used in the daily activities, for example sleep, eat, run, walk, talk. Children usually grasp the meaning of these words without thinking about them. To learn the rest of the verbs which are not used frequently teacher can make this learning process effortless entertaining, and natural. For beginners, parents can think of various tasks which require action verbs and also practice these in the house. Besides this, singing a song and playing games which related to the topic could be very useful to understand new words. It is easy to remember that all young learners can grasp at different paces, so it is best to mix up the teaching techniques and learning activities to get better results.

Materials and methods

The action verbs which are frequently used in everyday life are great to have some practice during the early childhood since the actions they represent can be easily leaned at home. But there is other words that can learn as they grow up, and start incorporating into their vocabulary. Action verbs can be divided into several different categories, they can talk about organizational actions, critical thinking actions or communication words. Some of them are much more easy to identify and explain than others. Some scholars suggest several interesting activities to young learners who study English language as a second language. The most effective ones are TPR activities. They are really helpful for young learners. Total physical response or TPR was created by American psychologist Dr. James Asher. Indeed, we learn our mother tongue with the help of this kind of activities. Our parents demonstrate and instruct and we respond them. No one demands or requires very small children to speak at all, only to listen and understand, which is to say, to comprehend. The result is that we acquire our mother tongue, therefore, the idea of TPR is to create a neural link between speech and action. So we can teach action verbs easily in this way. Total physical response has a lot of benefits, particularly for the instructors who are teaching beginners and young learners. Such as:

- The pairing of a movement with language is associated with effective learning;
- Pupils actively use the left and right side of their brains;
- It works with both small and large groups;
- It can be very effective to explain difficult actions (slide, launch)
- It can help the teachers with imperatives and classroom language.

There is also basic method which is suggested by teachers for using total physical response in the classroom when the instructor is teaching action verbs:

1. The teacher performs an action, both demonstrating and saying it. For instance, I am brushing my teeth;
2. Instructor call on the pupils to repeat the action;
3. Repeat once more
4. Write the verb/phrase on the board;
5. Repeat with other verbs and return to them regularly during the class to check retention.

TPR is a major method to teach action verbs and its result will be effective. Total physical response activities can be various, even the teacher can create herself or himself at any time. Here are some samples of TPR activities for teaching action verbs:

Follow the reader. Pupils line up behind the teacher and follows him or her around the classroom. The instructor does an action and shouts out the word for that action. The copy the action and repeat the word. Actions may include : wave hello/goodbye, it is cold/hot, stop, go, run, hop, skip, crawl, walk backwards, jump, sit down, stand up and others.

Exercises. This one is great for over excited students who need to burn off a bit of energy. It is also good for classroom commands and numbers. The teacher stands the pupils in a line and call out instructions: “ Jump 10 times”, “Turn around 4 times” and others. Other good ones to apply are: run (on the spot), hop, hands up and down, touch your (body part), stand up and sit down and jump. In this case teacher should demonstrate the action verbs which are taught.

Classroom races. Races are fun way to teach a lot of different dynamic verbs as well as adjectives and adverbs. Teacher should line the students up and tell them the action they have to do during the race and then shout go. Actions may include: little steps, skip, jump, giant strides, hop like a rabbit, fly like a bird, walk quickly/slowly, run backwards and so on.

Can you actions. Teacher may use this game teaching action verbs. In addition to this, he or she can teach “Can you...?”, “Yes I can”, “No I can’t”. These actions are really fun: dance, run quickly, skip, hop, do a star jump, touch your toes, cross your eyes, snap your fingers, whistle, sing. To illustrate, the teacher should ask a pupil “Can you raise your hands?” If the pupil replies “Yes I can” then she or he says “Ok go!” and the pupil does the action. If pupil says “No, I can’t” say “Too bad”, “Ok can you wiggle?” The activities which are similar to the mentioned ones above are suggested by many teachers.

Conclusion

All things considered, teaching action verbs will be really interesting and easy if the teacher can find the right way or method to teach. Dynamic verbs are considered as the first levels of teaching new language as a SL. This might be because action verbs tell what the subject of a sentence is doing. Certainly we can think of verbs for actions we completed today. We may have brushed our teeth, put our shoes on, drank our water. Therefore, if such kinds of verbs are taught from every day life to the young learners, it will be really efficient for both teachers and pupils. Pupils can remember easily and then they can use correctly this words in their speech. The originator of the total physical response known worldwide as TPR, Ph.D James. J. Asher says : “We learned a lot about acquiring languages by observing infants. For example, infants do not start life speaking their native language. It works like this: The caretakers utter a direction and the infant responds with a physical action. Such as “Pick up your toy and put it on your bed” I call these unique transactions, language-body conversations”. In these sentence, Dr Asher tried to explain the role of TPR in learning new language and he was able to do it that it is obviously seen from his words. It can be another proof of teaching action verbs efficiently when they learned through TPR and other interesting motional games which are taken from every day life.

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