

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Vocabulary Learning for Young Learners

Vocabulary learning involves developing connections between a word's spoken form, its meaning, and its use in a particular context. For beginner learners, these connections are easier to establish when the referent is concrete and when meaning is supported by visual, auditory, and kinesthetic cues. Recent TPR research indicates that physical actions can function as semantic cues because learners hear a command, observe or perform an action, and encounter the same vocabulary repeatedly in meaningful classroom routines (İnciman Çelik et al., 2021; Magnussen & Sukying, 2021).

Vocabulary learning among young learners should be limited to a manageable set of words and supported through repeated encounters. Repetition is most useful when it is not purely mechanical. A teacher may repeat the same target word through different commands, group arrangements, speeds, or combinations of movement. Liu et al. (2024) emphasize that TPR can be strengthened when movement becomes meaningful and when learners are allowed some variation rather than following a single rigid model throughout the lesson.

In the present study, vocabulary learning is treated as a classroom process rather than a numerical outcome. The analysis focuses on how the teacher presented meaning, how students were invited to demonstrate comprehension through action, and how vocabulary practice was embedded in teacher-student interaction. This process-oriented view is consistent with the descriptive qualitative focus of the research.

2.1.1 Dimensions of Vocabulary Knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge is multidimensional. A learner may recognize that a spoken word is familiar without being able to explain its meaning, produce it independently, or use it in a new sentence. For the purposes of a young-learner classroom, three dimensions are particularly relevant: form, meaning, and use. Form includes how the word sounds and, when appropriate, how it appears in writing. Meaning includes the concept, object, action, or relationship represented by the word. Use concerns how the word functions in a command or classroom

expression. These dimensions develop gradually and should not be reduced to the ability to translate an isolated item.

In the present lesson, the spoken form was primary because TPR begins with listening. The teacher pronounced an animal-based command, and the action provided a visible representation of meaning. The grammatical form was kept simple so that students could focus on the relationship between the animal and its movement. Written words and pictures functioned as supporting resources, not as substitutes for oral input. This design was consistent with the students' beginner level and with the implementation focus of the study.

The relationship among form, meaning, and use also explains why command selection must be coherent. If a gesture represents only one word while the spoken instruction contains several unfamiliar elements, students may respond to the gesture without processing the complete phrase. Therefore, the teacher needs to introduce new linguistic elements gradually, maintain consistency between the command and movement, and check comprehension by varying the sequence. TPR is strongest when physical action clarifies linguistic meaning rather than distracting from it.

2.1.2 Receptive and Productive Vocabulary

Receptive vocabulary refers to language that learners can recognize or understand when they hear or see it, while productive vocabulary refers to language that they can retrieve and use. Young beginners commonly understand more than they can say. TPR respects this asymmetry by allowing learners to demonstrate comprehension through action before requiring oral production. A student who moves both arms after hearing "The bird flies" may show receptive understanding even if the student is not yet ready to produce the complete sentence.

This sequence should not be interpreted as a permanent separation between listening and speaking. Once commands become familiar, the teacher may invite students to repeat a word, complete part of a phrase, or lead a command. The progression must remain sensitive to readiness. Premature pressure for oral production can shift attention away from meaning and increase hesitation, while an excessively long period of imitation may prevent learners from taking a more active

linguistic role. The implementation therefore requires a balance between comprehension support and opportunities for emerging production.

The descriptive qualitative design of this study records that progression without assigning it a test score. Observation focuses on whether the teacher allowed listening time, how oral attempts were invited, and how support changed across response arrangements. This approach does not determine the size of students' receptive or productive vocabularies. It describes how the lesson created conditions in which both could begin to develop.

2.1.3 Vocabulary Selection, Repetition, and Retrieval

Vocabulary selection for young learners should consider familiarity, concreteness, relevance, pronounceability, and the possibility of meaningful reuse. The theme *Animals Around Us* met these criteria because the referents were known to the students and the movements could be represented safely. Concrete language is especially compatible with gesture-based instruction. Oppici et al. (2023) note that gesture research tends to be more directly applicable to concrete vocabulary because the relationship between a word and an iconic movement is easier to establish than it is for abstract language.

Repetition is necessary, but the form of repetition matters. Repeating the same command in the same order may produce a memorized motor sequence rather than evidence that students are processing each spoken item. A teacher can make repetition more informative by changing the order, pausing before the movement, alternating between modelling and spoken command alone, or directing the command to different groups. Variation creates small retrieval demands while keeping the language within a manageable range.

Recent TPR studies use repetition in different ways. Magnussen and Sukying (2021) integrated TPR with songs across several weeks, Liu et al. (2024) examined personalized movement, and Dongsanniwas and Sukying (2024) used structured TPR tasks with primary learners. Although their designs differ from the present descriptive study, they support the pedagogical principle that repeated encounters should remain meaningful. In MI Sindangraja, variation was achieved through changes in order, speed, grouping, and simple modifiers rather than through technology-intensive resources.

2.2 Teaching English to Young Learners

Teaching English to young learners requires attention to developmental characteristics, classroom emotion, attention span, and the need for concrete experience. Young learners generally respond more readily to short, varied, and observable tasks than to lengthy explanations. Ratminingsih et al. (2021) argue that English instruction for children should integrate meaningful contexts, attractive learning resources, and age-appropriate interaction.

Movement can serve both instructional and managerial purposes. It enables children to demonstrate understanding without being required to produce extended speech, but it also demands clear boundaries, safe use of space, and concise directions. Teachers therefore need to balance activity with structure. In a TPR lesson, the teacher's model, tone of voice, sequencing, and monitoring are central to keeping physical participation connected to the learning objective.

The affective dimension is also important. Children who are uncertain about a foreign-language word may hesitate to speak, whereas responding together through action can reduce the visibility of individual mistakes. Paramita (2022) and Zur and Selfieni (2022) report positive learner responses to TPR-based activities, particularly when commands and movements are understandable and classroom interaction remains supportive.

2.2.1 Developmental Characteristics and Instructional Implications

Young learners differ from adolescents and adults in the ways they sustain attention, interpret explanation, regulate movement, and respond emotionally to public performance. They often learn more effectively when a lesson offers an immediate purpose, concrete cues, brief cycles of activity, and opportunities to interact. These characteristics do not imply that all children share one learning style. They indicate that instructional design should be flexible enough to accommodate varied response speeds and levels of confidence.

For second-grade learners, a long explanation about the meaning of a verb is less accessible than a concise command accompanied by a clear action. However, activity alone is insufficient. Children also need predictable routines, transition signals, and clear expectations about when to move and when to listen. A TPR lesson therefore combines physical energy with structure. The teacher directs

attention before giving the command, creates processing time, observes the response, and pauses the activity when classroom control begins to weaken.

The classroom role of imitation also requires careful interpretation. Imitation is a legitimate form of early participation because it allows students to rehearse a new relationship between language and action. Yet students should eventually encounter commands without a simultaneous model. The movement from imitation to more independent response is not necessarily linear. Some learners may respond independently to one command while still requiring support for another. Describing these shifts is central to understanding implementation.

2.2.2 Attention, Emotion, and Participation

Attention in a young-learner classroom is dynamic. It may increase when an activity is novel and decrease when the same routine is repeated without variation. Physical response can renew attention because students must listen for a verbal cue and coordinate an action. Nevertheless, highly expressive movement may also compete with language for attention. The teacher must ensure that students are responding to the command rather than treating the activity only as play.

Emotional safety is equally important. Students who fear making a mistake may avoid answering individually even when they understand part of the lesson. Collective physical response lowers the visibility of individual uncertainty and provides a less threatening entry point. Pair and group practice can then offer intermediate support before individual turns. Recent studies describe participation, enjoyment, and reduced pressure as common advantages perceived in TPR classrooms (Xie, 2021; Paramita, 2022; Zur & Selfieni, 2022; Wardani et al., 2025).

Participation must still be described cautiously. A student may appear enthusiastic without processing every target word, while a quiet student may understand more than is outwardly visible. The present study therefore treats participation as an aspect of classroom implementation rather than as direct proof of achievement. The observation sheet records what students did in response to instructional arrangements, and the discussion distinguishes visible engagement from conclusions about vocabulary mastery.

2.2.3 Scaffolding and Multimodal Classroom Support

Scaffolding refers to temporary support that enables learners to participate in a task that would otherwise be too difficult. In this study, support included pictures, teacher modelling, collective response, slowed commands, repetition, peer grouping, and feedback. The supports were not all used at the same intensity throughout the lesson. They were added or reduced according to the students' visible need.

The combination of spoken language, pictures, facial expression, gesture, and whole-body movement creates a multimodal learning environment. Each mode contributes different information. A picture can identify the animal, a gesture can represent the movement, and the spoken command provides the linguistic form. The modes are most useful when they are coordinated. If the picture, action, and command communicate different meanings, the additional cues can increase rather than reduce confusion.

Jusslin et al. (2022) describe embodied language education as a field in which bodily action, perception, and social interaction are integrated with language learning. Their review cautions against treating embodiment as movement added for entertainment. Embodied activity should be deliberately connected to the conceptual and linguistic content. This distinction supports the present study's attention to the accuracy of movements, clarity of commands, and teacher adjustments.

2.3 Total Physical Response

2.3.1 Definition and Core Principles

Total Physical Response is a language-teaching approach that coordinates speech with action. Asher (1977) proposed that learners could first demonstrate comprehension physically before being expected to speak. Contemporary studies continue to describe three central features of TPR: comprehensible spoken commands, physical response, and a gradual progression from teacher modelling toward learner independence (Setiawan et al., 2022; Rosiana et al., 2025).

TPR is particularly suitable for language that can be represented through movement. Concrete verbs, classroom instructions, body parts, and familiar objects are easier to demonstrate than abstract concepts. For this reason, the method should

be selected strategically rather than treated as a complete approach for every language objective.

2.3.2 Instructional Stages

Recent descriptive studies organize TPR implementation into preparation, modelling, guided response, varied practice, and review. During preparation, the teacher selects concrete vocabulary and safe movements. During modelling, the teacher gives a command and performs the corresponding action. In guided response, the teacher and students act together. Support is then reduced so that students respond in groups, pairs, or individually. The lesson closes with a brief review that reconnects the spoken forms, meanings, and actions (Setiawan et al., 2022; Rosiana et al., 2025).

The stages should remain flexible. If students appear uncertain, the teacher may return to modelling, slow down a command, use a picture, or repeat a movement. If students become comfortable, the teacher may vary the command sequence or invite learners to lead an activity. This responsiveness is important because a descriptive account of TPR implementation should show not only the planned procedure but also the adjustments made during actual classroom interaction.

2.3.3 Teacher and Student Roles

The teacher functions as planner, language model, director of physical activity, monitor, and provider of feedback. Setiawan et al. (2022) highlight these multiple roles in elementary TPR instruction. Students initially act as listeners and physical responders. As the lesson develops, they may respond with less modelling, participate in peer activities, and attempt short verbal production. The transition should not be forced; physical comprehension remains the primary entry point.

2.3.4 Strengths and Limitations

TPR can make meaning observable, provide repeated exposure, support whole-class participation, and reduce immediate pressure for oral production. A mixed research synthesis by İnciman Çelik et al. (2021) found generally positive patterns in the relationship between TPR and vocabulary learning. More recent studies with young learners also describe high levels of participation and positive classroom responses (Magnussen & Sukying, 2021; Paramita, 2022).

Nevertheless, TPR has limitations. It is less appropriate for abstract language, may become repetitive, can restrict learner creativity if imitation is too rigid, and may create noise or safety issues in a crowded room. Liu et al. (2024) note the value of providing more meaningful and personalized movement, while Rosiana et al. (2025) emphasize the teacher's responsibility for planning and directing classroom activities. These limitations support the need to examine implementation in context rather than assuming that the method works in the same way in every classroom.

2.3.5 TPR and Embodied Language Learning

TPR can be interpreted within the broader perspective of embodied learning. From this perspective, language learning is not confined to verbal explanation or mental rehearsal; perception and action contribute to how meaning is represented. In a vocabulary lesson, the learner hears a command, observes a movement, and may perform the movement. These experiences create several routes through which the word can be interpreted and later recognized.

The recent evidence base provides a more nuanced view than the simple claim that movement always improves learning. Jusslin et al. (2022) identified a growing body of empirical work on embodied approaches across first-, second-, and foreign-language education. Their synthesis highlights the importance of how teachers orchestrate bodies, spaces, materials, and interaction. Movement is pedagogically meaningful when it is connected to a learning objective and socially organized within the classroom.

Oppici et al. (2023) compared gesture enactment and gesture observation in a systematic review and meta-analysis. Their findings suggest that observing semantically meaningful gestures can sometimes provide benefits comparable to performing them, although the quality of evidence and number of available studies remain limited. This point is relevant to a TPR sequence because students initially observe a teacher model before acting. Observation is not merely waiting; it may be an active stage of meaning construction.

The embodied perspective also clarifies the limitation of TPR for abstract vocabulary. Actions for run, fly, or hop have recognizable relationships with the words. Concepts such as fairness, possibility, or responsibility are less directly

represented. Teachers may still use metaphorical gesture, but the relationship is more interpretive and culturally variable. The present study therefore restricts its conclusions to concrete animal vocabulary and does not present TPR as a complete solution for all lexical instruction.

2.3.6 Command Design and Instructional Language

The command is the central unit of a TPR lesson. Effective commands are concise, audible, consistent, and physically interpretable. At the initial stage, unnecessary linguistic complexity should be avoided because students need to identify the relationship between the spoken input and expected response. Once a command becomes familiar, the teacher can vary one element at a time, such as speed, direction, or manner.

Command design also involves grammatical consistency. The present materials used simple subject-verb patterns such as “The bird flies.” Because the lesson focused on vocabulary implementation rather than explicit grammar instruction, the teacher maintained stable sentence frames and changed the lexical items. This consistency reduced the number of simultaneous demands. Modifiers were introduced only in the second stage, when the core animal-action relationships had already been modelled.

Teacher delivery influences comprehensibility. Volume, pace, pause length, gesture timing, and eye contact determine whether students can coordinate listening with action. If the teacher moves before completing the command, students may follow the movement without attending to the language. If the command is too fast, slower processors may depend on peers. The observation of timing is therefore an important part of implementation research.

2.3.7 Classroom Management, Safety, and Inclusion

Movement-based lessons require proactive classroom management. The teacher needs to define the movement area, select actions that can be performed in place, provide stop signals, and ensure that students can see the model. Group size and classroom layout influence both safety and attention. A method that is appropriate in an open hall may need modification in a classroom with fixed desks.

Inclusion also concerns differences in mobility, confidence, processing speed, and sensory preference. A student who cannot or does not wish to perform a

large movement should still be able to participate through a smaller gesture, pointing, or observation. The teacher should avoid interpreting every limited movement as lack of comprehension. Oppici et al. (2023) provide relevant support for recognizing that meaningful gesture observation may also contribute to embodied learning.

Xie (2021) identifies practical challenges including teacher training, limited proficiency, traditional classroom expectations, and the absence of authentic language environments. More recent teacher-perception research similarly reports that preparation time, abstract vocabulary, classroom space, and professional development affect implementation (Wardani et al., 2025; Tran & Luu, 2026). These findings support the inclusion of classroom management and teacher adjustment within the analytical framework of the present study.

2.3.8 Materials and Activity Variation

TPR does not require expensive media, but the available materials should have clear instructional functions. Animal pictures establish the referent, command cards support consistent language, the board can display key forms, and open floor space makes safe response possible. A material becomes unnecessary when it distracts from listening or duplicates information without adding clarity.

Activity variation should preserve the target-language focus. Whole-class response can establish a common model; pair practice can provide peer support; group turns can make observation more manageable; individual response can reveal the need for additional scaffolding; and student-led commands can create emerging productive use. Variation should not introduce so many new rules that the activity becomes a game unrelated to the vocabulary objective.

Setiawan et al. (2022) and Rosiana et al. (2025) report the use of songs, listening-and-doing activities, games, and teacher assessment within TPR lessons. Liu et al. (2024) adds personalized movement and video production. The present study uses simpler variations that match its resources and participants. This contextual difference reinforces the principle that TPR is a flexible instructional framework rather than a fixed collection of activities.

2.4 Recent Relevant Studies

The present study reviewed research published from 2021 to 2026 so that the research gap and discussion were grounded in recent evidence. A summary is presented in Table 2.1.

1. Table 2.1 Summary of Recent Relevant Studies (2021–2026)

Researcher(s)	Context and Design	Main Focus/Findings	Relevance and Difference
Magnussen & Sukying (2021)	Thai preschool learners; classroom study	Songs and TPR supported vocabulary learning and positive learner reactions.	Relevant to young learners; different age group and combined method.
İnciman Çelik et al. (2021)	Mixed evidence synthesis	Synthesized outcome-oriented and qualitative findings on TPR and vocabulary learning.	Provides a recent evidence base; does not describe one classroom context.
Xie (2021)	Young-learner English education; literature-based analysis	Examined the suitability, classroom application, and implementation challenges of TPR.	Clarifies practical conditions; the present study supplies a situated classroom account.
Nguyen et al. (2021)	Young learners; classroom intervention	Examined the relationship between TPR activities and vocabulary learning.	Supports the language-action rationale; differs from the present process-oriented design.
Paramita (2022)	Second-grade elementary students; descriptive qualitative	Focused on participation and motivation during TPR vocabulary activities.	Similar participant age; less detailed analysis of instructional stages.
Setiawan et al. (2022)	Elementary learners; descriptive qualitative	Described materials, teacher roles, and pre-, whilst-, and post-teaching stages.	Strong procedural reference; different classroom and participant range.
Jusslin et al. (2022)	Mixed-studies review of embodied language education	Explained how bodily action, perception, materials, and interaction contribute to language instruction.	Provides the embodied-learning lens used to interpret TPR implementation.
Afrianti & Rustipa (2023)	Elementary school; qualitative	Used observation, interviews, and documentation to describe TPR vocabulary teaching.	Similar data orientation; different site and vocabulary context.
Oppici et al. (2023)	Systematic review and meta-analysis of gesture-supported vocabulary learning	Compared the pedagogical roles of observing and enacting meaningful gestures.	Supports the interpretation of observation before physical response.

Researcher(s)	Context and Design	Main Focus/Findings	Relevance and Difference
Liu et al. (2024)	Young EFL learners; comparative study	Compared traditional and personalized TPR and discussed creative movement.	Supports movement-meaning connection; technology-rich context differs.
Rosiana et al. (2025)	Second-grade primary students; descriptive qualitative	Identified teaching stages, teacher roles, listening-and-doing activities, and games.	Closest recent study; current research adds a madrasah context and detailed field-note account.
Wardani et al. (2025)	Indonesian elementary teachers; perception study	Described perceived benefits and practical demands of using TPR for vocabulary teaching.	Adds a teacher-practice perspective relevant to planning and management.
Tran & Luu (2026)	Primary-school teachers in Hanoi; exploratory qualitative study	Reported teacher perspectives on classroom use, constraints, and professional support.	Extends the recent regional evidence and informs contextual interpretation.

2.4.1 Methodological Trends in Recent TPR Research

Recent TPR research uses experimental, mixed-method, descriptive qualitative, narrative, review, and teacher-perception designs. Experimental studies tend to examine vocabulary recall or retention under defined instructional conditions (Nguyen et al., 2021; Dongsanniwat & Sukying, 2024; Liu et al., 2024). Their contribution is the structured comparison of outcomes, but their procedures may differ from ordinary classroom practice. Descriptive studies examine stages, teacher roles, interactions, and challenges in natural settings (Xie, 2021; Paramita, 2022; Setiawan et al., 2022; Afrianti & Rustipa, 2023; Rosiana et al., 2025). Their strength is contextual detail, although they cannot establish causal effectiveness.

Research syntheses connect these individual studies to broader patterns. İnciman Çelik et al. (2021) synthesized quantitative and qualitative TPR research, Jusslin et al. (2022) examined embodied approaches across language education, and Oppici et al. (2023) compared gesture observation and enactment. These reviews support the general relevance of action and gesture while also highlighting heterogeneity, limited samples, and the influence of instructional conditions. They justify a cautious interpretation of classroom findings.

Teacher-focused studies add another layer. Wardani et al. (2025) examined Indonesian elementary teachers' perceptions, while Tran and Luu (2026) reported

teacher views from primary education in Hanoi. Both studies identify perceived benefits alongside demands involving space, time, preparation, and professional learning. Such evidence is directly relevant to the present study because the success of a movement-based lesson depends on how the teacher translates general principles into classroom decisions.

2.4.2 Areas of Agreement and Tension

The literature shows broad agreement on several points. TPR is most naturally suited to concrete language, clear actions, and beginner learners. Teacher modelling establishes the initial relationship between language and movement. Repetition is necessary, but variation helps prevent mechanical copying. Students frequently respond positively to low-pressure physical activity. Finally, teachers need to plan for classroom management rather than treating it as an issue that can be solved after the lesson begins.

The literature also contains productive tensions. Some studies emphasize physical enactment, whereas gesture research indicates that meaningful observation may also support learning (Oppici et al., 2023). Some TPR accounts prioritize a silent comprehension period, while contemporary classrooms often invite limited verbal participation relatively early. Some outcome studies describe improvements, but descriptive studies reveal that participation, peer dependence, and uneven response speed complicate simple interpretations. These tensions suggest that implementation should be responsive rather than doctrinaire.

Another tension concerns standardization and creativity. Stable movements can make commands predictable and easier to interpret, but overly rigid imitation can restrict agency. Personalized movement may strengthen meaningfulness for some learners (Liu et al., 2024), yet young beginners may first need a common model. A gradual sequence can reconcile these needs: the teacher establishes a shared action and later allows variation when the language is familiar.

2.4.3 Implications for the Present Analytical Framework

The literature review informs six analytical questions for the present study. First, how was vocabulary selected and bounded? Second, how did the teacher coordinate command and model? Third, how were listening time, collective response, and repetition organized? Fourth, how was support reduced or restored?

Fifth, how were space, noise, participation, and different response speeds managed?
Sixth, how did the teacher close and review the lesson?

These questions do not function as numerical variables. They are sensitizing concepts that guide observation and thematic interpretation. They help the researcher notice relevant classroom processes while remaining open to events not anticipated in the lesson plan. The framework also creates consistency across the research question, instruments, field notes, findings, and discussion.

The recent evidence therefore strengthens rather than broadens the scope of the study. The thesis does not attempt to reproduce every research design found in the literature. Instead, it uses recent findings to interpret one classroom implementation carefully. The comparison allows the study to identify where the MI Sindangraja lesson reflects common TPR principles and where local conditions required adaptation.

2.3.9 Responsive Scaffolding and Gradual Release

Scaffolding in a TPR lesson is responsive when support is adjusted in relation to visible classroom need. The relevant supports include a picture, a complete teacher model, collective action, slowed delivery, repetition, peer grouping, and a familiar command frame. These supports do not form a rigid ladder that can be removed according to a fixed timetable. A learner may respond independently to a familiar action but need renewed modelling when a modifier changes the command. The teacher therefore moves between support and independence in a recursive manner.

Gradual release begins with shared meaning. The teacher makes the relationship between language and movement visible, then invites the class to act together. Once the relationship is familiar, the teacher can create a small interpretive demand by delaying or withholding the model. The learner must then attend more closely to the spoken command. If uncertainty becomes visible, the teacher may restore part of the support instead of immediately correcting the learner publicly. This sequence protects comprehension while still creating opportunities for more independent response.

The principle is consistent with recent descriptions of teacher roles in elementary TPR classrooms (Setiawan et al., 2022; Rosiana et al., 2025). It also

connects with the broader embodied-learning literature, which emphasizes the orchestration of perception, action, materials, and social interaction (Jusslin et al., 2022). From this perspective, scaffolding is not simply additional help. It is the deliberate arrangement of cues so that attention can shift progressively from a visible action toward the linguistic signal.

Responsive scaffolding has an important implication for observation. The researcher should not treat the return of modelling as evidence that the instructional sequence failed. The return may show that the teacher was monitoring the class and protecting access to meaning. The analytical question is therefore not whether support disappeared completely, but how and why it was reduced, restored, or changed.

2.3.10 Visible Response and Evidential Caution

Physical response is central to TPR because it provides an observable connection between a spoken message and an action. Nevertheless, the meaning of that response depends on context. A learner may act after processing the command, after copying the teacher, after observing a peer, or after anticipating a familiar sequence. The action remains relevant classroom evidence, but it should not automatically be treated as proof of stable vocabulary knowledge.

Several observational distinctions help preserve analytical caution. A response given while the teacher is modelling shows participation in a supported language-action routine. A response after the teacher stops modelling provides different evidence because the spoken command becomes more prominent. A delayed response may show uncertainty, processing time, attention to peers, or a need for clearer input. The observer should describe these conditions before interpreting them.

Gesture research reinforces the value of this distinction. Oppici et al. (2023) show that observing meaningful gesture and enacting gesture can both contribute to vocabulary learning under particular conditions. This finding supports an instructional sequence in which watching is an active stage rather than an absence of participation. It also cautions against ranking learners solely by the size or immediacy of their movements.

For the present study, physical response functions as evidence of how the lesson was organized and how learners participated in the moment. It helps explain teacher decisions, including repetition, changed order, peer-supported practice, and restored modelling. The thesis does not transform those responses into individual scores. This evidential boundary allows the classroom description to remain rich while avoiding claims that require a different research design.

2.4.4 Critical Appraisal of the Recent Evidence

Recent studies broadly support the relevance of TPR and gesture-supported instruction, but their conclusions must be read in relation to design and context. Outcome-oriented studies often use defined teaching periods, selected lexical material, and structured assessments. They contribute evidence about vocabulary learning under those conditions, yet they may not explain the full range of teacher adjustments that occur in ordinary classroom interaction. Descriptive studies provide stronger contextual detail but cannot establish causal effectiveness.

The age of the learners also matters. Preschool, primary, and older beginner learners may differ in attention, language experience, movement regulation, and willingness to perform publicly. Findings from one group can inform interpretation without being transferred mechanically to another. Magnussen and Sukying (2021), Nguyen et al. (2021), Dongsanniwat and Sukying (2024), and Liu et al. (2024) each contribute relevant insights, but the present study uses them to illuminate instructional principles rather than to predict an identical outcome.

Instructional form is another source of variation. Some studies combine TPR with songs, games, video production, or personalized gestures. Others use teacher-led command routines. A positive finding for a combined activity cannot be attributed to bodily movement alone because music, novelty, peer interaction, or digital production may also shape the experience. The current classroom used simple pictures, spoken commands, and actions in place. Its contribution lies in showing how a low-resource version was managed.

The reviews by İnciman Çelik et al. (2021), Jusslin et al. (2022), and Oppici et al. (2023) help place these differences within a broader body of evidence. They support the relevance of coordinated language and action while also indicating variation in participants, tasks, and research quality. A responsible literature review

therefore avoids presenting TPR as uniformly successful. It identifies the conditions under which the approach appears pedagogically plausible and the questions that still require contextual investigation.

This critical appraisal leads directly to the present study. A detailed account of implementation is needed because a method is always mediated by teacher language, classroom space, learner readiness, cultural expectations, and available materials. The study contributes that contextual account while using recent scholarship as an interpretive frame.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework positions TPR implementation as a sequence of connected classroom actions. The process begins with contextual vocabulary selection and lesson preparation. It continues through teacher modelling, collective physical response, repetition and variation, and gradual movement toward pair, group, or individual response. Observation, field notes, and documentation are used to describe how these actions occur and how the teacher adjusts them in response to the classroom situation. The analysis then identifies recurring implementation patterns and challenges. This framework keeps the research aligned with its single question: how TPR was implemented in the classroom.

2.5.1 Components of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework contains four connected domains: contextual preparation, instructional enactment, responsive adjustment, and qualitative interpretation. Contextual preparation includes the selection of familiar vocabulary, design of meaningful movements, preparation of pictures, arrangement of classroom space, and establishment of safety expectations. These decisions occur before the command-response sequence begins, but they shape every later stage.

Instructional enactment includes spoken commands, teacher modelling, listening and observation time, collective action, repetition, variation, and movement toward pair, group, or individual response. The stages provide an analytical sequence rather than a rigid script. Their purpose is to identify what the teacher and students were doing at particular moments and how language was coordinated with action.

Responsive adjustment connects the stages. The teacher observes hesitation, peer dependence, noise, limited visibility, or uneven pacing and then changes the support. Possible adjustments include slowing the command, repeating it, using a picture, restoring the model, reducing the response group, or limiting the movement. This domain explains why implementation cannot be understood solely from the lesson plan.

Qualitative interpretation connects evidence with claims. Observation records describe enactment, field notes preserve sequence and notable events, lesson plans represent intention, and photographs provide limited contextual confirmation. The researcher compares these sources, develops process-oriented codes, organizes themes, and states conclusions at the level supported by the evidence. The framework therefore integrates pedagogy and methodology.

2.5.2 Sensitizing Concepts and Analytical Relationships

The framework uses sensitizing concepts rather than measurement variables. Sensitizing concepts direct attention to meaningful features while allowing the classroom record to refine the interpretation. In this study, the central concepts are comprehensible command, meaningful movement, observation before enactment, guided response, variation, reduced support, restored support, participation structure, classroom management, and closure.

The relationships among these concepts are consequential. A command becomes more comprehensible when its linguistic form, picture, gesture, and timing are coordinated. Guided response becomes pedagogically useful when students have sufficient observation time and the movement represents the intended meaning. Variation becomes informative when it changes order or support without introducing excessive linguistic complexity. Reduced support becomes inclusive when the teacher remains prepared to restore assistance.

The framework also recognizes alternative explanations. Collective movement may reflect shared comprehension, imitation, peer following, or a combination of these processes. A photograph may confirm that movement occurred but cannot identify the spoken command. A planned activity may appear in a lesson plan without being fully enacted. These possibilities do not invalidate the data; they establish the need to compare sources and write claims cautiously.

The resulting analytical proposition is that TPR implementation is best understood as a coordinated and responsive classroom process. Its meaning lies not in movement alone but in the relationship among language, bodily action, materials, grouping, space, and teacher judgement. This proposition guides the findings chapter and keeps the study focused on implementation rather than measured effectiveness.