

## TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS, EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

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**Annotation.** *This article presents an in-depth analysis of the most effective strategies for teaching English to young learners, based on both theoretical foundations and experimental teaching practices. It explores the psychological, linguistic, and pedagogical principles that influence language acquisition in children, highlighting the importance of developmentally appropriate methods such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Total Physical Response (TPR), and the use of visuals and storytelling. The article underscores the significance of multisensory and interactive learning environments that align with the cognitive characteristics of young learners. An experimental lesson is described and analyzed, demonstrating how combining movement, visuals, and meaningful interaction leads to improved vocabulary acquisition, increased motivation, and active learner participation. The findings support the idea that teaching young learners requires creative, engaging, and learner-centered strategies that foster both language development and emotional well-being.*

**Keywords:** *young learners, English teaching, communicative methods, Total Physical Response, visuals, storytelling, learner motivation, multisensory learning, experimental teaching.*

**Аннотация.** *В данной статье проводится всесторонний анализ наиболее эффективных стратегий преподавания английского языка детям младшего*

школьного возраста, опираясь как на теоретические основы, так и на практический опыт. Рассматриваются психологические, лингвистические и педагогические принципы, влияющие на усвоение языка детьми, с акцентом на возрастные особенности восприятия. Особое внимание уделяется таким методам, как коммуникативное обучение (CLT), метод тотальной физической реакции (TPR), использование наглядных материалов и рассказывание историй. В статье подчеркивается важность мультимодальных и интерактивных подходов, соответствующих когнитивным особенностям младших школьников. Также описывается экспериментальный урок, который демонстрирует эффективность сочетания движения, визуальных средств и осмысленного взаимодействия. Результаты подтверждают необходимость творческого, увлекательного и ориентированного на ученика подхода к обучению, способствующего не только развитию языковых навыков, но и повышению мотивации и эмоционального комфорта.

**Ключевые слова:** младшие школьники, обучение английскому языку, коммуникативные методы, TPR, визуальные материалы, рассказывание историй, мотивация учащихся, мультимодальное обучение, экспериментальное обучение.

**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu maqolada yosh o'quvchilarga ingliz tilini o'rgatishning eng samarali strategiyalari chuqur tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot psixologik, lingvistik va pedagogik asoslarga tayangan holda til o'rganish jarayoniga ta'sir qiluvchi omillarni yoritadi. Bolalar uchun mo'ljallangan mos yondashuvlar — jumladan, Kommunikativ til o'qitish (CLT), To'liq Jismoniy Javob (TPR) usuli, ko'rgazmali vositalar va hikoya aytishning ahamiyati alohida ko'rsatib o'tiladi. Maqolada multimodal va interaktiv o'rganish muhiti yosh o'quvchilarning kognitiv xususiyatlariga mos kelishi lozimligi ta'kidlanadi. Eksperimental dars asosida amalga oshirilgan kuzatuvlar harakat, ko'rgazmali vositalar va ma'noli muloqot orqali lug'at boyligini oshirish, motivatsiyani kuchaytirish hamda darsdagi faol ishtirokni ta'minlashda bu yondashuvlarning samarali ekanini ko'rsatadi. Maqola xulosalariga ko'ra, kichik

*yoshdagi o'quvchilar bilan ishlashda ijodiy, jalb qiluvchi va o'quvchiga yo'naltirilgan metodlardan foydalanish zarur.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *yosh o'quvchilar, ingliz tili o'qitish, kommunikativ metodlar, TPR, ko'rgazmali vositalar, hikoya aytish, motivatsiya, multimodal o'qitish, eksperimental dars.*

### **Introduction**

The global demand for early English language education has driven a major shift in pedagogical approaches for young learners. In Uzbekistan, recent educational reforms echo this trend, aiming to introduce English at the primary level with effective, age-appropriate methodologies. However, young children have specific cognitive and emotional needs that require tailored strategies. Teaching English to young learners (EYL) is not simply a simplified version of adult instruction—it requires a distinct approach grounded in developmental psychology, language acquisition theory, and creative classroom practice. This article investigates these theoretical and practical aspects and presents an experimental lesson that integrates communicative and multisensory methods in a real classroom setting.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

#### **Characteristics of Young Learners**

Children aged 6–12 exhibit cognitive patterns aligned with Piaget's preoperational and concrete operational stages, where learning is primarily experiential, visual, and movement-driven. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory further emphasizes the importance of social interaction and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in scaffolding language learning through guided participation.

Young learners often have short attention spans and high affective sensitivity, requiring lessons to be dynamic, supportive, and fun. Their motivation is primarily intrinsic and thrives when tasks are meaningful, enjoyable, and physically engaging. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis supports this, showing that stress-free environments and comprehensible input are key to successful acquisition.

#### **Linguistic and Psychological Insights**



Krashen's Input Hypothesis and theories of brain-based learning reveal that language is best acquired when learners receive comprehensible input slightly above their current level ( $i+1$ ) in relaxed, emotionally supportive settings. Neuroscientific studies confirm that bilingual children process language in more integrated brain regions than adult learners, indicating an optimal window for second language development.

Furthermore, interviews and classroom observations show that environmental factors peer interaction, adult scaffolding, and emotionally safe contexts—directly influence vocabulary retention and speaking skills. These findings stress the need for methods that combine movement, play, and visual cues with active communication.

### **Effective Strategies and Activities**

#### **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

CLT in the young learner classroom encourages learners to use language in real-life contexts through tasks like role-play, songs, and games. Activities such as “Find Someone Who...,” shopping dialogues, or storytelling sessions are engaging ways to practice speaking and listening. These strategies emphasize fluency over accuracy and create opportunities for spontaneous interaction, which boosts confidence and functional vocabulary use.

#### **Total Physical Response (TPR) and Movement**

James Asher's TPR method is especially effective for beginners. By linking language input to physical actions, students internalize vocabulary without the pressure of immediate verbal production. Activities like “Simon Says,” action songs, and animal miming provide an outlet for energy while reinforcing grammar and lexis through muscle memory.

### **Visual Aids and Multisensory Support**

Children are visual learners. Flashcards, puppets, posters, and realia make abstract language concepts more tangible. For example, using “What's missing?” games or picture stories improves vocabulary retention. Drawing and labeling activities enable learners to personalize and consolidate new language in creative ways.

### Storytelling with Interaction

Narratives build emotional connection and cognitive engagement. When learners physically act out parts of a story or predict events mid-narration, they develop comprehension and narrative skills. Interactive storytelling integrates listening, speaking, and movement in a meaningful context that fosters language retention.

#### Experimental Lesson: Practice-Based Insights

An experimental lesson was conducted with a group of 7–8-year-old students at School No. 279 in Tashkent. The lesson combined flashcards, TPR, storytelling, and drawing to teach zoo animal vocabulary.

#### Objectives:

- Teach and reinforce six animal names (e.g., lion, elephant)
- Encourage sentence production (“It’s a lion”)
- Use movement to demonstrate comprehension
- Assess retention through drawing and labeling

#### Lesson Flow:

1. Warm-Up: “Hello Song” and animal chant
2. Vocabulary Introduction: Flashcards + gestures
3. Storytelling: Zoo adventure with mimed actions
4. Games: “Simon Says,” “What’s Missing?”
5. Activity: Drawing and labeling favorite animals
6. Review: Questions + smiley face feedback cards

#### Findings:

Students were highly engaged, demonstrated accurate vocabulary recall, and showed improved participation, especially in kinesthetic and visual tasks. The lesson also highlighted the importance of repetition, movement, and narrative to support long-term learning. Learners with lower initial performance improved significantly when visual and bodily cues were added.

### Discussion

The combination of theory-driven and practice-based strategies effectively addresses the developmental characteristics of young learners. Movement and visuals reduce cognitive load and increase attention, while communicative tasks build fluency and confidence. These approaches align with constructivist and sociocultural theories, emphasizing active learning, social interaction, and contextualized practice.

Challenges remain, such as managing classroom discipline during active tasks and ensuring differentiation for mixed-ability groups. However, with structured routines and appropriate scaffolding, such obstacles can be minimized.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

Teaching English to young learners requires more than linguistic content delivery—it necessitates an understanding of how children think, feel, and learn. Strategies such as CLT, TPR, storytelling, and visual aids provide meaningful, engaging, and developmentally appropriate instruction. The experimental lesson confirms that integrating movement and visuals enhances learner motivation, retention, and communicative competence.

### **Recommendations:**

- Use multisensory materials to support diverse learning styles
- Include stories and songs to contextualize language
- Apply TPR and role-plays for vocabulary reinforcement
- Design low-pressure assessment tools (e.g., drawing, smiley faces)
- Provide continuous teacher training in child-centered methodologies

Further research could focus on longitudinal impacts of such methods across grade levels and explore how digital tools might complement these strategies in future classrooms.

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