

Teaching Terminology - an Integrated Approach

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Learning Korean terminology for individual Taekwon-Do movements can prove to be a daunting challenge for students. It is the task that many leave until last, in the hope that a few sessions of cramming will fix the required information sufficiently long enough in short term memory, to get through a grading. It may be viewed by student and instructor alike as simply a list of words to learn by rote. A recent study showed that some instructors within ITFNZ felt that learning theory is currently required at the expense of physical aspects.[1] I believe however, that the reverse is true; that the learning and use of Korean terminology can enhance and help to refine the physical techniques that we learn.

I developed the methods outlined below for three reasons:

- 1. Most of my club members are children. They needed simple, effective activities to help reinforce the unfamiliar Korean words. Learning at home can be difficult due to their young ages and the inability of those at home to help them unless they also attend the class.
- 2. Making training fun is an important principle of instructing.[2]
- 3. I needed to learn the theory myself in order to role model the use of it effectively, and I learn best with a combination of kinaesthetic and aural methods.

The emphasis that our organisation has placed on the learning and importance of theory has changed during the 15 years that I have learnt Taekwon-Do. When I sat my first grading in 1986, we were expected to know only the most rudimentary terms; the ability to follow basic commands, and to repeat the lines of the oath after a senior who often got the words wrong anyway, was often all that was required. Following the split from Master Yun International Taekwon-Do in 1989, the Grading Sub-Committee developed its own syllabus, complete with theory at each level and terminology grouped in batches of similar techniques. The major disadvantages of organising the terminology in this way was that it was not completely linked to the techniques that were being learnt at each level, encouraging rote learning, and there were inconsistencies with the terminology found in references such as General Choi's Condensed Encyclopaedia. This resulted in the type of terminology misunderstandings and mix-ups cited by M Breen, in his essay "A Discussion of Commonly Misunderstood and Misused Terminology" (1994). The syllabus was modified again, resulting in its present form since the end of 1998.

"Each grade is to know the Korean for each of the techniques that they learn."[3]

This is a shift away from learning terminology purely as an exercise, towards a more integrated approach, with the expectation that the terminology should be a natural and logical extension of the physical skills being acquired. It can however be challenging to master all the different words

used in the correct manner, as the skills and associated terms are organised according to physical difficulty and occurrence in patterns.

Most of the terminology contained in the kup syllabus (including patterns), has two or more of the following components:

Movement Component | Examples

A. Direction | Wen, orun, nagagi, duruogi, yop, ap

B. Stance | Narani, gunnun, niunja, junbi

C. Height | Nopunde, kaunde, najunde

D. Tool | Palmok, sonkal, an palmok, ap joomuk, sonkut.....

E. Technique Type | Makgi, jirugi, chagi, tulgi, taerigi.....

F. Technique Specifics | Yop, ap, doo, sang, kyocho.....

G. Motion | Normal, slow, continuous, connecting, stamping, sliding.....

H. Diagram Reference | A, B, C, D, E , F , CE, AD etc.....

I incorporate terminology into as many different parts of a training session as possible, but try to limit to 1 or 2 components within any one session, so as not to overload especially young students with too many different words at once. Techniques are selected from within the appropriate grade level, then used in conjunction with physical movement to reinforce the learning. Please note that this is a reinforcement of previous learning, rather than the initial teaching of the terminology or the technique. A brief revision of the terms to be used is done before starting the activities outlined below. Included are some examples from warm-up, basic drills, and partner work activities as well as patterns.

WARM-UP

Following basic limbering and/or joint rotations, some sort of aerobic activity is usual to increase the heart rate:

Activity #1 This is a version of the game 'Boats', where students run to various parts of the dojang according to a called out direction. Instead of the traditional port, starboard etc, I use terms denoting direction such as ap, wen, orun etc, as well as basic commands like charyot etc.

(Senior variation of this is to use pattern diagram directions eg: A, B, C etc)

Activity #2 Students run in a random pattern. I call out a stance, and the students have to stop in that stance. For white and yellow belts this is normally sufficient; more senior belts may have a

second component added eg tool. If the call is gunnun/palmok, the juniors do the walking stance, the seniors do walking stance with a technique that uses a forearm as the tool.

BASIC DRILLS

Constant repetition is a basic practise of all Martial Arts, because it builds the foundation for the automatic use of a technique in a real life situation, and because it teaches perseverance and self discipline.[4] Repetitive drills can be made more interesting and productive by varying the approach. Focusing on one or more of the movement components whilst performing drills is one way of incorporating this.

Activity #3 Instead of counting movements, I call out the name of a tool and the next technique has to use that tool.eg balkal. Can be as specific or as general as the level of the students allow, and techniques may be repeated as often as required.

Activity #4 Partner work: white belts paired up to practise punches. Target person calls out height using Korean terminology, attacker punches to appropriate target.

(Senior variation: tools can be chosen at random from a set list from syllabus)

PATTERNS

The previous activities are very useful at the beginner level. Using a similar approach for patterns has been especially beneficial for yellow belts and above, as it keeps them (and me) focused on the specific purpose and execution of each technique. It also gives repeating patterns over and over again a focus that younger students in particular find difficult to sustain. The most important factor here is the verbalisation, by the students, of each component's Korean term as it is being performed. This reinforces the connection between the movement and the term at the same time. It is not necessary to perform the movements full power, but each movement must be performed as accurately as possible, especially in regard to the specific component. Children in particular focus better on one thing at a time, rather than all the components at once, but more components can be added as competency progresses.

Activity #5 Step#1 Choose 1 component to focus on for whole pattern. For each movement student needs to say specific term aloud as the movement is performed.

Eg. Do-San Tul Component D - Tool: palmok, ap joomuk, palmok, ap joomuk, sonkal, sonkal, sonkal, sonkut etc.....

Repeat pattern several times, the same way.

Step#2 Choose a different component, eg height, and repeat the process above.

Step#3 Put the two components together, or in combination with other components.

Final Step Perform pattern full power without verbalisation, but concentrating on whichever of the components that had been previously been worked on. For more junior students just step #1 and the final step may be sufficient in one session.

Students may practise this way in small groups as well. Master Leong's book[5] in particular is a good reference for this as it has the names of the movements under the matching photograph in English and Korean.

In this way a single pattern may be practised many different ways, focusing on a different set of components each time.

Alternatively all the patterns could be worked through focusing on the same component(s) each time. Practising the

terminology this way enhances the physical aspects because it encourages the student to be accurate and to understand the purpose and method of each movement clearly, which is one of the training secrets of Taekwon-Do. In addition, it has the advantage of learning the terminology at the same time as the physical practice is being done, saving time as well. Please note however, that the approach I have outlined is dependent on the teaching groundwork to be done first for each of the techniques at a given level, and on the instructor providing a good role model in the pronunciation and competent usage of the terminology.

Once all the basic components have been covered at a given level, for most students it is more straightforward to learn the full term given for each of the prescribed techniques. Each component of the term means something to the student, and they have had plenty of practice saying the words aloud. The terms have been learnt in the context of the physical movements, and help them to focus on practising and performing especially patterns more accurately. Children being children though, there are never any guarantees. At least the movements and the accompanying terminology are used with a measure of understanding, which is a definite improvement on rote learning a list of words that have little relevance to the techniques trying to be mastered.

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[1] ITFNZ Taekwon-Do 2000 and Beyond - Strategic Marketing Management Report for ITFNZ (inc.)Hayden Breese 1999 p.29

[2] Instructors' Course Notes 1998Mike Lowepp13-14

[3] Instructors' Talk August 1998

[4] Insights for Instructors Pt 2 - Rob Tobin Instructors' TalkSept 99

[5] Taekwon-Do the Complete Syllabus and Grading Manual - Master Leong Wai Meng1998