



An assessment of the effectiveness of 'TPRS' ('Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling') as a means of teaching Latin vocabulary and grammar

by Emily Clark

The Context

The purpose of my assignment was to assess the effectiveness of 'TPRS' ('Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling') as a means of teaching Latin vocabulary and grammar. The focus of my sequence of lessons was the vocabulary and grammar from Stage 7 of the *Cambridge Latin Course* (CLC) (CSCP, 1999, p. 96). These lessons will be taught to a mixed attainment class of Year 8's (class A).

In the 1990s, Ray, a teacher of Spanish in the United States of America, created what was to become known as TPRS. Ray had been teaching using Asher's (1972) method, TPR ('Total Physical Response'), which requires students to respond to commands given in the target language with actions (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 1). Although appreciating its value, he came to realize that it was not a complete teaching method by itself. As such, he entwined this pedagogical practice with the then current linguistic theories of Krashen (1988). Ray extended TPR to become TPRS by introducing storytelling to his teaching, on the basis that it is a flexible way to 'allow easy aural comprehension of a story' which closely resembles first language acquisition (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 17).

The main objective of TPRS is 'to help our students become proficient in speaking and understanding their new language. We believe that the main factor in the development of proficiency is contextualized, repetitive and varied comprehensible input that keeps learners' interest.' (Ray & Seely, 2003, viii). 'Comprehensible input' is to be understood in relation to Krashen's theories, which I will consider further in my literature review. Grammar is not explicitly taught, but rather inductively acquired.

I believe that it is TPRS's emphasis on learning vocabulary through a variety of learning styles, its oral, yet comprehensible nature and the repetition of vocabulary, which differentiates it from other teaching approaches. Ray explains that 'you are trying to get them to hear the new word in context...it is crucial in teaching language to give the students as many repetitions of a word as possible...this is what brings about real acquisition and long-term remembering' (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 75).

The choice of TPRS as my research topic had in part been inspired by my personal experience and circumstance. I first became acquainted with TPRS at a Joint Association of Classical Teachers (JACT) training day in 2011. I attended a session on 'Spoken Latin', which

was run by Keith Rogers. Although this session was aimed at highlighting the benefits of offering a lunchtime speaking club, he also advocated the practice of TPRS in the classroom and gave a brief demonstration of how it might be utilized for adapting the CLC stories. On the PGCE teacher-training course organized by King's College, London, I also conveniently found myself placed in one of the schools which was due to take part in TPRS trials in September 2011, which unfortunately had to be cancelled. As such, elements of TPRS were being experimented with in some Year 8 and 9 Latin lessons, particularly repetition and oral questioning. Therefore my school was the ideal setting from which to carry out this research.

My final reason behind my choice of topic, came out of my reading of Ray and Seely's theories about TPRS, where they profess that despite TPRS 'gaining considerable ground in the language teaching world of North America', little research has been done to investigate its effectiveness (Ray & Seely: 2003, xvi). Accordingly, 'there is a great need for solid research to back up the results that so many teachers have observed.' I am aware of two unpublished studies into TPRS (Webster, 2003; Kariuki & Bush, 2008), which found TPRS to be more effective than traditional teaching methods with regard to vocabulary

acquisition (Castro, 2010). Another unpublished study did not find a significant difference between TPRS and the grammar-translation teaching method (*ibid.*). As far as I am aware, no research has been done into the effectiveness of TPRS for teaching Latin vocabulary and grammar.

Storytelling formed the main part of my sequence of lessons. The stories were written by myself, and were personalised to members of the class. I used pictures as my main teaching resource in support of the TPRS stories, so that students could visually associate the new words with an image. Nation emphasises the benefits of using pictures to 'aid memory retention' in vocabulary learning (Nation, 2001, p. 85).

I assessed the students' learning through formative assessment. This included: tests with a learning purpose; questioning and aural checking of comprehension in classroom; and written comments feedback in response to creative writing stories. The effectiveness of TPRS as a teaching tool was assessed against a class being taught through the CLC inductive-reading method (class C). Another class was also taught using the same lesson plans so that I might carry out observations (class B). At the end of the sequence, I used dialogic teaching to allow the whole class to have an intelligent conversation about the TPRS and the CLC.

Class A had a total of 21 students, six of which were the focus of my assignment. To ensure that these students remained anonymous, I have given them fictional names. I selected one student of each gender for the low (Ariadne and Theseus), middle (Dido and Aeneas) and high attainment (Medea and Jason) categories, based on their report grade given in December 2011. Ariadne found learning vocabulary particularly hard and lacked confidence in Latin, while Theseus needed to make more effort to pay attention in lessons. Aeneas also struggled to concentrate in class and could show signs of immaturity at times, whereas Dido was a conscientious and hard-working student. Medea was quiet in lessons, while Jason

was particularly strong on writing creative Latin stories.

The Aeneid School is a co-educational independent school in Essex. Latin is compulsory in year 8, with four classes of approximately 20 students having two 50-minute lessons per week.

The Literature Review

In this literature review, I firstly aim to study the history of TPRS and then explore the theories of language acquisition, focusing on those which underpin TPRS and the CLC. Throughout this process I will highlight the aspects which differentiate TPRS from other teaching approaches to Latin. I will then consider the theory behind the effectiveness of TPRS's methods, particularly pre-teaching vocabulary and repetition.

TPR

The starting point for the development of TPRS was Asher's TPR. Asher based this approach on Piaget's (1954) sensory-motor stage theory on first language acquisition, that language has to be understood before it can be produced (Hohenstein & King, 2011, p. 177). Asher applied this theory to second language acquisition, requiring students to demonstrate their comprehension of the oral command through actions, before any attempt was made to speak in the target language. Saltz and Donnerwerth-Nolan (1981) agree that 'the use of physical action when learning has been shown to facilitate language recall' (Schmitt, 2000, p. 135). Nattinger agrees that TPR promotes long-term memory retention, however he attributes this to the active rather than passive nature of the method (Nattinger, 1988, p. 67). Osburn emphasises how TPR reaches out to another learning style (kinaesthetic) and provides variety as an instructional supplement to a lesson (Osburn, 1998, p. 81). Stevick refers more generally to the production of a response from the learner (Stevick, 1976, p. 38). However, some academics remain sceptical (Duquette, 1995, p. 3).

This is because, as Ray found in practice, TPR is limited; it can only be utilised for simple forms or abstract words and it cannot be used for prolonged periods of time (Duquette, 1995, p. 5).

STORYTELLING

Ray introduced storytelling to TPR based on its flexibility and its ability to encourage aural comprehension in a manner reflecting first language acquisition (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 17). Since the oral traditions of Homer, storytelling has been an effective way to memorise vast quantities of information. Rose and Nicholl advocate this: a story being a good 'memory aid', linking words sequentially, and drawing a 'picture in your mind' (Rose & Nicholl, 1997, p. 136). Egan highlights the value of stories as a 'cultural universal; everyone everywhere enjoys stories' (Egan, 1986, p. 3). Further, storytelling stimulates the imagination and 'reflects a basic and powerful form in which we make sense of the world and experience' (Egan, 1986, p. 3).

Nation comments in relation to listening to stories: 'there is a growing body of evidence (Elley, 1989; Brett, Rothlein & Hurley, 1996) that learners can pick up new vocabulary as they are being read to. There are several conditions that make this learning more likely...interest in the content of the story, comprehension of the story, understanding of the unknown words and retrieval of the meaning of those not yet strongly established, decontextualization of the target words, and thoughtful generative processing of the target vocabulary' (Nation, 2001, p. 118). With regard to interest, 'Elley (1989) explained the differing amounts of vocabulary learning from two stories by the lack of involvement of the learners with one of the stories' (Nation, 2001, p. 118).

TPRS engages the learners by personalising the stories, which for Takac, 'makes the learning material psychologically 'real' (Takac, 2008, p. 22). It seems that storytelling functions as an ideal tool to fulfil the main objectives of TPRS: context, repetition and varied comprehensible input.

STORY-BASED COURSES: THE CLC

The place of storytelling in Latin teaching is already firmly established. Story-based courses, such as the CLC, were created in the 1970s, based on the theory that 'it is possible to enable pupils to develop an intuitive grasp of Latin grammar' (Sharwood Smith, 1977, p. 39). 'Story-based courses were developed with the twin aims of teaching comprehension of Latin through reading and of fostering an understanding of the cultural context of Roman Civilisation' (Lister, 2007, p. 5). The main difference between the stories of the CLC and TPRS seems to be that TPRS uses personalised stories whereas the CLC uses cultural context.

THE CLC AND LINGUISTIC THEORY

In the 1960s the Cambridge School Classics Project was created for the purposes of reforming Latin teaching using contemporary linguistic theory, which would promote the 'rapid acquisition of reading skills' (Forrest, 1996, p. 55). As such, 'sentence patterns were compared with one another and all other parts of the language were treated with reference to their typical place in the sentence structure' (Forrest, 1996, pp. 65-66). In this way, the CLC is based on cognitive strategies, using mental processes by looking for patterns in the language (Cook, 1998, p. 116). It was the linguistic research of Wilkins, which was influenced by the thoughts of Chomsky and Halliday, which underpinned the theoretical structure of the course. Chomsky's theories were based on first language acquisition, that a child has 'significant innate linguistic principles, a genetic programme that corresponds to the underlying deep structure of *any* language' and as such 'the child intuitively constructs his own grammar, apparently in a very short time and from very limited resources' (Reader, 1978, p. 65).

Reader criticizes the application of first language acquisition theories to second language learning, largely based on the learner's lack of daily exposure to the target language (Reader, 1978, p. 66). Krashen however, whose theories

underpin TPRS, disagrees, arguing that the process of first language acquisition can be replicated in second language learning. From this, in collaboration with Terrell, he created the 'natural approach' to language learning (Krashen & Terrell, 1988).

KRASHEN

Krashen is an expert in language pedagogy, whose theories are of particular importance to TPRS, especially in relation to comprehensible input. Krashen's theories on linguistic competence are set out in five hypotheses.

The input hypothesis has considerable importance for TPRS as it considers comprehensible input. In order for the language to be acquired, Krashen stresses that input must be comprehensible. He uses the formula 'i + 1' where 'i' represents the student's present level of acquired knowledge (Johnson, 2001, p. 93). This is based on the theory that a student is able to understand the input a little beyond their current competence by contextualizing the new information (Johnson, 2001, pp. 93-94). Further, Krashen agrees with Asher (1972) and Piaget (1954) that comprehension in the manner of acquisition should come before speaking and writing (Krashen & Terrell, 1988, p. 20).

Krashen's second hypothesis distinguishes between language learning and language acquisition. According to Patrick, the 'acquired system' is the 'produce of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language' requiring 'meaningful interaction in the target language', concentrating on the 'communicative act' (Patrick, 2011, p. 5). In contrast, the learning consists of a 'conscious process', resulting in 'knowledge about the language' (Patrick, 2011, p. 5).

The monitor hypothesis emphasises the importance of teaching in an informal, low-stress environment. This presumes that acquisition subconsciously produces fluency, whereas learning acts as a grammatical editor, 'a monitor', particularly in formal

situations (Johnson, 2001, p. 91).

The 'affective-filter' hypothesis considers the emotional state of the students. Krashen believes that in order to acquire language, this filter must be open, which requires a willing and positive attitude (Johnson, 200, p. 94). Saffire agrees with Krashen in that relaxation and enjoyment are essential for the acquisition of language: 'if relaxation conserves energy, enjoyment generates it' (Saffire, 2006, p. 160). 'Gardner (1988, p. 37) stresses the connection between enjoyment and learning... 'success in learning the language will foster positive attitudes and enhance motivation'' (Saffire, 2006, p. 160).

The natural order hypothesis considers that language should be acquired in its natural predictable order rather than being dependent on the degree of difficulty of the grammar (Patrick, 2011:7). As grammar is not explicitly taught in TPRS, the learning of grammar should follow a natural order.

LINGUISTIC THEORY AND TPRS

Chomsky's linguistic theories are common to the CLC, TPR, TPRS and the Direct Method. Like the CLC, TPR and TPRS, the Direct Method takes an inductive approach, but the learner is completely immersed in the target language in order to replicate first language acquisition.

While Ray and Seely appreciate that full immersion is 'appealing because of its affinity to natural language acquisition, it is not in accord with our classroom experience' (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 8). TPRS differs by emphasizing the importance of comprehensible input, so that 'if a teacher speaks purely in the target language it will be 'very likely' that the students will not 'really succeed in learning' (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 18).

Comprehensible input is fundamental to TPRS teaching. Takac notes that 'activating linguistic pre-knowledge and knowledge of the world creates a link between new words and already known words. It is in the process of creating the links, new words become more meaningful and organized, and thus easier to learn' (Takac, 2008,

p. 22). However, Nation highlights that 'there is still insufficient research on the effects of the ratio of unknown words to known words in a text aimed at incidental vocabulary learning' (Nation, 2001, p. 118). In consideration of this, Hu and Nation (in press) found that in a 'written fiction text', the learner needed to know '98% of the running words in order for most of them to gain adequate comprehension (Nation, 2001, p. 118). As such, Nation deduces that 'it is likely that for extensive listening the ratio of unknown words to known should be around 1 in 10' (Nation, 2001, p. 118). The input of TPR is made comprehensible by being introduced alongside a concept or action recognizable to the student. Ray and Seely consider that TPR provides contextualized comprehensible input, which although not varied by itself 'is effective as long as the teacher has interesting and non-repetitive novel commands' (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 14). To a certain extent the CLC is also comprehensible because the students are gradually introduced to new vocabulary and grammar forms, and new sentences are modeled with pictures. However, in accordance with Hu and Nation's research it is far from the case that the learner knows '98% of the running words' (Nation, 2001, p. 118).

PRE-TEACHING VOCABULARY

It is on this point of pre-teaching vocabulary that the practice of TPRS differs to Krashen's theories. Whether or not to pre-teach vocabulary is a controversial manner, and as such opinions are divided. Nation and Coady believe that 'learning vocabulary through context must be the major way of increasing vocabulary knowledge' and that students need to develop coping procedures rather than placing too much emphasis on knowing the meaning of the words (Nation & Coady, 1988, p. 109). However, Cook acknowledges that guessing may lead to students jumping to the wrong conclusions (Cook, 1998, p. 59). In addition, Carrell (1983) makes it clear that the 'learner needs to be supplied with the vocabulary that the native takes for granted', considering 'teaching as building up the learner's

background knowledge', known as 'schema theory' (Cook, 1998, p. 123).

Nation emphasises how words should be 'decontextualized' so that they can be understood as 'words themselves', rather than only 'as part of the message' (Nation, 2001, p. 119). Penno, Wilkinson and Moore (forthcoming) studied the learning of vocabulary through listening to stories and found that 'vocabulary that was explained during the story was learned better than that which was not explained' (Nation, 2001, pp. 119-120).

REPETITION

While both TPRS and the CLC provide comprehensible input, the stress on using variety and repetition is far higher in TPRS. According to Nation, repetition 'adds to the quality of knowledge and also to the quantity of this knowledge' (Nation, 2001, p. 76). When teaching through TPRS, three words are intensely focused on during a 50-minute lesson, and as such, could be categorised as 'massed repetition... spending a continuous period of time, giving repeated attention to a word' (*ibid.*). However, in practice, the new words would be recapped at the beginning of the next lesson and then incorporated into further stories so would be naturally be repeated over a course of time. This is what Nation considers to be spaced repetition 'spreading the repetitions across a long period of time.' According to Nation, it is spaced repetitions, which result in long-term memory retention (*ibid.*).

The CLC seems to adhere to this notion, repeating new words throughout the stories of the stage. However, on further consideration, it was noted that '*valde*' (very much), one of the learning vocabulary words of stage 7, occurs only twice in the whole stage. As such, it is questionable whether this is repetition at all and how the students would be expected to intuitively grasp the meaning in this way. This highlights that although CLC agrees with TPRS in learning through context, it differs dramatically in repetition.

The oral nature of the TPRS storytelling allows for a greater repetition of words: TPRS expects that through a personalised mini story, the teacher will repeat the three key words 50 to 100 times in context in one 40-50 minute lesson (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 48). The teacher should follow a statement with mirrored questions; Ray explains that 'you are trying to get them to hear the new word in context...it is crucial in teaching language to give the students as many repetitions of a word as possible...this is what brings about real acquisition and long-term remembering' (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 75). Thornbury highlights that 'simply repeating an item...seems to have little long-term effect unless some attempt is made to organise the material at the same time' (Thornbury, 2002, p. 24). He estimates that through reading, a new word should be met 'at least seven times over spaced intervals' in order to 'stand a good chance of being remembered' (*ibid.*). Nation refers to Kachroo's (1962) study, whereby 'words repeated seven times or more in his coursework were known by most learners' and Crothers and Suppes (1967) who found that six or seven repetitions was sufficient (Nation, 2001, p. 81). He also notes Tinkham's (1993) research which differentiated learners between the majority who would require five to seven repetitions, and the few who may require at least twenty (Nation, 2001, p. 81).

SPEAKING

In consideration of the main objective of TPRS, 'to help our students become proficient in speaking and understanding their new language', it is interesting to consider the oral nature of TPRS. The storytelling element may appear to take TPRS outside the realms of the listening approach of TPR and the natural approach. Despite one of the objectives of TPRS being speaking proficiency, Ray proclaims that the purpose of speaking in lessons is not learning or acquisition (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 122). He notes how, in accordance with Krashen's affective-filter theory, speaking lowers the students' anxiety, helping to build their confidence, and therefore inadvertently develops fluency (*ibid.*).

ASSESSMENT

According to Black and Wiliam, 'assessment refers to all those activities... which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged' (Black & Wiliam, 1998, p. 2). Further, this assessment is formative when it is used for the purpose of adapting teaching. According to Harrison, in order for the assessment to be formative, the following 'prerequisites' must apply: students should be provided with the opportunity to 'communicate their perception of their evolving learning' (Harrison, 2011, p. 223). I planned to ensure this, particularly in lesson two, by asking them to write what they have learnt in today's lesson, what they found hard, and what they enjoyed. I then commented as necessary, building a dialogue with individual students.

The second prerequisite is that the teacher has the flexibility to adapt future learning in accordance with the learners' needs (*ibid.*). I planned to test the students on what they already knew in lesson one, in order to ascertain what vocabulary needed to be taught in the subsequent lessons. This is in accordance with Black and Harrison (2004), who state that the goal of formative assessment 'is to find out what students know, what they partly know and what they do not know' (Harrison, 2011, p. 225). Following a formative assessment in lesson four, I went over it with the class in lesson five by retelling the story through TPRS. I planned to adapt my questioning to focus on the vocabulary that the students particularly struggled with. Further, Abbott considers how attainment should be based not on what students can memorise, but on what they 'can "do" with the language' and whether then can apply their knowledge outside of the classroom (Abbott, 1998, p. 42). For this reason, Ray suggests testing what has been acquired by the long-term memory by giving 'an unannounced vocabulary test' (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 65). Consequently, all assessments within the sequence of lessons will be unannounced.

A further prerequisite is to provide 'model descriptive feedback' (Harrison,

2011, p. 223). I implemented this by providing 'comments only' feedback to the students' work. I anticipated using the 'stars and stairs approach' (Chappius, 2009) where the stars represent comments that recognise what has been achieved, while the stairs are the steps or intervention needed to improve the work' (Harrison, 2011, p. 228). When marking the assessment in lesson four, I listed 'got it' columns for areas which of grammar which needed further attention. Harrison highlights that the feedback is 'direct' when provided through oral or written comments to work: 'the key here is in providing descriptive comments about what has been achieved and guidance on what needs to be done next to improve the work or develop it further' (Harrison, 2011, p. 227). Further, 'effective feedback' relies on the teacher providing 'guidance for improvement by indicating where a student needs to focus their efforts through pointing out a problem with a strategy or a process, asking a question, making a suggestion for action or offering a reminder or link to a previous work' (Harrison, 2011, p. 228).

The teacher must also involve the learner in 'decisions about their learning, helping them to develop the skills for this' (Harrison, 2011, p. 224). If one of students needed further support their learning, I arranged to meet them at a break or lunchtime to discuss and implement learning strategies. Throughout the sequence of lessons, I also endeavoured to show an awareness of 'the skills, ideas and concepts needed to produce quality pieces of work that recognize misconceptions, likely reasoning errors and mistakes as the beginning of developing better understanding' (*ibid.*).

During TPRS, I asked questions in the target language about the stories in order to assess comprehension aurally. Students have been found to achieve more when teachers make use of frequent questions to monitor progress and check understanding (Harris, 1998, p. 172; Brooke, 2002, p. 53). Further, Ofsted (1996b, p. 23) refers to questioning as 'the single most important factor in a students' achievements of high standards, where questions were used to

assess students' knowledge and challenge their thinking' (Brooke, 2002, p. 53). In relation to TPRS, Krashen and Ray identify speaking is a 'valuable assessment tool' as 'an indication of the level of competence of the student' (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 123). Throughout the sequences of lessons I will be frequently checking comprehension aurally, particularly of the low attainment students; the class should not progress from the TPR stage until all students have demonstrated comprehension of the vocabulary.

The Lesson Sequence

The learning objective for my sequence of lessons was for students to acquire the learning vocabulary at the end of stage 7 of the CLC through TPRS (20 new words), incorporating the new grammar points into the stories (sentences without a nominative; third declension perfect tense verbs). TPRS categorizes vocabulary into three groups, and I categorized the Stage 7 vocabulary accordingly.

The sequence of lessons comprised of five 50-minute lessons. All six students were monitored throughout the lessons, and it was their performance in lessons, which is the focus of this evaluation.

LESSON ONE

The aims of the first lesson were: to find out what the students already knew, with an assessment; to introduce seven new words through TPR (and the cognate '*mortuus*'); and to test how much of this new vocabulary was understood and had been internalized throughout the lesson.

I commenced the lesson with an assessment in order to understand what the students already knew, with a formative purpose in accordance with Black and Harrison (2004). To introduce the imperfect and perfect tense in the previous stage, I had used '*heri*' (yesterday) to distinguish between actions happening '*hodie*' (today) and in the past. I appreciated that there would be little point in re-teaching a word which was already acquired, and that

any prior knowledge would not provide a true representation of vocabulary 'internalized' through TPRS. I was therefore flexible to the prospect of adapting my lesson plans in response to the students' needs. Through this test, the students were also able gain an understanding of my expectations and their learning targets for the subsequent lessons.

However, before setting the assessment, I was wary about damaging the students' confidence, particularly Ariadne's. I made it clear that the test was on material that they had not yet covered, and to approach it with guesswork. I was pleasantly surprised by their positive reaction to this, particularly Ariadne, who attempted to guess all twenty words. By asking the students to guess at words they did not recognize, they were encouraged to form links with English derivatives, and develop 'coping procedures' to approaching new vocabulary (Nation & Coady, 1988, p. 109). This allowed the students to practise an important skill, particularly in preparation for the derivatives questions at GCSE.

19 out of 20 students in the class correctly translated *'heri'* as yesterday. Of the high attaining students, Jason accurately identified six additional new words, including the cognates *'narrat'* (tells) and *'mortuus'* (dead). Aeneas failed to accurately translate any additional words; however, he did connect *'narrat'* to narrator. Theseus interestingly translated *'mortuus'* as mortal: *'mortalis'* in Latin, from *'mors'*, *'mort -'*, (death); while he was unable to find the correct English translation, he demonstrated an understanding of how the etymology of words works. Likewise, all students translated *'intellegit'* as intelligent / clever, showing a general understanding of the meaning, but a failure to interpret into verb form.

Jason, Medea, Aeneas and Theseus translated *'in cubiculo dormiebat'* as 'he / she is / was sleeping in the bedroom'. Therefore four of the class sample recognized that the person doing the action is intrinsic in the verb (and 15 out of 20 of the whole class). However, with hindsight, the inclusion of an accusative

may have been a better test of this, which I incorporated into the assessment in lesson four.

Following the assessment, I began teaching the TPR vocabulary. While TPR teaches through commands and actions, I felt that the students were still struggling to remember the singular and plural 3rd person endings and therefore I decided that introducing the imperative forms: *'lacrima; lacrimate'* was likely to cause too much confusion at this stage. While being flexible to the students' learning needs, I became aware that by accounting for the degree of difficulty of grammar, I was going against Krashen's natural order hypothesis (Patrick, 2011, p. 7). This lays further emphasis on the limitations of TPR identified by Ray, which led him to develop TPRS (Duquette, 1995, p. 5).

I began by teaching *'lacrimant'* and *'necat'*. I asked Dido to translate *'necat'*, which she did accurately. I also asked Theseus to perform *'lacrimat'* individually. From my observation of class B, I noted that they mistranslated *'necat'* as stabbing, which meant that multiple actions needed to be performed to demonstrate this word. Therefore, for this class, *'necat'* proved not to be truly TPR-able, as the meaning required further clarification (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 11). This was also confirmed by Theseus, who incorrectly interpreted *'necat'* as 'attacks' in the end of lesson vocabulary test). Interestingly, when I moved onto *'intellegunt'* with class A, the action was also misinterpreted; however, I believe that this was based on their preconception of the meaning, having guessed the word as 'intelligent' in the test. This is something that Cook warned about (Cook, 1998, p. 59), highlighting the importance of pre-teaching vocabulary. I asked Ariadne to perform *'intellegit'* alone, and noted that her response time was six seconds. I practised this word again with the whole class, before returning to asking Ariadne to repeat it individually: this time her response was immediate. I added detail to these commands by introducing the rest of the TPR words. I became mindful that TPR was not really stretching the high attaining students, particularly Jason, who already understood the meaning of *'lacrimat'* and *'necat'* in advance of the lesson.

In review of the whole class, I gave them a short vocabulary test on the new TPR words. 11 out of 20 students (55%) had 'internalised' all of the new TPR words, scoring 100%. Jason, Medea, Aeneas and Dido were among these. The number of students correctly translating *'necat'* increased from 5 out of 20 in the initial assessment to 18 out of 20 in the TPR vocabulary test. Interestingly, 12 out of 20 students translated *'tacite'* as an adverb, intuitively grasping the grammatical form from context. Theseus only internalized half of the new words, misinterpreting *'cum'* as both, which was a logical translation, but not in the context. Particularly for the low attaining students, it seems that words need to be decontextualized before being understood in context (Nation, 2001, p. 119). Having continued to practise *'intellegit'* after a slow response time, Ariadne correctly translated it as 'understands' in the test. The production of a physical response seems to aid language recall (Schmitt, 2000, p. 135). However, at this stage it was not yet clear whether 'TPR promotes long-term memory retention' (Nattinger, 1988, p. 67). All students of class A and B enjoyed the novelty of TPR. However, as an all-encompassing teaching tool, it seems that Ray was right to develop TPR further (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 17). TPR particularly appealed to the low attaining students, with Aeneas commenting in lesson five: *'by doing the actions it really goes into your head'*, suggesting that the kinesthetic nature of method was well suited to his style of learning.

LESSON TWO

The aims of the second lesson were: to consolidate the students' understanding of the TPR vocabulary; introduce three new words through storytelling, with a particular focus on writing.

Lesson two commenced by going over the TPR vocabulary. I used the TPR test formatively by giving particular attention to *'cum'* and *'prope'* and clarifying the meaning of the words while doing the action. I ensured that I tested Theseus and Ariadne on the meaning of *'necat'* by asking Theseus to translate it and Ariadne to perform the action.

Following this, I began the storytelling element of TPRS. Due to time limitations, I had to adapt this to allow 25 minutes for each personalized mini-situation, rather than 50-minutes (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 48). I tried to ensure that the stories were comprehensible, apart from the inclusion of the new vocabulary words. I included 12 occurrences of new words, out of 76 words: this equates to 84% being known, which falls slightly short of Nation's estimate that 90% of vocabulary needs to be known for listening tasks (Nation, 2001, p. 118).

A picture of an androgynous figure 'catching sight of' a 'huge' were-wolf was displayed on the board to visually support the story, in line with Nation's view on the benefit of using pictures to aid memory retention (Nation, 2001, p. 85). In lesson five, Aeneas commented how pictures make it easier to remember the words as they '*help you to say the words in your mind*'. Jason expressed that '*every picture has a story*' and commented how the picture helped him to be imaginative, while reminding him of the key points.

Following the pre-teaching of the vocabulary, Dido and Ariadne were selected to act out the story. Ariadne commented how it was exciting to be in the story and to act it out, reiterating Takac's point about it making it seem more real (Takac, 2008, p. 22). Jason quickly grasped the meaning of '*terret*' (frightens), answering '*lupus Didoam terret*'. However, other students, including Theseus, confused '*terret*' with '*timet*'. The second time the story was retold allowed for an element of the 'bizarre and exaggerated', with Aeneas substituting '*mus*' (mouse) and '*elephantem*' (elephant) so that a huge mouse was frightening an elephant (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 25). I asked Medea, as a high attaining student to retell the story, allowing for differentiation at the top level of the class.

In order to assess how well the class had understood the story I asked them to write a creative piece using the three new words. Following this, I asked them to make a note of one thing they learnt in today's lesson; one thing they found hard; and one thing they

enjoyed. This provided with students with the 'opportunity to communicate their perception of their evolving learning' (Harrison, 2011, p. 223). I marked the stories formatively, with 'comments only', being mindful to make the feedback descriptive. I tried to write both a positive comment and an area for improvement, in adherence to the 'stars and stairs' approach (*ibid.*, p. 228).

Jason stated that he did not find anything hard about the lesson, which again questions whether TPRS is pushing the high attaining students to their full potential. However, Medea found putting the new words into sentences that made sense difficult. Aeneas incorporated '*ruit*' (hurries) into his story, demonstrating that he was trying to retell the story in his own words, which Ray and Seely identify as a fundamental part of the learning process (Ray & Seely, 2003, p.48). When asked what he learnt in today's lesson, he wrote 'new vocabulary which helps you to put more detail into sentences.' Dido showed inquisitiveness, asking what the Latin for small was. Theseus confused the use of '*terret*' with '*timeo*', as he did during the storytelling. He stated that he found the words easy to remember but hard to remember what they meant. By this I think he was referring to his difficulties with '*terret*' and how he had grasped that '*conspicit*' generally meant something to do with 'seeing' but failed to remember the specific meaning of 'catches sight of.'

Ariadne displayed a lack of confidence by declaring that she did not understand the lesson. However, she did seem to understand some of the new words, having incorporated them into her story. Being mindful of Krashen's 'affective-filter' hypothesis, I was concerned about Ariadne's anxiety hindering her language acquisition, and so tried to generate a positive learning environment in my response (Johnson, 2001, pp. 94-95). In this way, I was able to start a personal dialogue with the students to address particular issues they had, helping me to identify things they found hard, which would need further work.

Repetition is of particular

importance to TPRS teaching. During each personalized story, Ray and Seely advise aiming to repeat each new word 50 to 100 times in one 40-50 minute lesson (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 48). I was surprised that I only repeated each new word approximately 15 times, as the lesson already felt quite didactic. However, given that my personalized story was told in 25 minutes, the rate of word repetition is not too far from what they were aiming for. My research on repetition indicated that seven repetitions over spaced intervals should be sufficient in order for the new word to be acquired (Thornbury, 2002, p. 24).

LESSON THREE (JASON WAS ABSENT DUE TO ILLNESS)

The aims of this lesson were: to consolidate the students' understanding of the last lesson's new words; to introduce three new words; to practise speaking and writing, with an emphasis on speaking and the first person.

I commenced the lesson by reviewing the three new words from the previous lesson. The personalized story in lesson three took much the same format as lesson two, only introducing three new words, with a different picture. Although more time was available for the personalized story in this lesson, after lesson two, I felt that 25 minutes was the longest I could spend on it in order to keep the interest of the higher attaining students. This story linked neatly to the following activity on the first person. Students seemed to get on well with this, and Ariadne had seemed to particularly enjoy preparing '*chocolatem*'.

The class did not have long at the end of the lesson to write their stories. However, all five of the sample students explored the first person using '*paro*' as practised orally, although it would have been good to see some of the students using the first person form with other verbs.. Interestingly, Aeneas and Theseus used '*cenam*' (dinner) correctly, rather than the new word '*cenat*' (dines). Ariadne clearly understood the oral exercise, as she was able to reiterate this in her written story.

LESSON FOUR

The aims of lesson four were: to introduce four new words and to assess the effectiveness of TPRS with a formative translation test.

Four new words were introduced through personalized mini-situations as above. As I had to introduce an extra word in the same time frame, I decided to base this story on the same theme from lesson three. This gave the students a sense of immediate familiarity and provided the opportunity to revise the new words from the previous lessons. I chose to introduce *'valde'* with *'timet/timebat'* (fears/was fearing). This was an interesting choice, given the earlier confusion that the students faced with *'terret'*. Perhaps where similarities arise, it is better to bring them to the forefront and make them known to the students, 'recognizing misconceptions and likely reasoning errors' (Harrison, 2011, p. 224). The CLC seems to agree with this, as it introduces *'vale'* (goodbye) alongside the new word *'valde'* (very much) during Stage 7, and *'tandem'* (finally) together with *'tamen'* (however) (CSCP, 1999, pp. 84-111).

The class then sat an unannounced assessment, which consisted of a personalized story (Latin to English translation), followed by the option to write their own Latin story. This adhered to Ray and Seely's notion that unannounced assessments test what has been acquired into the long-term memory (Ray & Seely, 2003, p. 65).

The assessments were marked out of a total of 20 for vocabulary with a 'got it' column for persons, tenses, sentences without a nominative and 3rd declension perfect tense verbs. For the purposes of assessing the 'value added' by TPRS teaching, a mark was deduced out of 17, to exclude *'heri'* which was already known by all but one student (and consequently correctly translated in this assessment), and the cognates *'narrat'* and *'mortuus'*. Dido scored the highest mark with regard to vocabulary, with 15/17; Medea scored 14/17; Jason scored 13/17; Aeneas scored 12/17; Theseus scored 9/17; and Ariadne scored 7/17. 13 out of 21 students (62% of the whole class)

retained 70% of the vocabulary, with only two students scoring less than 50%. 3 out of 21 students retained over 80%.

With regard to grammar, of the my class sample, the high and middle attaining students understood how to translate sentences without a nominative and Theseus seemed to get the basic idea, but was not clear on his verb endings. Of the class sample, only the high attaining students were able to translate the 3rd declension perfect tense verb. Of the six students who correctly translated *'conspexerunt'*, all demonstrated a good understanding of the perfect tense generally.

Unfortunately I was unable to compare these results with class C, who were being taught using the CLC. This is because the teacher decided that it would be too unfair to give the students an unannounced test, without giving them time to revise the vocabulary, as they had only met the new words a few times. It seemed that the repetition of new words in the CLC was not sufficient to produce acquisition: the students had only met *'valde'* (very much) twice throughout Stage 7. The CLC needed to have a higher frequency of repetitions of *'valde'* if the students were to intuitively grasp the meaning. Consequently, class C were given time to revise, so that the test did not affect their confidence levels, therefore making the assessments incomparable for the purposes of this study. However, this worked to emphasize the value of TPRS as a method of language acquisition in the classroom, as attainment should be based not on what students can memorize, but what they 'can 'do' with the language' (Abbott, 1998, p. 42).

LESSON FIVE

The aims of the lesson were to give feedback on the assessment; to go over the assessment through TPRS; and to consolidate the students' understanding of the story through drama.

I commenced the lesson by explaining the mark scheme and giving oral feedback to the whole class. I also gave the students the opportunity to address my comments. Rather than

correcting the vocabulary, I wrote questions to make the students think about the meaning of the words, such as 'can you remember the action?', 'who frightens who?', 'how much?', in accordance with Harrison's 'effective feedback' strategies for formative assessment (Harrison, 2011, p. 228).

The assessment story was then retold through TPRS, with the high attaining students developing their pronunciation skills and the others consolidating their understanding of the words which they incorrectly translated in the test, by filling in personalized vocabulary sheets.

I asked the two students who scored below 50 % to meet me the following morning to discuss future learning strategies. As Ariadne had particularly enjoyed guessing the vocabulary words in lesson one, we agreed to discuss how derivatives work and I showed her how to make links between Latin and English words.

The final part of the lesson was spent discussing what the class had liked or disliked about the sequence of lessons and how this compared to learning through the CLC. Generally the class agreed that they enjoyed the storytelling and actions but seemed divided as to whether they preferred personalized or cultural stories. One middle-attaining student commented that she enjoyed the personalized stories as a way of making them more interesting and approachable. However, Jason expressed that he preferred learning through history explaining, '*as the language is no longer spoken, in order to learn the language of the Romans I want to be able to learn about the Romans and where they came from'*. Dido noted how as they had not learnt the first or second first person perfect tense, exploring the first person through personalized stories was confusing. Jason also commented that he would like to do more translating. Medea emphasized that she worried less when the test was unannounced.

I have not analyzed the written story homework, as this was completed before the students received feedback from the assessment. However all students, including Ariadne, made a good effort on this, with Jason and Aeneas creating particularly imaginative pieces of work.

Conclusion

TPRS is distinguished by its level of comprehensible input, teaching through actions, pre-teaching vocabulary and personalized stories, with a focus on vocabulary repetition. While it was not possible to directly compare the effectiveness of the practice of learning through TPRS with that of learning through a reading course such as the CLC, it is evident that TPRS teaching seems to have been successful on several levels. This is demonstrated by the results of the unannounced test in lesson four, particularly in relation the language (vocabulary and grammar) which had been 'acquired', rather than 'learned' (Patrick, 2011, p. 5).

I believe that the main successes of TPRS can be found in the middle attainment students, with Aeneas and Dido performing better than I would have expected in the lesson four assessment, particularly Dido who out-performed many high attainment students. TPRS also seemed to reach out to the lower attaining students, helping to engage their interest through the personalized stories and drama.

The main weakness that I identified with TPRS was its failure to properly address differentiation by mainly concentrating on the comprehension of the low attaining students. Although high attaining students were asked to repeat the stories orally, and had the opportunity to stretch themselves through writing, I do not believe that they were working to their full learning potential. This was confirmed by Jason's feedback during lesson five, where he requested more translating and a return to the CLC and teaching through learning about Roman civilization. Further, there can be many 'degrees' of comprehensible input within a mixed attainment class; what was comprehensible for the majority proved not to be for the lowest attaining students.

In consideration of teaching through personalized stories, I felt that this raised the students' interest initially but that it would be difficult to sustain this once they were no longer a novelty. Rather in the future, I would like to incorporate personalized stories sporadically, but to adapt the continuous narrative of the CLC stories for TPRS teaching methods.

While I am supportive of the intuitive methods of both TPRS and the CLC, I believe that the environment in which a child learns his first language cannot be replicated in second language acquisition. This is because much of first language acquisition relies on necessity and communication, which simply cannot be recreated in two 50-minute lessons each week. As such, this study has highlighted a clear need for pre-teaching vocabulary with frequent, spaced repetition.

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